

A NEW LOOK AT DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN
TITLE I AND NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS: DOES DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP
IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL CULTURE?

by

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The College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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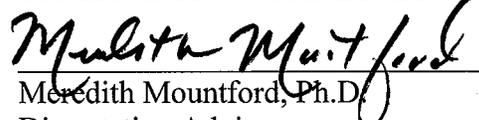
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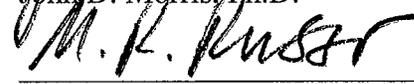
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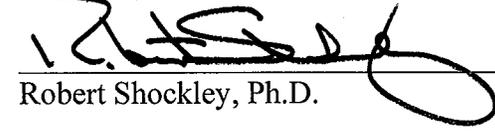
This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Meredith Mountford, Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

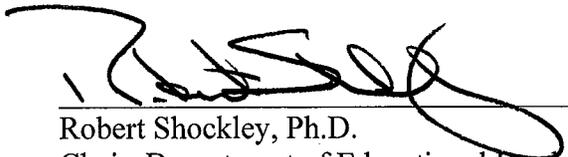
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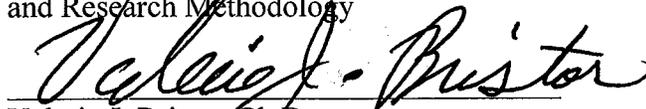

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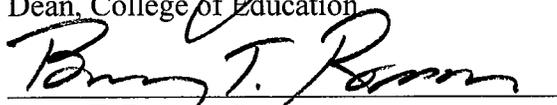

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Keietta Givens, the younger of two daughters, was born to Orsibe and Irma Givens on September 25 in Miami, Florida. She matriculated through Miami-Dade public schools where she attended Golden Glades Elementary, Myrtle Grove Elementary, and Parkway Middle School. Later, she attended and graduated from Miami Carol City Senior High in Miami, Florida. While in attendance at Miami Carol City, Keietta was active in several organizations; however, her most successful accomplishment was winning the State Basketball Championship in 1990. After high school, she graduated from Florida State University in the spring of 1995 with a Bachelor of Science degree in criminology and a minor in computer science. Ms. Givens later attended Florida International University and graduated with a master's degree in Social Work. She continued her education and earned an Educational Leadership certification in 2003 from Florida Atlantic University, where she also received her specialist degree in the Fall 2010.

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I would like to first thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving me the strength to endure this journey over the last seven years. I know that without His guidance throughout this process, I would not have made it to this momentous occasion. God is a light under my feet who has guided me to this pivotal point in my life and I truly thank him.

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father, Orsibe and Irma, for their unconditional love. My parents have truly been a blessing to me for my entire life and they have encouraged me through difficult times, never leaving my side. Thank you for your love and guidance. I truly appreciate everything. I know I would not be here if it weren't for you. I love you. Thank you to my sister Deatrick, my niece Kai, and my nephews Adriel and Tariq for their understanding when Auntie could not be around all the time.

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ABSTRACT

Author: Keietta Latraill Givens

Title: A New Look at Distributive Leadership in Title I and Non-Title I Schools: Does Distributive Leadership Impact Student Achievement and School Culture?

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Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Meredith Mountford

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The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools and to examine the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Additionally, the study investigated the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Finally, this study determined if the relationship between distributed leadership, school culture, and student achievement is moderated by Title I status.

This study was significant in the realm of education as it explored distributive leadership, its working definition, and possible relationship to increased student achievement and positive school culture. A quantitative method, including three statistical analyses, was implemented to answer each of the five proposed research questions and five corresponding null hypotheses. A bivariate correlation analysis

revealed there was not a relationship between distributive leadership and school culture; distributive leadership and student achievement in a middle school setting. Further, a moderation analysis determined that distributive leadership and school culture, distributive leadership and student achievement were not moderated by Title I status. Additionally, a t-test showed there was not a difference in how leadership was distributed within Title I and Non-Title I schools. A discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for K-12 were explained in detail, followed by suggestions for future research.

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I. INTRODUCTION

For decades, leadership theorists often conflated the term leadership with management (Bell, 1991; Bush, 2008; Cuban, 1988). In fact, traditional leadership theory integrated management-oriented function and execution of positional power (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Leithwood, 1994). Early educational administration theory often posited administrators approaching leadership practice in isolation while also attempting to make significant change in schools without garnering input from their community or faculty (Gronn, 2000). However, in the mid 1950s, a renowned leadership theorist, the late C. A. Gibb (1913-1994), was instrumental in formulating a new criterion for examining leadership practice that departed from the traditional paradigm of the time. Gibb (1954) proposed that leadership should be viewed as group practice, a set of assignments that was performed by the group in a centralized system. As a result, the assignments could be dispersed, shared, and distributed (Gibb, 1954). Gibb recommended two forms of leadership distribution: the incidences of the assignments performed by each group member and the method of group assignments. More recently, Spillane (2005) added clarity to Gibb's early work by articulating the idea of leadership practice. Spillane stated, "Distributed leadership first and foremost is about leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines, and structures" (p. 144).

Spillane (2006a) attempted to create a structure that analyzed the distributive perspective originally proposed by Gibb, further utilizing a framework of collective distribution. Spillane explained, "... collective distribution characterizes practice that is

stretched over the work of two or more leaders who work to enact a leadership routine by working separately but interdependently” (p. 60). Furthermore, he described coordinated distribution as situations where leadership routines involved activities performed in sequence (Spillane, 2006a).

Gibb’s (1954) and Spillane’s (2006a) leadership theories were designed to incorporate more individuals into leadership practice. Additionally, both theories of leadership practice sought to impact the entire organization and forge opportunities for leadership. However, the link between distributed practice and student achievement had not been widely researched in the educational arena.

The Wallace Foundation recently conducted comprehensive 5-year study, “Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning,” which analyzed the effects of distributed leadership and student achievement (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). The study, however, was unable to detect a significant correlation between distributive leadership and student learning based on several contributing factors. First, a clear measure of distributive leadership was not formulated and, secondly, there were significant changes in leadership personnel throughout the study. Therefore, further exploration of distributive leadership would benefit many educational researchers. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) stated, “To understand the distribution of leadership, one needs to explore evidence of actual behaviors and influences associated with core leadership practices and specific focal points of school-improvement activity” (p. 64). Earlier studies by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) found:

... not unlike the recent trend advocating instructional leadership as the silver bullet for school reform, advocating distributive leadership, without providing the necessary training on how to operationalize it endangers it of becoming no more than a slogan unless it is given thorough and thoughtful consideration. (p. 5)

From this vantage point, it would appear that leaders within schools who implement distributive leadership must develop professional development that would impact and sustain the organization. Furthermore, this process would need to ensure teacher leaders and principals have a clear understanding of positional power and structures within their schools.

According to Timperley (2005), “I suggest that better understanding is needed of how leadership is enacted when it is distributed and of the conditions under which such distribution is differentially effective if it is to make a difference to instructional practices in schools” (p. 398). Regardless of how strong the theory, principals cannot effectively employ distributive leadership unless they fully understand the practice and share their positional authority.

Statement of the Problem

Relationships between leaders and followers within the organization have not been the primary focus in school leadership literature. In fact, most literary conversations discussed leadership traits of principals (Harris, 2005). Spillane (2006b) suggested the responsibilities of individuals working within the organization were distributed across various situations and leadership practice. Additionally, “... close attention must be paid to the interaction among individuals, particularly with respect to how these interactions

are facilitated or constrained by specific aspects of the situation” (Spillane & Miele, 2007, p. 60).

For example, Harris (2002) commented on a study that involved effective leadership in secondary schools facing challenging circumstances. Harris stated:

... while the heads emphasized the contingent nature of many of the decisions they made and how different leadership strategies would be used in different contexts, the central belief in distributing leadership to teachers remained unaltered. This form of leadership starts not from the basis of power and control but from the ability to act with others and to enable others to act. It places an emphasis upon allowing and empowering those who are not in positions of responsibility or authority to lead. (p. 22)

In Figure 1, Harris (2008) explained leadership activity and its complexity within the schools. The model describes three categories of distributive leadership that outline organization theory and individual outcomes: (a) within schools focused on restructured responsibility, roles of the organization, and prioritized leadership; (b) between schools emphasized collaboration that included sharing staff, school-wide curriculum, and resources, and (c) outside schools formulated relationships with outside agencies that offered numerous services to schools for school improvement.

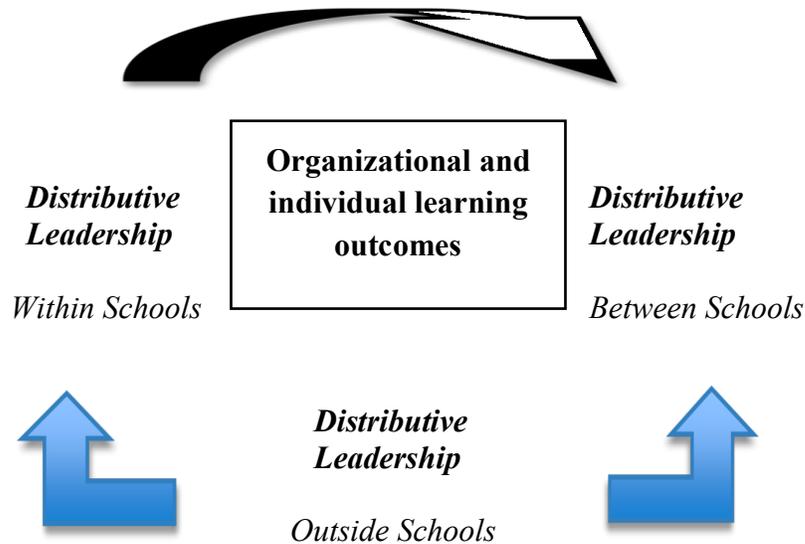


Figure 1. Harris Model of Distributive Leadership. Source: Harris, A. (2008). *Distributed school leadership: Developing tomorrow's leaders*. Oxford, England: Routledge. Reprinted with permission.

As Harris (2008) illustrated in her distributive model, leadership in schools “suggests that there is a need to build capacity within the system in order to transform it” (p. 74). Further, empirical studies have not clearly defined distributive leadership practice designed for research. Harris (2002) stated, “while there is a great deal of contemporary interest in schools in difficulty, few research studies have focused exclusively upon leadership practices and approaches” (p. 16). Therefore, further investigation of distributive leadership in an urban school setting could yield a wealth of interesting data.

Conceptual Framework

Leadership should involve more than the principal in order to sustain the organization (Hargreaves, 2007). Harris and Spillane (2008) advocated Hargreaves’s stance, which stated that building capacity from within the school was an essential

element for a school's longevity and sustainability (Harris & Spillane, 2008). Due to the current educational climate that focuses on accountability with student performance, schools must begin from the inside out with effective restructure of the organization (Hargreaves, 2007).

Subsequently, distributions within, between, and outside schools are the focal point for school leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008). Harris and Spillane (2008) suggested capacity building as a theory that provided organizations with benefits for working together toward common goals, which would ultimately result in enhanced sustainability. Hargreaves (2007) argued:

... that leadership requires more than head teachers securing sustainable system-level change...[a] system redesigned is needed to school and achievement. [This] model includes flatter, less hierarchical staff structure, distributed leadership, student leadership, leadership development and succession and participative decision-making processes. (p. 7)

Spillane, Diamond, and Halverson (2004) proposed that leaders' thinking in various situations were the most suitable solution to continued change in school leadership. Fullan (1998) also agreed with Spillane et al. (2004) in reference to change in the form of restructuring, and further defined restructuring as a shift in the formal school structure, organization, and roles.

In order to promote a climate of change within the organization, Fullan (1998) emphasized a collaborative work culture, which could result in a professional learning community. In addition, work culture could improve instructional practice in light of student performance data. In fact, this view characterized the interaction of leaders,

followers, and their situation in the execution of a particular leadership task (Spillane et al., 2004). Stoll (1999) described a school's learning capability as "the power to engage in and sustain continuous learning of teachers and the schools itself for the purpose of enhancing student learning" (p. 506). Therefore, an organization that practiced a collaborative work culture produced an environment of change that included continuous learning, professional learning communities, and effective instructional practice. Furthermore, leaders and followers continued to facilitate sustainable change within the organizational structure.

On the other hand, Social Exchange Theory was designed to encourage a colleague to perform a task they would not ordinarily complete (Harris, 2003). School leaders provided services to individuals and/or groups in exchange for compliance (Harris, 2003). As a result, teacher leaders empowered followers by fulfilling their expectations, which can be a form of school leadership characterized as distributed leadership (Harris, 2003).

In addition, as teacher leaders practiced distributive leadership, both their self-efficacy and participation increased school operations (Harris, 2007). Ultimately, positive change occurred in a school that practiced distributive leadership (Harris, 2007).

Distributive leadership has various dimensions, as Spillane (2006a) noted:

Distributive leadership takes a stance with respect to what is important in understanding school leadership. However, it does not prescribe what we ought to do in order to practice leadership more effectively, to produce certain outcomes. What distributed leadership, like all leadership theory, can do to benefit practice is provide a frame that helps school leaders and others interpret

and reflect on practice as basis for rethinking and revising it. In this way a distributed leadership approached can be a powerful tool for transforming the practice of leadership. (p. 87)

Researchers such as Harris (2007) and Hargreaves (2007) found that capacity building within a school was the direction leaders should follow to promote change. As school principals developed leaders within schools, they established an environment of sustainability and continuous improvement. Subsequently, capacity building is an essential component to the success of these schools. Findings from both studies suggested school principals are not the antidotes to the problems surrounding sustainability in schools, but may be the catalyst toward a solution.

While Spillane et al. (2004) concentrated on leadership practice within schools, Elmore (2002) organized his efforts on teacher and principal relationships. Both theories, however, promoted the concept of relationship building in schools. Accordingly, principals were compelled to construct an environment in schools where individuals become successful. But, how does leadership development impact the total organization? This is the question that was the focus of this study.

Several researchers (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Spillane & Diamond, 2007) have concluded through empirical studies that emphasis solely on the school principal limits the scope of leadership within a school environment. Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor (2003) conducted a study of 100 elementary schools where leadership responsibilities were distributed among several individuals within the organization, not just the principal leader. In addition, their study surveyed formal leaders within the school to ascertain leadership practice distribution.

The Camburn et al. (2003) findings, as well as others (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood, Jantzi, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997; Spillane & Diamond, 2007), strongly suggested leadership practice focused exclusively on the work ethic of positional leaders such as principals or assistant principals most often ignored the complexity of school leadership. Therefore, in researching how leadership development impacts the total organization, this study included positional leaders such as principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders with formal leadership positions.

The current study incorporated a similar type of participant group as selected by Camburn et al. (2003) in their research, which included principal, assistant principal, content area coaches, team liaisons, and department chairs. Leithwood and Jantzi's (2000) study stated, "schools might benefit most from leadership of a small number of easily identified sources" (p. 1014), which is the framework for the current study. Teacher leaders who assumed leadership roles were often distinct from positional leaders; therefore, their interactions were important factors to understanding distributive leadership practice (Leithwood et al., 1997).

Furthermore, much of the research has focused mainly on elementary schools and leadership. In the current research, the study will be centered on leadership in middle schools only. Subsequently, the research will add to the significance of distributive leadership, student achievement, and school culture.

Significance of the Study

The extent of distributive leadership within schools was the primary focus of the current study. In addition, the effects of both student achievement and school culture on distributive leadership within schools were at the cornerstone of this research. The study

intended to articulate a clear distinction of distributive leadership from other leadership terms. Furthermore, the research could provide leaders with guidelines for effective leadership in schools that could improve student achievement and success.

According to Harris (2003):

The research base for distributive leadership is still embryonic. While there is considerable theory, we have relatively little empirical knowledge about how, or to what extent, principals actually use distributed leadership. And evidence that firmly links distributed leadership to student achievement is still far in the future. (p. 262)

The Wallace Foundation study (Wahlstrom et al., 2010) stated that principals were obligated to assume an active role in setting up the leadership distribution structures within the school. According to Wahlstrom et al. (2010):

... the need to be sensitive to the focus and scale of leadership distribution and action as they relate to student learning. At the micro-level of specific goals and leadership tasks, different patterns of distribution across leadership sources and actions often co-exist in a school. The influence of more general concepts and approaches to leadership distribution on student learning outcomes, such as collective leadership (Section 1.1), shared leadership and professional community (Section 2.2) are more easily and empirically measurable than specific forms and arrangements of distributed leadership. (p. 64)

The notion that distributive leadership affects both academic achievement and school culture in schools was unexplored territory. Furthermore, leadership practice in schools can be difficult, if not impossible, to measure. Numerous research studies have analyzed

the relationships between student achievement, school culture, and leadership. In fact, several studies have added significant value to educational research and credence to the exploration of distributive leadership (Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004; Gruenert, 2005; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Stolp, 1994; Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

For example, Gruenert (2005) conducted a study in 81 schools that recognized a direct relationship between culture and student achievement. Both math and language arts results were directly related to teachers working together in a collaborative school culture. Further, Gruenert learned that a collaborative school culture is the most productive environment for positive student learning and achievement.

In addition, Leithwood and Mascall (2008) surveyed approximately 2,500 teachers in 90 schools to explore how collective leadership impacted student achievement. As part of their discussion, Leithwood and Mascall utilized collective leadership terminology interchangeably with distributive leadership in their study.

For the purpose of consistency and clarity, Leithwood and Mascall (2008) defined distributive leadership as follows:

Distributed leadership also enhances opportunities for the organization to benefit from the capacities of more of its members; it permits members to capitalize on the range of their individual strengths; and it develops among organizational members a fuller appreciation of interdependence and how one's behavior effects the organization as a whole. Through increased participation in decision-making, greater commitment to organizational goals and strategies may develop.

Distributed leadership has the potential to increase on-the-job leadership development experiences and reduce the workload for those informal

administrative roles. The increased self-determination arising from distributed leadership may improve members' experience of work. Such leadership allows members to better anticipate and respond to the demands of the organization's environment. (p. 530)

Leithwood and Mascall's (2008) study reported that, "... higher-achieving schools awarded leadership influence to all school members and other stakeholders to a greater degree than that of lower achieving schools" (p. 529). As a result, leadership influence effects within schools and results add significance to this study.

A qualitative study by Brown et al. (2004) explored why there was a difference in student achievement between high performing and low performing schools. In fact, Brown et al.'s research concluded that student achievement was likely to increase in schools where distributive leadership was prevalent. Moreover, teachers who were actively involved in the decision-making process contributed to positive results within the school. The Brown et al. findings indicated that academic emphasis, teacher affiliation, collegial leadership, resource support, and institutional integrity were starkly different in high performing schools as compared to lower performing contemporaries. Therefore, the current research study could augment the current literature that examined the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools and to examine the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Additionally, the study investigated the relationship between distributive

leadership and school culture in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Finally, this study researched if the relationship between distributed leadership, school culture, and student achievement is moderated by Title I status.

Research Questions

This research study was comprised of five questions:

1. Is there a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools?
2. Is there a relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math) in a middle school setting?
3. Is there a relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting?
4. Does Title I status moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math)?
5. Does Title I status moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture?

Null Hypotheses

- H₀1: There is no difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools.
- H₀2: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math) in a middle school setting.
- H₀3: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting.

H₀4: The relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement is not moderated by Title I status.

H₀5: The relationship between distributive leadership and school culture is not moderated by Title I status.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study had several delimitations, which are components of the study controlled by the researcher. Middle schools were the only group of participants selected for the study; both elementary and high schools were excluded. Additionally, the study only surveyed formal leaders in schools; informal leaders without a leadership position were not included. In addition, school customer satisfaction surveys only included answers compiled by instructional staff; parental and student survey information was excluded.

Limitations are elements of the study that are not in the control of the researcher. A critical component of this study included surveys based on participant opinion. The survey investigated school leadership; therefore, bias may exist for respondents to self-report in a positive manner. Further, respondents may not report customer satisfaction information from each school accurately. Finally, school district assessment data were created in a database and inaccuracies from the information may be possible.

Definitions

The following list of definitions gives the reader clarification of terms referenced throughout the paper.

Building capacity: Creating an environment within a system where individuals work collectively to reach organizational goals, thus creating sustainability for the organization (Harris, 2003).

Comprehensive Assessment Test: An assessment designed for students in grades 3-12 that measures their comprehension in reading, math, science, and writing (FLDOE, 2013).

Formal leaders: Principals, assistant principals, coaches, team leaders, team liaisons, and department chairs who have formal leadership designations (Day & Leithwood, 2007).

Non-Title I: Schools that do not have a high percentage of students from low-income families and do not have a Title 1 designation as stated by the federal government program (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2013).

School culture: A customer satisfaction survey in which each participant group (teacher, student, and parent) assigns a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F) to schools based on their overall satisfaction. The number of survey responses by letter grade is converted to a percentage, which was a component of this research study. Percentages by letter grade were compiled for each middle school and calculated. The percentage by letter grade was tabulated and the weighted average calculated to obtain one score from each school. A weight for each grade (A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, and F=1) was created to compute the weighted average for each school.

School letter grades. Annual letter grades of A, B, C, D, F, or I assigned to schools based on their performance on a comprehensive examination. The letter grade is

converted to a percentage in order to measure school culture. (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Student achievement: Reading and mathematics criterion-referenced test utilized to assess student achievement on the knowledge and skills described in the State Core Curriculum.

Title I: Schools designated by the Federal Government for inclusion in the Title 1 program as having a large percentage of students from low-income families receiving free or reduced priced lunch (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2013).

Chapter Summary and Organization of Dissertation

Distributive leadership continues to be a term that permeates conversation in the educational field. The idea that multiple leaders within the organization can make a significant impact on culture and student achievement was prevalent in the research. Therefore, further exploration of distributive leadership and its influence within the school was explored. Chapter 2 includes background information on a variety of leadership styles that were researched and concludes with the background on the early forms of distributive leadership as proposed by Gibb (1954). In recent years, several researchers have taken Gibb's theory and expanded it to include actual activities performed by individuals within the group (Gronn, 2002). Chapter 2 expands this definition with clear insight to the current study. Chapter 3 explains the research method used in this study, which includes sample, data collection, and statistical methods. Chapter 4 contains the findings and analyses of the statistical methods employed in this study. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study and reports on conclusions drawn from the findings and implications for further research.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter 2 begins by reviewing the origins of leadership definitions commonly found in literature and by describing some of the earliest and most innovative studies on distributive leadership as researched by Gibb (1954) and others. The chapter briefly reviews current distributive leadership theories and concludes with a discussion about urban schools, leadership, culture, and student achievement, which builds a foundation for the current research study.

The chapter is organized in this manner to establish a foundation of the evolution of distribution, which led directly to the concept of distributive leadership. An in-depth discussion of current leadership theories is given to formulate criteria for leadership in urban schools. As this review of literature evolves, the purpose of leadership practice as related to leadership theory will be made explicit in terms of its relationship to the proposed research.

Leadership Defined

Over time, leadership theories have ebbed and flowed between a myriad of definitions in order to delineate leadership practice, such as research defining a leader by their shared characteristics or through their leadership actions. A relevant example of this dichotomy was discovered in Landy's (1989) study, which described the personal characteristics a person possessed within an organization. Subsequently, Landy suggested predictability of an emergent leader who distinguishes themselves from others. Therefore, Landy's theory encompassed a multitude of studies and theories that were

dedicated, first and foremost, to defining what a leader did, rather than the personality characteristics of a leader. For example, in 1967, Fiedler attempted to define leadership in the following manner: “A leader is the individual in the group given the task of directing and coordinating task-relevant group activities, or who, in the absence of a designated leader, carries the primary responsibility for performing these function in the group” (p. 8). However, over time, it has become evident that leadership was much more complicated than identifying how a leader takes action or why that action was taken.

While leadership happens within any group of people, formally and informally, and within all organizations, large and small, the following sections of this chapter are dedicated to leadership practice in action. In addition, distributive leadership theory as it is viewed in the educational arena is reviewed. To begin, early theories of leadership are discussed in detail, followed by an in depth discussion in subsections on teacher leadership, both transformational and transactional, which are prominent theories in the educational field. Finally, shared leadership theories are introduced.

Early Theories of Distributive Leadership

Gibb (1954) began looking at the concept of multiple individuals impacting the entire organization. Prior to that, however, his emphasis was mainly on the individual within the group and not necessarily their impact on the organization. Groups were defined as “the interaction of its members, in such a way that each unit is changed by its group membership and each would be likely to undergo a change as a result of changes in the group” (Gibb, 1954, p. 878). His philosophy examined an individual’s dependence on others within the group. According to Gibb (1954), a group would not be considered functional without the interaction and interdependence of others. Gibb (1968) expounded

this theory as he defined group interaction within an organization. His definition stated, “a group in which the members are differentiated as to their responsibilities for the task of approaching the group goal is commonly called an organization” (Gibb, 1954, p. 880). Gibb’s (1954) definition advanced the emergence of leadership within the group.

Additionally, a leader can be defined as a person who has influence over others within the group (Gibb, 1954). An earlier empirical study conducted by Gibb (1950) confirmed a relationship between the leader and his/her influence within the group. However, the study mainly emphasized positional leadership, rather than leadership of the individuals represented within the group. Gibb (1950) attempted to define leadership in the following manner:

Leadership is probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions, which must be carried out by the group. This concept of “distributed leadership” is an important one. If there are leadership functions, which must be performed in any group, and if these functions may be “focused” or “distributed,” then leaders will be identifiable both in terms of the frequency and in terms of the multiplicity or pattern of functions performed. (p. 884)

As a result, several researchers expanded their research to include not only the individual but also the leadership practiced by each individual, which confirmed Gibb’s theory.

Kerr and Jermier (1978) argued there was ample (statistical) evidence in several studies to suggest that leaders failed to have a significant impact on organizational outcomes. Kerr and Jermier illustrated how a number of results were not automatically related to leadership. It was determined, however, that certain individual, task, and organizational variables act as “substitutes for leadership, negating the hierarchical

superior's ability to exert either positive or negative influence over subordinate attitudes and effectiveness" (Kerr & Jermier, 1978, p. 386). Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) suggested that democratic leaders assign a greater degree of responsibility in decision-making to the followers within the organization. Furthermore, they developed a leadership continuum model that afforded managers a range of choices for involvement, presented criteria for involvement and delegation, and emphasized employee development and empowerment (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973).

From the mid-1980s onward, school leadership research shifted in a different direction than in previous years. Camburn et al. (2003) argued that with the rise of educational reforms, such as site-based management, career ladders for teachers, and mentor teacher programs, research began to change. The primary emphasis was not only the leadership activities of school principals, but also the leadership exercised by teachers, external change agents, and others. The conceptual model guiding research on school leadership (Camburn et al., 2003) came to the forefront with what Rowan (1990) called "network" (p. 355) patterns of control, where leadership activities were distributed across multiple roles and role incumbents. Out of this research emerged a new vision of effective leadership in which multiple school members exercised powerful instruction (Camburn et al., 2003).

As Gibb (1954) and other researchers (Camburn et al., 2003; Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973) expanded leadership theories, each new theory elucidated previous ones and created a foundation for the development of distributive leadership. The following sub-sections discuss various forms of leadership theories that have shaped the educational platform. In the case of transformational and transactional leadership, both theories are

saturated with an emphasis on followers within the organization and their continuous development.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Transformational leaders attract followers by creating an environment that displays a clear and focused vision, self-confidence, and clearly calculated decisions that are in the best interest of the organization (Bass, 1985). In his book, *Leadership*, Burns (1978) stated:

... the transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But, beyond that, the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower.” (p. 4)

Simply stated, leaders’ responsibilities are to motivate followers to a higher level of engagement within the organization.

On the other hand, Bass (1985) noted, “the transactional leader pursues a cost-benefit, economic exchange to meet subordinates’ current material and psychic needs in return for contracted services rendered by the subordinate” (p. 14). Transactional leadership exchanged between the leader and follower may not be equal based on the type of relationship shared within the organization. A low quality exchange is based primarily on “goods or rights,” while a high quality exchanged is determined by shared personal relationships between leaders and followers (Landy, 1989, p. 101). Each form of leadership exchange serves a purpose and some may be more prevalent within the organization than others. Transactional leadership provides gratification for the follower as a result of the exchange with the leader (Bass, 1985).

Bass (1985) contended that Burns's notion of hierarchy was not a necessary component of the transformational process. From this perspective, leaders stimulate followers to become more self-motivated, self-reliant, and proficient in their current position (Bass, 1985). Hence, the notion of inner-stimulation according to Maslow's hierarchy may not be needed in the transformational process. Both forms of leadership practice seek to develop environments where each person (leader and follower) can flourish to their full potential.

Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) applied constructive personality theory to both transactional and transformational leadership. Unlike Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), these researchers theorized personality traits are a factor in determining what type of leader emerges. As a result, leaders can be positioned in a leadership capacity that aligns to their personality.

Leithwood, Jantzi, and Dart's (1991) research studies reviewed the impact of transformational leadership as a direct result of new initiatives at both the state and local levels. In their research, several concepts such as sustainable school culture, promotion of professional development, and clear school improvement goals emerged (Leithwood et al., 1991). Further studies have suggested that when organizational change occurs, transformational leaders are more effective in leading change (Boga & Ensari, 2009).

Transformational leaders promote an atmosphere where followers can flourish and add value to organizational pursuits and vision. Unlike transactional leadership, most interactions are based more on relationships and less on organizational goals. However, both forms of leadership allow individuals within the organization to perform leadership responsibilities; hence, a new formula for teacher leadership was established.

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership gained momentum in education during the last two decades. According to Smylie (1985), “teacher leadership has become a defining characteristic of recent efforts to professionalize teaching and reform schools” (p. 3). In an era of accountability, the demand for teacher leadership within schools has become more evident than ever before. York-Barr and Duke (2004) reported “... the concept of teacher leadership suggests that teachers rightly and importantly hold a central position in the ways schools operate and in the core functions of teaching and learning” (p. 255). Teacher professionalism ideologies began to emerge and new initiatives were prevalent in the 1980s (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Reform efforts at that time were comprised of several components: to attract and retain quality teachers, to hire high functioning individuals for the classroom, and to increase teachers’ involvement in the decision making process (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Teacher leadership literature was far more advanced than other types of leadership prevalent in education forums (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The rationale for the progression of teacher leadership was grouped in several categories: “...benefits of employee participation; expertise about teaching and learning; acknowledgment, opportunities, and rewards for accomplished teachers; and benefits to students” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 258). Teachers who assume more responsibilities in the school are in a position to move toward a more democratic school environment (Barth, 2001). Ultimately, teacher leaders are the cornerstones in any school environment.

Subsequently, a school environment that values communication and cohesiveness within schools, advocates for teacher leaders in the organization (Hart, 1995). As a

result, teacher leaders promote a more democratic environment where individuals within the organization can learn and provide support (Hart, 1995). In fact, professional development is prominent in environments where school communities integrate teacher leadership (Hart, 1995). Barth (2001) summarized the significance of teacher leaders:

In sum, all teachers have leadership potential and can benefit from exercising that potential. Teachers become more active learners in an environment where they are leaders. When teachers lead, principals extend their own capacity, students enjoy a democratic community of learners, and schools benefit from better decisions. This is why the promise of widespread teacher leadership in our schools is so compelling for principals, students, and teachers and for the success of schools themselves. (p. 445)

Therefore, principals could extend leadership responsibilities to teacher leaders and increase the potential for school improvement. Accordingly, teachers and principals work collaboratively to further organize shared leadership within the school environment.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership, like so many other forms of leadership practice, fails to offer a concrete definition for schools (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). The manner in which principals share leadership practice is considered ambiguous and “how principals share leadership formally and informally is not well understood” (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, p. 461). To that end, a definite definition of shared leadership would be a critical component to researching distributive leadership and understanding its application in and impact on schools. In fact, the multiple definitions of shared leadership have conflated rather than articulated the leadership literature base.

Marks and Printy (2003) defined shared leadership as principals and teachers cooperating with each other on “curriculum, instruction and assessment” (p. 371). Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) defined shared leadership as “... an emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members” (p. 1218). Both definitions seek to delineate the importance of the leader and teacher working collaboratively within the organization.

Ensley, Hmieleski, and Pearce (2006) agreed with Carson et al.’s (2007) analysis of shared leadership or teaming in that it should involve more than one individual in the decision-making process. Their conclusions found leadership of this nature is drawn from the collective team and not one individual person. Further, Pearce and Sims (2002) defined the term “distributive influence” (p. 172) to describe shared leadership within a team. Teams working collectively and not individually were concepts identified by Yukl (1989) in a research study. Researchers have taken the concept a step further by analyzing shared leadership and school effectiveness (Pearce & Sims, 2002). Anthony (1981) explained:

Shared leadership is more than giving teachers a voice in hiring, budgeting, and curriculum decisions. It’s more than a system of organization called curriculum councils. It means believing that conflicts, differences of opinion, and varying teaching strategies and philosophies are healthy. It means creating and being able to live with diversity. (p. 487)

Shared leadership between teachers and principals potentially involves more than one individual in both the decision-making and curriculum development process working

collectively on initiatives that benefit the entire school. In addition, teachers and principals work collaboratively within the organization toward a common objective.

Summary

In conclusion, transformational, transactional, teacher, and shared leadership theories identify the follower in the organization working with the leader and/or principal. Each theory was discussed in detail, recounting how the follower should have involvement in the decision-making process, in curriculum decisions, and in formulating objectives. It is important to note the follower has a vested interest in organizational outcomes, although the involvement between the leader and follower may be limited at times. Therefore, distributive leadership theories have been constructed to expand these relationships.

Current Theories of Distributive Leadership

Gibb's (1954) leadership theory created a foundation for researchers to formulate additional theories. His exploration of groups and their interactions expanded the idea of previous researchers who purported that only one person could make an impact on the organization. Current distributive leadership researchers (Elmore, 2000; Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2005) expanded Gibb's theory and began to examine groups, their activities, and/or the tasks they perform, which created a new theory of leadership. The following sub-sections discuss each researcher's theory in detail.

Elmore: Distributive Leadership and Standards-Based Reform

Standards-based reform has brought an accountability component to leadership, which has now directed schools to be accountable for student learning and their outcomes. Because of this, leaders within schools began to concentrate less on external

obstacles and more on internal capabilities and structures (Murphy, Hallinger, Peterson, & Lotto, 1987). Consequently, a worldwide reform effort in professional development for teachers and improved instructional practice has become prominent (Elmore, 2000). To add value to this study, it is important to investigate researchers who have explored standards-based reform and the relationship with distributive leadership. Richard Elmore (2000) investigated leadership impact on student learning with regard to loose coupling. In addition, Elmore reviewed the connection to standard-based reform development, which led to the formulation of distributive leadership theory.

Loose coupling. “Loose coupling is a term that emerged in the 1960s to explain a theory of leadership that was prevalent in schools” (Elmore, 2000, p. 5). Researchers sought to find an explanation as to how educational structures functioned without interaction between administrators, teachers, and support personnel. In essence, an environment was created not conducive to promoting positive student outcomes (Elmore, 2000). As Weick (1976) explained:

By loose coupling, the author intends to convey the image that coupled events are responsive, but that each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness. Thus, in the case of an educational organization, it may be the case that the counselor’s office is loosely coupled to the principal’s office. The image is that the principal and the counselor are somehow attached, but that each retains some identity and separateness and that their attachment may be circumscribed, infrequent, weak in its mutual affects, unimportant, and/or slow to respond. (p. 3)

Therefore, leaders within the school were disconnected from aspects of teaching and learning, which contributed to a “buffering” effect in schools (Elmore, 2000, p. 6). Also, “... administration in education, then, has come to mean not the management of instruction but the management of the structures and processes around instruction” (Elmore, 2000, p. 6). In other words, administrators were protecting teachers from outside influences that may disrupt their educational practice in the classroom. Consequently, leaders became defragmented from teaching and learning, perpetuating a continuous disconnect between teachers and leaders.

As well, structures and practices were created that did not produce a positive effect on student learning (Elmore, 2000). These practices included lack of communication between leaders, support, and teachers; clear organizational goals not being established; and finally, individuals working in isolation from each other who were unaware of outcomes (Elmore, 2000). Furthermore, instructional strategies developed from loose coupling practices had limited success in the classroom (Elmore, 2000). Subsequently, a reform movement designed with a broader effect on school improvement emanated to the forefront, namely standard-based reform.

Standard-based reform. In the early 1970s and 1980s, standard-based reform efforts were a part of the educational discourse (Ravitch, 1995). Students were not performing well on tests, which led to the reported indictment of the education system (Ravitch, 1995). Also, students were unable to perform well on math and science international assessments, which outraged the public (Ravitch, 1995). Third, several political and education officials began to acknowledge that schools should not primarily observe service, but product, which was student performance and outcome (Ravitch,

1995). Finally, the achievement gap between racial sub-groups had continuously grown larger, further disenfranchising many minority students (Ravitch, 1995). Therefore, the foundation for a reform movement in education was discovered with a new set of standards.

However, standards are not considered productive unless the effectiveness is measured (Ravitch, 1995). Content, performance, and school delivery standards are all interrelated and non-existent without each other (Ravitch, 1995). Additionally, Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan (2008) agreed that “movement reflects a confluence of policy trends—in particular, a growing emphasis on using tests to monitor progress and hold schools accountable...” (p. 2). With standards-based reform established, movements began with the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001, which added an accountability component to all public schools and students in the education system with implementation of standard-based reform. NCLB stated:

The NCLB Act, which reauthorizes the ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Act], incorporates the principles and strategies proposed by President Bush. These include increased accountability for states, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for states and local educational agencies (LEAs) in the use of federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children. (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)

Due to this legislation, more rigorous standards were being implemented and monitored by each state. Additionally, students were tested annually in reading, math, science, and writing to determine proficiency level. States were responsible for

monitoring progress by ethnic sub-groups and disability to ensure that students were making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward statewide proficiency standards (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).

Researchers have found that “perhaps the most compelling argument for organizing educational reform around standards is the shift in emphasis from what schools put into the process of schooling to what we get out of schools, that is, a shift from educational inputs to educational outputs” (Marzano & Kendall, 1997, p. 9). Consequently, students should be able to demonstrate academic improvement and improve proficiency over time. If this does not occur, schools then need to formulate an action plan in order to make necessary adjustments to ensure student success.

Many reform efforts perpetuated some conflict within the public education system. First, standard-based reform asserted that schools were responsible for what students learn as well as the educational process (Elmore, 2000). Second, reform efforts concentrated on students’ ability and inability to understand the same academic standards taught within the classroom (Elmore, 2000). Finally, individual schools were accountable for academic progress rather than school districts bearing the entire burden; this localized the responsibility (Elmore, 2000). As a result, “these conflicts between the logic of standards-based reform and the logic of the traditional institutional structure of public education challenge both public schools and the people who work in them” (Elmore, 2000, p. 10). According to Elmore (2000):

The skills and knowledge that matter in leadership, under this definition, are those that can be connected to, or lead directly to, the improvement of instruction and

student performance. Standards based reform forces this question. It makes leadership instrumental to improvement. (p. 14)

Essentially, leadership in this capacity prepares a foundation for professional development and distribution of responsibilities. Tucker and Coddling (1998) agreed the principal must provide a leadership team of individuals within the school who share responsibilities in order to execute goals established by the school. Furthermore, Elmore (2000) examined leadership theory effect on school improvement.

Elmore and distributive leadership. The new theory of leadership requires the leader to relinquish some control over the daily aspects of school improvement since it is not possible for a leader to control all aspects of the school improvement process (Elmore, 2000). Elmore (2000) reported:

Control implies that the controller knows exactly what the controlee (if you will) should do, whereas guidance and direction imply some degree of shared expertise and some degree of difference in the level and kind of expertise among individuals. It is this problem of the distribution of knowledge required for large-scale improvement that creates the imperative for the development of models of distributed leadership. (p. 15)

Shared responsibility and knowledge began to modulate individual behavior with the school environment amongst individuals (Elmore, 2000). Elmore (2000) believed that in any organization individuals acquire skills and knowledge that are related to their innate abilities. It is these known abilities that formulated Elmore's theory of distributive leadership. In essence, distributive leadership was described as individuals utilizing their specialized roles to enhance the organization. Elmore (2000) explained:

Distributed leadership, then, means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. It is the “glue” of a common task or goal ...that keeps distributed leadership from becoming another version of loose coupling. (p. 15)

Elmore (2000) considered everyone in the organization responsible for the leadership and management of the organization. In fact, Elmore (2000) proposed that administrators were primarily responsible for enhancing the skills and knowledge of individuals within the organization as well as for setting clear expectations and guidelines for the usage of prescribed skills and knowledge. Further, Elmore (2000) reported the development of a cohesive relationship with each other would increase productivity within the organization. In other words, each individual would be responsible for contributing to the entire organization.

To that end, Elmore (2000) developed a new model of distributive leadership that consists of five key principles that have a two-fold purpose. The model provides a prescription for leaders with various abilities to follow, which can lead to large-scale improvement in the organization. Second, this model describes how leaders in different roles and positions distribute their responsibilities. In that, this model shows a formula for distribution based on Elmore’s five key principles, which include: (a) the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance regardless of role, (b) instructional improvements require continuous learning, (c) learning requires modeling, (d) the roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement and not from the formal dictates of the institution, and (e) the exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity (Elmore, 2000).

The first principle notes, “The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role” (Elmore, 2000, p. 20); this principle dispels several leadership theories, including managerial, political, and cultural constructs. As a result, each theory lacks the accountability directly related to school improvement of instructional practices. In terms of the relationship between the work of the leader and the organizational purpose, Elmore (2000) considered this a missing component of the aforementioned leadership theories. Elmore stated:

If we put improvement of practice and performance at the center of our theory of leadership, then these other theories of leadership role must shift to theories about the possible skills and knowledge that leaders would have to possess to operate as agents of large scale instructional improvement. (p. 20)

The second principle proposes that “Instructional improvement requires continuous learning” (Elmore, 2000, p. 20). Further, “the existing institutional structure of public education does one thing very well: It creates a normative environment that values idiosyncratic, isolated, and individualistic learning at the expense of collective learning” (Elmore, 2000, p. 20). Leadership environments must promote learning not just for the individual, but for the collective body as well. In this setting, the acquirement of new knowledge and skills should be embedded in the culture.

Elmore’s third principle emphasizes that “learning requires modeling” (Elmore, 2000, p. 21), which promotes learning and modeling within the organization. It is important to note that leaders must model values and behaviors expected within the organization. Consequently, leaders would be subjected to the same criticism with which others were measured.

The fourth principle states, “The roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement, not from the formal dictates of the institution” (Elmore, 2000, p. 21). This principle targets the roles and activities of leadership expertise required for learning and improvement. Therefore, “this kind of cooperation requires understanding that learning grows out of differences in expertise rather than differences in formal authority” (Elmore, 2000, p. 21). In other words, leaders should possess the required knowledge and skills to lead individuals within an organization; otherwise, the capacity of the leader would be ineffective in promoting change.

Elmore’s final principle, “The exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity,” (Elmore, 2000, p. 21) discusses the reciprocity of each characteristic. Specifically, leaders are ultimately accountable for assuring that individuals within the organization have the capacity to accomplish any assignment. The leader’s responsibility is to create an opportunity for others to acquire knowledge and skills, which benefits both the leader and each person within the organization.

Elmore’s (2000) theory investigated leaders’ formulation of adequate leadership skills that supported learning and expanded expertise. Ultimately, leadership of this type could design a culture that promotes large-scale improvement. Likewise, leaders are accountable for the operations of the organization and building capacity within. According to Elmore (2000), “Distributed leadership ... derives from the fact that large scale improvement requires concerted action among people with different areas of expertise and a mutual respect that stems from an appreciation of the knowledge and skill requirements of different roles” (p. 36). While Elmore (2000) believed distributive

leadership, professional development, and learning are critical elements to leadership practice, Spillane (2006a) added that interactions between leaders and followers are an intricate component of distributive leadership.

Spillane: Distributive Leadership Perspective

James Spillane has been a leading researcher in the study of distributive leadership theory for several years. In a four-year study longitudinal study, entitled *The Distributive Leadership Study* (Northwestern University, 2010), Spillane, along with fellow researchers Diamond and Halverson, identified tasks, actions, and interactions of leadership that operate together throughout the daily routines in schools (Spillane, Diamond, & Halverson, 2001). This ideology builds from the work of Katz and Kahn (1966), who began to examine other individuals working within the organization to gain an understanding of leadership. Both Lave (1988), who described human activity theory, and Vygotsky (1978), who discussed social and culture influences, also provided a framework for Spillane's et al. (2001) development of leadership practice. From this perspective, Spillane et al. (2004) explained:

Leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal, or indeed any other individual or group of leaders, knows and does. Rather, it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks. We concluded by considering what our distributed leadership perspective might entail for research on school leadership and innovation. (p. 5)

The authors contended that understanding the “how” and “why” of leadership is an intricate part of understanding distributive leadership practice and without it, the theory would be incomplete. For instance, to examine only positional leaders such as principals

or teacher leaders to study leadership limits the scope of practice (Spillane et al., 2001). From this perspective, leadership practice has a narrow viewpoint of leaders' knowledge and performance. Spillane et al. (2001) proposed:

By taking leadership practice in a school as the unit of analysis, rather than as individual leaders, our distributed theory of leadership focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among both positional and informal leaders. (p. 24)

School leadership practice focuses on leaders' thinking and action in situations (Spillane et al., 2004). The appropriate unit of analysis is not the leaders themselves, but their leadership activities (Spillane et al., 2004). Moreover, leaders begin to expand not only their thinking, but also instructional practices within the organization (Smylie & Denny, 1990). This view of leadership seeks to expand the leadership practice theory beyond the individual position to actual leadership activities as expressed by Spillane et al. (2004):

A distributive perspective on human activity presses us to move beyond individual activity to consider how the material, cultural, and social situation enables, informs, and constrains human activity. In this view, activity is a product of what the actor knows, believes, and does in and through particular social, cultural, and material contexts. (p. 10)

Leadership activity involves three essential elements: leaders, followers, and situation (Spillane et al., 2004). As described in Figure 2, the interaction between each component is continuous and leadership practice constitutes the activity performed by each individual.

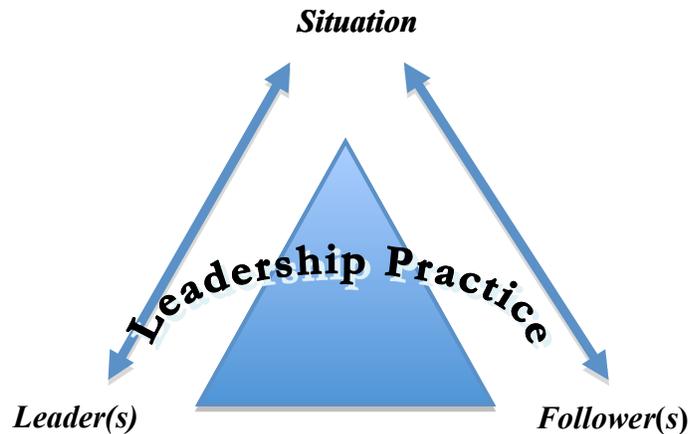


Figure 2. Constituting elements of leadership practice.

Four components of distributive leadership. Spillane et al.'s (2004)

perspective was developed from four central ideas: leadership task and function, task-enactment, social distribution of task-enactment, and situational distribution of task-enactment. In fact, leadership from this perspective is not simply a function of what a school principal, or indeed any other individual or group of leader, knows and does (Spillane et al., 2004). From this viewpoint, it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks (Spillane et al., 2004).

The first component, leadership and task function, separates leadership practice into specific tasks. These tasks include developing a school vision, conducting disciplinary meetings with students and parents, and monitoring curriculum instruction in a classroom. Alternatively, “these leadership functions provide a framework for analyzing leadership tasks and exploring their relation to instructional innovation. Focusing on macro-functions alone, however, will not enable us to understand practice...” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 14).

As Spillane explained, the second component of enacting leadership tasks moves beyond mere identification and analysis to their actual enactment. Moreover, “there is often a difference between what people do and what they say about what they do, a distinction that can be maintained without duplicitous intent” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 14). In order to analyze leadership practice, understanding how school leaders perform daily tasks is critical. For example, “to gain insight on practice, we need to understand a task as it unfolds from the perspective and through the ‘theories-in-use’ of the practitioner” (Spillane et. al., 2004, p. 15).

The third component focuses on social distribution of task enactment. From this perspective, leadership practice is distributed among positional and informal leaders as well as among the followers within the organization. Specifically, “understanding how leaders in a school work together, as well as separately, to execute leadership functions and task is an important aspect of the social distribution of leadership practice” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 16). Spillane noted that social distribution of task reaches far beyond just labor division or duplication and moves toward “the enactment of leadership tasks as potentially stretched over the practice of two or more leaders and followers” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 16).

The final component by Spillane et al. (2004) involves situational distribution of leadership practice, which describes viewing practice as an interwoven web of actors, artifacts, and situation. Further, Spillane et al. (2004) suggested, “... activity theory and distributed cognition, our distributed perspective argues that situation is not external to leadership activity, but is one of its core constituting elements” (p. 20). Spillane et al.’s (2004) theory lends itself to expanding leadership practice beyond the normal structures

that limit the introduction of new tools, which may impact the leadership activity within the organization.

Situational distribution of leadership practice distinguishes itself from other theories of leadership for several reasons. First, “leadership activity is, to varying degrees, distributed or stretched over various facets of the situation, including tools, language, and organizational structure. Situation is part of practice and works to influence leadership activity from within the activity” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 21). Second, a situation may enable or constrain leadership activity, while the impeding activity may begin to transform the situation over a period of time. Finally, situational distribution deals mainly with the day-to-day leadership activities, not just general types of leadership or organizational roles. Eventually, leadership practice that embodies a broader perspective no longer limits organizational capacity.

Distributive leadership can be identified in three different types:

1. Collaborated distribution: characterizes leadership practice that is stretched over the work of two or more leaders who work together in place and time to execute the same leadership routine,
2. Collective distribution: characterizes practice that is stretched over the work of two or more leaders who enact a leadership routine by working separately but interdependently, and
3. Coordinated distribution: refers to leadership routines that involve activities that have to be performed in a particular sequence (Spillane, 2006a, p. 60).

Distributive leadership, a relatively new term and considered effective in low socio-economic schools, needs further exploration. Distribution of responsibilities for

leadership functions differs among school type; moreover, Spillane (2006a) referred to public, private, charter, and magnet schools in his study. Other types of factors such as students socio-economic status were not researched or reviewed by Spillane (2006a), providing a platform for future research on this topic.

Gronn: Distributive Leadership and Activity Theory

Distributive leadership in Spillane et al.'s (2001) research reviewed leaders and followers; but Peter Gronn (2002), a fellow researcher, formulated a more constrictive view. In earlier research by Kerr and Jermier (1978), leadership had little effect on outcomes, while task and routines were significant factors in success. Research by Fondas and Stewart (1994) explored the notion of examining various interactions between managers and their employees. They stated:

This will contribute to articulating a more viable theoretical framework and facilitate empirical observation of a manager's network of interactions and contacts with others. Because so many aspects of managerial work are accomplished by engaging in contact with others – for example, communicating a decision, appraising an employee's performance, influencing a peer, motivating a subordinate - a large part of what makes behavior in a job 'managerial' can likely be understood by examining these contacts, their expectations of and relationship with the focal manager. (p. 97)

Subsequently, Gronn (2000) proposed a view of leadership that was embedded in activity. Gronn defined activity in the following manner:

Activity is the bridge between agency and structure. The structural patterns taken by various social or organizational formations are activity-dependent, and an

analysis of the activities engaged in by particular sets of time-, place-, space- and culture-bound sets of agents permits an understanding of agential–structural relations through the process of structuring. (p. 318)

According to Gronn (2000), activity theory has several advantages above other types of leadership. First, it encompasses many of the gaps that prior leadership theories have missed. Second, it provides for a more comprehensive analysis of organizational work. Last, activity theory develops as a result of the leadership practice. Gronn (2000) states, “...an understanding of the contribution of leadership to learning in the workplace is facilitated by the developmental and emergent approach to practice implicit in the activity system model” (p. 327). Further, it presents a varied approach to leadership that has practical implications. Gronn (2000) indicated, “activity is a vehicle for representing human behavior in and engagement with material (i.e., natural and social) world” (p. 327).

Figure 3 shows the interaction between subject (individual or collective), object (work), and instruments (artifacts or tools) within activity theory. In terms of distributive leadership, Figure 3 describes how the subject impacts the entire system and forms an expansion of labor throughout. However, it does not explain one activity, but describes a model for comprehensive evaluation of a particular activity.

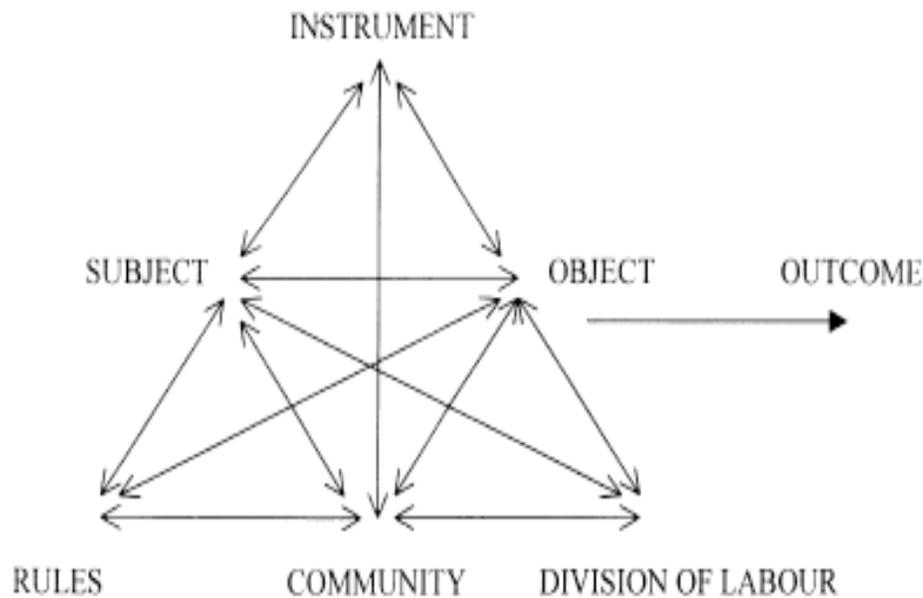


Figure 3. The meditational structure of an activity system. Adapted from “Expansive Visibilization of Work: An Activity-Theoretical Perspective,” by Engeström, Y. (1999), *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 8(1), 66.

Gronn (2002) identified difficulties in leader-follower and leadership-followership relationships in that a prescription for division of labor was discussed, not a description. This method causes a problem for researchers, particularly when actual divisions of labor are constantly changing in the evolution of the organization. Gronn’s description of distributive leadership encompassed a vivid definition.

According to Gronn (2002), leadership can be defined as “one individual, an aggregate of separate individuals, sets of small numbers of individuals acting in concert or large plural-member organizational units” (p. 428). Specifically, Gronn examined how individuals interact with each other in their environment. He proposed that people give freely of themselves within the group to accomplish a task. Further, Bryman (1996) argued that leadership should be shared within the organization.

Division of labor includes the “totality of the tasks” (Gronn, 2002, p. 428), in that all workers have the knowledge capability and understanding to accomplish the task set before them, which is viewed as the technical form of labor distribution.

“Changes in the division of labor occur with the addition of new tasks and new task requirements, and with the adoption of new technologies” (Gronn, 2002, p. 428). However, division of labor comprises a social element as presented by Gronn (2002). Furthermore, the social component perpetuates a pattern of decision-making based on the emotionality of the situation. Moreover, “this is evident when individuals and groups decide, on the basis of their values and interests, the preferred arrangement or configuration of tasks” (Gronn, 2002, p. 428). Both social and technical labor forms are important resources to organizational power.

Gronn’s emphasis on leadership and influence. In the 1970s and 1980s, a social and political debate began about the nature of power and distribution. Gronn (2000) explained, “the argument mainly concerned whether power was concentrated in one center, -spelling? and exercised by an individual or by an elite, dispersed, or decentered among a plurality of elite groups” (p. 329). The notion of power and influence not being overt, but dispersed, has implications for organizational leadership.

Leadership expressed covertly and not openly can influence the behavior of individuals within the organization. Gronn (2000) stated:

First of all, if leadership is an instance of influence, then, like influence, it need not be expressed in ways that are obvious to the naked eye.... In circumstances of either the imagined or embodied presence of the members of an organization, suppose that one party surmises how another might respond were she or he to

initiate an action. The particular supposition may be based on previous direct experience or on the reputation of the other party. Anticipating a possible negative outcome, perhaps, the first party refrains from doing anything. Ostensibly, then, while no action has occurred, the second party (unbeknownst to her/or him, or anyone else) has been influential. (p. 330)

Organizational influence can be reciprocal in many instances, according to Gronn (2000), who believes that because of the dualism between specialization and interdependence, division of labor creates an environment of influence within the organization. Further, "... tasks are broken down into their detailed specialist components, which are then performed by different individuals. But this fragmentation of effort leaves each worker dependent on others for the completion of an overall task" (p. 330). From Gronn's viewpoint, influence is a means of integrating task to collectively achieve goals generated by the organization.

Summary of Research on Distributive Leadership Theory

In summary, Gibb (1954) began the conversation about individual groups impacting the organization. However, his research failed to explore leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2004), activity theory (Elmore, 2000), or the effect of influence within the organization (Gronn, 2002). In addition, standards-based reform within schools introduced an accountability element that was not widespread in the organization of schools (Elmore, 2000). Schools were responsible for student education and maintaining quality instruction as a result of standards-based reform. Also, schools started to identify the reasons why some student achievement levels were higher than others. Accordingly, schools monitored academic progress as a result of standards-based reform efforts.

Subsequently, the reform movement led researchers to examine leadership differently; hence, development of distributive leadership theory.

Moreover, distributive leadership, according to Elmore (2000), must have a clear path, persistent professional development, focused activities, and capacity building in the organization. However, according to Spillane et al. (2004), distributive leadership differs from Elmore's (2000) theory, which mainly discussed leadership development. In contrast, Spillane et al. (2004) emphasized the how and why of leadership practice. In fact, Spillane et al. argued that if both concepts were missing from the distributive leadership equation, the theory would be deficient. Leadership activities and task both expanded distributive theory beyond the individual in the organization and examined the actual activities performed by the leader, the situation, and followers.

Subsequently, Spillane et al. (2004) described several components of distributive leadership that expanded the theory even further. For instance, Spillane et al.'s theory has both a social and situational component that enhances distribution, which removes the attention from individuals to the actual activities performed. Spillane et al.'s and Elmore's (2000) theories regarding distributive leadership primarily examined leaders and followers; however, Gronn (2002) focused on distribution and activity.

Activity theory views leadership as the relationship between the individual and surrounding environment. Leaders' relationships with followers were a difficult concept for Gronn (2002) to grapple, in that a clear division of labor definition was not described, as with Elmore's (2000) theory. Gronn (2002) defined division of labor as groups working collectively on a task with each person having the capacity and knowledge to complete the task.

Each theorist's perspective continued to develop ideology that explored the organizational structure. In that vein, distributive leadership theory broadened leadership practice to include more collaboration and interaction between leaders and followers. The new distributive leadership sought to expand leadership beyond the singular to the plural.

As theorists began to clearly define distributive leadership, the effectiveness within an urban school setting eluded distributive leadership in urban schools. Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson, and Ylimaki (2007) argued that pursuing leadership in urban schools was important for several reasons: "Increased demands to hold schools accountable for measurable student achievement; increased environmental and organizational complexity; and a growing perception that high-quality school leadership is in short supply" (p. 292), which added credence for school accountability. Therefore, Jacobson et al. provided a viable argument to expand the conversation regarding leadership in urban schools.

Leadership in Urban Schools

Researching leadership in urban school settings produced a firestorm since the era of accountability as a result failing schools (Harris & Chapman, 2002). In the subsequent sub-sections, school efforts to solve the issues prominent in high poverty schools are discussed, followed by current research studies that analyzed principal leadership practice and student outcome in the context of urban schools. Finally, effective school practices for successful school leadership are reviewed (Carter, 2000; Dantley, 1990; Eisinger & Hula, 2004; Fullan, 1998; Gooden, 2002; Harris & Chapman, 2002; Thomson & Harris, 2004).

Thomson and Harris (2004) argued that leading schools in high-poverty communities are “marked by high degrees of innovation, strong staff cultures of support and enquiry-based collaboration, with opportunities for students, teachers and parents to develop strong leadership roles” (p. 4). In terms of the work involved, successful school leadership in high-poverty communities is a shared responsibility (Carter, 2000). In an effort to approach the problem in urban schools from a different perspective, some districts have hired superintendents who do not have educational backgrounds (Eisinger & Hula, 2004). However, not all high-poverty schools have the capacity to support leadership in this form (Harris & Chapman, 2002). Additionally, school leadership is about developing the best conditions for learning (Fullan, 1998).

Solutions to the prevalent issues prominent in urban schools have been researched extensively, especially the impact of school leadership. Dantley (1990) proposed critical leadership as a solution to the problems that permeate urban schools across the country. Gooden (2002) defined critical leadership as follows:

Critical leadership focuses on a critical awareness on the part of the instructional leader. It requires the administrator to be reflective and to critically examine his or her expertise and/or own experiences. Critical leadership requires questioning the way things are and setting new precedents where necessary for the sake of advancing organizational knowledge. (p. 140)

Furthermore, “... many urban school teachers and administrators have not subscribed to this notion of stewardship, and they are unaware or unconvinced of using critical leadership as a guide to their pedagogy or leadership” (Gooden, 2002, p. 140).

For this reason, research in urban schools and its relationship to leadership has found its way to the educational forefront.

Research in Urban Schools

Early research studies conducted in low socio-economic schools, often those associated with urban settings, determined students lacked academic success. As a consequence, the schools they attended were ineffective with maintaining student success (Coleman, 1966). However, later research (Weber, 1971) was conducted to dispel the original findings. Research proved that strong instructional leadership facilitated by the principal enhanced school effectiveness in urban schools (Weber, 1971).

In the 1980s, research by Jackson, Logsdon, and Taylor (1983) analyzed principal leadership behaviors in urban schools settings. Leadership style and support emerged as one prominent factor in effective urban schools. Principals were viewed as more supportive and assertive in effective schools, while ineffective principals appeared libertarian in their leadership style (Jackson et al., 1983). Principals viewed as effective leaders were highly structured in their leadership style (Jackson et al., 1983).

Furthermore, a research study by Beachum, Dentith, McCray, and Boyle (2008) analyzed leadership in urban school settings. The study concluded leaders are responsible for maintaining a strong academic tone throughout the entire school. As Mulford et al. (2007) also discovered in their research conducted in Australia, a major contributor to school success was “high-performing leadership” (p. 16), human resource, and collaboration.

Other research by Harris (2002) explored leadership in schools considered urban or challenging in context. A comprehensive study was coordinated in schools that served

students from diverse backgrounds where a large number received free or reduced lunches. Harris reported success in these schools was dependent on leaders implementing the following: a clear vision conveyed by the principal, a strong emphasis on student achievement, distributive leadership, strong community involvement, active teacher leaders, and professional development.

Successful Urban Schools

Principal leaders in challenging schools face adverse conditions, resulting in the professional freedom to make decisions that benefit students and teachers (Carter, 2000). Several aspects of school leadership were viewed as successful in high poverty and high performing schools, and included goal setting, developing teacher leaders, and working effectively with the community (Carter, 2000). These effective practices, common throughout all the schools discussed in the study, resulted in the academic performance in the schools increasing. George, Grissom, and Just (1996) investigated several factors in an urban school setting, which included a site leadership team, a strong principal, a school vision, and quality core curriculum, all of which contributed to success in the school.

Several research studies determined that many urban schools lack quality leadership to become successful. However, leadership roles and responsibilities can affect change if implemented in schools with fidelity. Morefield and Andrews (1991) stated "... school principals who clearly understand the meaning of schooling in a democratic society, possess leadership ability, and perform their professional roles in such a manner that teachers will commit their considerable energy to create good schools" (p. 272).

Leadership in urban schools is a phenomenon that continues to fascinate researchers and expand the realm of developing leadership roles. As mentioned earlier, schools are using critical leadership as a solution to the issues that are prevalent in urban schools (Dantley, 1990). However, this theory of leadership lacks support in educational arenas because the focus is on the individual and not on the school. Nevertheless, some research studies have shown academic success in urban schools when leaders have strong instructional leadership, a clear vision, distributive leadership, and an emphasis on professional development. In addition, successful urban schools ensure that goal setting, development of teachers, and community involvement are intricate elements to creating an environment where students and teachers flourish (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Subsequently, school culture also has been correlated to academic success and collaboration in schools (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990)

Leadership and School Culture

School culture provides leaders a pathway to school effectiveness (Lambert, 1988). In an era of accountability, principal leaders are responsible for generating an environment where school culture can thrive and for developing schools that produce positive results (Karpicke & Murphy, 1996). Further, “a preliminary step to shaping school culture is for leaders, be they principals or a leadership team, is to become familiar with the concept of school culture” (Gruenert, 2000, para. 5). In the following subsections, school culture is defined, followed by a discussion on effective schools and concluding with research studies on student achievement and school culture.

Defining School Culture

Culture, outside of the school setting, is defined differently in research. For

example, Erickson (1987) suggested, “A system of ordinary, taken-for granted meanings and symbols with both explicit and implicit content that is, deliberately and non-deliberately, learned and shared among members of naturally bounded social group” (p. 12). On the other hand, Lambert (1988), who applied a definition of culture within the context of schools, offered the following definition:

... a school in which the staff, working together, examines itself and decides that the reading ability of the students is within their power to change and sets about to design a program to do just that, is undoubtedly an effective school. Not because of a strong reading program, but because they possess a set of beliefs that causes them to value the following ideas: self-examination, non-defensiveness, working together, power to effect change, unwillingness to believe that certain students can't learn, effective program design and implementation, continued evaluation, the expectation that their program will work but may need changes along the way, willingness to work through problems, and staff leadership. (p. 5)

Marshall (1988), not unlike Erickson (1987) with a focus within the context of schools, defined school culture, “as unceremonious structures and norms that are interwoven within the school’s beliefs and actions” (p. 262). Researchers differ vastly on a definition of school culture, causing a lack of uniformity around its basic meaning. What most theorists agree on across definitions is that developing, nurturing, and maintaining a positive school culture are vital components of effective educational leader practice.

Effective School Cultures

The influence of administrators on school culture within schools has escaped the education conversation. However, Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) proposed

transformational leadership as a style of leadership that could cultivate school culture and create a collaborative work environment. Leithwood and Jantzi's research resulted in six broad strategies that contributed to assisting principals in improving collaborative school culture. A collaborative work environment could exist in a school if the leader:

1. strengthened the school's culture;
2. used a variety of bureaucratic mechanisms to stimulate and reinforce culture change;
3. fostered staff development;
4. engaged in direct and frequent communication about cultural norms, values, and beliefs;
5. shared power and responsibility with others; and
6. used symbols to express cultural values. (p. 23)

As Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) identified in their study, collaborative leadership is an influential factor in changing the school culture. Eilers and Camacho (2007) suggested similar results in a case study of an elementary school. Over a two-year period, three indicators (professional communities practice, collaborative leadership, and evidence base practice) directly correlated to school culture increased.

Drawing from researchers such as Leithwood and Jantzi (1990), Marshall (1988), and Lambert (1988) for the purpose of this study, school culture was defined as a culture of values that can impact individuals and schools. Moreover, within this working definition of culture, schools are able to work collaboratively and have a strong belief system that all children have the ability to learn. Furthermore, effective school cultures enable frequent communication and professional development. In addition, sharing

power and responsibility with others promote collaboration in a school culture. In fact, a school culture that fosters these characteristics is more likely to exhibit positive student achievement within a school.

Student Achievement and School Culture

School culture and its impact on student achievement has been a missing component due to the new era of accountability and the focus on educational standards. Moreover, “although culture may be a nebulous concept in a world where principals need concrete results in student achievement, linking culture and student achievement may allow principals to re-center their energies on more human aspects of school leadership” (Gruenert, 2005, p. 43). As a result, a positive culture in schools may increase student achievement (Gruenert, 2005).

However, the initial step for school leaders is the acknowledgement that a school culture exists within the school realm (Gruenert, 2000). Additionally, the school leader can develop a definition that facilitates a cohesive environment (Gruenert, 2000). Consequently, “school leaders who are insensitive to the culture of the school are unlikely to have the knowledge and skills to intervene and may also be negatively disposed towards intervention” (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1998, p. 15). Actually, principals should devote their efforts to the language of culture rather than academic performance in schools (Pawlas, 1997).

According to Stolp (1994), “A principal who acts with care and concern for others is more likely to develop a school culture with similar values. Likewise, the principal who has little time for others places an implicit stamp of approval on selfish behaviors and attitudes” (p. 4). Principals who have a clear vision and who are able to adapt to

change are more likely to cultivate school culture in schools (Stolp, 1994).

School culture and student achievement are both concepts that require further investigation. However, schools that concentrate on the individuals within the school and less on results may expand leadership practice. As the process changes, the values of the school change, and positive student achievement results can follow.

In an era of accountability, schools are attempting to find viable solutions to the problems that are prominent in urban schools. For example, schools have appointed superintendents who do not have educational backgrounds. Also, schools have conducted studies concentrating on the principal's effectiveness in schools. In fact, leaders who set concrete goals and developed leadership are two additional components researchers found necessary for school success (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Additionally, both school culture (Gruenert, 2005) and leadership style (Jackson et al., 1983) have increased student achievement in several studies. In conclusion, each solution's emphasis is curtailing the issues in urban schools.

As stated earlier, accountability has heightened the awareness of student achievement in urban schools. Research studies concerning both school culture and urban leadership have shown positive effects on student achievement. Hence, the current research study evaluated both concepts a step further by studying distributive leadership and school culture in urban school environments.

Chapter Summary

This chapter opened with a discussion of various forms of leadership that provide a framework for this study. Further, the chapter examined early forms of leadership that began to formulate the foundation for distributive leadership. An exploration of the

varying theories of Elmore (2000), Spillane et al. (2004), and Gronn (2002) regarding distributive leadership followed. The chapter included a brief summary of the accountability surrounding research in the area of leadership in an urban school setting, and concluded with a discussion about how distributive leadership, school culture, and student achievement are related to the current research study.

III. METHODS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools and to examine the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Additionally, the study investigated the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Finally, this study researched if the relationship between distributed leadership, school culture, and student achievement is moderated by Title I status.

The study analyzed three key variables defined as distributive leadership, school culture, and student achievement. Chapter 3 begins with a review of the study's research questions and null hypotheses. Next, it explains the quantitative methods and design of the study, which is followed by a description of the processes used to select the site and participants of the study. Finally, the chapter provides a detailed description of the processes and instruments used to collect data for the study. Chapter 4 will discuss the data analysis and present the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 will analyze and draw conclusions from the previously outlined findings. Furthermore, Chapter 5 will give recommendations for future research.

Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools?

2. Is there a relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math) in a middle school setting?
3. Is there a relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting?
4. Does Title I status moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math)?
5. Does Title I status moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture?

Null Hypotheses

- H₀1: There is no difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools.
- H₀2: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math) in a middle school setting.
- H₀3: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting.
- H₀4: The relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement is not moderated by Title I status.
- H₀5: The relationship between distributive leadership and school culture is not moderated by Title I status.

Research Methods and Design

The research method chosen for this study was quantitative; in addition, the study was influenced by research conducted by Leithwood and Mascall (2008). In their research study, Leithwood and Mascall selected a quantitative approach that expanded

the literature regarding leadership by examining the relationship with student achievement. Moreover, their findings suggested leadership practice should be explored further and that the information collected could build a foundation for future research.

The design of the research study included the collection of distributive leadership survey information, which measured the level of distributive leadership in each school. The survey was distributed to formal leaders who are currently employed in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Also, student achievement data, available from the district's website and research department, were collected. Additionally, data from the statewide department of education were reviewed. A customer satisfaction survey, which measured teacher, parent, and student satisfaction from each school participating in the study, was collected.

Several statistical analyses were conducted to determine if a relationship exists between distributive leadership, student achievement, and school culture. The design and analysis allowed this researcher to answer the research questions and hypotheses. Finally, a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 20) was utilized to analyze the data collected.

Site and Participant Selection

The following sections of the paper review the process to select sites and participants for the study. Site selection included a detailed description of demographics, population size, and ethnic composition. Further, the process of selecting participants for the study and sample size criteria are reviewed. Additionally, information regarding school type, components of the survey instrument, and the data collection process are reviewed.

Site Selection

Middle schools located in one of the largest urban and most diverse school districts in the Southeastern United States were selected for inclusion in the study. The school district serves approximately 257,000 students and 230 schools, which consist of several elementary, middle, high, charter, and virtual schools. Students currently enrolled come from 173 countries and speak 53 different languages, creating a truly diverse student population. The ethnic composition of the district is 51% (White), 28% (Black), 15% (Hispanic), and 6% (other). The district has been graded “A” for the past three years, based on a comprehensive assessment test administered by the state.

School type. The current research design included middle schools from grades 6-8 located in the district. There are 40 middle schools that represent a diverse population of students and staff, with 35 schools classified as Title I and 5 represented as Non-Title I. For this study, middle schools designated as Title I and Non-Title I during the 2011-2012 school year were selected. Table 1 displays the average percentage of students from Title I and Non-Title I schools by ethnicity (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Table 1

Average Percent of Students in Title I and Non-Title I Schools by Ethnicity

	Black	White	Hispanic	Other
Title I	19	40	33	8
Non-Title I	56	17	21	5

In the current study, 65% of middle schools selected have 50% or more of their students receiving a free or reduced price lunch. Enrollment in each middle school ranges from 500-1,500 students per year.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

This study solicited formal leaders from both Title I and Non-Title I middle schools for participation in the study. All participants selected for the current study were currently in formal leadership positions that included principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, team leader, team liaison, and department chair. As Leithwood and Mascall (2008) and many other researchers have stated, expanding the scope of leadership outside the principal and assistant principal benefits the entire school. Therefore, the participant groups were comprised of a range of individuals in varied leadership positions as recommended by Leithwood and Mascall (2008). Schools within the district have several positions that are mandated by contract, which provided a possible number of participants for inclusion in the study.

A participant recruitment script (Appendix A) was emailed to all middle school principals, soliciting names for participation in the study. Each principal selected school leaders who were currently in formal leadership positions, and emailed the list to the researcher. A final list of participants was compiled in a database. Finally, an invitation to participate in the study was emailed to potential participants, which included an informed consent (Appendix B) with a survey link. By clicking on the link, participants consented to participation in the study. Pseudonyms were utilized to protect the confidentiality of the schools and the participants.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study included a survey administered to formal leaders within schools. In addition, a survey instrument (Appendix C) created by Hulpia (2009) - was the primary source for distributive leadership data and was initiated for this study with permission (Appendix D). Also, student achievement and customer satisfaction survey information were collected from archival data. Additionally, both the school district's and the Department of Education websites were reviewed for school archival data. Moreover, customer satisfaction survey information from the district's research department was reviewed.

The following subsections describe the data collection methods for the research study. The process for collection of student achievement data is explained, followed by a description of the recording process. In addition, school culture procedures are discussed in detail. Finally, the information collected was analyzed through SPSS to answer the research questions.

Student Achievement Data

Student achievement data, which includes reading and math scores, are published yearly by the Department of Education, based on the results of a Comprehensive Achievement Test administered to students. Originally only four grade levels participated in the assessment; however, in 1999, because of legislative changes, the test now is administered to all grade levels. Specific content benchmarks are measured to discern the level of comprehension for students. Students have the opportunity to potentially score a proficiency rate of level 1-5, with level 5 the highest possible achievement level and level 1 the lowest.

Students are administered a yearly test in grades 3-10 in the area of reading and math. Student achievement scores are tabulated in the following manner: (a) proficiency rates of level 3 or higher on the test; (b) significant learning gains by students who scored below a level 3 over a two year period, and (c) students who scored in the lowest 25% the previous year and improved in the current year. For the purpose of this study, the percent of students scoring level 3 or higher in both reading and math scores from each school were collected for tabulation.

School Climate Survey

The school district administers a customer satisfaction survey to teachers, students, and parents every year to evaluate school effectiveness. Subsequently, the district formulates changes based on the information reported. Each school within the district is provided with their survey data to assess the overall school climate. In this study, school climate terminology was used interchangeably with school culture. In fact, the survey measures both school and educational environments, school safety which correlates to elements directly related to school culture (Leithwood, 1994). Further, the district provides support to schools based on their findings after the data are reviewed. The survey is sent to students in grades 3-12, full-time instructional employees, and parents. The school district randomly selects parents for inclusion in the survey while both instructional staff and students are requested to complete the survey. The test is administered in a specific way based on the population being surveyed. For students and staff, when they log onto a school computer, a button appears on screen that directs them to the survey. Selecting this button serves as the consent to participate. Parents, however, have the option of completing the survey in paper form or online.

In 2011-2012, 5.4% of parents, 81.9% of students, and 81.7 % of staff responded to the survey. For the purpose of this study, the staff response rate was the primary source of data collection. This information is available on the district's website located in the research department. Each participant group in each school was assigned a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F) based on their overall satisfaction. The number of survey responses by letter grade was converted to a percentage, which was a component of this research study. Percentages by letter grade were compiled for each middle school and calculated. The percentage by letter grade was tabulated and the weighted average calculated to obtain one score from each school. This researcher created a weight for each grade (A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2 and F=1) to compute the weighted average. Instructional staff responses were included in the study; parent and student responses were excluded.

Instrumentation

A distributive leadership (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009) survey, the Distributive Leadership Inventory (DLI), was distributed to 46 secondary schools with a minimum population of 600 students. Hulpia's (2009) study was designed to explore the development of a distributive leadership instrument in secondary schools. A total of 2,198 principals, assistant principals, second grade teachers, and teacher leaders completed the questionnaires with a 69% response rate (Hulpia et al., 2009). According to Hulpia et al. (2009) the internal consistency reliability for the DLI was .79. Hulpia (2009) originally extracted scores from the survey into three separate areas: average leadership, maximum leadership, and leadership distribution. The Hulpia (2009) survey included 45 questions that participants completed in approximately 20 minutes.

In Hulpia's (2009) study, the results were separated by leadership support and supervision as it relates to formal leadership positions. In Table 2, support was viewed as a function of the principal, assistant principal, and teachers leaders. School supervision was mostly performed by the principal; the assistant principal's role was not as involved based on the mean score. Average leadership of the principal, assistant principal, and teacher leader results were varied. Maximum leadership for the principal, assistant principal, and teacher leaders had a mean of 2.93 for leadership function and supportive leadership mean was 2.98. Hulpia's findings suggest that leadership support was evenly distributed among the leadership team. Supervision, on the other hand, was not as distributed.

Table 2

Average Leadership, Maximum Leadership, and Leadership Distribution Mean and Standard Deviation for Leaders

	Mean	Standard Deviation		Mean	Standard Deviation
AVERAGE LEADERSHIP			PRINCIPAL		
Support	2.51	0.71	Support	2.66	0.86
Supervision	2.09	0.82	Supervision	2.70	1.06
MAXIMUM LEADERSHIP			ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS		
Support	2.98	0.65	Support	2.53	0.86
Supervision	2.93	0.89	Supervision	2.19	1.16
LEADERSHIP DISTRIBUTION			TEACHER LEADERS		
Support	5.15	0.74	Support	2.34	0.84
Supervision	4.32	1.16	Supervision	1.38	1.08

The survey was a quantitative assessment divided into several sections designed to address essential areas of distributive leadership. First, the questionnaire measured the quality and the distribution of leadership functions using a Likert-type scale from 0-4, ranging from “never” to “always.” The second section requested participants to rate their cooperation of the leadership team. Next, respondents rated the perception of participation of school members in the decision-making process. General professionalism and job satisfaction were rated in the last section of the questionnaire. Likert-type scales from 0-4, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” were included in the final three sub-sections (Hulpia et al., 2009). For the purpose of this study, all sub-section scores were tabulated to measure distributive leadership in a middle school setting.

Hulpia (2009) proposed that future researchers should not calculate all three scores separately; instead, they should use either average or maximum leadership from all sub-sections created in the survey. The current research study followed Hulpia’s (2009) recommendation and included only one score, the mean score for each school represented. Averaging individual participant scores from each middle school in the study derived the mean score.

A survey link was emailed to each participant with a letter explaining the research. The respondents were given two weeks to complete the survey. This researcher emailed follow-up reminders the second week, advising participants of the deadline. There was a 13% response rate for the current research.

Data Analysis

The current study implemented a quantitative research design to answer each of the five research questions. A t-test was performed to analyze question 1 to determine if there is a difference in Title I and Non-Title I schools. A bivariate correlation was conducted to analyze questions 2 and 3 of the research study to determine if a relationship exists between distributive leadership, student achievement and school

Table 3

Summary of Data Analysis

Null Hypotheses	Description	Statistical Analysis
Ho1	There is no difference between distributive leadership in Title I and Non-Title I schools.	<i>t</i> -test
Ho2	There is no relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (Reading and Math) in a middle school setting.	Bivariate Correlation
Ho3	There is not relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting.	Bivariate Correlation
Ho4	The relationship between distributive leadership and school achievement is not moderated by Title I status.	Moderator Analysis
Ho5	The relationship between distributive leadership and school culture is not moderated by Title I status.	Moderator Analysis

culture in a middle school setting. Further, questions 4 and 5 were evaluated by conducting a moderator analysis. Both questions were designed to analyze if the inclusion or exclusion of Title I status in schools moderated the relationship between

distributive leadership, student achievement and culture. The alpha was set at .05 for each statistical analysis. Table 3 summarizes the hypotheses testing for the current research.

Consent

Prior to undertaking this research study, the research sought the required IRB approval from Florida Atlantic University. The process involved submitting a research proposal and survey information. The researcher's dissertation chair and department chair from the College of Education Educational Leadership Department analyzed the documents prior to approval.

Upon IRB approval, permission was obtained from the school district included in the study. The process included submission of survey documents and the current research proposal; the district's approval allowed the research to proceed.

Chapter Summary

The current study implemented a quantitative research design to answer each of the five research questions. Chapter 3 outlined the procedures for collecting middle school data and how the information was analyzed for this research study. The quantitative research design was discussed and variables were explained. Distributive leadership, student achievement, and school culture were highlighted throughout the chapter. The process of data collection procedures was explained in detail. The participant selection and data analysis of each research question was discussed. The next chapter will review the findings of the study.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools and to examine the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Additionally, the study investigated the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Finally, this study researched if the relationship between distributed leadership, school culture, and student achievement is moderated by Title I status.

The five research questions in the study were:

1. Is there a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools?
2. Is there a relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math) in a middle school setting?
3. Is there a relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting?
4. Does Title I status moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math)?
5. Does Title I status moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture?

There were five corresponding null hypotheses that were included in this study:

- H₀1: There is no difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools.
- H₀2: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math) in a middle school setting.
- H₀3: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting.
- H₀4: The relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement is not moderated by Title I status.
- H₀5: The relationship between distributive leadership and school culture is not moderated by Title I status.

Presentation of Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents

The Distributive Leadership Instrument surveyed 40 middle schools in a school district that serves over 250,000 students; however, only 35 schools responded. There were 466 surveys sent via email to principals, teacher leaders, chairpersons, coaches, team liaisons, and department chairs seeking their participation in the research study. A total of 64 surveys were returned, which is a 13.7% response rate. This information was compiled and utilized to complete all statistical analyses for this study.

Descriptive Statistics

For the purpose of this study, the school was selected as a unit of analysis. The study originally targeted 40 middle schools within the school district. A total of 67.5% schools that reported a survey score were included in the final analysis. Additionally, a total of 13.7% participants responded to the study, 12% from Title I and 1.7% from Non-Title I. Further, an examination of the mean, standard deviations, minimum, and

maximum were performed on all variables included in the study. Table 4 reflects the analysis of the respondents in the study.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of All Tested Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Distributive Leadership	85	172	133.9	19.73
Reading Score	24	81	55.7	12.33
Math Score	26	84	58.1	12.41
School Culture	29.20	47	40.3	4.74
Title I Status	12.60	96	65.8	22.7

N=27

Distributive leadership. The minimum score for schools represented in the study was 85 and maximum 172. The mean for this variable was 133.9. Thus, the level of distributive leadership was varied between both Title I and Non-Title I schools.

Reading score. The reading score represented the percent of students in schools scoring a level 3 or higher. The lowest score was 24 and the maximum score 81, with a mean of 55.7. Therefore, several schools did not meet the minimum proficiency rates required by state and federal standards.

Math score. The math score represented the percent of students in schools scoring a level 3 or higher. The minimum score was 26 and maximum 84. The mean for this variable was 58.1. Thus, several schools did not meet minimum proficiency rates established by state and federal guidelines.

School culture. The minimum score for school culture was 29.20 and the maximum score 27. The mean for this variable was 40.3. Thus, school culture was varied in Title I and Non-Title I schools based on the statistics.

Title I status. The minimum score for this variable was 12.60 and maximum 96, with a mean of 65.8. Title I status was determined by free and reduce lunch amongst students attending Title I or Non-Title I schools in this study. Therefore, several schools within the study fall well below the poverty level based on the minimum score.

Hypotheses Testing

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program, version 20, was utilized to perform three statistical analyses. Specifically, a bivariate correlation, linear regression, and *t*-test were performed to answer each research question. Additionally, the alpha was set at .05 for each statistical analysis.

Research Question 1: Is There a Difference in How Leadership Is Distributed in Title I and Non-Title I Schools?

A *t*-test was performed to determine the difference in distributive leadership scores between Title I and Non-Title I schools. This type of analysis was designed to compare the mean of each variable. Table 5 summarizes the results of the statistical analysis.

Null Hypotheses 1: There is no difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools. In Table 5, distributive leadership was not significant ($p > .05$); thus a *t*-test assuming equality of variance was used. Moreover, comparing distributive leadership means for Title and Non-Title I schools was not significant [$t(25) = .102, p > .05$]. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) was not rejected.

Table 5

Independent t-Test Results for Distributive Leadership in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

Distributive Leadership	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	P	T	Df	P (2 tailed)
Equal Variances Assumed	0.35	.853	.102	25	.920

Note: N=27

Research Question 2: Is There a Relationship Between Distributive Leadership and Student Achievement (Reading and Math) in a Middle School Setting?

Bivariate correlations were performed to determine if a relationship exists between the identified variables. Distributive leadership as the dependent variable and reading and math scores as the independent variables were included. Table 6 summarizes the results of the statistical analyses.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (reading and math) in a middle school setting. In Table 6, the results indicate there was not a significant relationship ($p < .05$) between distributive leadership, reading scores (-.054) and math scores (-.054). Both variables were not significant at 0.01 levels. Given the negative correlation, as reading and math scores decreased, distributive leadership scores increased. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was not rejected.

Table 6

Correlations Among Distributive Leadership, Reading, and Math Scores Variables

	Distributive Leadership	Math Score	Reading Score
Distributive Leadership	1	-.042	-.054
Math Score	-.042	1	.968*
Reading Score	-.054	.968*	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 –tailed) Note: N=27

Research Question 3: What Is the Relationship Between Distributive Leadership and School Culture in a Middle School Setting?

A bivariate correlation test was performed, utilizing SPSS to answer the current research question. Distributive leadership was identified as the dependent variable, with customer satisfaction survey data as the independent variable. Both variables were analyzed to determine if a relationship existed in a middle school setting.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting. The correlation results indicate there was not a significant relationship between distributive leadership and school culture. The correlation between distributive leadership and school culture was $r=.143$, $p > .05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_03) was not rejected.

Research Question 4: Does Title I Status Moderate the Relationship Between Distributive Leadership and Student Achievement (Reading and Math)?

In order to test the moderation effect, a regression was performed in this study. Student achievement was predicted from distributive leadership, Title I status, and the

product of the distributive leadership and Title I status. Distributive leadership was centered. A detailed statistical analysis is reflected in Table 7.

Null Hypothesis 4: The relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement is not moderated by Title I status. In Table 7, the moderation effect was not significant [$t(23) = 1.48, p > .05$]; thus, Title I status did not affect the relationship between distributed leadership and student achievement (reading). Further, the VIFs were greater than 10, which is in the margin of concern. Additionally, the same moderator analysis was performed using the same independent variables; math scores were the dependent variables in the analysis. The moderation effect was again not significant [$t(23) = .906, p > .05$]. Again, Title I status did not affect the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (math). As well, the VIFs were greater than 10, falling within the margin of concern. As a result, the null hypothesis (Ho4) was not rejected.

Research Question 5: Does Title I Status Moderate the Relationship Between Distributive Leadership and School Culture?

A moderator analysis regression was conducted in this study to determine if Title I status moderated the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture. This researcher multiplied Title I status (independent variable) by distributive leadership (independent variable), which created a moderator variable. Distributive leadership was again centered to decrease the effects of collinearity. A detailed statistical analysis is reflected in Table 7.

Null Hypotheses 5: The relationship between distributive leadership and student culture is not moderated by Title I status. In Table 7, the moderation effect

was not significant [$t(23) = .004, p > .05$]. Therefore, Title I status does not affect the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture. The VIFs are greater than 10, which is within the margin of concern. Subsequently, the null hypothesis (H_05) was not rejected.

Table 7

Moderation Effects of Title I Status on the Relationship between Distributive Leadership and Student Achievement and School Culture

Dependent		B	T	P	VIF
Reading Score	DL	.415	-1.437	.164	12.394
	Title I status	-.936	-11.166	.000	1.045
	Product DL and Title I status	-.428	-1.484	.151	12.345
Math Score	DL	.196	.909	.373	12.394
	Title I status	-.491	-9.035	.000	1.045
	Product DL and Title I status	-.057	-.906	.374	12.345
School Culture	DL	.042	.282	.781	12.394
	Title I status	-.109	-2.922	.008	1.045
	Product DL and Title I status	.000	-.004	.997	12.345

Note: N=27

Summary of Findings

Five research questions were presented and five hypotheses tested to determine the relationships between the variables included in the study. All five hypotheses were rejected in the current study. Table 8 describes each null hypotheses, statistical analyses and final outcome of the current study.

Table 8

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Null Hypotheses	Description	Statistical Analysis	Rejected/Failed to Reject
Ho1	There is no difference between distributive leadership in Title I and Non-Title I schools.	<i>t</i> -test	Failed to Reject
Ho2	There is no relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement (Reading and Math) in a middle school setting.	Bivariate Correlation	Failed to Reject
Ho3	There is not relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in a middle school setting.	Bivariate Correlation	Failed to Reject
Ho4	The relationship between distributive leadership and school achievement is not moderated by Title I status.	Moderator Analysis	Failed to Reject
Ho5	The relationship between distributive leadership and school culture is not moderated by Title I status.	Moderator Analysis	Failed to Reject

This study revealed that a relationship does not exist between distributive leadership, school culture, and student achievement. Furthermore, Title I status does not moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture.

Additionally, there is no difference in the way leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 revealed that a relationship does not exist between distributive leadership, school culture, and distributive leadership. In addition, the study found that there is no difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Chapter 5 discussed these findings in detail as well as in relationship to what earlier similar studies have found. Chapter 5 also drew conclusions from the findings based on the literature and earlier research findings. Finally, Chapter 5 discussed the implication for future research and practice based on the findings of the study.

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Distributive leadership is a term that has permeated educational leadership for at least 20 years; however, to date, a clear definition of it remains somewhat elusive. This study sought to bring a clearer definition to the term of distributive leadership as well as to investigate any differences in distributive leadership within Title I and Non-Title I schools when compared to school culture and student achievement.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I and Non-Title I schools and to examine the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Additionally, the study investigated the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Finally, this study researched if the relationship between distributed leadership, school culture, and student achievement is moderated by Title I status.

Review of the Methodology

The current research study employed a quantitative method to answer the five proposed research questions and five null hypotheses. There were 40 schools targeted for the study; however, only 35 schools returned participant information and 27 submitted surveys, 5 Non-Title I and 22 Title I schools. Additionally, archival statistics were retrieved for both school culture and student achievement variables. Finally, survey data were collected to determine the level of distributive leadership in each school. A *t*-test was performed to determine if there is a difference in distributive leadership between

Title I and Non-Title I schools. A bivariate analysis was conducted to determine if a relationship exists between distributive leadership, school culture, and student achievement. Finally, a moderator analysis was performed to determine if Title I status moderates the relationship between distributive leadership, school culture, and student achievement.

Discussion of the Findings

In the following sub-sections, the findings of this study are grouped into three broad perspectives for discussion. First, the relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement are reviewed, followed by a discussion of distributive leadership and school culture. The final subsection reviews Title I and Non-Title status in relation to distributive leadership.

Student Achievement

Leadership practice within schools has been a topic of discussion in research for years (Leithwood et al., 1997). Furthermore, the discussion regarding the effects of leadership and student achievement also has been the topic of many research studies (Harris, 2002; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). It is important to note that several research studies predicted that leadership has a correlation to student achievement (Brown et al., 2004; Harris, 2002; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). However, the current research study did not find the same results.

The current findings are not consistent with much of the current research discussed in Chapter 2 (Brown et al., 2004; Harris, 2002; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). In conducting a bivariate correlation analysis, the results revealed a relationship does not

exist between distributive leadership and student achievement. Additionally, the current study failed to identify if this relationship influences student achievement.

In a similar study conducted by Brown et al. (2004), a qualitative research design was performed to study leadership and student achievement. The current study did not utilize a qualitative method as previous studies (Harris, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004), which may be a contributing factor for a lack of correlation between student achievement and distributive leadership. In addition, a study conducted by Walhstrom et al. (2010) reported there was not a significant correlation between distributive leadership and student achievement. More importantly, the findings of the current research study coincided with the results from Walhstrom et al. (2010).

In the literature review was a discussion of Harris' (2002) distributive leadership model that described the relationships within, between, and outside schools and their impact on student improvement. In fact, Harris' (2002) main focus was capacity building within the organization, which has been the foundation of distributive leadership. However, this study failed to uncover a relationship between distributive leadership and student achievement. According to Harris (2002), distributive leadership within schools affects the relationship between and outside schools. Therefore, failure to discover a relationship with distributive leadership and student achievement in the current study can impact organizational and individual outcomes. However, findings from this study were unexpected in that previous studies found a correlation between leadership and student achievement (Brown et al., 2004; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

School Culture

In the literature review, leadership style is an important factor in urban schools that are successful (Jackson et al., 1983). In the current study, a bivariate correlation was performed to determine if a relationship exists between distributive leadership and school culture. Research conducted by Gruenert (2005) found a direct correlation with school culture and student achievement. Several studies suggested that if a positive school culture existed in schools, it would positively affect student achievement (Lambert, 1988; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Further, Karpicke and Murphy (1996) stated that principals are responsible for developing environments where school cultures are positive, which contributes to successful schools. Not to mention that Leithwood and Jantzi's (1990) research included leadership as a factor that influenced school culture.

However, the analysis of distributive leadership and school culture in this study revealed that a relationship does not exist between distributive leadership and school culture. In Chapter 2, much of the research focused on the positive effects of school culture and student success (Gruenert, 2000; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). According to Lambert (1988), school culture has a direct relationship to school effectiveness or improvement. The current findings do not align with Leithwood and Jantzi's (1990) research, which stated that cultivating school culture would create a collaborative or distributive work environment.

Title I and Non-Title I Status

In an early study by Coleman (1966), some urban schools lacked academic success and were considered ineffective. Several forms of leadership were researched, such as critical leadership (Dantley, 1990), transformational leadership (Leithwood &

Jantzi, 1990), and distributive leadership (Harris, 2002) to investigate the problem. Furthermore, research determined that developing teacher leaders builds high performing urban schools (Harris, 2003). Additionally, Mulford et al. (2007) found that leadership contributed to the academic success of high poverty schools. The current findings reported no relationship between the exclusion or inclusion of Title I status between distributive leadership and student achievement. The study also revealed that reading and math scores were not moderated by Title I status.

In addition, a research study by Brown et al. (2004) suggested student achievement increased in urban schools that practice distributive leadership, which does not correspond to the current findings. Additionally, a study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010) revealed that when stakeholders do not have a significant role within low performing schools, student achievement results are lower. Therefore, the findings do not support the research.

The results of this study indicated no significant relationship between Title I status, distributive leadership, and school culture. A moderation analysis was conducted between distributive leadership and school culture with Title I status as the moderator. Researchers have found that leadership was a significant factor in student achievement and school success (Jackson et al., 1983). However, in the current study, Title I status did not moderate the relationship between distributive leadership and school culture.

Furthermore, a *t*-test was performed to determine if there is a difference in how leadership is distributed in Title I schools and Non-Title I schools. An analysis of the data reported no difference in how leadership was distributed in each school. The

purpose of this research question was to investigate if distributive leadership is more prominent in schools of this type.

Research Results Compared to Hulpia

Hulpia et al. (2009) leadership results were analyzed in a sub-score format in his original study. He reported average leadership, maximum leadership and leadership distribution mean scores (see Table 2). Hulpia et al. (2009) study focused mainly on scores from different subsequent leadership perspectives. In his findings, leadership was evenly distributed among the leadership team based on the sub-score results. Further, Hulpia et al. (2009) found that distributive leadership was evident with formal leaders within the organization.

In the current research, the results were not consistent with Hulpia et al. (2009) or current literature. The research did not evaluate the elements by sub-score as in Hulpia's et al. (2009) research. By utilizing sub-scores, Hulpia et al. (2009) found that leadership support was distributed evenly with formal leaders. However, the current research focused on a cumulative distributive leadership score. The higher the distributive leadership score, the more distribution occurring within schools. The scores generated were varied which demonstrated that leadership in each school was different. However, it does illustrate that distributive leadership was present in each school at various levels. Unlike Hulpia et al. (2009), the current research reflects a district that would benefit from a more focused examination of leadership distribution based on formal leadership positions. This would definitely need more exploration through research.

Recommendations for K-12 School Leaders

The current research study was unable to find a relationship between distributive leadership, student achievement, and school culture, although previous studies have found that a relationship existed (Gruenert, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Mulford et al., 2007). Moreover, this study heightens the awareness for K-12 leaders to review research that focused on groups (Gibb, 1954), distributive leadership (Harris, 2002), and school culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). However, findings from this study suggested that K-12 leaders formulate a school environment that encompasses all of the items discussed previously. More importantly, if all components are working together, student success within schools is inevitable, thus improving student achievement.

In the age of accountability, K-12 leaders are obligated to cultivate a school environment where individuals are afforded the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the organization (Spillane, 2006a). As Gibb (1954) discussed in his research, each individual within the group has a function and should interact with each other to ensure each task is completed. The interaction between the group members lends itself to improving the organization not individually, but collectively.

In addition, K-12 leaders must explore the distributive leadership concept within schools. A study conducted by Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found a correlation between collective leadership and student achievement, which allowed additional individuals other than the principal to impact the organization. Further, Spillane (2006a) explained that individuals in organizations have responsibilities that were distributed across situations and different leadership practice, subsequently confirming the notion as

proposed by Day and Leithwood (2007) that primary emphasis on the principal would significantly limit leadership in schools.

However, a school culture that provides the best environment for student success is critical for K-12 leaders. Several studies have shown a correlation between school culture and improved student achievement (Gruenert, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990), providing a crucial platform for K-12 leaders to begin the school culture conversation. In fact, this adds credence for K-12 leaders that school culture development not only improves student achievement, but also develops individuals in the organization, which is a critical component to school success. Specifically, if distributive leadership, positive school culture, or group leadership practices are to become central parts of a school, each must be an intricate component of school leadership.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

The current study brought forth several recommendations resulting from the findings. These recommendations were based on reviewing other research studies that found relationships between distributive leadership, student achievement, and school culture. First, future research should use a mixed method or qualitative approach to investigate distributive leadership within schools. The qualitative questions should be structure in a format much different for the questions researched in this study. It is critical that questions are designed to identify the actual practice performed by school leaders within the school organization (Mulford et al., 2007). Several researchers utilized a qualitative design for research, which resulted in a correlation between distributive leadership, student achievement, and school culture (Harris, 2002; Spillane, 2006a).

In addition, school culture survey instruments with specified detailed information about schools will be critical in future research. Finally, the selection process should be targeted and based on set criteria created by the researcher. In previous studies, site and participant selection met specific criteria, which limited the number of participants and resulted in noteworthy findings (Mulford et al., 2007). In the current study, the actual leadership positions were not solicited as part of the research. Future researchers should include formal leaders actual positions as discussed by Leithwood and Mascall (2008) to understand how each individual influences distributive leadership within the organization.

Distributive leadership and its effects on school performance are critical to the evolution of increased student achievement within a school environment (Brown et al., 2004). Subsequently, school leaders should practice this form of leadership frequently to improve their organization (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Additionally, leadership effects on school culture can provide an environment where students and leaders can learn effectively (Gruenert, 2005). In fact, examining the effects of Title I status on school performance supports the claim by researchers that student achievement increases with good leadership (Brown et al., 2004; Spillane, 2006a). However, since this study did not expand the definition of distributive leadership, there still is a need for further discussion of the topic.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Principal Recruitment Form

Dear Principals,

My name is Keietta Givens and I am currently a Doctorate student enrolled at Florida Atlantic University pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership. The purpose of my research study will be to determine if a relationship exists between Distributive Leadership, Student Achievement and School Culture in Title I and Non-Title I schools. As part of my study, I need to survey individuals at your school with formal designated leadership positions. Further, as principal, I need your assistance recruiting leaders in these positions.

Please list below the names of each individual at your school that is currently in a designated leadership position. If you do not have a person in a position listed, please leave it blank. Each participant will receive an email explaining the research and a 45-item survey link that will take a minimum of 20 minutes to complete.

Name of School

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| | _____ |
| 1. Principal | _____ |
| 2. Asst. Principal | _____ |
| 3. Asst. Principal | _____ |
| 4. Asst. Principal | _____ |
| 5. Reading Coach | _____ |
| 6. Math Coach | _____ |
| 7. Writing Coach | _____ |
| 8. Science Coach | _____ |
| 9. Elective Chair | _____ |
| 10. Math Chair | _____ |
| 11. Science Chair | _____ |
| 12. Lang. Arts Chair | _____ |
| 13. Social Studies Chair | _____ |
| 14. Reading Chair | _____ |
| 15. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |
| 16. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |
| 17. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |
| 18. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |
| 19. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |
| 20. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |
| 21. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |
| 22. Team Leader/Liaison | _____ |

Thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If you have any questions please contact me at Keietta.Givens@browardschools.com.

Appendix B

Adult Consent Form

Dear Participant,

Thank you in advance for your participation in this research study. The title of the study, “*A New Look at Distributive Leadership in Title I and Non-Title I Schools: Does Distributive Leadership Impact Student Achievement and School Culture*” is a quantitative study designed to explore leadership practice. The purpose of the study will be to determine if a relationship exists between distributive leadership, student achievement and school culture. To participate in this study, you will respond to a 45-item survey on distributive leadership in your school.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The questions will be composed of items that address different aspects of distributive leadership, which include components of the leadership team, support, supervision, participative decision-making, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction of school leaders. Your thoughts and feelings as an educational professional are critical to this research study.

The risks to you by participating in this project are minimal. However, your contribution will potentially benefit education in the area of distributive leadership and expand educational practice. Your name will not be required for participation. To maintain confidentiality, your email address will not be recorded with your survey responses.

Your data will be submitted via a survey link that only the main researcher can access. The data collected will be kept confidential unless required by law. All data provided will be kept secure as possible using current technology. However, please be aware that no assurances can be made regarding Internet violations by third parties. All data collected will be deleted from computers and servers used three years after the study is completed.

For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Florida Atlantic University Division of Research at 561.297.0777. For questions regarding the study, please contact the principal investigator, Dr. Meredith Mountford, at moutfound@fau.edu, 561-297-6551, or main investigator, Keietta Givens at kgivens3@fau.edu, 305-213-2732.

By clicking the link below you are consenting to participation in this research study. You are also affirming the following: 1) You have read the information describing this study and any questions have been answered to your satisfaction; 2) You are 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate. Please print or save a copy of this consent form for your records.

Insert Survey link

Thank you for your participation and supporting distributive leadership in education.

Appendix C

Distributive Leadership Survey

Please answer each question by placing a numerical value on the line. The survey should not take more than 20 minutes to complete. After the completion of the survey, please submit online.

Please mark the following items: Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree (1) Not Sure (2) Agree (3) Strongly Agree (4)

1. ____ There is a well-functioning leadership team in our school
2. ____ The leadership team tries to act as well as possible
3. ____ The leadership team supports the goals we like to attain with our school
4. ____ All members of the leadership team work in the same strain on the school's core objectives
5. ____ In our school the right man sits on the right place, taking the competencies into account
6. ____ Members of the management team divide their time properly
7. ____ Members of the leadership team have clear goals
8. ____ Members of the leadership team know which task they have to perform
9. ____ The leadership team is willing to execute a good idea
10. ____ It is clear that members of the leadership team are authorized to make decisions
11. ____ Leadership is delegated for activities critical for achieving school goals
12. ____ Leadership is broadly distributed among the staff
13. ____ We have an adequate involvement in decision-making
14. ____ There is an effective committee structure for decision-making
15. ____ Effective communication among staff is facilitated
16. ____ There is an appropriate level of autonomy in decision-making
17. ____ My school inspires me to do the best I can
18. ____ I'm proud to be a part of this school team

19. ____ I really care about the fate of this school
20. ____ I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar
21. ____ I regularly talk to friends about the school as a place where it is great to work
22. ____ I'm really happy that I chose this school to work for
23. ____ There is no better job than being a teacher/teacher leader
24. ____ I like to teach/perform my teacher leader function
25. ____ I want to stay in my current job
26. ____ If I could choose again, I would trade my job for another profession
27. ____ My job has more advantages than disadvantages
28. ____ I'm proud of my job
29. ____ My job inspires me
30. ____ I'm very enthusiastic about my job
31. ____ In the morning, I like to go to work
32. ____ I'm really absorbed in my work

To what amount is (1) principal; (2) the assistant principals; (3) the teacher leaders involved in the following statements? (never/0;always/4). The scale is from 0-4.

Never (0) Rarely (1) Sometimes (2) Often (3) Always (4)

33. ____ Evaluates the performance of the staff
34. ____ Is involved in summative evaluation of teachers
45. ____ Is involved in formative evaluation of teacher
36. ____ Promotes a long term vision
37. ____ Debates the school vision
38. ____ Compliments teachers
39. ____ Helps teachers
40. ____ Explains his/her reason from criticism to teachers
41. ____ Is available after school to help teachers when assistance is needed

- 42. ____ Looks out for the personal welfare of teachers
- 43. ____ Encourages me to pursue my own goals for professional learning
- 44. ____ Encourages me to try new practices consistent with my own interests
- 45. ____ Provides organizational support for teacher interaction

Appendix D

Author Permission

H. Keietta | Sign Out | Options | Help | PreviewMail w/ Y! Toolbar | Go Mobile | My Y! | Yahoo!

Search Mail
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FAVORITES

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RE: Distributive Lead...

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- Folders +
- Delta
- Delta 2010
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- dolphin
- Fou
- Keietta
- Notes
- Tau Rho 1
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Applications

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- Automatic Organizer
- Calendar
- Flickr
- My Cool Fonts
- NotePad
- Stationery
- Unsubscriber

RE: Distributive Leadership Inventory 1 Hide Details

Wednesday, February 24, 2010 3:23 AM

FROM: Hester Hulpia

TO: 'Keietta Givens'

CC: kgivens3@fau.edu

Dear Keietta,

In attachment you find my PhD-study. In the second chapter I describe the development of my research Instrument, which is added in Appendix. Currently I am working to improve this research Instrument. So, please, let me know your remarks and comments.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,
Hester Hulpia

Hester Hulpia
Vakgroep Onderwijskunde - Faculteit Psychologie en Pedagogische Wetenschappen
Henri Dunantlean 2 - 9000 Gent
tel: +32 (0)9 264 88 70

Van: Keietta Givens [mailto:dst027@yahoo.com]
Verzonden: Wednesday, February 24, 2010 6:15 AM
Aan: Hester.Hulpia@UGent.be
CC: kgivens3@fau.edu
Onderwerp: Distributive Leadership Inventory

Hello,

My names is Keietta Givens and I am a graduate student at Florida Atlantic University. I am in the process of writing my proposal and found your study on the distributive leadership inventory. My study is on distributive leadership in high poverty schools and does it have an impact on student achievement and school culture. I will be comparing distributive leadership in high SES schools and Low SES schools secondary schools. Is it possible for you to send me the original DLI used in your study. It appears this inventory is what I have been searching for and would like to use it in my study. I appreciate any help you can give me.

Thank you

Attachments

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