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Organisation Theory in Education: How does it inform School Leadership?

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Introduction

This paper aims to provide an overview of organisation theory and to connect it to theoretical literature and empirical research on school leadership. The paper draws mainly on UK school leadership literature but also includes US and international sources, where appropriate. The paper builds on previous work by the author (e.g. Bush 2011, Bush and Glover 2014).

Much of the literature treats organisation and leadership theories as distinct and unconnected but, in this paper, I argue that there are considerable overlaps between these two genres of theory. In particular, I seek to demonstrate that organisation and leadership theory can be analysed and compared using four central constructs; goals, structure, culture and context. The paper begins by discussing the origins of organisation theory and then examines its characteristics through a discussion of the four constructs. The main school leadership models are examined and then linked to organisation theory through the four constructs. The paper concludes with an overview of the connections between leadership and organisation theory.

The Origins of Organisation Theory

Organisation theory emanates from work seeking to explain how industrial and commercial bodies operate. A major contributor and founder of this body of literature was Max Weber, who developed and refined bureaucratic theory. Many of the key concepts within 21st century theory, including authority, hierarchy and accountability, originate from his observations of 19th century businesses *and government agencies*. That bureaucracy has remained a powerful way to describe and understand organisations is a tribute to the quality of his thinking. The other organisational theories which developed in the 20th and 21st century are often deployed against bureaucracy but they have failed to displace it.

Organisation theory also underpins management theory, as Hoyle (1986: 1) explains:

‘Organisation theory is theory-for-understanding. We can thus make a broad distinction between organisation theory and management theory, which is practical theory and hence has a narrower focus. However, the distinction cannot be pressed too hard since management theory is grounded in, and the research which it generates contributes to, organisation theory’.

Hoyle (1986) adds that organisation theory enhances understanding of leadership and management in schools.

The labels used to define this field in the UK have changed from ‘educational administration’ to ‘educational management’ and, more recently, to ‘educational leadership’ (Gunter 2004). These changes were reflected in the title of the UK’s professional association, now called the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS), and the Society’s international journal, Educational Management, Administration and Leadership (EMAL). In England, this shift is also exemplified by the opening of the National College for School *Leadership* in 2000, described as a paradigm shift by Bolam (2004). Bush (2008: 276) asks whether these are just semantic shifts or whether they represent a more fundamental change in the conceptualization of *principalship*? This leads to questions about the components of organisation theory and how they link to administration, management and leadership in education.

Characteristics of Organisation Theory

Organisation theory is contested terrain. This was evident most strongly in the work of Greenfield (1973) and Hodgkinson (1978) (see below) but can be observed less starkly in the different views expressed by theorists. Organisation theory is pluralist, with many ideas competing for attention, emanating from contrasting beliefs about the nature of organisation (Bolman and Deal 1991). This leads to the first characteristic, that theories are predominantly *normative* rather than descriptive (Bush 2011). A normative approach means that theorists are advocating how organisations ought to be led and managed, rather than explaining how they work (Simkins 1999). A further complication is that the author’s stance is not always *overtly* normative, leading to confusion between ‘is’ and ‘ought to be’.

A second, and related, characteristic is that theory tends to be *selective*. ‘The espousal of one theoretical model leads to the neglect of other approaches’ (Bush 2011: 29). In shining the light on one

aspect of organisations, other dimensions are left in the shade. The search for an over-arching theory (e.g. Ellstrom 1983) has largely failed.

Analysts seeking to explore theory, and to compare different approaches, have drawn on four aspects of organisations:

1. Goals

The purposes of organisations lie at the heart of theory and practice in education and beyond. Theorists often focus on two key dimensions of aims and purpose. First, who decides on the goals of the organisation? This aspect can be further elaborated to ask whether the goals are determined within or beyond the organisation. The second aspect relates to the level of agreement about those goals. Are they embraced by all stakeholders or are they imposed and/or contested?

2. Structure

Structure is one of the most visible aspects of organisations but it may also serve to differentiate them. Difference may be manifested by whether structures are vertical or horizontal. There is also tension between 'fixed' structures, with little regard for individual talents and experience, and 'flexible' structures, which adapt to suit the capabilities of staff. Is the main emphasis on the structure or on the people who fill the roles within it?

3. Culture

In contrast, organisational culture tends to be invisible. Notions of climate and ethos abound in the literature but these are intangible, based around values and beliefs. The main differences in the treatment of culture in organisational theory relate to how it is developed, sustained and modified. Values may be overt and non-negotiable in faith schools but much harder to pin down in secular organisations. Leaders also find that culture is much harder to change than structure because its intangibility makes it resilient to innovation.

4. Context

Schools are universal; a feature of every community in every country of the world. However, there is growing recognition of the importance of context (e.g. Leithwood et al 1999). A large school in a big city in a highly developed country is very different from a small rural school in a developing context. These differences pose a challenge for organisation theorists, who tend to assume that their models are universally applicable. The influence of context is manifested partly through the relationship between the organisation and its external environment. The environment provides the customer base for

commercial organisations and represents the stakeholders for public sector bodies. The nature of the relationship between organisations and stakeholders is an important variable for theorists.

Organisation Theory and School Leadership

There are many alternative, and competing, models of school leadership (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach 1999, Bush 2011, Bush and Glover 2014). What they have in common is their origins in organisation theory. In this section, I review the main leadership models.

Managerial leadership

Managerial leadership assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviours and that, if these functions are carried out competently, the work of others in the organisation will be facilitated. Most approaches to managerial leadership also assume that the behaviour of organizational members is largely rational. Authority and influence are allocated to formal positions in proportion to the status of those positions in the organizational hierarchy (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach 1999: 14). Leithwood et al (ibid: 15) add that 'there is evidence of considerable support in the literature and among practicing leaders for managerial approaches to leadership'. They add that 'positional power, in combination with formal policies and procedures, is the source of influence exercised by managerial leadership' (Ibid: 17).

As noted earlier, Weber's (1989) pioneering work was a major, and enduring, contribution to organisation theory. Derived from notions of bureaucracy, managerial leadership incorporates many aspects of Weber's model. These include:

- A hierarchical authority structure, with formal chains of command between the different positions in the hierarchy.
- A goal orientation, with clear targets being set by formal leaders.
- A division of labour, with employees (teachers) specialising in particular activities on the basis of their expertise.
- Impersonal relationships between staff, and with clients.
- Accountability to the formal hierarchy, rather than to school-level stakeholders.

(Bush 2011)

This model can be widely observed, especially in countries with centralised education systems, notably those in Africa, Asia, and Eastern and Southern Europe.

Managerialism

Where managerial leadership is strongly advocated, the management processes may be seen as more significant than the educational purposes they are intended to serve, leading to managerialism. This may lead to anxiety about the dangers of value-free management, focusing on efficiency for its own sake, what Hoyle and Wallace (2005: 68) describe as 'management to excess'. Referring to England, Simkins (2005: 13-14) claims that managerialist values, such as rigid planning and target-setting regimes, are being set against traditional professional values. Target-setting, of course, is a particular manifestation of the goal orientation which is a strong feature of bureaucracy. Goldspink (2007: 29) aligns managerialism with 'New Public Management' and adds that 'tight linkage between teachers, schools and the centre is seen as both desirable and achievable'. 'Tight linkage' is also a feature of Weber's bureaucratic model, within a strongly hierarchical framework.

Transformational Leadership

This form of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organisational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organisational goals, and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals, are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999: 9).

Transformational leadership has its origins in Weber's (1989) notion of charismatic leadership. This model focuses on the individual attributes of the senior leader in the organisation; the CEO or principal. This individual sets out a vision and exhorts or inspires organisational members to pursue activities linked to the vision. This is solo leadership at its most potent.

Leithwood's (1994: 506) research suggests that there is some empirical support for the essentially normative transformational leadership model. He reports on seven quantitative studies and concludes that:

'Transformational leadership practices, considered as a composite construct, had significant direct and indirect effects on progress with school-restructuring initiatives and teacher-perceived student outcomes'.

The transformational model is comprehensive in that it provides a normative approach to leadership which focuses on the process by which leaders seek to influence activities and outcomes. However, it may also be criticized as being a vehicle for control over teachers, through requiring adherence to the leader's values, and more likely to be accepted by the leader than the led (Chirichello 1999).

The contemporary policy climate within which schools have to operate also raises questions about the validity of the transformational model, despite its popularity in the literature. Transformational language is used by governments to encourage, or require, practitioners to adopt and implement centrally-determined policies. In South Africa, for example, the language of transformation is used to underpin a non-racist post-Apartheid education system. The policy is rich in symbolism but weak in practice because many school principals lack the capacity and the authority to implement change effectively (Bush et al 2009).

The English system may be seen to require school leaders to adhere to government policies, which affect aims, curriculum content and pedagogy, as well as values. In this respect, transformation may be a unilateral process of implementation, not a context-specific assessment of the needs of individual schools and their communities. There is 'a more centralized, more directed, and more controlled educational system [that] has dramatically reduced the possibility of realising a genuinely transformational education and leadership' (Bottery, 2001: 215). Another problem is that this form of heroic leadership does not lead to sustainable success for the organisation; the departure of the 'hero' often leads to organisational decline.

When transformational leadership works well, it has the potential to engage all stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives. The aims of leaders and followers coalesce to such an extent that it may be realistic to assume a harmonious relationship and a genuine convergence leading to agreed decisions. When 'transformation' is a cloak for imposing the leader's values, or for implementing the prescriptions of the government, then the process is political rather than genuinely transformational (Bush 2011: 86).

Transactional leadership

Transformational leadership is often contrasted with transactional approaches (Bush 2011, Miller and Miller 2001). The latter relates to relationships between leaders and teachers being based on exchange of valued resources. In its simplest form, teachers provide educational services (teaching, pupil welfare, extracurricular activities) in exchange for salaries and other rewards. This model emanates from the

political aspects of organisation theory. Leaders act politically when they engage in transactional behaviour as they are seeking to influence people to act in a particular way in order to secure personal or organisational objectives.

Moral leadership

The moral leadership model assumes that the critical focus of leadership ought to be on the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves. Authority and influence are to be derived from defensible conceptions of what is right or good (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999: 10). Several other terms have also been used to describe values-based leadership. These include ethical leadership (Stefkovich and Begley 2007, Starratt 2005), authentic leadership (Begley 2007), spiritual leadership (G. Woods 2007), and poetic leadership (Deal 2005).

West-Burnham (1997: 239) discusses two approaches to leadership which may be categorized as 'moral'. The first he describes as 'spiritual' and relates to 'the recognition that many leaders possess what might be called "higher order" perspectives. These may well be . . . represented by a particular religious affiliation'. Such leaders have a set of principles which provide the basis of self-awareness. Woods's (2007: 148) survey of headteachers in England found that 52% 'were inspired or supported in their leadership by some kind of spiritual power'. West-Burnham's (1997: 241) second category is 'moral confidence', the capacity to act in a way that is consistent with an ethical system and is consistent over time.

Sergiovanni (1991: 329) argues for both moral and managerial leadership:

'In the principalship, the challenge of leadership is to make peace with two competing imperatives, the managerial and the moral. The two imperatives are unavoidable and the neglect of either creates problems. Schools must be run effectively if they are to survive . . . But for the school to transform itself into an institution, a learning community must emerge . . . [This] is the moral imperative that principals face'.

Participative leadership

Participative leadership is one of the most important of the shared leadership models. Leithwood et al (1999: 12) say that this model 'assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group'. This is a normative model underpinned by four central arguments:

- Participation should increase school effectiveness, as teachers 'own' the decisions.
- Participation is justified by democratic principles, within a professional context.
- Participation serves to bond staff together, working towards agreed goals.
- Participation increases the total leadership available to the organisation, leading to the notion of leadership density.

(Bush 2011, Leithwood et al 1999, Sergiovanni 1984).

Savery et al (1992) show that staff desire to take part in decision-making, and conclude that 'people are more likely to accept and implement decisions in which they have participated'. Cludts (1999: 157) also stresses the ethical dimension of employee participation.

Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership has become the normatively preferred leadership model in the 21st century. Gronn (2010: 70) states that 'there has been an accelerating amount of scholarly and practitioner attention accorded [to] the phenomenon of distributed leadership'. Harris (2010: 55) adds that it 'represents one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership in the past decade'.

An important starting point for understanding distributed leadership is to uncouple it from positional authority. As Harris (2004: 13) indicates, 'distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role'. Gronn (2010: 70) refers to a normative switch 'from heroics to distribution' but also cautions against a view that distributed leadership necessarily means any reduction in the scope of the principal's role. Indeed, Hartley (2010: 27) argues that 'its popularity may be pragmatic: to ease the burden of overworked headteachers'. Lumby (2009: 320) adds that distributed leadership 'does not imply that school staff are necessarily enacting leadership any differently' from the time 'when heroic, individual leadership was the focus of attention'.

Bennett et al (2003: 3) claim that distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise. However, Hopkins and Jackson (2002) argue that formal leaders need to orchestrate and nurture the space for distributed leadership to occur, suggesting that it would be difficult to achieve without the active support of school principals. Given that leadership is widely regarded as an influence process, a central issue is 'who can exert influence

over colleagues and in what domains?' (Harris 2005: 165). Heads and principals retain much of the formal authority in schools, leading Hartley (2010: 82) to conclude that 'distributed leadership resides uneasily within the formal bureaucracy of schools'. However, the emphasis on 'informal sources of influence' (Harris 2010: 56) suggests that distributed leadership may also thrive if there is a void in the formal leadership of the organisation. Harris (2005: 167) also argues that 'distributed and hierarchical forms of leadership are not incompatible' but it is evident that distribution can work successfully only if formal leaders allow it to take root.

The interest in, and support for, distributed leadership is predicated on the assumption that it will bring about beneficial effects that would not occur with singular leadership. Leithwood et al (2006: 12) show that multiple leadership is much more effective than solo approaches:

'Total leadership accounted for a quite significant 27 per cent variation in student achievement across schools. This is a much higher proportion of explained variation (two to three times higher) than is typically reported in studies of individual headteacher effects'.

Leithwood et al (2006: 13) add that schools with the highest levels of student achievement attributed this to relatively high levels of influence from all sources of leadership. Hallinger and Heck (2010) also found that distributed leadership was significantly related to change in academic capacity and, thus, to growth in student learning.

As suggested earlier, the existing authority structure in schools provides a potential barrier to the successful introduction and implementation of distributed leadership. 'There are inherent threats to status and the status quo in all that distributed leadership implies' (Harris 2004: 20). Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) refer to the residual significance of authority and hierarchy, and note the 'dark side' of distributed leadership, managerialism in a new guise. More neutrally, it can be argued that distributed leadership leads to the power relationship between followers and leaders becoming blurred (Law 2010).

These reservations suggest that an appropriate climate is an essential pre-condition to meaningful distributed leadership. Harris (2005: 169) argues that 'the creation of collegial norms' are essential and adds that teachers need time to meet if collective leadership is to become a reality. She adds that cordial relationships are required with school managers, who may 'feel threatened' (ibid) by teachers taking on leadership roles. Despite these reservations, however, the research does show that distributed leadership has the potential to expand the scope of leadership, leading to enhanced student

outcomes while developing the formal leaders of the future. Gronn's (2010: 77) 'hybrid' model of leadership may offer the potential to harness the best of both individual and distributed approaches.

Teacher leadership

There are clear links between teacher leadership and distributed leadership. Frost (2008: 337) characterises the former as involving shared leadership, teachers' leadership of development work, teachers' knowledge building, and teachers' voice.

Muijs and Harris's (2007: 961) research in three UK schools showed that:

'Teacher leadership was seen to empower teachers, and contributed to school improvement through this empowerment and the spreading of good practice and initiatives generated by teachers. A range of conditions needed to be in place in schools for teacher leadership to be successful, including a culture of trust and support, structures that supported teacher leadership but were clear and transparent, strong leadership, with the head usually being the originator of teacher leadership, and engagement in innovative forms of professional development.'

Timperley (2005: 418) cautions that developing teacher leadership in ways that promote student achievement presents difficulties. Teacher leaders with high acceptability among their colleagues are not necessarily those with appropriate expertise. Conversely, the micro-politics within a school can reduce the acceptability of those who have the expertise. Stevenson (2012) argues that the interpretation of teacher leadership is managerialist in nature and inherently conservative. Helterbran (2008: 363) notes that teacher leadership 'remains largely an academic topic and, even though inroads have been made, teacher leadership remains more a concept than an actuality'. Muijs and Harris (2007: 126) conclude that 'teacher leadership requires active steps to be taken to constitute leadership teams and provide teachers with leadership roles. A culture of trust and collaboration is essential, as is a shared vision of where the school needs to go, clear line management structures and strong leadership development programmes'.

Post-modern leadership

This model is closely linked to subjective organisation theory (Greenfield 1973). Keough and Tobin's (2001: 2) definition illustrates this connection:

‘Current post-modern culture celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths as defined by experience and revels in the loss of absolute authority’.

The distinctive feature of this model is its emphasis on the individual. Instead of organisational goals and structures, there are numerous subjective views, which may or may not coalesce. The very notion of ‘organisation’ is challenged by this perspective, where the emphasis is on relationships rather than formal authority. Chan and Dixon (2012: 144) add that post-modern approaches are ‘pluralistic and emancipatory’. Surprisingly, perhaps, this model has become marginal since Greenfield’s heyday in the 1970s and 1980s. While academics readily acknowledge the primacy of individual perceptions in planning and conducting qualitative research, they are much less comfortable in applying this to organisational analysis. This may be because the post-modern view offers few clues as to how leaders are supposed to operate.

Contingent leadership

The models of leadership examined above are all partial. They provide valid and helpful insights into one particular aspect of leadership. None of these models provide a complete picture of school leadership. As Lambert (1995: 2) notes, there is ‘no single best type’. The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts, and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a ‘one size fits all’ stance:

‘This approach assumes that what is important is how leaders respond to the unique organizational circumstances or problems . . . there are wide variations in the contexts for leadership and that, to be effective, these contexts require different leadership responses’ (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999: 15)

Yukl (2002: 234) adds that ‘the managerial job is too complex and unpredictable to rely on a set of standardised responses to events. Effective leaders are continuously reading the situation and evaluating how to adapt their behaviour to it’. As Vanderhaar, Munoz and Rodosky (2007) suggest, leadership is contingent on the setting.

Leadership requires effective diagnosis of problems, followed by adopting the most appropriate response to the issue or situation (Morgan 1997). This reflexive approach is particularly important in periods of turbulence when leaders need to be able to assess the situation carefully and react as appropriate rather than relying on a standard leadership model.

Leadership Models and Organisation Theory

The established concepts of administration and management have been joined, or superceded, by the language of leadership but the activities undertaken by principals and senior staff resist such labels. Successful leaders are increasingly focused on learning, the central and unique purpose of educational organizations. They also face unprecedented accountability pressures in what is clearly a 'results driven' business. As these environmental pressures intensify, leaders and managers require greater understanding, skill and resilience to sustain their institutions. Principals and senior staff need an appreciation of theory, to inform and underpin their professional practice.

Each of the leadership models discussed in this paper is partial. They provide distinct but uni-dimensional perspectives on school leadership. A helpful way to distinguish between the models is to consider how the four characteristics of organisation theory discussed earlier apply to each of them.

Goals

The various organisation theories make different assumptions about the nature of goal-setting. Managerial leadership treats goal-setting as the prerogative of the positional leader (principal), who may or may not consult others before determining and articulating the goals. Followers are assumed to accept and implement these goals without question. In centralised systems, in particular, leaders are assumed to have the formal authority to decide the aims and purposes of their organisations, as long as they are consistent with external imperatives.

Transformational leadership advocates also regard goal-setting as largely the role of the principal but the process of follower acceptance differs. Instead of relying on positional authority, such leaders use their charismatic power to persuade or inspire colleagues to endorse the goals and to work towards their achievement. Such heroic leaders may be able to gain support for both worthy and less worthy aims – consider the contrast between Nelson Mandela and Adolf Hitler.

Transactional leadership theorists assume that goals are contested and that leaders have to negotiate with followers to secure acceptance of their own priorities. By offering inducements, for example in the form of promotion, people may be persuaded to support the leader's goals. Such endorsements are short-term, however, and limited to the specific aims sought by the leader at the time of the exchange.

Moral leadership shares many characteristics with transformational approaches but goals are assumed to be worthy and ethical. In this model, followers are ready to adopt and pursue the goals if they share

the moral purpose of the leader. In faith schools, for example, beliefs are widely shared and goals may be underpinned by a spiritual dimension. However, this can be uncomfortable for those staff who do not share the values of the majority. Faith schools in the UK invariably require applicants for headships to be active members of the relevant religious group, to sustain its spiritual values.

Participative leadership differs from the models discussed so far, in seeking to achieve consensus over the goals to be pursued by the organisation. Investing time in this process is thought to pay dividends through a greater commitment to the goals, arising from staff 'ownership' as a result of the participative process. Difficulties may arise, however, if the agreed goals are not endorsed by the formal leader who may be left in the uncomfortable, and unsustainable, position of defending goals which s/he does not support.

Distributed leadership arises from 'collaboration and joint working' (Harris 2004: 16), which makes it sound very similar to participative leadership and other shared approaches. It is distinctive, however, in uncoupling leadership from formal authority and focusing on influence, which can emanate from any part of the organisation. However, it is not clear how the goals will be determined. Gronn (2010: 74) argues that heads retain considerable power so it is unlikely that goals will be pursued without their active support.

Teacher leadership empowers teachers (Muijs and Harris 2007) but it is unclear whether this empowerment extends to goal setting. The most likely scenario is that teachers may be able to set goals for their departments and sub-units, as long as they are consistent with wider school aims. The head is usually the originator of teacher leadership (ibid), and is unlikely to support this approach if it seems likely to lead to goal conflict.

Post-modern leadership disputes the notion of organisational goals. Greenfield (1973: 557) argues that they are simply the personal aims of the most powerful individuals. This links to a fundamental criticism of much organisation theory, that it reifies schools. 'A collectivity such as a school is referred to as if it was a corporate entity . . . independent of the people who constitute it (Hoyle and Wallace 2005: 12-13). Within this model, school goals and visions are dismissed as fictions.

Structure

The notion of organisational structure takes on different meanings within the various models. Managerial leadership treats structure as hierarchical with decision-making arising from positional

authority; a top-down approach. Particularly in centralised systems, the structure is vertical and accountability is to the next level in the hierarchy, within and beyond the organisation. The positions in the structure are predominant and there is little attention to individual variables.

Transformational leadership models also assume a largely vertical structure because so much is invested in the inspirational power of the leader. Followers are central to this approach and this also implies hierarchical relationships. There is limited scope for followers to contribute to decision-making as the main assumption is that the top leader (the principal) is able to persuade followers of the worth of his or her vision.

Transactional leadership models imply a more fragmented structure, with leaders having to negotiate with followers to secure implementation of their aims and policies. There is an exchange process, with inducements being offered to secure at least short-term support for the leader's plans. This process does not fit comfortably with traditional hierarchical structures.

Moral leadership models offer little guidance on structure, as their focus is on values and beliefs, notions easier to align with culture than with structure. However, the relationships between leader and followers may be seen as similar to those prevailing in transformational models, albeit with a stronger ethical base. While transformational leadership may be criticised for not distinguishing between worthy and unworthy goals, moral leadership explicitly targets goals consistent with the values of the leader. This suggests a strong emphasis on hierarchy, as in many faith-based schools, but with a strong moral framework.

Participative leadership differs from the models discussed above by emphasising lateral structures. The assumption is that all members of the organisation should have an equal opportunity to contribute to decision-making. In professional organisations, such as schools, expertise is widely spread and structures are seen as vehicles for enabling such expertise to inform decision-making. The hierarchy is flattened and is much less pyramidal than typical managerial structures. Such horizontal structures are more frequently encountered in small elementary schools than in large high schools.

Distributed leadership, with its emphasis on influence rather than formal authority, might appear to suggest flatter structures but, as Gronn (2010) notes, principals retain considerable residual power, suggesting that hierarchy is by no means redundant. Bennett et al (2003) argue that distribution may arise from a variety of influences, including a top-down initiative from a strong or charismatic leader.

This suggests that distributed leadership resists the conventional distinction between vertical and horizontal structures and may include elements of both approaches, depending on the specific context.

Teacher leadership indicates lateral structures as teachers work collaboratively with colleagues to initiate change. If this also leads to whole-school innovation, this might be seen as an inverted, or 'bottom-up', structure. Muijs and Harris's (2007: 961) research in three UK schools showed that 'teacher leadership was characterised by a variety of formal and informal groupings'. It is difficult to imagine distributed leadership becoming embedded in schools without teacher leaders. This suggests that teacher leadership structures should be conceptualised as both horizontal and vertical, as noted above.

Post-modern leadership, and the related subjective models, eschew the concept of organisational structure, preferring to discuss interactions between participants, a more fluid notion than fixed structures. Greenfield (1973: 565) dismisses structure as 'external trappings' and argues the centrality of 'human foundations'. Post-modern leadership focuses on the centrality of individual behaviour. In this model, people do not simply fit into predetermined structures; they actively create and recreate the relationships which underpin such frameworks. This links to the balance between role taking and role making (Hall 1997). Do teachers and leaders accept their job descriptions or reshape them in their own image?

Culture

There is increasing interest in the impact of culture on education. This may occur at two levels; societies and organisations. Bottery (2004: 36) warns of 'cultural globalisation', arising from the uncritical adoption of international norms, regardless of local or national customs. Dimmock and Walker (2002) discuss seven dimensions of societal culture, each expressed as a continuum. These include power distribution/concentration, and group/self orientation, which are particularly relevant to organisation theory and school leadership.

Societal culture provides the enduring backdrop for organisational culture, which leaders may be able to influence. Organisational culture focuses on the value and beliefs of members, often enacted through shared norms and meanings. Culture is expressed through rituals and ceremonies and may lead to the identification of heroes and heroines who embody the school's cultural values.

In linking culture to school leadership, a central factor is whether or not culture is perceived to be unitary within the organisation. In managerial and transformational leadership, a unified culture is assumed, often linked to the principal's vision for the school, which followers are expected to embrace. Within moral leadership, the culture is linked to the prevailing values of the dominant group. In faith schools, for example, the specific denomination has certain established beliefs, which may be further reinforced by recruiting students, and appointing staff, who are members of the specified faith.

Within participative, distributed and teacher leadership models, there may also be a uniform culture, but this is assumed to emerge, and to be reinforced, through collegial activity rather than being set at the top of the organisation. Within transactional models, there is a greater emphasis on sub-cultures, based on divergent values and interests. These are reconciled, in the short-term, through the exchange process which characterises the model. Post-modern leadership extends this fragmentation to the individual level, with its assumption that values and beliefs are subjective.

However, these various perspectives also acknowledge that culture is enduring and slow to change. Hargreaves (1999: 59) notes that people's values and beliefs are 'resistant to change'. Culture is most amenable to change if one or more of the following circumstances arise:

- The school faces an obvious crisis, such as a negative inspection report or declining student numbers.
- The leader is very charismatic, commanding loyalty and followership. This is a strong feature of transformational leadership.
- The leader succeeds a very poor principal, so that staff are seeking a new direction.

(adapted from Hargreaves 1999: 59-60)

Even in such circumstances, however, cultural change is by no means assured. As a consequence, leaders often resort to modifying structure. Although structure may be seen as the 'physical manifestation of . . . culture' (Bush 2011: 180), Schein (1997) cautions that culture cannot be inferred from structure as it could result from different assumptions.

Context

As noted above, schools are universal but organisation theorists tend to give insufficient attention to context when discussing the various models. For example, school size can have a significant impact on the applicability of leadership models. Participative approaches are much easier to adopt in small

elementary schools while large high schools are stratified by subject departments, and in other ways, leading to managerial and transactional approaches being more salient. Another significant variable relates to location. Rural schools may have a closer identification with their communities while those in large cities find such contacts more difficult to develop and sustain. In addition, differences across countries influence the validity of leadership models. In highly centralised contexts, as found in much of Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe, bureaucracy and hierarchy are emphasised, making it almost inevitable that principals will operate as managerial leaders.

Organisation theorists have responded to such contextual variables by developing the notion of contingent leadership. In this model, leaders respond to the unique circumstances or problems they face by adapting their behaviour. Principals need to acquire, and to use, a large repertoire of leadership practices (Leithwood et al 1999: 15). This calls for 'conceptual pluralism' (Bolman and Deal 1991), rather than rigid adherence to one approach regardless of context and circumstances, a message which is applicable to both practitioners and theorists.

Conclusion

Managerial leadership has been discredited and dismissed as limited and technicist, but it is an essential component of successful leadership, ensuring the implementation of the school's vision and strategy. Management without vision is rightly criticized as 'managerialist' but vision without effective implementation is bound to lead to frustration. Managerial leadership is a vital part of the armoury of any successful principal.

Transformational leadership is currently in vogue as it accords closely with the emphasis on vision as the central dimension of leadership. Successful leaders are expected to engage with staff and other stakeholders to produce higher levels of commitment to achieving the goals of the organization which, in turn, are linked to the vision. There is evidence to suggest that transformational leadership is effective in improving student outcomes (Leithwood, 1994) but this model also has two major limitations. First, it may be used as a vehicle for the manipulation or control of teachers who are required to support the 'vision' and aims of the leader. Where this fails to take root, transactional approaches may be required to secure adherence to the leader's policies. Second, the language of transformation may be used to secure the implementation of centrally determined policies, not the identification of school-level vision and goals.

Distributed leadership has become the normatively preferred leadership model in the 21st century. Harris (2010) argues that it is one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership. As with participative leadership, it can be differentiated from several other models by its focus on collective, rather than singular, leadership. Leithwood et al's (2006) important study of the impact of school leadership led to an evidence-based claim that leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed. Gronn's (2010) 'hybrid' model of leadership may offer the potential to harness the best of both individual and distributed approaches.

Teacher leadership is often linked to distributed leadership. A key distinction can be made between teachers' classroom leadership, which may involve other adults, and their wider school role. Promoting teacher leadership provides greater leadership capacity and capability, and also offers the prospect of a 'ready-made' cohort when middle and senior leadership positions become available. Teacher leadership is more likely to succeed where it is fostered and nurtured by principals and senior leaders.

Moral leadership is based on the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves. Leaders are expected to behave with integrity, and to develop and support goals underpinned by explicit values. Such leadership may be found in faith schools, where the values are essentially spiritual, or may be a product of the leader's own background and experience. The main difficulty arises when staff or stakeholders do not support the values of leaders. This is likely to be uncomfortable for the people concerned and may lead to dissonance within the school.

Contingent leadership acknowledges the diverse nature of school contexts, and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' stance. The educational context is too complex and unpredictable for a single leadership approach to be adopted for all events and issues. Leaders need to be able to read the situation and adopt the most appropriate response. Contingent leadership, then, is not a single model but represents a mode of responsiveness which requires effective diagnosis followed by careful selection of the most appropriate leadership style. Fully rounded leaders have a full repertoire of practices which are deployed as required to address the issues and problems they face.

In this paper, I have sought to establish that there are significant connections between organisation and leadership theories. However, scholars rarely seek to test such links. Our understanding of school leadership theory and practice would be greatly enhanced by more studies which seek to apply organisation theory to a wide variety of school contexts, drawing on the four constructs outlined earlier.

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