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The Most Effective Ways to Build a Strong Culture to Endure Times of Change

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THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO BUILD A STRONG SCHOOL CULTURE TO ENDURE TIMES

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President John F. Kennedy once stated, "We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives." Thank you to my family for believing in me, my colleagues for challenging me, and my many life coaches for supporting me. Thank you for pushing me to be a better person, student, teacher and leader.

Abstract

Times of change are inevitable. It is common for times of change to be accompanied with feelings of uncertainty. Leaders cannot predict change, but they can prepare for change by creating strong cultures of trust and building capacity within their organizations. In terms of educational organizations, it is crucial for administrators to implement leadership practices that provide faculty and students with safety, consistency and supportive social relationships to combat change and uncertainty. A review of literature will seek to answer the question: How can an administrator effectively build a school culture that can endure times of change? This thesis reviews the research that explores how open communication, consistent leadership behaviors, caring leadership and collegial trust are essential to building a strong culture of trust. This thesis will also investigate the impact of which shared leadership, collaboration and collective decision-making have on an administrator's ability to build a capacity for change and leadership in their faculty. Finally, this paper will review how administrators can sustain strong cultures of trust and high levels of capacity within their institutions.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A leader will more than likely experience leading through some extent of change. At times, leaders have had to and will have to change the narrative to gain the support and buy-in of their faculty. In the context of educational organizations, schools are supposed to be places that ensure safety and structure for all students and staff members. This can become jeopardized in times of change. It is in such times of uncertainty that people turn to designated leaders. In the education system this might be superintendents, principals, deans, or team leaders. When cultures of change are established, it is important for leaders to counteract feelings of fear, resistance, victimization and anger. Leaders are expected to guide and support learning and growth from the most difficult situations.

Change in any organizational system is inevitable. The way in which people in roles of power choose to lead through change is critical to the overall "health" of the organization. The management strategies a leader chooses to lean on and implement through a period of change directly affect the culture, community and outcomes of a work environment. Opinions and research findings are conclusive that leaders successfully navigate times of change by implementing practices that develop trust, capacity and security. Workplaces that lack trust are more "likely to experience the overheated friction of conflict as well as a lack of progress toward its admirable goals" (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. ix). Workplaces that have a low capacity for change crumble due to a lack of resilience, adaptability, and confidence in leadership capabilities (Benett, Ylimaki, Dugan & Brunderman, 2014; Collie & Martin, 2016).

Regardless of if the change is predicted or not, leaders need to employ the best leadership practices that allow their organizations to endure and ultimately, overcome it.

Types of Change

Before the most effective practices of leadership can be analyzed, the different classifications of change need to be addressed. This paper will address the idea that change can be classified as planned versus unplanned. Throughout a lifetime, people's lives are characterized and affected by times of change and uncertainty (Collie & Martin, 2016). There will be times when administration or management teams expect change and can be proactive in how they prepare for a system shift (Macnamara, 2006). Conversely, change can also occur unexpectedly. This type of change tends to onset feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and upheaval. Times of uncertainty are needed for change to occur in organizations (Karp & Tveteraas Helgo, 2007). Leaders need to be mindful that they cannot predict how people will react to change (Karp & Tveteraas Helgo, 2007). It is also important to note that planned change, even with the most thought-out plan tends to occur in a more chaotic and disruptive fashion (Macnamara, 2006). Finally, change is often identified as positive or negative. Predicted change is most often viewed as positive because there are resources, strategic planning strategies and support available for all stakeholders throughout the transition period.

The Importance of Effective Leadership in Times of Change

Predicted or not, change will occur internally and externally in a workplace which affects the entire organizational system. Michael Fullan (2001) strongly believes change

is more about strategizing and less about the strategies themselves. Change can be analyzed, led and understood to some extent, but cannot be controlled. In recent events, there have been times of racial and political unrest during a global pandemic that have shifted core values, beliefs and the workings within systems nationwide. There have been high levels of uncertainty and cries for interdependence. Work communities need psychological safety (Edmundson, 1999) that only effective leaders can provide. In times of discomfort and uncertainty, people look to leader figures for guidance. Leaders who they trust to make informed decisions, who distribute power and openly communicate their ideas and plans to address and combat the change. Many researchers and authors concur that leaders must create organizational trust, be transparent in communication and establish interdependence among members before they can effectively lead through a time of transition or change (Edmundson, 2014; Rivas & Jones, 2014; & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). These factors play largely into an organization's ability to construct and maintain a strong culture to endure times of change. Work communities experiencing change without leadership rooted in structural guidance or relational support are likely to crumble. Research shows principals have the second greatest influence on student and whole school success (Sanzo et al., 2010). Principals have the unique opportunity to influence many stakeholders and remind them of the big picture and keep everyone in pursuit of the shared vision (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). It is when a fundamental reason for a change initiative is communicated, members are more likely to develop an emotional or motivational

commitment to a leader's vision, especially in times of chaotic or unexpected change

(Karp & Tveteraas Helgo, 2007).

The Importance of Trust

Researchers collectively define trust to be a vulnerable relationship between two parties

based on the confidence that both parties are competent, reliable, honest, benevolent,

and openly communicate with one another (Akar, 2018; Babaoglan, 2016; Kars, 2018;

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2000). Trust has also been defined as "believing in others in

the absence of compelling reasons to disbelieve" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, p.

340). According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, trust is crucial to an efficient, successful

and interdependent society (2000). People are expected to handle finances honestly,

obey laws, construct sensible roads and protect citizens honorably. There are many

facets of dependence that have been created based on the confidence and expectations

that each person will fulfill their role in society. In the context of schools, the most

common dependencies exist between administrators, teachers, parents and students.

To ensure stability and success, these social relationships must be rooted in trust

(Demir, 2015). Trust is a hard construct for researchers to measure which is why most

studies that focus on trust collect data through surveys or interviews.

The Importance of Building Capacity

Capacity building is a continuous improvement strategy toward the creation of a

sustainable and effective organization (National Council of Nonprofits, 2021). High-

capacity schools are defined as having a collaborative culture among staff. Leaders need

to provide faculty with a work environment that allows all members to extend their

capacity so that all members can thrive and develop (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). Schools need to have the capacity to not only endure times of change and uncertainty but overcome. Educational leaders can build capacity for change by supporting and developing resilience among staff members.

Research Focus

This thesis will analyze leadership strategies and characteristics in accordance with administrators (principal, assistant principal, or dean) in the organizational system of education. It should be noted that research findings related to other organizational systems might be applicable to an educational setting. A review of literature will seek to answer the question: How can an administrator effectively build a school culture that can endure times of change? Discussion of leadership strategies, various contexts of change, and leadership behaviors will provide a synthesized perspective of expected versus unexpected change in a school environment. The review will examine leadership strategies that highlight various aspects of responsibility, teamwork, relational capacity and communication styles. It will be helpful for administrators and teachers to identify the most effective ways to increase rapport and sustain trust in a school climate during times of uncertainty and change.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Search Procedures

To locate the literature for this thesis, searches of ERIC, SAGE, EBSCO MegaFILE and Educational Journals were conducted for publications from (1954-2020). Sources were narrowed and refined by only reviewing studies from peer reviewed journals that had an emphasis on best practices of leadership and administration that addressed the guiding questions of this thesis. Keywords that were used in these searches include: leadership, trust, open communication, strategic planning, collaboration, school, teachers, organizational trust, positive culture, change and building capacity. This chapter will additionally review the importance of establishing trust and building capacity in a work culture prior to strategic planning efforts.

Creating a Culture of Trust

Organizational trust is a "multidimensional concept" (Kars & Inandi, 2018, p. 147) consisting of confidence and positive expectations of members' goals, actions, and intentions (Akar, 2018; Babaoğlan, 2016). For school organizations to be effective and successful, faculty must have confidence in themselves, their administrators, and colleagues (Akar, 2018). School culture is more likely to crumble when faced with times of change if faculty doubts the vision, intentions and decisions made by their administrators. Many school administrators believe establishing a culture of trust is essential to the success and positive environment of a school or educational institution (Cosner, 2011). Research has found schools with strong cultures of trust to have higher levels of student success (Louis et al., 2016) and healthy trusting relationships among

administrators, teachers, and students (Cosner, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

In times of change and uncertainty, faculty need to trust their leaders and colleagues to

make informed decisions that are in the best interest of all members.

Researchers Sanzo, Sherman and Clayton (2010) designed a study to explore the

practices of middle school principals that enabled them to effectively lead successful

schools. Three guiding questions were asked: "How do leaders develop a shared

understanding of their organizations?", "How do leaders support and sustain school

performance?" and "What do leaders do to facilitate change?" (Sanzo et al., 2010, p.

34). Schools that met Commonwealth of Virginia accreditation standards; those whose

schools met the federal NCLB accreditation standards; and principals in at least their

third year as principal created the criteria for the principals that were surveyed. The

principals who attended the one-hour interviews represented a diverse cross-section of

school sizes, locations, and student populations. Common themes of practices found

from the interviews were: sharing leadership, facilitating professional development,

leading with an instructional orientation, and acting openly and honestly (Sanzo et al.,

2010). Sanzo et al. (2010) concluded that principals cannot lead schools without staff

collaboration, open communication and trust. Trust can be fostered through strategic,

intentional and thoughtful practices by leaders to create a genuine, respectful work

environment where staff feels free to take risks (Sanzo et al., 2010). Research suggests a

culture of trust can be built when leaders engage in honest, open communication, are

consistent in their leadership behaviors, share and delegate leadership responsibilities,

as well as genuinely care for their organization and members (Sanzo et al., 2010;

Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). Once a strong culture of trust is established, it is the leader's job to create a system or structure of sustainability.

Open Communication

Research supports the idea that trust builds and results from openness in organizations (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Researchers have identified three key facets that affect perceptions of trustworthiness in terms of communication: (1) explicit information, (2) adequate explanations for decisions, and (3) open communication (Whitener et al., 1998). In times of change, it is imperative for faculty members to feel confident in their leader's ability to communicate accurate information and trust them to make informed decisions. Sanzo et al. (2010) found both principals and staff value a work environment of openness and honesty. Principal interview responses affirmed the need for administrators to be up front with faculty about decisions as well as their expectations of student and teacher performance (Sanzo et al. 2010). Sanzo et al. (2010) noted one principal specifically was moved to tears reflecting on the honesty and openness of relationships among stakeholders of his school. Open, candid communication among leaders and members holds power and respect in any organization regardless of planned or unplanned change. When there are high levels of trust in organizations, members are more likely to openly share information related to concern, errors, personal opinions and ideas (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). It is important that information is accessible and frequently communicated to all members of an

organization and that all members feel they can engage openly in discourse with one another (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014).

Roberts and O'Reilly (1974) conducted a study to examine the relationship between trust, influence and mobility. The participants were from four diverse organizations. The first, a state mental health outpatient facility, where 101 members at all job levels were questioned and had a 98% response rate. The second, a high technology military unit where 95 questionnaires were given to enlisted men and officers, a 55% response rate. The third, a medical center emergency room and outpatient facility consisting of 54 nursing and clerical employees with a 100% response rate. The fourth, a financial institution consisting of 179 respondents from six branch offices, with a 90% response rate. Roberts and O'Reilly concluded that there was a strong correlation between high levels of trust between superiors and subordinates and high levels of confidence in subordinates of the accuracy of information being disclosed to them by their superiors (1974). Additionally, Roberts and O'Reilly (1974) concluded that subordinates have a greater desire to engage in communication with their superiors. Conversely, when there are high levels of distrust between a subordinate and a superior, the subordinate is more likely to withhold information and avoid communicating with the superior.

Consistency in Leadership Behaviors

Openness and authenticity are two of the central components of trusting relationships (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) conducted a conceptual and empirical study that measured faculty trust in the principal

and faculty trust in colleagues using trust scales. A sample of 86 middle schools provided

2,741 teacher responses was used to evaluate such trust relations. The middle schools

were chosen from the same states but varied in geographic areas and socio-economic

levels. Faculty were given two six-point scale Likert descriptive questionnaires to

complete; the organizational climate description questionnaire (OCDQ-RM) and the

organizational health inventory (OHI-RM) (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). A shortened

variation of Henderson and Hoys' (1983) leadership authenticity scale (LAS) was

implemented for this study. One specific item on this scale was "The principal's beliefs

and actions are consistent" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, p. 343). Tschannen-Moran

and Hoy (1998) found collegial leadership, friendly, supportive, open principal

behaviors, to make a strong and significant contribution to faculty trust in the principal.

They also found a sixty percent variance in the faculty trust in the principal to be

explained by the authenticity of the teacher and principal behavior. It was the

authenticity of the principal behaviors however, that makes a significant independent

contribution (Beta = 0.828, p < 0.01) to the overall openness and level of trust in the

schools (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). They found leader authenticity to be closely

related to trust in the principal, while teacher authenticity is closely related to trust in

colleagues.

Hanford and Leithwood (2012) conducted a study that analyzed the relationship

of trust among teachers in schools with student achievement and if trust in school

leadership is an influencer on such trust. The study aimed to identify leadership

practices that teachers interpret as signs of trustworthiness of their principals. Data for

the study was provided through post-observation interviews with 24 randomly selected

teachers in three "high trust" and three "low trust" schools. The study concluded that

teacher trust in principals is most shaped by leadership practices, which teachers

interpret as indicators of competence, consistency, reliability, openness, respect, and

integrity. Research has found intentional, consistent administrative practices to foster a

sincere and safe work atmosphere where faculty members feel free to take risks

(Maslow, 1954; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Sanzo et al., 2010). Members watch and

evaluate their leaders and the actions they take. It is through consistency in leadership

behaviors that leaders can create a sense of predictability, safety and structure for

members. Researchers claim principals who demonstrate collegial leadership are often

regarded as approachable, helpful, supportive, and genuinely concerned about personal

and professional needs of their faculty (Kim & Henkin, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy,

1998). Administrators can achieve this through intentionally keeping communication

lines open with all staff members and making themselves available to reflect and

process with faculty. When leaders are consistent with their conversations and actions,

a sense of trust can be developed between a leader and an employee (Akar, 2018; Kim

& Henkin, 2005; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006). Whitener et al. (1998) found that when

employees can predict future manager behaviors, they become more willing to take

risks in the workplace. Based on research related to consistency in leadership behaviors,

people crave familiarity and predictability in the behaviors and actions of their leaders in

times of change and uncertainty.

In the context of education, leadership behaviors of school administrators are influential on all stakeholders but most specifically teachers (Kars & Inandi, 2018). Cosner (2011) conducted a study that examined leadership perceptions and practices of 11 high school principals who were known for their success in developing capacity in their schools. Half of which conclusively responded that there was a visible concern between the quality of relationships among staff members and trust when they began their principalship. Two of the principals spent extensive time fostering the process of creating and setting norms for staff interactions. Cosner (2011) also found harmonious responses among the principals regarding administrators needing to establish norms among staff and be consistent in how they reinforce said norms to gain the trust of staff members. It is when actions violate agreed upon norms that the development of trust has the potential to be compromised. When leaders, specifically in an educational setting, consistently model and instill behaviors that positively influence and motivate employees they are also setting the standard for how educators should lead students (Akar, 2018).

Caring Leadership

Researchers Louis, Murphy and Smylie define caring as the regard for another's well-being or affective-based trust (2016). Researchers have found educational settings to be more conducive to caring (Louis et al., 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). According to Louis et al. (2016) the core elements of caring relationships in schools are attentiveness, motivational displacement, situationality, mutuality, and authenticity. Louis et al. (2016) drew on data from a five-year study that was conducted to evaluate

the relationship of leadership to student learning for their analysis on caring leadership. The study randomly sampled 3,900 teachers in 134 elementary and secondary schools in 40 districts in nine states to be surveyed. Louis et al. used five survey-based measures in their analysis: (1) Caring Principal Leadership, (2) Academic Support for Student Learning, (3) Teacher Collaboration, (4) Teachers' Deprivatized Practice, and (5) Collective Responsibility for the academic environment. The study used the SPSS analysis package to measure survey responses. The Cronbach's alpha (assesses internal consistencies) for the measure of caring principal leadership was 0.93. The two survey items related to Principal Caring that had the closest score to Cronbach's Alpha were "My school administrator develops an atmosphere of caring and trust" and "In general, I believe my principal's motives and intentions are good" (2016). Louis et al. (2016) concluded that school administrators who demonstrate and encourage caring behaviors in their schools contribute at large to the overall success and feelings of trust within their buildings. Staff members need to feel empowered by their principal to make their own decisions and to work with them in a cooperative, professional manner. Louis et al. (2016) also concluded there to be a significant indirect correlation between Caring Principal Leadership and student achievement.

Additionally, Louis et al. (2016) drafted several general practices that could be expected of caring leaders:

Engaging the school community in the vision and challenge of being a caring school. Assessing the capabilities, contexts, and expressions and experiences of caring that can or should occur and engaging the school community in self-

assessments related to caring. Shaping school organizational culture through

supportive structures, social relationships, politics, and reinforcing the norms

and values that constitute a school's organization. Cultivating the larger systems

of caring relationships to which school members belong, such as parent

partnerships, and partnerships and projects with community organizations (p.

320).

Caring school culture should be evident among students, teachers, support staff and

administrators (Louis et al., 2016; Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). This is where consistency

in leadership behaviors is crucial.

Gale and Bishop (2014) conducted a study to describe and analyze middle-level

principals' perceptions of effective school leadership practices. The data was rooted in

qualitative methods due to the purpose of finding practices and characteristics of

effective leaders. Twenty-four principals were interviewed, answering a common series

of standardized open-ended questions and followed throughout a school day. Principals

were also required to share documents that highlighted specific beliefs and values held

within their school climates. The study concluded that principals feel it is necessary for

leaders to demonstrate competency in developmentally responsive and relational

leadership. Leaders must foster relationships consisting of trust, respect, and knowledge

of needs, both developmental and academic of students and staff they serve in their

schools. Every participating principal reported having plenty of energy and enthusiasm

to continue their leadership track. Collectively the principals showed resilience, energy,

flexibility, and engagement in their work. Researchers have conclusively found similar

characteristics to be present in educational organizations that exhibit high levels of trust; characteristics such as compassion, competence, consistency, transparency, and open communication, risk-taking, interdependence and vulnerability (Demir, 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 1999). In times of change, leaders need to create social environments where members feel cared for and valued (Gustafsson, 2020). Administrators have the opportunity to cultivate such environments and model caring relationships among teachers, students and nonprofessional staff members.

Collegial Trust

For an organization to develop a strong culture of trust, trusting relationships must exist not only between teachers and administrators but also among teacher colleagues. When a school culture reflects values of openness, trust and collaboration teachers are more likely to work together as a team (Demir, 2015). Edmundson (1999) conducted a study that tested eight hypotheses related to team performance, psychological safety and efficacy. Approximately 5,000 employees that created 53 work teams. Surveys, observations, and interviews were conducted for data collection purposes. The study concluded that structural and interpersonal factors both influence learning and performance in teams. With the promise of times of uncertainty and change, teams can provide psychological safety for team members (Edmundson, 1999). There is a great need for team members to feel safe to ask questions, seek help and address mistakes in times of uncertainty (Edmundson, 1999; Mansfield et al. 2012). Teachers are more likely to be vulnerable and take risks in their work environment if they feel their colleagues are reliable or trustworthy (Kars & Inandi, 2018).

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2014) conducted a study to explore the relationships between faculty trust in the principal, principal leadership behaviors, school culture, and student achievement. The findings were compatible with that of Hanford and Leithwood. Teachers (approximately 3,215) from 64 elementary, middle, and high schools in two school districts were surveyed anonymously. The study assessed faculty trust using a subscale of the Faculty Trust Scales. Teachers evaluated their principals in terms of benevolence, honesty, openness, competence, and reliability. The study concluded that staff trust in the principal was related to perceptions of collegial and instructional leadership and characteristics of school climate. One implication made from the study was that principals need to engage collegially with teachers in ways that are open, honest, and kind while at the same time demonstrating competency in decision making and overall knowledge in administering academic programs to achieve faculty trust. Both studies affirm and encourage trust-building practices among principals and staff members.

Cosner (2011) conducted a study to further understand how principals foster collegial trust as a capacity-building mechanism, specifically at the secondary level. The study consisted of interviewing 11 principals who were nominated for being experts in building capacity in their school. The interviewees had to have been a principal at their current school for a minimum of three years. Cosner held personal interviews with each principal and analyzed documentary evidence of improvement plans, past improvement plans summative reports, staff meeting agendas, professional development schedules, department meeting agendas, etc. (2011). In second and third round interviews, Cosner

asked the principals more specific questions such as "Were there things you did to support the development of relationships and trust between staff members in this school?" (2011, p. 261). Cosner (2011) concluded that principals must support and encourage trust formation among teachers by creating cultures of cooperation, along with time and structures that allow for collegial collaboration. Collegial trust is imperative in the educational setting due to the overwhelming number of tasks that colleagues expect and require each other to complete daily to attain organizational goals (Cosner, 2011). Cosner (2011) found that positive, trusting relationships between principals and teachers have a moderate effect on organizational trust, but it is the relationships between teachers that have the greatest influence on organizational trust.

Research has found similar to trusting relationships built between principals and teachers, trust is built among colleagues through open, consistent communication and mutually supportive relationships (Kim & Henkin, 2005; Mansfield et al., 2012; Tshchannen-Moran 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) found teacher authenticity to have a high correlation with trust in colleagues. Research supports the claim that faculty members are more likely to collaborate with each other in a culture of trust (Kim & Henkin, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). For teachers and staff members to share information or be vulnerable, they need to have certainty that their colleagues are authentic and trustworthy. Research suggests that trust among colleagues increases the exchange of methodologies, deficiencies, data about problems, and needs within an organization (Cosner, 2011; Kars & Inandi, 2018). Trust in colleagues can help reduce uncertainty and increase teacher cooperation in

times of change (Cosner, 2011; Demir, 2015). Regarding unexpected change or crisis

that potentially arise in school settings, when there is a strong level of organizational

trust, there is a greater likelihood for cooperation, innovation, and collaboration among

staff members (Cosner, 2011).

Sustaining Trust

Educational leaders are responsible for enabling, strengthening and maintaining

cultures of trust in times of change or uncertainty (Kim & Henkin, 2005). Whether

predicted or not, times of change often disrupt an organization. In these times, leaders

must strive to preserve and protect existing trust and avoid any loss of trust

(Gustafsson, Gillespie, Hailey, & Dietz, 2020). According to Gustafsson et al. (2020), it is

in these times that trust has not yet been broken but rather is in a state of suspension as

members seek reassurance that practices and understandings rooted in trust will be

sustained. Sustaining trust consists of active practices to preserve established trust in

relationships (Gustafsson et al., 2020). To sustain trust, administrators need to make

child-centered decisions daily, model trusting behaviors as well as integrity. Educational

leaders need to also demonstrate competence, invest in all members and be regarded

as reliable in not only their education institutions but community as well (Louis et al.,

2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; 2000). Leaders can create a sense of security for

faculty members in times of uncertainty and sustain cultures of trust by being consistent

in their leadership behaviors, directly communicating changes or new information and

creating a space for members to collaborate and partake in the decision-making

process. Leaders should also encourage caring trusting relationships among all

stakeholders (Louis et al., 2016). Louis et al. found organizations consisting of caring

relationships (e.g., between administrators and teachers, among teachers or teachers

and students) to create relational trust which led to members being willing to permit or

explore new behaviors or ideas that rise from change (2016).

When change cannot be predicted or planned for, leaders must provide

members with a sense of safety and security. This starts with social relationships rooted

in trust and respect. Gustafsson et al. (2020) used a qualitative multi-case study design

to answer the question: "Which practices do organizational leaders and members use to

actively preserve employee trust in the organization during periods of disruption?" (p.

7). Gustaffson et al. conducted thirteen 90-minute focus groups (four to ten participants

each) involving 73 non-managerial employees and 21 one-hour interviews with leaders

and managers (e.g., workforce representatives, junior employees, team leaders) (2020).

The non-managerial focus groups were prompted with questions such as: "How would

you characterize trust in the organization prior to [the challenge or change]?, How did

this impact on employee trust in the organization?" and "What, if any, specific practices

or processes influenced trust in the organization?" (Gustafsson et al., 2020, p. 7).

Gustafsson et al. found two major conditional factors to arise from times of change: (1)

disruption of familiarity and (2) the importance of vulnerability. It also created

uncertainty about the future and triggered feelings of fear and anxiety among

organizational members (2020). Organizational members identified four practices that

helped them to cope with uncertainty: (1) clearly articulated rationale for change, (2)

positive future vision, (3) effective planning and, (4) shared decision making

(Gustafsson, 2020). These practices somewhat correlate with Whitener et al.'s previously stated three key communication facets (1998). Effective administrators create rigorous accountability systems that promote and sustain successful work environments (Sanzo et al., 2010). By providing more collaboration and collective decision-making opportunities, leaders increase organizational commitment, trust, job satisfaction and work performance (Kars & Inandi, 2018). Gustafsson et al. (2020) found that all of the leaders from the three trust preserving organizations understood that each stakeholder group had an honest right and a need to be heard in the decision-making process. By listening to members, leaders can affirm members of their influence on future outcomes and communicate strong administrative support. Multiple researchers have conducted studies with similar findings. For example, Tarter, Bliss and Hoy (1989) found that teachers' organizational trust is directly related to support from school administrators or leaders. Additionally, Demir (2015) conducted a study to determine the effect of organizational trust on a teacher leadership culture within a school using a causal-comparison research model. She found the strongest relationship to be between trust in administration and administrator support. Demir concluded, teachers are more likely to develop and maintain trusting relationships with administrators who encourage self-development, communicate feelings of trust, motivate them and encourage cooperation in school-wide decision making (2015). The goal in times of change should be to preserve or improve existing levels of trust within an organization but never to lose trust (Gustafsson, 2020).

Building Capacity for Change

Stoll (2009) states, "Sustainability is the goal; capacity is the engine that will ultimately power the sustainability journey" (p. 121). Building capacity is the developing and strengthening skills, abilities and processes that organizations need to survive, adapt and thrive in changing environments (United Nations, n.d.). When making decisions related to transition or improvement, leaders must consider what needs to be in place to ensure an organization has the capacity for the change to be sustainable (Stoll, 2009). When building capacity for change, all members must be involved in times of transition and the role they have in the process. According to Gustafsson et al. (2020), the sense of empowerment increases employees' belief in their capability to cope with uncertainty and change resulting in increased capacity for change. Leaders can build capacity within their staff through teacher resilience, shared leadership as well as collaboration and shared decision making.

Teacher Resilience

Teacher resilience has been defined as, "the ability to adjust to varied situations and increase one's competence in the face of adverse conditions" (Bobek, 2002, p. 2). Mansfield, Beltman, Price and McConney conducted a study that surveyed 259 participants from a pool of novice teachers or graduating teachers. The participants were asked to answer the question, "How would you describe a resilient teacher?" (Mansfield et al., 2012). The responses were analyzed for content and common themes. Mansfield et al. (2012) decided to analyze the data by using an iterative and inductive process through coding and collective discourse. The researchers found there to be

numerous common codes among responses such as *flexible, adaptable, reflective and able to ask for help* to name a few (Mansfield et al., 2012). Mansfield et al. (2012) also found the common themes among responses of resilient teachers being good communicators and working well with colleagues. The responses collected and analyzed in the study collectively reported the description of teacher resilience to involve the capacity to "bounce back" (Mansfield, 2012). Resilient teachers were often described to be "flexible" or "adaptable". Collie and Martin define adaptability as an individual's "ability to effectively react and respond in constructive ways to situations of change, novelty and uncertainty" (2016, p.27). This explains why resilient teachers respond well to planned or unplanned change. They are able to "swerve" and change course quickly and effectively without too much anxiety or stress (Collie & Martin, 2016: Mansfield, 2012). According to Collie and Martin (2016) adaptability is an important capacity for teachers to develop because the career of teaching involves responding to and managing constant situations of change. The ability to adapt and manage change is essential for teachers' to be effective in the classroom, school environment and beyond (Collie & Martin, 2016).

Shared Leadership

Building capacity for change often requires building capacity for leadership. Leading change initiatives cannot be done by one person alone; developing leadership capacity is imperative (Sanzo et al., 2010; Stoll, 2009). Researchers claim administrators who share or delegate control exhibit high levels of trust and respect for their staff members (Gustafsson et al., 2020). On the contrary, faculty need to be flexible and

open-minded about taking on new duties or responsibilities during a time of change in

order for the effective transition to occur (Rivas & Jones, 2014). According to Stoll

(2009), leadership capacity among faculty is increased when administrators emphasize

developing as a team. Sanzo et al. (2010) concluded that most of the middle school

principals they interviewed valued a collaborative, team atmosphere within their

schools. It was clear there must be a specific organizational structure within each school

in order for shared decision making to be successful. Principals need to empower faculty

to make personal, informed decisions and work with them in a collective, collegial way

(Sanzo et al., 2010). One principal shared she successfully did this by creating overall site

leadership teams and specialized teams within each grade level. She would meet with

the team leaders, share information, and ask them to share with their own designated

groups, and then members would develop questions based upon that information

(Sanzo et al., 2010). Leaders need to provide faculty with space to reflect, process and

communicate with one another (Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; 2016). Other principals

confirmed similar leadership systems and structures in their own schools. One principal

directly stated, "I do not believe that a principal alone can have an effective school"

(Sanzo et al., 2010, p.36). It was clear the principals believed they could not lead their

schools without staff collaboration and cooperation. Sanzo et al. (2010) also asked the

middle school principals how they promoted a shared vision in their schools. Research

has found two common themes among effective principals: a well-organized, shared

leadership structure and a clear, active vision (Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; 2016; Sanzo et

al., 2010). The principals in Sanzo et al. 's (2010) study recurrently referenced and

credited leadership success to the use of specialized teams and committees such as

"professional learning communities'' (PLC). Research has found that school principals

who use such structures as platforms build common understandings and bring faculty

together as a community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2006). Additionally, the principals

discussed the importance of evolving and supporting a community of professionals that

share responsibility for the school (Sanzo et al., 2010). One principal participant from

Sanzo et al.'s study spoke to the importance of developing leadership within faculty

members (2010). Mitchell and Sackney (2016) concluded by fostering a culture that

allows teachers to feel safe and extend their leadership capacity, administrators are

ensuring other faculty members can similarly thrive and grow alongside them. Mitchell

and Sackney also discovered a willingness among teachers to take on leadership roles

and tasks when school culture is built on mutual respect, attention to the needs of

others, and a sense of interdependence (2016). If administrators can assure teachers

that leadership tasks and roles are meaningful and authentic, leadership capacity will be

sustained (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). Additionally, providing faculty with adequate time

to process, prepare, and ask questions with colleagues can increase levels of trust

between members and leaders (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). Whether the change is

planned or not, "...individuals are often fearful of the unknown and need to have time

to understand and work with the changes" (Rivas & Jones, 2014, p. 8). Sanzo et al.,

highlighted a principal response that encouraged leaders to take some of the difficult

individuals most resistant to change, and rather than forcing them to embrace the

change, help said individuals see their role as a leader in the event of change (2010).

In order to build leadership capacity in preparation for times of change or uncertainty, principals need to develop faculty members as leaders and create opportunities for members to step into leadership roles. Leaders need to create a school culture that encourages collective problem solving and shared decision making for the people working and studying in it. Leadership engagement among teachers can be sustained as long as the leadership opportunities are meaningful and authentic (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016).

Collaboration and Shared Decision-Making

Research has found high-capacity schools have a collaborative culture among staff members (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). According to Bennett et al., (2014), collaboration is developed through professional and authentic teamwork among organization members. Research supports the claim that times of uncertainty and change are often accompanied with the call for interdependence in the workplace (Demir, 2015; Edmundson, 2014). In times of restructure or improvement it is crucial that school administrators include all stakeholders in their decision-making process (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Leaders must be intentional with making time at the beginning of the change process, planned or unplanned, to create awareness and need for the change (Rivas & Jones, 2014). Staff members will be more trusting if they know and trust their administrator's motives (Kim & Henkin, 2005). By informing and involving as many individuals at the start of a change initiative, potential resistance by faculty will be greatly minimized once individuals realize that change is inevitable and hopefully any denial for the effects of the change can be minimized as well (Rivas & Jones, 2014).

Leaders need to endorse and encourage an environment of shared decision making that

creates a seat for all stakeholders at the table. Members need to feel empowered to

share their voices, experiences and talents. Faculty inclusion in change initiatives and

decision making, also allows administrators to affirm the standing and worth of

members in times of uncertainty and change (Whitener et al., 1998). Multiple

researchers conclude, honest communication along with support from both superiors

and peers are essential for individuals to be able to collaborate and feel secure during

times of change (Cosner, 2011; Sanzo, et al., 2010, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014).

Each stakeholder has valuable knowledge and perspectives to contribute to the

decision-making process. It is through collaboration and shared-decision making that

not only are better quality decisions possible, but greater levels of intrinsic motivation

and commitment result as well (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Demir (2015) found that

educational organizations with strong trusting relationships are more likely to develop

interdependencies among stakeholders based on a mutual expectation that all members

will act appropriately per commonly agreed upon norms. This also increases the

likelihood of collaboration among teachers, students, administrators, and additional

staff members (Demir, 2015). This allows for all stakeholders to be involved in

addressing and discussing potential roadblocks (Rivas & Jones, 2014). Tschannen-Moran

(2001) believes it is when principals are reluctant to extend influence to teachers and

parents that assumptions of distrust tend to occur.

Tschannen-Moran conducted a study with a focus on the relationship between

collaboration and trust in schools (2001). Tschannen-Moran defined collaboration as

"the extent to which teachers perceived themselves and parents to be not only involved but to exercise influence over school and classroom-level decisions" (2001, p. 317). A collaboration survey was created, tested and refined by a panel of experts for this study. The survey asked for teacher perceptions of the level of collective collaboration and trust within the school, not their own level of involvement in collaboration or personal feelings of trust (Tschanen-Moran, 2001). A 35-item trust survey was also created (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 1998) based on the 14-item, six-point Likert response Trust Scales developed by Hoy and Kupersmith (1985). Tschannen-Moran (2001) created three groups to measure collaboration in the study: (1) collaboration between principal and teachers on school-level decisions, (2) collaboration with parents and teachers in related to school-level decisions, and (3) collaboration with teacher colleagues related to classroom-level decisions (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Three groups were additionally created to measure trust among faculty members: (1) trust in the principal, (2) trust in colleagues, and (3) trust in students and parents (Tshannen-Moran, 2001). The population for this study was principals and teachers from 45 of 91 elementary schools in a large urban district (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Tschannen-Moran (2001) found there to be a positive correlation between collaboration and trust in the principal, the more a principal interacted and collaborated with teachers, the more likely they were to trust the principal's initiatives. Additionally, a positive correlation was found between collaboration with colleagues and trust in the principal (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Teachers are more likely to be involved in decision making than parents, but Tschannen-Moran found that schools with high levels of trust were

more likely to include teachers, parents and students in school-level decision making

(2001). For schools to flourish and reap the benefits of collaboration practices and

shared decision-making, trust must be a prerequisite (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Mitchell and Sackney (2016) conducted a study with the intention of discovering

how educators and administrators constructed their schools and framed practices that

established them to be high-capacity learning environments. The top 15 out of 144

schools in Ontario and Saskatchewan Canada were chosen as participants for the study

through the evaluation of surveys completed by administrators, staff and students

(Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). Mitchell and Sackney (2016) found collaborative leadership

to occur through structured teams and organized meetings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research reviewed so far collectively identified and

encouraged establishing strong cultures of trust and building capacity for change in staff

as highly effective leadership practices. Research also suggests that through open and

honest communication, sharing power and collaborating with staff members, leaders

can lay the groundwork that will support change initiatives moving forward. Team

members need a work environment that is safe to take risks, ask questions, and make

informed decisions in times of change or uncertainty. These practices also appear to

improve school climate among principals, staff and students. An effective leader

strategically plans for change. For the plan to be carried out effectively, leaders need to

have an established culture of trust and build capacity in their organization.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Literature

Organizational trust has multiple facets consisting of confidence and positive

expectations of members' goals, actions and intentions (Akar, 2018; Babaoğlan, 2016).

Establishing a culture of trust is detrimental to the overall success of an educational

institution (Akar, 2018; Cosner, 2011; Louis et al., 2016). When strong cultures of trust

are present, healthy relationships are created and maintained among administrators,

staff and students (Cosner, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Research found

sharing leadership, facilitating professional development, leading with an instructional

orientation, and acting openly and honestly to be practices that enable principals to

effectively lead successful schools (Sanzo et al., 2010). Research also suggests a culture

of trust is often built when leaders choose to engage in honest, open communication,

are consistent in their leadership behaviors, share and delegate leadership

responsibilities, as well as genuinely care for their faculty (Sanzo et al., 2010; Tschannen-

Moran & Gareis, 2014; Whitener et al., 1998).

Research has found trusting relationships to cultivate in cultures consisting of

open and honest, direct communication (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Sanzo et al.,

2010; Whitener et al., 1998). Effective leaders and administrators who communicate

often and provide adequate reasoning for decisions hold respect among their faculty

members (Gustafsson et al., 2020; Sanzo et al., 2010; Whitener et al., 1998). Faculty

members are also more likely to openly share concerns and personal ideas when there

are high levels of trust within an organization (Tshannen-Moran, 2001; Roberts & Reilly

1974; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014).

Researchers have found high levels of trust are more likely to result in

educational institutions when administrators are authentic and consistent in their

leadership behaviors (Akar, 2018; Henderson & Hoy 1983; Kim & Henkin, 2005; Mitchell

& Sackney, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 1998). Research concludes leader

authenticity to be closely related to trust in the administrator or principal, while teacher

authenticity to be closely related to trust in colleagues (Hanford & Leithwood, 2012;

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Research has also found intentional, consistent

administrative practices to foster a sincere and safe work atmosphere where faculty

members feel free to take risks (Maslow, 1954; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Sanzo et al.,

2010). Administrators who demonstrate collegial leadership are often regarded as

approachable, helpful, supportive, and genuinely concerned about personal and

profession needs of their faculty (Kim & Henkin, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 1998).

Researchers have found educational institutions whose administrators prioritize

fostering caring relationships and caring leadership to have higher levels of trust as well

among members (Gale & Bishop, 2014; Louis et al., 2016; Mitchell & Sackney, 2016;

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Research has found that trust can be built among

colleagues through authentic, mutually supportive relationships (Kim & Henkin, 2005;

Mansfield et al., 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Tshannen-Moran, 2001).

Educational institutions with high levels of trust among colleagues often leads to high

levels of collaboration among faculty (Cosner, 2011; Kars & Inandi, 2018; Kim & Henkin,

2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Trust in colleagues can help reduce feelings of uncertainty and increase teacher cooperation in times of change (Cosner, 2011; Demir, 2015).

Once a strong culture of trust, administrators are responsible for strengthening, maintaining and sustaining such a culture in times of change and uncertainty (Gustafsson et al., 2020; Kim & Henkin, 2005). Sustaining trust consists of active practices to preserve existing trust in relationships (Gustufsson et al., 2020). Administrators with a sense of safety and security which can be done through social relationships rooted in trust and respect and consistent leadership behaviors (Gustafsson et al., 2020; Kim & Henkin, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). To sustain trust, administrators need to make child-centered decisions daily, model trusting behaviors as well as integrity. Educational leaders need to also demonstrate competence, invest in all members and being regarded as reliable in not only their education institutions but community as well (Louis et al., 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; 2000). The goal in times of change should be to preserve or improve existing levels of trust within an organization but never to lose it (Gustafsson, 2020).

Capacity for change can be built through teacher resilience, shared leadership as well as collaboration and shared decision making (Bobek, 2002; Demir, 2015; Sanzo et al., 2010; Stoll, 2009; Mitchell & Sackney, 2016). Resilient teachers are able to "swerve" and "bounce back" in times of change without too much anxiety or stress (Collie & Martin, 2016; Mansfield, 2012). This is essential to sustain a culture of trust and build an organizations capacity for change. Leading change initiatives cannot be done by one

person alone; developing leadership capacity is imperative to building capacity for

change in an organization (Sanzo et al., 2010; Stoll, 2009). Leadership capacity is

increased among faculty when administrators emphasize developing as a team (Sanzo et

al. 2010; Stoll, 2009). Research found strong school cultures to have administrators who

evolve and support a community of professionals that share responsibility for their

school (Sanzo et al., 2010). Leaders must also develop and create opportunities for

teachers to step into teacher-leader positions to help support and lead change

initiatives (Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Sanzo et la., 2010). Leaders need to provide faculty

with space and time to reflect, process and communicate with one another (Mitchell &

Sackney, 2006; 2016).

Research has found common themes among effective principals and

administrators; a well-organized, shared leadership structure, shared decision-making

and a clear, active vision (Karp & Tveteraas Helgo, 2007; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006;

2016; Sanzo et al., 2010). Times of uncertainty and change often call for

interdependence in the workplace (Dermir, 2015; Edmundson, 2014). In times of

restructure and improvement it is crucial that school administrators include all

stakeholders in their decision-making process (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Rivas & Jones,

2014, Whitener et al., 1998). Multiple researchers conclude, honest communication

along with support from both superiors and peers are essential for individuals to be able

to collaborate and feel secure during times of change (Cosner, 2011; Sanzo et al., 2010;

Tshannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014; 2016). Research also found high levels of collaboration

among colleagues and administrators to have a positive correlation with levels of trust

in the workplace (Mitchel & Sackney, 2016; Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Limitations of the Research

To locate the literature for this thesis, searches of ERIC, SAGE, EBSCO MegaFILE

and Educational Journals were conducted for publications from (1983-2020). It would

have been preferred for the research to be from dates within a time range of the last

twenty years to be more accurate and relevant. Sources were narrowed and refined by

only reviewing studies from peer reviewed journals that had an emphasis on best

practices of leadership and administration that addressed the guiding questions of this

thesis. Keywords that were used in these searches include: leadership, trust, open

communication, strategic planning, collaboration, school, teachers, organizational trust,

positive culture, change and building capacity. The research was limited to articles that

were identified as being peer-reviewed as well as having full text available to review.

Additionally, many of the surveys administered in the research studies were open ended

which can lead to implications and misinterpretations of participant responses. While

there was a considerable amount of research available regarding trust and elements of

trust, there was a limited amount on sustaining trust as well as specific practices for

educational leaders to take to build capacity within their educational institution. While

research implies best practices in terms of education change initiatives and reform,

there was little research found that referenced specific historical times of change in

educational institutions and how they were successfully overcome. There was also

limited research on the different types of change and how leaders react and proactively

plan to such types of change. This made it more difficult to thoroughly answer the research question.

Implications for Future Research

It is crucial for administrators and educational leaders to proactively plan for change. The research for this paper lends insight to the development and preservation of strong trust culture. Future research should examine the trust preservation in "real-time". Little research has been found to outline an administrators proactive and reactive plan in times of change. This might help gain understanding of employees during disruptive times of change and the factors that lead to their decision as to whether to stay or leave the organization. It would also be beneficial for longitudinal studies of the formation and preservation of trust in schools to be conducted as well. Little research was found related to broken trust and practices leaders can implement to rebuild a culture of trust. Often when trust is broken in an educational institution, suspicion, punishment and broken relationships are likely consequences. The effectiveness of the institution tends to be undermined or compromised in such situations. How can knowledge and best leadership practices be used to create positive outcomes from broken trust? What are the effects on teacher collaboration when trust is broken within an educational institution?

Regarding types of change, it would be beneficial for future research to identify different types of change and the positive and negative connotations that are often affiliated with them. For example, planned change is often considered to be positive, while unexpected change is negative. This norm of positive and negative change has

potential to be deconstructed if leaders are equipped with strategies that allow them to effectively lead through *all* types of change. If administrators create a strong trust culture and build capacity among staff members for change, the idea of change in an organization should not be accompanied by solely feelings of fear and anxiety.

Implications for Professional Application

As people enter the teaching profession, it is important that they are equipped with skills and experiences to help them combat times of change. Pre-service teacher education programs and teacher professional development should support the development of teachers' resilience. Such programs might incorporate educational opportunities emphasizing flexibility, adaptability, emotional engagement and strategies for being resilient in various school and community contexts, specifically related to times of change.

It is important for colleagues to develop at minimum a professional level of mutual trust. Districts or schools should provide faculty with training and educational opportunities to allow and develop collegial trust behavior. The goal of such trainings will be to enhance members competencies, skills, shared decision-making, delegation, communication and leadership capabilities. Faculty will participate and be exposed to community building and group sharing activities. As a grade level team leader, I see such trainings to be beneficial to my personal confidence in initiating and establishing trusting relationships in my team. By fostering strong trusting relationships in my team, hopefully there will be a natural increase in collegial trust and collaboration among my team members.

Educational leaders and administrators need to be engaging in authentic conversations with their faculty members. They need to provide time and space for staff to self-assess and reflect throughout change initiatives independently and collectively with colleagues. Administrators might choose to implement teacher mentorship programs or support teachers through an instructional coaching model. Administrators should also invite teacher input in school decision-making and encourage staff members to ask questions. Administrators should also communicate confidence in their staff members' abilities to do their work effectively and efficiently. This can be done in post-teacher observation meetings with teachers, through administrators visiting team meetings or during whole staff meetings.

Conclusion

Change cannot always be expected. Educational leaders can effectively lead through all types of change if they have cultivated a strong culture of trust and have built capacity among members for change. Leaders must openly communicate, remain authentic and consistent in their leadership practices as well as encourage collective collaboration, decision-making and leadership. One cannot successfully lead through a time of transition or change alone.

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