

# Transforming Traditional Bureaucratic Management Practices By Employing The Collegial Leadership Model Of Emancipation

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## ABSTRACT

*The main purpose of this study is to determine whether the Collegial Leadership Model of Emancipation (COLME) can serve as a conceptual framework to transform traditional bureaucratic management practices (TBMPs) in organizations such as schools. The question does arise whether a theory such as the COLME has the potency to introduce leadership change by empowering and emancipating their employees. It is a fallacy to simply assume that experience alone, in the absence of theory, will contribute to this knowledge base to develop collegial leaders. All the respondents in this exploratory qualitative study embraced collegiality to transform TBMPs in their organizations. For the positive effects to be sustained, the collegial practices need to be evolutionary and emancipatory in order to evoke the values of collegial leadership as elucidated by the findings of this study. Interviewees affirmed that the COLME provides an astute framework to develop commendable collegial leadership practices as it clearly outlines procedures to develop and use the leadership potential of all the employees in order to foster joint accountability. They acknowledged that when the principles of collegiality are flexibly applied, they contribute to the creation of a holistic milieu in which all employees are able to express themselves freely without fear of failure and thus feel that they are part of the democratic decision-making process. Evidently, a conceptual framework such as the COLME can serve as a benchmark for leadership effectiveness because organizational outcomes need to be measured against standards of excellence in meeting both employee and customer expectations.*

**Keywords:** Collegial Leadership; Traditional Bureaucratic Management Practices; Employee Empowerment; Teacher Leaders

## INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether the Collegial Leadership Model of Emancipation (COLME) can serve as a conceptual framework to modify and transform traditional bureaucratic management practices (TBMPs) in organizations such as schools. Naturally, the question does arise whether a theory such as the COLME has the potency to introduce leadership change in organizations. Grundy (1987) avers that theory “directs, confirms and legitimizes practice” (p.51). According to Snow (1973), “a theory is essentially a symbolic construction that is designed to bring generalizable facts or laws into systematic connection” (p.78). Action in the realm of human affairs involves risks which can only be weighed up by the practitioners themselves seeing that action following from enlightenment must always be a matter of free choice. As Grundy points out:

*Emancipation lies in the possibility of taking action autonomously. That action may be informed by certain theoretical insights, but it is not prescribed by them. (p.113)*

Danielson (2007) asserts that the unprecedented demands being placed on schools today require leadership at every level. She points out that many schools are still organized as though all the important decisions are made by

administrators and carried out by teachers. It is a fallacy to simply assume that experience alone, in the absence of theory, would contribute to this knowledge base to develop collegial leaders in organizations such as schools. Conceptual frameworks such as the COLME can serve as benchmarks for leadership effectiveness because organizational outcomes need to be measured against standards of excellence in meeting employee and customer expectations (Singh, 2008). Walker (1990) also affirms that the benefit of a theory in any field provides a framework so as to conceptualize and clarify important problems and techniques. Besides *theoretical validity*, a conceptual framework such as the COLME has *practice validity* because it is consistent with the nature and role expectations of collegial leaders (Sheppard, 1998; Singh; 2008; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013). Parton (2000) infers that rather than seeing the relationship in terms of the *application* of theory to practice, we recognize that theory can be generative. In so doing, Parton affirms that:

*Theory can offer new insights and perspectives such that practitioners can think and act differently. Ironically there is nothing as practical as a good theory. (p.461)*

Personal knowledge grows by tapping into a vast body of existing knowledge that is underpinned by intensive and extensive research which generates theories (Parton, 2000). Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) attest that good practice is based on theory. According to them, practice means the procedures, methods, and skills that apply to the working world, where a person is on the job or actively involved in his or her profession. They affirm that these procedures and methods are teachable and can be applied in different situations. For instance, when a theory such as the COLME is applied in an organization, it should culminate in leaders and their employees being successful or effective. This process inevitably evokes the impact and importance of a theory on organizational practice as pointed out by Kaplan (1964):

*A theory is a way of making sense of a disturbing situation so as to allow us most effectively to bring to bear our repertoire of habits and, even more important, to modify habits or discard them altogether, replacing new ones as the situation demands. (p.295)*

Studies suggest that theory includes the most advanced and valid knowledge available that can be generalized and applied to many situations in organizations seeking transformation, progress and a competitive edge within a global community (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Certainly, any enterprise as complex as leadership requires some kind of theoretical or conceptual framework of thinking to guide it (Coleman, 1994; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Taba, 1962; Kouzes & Posner, 2001). As Bruner (2001) justly states, a theory can become more interesting and applicable when it becomes “outside-in” rather than “inside-out”. Theory drawn from the outside-in, rather than from a narrow view of inside-out, can provide guidance in shaping leadership practice in organizations (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004; Bruner, 2001). Being outside-in, theory facilitates a change in TBMPs which usually succumbs to an inside-out approach. COLME, as an outside-in theory for leadership capacity building allows leaders and their employees to bring into focus visions of their organizations’ future that are within the possible, even from a global perspective. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) also contend that frameworks for studying leadership activity are scarce and they firmly believe that:

*We need to observe from within a conceptual framework if we are to understand the internal dynamics of leadership practice. (p.4)*

Recent research (Bush, 2001; Singh & Manser, 2002; Singh 2008; Singh, 2010; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013; Bush, 2003) reveals that there is a major flaw in the way that collegial leadership strategies are contemplated and implemented in schools. This is evident in many poorly resourced schools (PRS) as opposed to well-resourced schools (WRS) in South Africa. In most of these PRS, a shared vision is regarded as a one-time occurrence rather than as part of an evolutionary process of collegiality in the school. The mistake often made is that the change in leadership strategies is regarded simply as a final product rather than it being a continuous transformational process embedded in collegiality. The absence of collegial attitudes and virtues and, hence, the absence of a meaningful shared vision, could be the reasons for many schools having an apparent lack of direction and commitment and this has a debilitating effect on employee job performance and satisfaction (Bush, 2001; Singh & Manser, 2002; Singh, 2008; Singh, 2013). The problem of this study, therefore, focused on the effectiveness of the COLME as a conceptual framework (theory) to transform TBMPs in organizations such as schools.

### **Need For Collegiality**

Credible leaders prefer to give away their power in the service of others and for a purpose larger than themselves, seeing that such leaders accept and act on the paradox of power - *We become the most powerful when we give our own power away* (Kouzes & Posner, 1997). Collegial leaders take the power that flows to them and connect it to the other members of their team. When leaders share power with others, they demonstrate profound trust in and respect for the other's abilities. These leaders are most respected and most effective, not as traditional management myth has it, the highly controlling, tough guy boss. Even in schools, Barth (2006) points out that:

*A precondition for doing anything to strengthen our practice and improve a school is the existence of a collegial culture in which professionals talk about practice, share their craft knowledge, and observe and root for the success of one another. Without these in place, no meaningful improvement, no staff or curriculum development, no teacher leadership, no student appraisal, no team teaching, no parent involvement, and no sustained change are possible.* (p.33)

Leadership practice does not only focus on what people do, but how and why they do it (Spillane, 2005). Freire (1997) contends that administrative structures at the service of centralized power do not foster democratic behaviour since the role of democratic leadership is to overcome authoritarian systems and create conditions for shared (collegial) leadership. Traditional managers are driven solely by the objectives of their organization, whereas collegial leaders are also inspired by the shared vision of their organizations (Kochan & Reed, 2005; Singh, 2005; Thilo, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 1997).

Empowerment of employees in any organization depends on the devolution of power by leaders (Singh, 2008). Traditional managers cling to power as an entitlement of their bureaucratic positions. In contrast, collegial leaders share their power base in order to flatten hierarchies (Kouzes & Posner, 1997). Empowered employees demonstrate a greater commitment to complete a task based on their increased sense of self-confidence, self-determination, and personal effectiveness (Singh, 2005). Kochan and Reed (2005) state that democratic leadership requires individuals to adopt a collaborative approach, which includes building a sense of community with all employees. This involves sharing power with others which involves multiple groups of employees in decision-making in meaningful ways. As Bennis (1994) points out, a leader focuses on people and inspires trust, whereas a manager focuses on systems and structures and depends largely on control measures to get the job done. A leader challenges the status quo which the manager accepts as "the classic good soldier" (Bennis, 1994). The differences between the manager and the leader, as described by Bennis, clearly distinguish the artist (leader) from the technocrat (manager). Collegial leadership must be viewed as a process that encourages and accommodates shared decision-making and shared leadership in the spirit of enabling and empowering everyone.

### **Use Of The COLME To Improve Leadership Practice**

Based on research (Manser, 1999; Singh, 2005; Singh, 2010; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013), the COLME is developed around the conceptualisation of four metaphorical pillars which illustrate the multiplicity of collegial emancipation (see Figure 1).

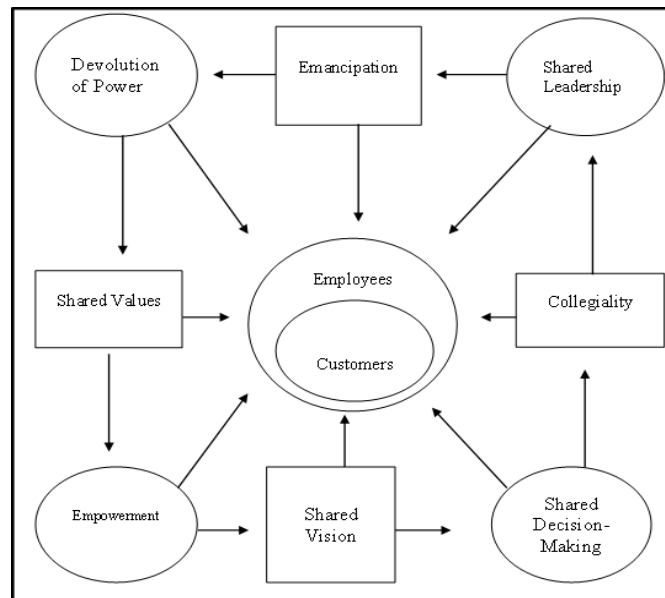


Figure 1: Collegial Leadership Model Of Emancipation

The four pillars are collectively employed to shape an emancipated climate in organizations, including schools. These pillars are devolution of power, empowerment, shared decision-making, and shared leadership. The conceptual framework of the COLME also includes four hypothetical pivots situated between each pillar. These pivots are shared values, shared vision, collegiality, and emancipation. The interaction of the four hypothetical pivots with the pillars results in the emancipation of employees from TBMPs. The nucleus of the COLME comprises the organization's employees and its customers. The continued existence of any organization depends on the cost-efficient and effective utilization of its human resources to deliver the services as necessitated by its customers.

#### Four Metaphorical Pillars

##### *Devolution Of Power*

Bureaucratic hierarchies that are dependent upon control and supervision may produce the following inhibiting effects in schools (Rowan, 1993):

- Teachers may feel that they are unable to express themselves freely. Hence they may not feel part of the decision-making process and not fully support the decisions that have been made.
- Teachers may feel that they are unable to have any influence over what happens at the school. This may result in a sense of alienation from those in management positions.
- There may be an increase in cynicism. Teachers may be increasingly suspicious and negative towards decisions made at the school.
- There may be an increase in destructive feelings. The lack of collegiality between management and the teaching staff may result in an increase in negativism regarding the role of management at the school.
- Teachers may believe that conformity is the safest route. This may inhibit change and development at the school.
- There may be a notion that intolerance and exploitation have to be accepted.
- Teachers may believe that new ideas only come from those in positions of hierarchical power. This may have a negative effect on the effectiveness of the teaching staff and hence the quality of teaching in the classroom.

Ingersoll (2007) observes, from his extensive research undertaken over the past two decades on power, control, and accountability in schools, that it makes no sense to hold people accountable for something they do not control or to give people control over something for which they are not held accountable. He points out that accountability without commensurate power is unfair and can be harmful. Likewise, giving teachers more power alone is not the answer. He notes that experts in organizational management and leadership have long held that accountability and power must go hand in hand in workplaces and that increases in one must be accompanied by increases in the other. Ingersoll aptly recommends that changes in both accountability and power are necessary to accomplish the larger systemic goal - ensuring that there are high-quality teachers in every classroom. As aptly stated by Donaldson (2007):

*Teacher leaders do not necessarily fit the leader-as-hero stereotype. Instead, they offer unique assets that come from the power of relationships. (p.26)*

Where bureaucratic management models focus on the importance of structure, authority and top-down decision-making, post-bureaucratic models stress the importance of lateral relationships (Bush, 1993). The decentralisation of power and the art of delegation are seen as key factors in increasing the efficiency of a school (Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013). Emphasis should be on the empowerment of teachers and a commitment to shared decision-making rather than on power derived from a hierarchical position (Dalin, 1994). It seems, therefore, that quality schooling, effective learning, and improved academic performance are more likely to take place in a non-bureaucratic climate (Manser, 1999; Singh, 2005). Research (Singh, 2013; Bush, 2003; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013; Bush, 2001) suggests that a school that demonstrates collegiality and shared decision-making should foster a climate of positive development, effective teamwork and greater commitment from teachers and learners.

#### *Empowerment*

There are several leadership skills that are important in the empowerment of teachers (Waterman, 1987):

- Maintaining a focus on the shared vision of the school
- Delegating responsibilities to a variety of teachers who may be regarded as specialists in their respective field of expertise
- Creating a climate in which people are not afraid to take risks and where there is not a fear of failure
- Providing appropriate resources that may assist effective teaching
- Assuring clear and open communication

A traditional bureaucratic approach suggests that the principals, deputy principals, and heads of departments, by nature of their position in the hierarchy, are responsible and accountable for all the decisions that are made in their schools. In contrast, a collegial approach suggests that all employees have a role to play in shared decision-making and shared accountability because of the specialist knowledge that they may possess. Therefore, all teachers at the school have the potential to become an authority at the school in one area or another. As pointed out by Grundy (1987), empowerment flows from the recognition that the cultural world, unlike the natural world, is a human construction and, hence, is capable of being recreated. Post-bureaucratic management thinking therefore encourages leaders to adapt a transformational leadership policy. Individual members of school teams should be encouraged to develop their own potential for expertise rather than simply accepting that they are to be controlled by those in positions of hierarchical power. Lofthouse (1994) contends that:

*The dominant principle of an organisation has shifted from management in order to control, to leadership in order to bring about the best in people and respond quickly to change. (p.6)*

Teachers, as empowered employees, must have an active role to play in the decision-making processes and be provided with maximum opportunities to demonstrate their expertise. This would give rise to the notion of the school as an open organization in which all employees have a significant role to play. In a collegial environment, all employees have an integral influence on the strategic planning, marketing, financial considerations, curriculum development, vision, recruitment, and required standards of their organization. Nothing less should be contemplated.

*Shared Decision-Making*

If empowerment has taken place and individuals, interest groups and institutions are given the opportunity to accept responsibility, they will then need to be accountable for the decisions that are made. With empowerment comes accountability and in a collegial leadership model, the concept of shared decision-making. This suggests that those who form part of a shared decision-making process are responsible and accountable for the way they lead the organization. Thus, critics of the solo decision-maker model have argued for giving attention to the shifting coalitions of decision-makers in organizations in which preferences and coalition membership are neither stable nor unified (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Olsen, 1984; Spillane et al., 2004). Strong relationships are teachers' most powerful leadership asset (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Donaldson (2007) states that whereas principals can shape teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, other teachers can also shape them. He argues that teacher leaders understand this and are deliberate about shaping their environment in a positive, responsible way. Donaldson further observed that teacher leaders draw on their relationships and their strong sense of purpose to help colleagues explore, share, and improve the practices they use daily with students.

Collegial decision-making is therefore predominantly participative (Singh, 2010; Singh, 2013). It is no longer the sole responsibility of principals and their senior management team members, but rather it becomes a responsibility that is shared by the entire staff (Bush, 1993). The school can establish working groups to determine proposals for decisions that require the attention of the entire staff. These working groups should acquire expertise in their specialist area, drawing on external expertise whenever such assistance is required. Groups should expect their proposals to be scrutinised and criticised by the entire staff before they are accepted (Campbell, 1985). Teachers must feel that they own the decisions made in a collegial leadership environment.

*Shared Leadership*

Focusing merely on the TMBPs of positional leaders to get the job done is problematic since research underscores the dire needed to move beyond those at the top of organizations in order to understand collegial leadership (Singh, 2005; Singh, 2008; Singh, 2013). Research (Spillane et al., 2004) on schools strongly suggests that leadership is not the sole purview of school principals seeing that teachers, as leaders, play significant roles in leading instructional innovation. Spillane et al (2004) aptly point out that if leadership is an *organizational quality*, then investigations of leadership practice that focus exclusively on the work of individual positional leaders are unlikely to generate comprehensive understandings of the practice of school leadership. More often, teacher leaders assume leadership roles from a perspective that is quite distinct from that of positional leaders, and the character and structure of these interactions is considered to be vital to comprehending leadership practice (Leithwood, Jantzi, Steinbach & Ryan, 1997; Urbanski & Nickolaou, 1997).

For collegiality to be effective, the processes of shared leadership need to prevail. Groups of employees and shared decision-makers should obtain the advice of experts from inside or outside the school. Leaders of these groups are identified as a result of their expertise and their leadership ability. According to Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham (1994), leaders, through their actions, show everyone what to follow and through such actions enable the followers to become leaders in their own right. School leadership is not synonymous with the principal seeing that there are other sources of leadership in schools. With regard to this, Spillane et al. (2004) firmly believe that:

*Leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal, or indeed any other individual or group of leaders, know or do. Rather, it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks. (p.5)*

**Four Hypothetical Pivots**

*Shared Values*

Values are the deep-seated, pervasive standards that influence every aspect of our lives - our moral judgments, our responses to others, and our commitments to personal and organizational goals (Kouzes & Posner, 1997). Rigid bureaucratic controls (as are evident in traditional management practices) can stifle the initiative,



creativity, and commitment required for excellence (Manz & Sims, 2001). The values captured within the culture of an organization provide meaning, purpose, and commitment to employees. Research done by Johnson and Donaldson (2007) on teacher leaders reveals that the traditional norms of teaching - autonomy, egalitarianism, and seniority - exert a powerful and persistent influence on the work of teachers. These traditional norms reinforce the privacy of the individual's classroom, limit the exchange of good ideas among colleagues, and suppress efforts to recognize expert teaching. Ultimately, they cap a school's instructional quality far below its potential. Johnson and Donaldson contend that if these norms remain dominant, many talented teachers who desire collaboration and expanded influence will become frustrated and leave education in search of another place to build a fulfilling career. Surely, if these norms persist, they will continue to dissuade teachers from sharing vital knowledge about teaching and learning with their colleagues.

#### *Shared Vision*

Schools with shared visions and norms of collaboration, and a sense of collective responsibility for students' academic success, create incentives and opportunities for teachers to improve their practice (Spillane et al., 2004; Bryk & Driscoll, 1985; Newman & Wehlage, 1995). Coleman (2003) defines vision as "a desirable future state of the organisation" (p.158). She points out that it relates to the intended purposes of the school, expressed in terms of values and clarifying the direction to be taken by the institution. She suggests that the vision should be inspirational so that the members of the organisation are motivated to work toward it with pride and enthusiasm. Conger and Kanungo (1998) observe that when organizational members perceive the vision as their own, they will feel internally driven to achieve the organizational objectives dictated by the vision. They point out that a sense of powerlessness is created amongst members when the leader installs "structures and mechanisms that foster a sense of control over the resources needed to perform meaningful tasks required for the vision's accomplishment" (p.196). The creation of a shared vision in a school may not only give a clear indication of that school's intended direction, but it may also serve to identify that school's intentions regarding the implementation of change (Buell, 1992; Faidley & Musser, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1992). Teachers who have participated in the process of creating a vision have a more positive attitude toward the realisation of the vision than those who have not (Buell, 1992). Where there is shared vision, employees give of their best and learn, not because they are forced to, but because they want to (Senge, 1990).

#### *Collegiality*

Collegial theories (Dalin, 1994; Whitaker,1995; Maeroff,1993; Rowan,1993; Royal & Rossi,1997; Raywid,1993; Sergiovanni,1991; Bush & West-Burnham, 1994; Singh, 2013; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013) focus on the relationships between employees and leaders who are expected to possess an authority of expertise. In a collegial climate, schools make decisions and policies through the processes of discussion and consensus in lieu of their shared vision. There is power sharing among all the members who should have a clear understanding about the vision of their school (Manser, 2005; Bush, 1993). Handy (1989) also contends that clever organizations do not simply work in the ways that organizations used to work. They have shifted their emphasis from the management of tasks to the leadership of people - from control to collegiality. Kouzes and Posner (1997) succinctly capture the essence of shared leadership by pointing out that:

*...leadership isn't the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It's a process ordinary people use when they're bringing forth the best from themselves and others. Liberate the leader in everyone and extraordinary things happen. (p.xx)*

Sergiovanni (1991) describes collegiality as the responsibility given to teachers to become an integral part of the leadership processes of their school so that they are fully immersed in educational activities that are guided by that school's shared vision and shared mission statement. It is a process of assimilation that involves encouraging personal visions to establish a vision built on synergy. As aptly affirmed by Senge (1990), it is a shared vision that is both personal and congenial:

*It is my vision and our vision (p.214).*

Rather than supporting a responsive reaction (transactional) form of leadership, collegiality places emphasis on being value driven and change directed (transformational). In other words, it encourages all teachers to actively participate in their schools' development and transformation. In a collegial leadership model, policies are determined and decisions are made through a process of discussion leading to consensus (Bush, 1993). There is power sharing based on the expertise and mutual understanding of the school's shared vision. The authority of expertise advocated by a collegial approach encourages teachers to collaborate through shared values and establish decision-making skills based on their expertise. This implies that teachers should mostly be held accountable when they are included in the decision-making process in a meaningful and collegial manner. Therefore, collegiality may be described as the way in which teachers and principals share common values, common goals, accountability, and a sense of trust built on a foundation of congeniality (Sergiovanni, 1991). Collegial strategies can thus be associated with the demonstration of professional behaviour toward colleagues, based on attitudes and virtues that are enshrined in the school's shared vision. In a collegial leadership model, the imposition of decisions on staff is morally unjustifiable and inconsistent with the notion of consensus (Coleman, Bush & Glover, 1996). Hence, the COLME places collegiality as the vital link between shared leadership and shared decision-making.

### *Emancipation*

According to Kouzes and Posner (1997), traditional bureaucratic management teachings suggest that the job of management is primarily one of control - the control of resources, including time, materials, and people. They point out that leaders "don't command and control; they serve and support" (p.16). A collegial leader can be classified as an *emancipator* seeing that s/he contributes extensively to create an environment for emancipation (Singh, 2010). The emancipation of teachers as decision-makers and leaders refers to the creation of a climate in a school that encourages teachers to participate in the development and change process in governing their school. Emancipation of employees in a collegial working environment connotes that teachers who demonstrate power through expertise are given the same opportunities and leadership rights as those placed in positions of hierarchical power. They need to feel gratified in their capacity as decision-makers and be unafraid to make binding decisions based on professional work ethics and collegial principles. Emancipation does not imply that teachers are given unconditional freedom, but rather it includes the assumption of responsibility and accountability within an individual's particular field of expertise. With freedom comes responsibility and commitment to contribute to the organization's shared and chosen vision (Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013). Employees need to feel comfortable in their capacity as decision-makers: *they must not be manipulated by their line managers to experience fear of failure (tobephobia) because of being compelled to succumb to TBMPs.*

### **Nucleus Of The COLME**

#### *Teacher Leaders As The Employees*

Today more than ever, as pointed out by Danielson (2007), a number of interconnected factors argue for the necessity of teacher leadership in schools.

- *Teaching is a flat profession.* In most professions, as the practitioner gains experience, he or she has the opportunity to exercise greater responsibility and assume more significant challenges. This is not true of teaching.
- *Teachers' tenure in schools is longer than that of administrators.* In many settings, administrators remain in their positions for only three to four years, whereas teachers stay far longer. Teachers often hold the institutional memory; they are the custodians of the school culture.
- *The demands of the modern principalship are practically impossible to meet.* Principals today are expected to be visionaries (instilling a sense of purpose in their staff) and competent managers (maintaining the physical plant, submitting budgets on time), as well as instructional leaders (coaching teachers in the nuances of classroom practice). In addition, the principal has become the point person for accountability requirements imposed by states and the federal government, and he or she must respond to multiple stakeholders (parents, staff members, the district central office, and the larger community). Under such pressure from a range of sources, many administrators simply cannot devote enough time and energy to school improvement.



- *Principals have limited expertise.* Like all educators, most principals have their own areas of instructional expertise. The school administrator cannot be an expert in everything. Individual teachers, of course, have their own particular areas of knowledge, but a group of teacher leaders can supply the variety of professional knowledge needed for sustained school improvement.

Given these factors, school improvement depends more than ever on the active involvement of teacher leaders as employees. School administrators can't do it all by themselves. Exemplary collegial leaders devote much of their time and effort building sound relationships based on mutual respect and caring. Under these circumstances, collegial leadership fosters the distribution of decision-making and shared accountability among all its employees.

#### *Learners As Customers*

Without learners, there can be no schools. They are the primary customers in our schools. The provision of quality and equal education must be offered to all our learners in a collegial milieu. The leadership of the school must ensure that this goal is realized. Quality cannot be treated like a commodity that is mechanically controlled or discarded whenever one so desires (West-Burnham, 1997). As pointed out by McTighe and Wiggins (2013), a fundamental reality in teaching is that our pupils vary in their prior knowledge, skill levels, and experiences, in their interests, and in their preferred modes of learning. This inevitably impacts on learning outcomes seeing that even in a relatively homogeneous school, the variety of abilities of learners can be substantial. Hence, in order for collegial leadership to prevail, it is imperative that an effective school should be imbued with the following characteristics (Dalin, 1994):

- There is a team spirit in the school. The teachers co-operate and help the learners and each other. The learners' attitude to schoolwork is positive. There is a combination of pressure on the one hand and support on the other.
- There is a focus on classroom practice where teachers are viewed as learners. There is a sense of commitment and sustained effort.
- The parents and the community participate in the life of the school. There is a sense of combined ownership that prevails amongst the teachers, the learners, and the parents.
- The principal is the chief catalyst and the initiator of development through collegiality.

The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes stakeholders' commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve education in their schools; above all, it is collective mobilization based on collegiality (Fullan, 2007).

#### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The primary purpose of this research was to determine the relevance of the COLME as a conceptual framework to transform TBMPs in schools as organizations. The qualitative research method was deemed suitable to conduct this investigation. Qualitative research suited this investigation because it is a process of understanding based on a distinct methodological tradition of inquiry that explored a social and human problem related to leadership practices in schools (Creswell, 1998). To better understand collegial leadership activity, it was sufficient in this exploratory study to generate thick descriptions based on personal interviews as a research method. Qualitative research further enabled the researcher to build a holistic picture of collegial leadership, as opposed to TBMPs, by conducting the investigation in the natural settings of the selected schools. Purposeful sampling was used to select the ten schools in Port Elizabeth, South Africa (Burns, 1998; Schloss & Smith, 1999). The five WRS are situated in affluent urban areas. These schools have sufficient financial support from external stakeholders because of their location. In contrast, the five PRS are situated in very poor communities with extremely limited financial resources. Parents of learners in these PRS are mostly unemployed.

Copies of the COLME were handed to the 40 participants of five PRS and WRS schools. The respondents were required to determine the application of the COLME in order to transform TBMPs in their schools. The COLME was discussed in detail with all the respondents during the pre-interview stage to ensure that they were knowledgeable about it. Also, at this initial stage of contact with the interviewees, prior to implementation, the

various components of the COLME were explained. Consequently, all the participants had the pre-knowledge to satisfy the requirements of the investigation. Therefore, it was expected that all the participants had the basic knowledge to distinguish between TBMPs and collegial leadership practices in all their activities in the application of the COLME at their respective schools. Unstructured interviews with the principal, a member of the school governing body, a head of department, and a teacher from each of the ten schools were accomplished over a period of six months after they were given the COLME. This gave the participants adequate time to determine the effectiveness of the COLME to address their challenges and concerns regarding TBMPs.

McMillan and Schumacher (1993) justly point out that because no investigator observes, interviews, or studies documents exactly like another investigation, the issue of reliability is immensely difficult. However, in this study, various techniques were used to corroborate the findings for the purpose of reliability. A tape-recorder was used while interviewing the respondents. The interviewees did not object to the use of a tape-recorder seeing that this medium was used to verify the notes taken down during the interviews. They were also requested to verify the synthesis of the data obtained. Furthermore, the participants were asked to modify any misrepresentations that they detected in the data presented to them. In the verification of the data, it was evident from the feedback obtained from them that the requirements for credibility, confirmability, and dependability were satisfied, to a large extent (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Confidentiality was ensured throughout the interviews. The main question presented to the participants was:

*To what extent can the COLME be used to transform traditional bureaucratic management practices in your school?*

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Traditional Bureaucratic Management Practices**

The interviews revealed that much of the current leadership crisis in many schools is based on the old-fashioned top-down bureaucratic style of management. The principals at the PRS admitted that much has still to be done in order to espouse the values of leadership presented in the COLME. All the principals interviewed concurred that leaders would normally consult their entire team, immaterial of rank, before binding decisions were taken, whereas traditional managers would demand that the work be done to the satisfaction of those higher up in rank. They agreed that it was impossible to equate leadership practices with traditional bureaucratic management approaches. All the respondents acknowledged that individuals in positions of authority could get things done through other people because of the power these individuals wield, whereas collegial leaders would mobilize others to want to act because of their credibility. One principal actually remarked that “Collegial leadership and traditional bureaucratic management practices are poles apart!”

Most of the principals also complained that much of their quality time was spent on basic administrative tasks, such as ensuring that the paperwork was done, instead of focusing on the leadership aspects of their schools. This impeded their ability to effectively implement collegial leadership principles as spelt out in the COLME. The issue of faulty and poor time management constantly came to the fore as a factor that impeded the transformation of TBMPs in schools, especially the PRS. However, all the respondents in both the WRS and PRS agreed that a new approach was evident in their relationships with their staff members after being exposed to the COLME. One principal at a WRS remarked:

*I don't jump to conclusions now. I listen carefully to my staff and weigh the options before embarking on a course of action. If no support is forthcoming from my staff, then I realise that alternatives have to be sought to address the issues jointly in a way befitting of collegiality.*

A principal from a PRS pointed out:

*I've learnt my skills from observing those that I worked under. As I've come from a disadvantaged background, such a model was fraught with deficiencies that still haunt us. How to shed the old management styles and introduce new leadership approaches based on collegiality is a major challenge for all of us in our country. It will take some time to change our attitudes toward joint decision-making as envisaged in the COLME, considering our history.*

Many of the principals admitted that it was not possible to completely transform traditional management practices within the period of a few months. They concurred that at least two years are required before collegial leadership practices could actually replace TBMPs to transform attitudes and relationships based on trust and become a reality in schools.

### **Shared Vision**

All the respondents agreed that a shared vision is vital for collegial leadership practices to materialise in schools. They also concurred that no single person should be the sole custodian of the school's vision. One principal's remark summed up the feelings of the respondents:

*Principals can no longer regard themselves as authority figures to impose rules and policies without consensual decision-making. It's imperative for principals to serve as coordinators of several interest groups among the entire school community who would then jointly determine the future direction of the school.*

A few principals indicated that the leaders' vision determined the successful attainment of the schools' goals. Members of the school governing bodies (SGBs) strongly contested this minority viewpoint and referred to the (South African) Schools Act of 1996 regarding the empowering all stakeholders to make an equal and just contribution to the delivery of quality education in schools. Furthermore, a shared vision created a healthy educational climate for a highly motivated staff to give of their best. A teacher at a PRS confirmed that:

*The newly formulated shared vision of my school serves as an inspiration and motivation to me and my colleagues to make a positive contribution to the quality of education offered to our learners.*

Also, a teacher from WRS pointed out that a shared vision:

*...allows us to be easily identified with the goals of our school. It is no longer your vision. It is part of my vision to excel in the work I do and it is also part of our vision as a team that works in the school.*

A member of the SGB expressed her satisfaction of shared vision underpinning collegial leadership practices. She expressed her satisfaction that:

*With the shared vision being part of collegial leadership, SGB members feel part of the school. We are not treated like intruders and our voices are now heard in all the decisions taken at the school.*

All the respondents concurred that a shared vision was dependent on shared values. A teacher at a PRS proudly remarked that he was now a "shareholder" of his school's vision.

### **Collegial Climate And Environment**

The interviews confirmed the assertion that educational transformation was devoid of any meaningful change without a concomitant shift in paradigm to accommodate the newly envisaged processes in collegial leadership. Currently, this is a major challenge facing employees; even more so in PRS. For a collegial climate to be created within the educational milieu, it is absolutely essential for a visible paradigm shift to come into effect. Conventional bureaucratic, restrictive management norms fail to address the metamorphosis required in education. All the principals concurred with this notion. Actually, one remarked:

*The principles of democratic leadership demand a participatory style of governance in a system in which equity of representation and equity of accountability are present.*

### **Enabling Others To Act Equally**

All the principals agreed that leadership was not the preserve of a few men and women appointed in official positions by the Department of Education. Another principal pointed out that equity of access into leadership roles

could no longer be the sole domain of principals. Teachers have now entered schools with advanced training skills that make it possible for them to share in leadership responsibilities. All the respondents supported the application of the COLME as an effective framework to get total involvement of all employees so as to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the utilisation of all resources. Recognising the role of teachers and parents (as well) in making major decisions is a key departure to what prevailed in the past. A teacher at a PRS said:

*The COLME breaks the stronghold that principals had in making and pushing down policies without any consultation whatsoever. Many principals still believe that they have the monopoly of controlling all the resources in a school. This myth has to explode. The input of every stakeholder needs to be recognised and appreciated in order to govern the school in a collegial way. There is no room for derision of teachers by senior members of the management team any longer.*

The teachers pointed out that limited participation in programme development, meetings, and decision-making had a direct negative impact on their job performance. This traditional bureaucratic approach to management had a debilitating effect on their confidence and commitment levels. They were extremely happy that the COLME created opportunities for unleashing their leadership skills which failed to take place within a traditional management environment. All agreed that within the broad parameters of the COLME, the feelings of powerlessness can be eradicated. This inevitably strengthens their beliefs in their own capabilities to handle organizational tasks in innovative and cost-effective ways.

All heads of departments interviewed concurred that a major hurdle in introducing innovative leadership styles in schools was based on inadequate professional competency development programmes. Upward mobility in leadership positions was not adequately supported by effective training programmes. One asked:

*How can you manage a department or even an institution without any academic and professional training? Will you appoint a pilot without the relevant training and qualification? To govern, to many managers, means to rule and control the institution in an autocratic way. Without effective training from the higher education sector, how can you expect us to succeed in implementing collegiality?*

Another remarked in a similar vein:

*The current method of promotion from teacher to principal in our country is beset with problems. How can a new principal introduce the COLME when he or she does not even understand the nuances of collegiality in running a school?*

All the respondents agreed that there was a dire need for leadership training programmes. The findings of this exploratory study strongly support the application of the COLME to transform TBMPs in organizations such as schools. Apparently, there is a cry for more leaders than traditional bureaucratic managers in these institutions. Kouzes and Posner (1997) observed why people *are* reluctant to answer the cry for leadership. They believe that:

*...this cautiousness results not from a lack of courage or competence, but from outdated notions about leadership. Just about everything we were taught by traditional management prevents us from being effective leaders. (p.15)*

Donaldson (2007) contends that we can strengthen school leadership and performance by acknowledging and supporting the vital roles of teacher leaders. He suggests that administrators, school boards, and state and federal policymakers should identify and support those clusters of teachers in which professional relationships and commitments are fostering instructional innovation. There is a need to respect the judgment of these professional clusters and to put resources behind the efforts of teacher leaders by supporting shared practice, planning, and professional learning focused on their purposeful improvement of practice. Administrators need to acknowledge that their own goals and initiatives can best be addressed by treating teacher leaders as vital and powerful partners.

Notwithstanding the historical imbalances between the poorly-resourced and the well-resourced schools, the COLME can serve as an effective benchmark to ensure that all employees jointly guarantee quality education. This domain can no longer be confined to the office of the principal alone. As evident in the framework of the

COLME, managing human resources and offering quality leadership is a collective effort. To govern an institution does not imply that there is no room for collegial leadership practices to prevail. According to all the educators interviewed, to attain collegiality in a school, certain measures had to be put firmly into place in order to optimize the realisation of collegial leadership practices. In support of the COLME, they noted that the consultative process ensuring equality of access in decision-making as partners was a major initial step to take toward a collegial leadership style. Hierarchies had to be flattened in order to achieve this goal of collegiality. All the employees of the institution had an entitlement to participate fully in deliberations affecting the various functions of the institution, the key one being the provision of quality education to the learners by committed teachers. There was no room for an *oligarchy* if the objectives of collegiality had to be realised.

## CONCLUSION

The COLME provides an astute framework to develop healthy collegial leadership practices in organizations such as schools. It delineates procedures to develop and use the maximum leadership potential of all the employees of a school in order to create and foster quality education. Notably, the principles of collegiality are flexibly applied in order to create a climate in which all employees are able to express themselves freely and hence feel that they are part of the democratic decision-making process. Of importance is that employees need to feel that they are able to have an influence over what should happen and does happen at the school rather than be subjected to the decisions of those placed in positions of hierarchical power. All the interviewees did acknowledge that collegiality was an important leadership intervention to transform the traditional bureaucratic management practices in their schools. Evidently, the COLME provides a suitable framework to achieve this goal. Excellent schools develop when educators understand that the power of their leadership lies in the strength of their relationships. Strong leadership in schools is the result from the participation of many stakeholders. Whether we call it distributed leadership, collaborative leadership, or collegial leadership, the ideal arrangement encourages every employee in the school to be a leader. More research needs to be done on the transformation of TBMPs in organizations.

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**NOTES**