

The Effects of Teacher Leadership on Teacher Satisfaction in a
Small Urban Charter School

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of providing teacher leadership opportunities in a small urban charter school on teacher satisfaction. The study was conducted from October 2014 to March 2015 during which time teacher leadership opportunities were offered school wide to teachers who had been employed at the school for at least one year. The results indicate that providing teacher leadership opportunities had no significant effect on teacher satisfaction. All teachers reported an increased level of teacher leadership and satisfaction in certain areas of the school, but that did not change the level of satisfaction with teaching overall.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

School improvement has seen an increase of allowing teachers to make professional decisions about school process and instructional dynamics. Teacher leadership has become the new foundation by which educators are able to “individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 287-288). Recent studies have shown that the imposition of traditional hierarchy limits the professional autonomy of teachers to improve education, which depletes teacher satisfaction. The adverse effects of these conventional trends include declining job satisfaction, reduced ability to meet students’ needs, and a depreciation of morale among teachers.

It was hypothesized that teacher leadership may be an accurate predictor of job satisfaction, moreso than demographic variables (Short & Rhinehart, 1992). However, with school improvement restructuring efforts emphasizing teacher leadership, Brunetti (2001) urged investigation of this variable as a function of job satisfaction because of its unknown effects on educational settings and related constructs. Some authors have identified formal roles for teachers that increased their authority in the school, such as serving as department chairs or as elected members of educational organizations (Dressler, 2001). Other studies have acknowledged that the perceptions of job satisfaction improve when teachers can exert their influence to change classroom practices, school culture, community relationships, and policy decisions (Kopkowski, 2008). This includes engagement in professional learning communities, dialogue, and research.

The empowerment of teachers through leadership has become an essential part of effective decision making in today's schools as evidenced by national projects (Lenardo, 2007). This paradigm shift has been studied to analyze the improvement of teacher satisfaction based upon the increase of ownership. Research has suggested that, in order for teachers to take responsibility for improved teaching and learning, they must engage in their work not just as teachers but also as teacher leaders (Jacobson, 2011). The definition of teacher leadership is evolving, away from traditionally titled roles and into informal roles that increase teachers' influence of educational infrastructure. Teachers are leaders when they "function in professional learning communities to affect student learning; contribute to school improvement; inspire excellence in practice; and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement" (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000, p. 5). Although teacher leadership is varied in definition, studies continue with how this model affects teacher satisfaction, attrition, and student performance. Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson, and Hann (2002) describe teacher leadership as "action that transforms teaching and learning in a school, that ties school and community together on behalf of learning, and that advances social sustainability and quality of life for a community" (p. 17).

In educational settings and with teachers as subjects, researchers have already examined job satisfaction with functions of job performance, quality of work life, and organizational effectiveness (Turner, 2007). Short and Rinehart (1992) indicated a need to explore the relationship of teacher leadership to other psychological constructs such as job satisfaction. The assumption that teacher leadership will improve teacher satisfaction, thereby enhancing teacher effectiveness to improve student achievement, is the basis for this study.

Statement of Problem

This study examined the impact of teacher leadership opportunities on teacher satisfaction. The study was designed to determine whether an increase in teacher leadership opportunities would influence teacher satisfaction.

Hypothesis

For this study, the researcher proposed the null hypothesis: There will be no significant improvement in the satisfaction of teachers despite the implementation of school wide teacher leadership opportunities.

Operational Definitions

The dependent variable was teacher satisfaction, which was measured by a pre- and post-survey of satisfaction at the initiation and conclusion of the time span for the implemented opportunities. The intent was to see a significant change in the rating scale results. The independent variable was the supportive practices of leadership. This was implemented through the time spent in the classroom and individual meetings with teachers implemented by the department chair. There were also descriptions of leadership opportunities that teachers could volunteer to accept throughout the school year.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section aims to review the literature as it relates to teacher leadership and the topics that make up the context of how educational reform has encompassed the theoretical framework of collegiality to increase teacher satisfaction. Recent research has found that, instead of hierarchal policy, the model of collegiality and professional learning communities provide teachers, who are in direct contact with students, the opportunity of offering educational solutions (Jacobson, 2011).

Section one of the review of the literature will discuss the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and its implications within urban education. Section two will address the surge of the charter school movement, and section three will review professional learning communities of teachers. This will contextualize the functionality and effectiveness of teacher leadership within schools as a mechanism to improve teacher satisfaction.

No Child Left Behind Reform

In 2001, Congress introduced a resolution to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice. The No Child Left Behind Act aimed to ensure that all students, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, would have the opportunity for a solid education. President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act into law in January of 2002.

One of the primary mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) includes that, by the end of 2006, all teachers had to meet the licensing and certification requirements of the state in which they teach, hold at least a bachelor's degree, and pass state testing criteria to be considered "highly qualified." Second, all students in a school were required to be 'proficient' by 2014 according to the individual state standards of proficiency. If a school continuously has students who are not proficient in areas like reading and math, the students at that school would be eligible for additional assistance programs and the ability to attend other more successful schools in their

district. Third, the longer a school fails to meet the NCLB criteria, the more assistance that would be made available to parents and students in that school's district (Darling-Hammond, 2007). The ultimate consequence is if schools do not meet the criteria, they run the risk of a state “takeover” or being closed altogether.

Two of the most distinct implications of NCLB surface through the policies of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Race to the Top (RTTT). In 2010, the collaborative efforts of the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers initiated the release of Common Core State Standards that detailed what students in kindergarten through twelfth grade should know in reading and mathematics (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The timeline of this project started in the mid 1990s through Achieve, Incorporated. This grew into the American Diploma Project in 2001 seeking to outline the increase of academic standards by aligning standards and assessments, requiring rigorous coursework, measuring of statewide accountability, and preparing students for college and career while monitoring post-secondary progress.

In 2009, President Obama supported U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s \$4.35 billion contest for all 50 states and DC created to spur innovation and reforms in state and local district K-12 education by August of 2010. The idea was to award money to various states who submitted applications showcasing better curriculum, assessment methodology, performance-based standards, and implementation of Common Core State Standard curricula that turned around the lowest-performing schools while continuing to build efficient data systems (Hursh, 2007). There was a maximum of 500 points based upon specific criteria that led to the award of funding.

Urban Education Post-NCLB

According to the U.S. Department of Education, NCLB was designed to provide school districts with more funding in the form of NCLB bonuses, as long as those schools are achieving the standards set (Smyth, 2008). NCLB allows states and school districts more flexibility in the use of their resources, holds school districts and individual schools accountable for their results, and gives parents report cards grading the schools in their districts so they can see which schools in their neighborhoods are succeeding (Gay, 2007). If schools fail to improve each year, a school improvement plan will be necessary to submit for implementation. If the school continues to fail and not improve after the improvement is executed, the result may be a violation of the contract and the school may be recommended for closure. This notion has been a consistent area of research and examination in urban environments where studies show that the NCLB Act has not closed the achievement gap but widened it (Tuerk, 2005).

Urban education has been a source of perplexity over time, and the enactment of NCLB, CCSS, and RTTT has proposed national debates (Paul, 2004). Recent research has shown that limited resources, growing child poverty rates, and decreasing access to health care are the recipe for failing urban schools. Schools with large populations of Black and Latino including ELL students have been broadly affected by social problems and politics that negatively impact the goals and objectives of current educational reform. As Darling-Hammond (2006) notes, “one of the most significant problems with the NCLB Act is that it mistakes measuring schools for fixing them. What we really need is an education act aimed at empowering schools to seek solutions, not one based on blaming, shaming and ultimately punishing them financially” (p. 653).

It is important to note that literature also supports the educational inequities that exist within urban education (Lenardo, 2007). This is also studied as a specific causation to empower communities, students, and teachers to take an active role in developing and implementing an

educational vision that goes beyond theoretical legislation becoming an ultimate challenge to current reform.

Years of quantitative and qualitative research on school reform resulted in significant knowledge about what kinds of reforms are working for students within urban education (Mathis, 2004). These include smaller classes; a curriculum and pedagogy that is culturally relevant and engaging; teachers who engage in ongoing professional development to better understand their own biases; and a system of assigning teachers to schools that is not based solely on seniority thus leaving the newest teachers in the toughest schools, among many others (Lee & Smith, 1995). Consequently, the era of the charter school movement has infiltrated all facets of education to assist with closing the achievement gap via effective teachers who take ownership of the infrastructure and decisions to improve student learning.

Charter School Movement

The central purpose of the charter school legislation is to, “eliminate a significant portion of statutory requirements and administrative rules and regulations usually imposed on public schools and in turn demand a new type of public accountability tied to actual performance” (Dressler, 2001, p. 170). According to the U.S. Department of Education, the definition of charter school is a nonsectarian, tuition-free, public school created on the basis of a performance contract or “charter” between the school and an authorizer (Wasley et al., 2000). This agreement serves as an outline of instructional and operational goals. The concept was developed to initiate new educational innovations to meet the demands of educational reform and indirectly examine the flaws of traditional, public education while fostering improved educational opportunities for children. Charter schools are required to meet or exceed basic student performance levels and achieve the operational goals in the charter agreement. The antithesis jeopardizes the renewal of the charter by having it revoked based upon the lack of fidelity.

According to the literature, charter schools are public schools that are free from many of the regulations applied to traditional public schools and, in return, are held accountable for student performance (Dressler, 2001). It is a formal, legal document between those who establish and run a school, called the “operators,” and the public entity that authorizes and monitors the schools called “authorizers.” Charter schools are, in theory, autonomous. They produce the results best for charter schools that are self-governing institutions with wide control over their own curriculum, instruction, staffing, budget, and governance (Wasley et al., 2000). As a public school, a charter school is funded with tax dollars and must have a process that offers any student who chooses a randomized selection for a slot. And while charter schools can be started by anyone who has an organized vision and focus, the school should demonstrate results accordingly that justify the charter, while monitoring progress.

Student Achievement at Secondary Level Charter Schools

Unlike most public schools, which tend to conform to some fairly traditional models, charter schools follow systematic guidelines but still manage to circumvent bureaucratic procedures. By definition, charter schools have the autonomy to freely innovate, and many aim to provide a holistic education for students (Taylor, 2005). Four common areas of this holistic approach in many charter schools venturing to increase student achievement are academic growth, social growth, metacognitive growth, and postsecondary preparation.

In ensuring support that responds to students’ academic and social needs at the secondary level, charter schools expect and receive help from families and community partners. Personalized support is evidenced through systems, such as advisory programs, college counseling, academic tutoring, and mentoring. The literature mentions that secondary schooling has many challenges different from the primary grades. In addition to the basic skill set that students need to be

successful in general, the secondary level must provide the mechanism for students' preparedness for the collegiate level or workforce.

According to the mandates of NCLB, many charter schools have the pressure to facilitate the increase of student achievement in addition to providing the additional measures of student performance at the post-secondary level. Recent research provides the data about the shortcomings of charter school evidence that students are any more prepared than that of traditional schools (Gerstl-Pepin, 2006).

Professional Learning Communities

Research has revealed that mandatory teacher collaboration, sometimes called "professional learning communities," have seen more effective results than the traditional model of experts who profess information with the expectation of improved instruction. Within many charter schools, this ideology of teachers using a system of collaboration to collect information, analyze data, and assess the possible pedagogical solutions to help students achieve has become standardized practice (Cummings, 2012). The principal often serves as an instructional leader, and, along with teacher collaboration, actively engages in ongoing professional development throughout the year. More importantly, the accumulating evidence that supportive interactions among teachers in school wide professional communities improve instruction and student achievement as well as enable them to assume various roles with one another dependent upon the level of knowledge, skills, and talents (Vanderhaar, 2006).

However, a professional community is more than just support; it includes shared values, a common focus on student learning, collaboration in the development of curriculum and instruction, the sharing of practices, and reflective dialogue including the simplistic yet essential element of trust. Research states that this is the definition of collegiality or shared leadership where time is allocated for teachers to meet and school policies are embedded critical in order to provide

increased opportunities for the social construction of meaning and shared norms and values among teachers (Cummings, 2012).

Teacher Leadership and Teacher Satisfaction

Charter schools allow various infrastructures different from average public schools using a dual model of autonomy and accountability and holding high academic and organizational expectations for the school. In turn, educational leadership has transcended the hierarchical model and projected a more lateral style (Jacobson, 2011). Studies have suggested that some of the most successful schools implement shared leadership between administrators and teachers to promote healthy and focused strategies in order to increase teacher satisfaction. Teacher leadership has many names including teacher empowerment, teacher voice, collegial environments, and shared decision-making. As such, the successful execution of this unique leadership helps to identify instructional challenges and attempts to seek solutions with the individuals who have direct contact with students every day (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Research also suggests that not only does teacher leadership impact teacher morale, but it also increases the self-efficacy of teachers which then becomes a cyclical endeavor (Piert, 2013). Research also mentions that when teacher leaders dialogue with other teacher leaders, the more they support teacher leadership (Wang, Walters, & Thum, 2013).

Teacher leadership in charter schools might also appear in cohorts that allow a group of vertically or horizontally aligned teams to collaborate on school wide decisions. Teacher leaders can exist in both formal and informal capacities within a school. They perform tasks like taking initiative among faculty members, spreading their skills and talents among the staff for the purpose of improving pedagogy, or acting as a liaison to monitor the progress of students as it relates to specific content areas or holistic growth.

Formal teacher leaders have a more operational role in school mentoring, leadership, and decision-making. Most important, by providing teachers with leadership opportunities, teachers become engaged in their own professional development, and a stronger atmosphere of satisfaction is evident, promoting the essential foundation of what is necessary to create an atmosphere most conducive for optimal outcomes.

Summary

The first step in promoting teacher leadership and its effectiveness must take into account the context of goals, objectives, and demographics. Allowing teachers to accept leadership roles while working in a collaborative environment focused on improved student success is the foundational intent of purpose. Teacher leadership allows the promotion of collegial environments providing the capacity of increased teacher satisfaction.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of teacher leadership on teacher satisfaction. Survey results were compiled and analyzed to determine whether the increase of teacher leadership opportunities would increase teacher satisfaction.

Design

The design used to conduct this research was a quasi-experimental pre-/posttest design. The dependent variable was teacher satisfaction. The study used a survey developed by Paula M. Short and James S. Rinehart (1992) that measured the level of teacher satisfaction using specific indicators of teacher empowerment. The independent variable was the implementation of school wide opportunities of teacher leadership in several instructional and operational areas. Administration and the charter school operator introduced a new infrastructure that addressed teacher input and provided an internal governance committee. The study was conducted from October 2014 to March 2015.

Participants

The participants in this study were 26 secondary teachers. They were all educators from the same small urban charter school in Baltimore City with grades six through twelve. This was a convenience sample from the participating school. Each of the classroom teachers represented the content areas of English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Special Education, and Arts. There were eight teachers who taught Grade 6 through Grade 8 only, eight teachers who taught Grade 9 through Grade 12 only, and seven teachers who taught Grade 6 through Grade 12. The teaching experience of the individuals ranged from one to over 20 years.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a perception survey accessible online that used combined constructs from two developed surveys. The referential surveys were the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) by Short and Rinehart (1992) and the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) survey by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission (2002). There are no validity or reliability tests available. The teacher leadership domain statements were used from the SPES survey. The statements from section 5a were used from the TELL survey.

Based on the two previously discussed surveys, specific statements were reviewed and used based upon the topic interest of the researcher. The domains of satisfaction resembled those from the SPES and TELL surveys (Appendix A). The survey developed by the researcher was used to quantify the impact of teacher leadership on the perception of teacher satisfaction. The completed survey designed by the researcher contained 25 Likert scale questions and 1 qualifying question relating to the number of years at the school. For this study, a four-point agreement scale was used with the elimination of the standard “neutral” response. The satisfaction survey has not been tested for validity and reliability.

Procedure

The satisfaction survey was given as a pre-assessment to determine teacher satisfaction with professional development, educational policies, support, instructional collaboration, resources, relationships, and governance. School leaders allowed teachers to take the survey during an internal professional development session. The researcher expressed that the purpose of the survey was for action research. Faculty members were informed that the survey was confidential. They were asked to complete all questions honestly and thoroughly for accurate data. The researcher explained that they would be asked to complete the same survey later in the

year as a post-assessment for comparison purposes. The pre-survey was administered online during October of 2014 and the post-survey during March of 2015.

The researcher worked with school leaders to solicit opportunities of teacher leadership. This effort was based upon a new implementation of teacher leadership school wide. The school implemented a new governance structure that included all stakeholders. Teachers participated in a new model of weekly internal professional development each Wednesday. The sessions were informative and allowed both whole group and departmental sessions. Teachers were able to campaign for election as department representatives. Five elected representatives were invited to quarterly meetings to help make major decisions for the school. This included decisions about budget, instruction, and climate and culture. The governance committee included five teachers, three parents, two students, one community partner, and one board member. School administrators met with teachers weekly outside of professional development for additional instructional support. Departments rotated meeting with administrators every Tuesday during a specific session of one hour to discuss current issues. The researcher participated in these sessions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

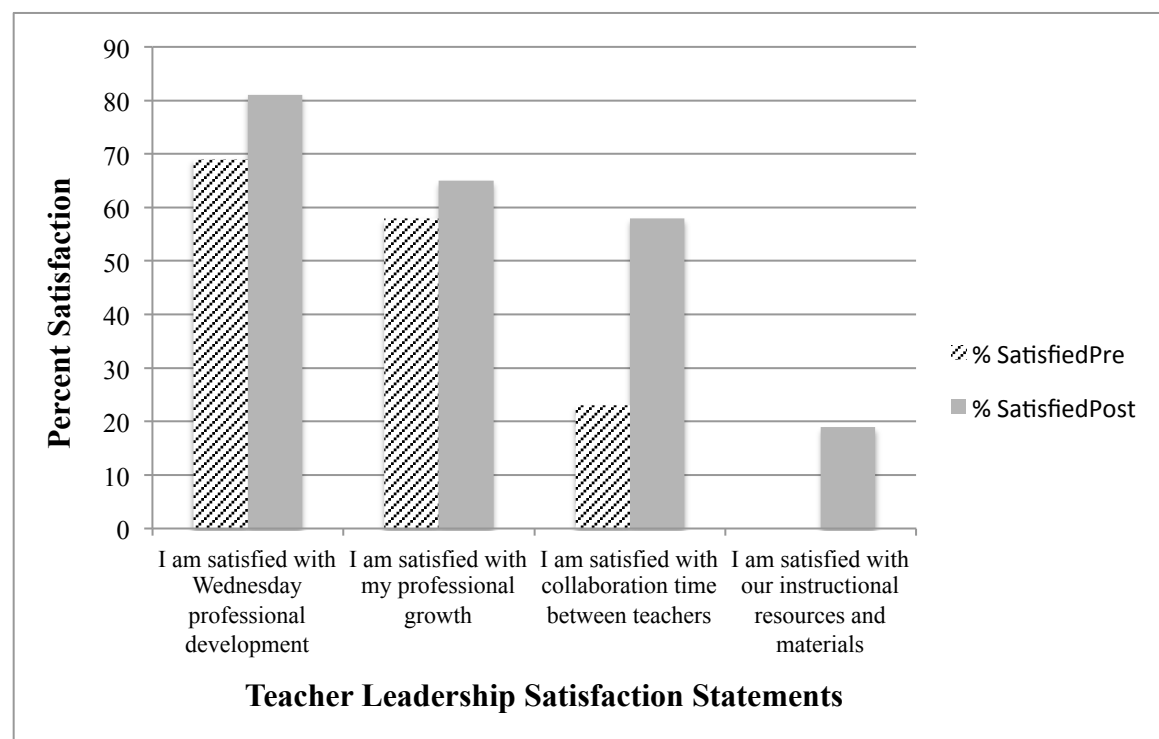
The purpose of this research study was to determine the impact of teacher leadership opportunities for teachers in a small urban secondary charter school on teacher satisfaction. A survey was given pre- and post-implementation to determine whether increased teacher leadership opportunities through a new infrastructural model would improve teacher satisfaction. The survey results proposed satisfaction based on statements of teacher leadership opportunities through instruction, support, and operations/governance. Based upon the statements, results were analyzed for overall satisfaction from the pre-survey to the post-survey.

The statements that encompassed teacher leadership opportunities in the area of instruction had overall increases from pre- to post-survey. On the pre-survey, the statements that addressed professional development and growth showed that the majority of teachers were satisfied (50% or above) and on the post-survey, both statements increased slightly. According to the data (Figure 1), there was a marginal increase of satisfaction from 69% to 81% with Wednesday professional development sessions led by teachers, but the increase of 12 percentage points was not significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 2.57, p = .46$). There was a slight increase of seven percentage points with teacher satisfaction of professional growth from 58% to 65%, which was not significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 1.55, p = .67$). The statement that targeted collaboration showed that the majority of teachers were not satisfied, but by the post-survey, the majority of teachers who were not satisfied had increased to the majority of the teachers being satisfied. Teacher satisfaction regarding collaboration time between teachers increased from low satisfaction (23%) to moderate satisfaction with (58%). This increase of 35 percentage points was not significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 7.21, p = .07$). When the results of satisfaction were compared based on the statements about instruction, professional growth showed the smallest increase, while collaboration among teachers had the largest increase. The statement

addressing instructional resources and materials showed that there were not any teachers who were satisfied, and on the post-survey, the majority of teachers were still not satisfied. However, this was the statement that showed significance. The percentage of teachers satisfied with instructional resources and materials shifted positively from 0% to 19%, and this change of 19 percentage points was significant ($\chi^2 (2,52) = 9.84, p < .05$).

Figure 1

Comparison of Pre/Post Satisfaction with Instruction Statements



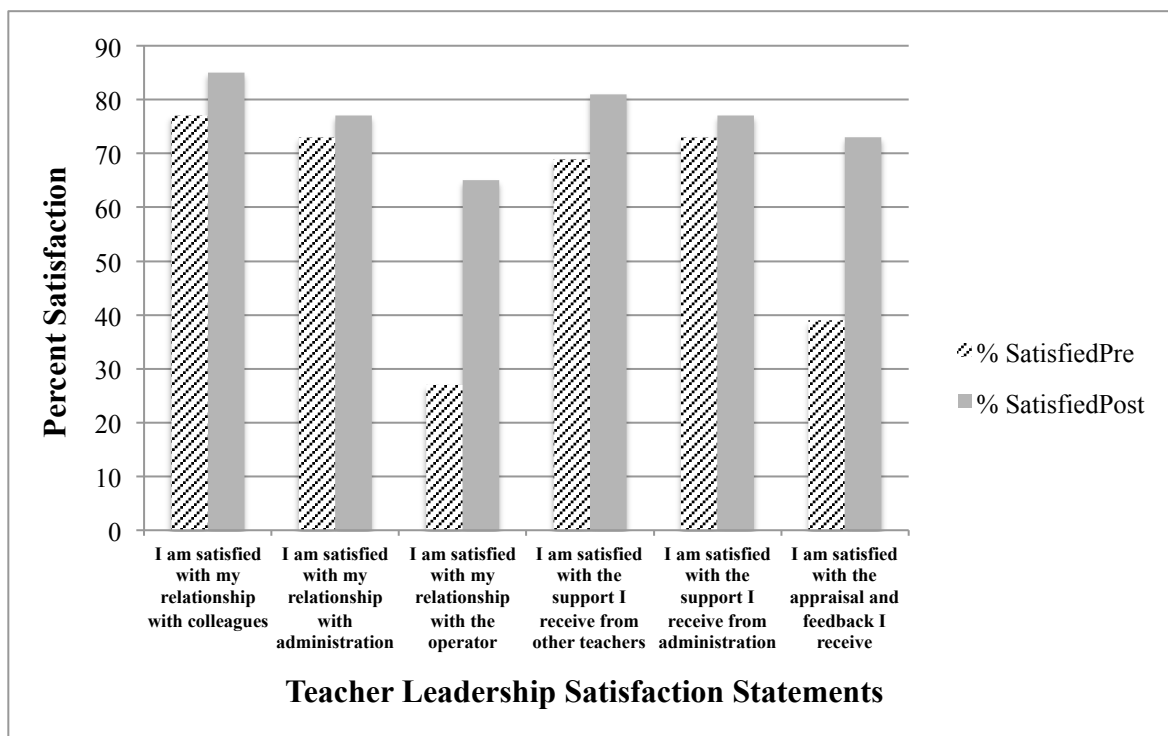
The statements that encompassed teacher leadership opportunities in the area of relationship and support had overall increases from pre- to post-survey (Figure 2). On the pre-survey, five out of six of statements showed that the majority of teachers were satisfied (50% or above), and on the post-survey, all five statements increased slightly with three of the five statements of satisfaction having significance.

When the results of satisfaction were compared based on the statements with relationships

and support of teacher leadership, administrative relationships and support had the smallest increase shift while relationship with the operator had the largest increase. According to the data, there was a marginal increase of satisfaction from 73% to 77% with relationships and support from administration. Both statements showed an increase of four percentage points, where the statement of relationship was statistically significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 9.58, p < .05$), while the statement of support was not significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 4.80, p = .19$). Teacher satisfaction regarding the relationship with and support from colleagues also showed a slight increase. The statement surrounding teacher satisfaction of relationships with colleagues increased by eight percentage points from 77% to 85% but was not significant ($\chi^2 (2,52) = 2.13, p = .35$). The statement surrounding teacher satisfaction of support from other teachers increased by twelve percentage points 69% to 81% but was not significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 3.03, p = .39$). The statement that targeted the relationship with the operator showed that the majority of teachers were not initially satisfied, but by the post-survey, the majority of teachers were satisfied. Teacher satisfaction regarding relationships with the operator increased from low satisfaction (27%) to moderate satisfaction with (65%). This difference of 38 percentage points was significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 10.44, p < .05$). The percentage of teachers satisfied with appraisal and feedback shifted positively from 39% to 73%, and this increase of percentage points was statistically significant ($\chi^2 (2,52) = 18.92, p < .05$).

Figure 2

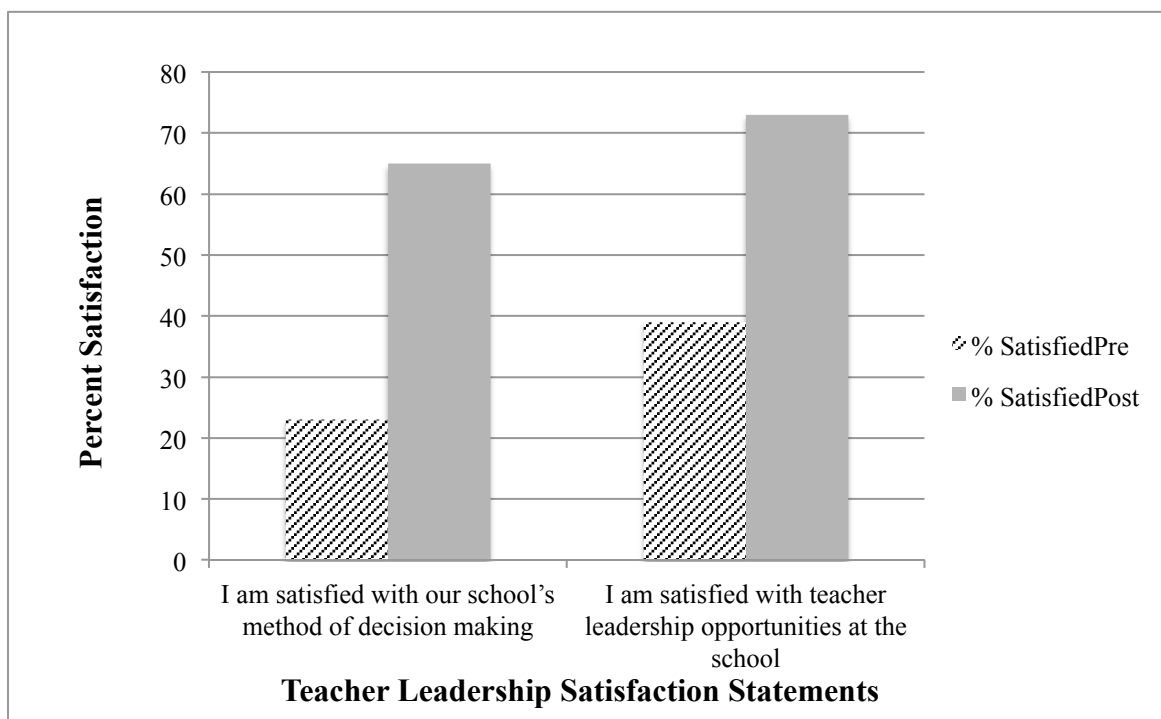
Comparison of Pre/Post Satisfaction with Relationships and Support Statements



The statements that encompassed teacher leadership opportunities in the area of operations/governance had overall increases from pre- to post-survey (Figure 3). When the results of satisfaction were compared, both statements showed that the majority of teachers were not satisfied (50% or above), and on the post-survey, satisfaction on both statements increased and the majority of teachers were satisfied with both areas showing significance. According to the data, teacher satisfaction regarding the school's method of decision making increased from low satisfaction of 23% to moderate satisfaction of 65%. The increase of 42 percentage points was significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 10.99, p < .05$). The percentage of teachers satisfied with teacher leadership opportunities shifted positively from 39% to 73%, and this change of 34 percentage points was significant ($\chi^2 (3,52) = 9.81, p < .05$).

Figure 3

Comparison of Pre/Post Satisfaction with Operation/Governance Statements

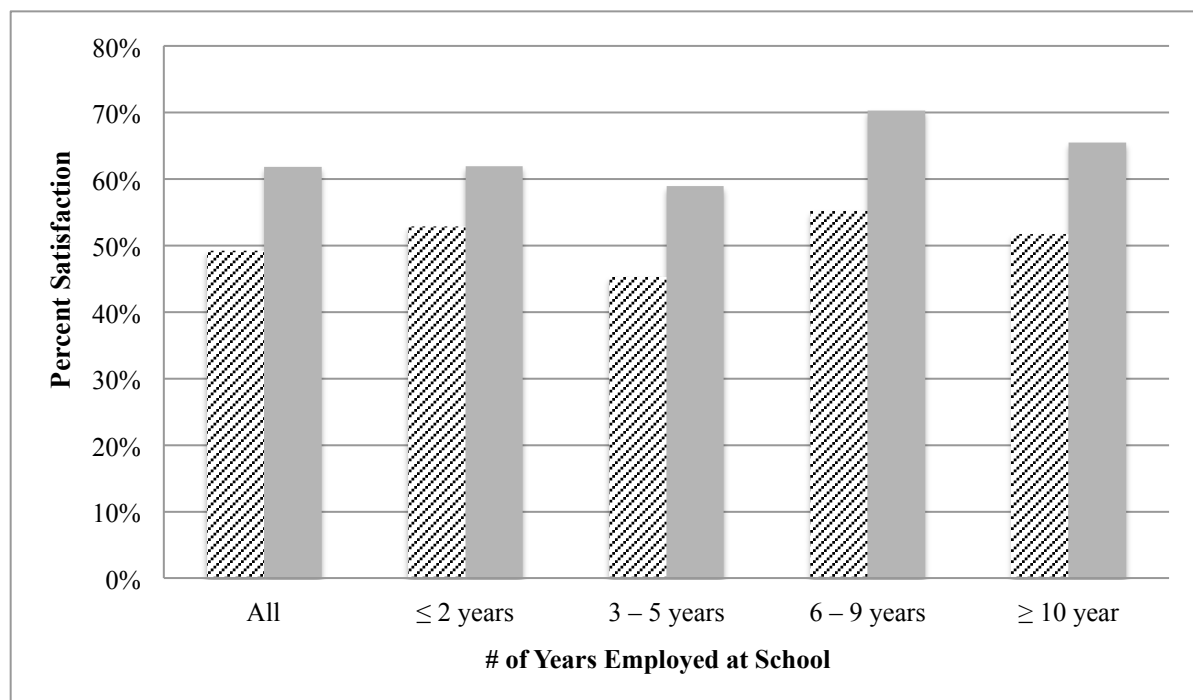


One other area of analysis was the number of years that teachers were employed at the school and the overall satisfaction (Figure 4). Teachers employed at the school for two or fewer years (23%) slightly increased their satisfaction by nine percentage points from 53% to 62%. Teachers employed at the school from three to five years, representing the largest group (54%), had an increase of overall satisfaction by 14 percentage points from 45% to 59%. Teachers employed at the school from six to nine years (19%) had the largest increase in overall satisfaction of 15 percentage points from 55% to 70%. Teachers employed at the school for ten years or more (4%) increased overall satisfaction by 13 percentage points from 52% to 65%.

The three to five year group had the majority of teachers initially not satisfied, but by the post survey, the majority of teachers were satisfied. According to the data, overall teacher satisfaction showed that the majority of teachers were not satisfied during the pre-survey and that satisfaction increased slightly by the post-survey.

Figure 4

Comparison of Tenure vs. Overall Satisfaction



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to determine whether the implementation of school wide teacher leadership opportunities would have an impact on teacher satisfaction. Most data supported the null hypothesis that there would be no significant relationship between the implementation of teacher leadership opportunities and overall teacher satisfaction. However, there was some data that rejected the null hypothesis. Some items that were statistically significant included satisfaction with instructional resources and materials, relationships and support from administration and relationships with the operator, appraisal and feedback, school's method of decision making, and teacher leadership opportunities.

Implications of Results

The survey results suggested that there was not a significant relationship between the teacher leadership opportunities implemented and overall teacher satisfaction. The level of teacher satisfaction was maintained from the pre-survey to the post-survey after implementation of teacher leadership opportunities. While the opportunities of teacher leadership increased, there was no impact on the overall satisfaction of the majority of teachers. Although the data showed that teachers were satisfied with some indicators of teacher leadership opportunities, these did not have a significant impact on overall satisfaction. The number of years that teachers were employed at the school resulted in similar levels of satisfaction. In general, the area of teacher leadership implementation as it related to governance demonstrated the largest increase of satisfaction.

Theoretical Consequences

Research has provided strategies for the stewardship of school improvement by improving teacher satisfaction (Kopkowski, 2008). Teacher satisfaction includes many variables, and the

manifestation of how it relates to overall effectiveness has been studied extensively. Teacher empowerment and the validation of input have been identified as effective methods to increase satisfaction. Leadership opportunities allow teachers to exhibit the best of their professional practices and increase satisfaction. Another way to increase teacher satisfaction is seen in the area of support through professional growth. Through more consistent methods of consultation and the increase of leadership opportunities, teachers are able to express their thoughts of school improvement and increase teacher satisfaction (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). While the implementation of teacher leadership opportunities occurred, the overall impact of the opportunities had limited significant influence on the level of current satisfaction by teachers at this school.

Threats to Validity

Several threats of validity occurred during this study. The group was a targeted and convenient sample. The group was also not a random selection and included a small number of teachers from the same school. The group was from the same geographical area and with a consistent student demographic. With only 26 teachers, generalizations were compromised. For example, two teachers completed the pre-survey and three teachers completed the post-survey at a different time than the other teachers. The researcher had no influence over this variable.

Another area of the survey over which the researcher had minimum control was the implementation of teacher leadership opportunities in the areas of instruction, support, and governance. Another threat to validity was whether or not teachers took advantage of the leadership opportunities. While the opportunities were presented and implemented, not all teachers were involved in leadership. Also, the models were new, a factor which did not provide the structure to optimize the level of involvement of teachers as planned. Finally, the study only included classroom teachers and excluded other staff that also have perspectives of school

improvement and could impact overall staff satisfaction. These threats to validity had a significant impact on the findings of the researcher.

Connections to Previous Studies

The results of this study demonstrated a marginal relationship between the implementation of teacher leadership opportunities and teacher satisfaction. In a study conducted by Pearson and Moomaw (2005), strong relationships were found between providing teachers with an environment of empowerment and teacher satisfaction. The goal of the study was to examine the relationship between teacher autonomy and on-the-job stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism.

Empowerment was measured by three items that inquired about teachers' perceptions of the administration in considering their opinions on matters that directly affect them, involving them in the development of school policies that affect their work, and how often their concerns were taken into account in administrative decisions to see “if the yield of greater job satisfaction was associated with a high degree of professionalism and empowerment” (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005, p. 43). All of these constructs of teacher leadership opportunities support their findings in that all have some impact on teacher satisfaction.

When teacher leadership opportunities and empowerment is provided to teachers, the anticipated outcome is increased satisfaction. The results of this study, however, did not provide strong support for the relationship between teacher leadership and job satisfaction although previous research found that teacher autonomy was one of the working conditions associated with higher teacher satisfaction. While support practices such as those mentioned in the research were implemented, this study did not demonstrate a significant impact on overall teacher satisfaction.

Implications for Future Research

Suggestions for future research would be to broaden the scope of participants to a larger population. Although it was not one in this study, the implementation of teacher leadership opportunities in other schools with a similar model might allow the expansion of research base.

A potential recommendation might be to study the impact of teacher leadership opportunities in charter schools with dissimilar student demographics to determine whether teacher satisfaction would be affected. The survey could be developed to have more targeted statements regarding teacher leadership. In addition, instead of using the Likert-Scale scale's model of "agree" or "disagree," a future survey might use "satisfied" or "not satisfied." Any survey questions that were found to be less focused on teacher leadership should be eliminated in order to better validate the analysis.

Another recommendation might be to establish focus groups of teachers who are participating in teacher leadership opportunities to narrow the research and results and provide more comprehensive data within the subset of teachers and their levels of satisfaction. The validity of the study may be improved by making these adjustments.

Conclusions/Summary

The data results from this research indicate that implementation of teacher leadership opportunities had limited influence on teacher satisfaction. In this study, teachers were presented with increased empowerment in the areas of instruction, support, and governance. While there was some increase with teacher satisfaction in specific areas, there was limited impact overall. More research to determine the causes of teacher satisfaction and how it impacts teaching and learning is warranted.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Satisfaction Statements <i>Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following aspects of your teaching experience at our school this school year</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am satisfied with Wednesday professional development				
2. I am satisfied with my professional growth				
3. I am satisfied with the support I receive from other teachers				
4. I am satisfied with the appraisal and feedback I receive				
5. I am satisfied with the safety of our school environment				
6. I am satisfied with school policies and procedures				
7. I am satisfied with district policies and procedures				
8. I am satisfied with student achievement				
9. I am satisfied with student behavior				
10. I am satisfied with student support				
11. I am satisfied with the support I receive from administration				
12. I am satisfied with teacher attendance				
13. I am satisfied with my class instruction				
14. I am satisfied with the curriculum of my content area				
15. I am satisfied with collaboration time between teachers				

16. I am satisfied with the level of arts/academic collaboration				
17. I am satisfied with my classroom conditions				
18. I am satisfied with our instructional resources and materials				
19. I am satisfied with technology in the school				
20. I am satisfied with my relationship with students				
21. I am satisfied with my relationship with parents				
22. I am satisfied with my relationship with colleagues				
23. I am satisfied with my relationship with administration				
24. I am satisfied with my relationship with the operator				
25. I am satisfied with teacher leadership opportunities at the school				
26. I am satisfied with our school's method of decision making				
27. I am satisfied with my workload				
28. I am satisfied overall with the school this year				
29. I am likely to continue teaching at our school next year				

	≤ 2	3-5	7-9	≥ 10
30. How many years have you been at this school?				