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The Successful Adoption of Teaching for Transformation: Utilizing Kotter's 8-Stage Process for Leading Change

Abstract

To grow and thrive, schools must be able to adapt and change. Educational institutions undergo many procedural, programmatic, and pedagogical changes, motivated by both external and internal forces, which push and pull a school to pivot from its current status quo. One such significant change is the implementation of Teaching for Transformation (TfT), a design framework for the creation of authentic, formational learning experiences rooted in a transformational worldview, with its core practices being employed in over 100 schools worldwide. To determine whether schools who have successfully transitioned to TfT practices have utilized methods from Kotter's 8-Stage Process model for change, the researcher conducted a survey of 46 educators from five TfT schools. Participants were either members of the school's teaching staff or members of the TfT implementation team. Results of the survey showed that schools that successfully implemented TfT showed a high likelihood of utilizing methods from Kotter's 8-Stage Process; however, not all stages were emphasized equally.

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Action Research Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

The Successful Adoption of Teaching for Transformation:
Utilizing Kotter's 8-Stage Process for Leading Change

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Action Research Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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Abstract

To grow and thrive, schools must be able to adapt and change. Educational institutions undergo many procedural, programmatic, and pedagogical changes, motivated by both external and internal forces, which push and pull a school to pivot from its current status quo. One such significant change is the implementation of Teaching for Transformation (TfT), a design framework for the creation of authentic, formational learning experiences rooted in a transformational worldview, with its core practices being employed in over 100 schools worldwide. To determine whether schools who have successfully transitioned to TfT practices have utilized methods from Kotter's 8-Stage Process model for change, the researcher conducted a survey of 46 educators from five TfT schools. Participants were either members of the school's teaching staff or members of the TfT implementation team. Results of the survey showed that schools that successfully implemented TfT showed a high likelihood of utilizing methods from Kotter's 8-Stage Process; however, not all stages were emphasized equally.

For any organization to survive and thrive, it must be able to undergo change. Some would argue that this law of organizational success can be attributed more universally to organisms, civilizations, and even philosophical movements. Armenakis and Harris (2009) use the language of “survive and prosper,” articulating that change is necessary for organizations to evolve, thrive, and better serve their clientele (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009). Exploring change takes on a whole new significance in the context of education where educators actively engage in the formation of young minds who will one day play even more significant roles in society, and in the raising up of the next generation. The fact that most children spend close to the same amount of their waking hours in school as they do at home further highlights the impact a child’s education can potentially have on their intellectual, social and character development.

Problem

Recognizing that there are many invested stakeholders, the issue of change within an educational setting becomes even more nuanced. Although administrators are put in a place of authority over schools, and therefore any change initiatives, the power of other stakeholders such as teachers and parents cannot be understated. Obviously, parents should have some form of a say in what, and how, their children are being taught, but teachers often still hold a significant amount of sway in school decision-making. With so many opportunities for differing opinions among stakeholders, school leadership teams need to understand and be able to implement successful change paradigm shifts to benefit student learning, the culture of the school community, and the longevity of their school.

Moreover, change within an educational institution cannot be viewed apart for the type of leadership that school embraces. Some of the research literature on change leadership suggests approaches that tend to emphasize a top-down, process-focused view of change, while

downplaying the importance of staff culture and the role that the change recipients play (Som, Chan, & Dumitrascu, 2020). In contrast, other change leadership models suggest an approach of servant leadership where a strong feedback loop is created between the leader and those being led, opportunities are given for shared leadership, and in turn the viewpoint and effectiveness of the leader is strengthened. According to Armenakis and Harris (2009), “involving change recipients in the diagnosis, interpretation, and remediation of challenges facing the organization” (p. 130) is an essential part of the change of an organization.

Regardless of the leadership approach, if educational institutions are going to be able to make meaningful changes, in both small and large ways, administrators need to be aware of, and educated in, understanding the complexity of change. Past successes and failures of organizations institutions (both within and outside of education) provide a wealth of lessons. Moreover, this is a topic that is of high relevance and importance in our everchanging education system with its multiple passionate stakeholders.

Purpose of the Study

Teaching for Transformation is a complex, multi-faceted change that some Christian schools are embarking on. Given the complexity of the change to a Teaching for Transformation framework (new shared language, changes in classroom rhythms and routines, and shifts in philosophy and pedagogy around what it means to educate Christianly), it is imperative to understand how best to engage in this change successfully for the sake of all stakeholders.

Research Questions

The study was framed around the following research questions:

1. Which aspects of change, as outlined in Kotter's 8-stage process, are most important for schools to successfully navigate in the implementation of the Teaching of Transformation framework?
2. How do perceptions of teaching staff (change recipients) differ from those of administration/leadership teams (change makers) regarding the implementation of Teaching for Transformation?

Definition of Terms

To have a unified understanding of the topics discussed in this review, the following definitions will be used. The definitions are the author's own, unless otherwise indicated:

Change Leadership: The driving forces, visions and processes that fuel large-scale transformation (Kotter, 1996).

Change Management: A set of basic tools or structures intended to keep any change effort under control (Kotter, 1996).

Change Recipient: Those individuals within an organization who are impacted by a change while not formally serving in a leadership role over said change.

Paradigm Shift: An important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way (Merriam-Webster).

Successful Change: A change in which there is a consensus between staff, parents, and students that this change is positive for the school community, and that this change is one that will have longevity in the organization.

Teaching for Transformation (TfT): A design framework for the creation of authentic, formational learning experiences rooted in a transformational worldview. These learning experiences invite, nurture, and empower teachers and students to play their part in God's story through their everyday learning. (TfT Story, n.d.)

Literature Review

Over the past century much research has been conducted looking into the phenomenon of leadership (Dugan, 2017; Northouse, 2021; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). This topic, and the theories behind it, is complex, involving a combination of many different factors (Cherry, 2021), and is a phenomenon that impacts many facets of our everyday lives. House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta, (2004) describe the field of leadership research as “[a stream flowing] in a meandering, intertwining, and constantly shifting manner” (p. 55). Because educational institutions have many commonalities with other organizations and businesses, it is helpful to examine leadership theory as it applies to all settings to gain an understanding of its implications for paradigm shifts in educational settings.

Leadership Theories

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has been "the single most studied and debated idea within the field of leadership" (Diaz-Saenz, 2011, p. 299) in the past 30 years. According to Bass (1985), “transformational leaders influence followers to transcend self-interest for the greater good of their unit and organization in order to achieve higher levels of performance” (p. 4). Transformational leaders can be characterized by: “idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration” (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991, p.10).

Transformational leadership theory fits well with the topic of educational leadership and change because more than any other theory it “fosters a culture of creative change and growth rather than one which maintains the status quo” (Bass & Avolio, 1993, p. 113). Moreover, studies in various levels of education have demonstrated the pivotal role that transformational leadership plays “in promoting and managing school development by influencing teachers' efficacy” (Francisco, 2019, p. 622). This can be seen in the work of Francisco (2019) who sampled 260 secondary teachers in the Philippines and found a strong correlation between transformational leadership factors and teacher self-efficacy. Sadeghi and Pihie (2012) also found a strong correlation between transformational leadership and levels of motivation in their research with 298 lecturers from Malaysian Research Universities, using a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Their research found that among the dimensions of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation received the highest mean score compared to transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional Leadership Theory, by contrast, involves leaders “characterized by contingent reward and management-by-exception styles of leadership... leaders [who] develop exchanges or agreements with their followers, pointing out what the followers will receive if they do something right as well as wrong.” (Bass & Avolio, 1993, p. 112). The transactional leadership view assumes that those being led lack self-motivation and hold external rewards in high regard (Betz, 2021). Bass and Avolio (1993) place transactional leadership in the context of change theory, stating that “[transactional leaders] work within the existing culture, framing their decisions and action based on the operative norms and procedures characterizing their respective organizations” (p. 112). When it comes to change, transactional leaders view their staff largely

through a behaviorist lens, harkening back to Pavlovian studies. However, transactional leadership does not necessarily stand as ethically inferior to transformational leadership. As noted by Groves and LaRocca (2011), transactional leadership flows from "teleological ethical values (utilitarianism)" and transformational leadership from "deontological ethical values (altruism, universal rights, Kantian principle, etc.)" (p. 511).

In fact, transactional leadership stands beside transformational leadership as one of the most popular and current approaches in understanding effective leadership (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Sometimes what an organization needs most is a leader who can be decisive and ‘get things done.’ Lowe, Kroeck and Sivasubramanian (1996) point to factors such as level of the leader (high or low) and organizational setting (public or private) as factors that influence which leadership style may be superior. Leaders in more mechanistic organizations, such as manufacturing or other highly regulated industries may actual be better off using transactional leadership methods (Lowe et al., 1996). McShane and Glinow (2005) articulate the contrast between transformational and transactional leadership styles by noting that “Transactional leadership improves organizational efficiency, whereas transformational leadership steers companies onto a better course of action” (p. 57).

Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic Leadership Theory involves leaders who “de-emphasize the extrinsic rewards of work and focus instead on the intrinsic side” (Conger & Kanungo, 1998, p. 18). One of the ways they accomplish this is by articulating a clear vision and mission and maintaining a positive image in the mind of followers (Walumbwa, Christensen, & Muchiri, 2013). This theory shares a considerable amount of overlap with the Great Man Theory of Leadership, a theory that was thought of as anecdotal and unscientific in the 1980’s (Organ, 1996), and which holds the

assumptions that (1) Great leaders are born possessing certain traits that enable them to rise and lead, and (2) Great leaders can arise when the need for them is great (Villanova, 2021).

An important point to note is the overlap in transformational and charismatic leadership. Both leadership styles “foster follower independence rather than subservience” (House & Howell, 1992, p. 91) and even encourage followers to think for themselves to the point where they are comfortable questioning directions when they find themselves in disagreement with the leader (Bass, 1985). Lowe, Kroek, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) found in their meta-analysis that across studies and regardless of the type of organization, the level of leadership, or the measure of effectiveness, “Charisma was consistently the variable most strongly related to leader effectiveness” (p. 414).

It is important to consider the many nuances of human nature and personality theory alongside exploring the particular behaviors of leaders. The field of psychology has contributed much to the conversation of organizational leadership, from benchmark conformity (Asch, 1961) and compliance studies (Milgram, 1963) revealing some raw truths about human nature and our desire to ‘fall in line,’ to Albert Bandura’s studies of self and collective efficacy with the findings that “the assurance a person places in his or her team affects the team’s overall performance” (Donohoo, Hattie & Eells, 2018, p. 41).

For many, the Asch (1961) and Milgram (1963) studies served to confirm what was already known about human nature; that people often display a strong tendency to follow the direction of authority figures even when one’s intuition knows that direction to be morally or ethically wrong. These studies help shed light on some of the sub-conscious processes present in the phenomenon of leadership and provide solid evidence to support the Charismatic Leadership Theory. While much leadership theory scholarship takes a leader-centric – or change-agent –

focus (Kanter; 1983; Kotter, 1996; Schein, 1987), others take an intentional look at the followers or change recipients involved.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership, another popular theory among leadership theories, views a leader as “a servant of his/her followers” and “...places the interest of followers before the self-interest of a leader [and] emphasizes personal development and empowerment of followers” (Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004, p. 80). Ehrhart (2004) describes servant leadership as “influencing, motivating and enabling those being led to perform better, developing their human and social capital, and offering them support in their assigned work” (p. 69). An important distinction in this theory is the premise that “a servant-leader looks first at someone’s potential and then tries to match that potential within that person’s field of work” (Trompenaars & Voerman, 2009, p. 31), an ideal that has been popularized in the Strengths-Based Leadership approach (Rath & Conchie, 2009). Closely linked to Servant Leadership Theory is the Participative Leadership (Participative Management) model, whereby leaders share in decision making with their subordinates (Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010). Research has shown that the perception of the followers that their superior has high confidence in them (psychological empowerment [Spreitzer, 1995]), paired with the opportunity to play an active role in decision making (intrinsic motivation), has a strong likelihood of increasing the effectiveness of this leadership model (Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010).

Those who embody servant leadership qualities “are particularly skilled at building bridges between cultures, because with servant-leadership, there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’; it is the shared goals that are important” (Trompenaars & Voerman, 2009, p. iix). It is the servant leadership model that is the most successful in humanizing the change recipients, and there are

several studies that have found that this approach has the ability to enhance psychological well-being as well as the affective commitment of the subordinates (Bouzari, & Karatepe, 2017; Clarence, Devassy, Jena, & George, 2021).

Theories of Organizational Change

Lewin's 3-Step Model

Any discussion of organization change theory begins with Lewin's 3-Step Model of organizational change - a theory that has dominated the field of change leadership and management for over 40 years (Burnes, 2004). Lewin believed that “group behavior, rather than that of individuals, should be the main focus of change [and he] maintained that it is fruitless to concentrate on changing the behavior of individuals because the individual in isolation is constrained by group pressures to conform” (Burnes, 2004, p. 983). From his theory of group dynamics, Lewin developed a 3-step model: (1) Unfreezing – create a safe space for the acknowledgement that the status quo is unsatisfactory (Schein, 1996), (2) Moving – Identify and evaluate the available options (Lewin, 1947), and (3) Refreezing – a stabilizing of the new organizational culture, norms, policies, and practices (Cummings & Worley, 2014).

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Model

The complexity of leading effective change is further taken into account in Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations model, which identifies four significant elements that influence a change recipient's attitudes toward change: “innovations (a new idea, practice or object perceived as new), communication channels (mechanisms for messages to travel), time (influencing decision making and the rate of adoption) and social systems (groups involved in joint problem solving on a common goal)” (Rogers, 2010, p. 10). Rogers (2010) takes a more scientific approach to organizational change theory and describes *diffusion* as “a process” by

which a change is communicated over time through specific channels of a social system, “a special type of communication” pertaining to new ideas, and also as “a kind of social change, defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system” (p. 6). One of the current leading experts in change leadership is John Kotter, who expands on Lewin’s and Roger’s theories of change.

Kotter’s 8-Stage Process

Kotter makes a strong distinction between change leadership and change management, pointing out that, while management is important, the much bigger challenge for most organizations is leading change; “motivating the actions needed to alter behavior in a significant way” and “getting change to stick by anchoring it in the very culture of an organization” (Kotter, 1996, p. 33). Moreover, Kotter’s 8-Stage Process, developed over 25 years ago, stands as one of the most widely recognized and widely used frameworks for implementing change in an organization (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). For the purposes of this study, Kotter’s 8-Stage Process is being explored in the context of various schools undergoing change due to its association with aspects of transformational and servant leadership.

The first stage in Kotter’s 8-Stage Process for Leading Change is to establish a sense of urgency (Kotter, 1996). This involves introducing the change to the change recipients so that it is embraced at both a rational and emotional level (The IRIS Center, 2010). This stage is instrumental in establishing a *need* for the change rather than simple a *want* for the change (Kotter, 1996). In introducing this stage to an executive manager, Kotter (1996) once used the question “Do your people believe the status quo is unacceptable?” and “Do they really feel a sense of urgency?” (p. 24).

The second stage is to create a guiding coalition in which the leadership team should be comprised of a range of skills and a range of experience (Kotter, 1996). This stage is also a fundamental theme in the Servant Leadership Model, which “emphasizes personal development and empowerment of followers” (Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004, p. 80). In his same conversation with the executive manager, Kotter (1996) asked “Who is pushing for this change?” (p. 24). Leaders must ensure that they have a guiding team who is as passionate about the vision as they are, ensuring that the change is not being led by one or two individuals in power. Moreover, it is rare that a principal (or change leader) will have all the skills and expertise in all areas needed for the change. For the change to be manageable and sustainable, it is imperative that a strong guiding coalition is formed.

The third stage is to develop a vision and strategy. The vision should be guided by a vision statement that is simple and clear so that it is accessible to all staff, but also should be inspirational for maximum effect (Kotter, 1996). Ideally the vision statement will also be focused, challenging, specific, achievable, realistic, measurable, and subject to refinement (The IRIS Center, 2010).

The fourth stage is to communicate the change vision. This stage involves gaining the support of other stakeholders by effectively communicating the vision. As one project manager put it, “Nothing will kill a change effort quicker than leaders saying one thing and doing another” (Rose, 2002, p. 2). This stage is a great opportunity to utilize the guiding team, and it is important to continually communicate the message throughout the change process as competing messages may also be spread. Kotter (1996) describes the first four steps in the transformation process as “[helping to] defrost a hardened status quo” (p. 24), while stages five to seven introduce an organization to new practices.

The fifth stage is to enable action. While the first four stages focus on strengthening the change initiative, the fifth stage begins to look at potential obstacles to success and to work toward removing or minimizing these. These may be “individuals, traditions, legislations or physical obstacles” (Kotter, 1996, p. 106). One popular tool that organizations use to assess barriers to success is the SWOT analysis (systematically exploring the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the organization) (The IRIS Center, 2010). Once staff have more clarity and openness around these forces, they are ready to create an action plan and begin implementing the change.

The sixth stage is to generate short-term wins. Since most change efforts an organization undertakes will take a considerable amount of time, it is important for change recipients to feel real-time success to feel motivated and to continue to back the change (Kotter, 1996). Short term wins refer to items from the action plan that are easily and quickly achieved (around three to six months). These minor progressions are not only motivational but serve as steppingstones to greater opportunities and successes (The IRIS Center, 2010).

The seventh stage is to consolidate gains (improvements) and produce more change. Organizations can become complacent before the change, or project, is properly finished, so it is important for the guiding team to continue setting goals and analyzing progress by reflecting on things such as “What worked?” “What did not?” and “How can we use what we know to continue to improve?” (Kotter, 1996). This needs to be done on a regular basis, keeping in mind that truly changing the culture of an organization can take years. At this stage it is also good for the organization to build leadership capacity (recruit and train new stakeholders) to avoid burnout of guiding team members (The IRIS Center, 2010).

The eighth stage is to anchor new approaches in the culture. To have a lasting effect the changes need to become part of the core, or culture, of the organization, rather than simply a superficial force that changes habits and processes. Besides the changes having an impact on day-to-day happenings in the school, one way to ensure that the change is being imbedded into the culture is by gradually infusing these changes into school documents such as staff evaluations, handbooks, budgets, and development plans (Kotter, 1996).

Change Recipients

While much leadership theory scholarship takes a leader-centric – or change-agent – focus (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992; Kotter, 1996; Schein, 1987), others look toward change in the context of the followers or change recipients. Som, Chan, and Dumitrascu (2020) refer to this as the Human Element, one of the change elements they found common to most change models. Som et al (2020) note that “A need to understand culture type and its embedded human sentiment before any initiation of a change project has become a fundamental prerequisite for change success.” (p. 492). In Kotter’s 8-Stage Process, as well as some of the other top change management models, we often see a significant value and sensitivity toward the change agents. Specifically, throughout his eight stages, Kotter (1996) addresses three of the four reasons people are inherently resistant to change: “a desire not to lose something of value, a misunderstanding of the change and its implications, a belief that the change does not make sense for the organization.” (p. 24) The theme of empowering others in the change process (sharing power) is one that continues to surface in change management theories and speaks to the human aspect of change theory seen in the Servant Leadership approach.

Summary

School leadership teams need to be aware of and understand the intricacies of paradigm shifts, holding the logistics of change in one hand (change management), with the humanization of those they are leading in the other hand (change leadership). We need to not only explore what successful leaders are doing, but how those leaders are journeying alongside those they are leading, identifying the subtle yet significant ways they invite those change recipients to be a part of the process, rather than having the process simply happening to them. When a school attempts a larger paradigm shift, leaders need to be aware of the risk of damaging the organization as it exists and of disrupting the trust between leadership and staff. With the complexity of the education system, and considering what is at stake, it is especially imperative that those in educational leadership be educated in, and empowered with, tools and wisdom that can help them to thrive throughout all of the changes, both internal and external. While various leadership models have shown promise in different contexts, in educational settings the transformational and servant leadership approaches are essential for schools to successfully navigate and thrive through large paradigm shifts. Furthermore, Kotter's 8 Stage Change Process most closely aligns with the essence of these leadership styles.

Methodology

This was a phenomenological mixed-method study of the experience of teachers and members of leadership (and/or the guiding team) throughout the process of the implementation of Teaching for Transformation. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach based within the humanistic research paradigm (Mapp, 2008) that focuses on the nature of experience of the person experiencing the phenomenon, or "lived experience" (Connelly, 2010) and which may include perceptions, emotions, and judgments. Because participants' experiences are coded on a

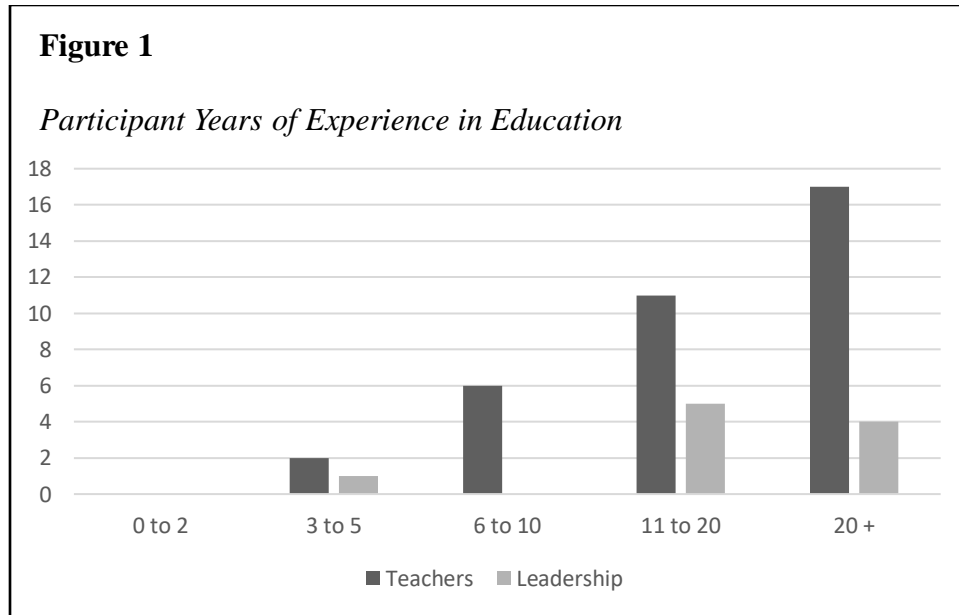
Likert scale, and later analysed statistically, this research utilized a mixed methods study, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The purpose of collecting and interpreting this data was to better understand which factors most influence successful (positive) paradigm shift experiences within a school community (and conversely, which factors influence unsuccessful [negative] paradigm shift experiences). To place this research in the context of current change theory, the participant responses have been grouped into various themes of “change factors,” which are then connected to Kotter’s 8-Stage Process. Some questions also targeted themes of servant leadership. In particular, participant responses were coded as experiences that were ‘neutral,’ ‘good,’ ‘bad,’ ‘extremely good,’ and ‘extremely bad.’ Those experiences were then considered in light of Kotter’s 8-Stage Process, Transformational Leadership and Servant Leadership in order to better understand the academic literature applied to the real experiences of individuals in Christian school contexts.

Participants

The research participants consisted of 36 teachers and 10 members of leadership teams from a total of five Christian schools throughout Canada and the United States. All schools had recently (within the past five years) implemented the Teaching for Transformation framework. Participants’ experience in the field of education ranged from 3-5 years to 20 + years. The mode response for teachers for experience was 20 + years and the mode response for leadership team members was “11 – 20 years” (see Figure 1). Convenience sampling was used for the selection of participants. Due to teachers’ busy schedules; the researcher wanted to make it convenient for teachers to take this survey without feeling like they had to sacrifice a great deal of personal, or professional time. Prior to the survey, all potential participants were provided with an

introduction that gave a sense of the length and nature of the survey and the purpose of the research (see Appendix C). Because it was difficult to code teachers prior to the study as early adopters/supportive of change, late adopters/averse to change, or somewhere in between, teachers from each school were chosen at random in hopes that a fair sampling of staff would be obtained.



Materials and Design

The 25- and 23-question surveys were divided into five parts (See Appendix A). The first part gathered demographic information about the participants. The second part asked questions directly related to each of Kotter's 8 Stages. The third part asked questions that were specifically connected to themes of servant leadership. The fourth part of the survey assessed the extent to which the adoption of TfT was successful, as viewed by the school staff, students, and families, and asked questions pertaining to themes of servant leadership. The fifth part included an opportunity for participants to offer any other information about their school's adoption of TfT that they thought would be pertinent to the study. These responses were coded to observe patterns and commonalities around themes that arose.

Questions were conceived by the researcher and based on the stages of Kotter's 8-Stage Process for Leading Change. The survey was distributed to participants using a Microsoft Forms online survey. In some cases, the survey was sent directly to participants with an introduction and invitation to participate, and in others the survey was shared via a colleague or administrator. To better observe correlations within schools, participating schools each received their own survey link. Although each specific school's data was known to the researcher, the anonymity of individual participants was preserved.

The survey was piloted prior to the study and feedback suggested that an open-ended question at the end of the survey would be beneficial. Feedback from the pilot survey also resulted in the purpose statement being modified to ensure better clarity.

Two sets of survey questions were used; the first was intended for teaching staff (those neither in leadership nor on the guiding team) and the second was intended for the leadership/administration or guiding team. The survey utilized a bipolar 5-point Likert scale and consisted of 25 questions for the teacher set and 23 questions for the guiding team set (See Appendix A). Participants were given a time frame of three weeks to complete the survey, and the average survey completion time was five minutes.

Survey results were coded into responses suggesting experiences that were 'neutral,' 'good,' 'bad,' 'extremely good,' or 'extremely bad.' Most of the survey questions were framed in the positive, so that the coding directly corresponded to the survey question answers; however, in order to avoid a response-set pitfall in the survey some questions were intentionally reverse-coded (which has been accounted for in the data analysis).

Results

To study the impact of Kotter's 8-Stage Process, it was important to first establish if the changes in each school setting were successful. Success was judged by staff, parent, and student satisfaction, as perceived by the teachers and members of the leadership, as well as their overall opinion of the success of the adoption of the Teaching for Transformation framework. Mean and standard deviation scores pertaining to teacher and leadership team perceptions of the effectiveness of the change are described in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Response per Likert-Scale question for Effectiveness of Change

Likert-Scale from (1 = low confidence) to (5 = high confidence)	Teacher		Leadership		T-Stat.	P-Value
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
a. There was a general sense of positivity among my colleagues regarding the change	3.59	0.37	4.266	0.61	4.3967	0.000069
b. There was a general sense of positivity among students regarding the change	3.628	0.31	3.832	0.59	1.4852	0.144621
c. There was a general sense of positivity among parents regarding the change	3.686	0.10	4.166	0.59	4.7728	0.00002
d. There is clear evidence that the change has taken root in our school	4.27	0.65	4.614	0.19	1.6421	0.107698
e. Our school is better because of this change	4.378	0.41	4.614	0.37	1.6417	0.107782
f. I feel like the changes made in our school will be long-lasting	4.528	0.29	4.7	0.40	1.5245	0.13454
g. The change is a "fad" that will be short-lived (Reverse scored)	4.36	0.32	4.9	0.20	5.0457	0.00001

The responses for these questions were well above average in each school, as indicated by the mean scores in Table 1. Based on the Likert Scale used in the survey, a neutral response would be 3. Mean responses for each question ranged from 3.59 to 4.528. Noting the standard deviations highlights the lack of variability of responses. By observing the responses of section four of the survey (Table 1), the researcher determined that all five schools surveyed fell into the category of "having a successful adoption of TfT." In particular, the final two survey questions

used to determine the success of the change (which also fall into the category of “Anchor the Change” in the questions pertaining to Kotter’s 8-Stage Process) serve as the two strongest indicators of the change being a successful one, as these responses indicate an ability from those surveyed to look at the future of their school and visualize that change having a lasting impact. Whether or not a given staff member agrees with the change should have little bearing on their ability to judge the longevity of the change. The researcher concluded that the schools selected represented a sample of schools that had (or were in the process of) successfully adopted the Teaching for Transformation framework.

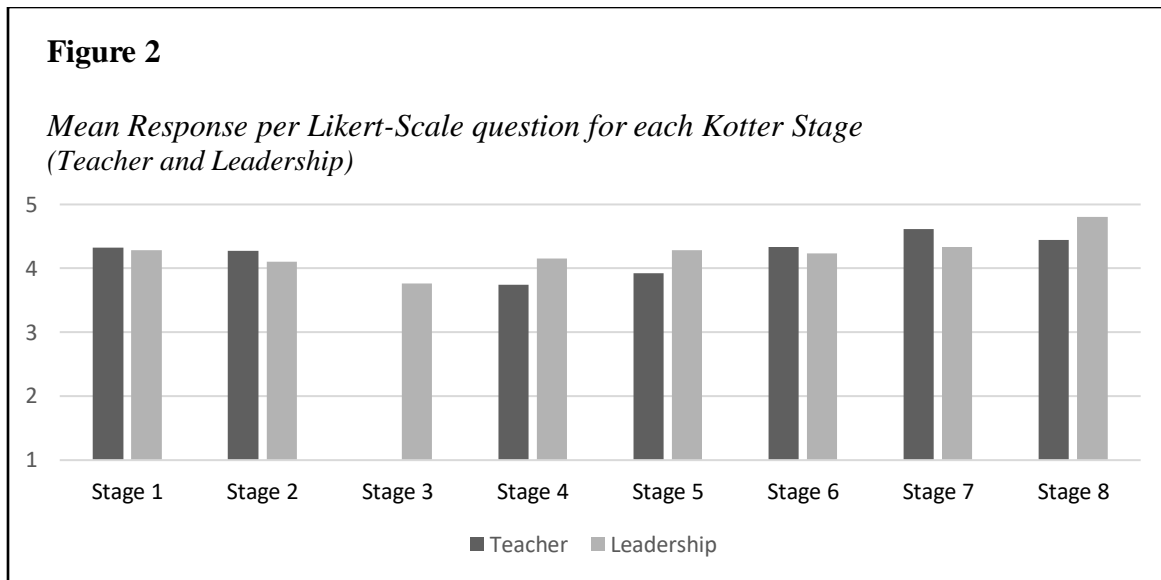
The first research question guiding this study aimed to identify which, if any, of Kotter’s 8 stages had the strongest impact on the success of the implementation of the Teaching for Transformation framework. Firstly, the responses for these questions were well above average in each school, as indicated by the mean scores in Table 2. Based on the Likert Scale used in the survey, a neutral response would be 3. Mean responses for each change stage category ranged from 3.75 to 4.8. Noting the standard deviations highlights the lack of variability of responses, with the lowest standard deviation being 0.2 and the highest being 0.97. The researcher concluded that all 8 stages of Kotter’s change process played a role in the successful adoption of the Teaching for Transformation framework in all schools studied.

Table 2*Mean Response per Likert-Scale Question for each Kotter Stage (T-Test)*

Likert-Scale from (1 = weak connection) to (5 = strong connection)	Teacher		Leadership		T-Stat.	P-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Establish a sense of urgency	4.32	0.20	4.28	0.27	0.5177	0.6073
Form a guiding team	4.28	0.35	4.1	0.97	0.9352	0.3548
Create a Vision*	(n/a)	(n/a)	3.77	0.44	(n/a)	(n/a)
Communicate the vision	3.75	0.14	4.15	0.44	4.7632	0.0001
Enable action	3.93	0.28	4.28	0.35	3.3116	0.0019
Ensure short-term wins	4.34	0.21	4.23	0.29	1.3458	0.1853
Improve and expand	4.61	0.22	4.33	0.28	3.3542	0.0016
Anchor the changes	4.44	0.32	4.80	0.24	3.2982	0.0019

*Teachers were not asked about the creation of a vision as not enough data would have been available for staff to make an informed response

The second research question was “How do the opinions and perceptions of teaching staff (change recipients) differ from those of the leadership team (change makers) regarding the implementation of Teaching for Transformation?” To explore this question, an unpaired, two-tailed t-test compared the teacher responses to the leadership responses. At first glance, Figure 2 appears to lack any significant difference between teacher and leadership groups; however, the p-value obtained from the T-tests (Table 2) do show some statistically significant results. Particularly worth noting are: Stage 4 “Communicate the Vision” which has a p-value of 0.0001, a difference that is considered to be extremely statistically significant; Stage 5 “Enable Action” which has a p-value of 0.0019, a difference that is considered to be very statistically significant; Stage 7 “Improve and Expand” which has a p-value of 0.0016, a difference that is considered to be very statistically significant; and Stage 8 “Anchor the Changes” which has a p-value of 0.0019, a difference that is considered to be very statistically significant. Additionally, an analysis of the data from the Effectiveness of Change questions (Table 1), items a, c, and g show statistical significance due to their P-values being less than 0.05.



A one-way ANOVA test was used to determine if any stages stood out as statistically significant from the others. Table 3 presents these results (with the omission of Stage 3 “Create a Vision” questions, as these questions were only asked of the change leaders’ group).

Table 3

ANOVA Summary Between Stages (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8)

Source	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean of Square (MS)	F-Stat	P-Value
Between Groups	6	49.6175	8.2696	13.0127	0.0000
Within Groups	617	392.0815	0.6355		
Total	623	441.699			

Open-Ended Response Themes

Five themes arose from the open-ended responses from Part 4 of the survey: Praise for Leadership, Praise for TfT, Criticism of Leadership, Criticism of TfT, and Reference to Change as a Process. The most frequent theme was Praise of TfT, with 11/24 (~45%) respondents including some form of positive comment about the TfT framework or their school’s transition to

TfT. One participant shared: “Children need to understand God's Word but also need to DO what they know. That's Teaching for Transformation.” Another participant commented “[TfT] has given all teachers a shared framework and language for implementing our faith and worldview intentionally into our teaching and our students' learning.” Another participant saw application of the TfT framework to roles in her life other than teaching, noting: “TfT has not only changed how I teach but also how I live my life as a mother/wife/etc.”

The second most frequent theme from the open-ended responses was Reference to Change as a Process. This is of particular interest as this was not mentioned to participants as a theme specific to this study. Nonetheless this theme was offered by 6/24 (25%) of respondents. One participant shared: “When we implemented TfT we did not see immediate results because TfT is a process, which takes time to develop. It also took awhile for parents, students and faculty to accept because it changed how we present our themes and lessons.” Another participant shared: “The implementation of TfT is ongoing. With Teaching for Transformation we do a better job of meeting the mission of *[school name]*.”

Due to a lack of responses from our original sample (20 from teachers, 4 from leadership) there was not enough data to find significant difference between the teacher and leadership open-ended responses.

Discussion

Overview

The purpose of this study was to answer the questions “Which aspects of change are most important for schools to successfully navigate the implementation of the Teaching of Transformation framework?” and “How do the opinions and perceptions of teaching staff

(change recipients) differ from those of administration/leadership teams (change makers) regarding the implementation of Teaching for Transformation?”

To accomplish this, the researcher surveyed staff members (change recipients) as well as administration and leadership team members (change leaders) to obtain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the participants, and how these experiences converge or diverge with Kotter’s 8-Stage Process.

Summary of Findings

In exploring the first research question “Which aspects of change are most important for schools to successfully navigate the implementation of the Teaching of Transformation framework?”, the researcher found that Stage seven “Improve and Expand”, and Stage eight “Anchor the Changes” received the highest scores with a combined teacher and leadership team mean score of 4.47 and 4.62 respectively. It is important to note, however, that the average response from Survey Part 2 questions for all respondents from all schools fluctuated around 4 (“agree”) with a mean response of 4.21. These mean responses are well above neutral, with the average being between the “agree” and “strongly agree” categories. This data suggests that, in general, there is a correlation between successful adoption of the Teaching for Transformation framework and the change stages proposed by Kotter. Although most respondents cited strong connections to their school’s change and Kotter’s 8 stages, it is interesting to note that both the “Create a Vision” and “Communicate the Vision” are the lowest categories for both teacher and leadership groups, suggesting that, of the 8 stages, less emphasis may be placed on establishing a strong guiding vision and initiatives for the change process.

The second research question looked at in this study was: How do the opinions and perceptions of teaching staff (change recipients) differ from those of change makers? As seen in

Table 1, 2 and Figure 2, the difference between teacher and leadership scores appears to be minimal; however, a subtle pattern can be noticed, and statistical significance can be attributed to some of the categories.

While staff surveyed both in the teacher and leadership group found a strong sense of success in their school's change, it is interesting to note that in general the leadership team had an overall more positive view of the change. This suggests that there is more buy-in from the established guiding team, which serves to confirm the research around cognitive biases and heuristics such as the IKEA Effect (Norton, Mochon, & Ariely, 2012) and the Endowment Effect (Weaver, & Frederick, 2012) which speak to the tendency of people to think more positively about things they are invested in; such as things they have built or that they own.

Recommendations for Practice

Due to the limited scope of this research, it is difficult to assign weight to a given stage of Kotter's 8-Stage Process for the successful integration of the TfT framework. However, there are still recommendations that can be drawn from these findings which pertain to schools that are journeying through the implementation of TfT or any large paradigm shift. First, change leaders should ensure that they are creating and sustaining feedback loops with their staff. Although the difference appeared to be minimal, several of the change stages showed statistical significance in regard to the difference between teacher and leadership team perceptions of its implementation (see Table 2). To help minimize dissonance between leadership and teacher perceptions, it is imperative that members of leadership seek opportunities, and build in regular rhythms, to help strengthen communication and subsequently trust between teachers and leadership.

Second, leadership teams need to be aware of the complexity of change, viewing their paradigm shift holistically. The data received from the survey results validates this point by

showing how important all aspects of the change process are. Because this research did not attempt to compare and assess the effectiveness of different types of change theories and models, it is not recommended that schools embrace Kotter's 8-Stage Process per se; however, it is still evident through these research findings that many aspects of the change process need to be considered and carried out effectively for a positive paradigm shift to take place. Due to the significant overlap of transformational leadership, servant leadership, and Kotter's Change Process, approaching change with a high regard for the change recipients and their autonomy is of the utmost importance for successful paradigm shifts in an educational setting.

Thirdly, those in school leadership need to be aware of the risk involved in approaching change without a strong vision of what that change will look like or how it will unfold. Although experienced managers are generally all too aware of [the fact that organizational change efforts often run into some form of human resistance], surprisingly few take time before an organizational change to assess systematically who might resist the change initiative and for what reasons (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1989). Even though the "Establish a Vision" category was the lowest ranked of the eight stages, it still showed a mean that was above a neutral response, suggesting that this is an important factor in change. Moreover, this research did not specifically explore to what extent schools needed a separate vision for the change process. For example, it was noted in the open-ended responses by two respondents that TfT fit well with their school's already established mission and vision, suggesting that, while the "Establish a Vision" stage appeared to be emphasized less than other stages, this does not imply that the leadership carried out the change while lacking a unified vision.

And finally, change cannot be viewed as an event, but needs to be seen as, and treated like, a process. After praise for the TfT framework, the second most volunteered response in the

open-ended questions made mention of the importance of viewing change as a process. Kotter's intentionality with choosing the name, 8 Stage Change Process is also a testament to the fact that, more than a theory or framework or model, change is a process that takes time.

Limitations

Because of the phenomenological design of this study, the researcher is not able to make definitive correlational inferences nor cause/effect conclusions between aspects of Kotter's 8-Stage Process and the success of the implementation of TtT. Rather, the researcher was able to describe the experiences of participants as it relates to Kotter's 8-Stages and the implementation of TtT.

Due to the size and homogeneity of the sample size, the results of this study do not have strong external validity and cannot necessarily be applied to all school, or organizational settings. Additionally, it is difficult to generalize the findings of this research to other paradigm shifts, as there may be intentional built-in aspects within the Teaching for Transformation framework that give it an edge over other paradigm shifts (e.g. instructional coaching, cohort learning models to provide mentorship, a worldwide network of schools to promote collaboration with, etc.). The fact that almost 50% of respondents voluntarily gave positive comments about TtT may be an indication of such a bias toward a good framework design.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research may employ an experimental design, using an experimental group (where school leadership teams are educated in Kotter's 8 Stage Change Model) and a control group (where school leadership is not given guidance on how to navigate the change), with "Knowledge of Kotter's Change Model" as the independent variable and "Success of TtT Implementation" as the dependent variable. The current research did not take into account prior

knowledge of Kotter's Change Model and this was not something that was specifically disclosed to participants. Future research may also take a more in-depth look at the strength of a change's success by employing data from schools that did not have successful change experiences, schools that had neutral change experiences, as well as schools that had successful change experiences. Another avenue of potential future research might explore differences between private and public education in the context of transformational and transactional leadership. Finally, there is much more to be uncovered about the lived experiences of guiding team members as well as change recipients through follow-up interviews, as these paired with survey data will give a more robust picture of people's experience of paradigm shifts.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions pertaining to Kotter's 8-Stage Model of Change		
Theme	Survey Group	Survey Question (“R” denotes items that were reverse scored)
1. Establish sense of Urgency	Teacher	I felt that this was a change our school needed
		The change didn't appear to meet a real need in our school (R)
	Leadership	Our leadership clearly communicated to the staff the importance of this change
		Our leadership team was able to demonstrate how this change would positively impact teaching and learning
2. Form a Guiding Team	Teacher	I felt that this change was lead by an individual rather than a team (R)
		I was personally asked (or know a colleague who was asked) to be a part of a team (“guiding team”) to implement this change
	Leadership	This change was lead by an individual, rather than a team (R)
		Our leadership didn't feel the need to form a team (R)
3. Create a Vision	Leadership	The leadership (and guiding team) had a vision statement to help guide action
		The leadership (and guiding team) lacked a unified vision of the change (R)
4. Communicate the Vision	Teacher	I had a good understanding of what the change would look like
		The timeline for the change was insufficient considering the size of the change (too short, or too long) (R)
		Our administration/leadership team effectively communicated the need for this change
	Leadership	The leadership provided the staff with a clear sense of what the change would entail, and how our school would look after the change was implemented
		The leadership (and guiding team) created and implemented a realistic timeline for this change
5. Enable Action	Teacher	I was aware of the steps I needed/need to take throughout this process
		I was given opportunities to learn and develop around this school change
		I felt confused as to the steps needed to be taken throughout this process (R)
	Leadership	The staff were aware of the steps they needed to take throughout this process
		The staff were given opportunities to learn and develop around this school change

6. Ensure Short-term Wins	Teacher	I felt a sense of success in myself, even in small ways
		I felt a sense of success in our school, even in small ways
	Leadership	The staff has had opportunities to feel successful in small ways (short-term wins)
7. Improve and Expand	Teacher	I feel challenged to continually improve on the change process that has happened as it pertains to my classroom teaching practice
	Leadership	Our leadership team provides staff the opportunity to continually improve on and revise the change process that has happened (as it pertains to their classroom teaching practice)
8. Anchor the Changes	Teacher	I feel like the changes made in our school will be long-lasting
		The change is a “fad” that will be short-lived (R)
	Leadership	I feel like the changes made in our school will be long-lasting
		The change is a “fad” that will be short-lived (R)
Survey Questions pertaining to Servant Leadership Practices		
Servant Leadership	Teacher	I felt as though the change happened <i>to</i> me, and not <i>with</i> me (R)
		I felt that my opinion was valued throughout this process
		Our administration/leadership team is in tuned to the needs of the staff
		I felt that my unique gifts were utilized throughout this process
		I felt that my colleagues lacked a high level of trust for our leadership team (R)
	Leadership	Our school leadership was in tune to the needs of the staff throughout the change process
		The leadership team considered the vision of the change more so than the wellbeing of teachers (R)
		Our leadership team utilized the unique gifts of the staff throughout this process
		The staff lacks trust for our leadership team (R)
Survey Questions pertaining to Effectiveness of Change		
Effectiveness of Change	Teacher	There was a general sense of positivity among my colleagues regarding the change
		There was a general sense of positivity among students regarding the change
		There was a general sense of positivity among parents regarding the change
		There is clear evidence that the change has taken root in our school
		Our school is better because of this change
		I feel like the changes made in our school will be long-lasting

		The change is a “fad” that will be short-lived (R)
	Leadership	There was a general sense of positivity among the school staff regarding the change
		There was a general sense of positivity among students regarding the change
		There was a general sense of positivity among parents regarding the change
		There is clear evidence that the change has taken root in our school
		Our school is better because of this change
		I feel like the changes made in our school will be long-lasting
		The change is a “fad” that will be short-lived (R)

Appendix B

Possible Survey Responses:

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Appendix C

The purpose of this study is to help us better identify and evaluate factors which positively or negatively influence the likelihood of successful paradigm shift experiences.

This survey will take approximately 5 - 10 minutes to complete and all data will be kept confidential. Results published will only make generalizations of the data collected, with no mention of individual survey participants or school names.

If you have any questions please contact Marcus Todd at mrcstd19@dordt.edu

Thank you. Your time is very much appreciated!