Understanding Democratic and Distributed Leadership: How Democratic Leadership of School Principals Related to Distributed Leadership in Schools?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine democratic and distributed leadership perceptions of teachers in their school and to explore the relationship between democratic and distributed leadership. This study intended to enrich and expand scholarly reflections on democratic and distributed leadership as regards considering the association between them, thereby deepening our understanding of leadership. Correlational research design was used as a research design in the study. Study population included teachers working at high schools in Eskisehir district in Turkey. Stratified sampling was used as a sampling method. The study sample included 462 teachers working at high schools. Descriptive statistics for democratic leadership suggested that respondent teachers perceive democratic leadership in their school in moderate level. Support and supervision were perceived as distributed leadership functions of the leadership team in schools. Regarding the leadership team characteristics, it was concluded that leadership teams are moderately perceived as coherent. The study results also revealed that there is a strong relationship between democratic leadership, distribution of leadership functions and coherent leadership team characteristics.

Keywords: *Democratic leadership, distributed leadership, school principals.*

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Introduction

The idea that leadership need to be distributed to be most effective in enhancing learning in schools gains a powerful momentum in leadership studies. In order to increase student learning, creating a culture of sharing responsibility and leadership in schools, not merely among school members but collectively within the community, plays an important role (Louis, Leithwood, Wahl-strom, & Anderson, 2010). Even though school leaders are key agents to promote students in receiving learning opportunities and to sustain continuous improvement in schools, the traditional view of a leader has been changing. Leaders at the organizational apex are not believed as the unique sources of change and vision in school organizations (Woods, 2005). New tendencies for leading and managing schools are asserted to be based on shared responsibilities of all members of the learning community in participative environments (Delgado, 2014). Since school improvement is difficult to be performed merely by school leaders, meaningful involvement of students, teachers, and parents in planning or implementation processes is necessary. It cannot be assumed that school improvement could be meaningfully succeeded and sustained only by the efforts of the school leaders. Democratic approaches of leadership (Gunter, 2001; Harris et al., 2003) have been proposed to address the challenges that the schools face with (Delgado, 2014).

In schools where democratic approaches are embraced, all school members engage to work as a team in the decision making, implementation or monitoring processes, and sense of ownership is developed with the participation of all school members. Therefore, democratic schools can easily cope with the challenges that the schools are facing by exceeding the capabilities of individual leaders through the participation of all school members. By means of using democratic approaches, decision making authority is spread throughout the school by providing all school members opportunity to participate in key decisions in schools (Delgado, 2014). Shared, collective and democratic leadership approaches have been addressed as the most affective approaches for providing responsibilities to lead and manage change and school improvement.

Distributed leadership where two or more individuals are in the practice of the principalship is pointed as an example of democratic leadership (Woods, 2005). It is assumed that distributed leadership fits within the collective and democratic approaches (Delgado, 2014). Indeed, distributed leadership emerged as an alternative to charismatic leadership, which portrays super talented characteristics with a single figure that persuade, inspire or direct followers towards the goals of organizational success (Hartley, 2007; Woods, 2005), is believed to be more likely to have an influence on student outcomes compared to traditional top-down leadership (Bell, Bolam & Cubillo, 2002, Silins & Mulford, 2002). Distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities is asserted to be associated with improvement of pupil outcomes and development of students as human beings and active participants (Day et al., 2009; Kensler, 2010; Woods, 2011). Distributed leadership also

enables change in educational performance and organizational culture (Avissar, Alkaher & Gan, 2017). In this context, distributed leadership is asserted to open up the boundaries of leadership beyond those in formal leadership positions and challenge hierarchies in school organizations. It is also indicated that distributed leadership is effectively performed in schools where an atmosphere of trust, collegiality and cooperation exist. Indeed, the schools in the communities with democratic values and devolution of power will provide a sound ground for adoption of distributed leadership (Saadi, Hussain, Bhutta, Perveen, Kazmi & Ahmad, 2009).

There are several empirical investigations of democratic and distributed leadership that help refine the theory and shed light on educational leadership literature. Even though the distinctiveness of democratic leadership in comparison with distributed leadership is delineated (Woods, 2004), these two leadership styles or approaches are related in the broadest sense like Spillane and Sherer (2004) noted as "scholars and practitioners often use shared leadership, democratic leadership and distributed leadership interchangeably, suggesting that, at least for some, distributed leadership may be no more than a new label for a familiar phenomena" (p.3). While in some cases, these terms are used interchangeably, some scholars describe those terms differ in meaning by trying to indicate fine distinctions (Oduro, 2004). Even though there is considerable attention to these leadership approaches, it is obvious that there is a definitional problem is further evident in the leadership literature and it is suggested that distributed leadership is the repackaging of familiar leadership concepts (Lakomski, 2005; Storey, 2004). There is therefore a need to understand how distributed and democratic leadership are interrelated.

The purpose of this study is to determine democratic and distributed leadership perceptions of teachers in their school and to explore the relationship between democratic and distributed leadership. The questions that guided the research were twofold:

- How do teachers perceive democratic and distributed leadership in schools?

- What is the relationship between democratic and distributed leadership in schools?

From this point of view, this study intended to enrich and expand scholarly reflections on democratic and distributed leadership as regards considering the association between them, thereby deepening our understanding of leadership.

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership has flowed in popularity throughout the history of education and repackaged numerous times by the educational theorists and researchers (Klinker, 2006). Indeed, the ideas about democratic leadership developed in the late 1930s, experiment undertaken by Kurt Lewin

and Ronald Lippitt in the United States. In the experiment, three groups of school children operated under three differential leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire. The authoritarian leader offers clear expectations about what will be done, when and how. All decisions are taken by authoritarian leader with minimum input from other group members. The democratic leader offers guidance to group members with participating in the group and encouraging member involvement in decision making while laissez-faire leader offers little or no guidance to group members with leaving all decision-making up to group members. Each three group took place in common activity project in the experiment and democratic leadership found as the most effective of the three leadership styles regarding the fact that group members feel more engaged and motivated, work together more cooperatively and creatively. However, the members in the authoritarian group were found as less creative, more dissatisfied and uninvolved. Similarly, the members in laissez-faire group were found as the least productive showing little cooperation and satisfaction (Rustin & Armstrong, 2012). As in the experiment, it is clear that democratic leadership facilitates leaders' and others' growth toward human potential (Woods, 2005). Indeed, the heart of democratic leadership rests a respect for what is to be human, a sense of cultivation of the common good, and the individual freedom to act according to one's direction (McClain, Ylimaki & Ford, 2010). Therefore, democratic leadership created an environment in which people are encouraged and supported in aspiring to truth in an open-hearted way (Woods, 2005, p.xvi).

Democratic leadership is concerned with meaningful participation and decision making to establish conditions for respectful relationships, collaborative associations, active cooperation, and enable the formation of social, learning and culturally responsive educational organizations, in part by employing strategies for achievement, enabling particular conversations and struggling to determine what is needed, when, and how to get there in specific situations by developing a politically informed commitment to justice for all (Gale & Densmore, 2010). It is also necessary to state that "democratic leadership entails rights to meaningful participation and respect for and expectations toward everyone as ethical beings" (Woods, 2004, p.4).

Democratic leadership based on philosophical tradition of Dewey's pragmatism cultivates "an environment that supports participation, sharing of ideas, and the virtues of honesty, openness, flexibility and compassion" (Starratt, 2001, p. 338). Indeed, democratic leadership implies that school principals are responsible to build educational organizations around central democratic values such as supporting equity and social justice, as well as in the wider community. It emphasizes social justice, dignity, rights and welfare of minorities and all individuals in the school. Democratic leadership requires value base of leadership practice and the processes creating or sustaining social justice, empowerment and community (Harris, Moos, Møller, Robertson & Spillane, 2007; Møller, 2003). By means of balancing power and trust in leadership and management areas of the school, empowerment

can be achieved which in turn creates a stimulating learning environment where students develop as citizens (Harris, et al., 2007).

Educational administration studies of democratic school leadership have frequently focused on how principals show democratic behaviors, use cooperative relationships and shared decision making in schools to improve schools, and some of the research emphasized the relationship between some organizational variables (Adeyemi & Adu, 2013; Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012; Blasé & Blasé, 1997; Blasé, Blasé, Anderson & Dungan, 1995; Bozdoğan & Sağnak, 2011; Harris & Chapman, 2002; Mbera, 2015; Riley, 2003; Terzi & Derin, 2016; Yörük & Kocabaş, 2001).

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership has come to prominence in school management and leadership discourse as means to provide teachers participation and empowerment in schools (Torrance, 2013). School leaders may not accomplish all the leadership tasks alone in the school and request for support from school staff because it is clear that "the common ideal of a heroic leader is obsolete […] the task of transforming schools is too complex one person to accomplish single handedly" (Lashway, 2003, p. 1). Therefore, school leaders have to run the school with multiple leaders to perform all leadership functions, allow teachers to participate in decision making processes and enhance mutual reinforcement (Gronn, 2002; Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon & Yashkina, 2007; Wai-Yan Wan, Hau-Fai Law & Chan, 2017). Since large schools with task complexity and large amount of school members may lead to limited daily interaction of school staff, traditional view of school leadership is left in favor of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002).

There is variety of meanings attached to the concept of distributed leadership in leadership literature (Bennett, Wise, Woods & Harvey, 2003; Woods, 2004). This favored notion is defined as emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals in which group members pool their expertise (Gronn, 2002; Woods, Bennett, Harvey & Wise, 2004). Indeed, distributed leadership highlights a multi-faceted leadership, involving both formal and informal leadership positions (Torrance, 2013). As Harris affirms that leadership "is shared and collected endeavor that engages all members of the organization" (2003, p.75), distributed leadership challenges the traditional trait of individualistic leader. Distributed leadership is noteworthy in that it is enacted collaboratively as two or more leaders engage in a particular situation (Spillane, 2006). Specifically, leadership that is distributed among all school staff provides multiple leaders, formally recognized or not, practice in a wide range of leadership and management activities in schools (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Following the same line of thought, distributed leadership is "a shared process of enhancing the individual and collective capacity of people to accomplish their work effectively" (Yukl, 2002, p. 432).

In regard to the origin of distributed leadership, it was pointed out that there is a tendency to move away from the heroic leadership style to an approach focusing on distribution of leadership among school staff due to questioning the "single leadership" paradigm and the complexity of school leaders' tasks (Bush & Glover, 2003; Goleman, 2002; Harris, 2004; Hartley, 2007). In distributed leadership perspective, leadership is not considered as a school leader's characteristic, knowledge or skill, rather it is regarded as a process based on daily interactions or functions of multiple leaders in the school and the situation, including organizational routines, structures and tools (Spillane, 2005; Spillane et al., 2004). As Spillane (2006) asserted that distributed leadership is stretched over a number of individuals and based on expertise, rather than hierarchical authority (Bennett et al., 2003; Woods et al., 2004). Indeed, distributed leadership provides a way of thinking about the practice of school leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004). As Bolden (2004) elaborates distribution of leadership is a less formalized model of leadership, separated from the organizational hierarchy, provides individuals at all levels leadership influence and roles, as cited in Oduro (2004). Thus, the responsibilities for leadership functions can be distributed on multiple leaders working in a coordinated manner (Heller & Firestone, 1995; Spillane, 2005) Existing scholarship shows that the core functions of leadership are necessary to be distributed. Leadership functions involves setting directions and articulating a school vision, developing and stimulating teachers, monitoring and evaluating teachers' performance (Hulpia, Devos & Rosseel, 2009, Spillane, 2005). By distributing leadership functions to other people in the school, the workload of school leaders is expected to decrease (Hulpia & Devos, 2009).

The mainstay of the literature regarding distributed leadership appears to focus on educational organizations (Baloğlu, 2011; Currie, Lockett & Suhomliinova, 2009; Gosling, Bolden & Petrov, 2009; Gunter, Hall & Bragg, 2013; Harris, 2008; Leithwood, Mascall & Strauss, 2009, Özdemir, 2012; Spillane, 2006; Williams, 2011). These is evidence to show that where school staff work collaboratively and leadership responsibilities are distributed, teachers' expectations, morale, confidence, professional development, stimulation and enjoyment in schools are enhanced (Court, 2003; Hulpia & Devos, 2009). Furthermore, distribution of leadership contributes to school effectiveness and improvement (Harris, Muijs & Crawford, 2003; Harris et al., 2007; Silins & Mulford, 2004). Distributed leadership also enhances teachers' job satisfaction since working collectively foster the teachers' feelings about being valued and supported in schools (Ereş & Akyürek, 2016; Hulpia & Devos, 2009). In addition, distributed leadership is asserted as potential contributor to positive change and transformation in schools (Harris et al., 2007), as well as enhancing organizational trust, organizational support and school success (Ereş & Akyürek, 2016; Yılmaz & Turan, 2015).

METHOD

Study Design

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between democratic and distributed leadership from teachers' point of view. Correlational research design was used to test whether democratic leadership of school principals is related to distributed leadership in schools.

Participants

Study population included teachers working at high schools in Eskisehir district in Turkey. Stratified sampling was used as a sampling method in the study. The study sample included 462 teachers working at high schools. Different type of 22 high schools included in the sample was determined regarding their socio economic environment. Based on the information obtained from teachers and Eskişehir Provincial Directorate of National Education, the high schools were separated into three groups: lower, middle and upper layers. Of the selected high schools, 9 of them were Anatolian high school, 6 of them were one of them was social sciences high school, 3 of them were high school and 4 of them were science high school, social sciences high school, İmam Hatip high school and teacher training high school. Of the respondent teachers, men (n=240) and women (n=217) were close in number and their ages were between 25 and 62 years (M=41.72, SD=8.28). Great majority of the sample (80.3%) hold the degree of Bachelor of Arts and the average work experience of the participants was 18.48 years. Demographic characteristics of the study sample were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the study sample

Options		1	2	3	4	5	6	Total/ response rate
Gender		Women	Men					
	n	217	240					457*
	$\%$	47.0	51.9					98.9
Age		25-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56+ years			
	n	88	218	108	26			440*
	$\%$	19.0	47.2	23.4	5.6			95.2
	M							41.72
	SD							8.28
Education level		Pre bachelor program	B.A. program	Graduate program (MA)	Graduate program (Ph.D.)			
	n	15	371	63	7			456*
	$\%$	3.2	80.3	13.6	1.5			98.7
Work experience		1-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	30+ years			
	n	63	219	122	38			442*

	%	13.6	47.4	26.4	8.2			95.7
	M							18.48
	S							
	D							7.54
		Turkish language and literature	Mathematics	English language	Biology	History	Other	
Field of experience								
	n	75	52	48	27	23	225	450*
	%	16.2	11.3	10.4	5.8	5.0	48.7	97.4

Note. * There are missing parts in the data collection tool that participants did not answer all the items.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study were collected through two scales. The first one was Leadership Style Questionnaire, which was used to determine democratic leadership style of school principals. The second one was Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI), which was used to identify distributed leadership in the school, based on the teachers' view. Moreover, demographic characteristics of the participants were collected via specific questionnaire items.

Leadership Style Questionnaire

Leadership Style Questionnaire developed by Northouse (2011) was administered on participants in the study. The questionnaire provides three subscales with 18 items measuring autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership styles. Since the present survey emphasized on democratic leadership styles of school principals, only the subscale measuring democratic leadership style was used. Democratic leadership subscale of the questionnaire comprised of six items. After adaptation of the questionnaire into Turkish language, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to determine construct validity of the scale. The CFA results revealed acceptable goodness of fit indices ($\Delta\chi^2$=36.09, Δdf =9, $\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$ ==4.27, RMSEA=.09, AGFI=.91, GFI=.97, SRMR=.034) which indicate that the scale items fit the collected data (Hu & Bentler 1998; Jöreskog & Sörbom 2001; MacCallum, Browne & Sugawara 1996). Furthermore, the reliability of the current study was analyzed and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found as .87, which shows an acceptable internal consistency, as shown in Table 2.

Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI)

Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) developed by Hulpia and her colleagues (2009). The inventory comprised two parts focusing on *distributed leadership functions of the members of the leadership team* and *characteristics of the leadership team*. Leadership functions past of the inventory identify whether supportive leadership behavior and supervising are achieved in the school leadership team. Leadership team characteristics emphasize a clear management framework characterized by group cohesion. Leadership functions were measured by 13 scale items with two sub-scales (support and supervision) while leadership characteristics were measured by 10 scale items.

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to confirm the underlying two-component structures for the leadership functions of the leadership team and one-component structure of leadership team characteristics. The first CFA was carried out on the items corresponding to the leadership functions. The analysis assure that the two-factor model of the leadership functions revealed good model fit results ($\Delta\chi^2$= 252.47, Δdf = 60, $\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$ = 4.20, RMSEA=.09, AGFI=.87, GFI=.91, SRMR=.027). The second CFA was conducted on the items corresponding to the characteristics of the leadership team. The one-factor model of the leadership team characteristics was fit for the scale and indicated acceptable goodness of fit indices ($\Delta\chi^2$=169.32, Δdf=30, $\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$=5.64, RMSEA=.10, AGFI=.87, GFI=.93, SRMR=.021). The two CFA indicated that the scale items fit the collected data (Hu & Bentler 1998; Jöreskog & Sörbom 2001; MacCallum, Browne & Sugawara, 1996).

The reliability of the scores of the DLI was determined through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The scores of the coherent leadership team characteristics had a high internal consistency (α = .98). The internal consistencies of the leadership functions were as follows: support scale scores were high (α = .96) and the scores of the supervision scale had high reliability coefficient (α = .95) as well, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Fit statistics for confirmatory factor analysis and cronbach alpha values

Model	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	$\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$	GFI	AGFI	SRMR	RMSEA	α
Democratic leadership	36.09	9	4.27	.97	.91	.034	.09	.87
DLI-Leadership functions	252.47	60	4.20	.91	.87	.027	.09	.97
*Support								.96
*Supervision								.95
DLI-Leadership team characteristics	169.32	30	5.64	.93	.87	.021	.10	.98

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used in the study to determine democratic and distributed leadership in schools. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the correlation between democratic and distributed leadership. Path analysis was used through structural equation modeling to test developed theoretical model which asserts that democratic leadership is related to distributed leadership in schools. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 and LISREL 8.7 software were used for statistical analyses in the study.

Findings

The mean, standard deviations, and the correlation coefficients between democratic and distributed leadership are presented in Table 3. Descriptive statistics for democratic leadership suggest that respondent teachers perceive democratic leadership in their school in moderate level (*M*= 3.43; *SD*= .78). Descriptive statistics also showed that support (*M*= 3.38; *SD*=1.07) and supervision (*M*= 3.47; *SD*= 1.11) are perceived as distributed leadership functions of the leadership team in schools. Indeed, the results suggested that supervision is more equally distributed among the leadership team than support according to the respondents. Regarding the leadership team characteristics, it was concluded that leadership teams are moderately perceived as coherent (*M*= 2.97; *SD*= .91).

Before testing the theoretical model which investigates the relationship between democratic and distributed leadership, Pearson correlation was conducted to determine the correlation between democratic and distributed leadership in schools. As seen in Table 3, positive relations, ranged between moderate to strong, were found between democratic leadership, leadership functions and leadership characteristics of distributed leadership.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients between democratic and distributed leadership

	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3	4
1.Democratic leadership	3.43	.78	-.42	.31	-	.59*	.52*	.58*
2.DLI-Leadership functions-distribution of support	3.38	1.07	-.42	-.60	.59*	-	.85*	.66*
3.DLI-Leadership functions-distribution of supervision	3.47	1.11	-.52	-.50	.52*	.85*	-	.62*
4.DLI-Leadership characteristics	2.97	.91	-.34	-.54	.58*	.66*	.62*	-

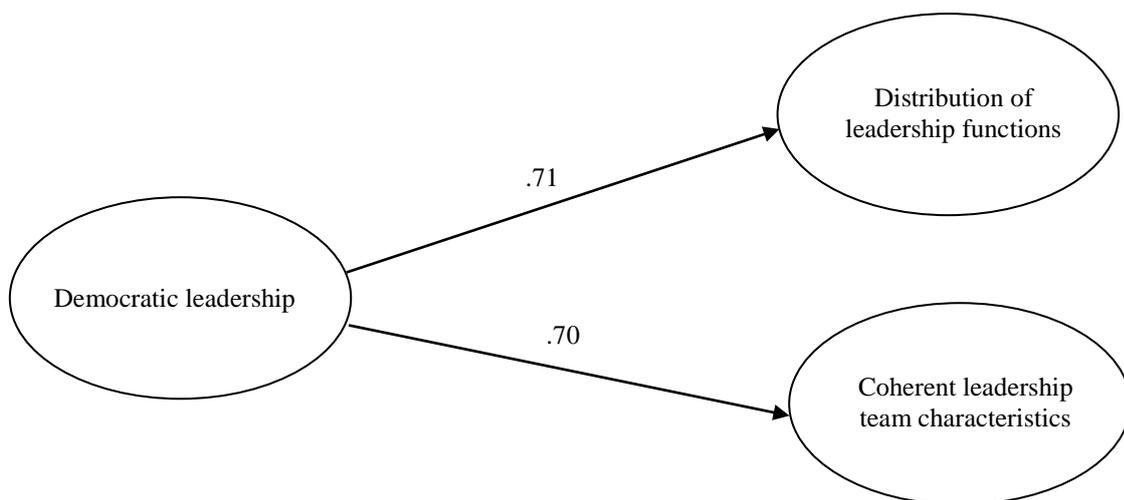*Note*. * Correlation is significant (*p*< .01)

Path analysis was conducted to determine the correlations between variables by calculating the goodness of fit indices for the developed model. The goodness of fit indices of the theoretical model which are presented in Table 4 determined with GFI, AGFI, SRMR, RMSEA, $\Delta\chi^2$ and $\Delta\chi^2 / \Delta df$ ratio statistics. GFI, AGFI, SRMR and RMSEA goodness of fit values were considered as the indication that the theoretical model was suitable for the obtained data (Hoyle, 2012; Hu & Bentler 1998; Jöreskog & Sörbom 2001; MacCallum et al., 1996).

Table 4. Goodness of fit statistics for the theoretical model

Model	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	$\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$	GFI	AGFI	SRMR	RMSEA
1	418.94	109	3.84	.90	.86	.060	.08

The results of the path analysis conducted on the theoretical model to determine the correlation between democratic and distributed leadership are presented in Figure 1. The first part and the independent variable of the model of structural equation designed between democratic and distributed leadership, the democratic leadership scale included 6 observed variables. The second part and the dependent variable of the structural equation model, distributed leadership includes two sub-scales, leadership team characteristics and distributed leadership functions. Leadership team characteristics included 10 observed variables while distributed leadership functions involved 13 observed variables.

When the relations between democratic and distributed leadership were examined through t-test in the model, the study results revealed that there is a strong relationship between democratic leadership, distribution of leadership functions and coherent leadership team characteristics. In the model, democratic leadership explained .71 standard deviation variance of distributed leadership functions while democratic leadership explained .70 standard deviation variance of coherent leadership team characteristics, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Model for democratic and distributed leadership

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

This article focuses on democratic and distributed leadership in schools as perceived by teachers. The main purpose of the study was to determine democratic and distributed leadership perceptions of teachers and to examine how democratic leadership is associated with distributed leadership in schools. In conducting such an empirical research about democratic and distributed leadership in schools, it was responded to close the gap that exists in the literature concerning the relationship between democratic and distributed leadership approaches.

Descriptive statistics results revealed that democratic leadership was shown in moderate level in schools. This means that school principals provide meaningful group participation and decision making with enabling collaborative associations and cooperation in schools (White & Lippitt, 1969; Woods, 2004). Furthermore, support and supervision were perceived as distributed leadership functions of the leadership team in the current study. This shows that supporting leadership behaviors of school members, providing instructional support, supervising and monitoring teachers regarding their performance are core functions of distributed leadership in schools (Blasé & Blasé, 2002; Hallinger, 2003; Hoy & Tarter, 1997; Southworth, 2002). It was also concluded that leadership is distributed among members of the leadership team, which were moderately perceived as coherent. This means that leadership team in schools have unambiguous roles known and accepted by school members (Chrispeels, Castionno & Brown, 2000; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Hulpia et al., 2009; Sanders, 2006), trust communicate and cooperate with each other (Holtz, 2004).

The result in this study also revealed that there is a strong relationship between democratic leadership, distribution of leadership functions and coherent leadership team characteristics. Even though it is asserted in the related literature that democratic leadership is not synonymous for distributed leadership, distributed perspective in leadership practice allows for leadership can be democratic or autocratic (Spillane, 2005) and leadership is stretched over multiple individuals in a school with different type of functions or activities (Spillane, 2005; Spillane & Camburn, 2006). Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that democratic leadership is significantly associated with coherent leadership team and distributed leadership functions such as distribution of support and supervision. As Woods asserts that 'Democracy adds to the emergent character of distributed leadership the notion that everyone, by virtue of their human status, should play a part in democratic agency' (2004, p. 12). Since characteristics of democratic leadership are distributing responsibility among members, encouraging, cooperating, guiding, empowering group members, permitting self-determination and aiding decision making process of the group (Gastil, 1994; Kuczmarski & Kuczmarski, 1995), democratic leadership can pave way for distributed leadership in schools. Furthermore, it is implicit that distributed leadership is related to more democratic and equitable forms of schooling (Harris, 2011).

Although this study sheds new light on the relationship between democratic and distributed leadership, this research was not without limitations, and a number of steps could be taken in future research to elaborate and extend the perspectives put forth in the present study. Firstly, limitation of the research instruments is acknowledged in the study. Date collection is limited by a number of items directed to the participants in the survey measuring democratic leadership in one aspect with six items, and just two core leadership functions of distributed leadership. However, it is obvious that the role of school leaders is too complex and more functions are performed by school leaders. Therefore, it is advisable to extend the study by investigating the relationship between democratic leadership and distribution of other leadership functions. Future studies can also expand democratic leadership instrument to get a more in-depth approach. Moreover, "leadership team" concept for distributed leadership was described participants as school principals and leader teachers in the school. However, some schools may not have teacher leaders and respond the survey only by considering the school principal or some schools may have multiple leaders including stakeholders. However, the role of policy-makers or parents needs to be thought as regards developing a cooperative team for the goals of the school by working collaboratively and advancing democratic approaches in schools.

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