

Shared Leadership among Caribbean Early Childhood Practitioners

Carol Logie
University of the West Indies
Trinidad and Tobago

Abstract

The chapter identifies notions of shared leadership and concerns within the Caribbean context. It further explores the concept of shared leadership within the context of Caribbean early childhood environments. Commitment to the organization was also analysed as a selected variable affecting leadership acumen, roles and perceptions. Eighty teachers from Early Childhood Care and Education Centres across Trinidad and Tobago participated in the study and shared their perception of leadership and commitment to their profession. A questionnaire was used to gather data. The study found teachers who stated they had an administrative role believed they were effective leaders. Similarly, a strong correlation was found between teachers who were committed to the job and their leadership role.

Tiivistelmä

Tässä artikkelissa käsitellään jaetun johtajuuden käsitettä karibialaisessa varhaiskasvatuksen kontekstissa. Myös organisaatioon sitoutumista analysoitiin valittuna muuttujana, joka vaikuttaa johtajuuden ymmärtämiseen, rooleihin ja havaintoihin. Tutkimukseen osallistui 80 opettajaa Trinidadin ja Tobagon varhaiskasvatusinstituutioista. Opettajia yhdisti heidän näkemyksensä johtamisesta ja heidän sitoutumisensa omaan professioonsa. Tutkimuksen aineisto kerättiin kyselyn avulla. Tutkimuksen mukaan opettajat, jotka näkivät roolinsa hallinnollisena, uskoivat olevansa tehokkaita johtajia. Vahva korrelaatio löytyi myös niiden opettajien välillä, jotka olivat sitoutuneita työhönsä ja johtajan rooliinsa.

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Introduction

Research studies in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education over the last five years have given a great deal of attention to the role of effective teaching in early childhood environments (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Bredekamp, 2011; Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa 2009). Moreover, new quality benchmarks, national curriculum standards and policy directives have generated statements which measure minimal quality standards for early childhood environments across the world. The discourse around quality practice and learning in early childhood environments has recently added a new dimension for our consideration. While it cannot be disputed that strong leadership plays a pivotal role in the cultural esprit de corp of any school setting, it is now strongly argued that there are benefits to promoting and supporting the leadership acumen of teachers as they navigate through the challenges of increasingly complex early childhood environments.

Teachers in early childhood settings have found themselves responding to increasing diversity in young children's cultural background, teacher qualifications, commitment to the job and staff understanding of required knowledge and competencies necessary to meet these new challenges (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Corsaro, 1988; DECET/ISSA, 2012; Thornton, 2007).

Similarly, shifting theories and constructs continue to affect early childhood practices in classrooms, while assumptions of the role of successful teachers are constantly under scrutiny (Logie, 2013). Teaching staff now find themselves required to make adjustments to their own assumptions and the internal workings of their early childhood environments (Jambunathan & Caulfield, 2008; Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden, & Bell, 2002; Stewart & Pugh, 2007).

The context – The Trinidad and Tobago experience

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is an English-speaking island state in the Caribbean region with a population of 1.3 million inhabitants and a per capita income of US\$15,781.50 in 2009 (UN Data World Statistics Pocket Book, 2009). The country's unemployment rate has been low over the last three years fluctuating around 5% (Central Bank Data Centre,

2010). Although the acquisition of a university degree with specialisation in the field of early childhood care and development is relatively new, young as well as seasoned providers in the field are presently seizing the opportunity to upgrade their skills.

Early education in Trinidad and Tobago has been part of every government's manifesto since 1996 and an increased number of providers are entering this service industry and educational field annually. Expanded services for young children under five offers greater access to families as both the public and private settings compete for student spaces. Teacher training and high quality early childhood settings that provide a smooth transition for children to the primary schools appears to be the paramount goal of parents. As part of the formal school system, high quality early education with the goal of Education for All, has led government policies to focus on the construction of state of the art preschools which meet international standards.

At present, there are at least 900 persons being trained at seven tertiary institutions (Trinidad and Tobago Government News, 2012). Three hundred teacher trainees are expected to enter tertiary institutions fully funded by the government of Trinidad and Tobago by 2015. There are 1,154 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres in Trinidad and Tobago, 750 of which are registered with the Ministry of Education. Of these, the government oversees 71 schools operated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and 130 government and government-assisted ECCE centres catering to 7,000 of the 34,000 children in the three to five year old age group in need of exposure to early childhood education (Trinidad and Tobago Government News, 2012). Approximately 27% of all children are not experiencing any programmes outside the home (Thornhill, 2011). Early childhood programmes can be found in both rural and urban areas and serve families in economically depressed areas as well as middle- and high-income households. All government centres offer free tuition, lunch and breakfast.

At present private centres outnumber government centres by three to one. Unfortunately, the private sector is not mandated by law to provide standardized ECCE services consistent with international standards. Many private centres provide largely custodial care or academic programmes not always suited to the developmental needs of the nation's children. Typically, physical conditions in private centres tend to be of poor quality

with high teacher-child ratios. Whether in low- or high-income settings, these programmes do not always adhere to the standards prescribed in the national curriculum guide.

Early childhood providers are also encouraged to upgrade their professional and academic qualifications through the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) programme which offers free tertiary education for the Bachelor's Degree to those who meet the matriculation requirements. Higher salaries for teachers with university degrees are also an incentive to fill new posts in all areas of the education system. While there is new impetus and apparent excitement among early childhood workers, historically there has been a paradigm shift. In the late 1950's–1970's, the dame school teacher/proprietor, (typically a retired female primary school teacher) managed, directed, lead and “whipped” the children into shape for their upcoming role as students in their nearby primary school. Preschools were then also a “drop off” custodial care facility for working parents and no professional early education/development training for adults in the setting was required. However, while sites like the one profiled above still exist, staff are now encouraged to seek training in the field of child development and larger numbers of gross domestic product (GDP) are spent annually on construction of new centres to meet international standards and the development of standardised certification for all providers at the national level. In the 2013 budget statement, education and training received \$9.1 billion (16%) of the \$58.4 billion budget (Howai, 2012).

Questions that are currently raised among the Caribbean teaching fraternity are as follows:

1. What is the commitment of teaching staff to their work environment?
2. What is the link between staff commitment and their perceived leadership acumen?

Positional leadership

In Trinidad and Tobago, the traditional model of leadership in education has typically been a hierarchical one in which the head teacher/principal's role is seen as an individual activity and power is concentrated within the position. The shift from a strong focus on positional leaders to various forms of shared leadership which stress the distribution of leadership

among teachers has been noted by many (Harris, 2006; Hatcher, 2005; Hulpia, Devos, Rosseel, & Vlesick, 2012; Gronn, 2002). Nonetheless, the fact remains that successful, high quality early childhood programmes are very often noted to be managed by a strong leader with the ability to build relationships, provide moral purpose, share knowledge and understand change. It is argued here that perhaps leadership (whether positional or shared) is in fact a key element of a quality environment and influences the context and culture of learning in the specific environment (Rodd, 2006).

Hujala (2004), in a study on early childhood leadership in Finland, also argued that although focus groups tended to speak about leadership at multiple levels, there was a tendency to focus on the Centre Director. This tendency highlights the important issue of the positional leader in the context of shared leadership. Furthermore, in their 2007 study “Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector”, Siraj-Blatchford and Manni posit that the positional or formal leader may not be at odds with the notion of shared leadership. In fact, it is argued that in some instances it may even be necessary in accomplishing the “structural change” to support the emergence of this model.

Shared or positional leadership – Is there a symbiotic relationship?

Thornton (2007) posits that leadership in this field is “working collaboratively in a learning community toward a shared vision” (p. 6). This broad definition parallels that of Crawford, Roberts and Hickmann (2010) who, referring to Johnson and Donaldson, 2007 and Wasley, 1991, consider teacher leadership to be, “a murky concept that refers not to a particular position, but rather to varied formal and informal leadership roles that teachers play within school communities” (p. 31). Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) argue that shared leadership has to be managed carefully, particularly in environments in which staff members might be young and inexperienced. In order to reap the benefits of shared leadership in early childhood settings, there is a need for the positional leader to develop the leadership capacity of the other employees and provide support for them as they execute their new leadership roles.

Although there is a movement away from hierarchical leadership in early childhood settings, there is an acceptance that the positional leader, who has the role of director or manager, has a greater responsibility than other

members for creating the context in which shared leadership can flourish. While conventional discussions of leadership thus far have focused on the traits of the positional, or formal leader (Bass & Bass, 2008; Judge, Bono, Iles, & Gerhardt, 2002; Northouse, 2004; York-Barr & Duke, 2008), it is argued here that other elements of leadership, particularly in the classroom need to be deconstructed.

While the typically non-hierarchical climate of the early childhood setting, Thornton and colleagues (2009) believe that hierarchical definitions of leadership are not applicable. The concept of distributed leadership speaks to a movement away from positional leadership, in which one person assumes the sole responsibility for leading a group or an organisation, to shared leadership responsibilities among several formal and informal leaders (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007). Whatever the definition, leadership in classrooms is a noted phenomenon. It is argued here that there can be a symbiotic relationship between all those who share leadership roles within the working organism of an early childhood environment. Moreover, this relationship can be the nucleus and driving force of a high quality learning environment.

Method in the study

The purpose of the study was to identify shared leadership among the teaching fraternity in the Caribbean region. It explored the concept of shared leadership in Trinidad and Tobago early childhood environments. Similarly, teachers' responses were analysed in an effort to gauge their perception of commitment to their centres, as well as their leadership acumen. During 2011, a sample of early childhood teachers was selected from rural and urban regions. These teachers were registered in a university programme, reading for their Bachelor of Education degree with a specialisation in Early Childhood Education. By strict adherence to the criterion of the target population, the above source yielded a sample size of 80 individuals engaged in full time employment as Early Childhood teachers. Full employment is defined in the Trinidad and Tobago context as permanent, temporary and contract workers.

In order to access the population as described above, the sampling frame was constructed from the enrolment lists. This approach to building

the sampling frame was undertaken in order to secure coverage from the number of individuals within early childhood centres across the country. Teachers in the sample were registered to upgrade their qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Development in response to a new government policy.

The study was guided by the notion that in Trinidad and Tobago, present teacher leadership was influenced by teachers' perceptions of themselves and their commitment to the job. The findings were gleaned from a questionnaire on the dimensions of shared leadership. The instrument included demographic information, data on respondents' perception of their leadership levels, roles and commitment levels.

The Leadership Scale used in the study was developed by Kenneth Leithwood, Robert Aitken and Doris Jantzi (2006) and reconstructed to allow feedback from teachers on ways in which their personal notion of leadership influenced teamwork, quality of interaction and pedagogical experiences in the classroom. From the original Leadership Scale, 31 of the 64 items related to leadership issues were included in the questionnaire. Like the original scale, variables were arranged in six subscales (see Table 1).

Table 1. The Leadership Scale within the Study

Subscales	Example Item	No. of Items
Identifying and articulating a vision	I am in support of and agree to school changes when and where necessary	5
Fostering the acceptance of group goals	I participate in the process of generating school goals	5
High performance expectations	I always meet the high expectation that is required of me	4
Providing individualised support/consideration	I am equipped with the resources to support my professional development	5
Providing intellectual stimulation	I am a source of new ideas for the professional learning of other members of staff	7
Providing an appropriate model	I always set a respective tone for interaction with young children	6

Adapted from: Leithwood, Aitken & Jantzi, 2006

Permission was sought and was given for the use of the scale and the questionnaire was piloted prior to its administration and amended where necessary for cultural relevance and reliability. All returns were manually edited and coded. Coding guidelines were developed and documented. The

Leadership Scale was subjected to a test of reliability. The items were found to be internally consistent based on satisfactory levels of their Chronbach's Alpha which ranged from the lowest (.63–Scale A) to the highest (.93–Scale B). Each subscale was subjected to Factor Analysis for the purpose of obtaining factor scores to be used in correlation analysis of the Leadership Scale. By the method of *principal axis factoring*, factor scores for each leadership scale were extracted.

Teacher profile

Information provided on the demographics of the sampling units included: sex, age, centre type, location, main occupation, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment. Questions related to respondents' perception of their leadership acumen, main responsibilities and perceived influence in the environment provided relevant data. The study gleaned by indirect method, respondents' understanding of their managerial and classroom responsibilities.

The commitment survey

An attitudinal commitment inventory instrument based on the original version of the Meyer and Allen Three-Component Model (TCM) of commitment (1990) was utilised. The TCM measured three forms of employee commitment to an organisation: 1) desire-based "I want to" (affective commitment); 2) obligation-based "I ought to" (normative commitment); and 3) cost-based "I need to" (continuous commitment) (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Two well-validated sub-scales were used. These were the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) and the Normative Commitment Scale (NCS). Items within each scale were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

According to Meyer and Allen (2004), in their more recent work, employees desirous of staying with an organisation exhibit high Affective Commitment and tend to perform at a higher level than those who did not. On the other hand, those with low Affective Commitment did not feel committed to stay with the organisation. Similarly, the authors noted that employees who remained due to feelings of obligation (high Normative Commitment) also tend to outperform those who feel no such obligation

(low Normative Commitment) but with weaker performance than workers with high Affective Commitment.

Each commitment scale was correlated with each of the six leadership scales on the basis of their factor scores. Zero order Pearson correlation coefficient was observed together with its level of significance. Only results at or below .05 level of significance were accepted as having significant correlations.

Results and discussion

The study found that there were indeed attributes to successful classroom leaders. The following describes four of the six subscales from the Leadership Scale (2006) which yielded interesting results from the sample. These scales were as follows: 1) Identifying and Articulating of Vision, 2) Fostering the Acceptance of Group Goals, 3) High Performance Expectations, and 4) Providing Intellectual Stimulation. Similarly, the TCM commitment survey yielded critical results on Affective and Normative Commitment in Caribbean environments.

Identifying and Articulating of Vision

When asked about their sense of the overall purpose of their Early Childhood Centre 86% of the respondents indicated that they have a sense of the Centre's overall purpose. Eighty-five per cent of early childhood teachers agreed that they know about their Centres' vision. The majority of Early Childhood Educators (89%) indicated support of and agreement with necessary changes to Centre Policies. Seventy-eight per cent of participants demonstrated an understanding of the relationship between the Centre's vision and Government initiatives.

Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2003) citing Sirotnik and Kimball (1996), noted that the concept of influence that characterises leadership remains constant when used in the context of teacher leadership. They admit, however, that the methods and goals of leadership might be unique. Teacher leaders have a clear vision (Barth, 2007; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2007; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007) and articulate it to other members of the team (Rodd, 2006; Siraj-

Blatchford & Manni, 2007). They translate this vision into practical strategies (Crowther et al., 2007) for action by setting goals and monitoring the progress toward the attainment of the goals. They are committed to the goals that are set (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007), confronting obstacles with which they might be presented (Crowther et al., 2007) and persisting in spite of these obstacles (Barth, 2007). Some authors, such as Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2003) consider these leadership elements to be narrow and posit the need to broaden them to include wider leadership roles such as advocacy.

Fostering the acceptance of group goals

The majority of Caribbean Educators in the study (76%) stated that they regularly encouraged achievement of centre goals among staff members. Similarly, an overwhelming majority of teachers agreed that they participate in the process of generating Centre goals with 5% of teachers disagreeing with the statement. 82% of teachers stated that they supported and encouraged the professional development of others consistent with the Centre policies. 18% of teachers indicated disagreement with the statement. Most participants (92%) agreed that their decisions and practices within the classroom are consistent with the goals of the Centre. 8% of teachers disagreed with the statement.

Most respondents (89%) agreed that they were involved in establishing goals and priorities of the Centre with 11% of teachers disagreeing with the statement.

The majority of early childhood teachers (94%) agreed that they display energy and enthusiasm for my work. Most respondents (96%) indicated that they set a respective tone for interaction with young children. Of those surveyed, 89% responded that they demonstrate a willingness to change policies and practices in light of new understandings/developments of the field. 92% of early childhood educators stated that they model techniques for solving problems that other staff members can relate to. An overwhelming majority of teachers (97%) stated that they are always open and genuine with staff, parents and children. Most early childhood professionals within the survey (90%) stated that they are perfect model of success and accomplishment within the profession and the early childhood environment.

Not unlike the studies by Gabriel (2005) and Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007), this study found that teacher leaders were able to create a culture of teamwork and a culture of learning among members of staff. They were also found to work effectively with parents and the wider community. Similarly, Caribbean early childhood practitioners promoted professional development of their team members. These findings were aligned recent conversations and insights from Gabriel (2005) and Rodd (2006).

High performance expectations

When teachers' perceptions of meeting high expectations in Caribbean classrooms were examined, it was found that 90% of respondents believed that they were meeting the administration's targets. Of the sampled educators, 97% considered themselves effective innovators. Most early childhood professionals, 84%, agreed that they were equipped with the necessary resources to support their professional development. The majority of teachers (82%) agreed that their opinions were always taken into consideration when initiating Centre policies. Additionally, the majority of teachers (86%) agreed that their unique needs and expertise were always acknowledged by the Centre. Many participants, 89%, agreed they had never shown favouritism toward individuals or groups. An overwhelming majority of early childhood practitioners (97%) agreed that the Centre always acknowledged their unique needs and expertise.

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Providing intellectual stimulation

The majority of early childhood teachers (85%) agreed that they always encourage other staff members to re-examine some basic assumptions about

their work. An overwhelming majority of teachers (95%) agreed that they are a source of new ideas for the professional development of staff members. Of those surveyed, 93% agree that they always stimulate staff members to think about their interaction and practice with school children. Most of the respondents, (92%) agreed that they encourage staff members to pursue their personal goals for professional development. Additionally, 85% of early childhood professionals agreed that they always persuade staff members to evaluate and refine their practices when necessary. Many participants (86%) agreed that they always persuade staff members to evaluate and refine their practices when necessary. 88% of early childhood professionals agreed that they always facilitate opportunities for staff members to learn from each other.

Job commitment and leadership in the classroom

Affective Commitment. This study examined the importance of affective commitment to early childhood practices. Affective commitment is defined as components of identification and internalisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment thus refers to the “emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002, 21). The findings indicated that affective commitment was highly and positively correlated with the study’s leadership subscales with the exception of the scale “Providing Intellectual Stimulus” with which there was no significant correlation below the 5% level of significance ($p = 0.73$) (see Table 2).

In this study teachers who were found to display affective commitment to their Centre, demonstrated an internalisation and acceptance of its esprit de corp and values. The study found that their commitment and willingness to lead were aligned with their personal goals and values. Additionally, teachers were found to accept the Centre’s influence in maintaining a satisfying symbiotic relationship. The study also found that Caribbean teachers demonstrated behaviours which were consistent with the purview of the school’s culture. Teachers were also willing to express additional effort on behalf of the educational system to maintain healthy relationships within their work environment. Moreover the study found that teachers exhibited a shared value system and their leadership goals were consistent with the goals of the education system.

Table 2. Correlations between Affective Commitment and Leadership Subscales with Cronbach's Alpha and (K.M.O) Goodness of Fit Measures

Scales	Statistics	Identifying and Articulating a Vision	Fostering the Acceptance of Group Goals	Having High Performance Expectation	Providing Individual Support	Providing Intellectual Stimulus	Being an Appropriate Model	K.M.O (Goodness of fit)	Cronbach's Alpha
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.41	0.415	0.331	0.355	0.198	0.302	0.782	0.719
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0.002	0.001	0.073	0.006		
K.M.O (Goodness of fit)		0.745	0.788	0.66	0.673	0.901	0.753		
Cronbach's Alpha		0.854	0.927	0.773	0.764	0.87	0.837		

Source: UWI-FDCRC Survey on Shared Leadership among Caribbean Teachers, 2010

Normative Commitment. Normative commitment refers to the employee's perception that he/she is obligated to remain with the organisation. Meyer and Allen indicated that an individual could experience one or more components of organisational commitment simultaneously (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Interestingly, the study also pointed to commitment among classroom leaders which focused on a sense of obligation. This commitment which has its foundation in a sense of obligation to the organisation is defined as normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990) as "internalization of normative pressure" (p. 77). This component of commitment within the leadership goals of teachers in the study was expressed in their level of institutional reciprocity. In other words, where it was believed that not only the institution shared their specific values teacher leaders perceived that there was operational reciprocity between themselves and the centre's organisational system. Therefore, the more valued the organisation was to them, the more consistent the teacher felt linked to the Centre's organisation goals.

The study also found that only three of the leadership scales: 1) having high performance expectation, 2) providing individual support, and 3) being an appropriate model were positively correlated with the Normative Commitment Scale (see Table 3). As in the case of affective commitment, significant correlations were observed and indicated a link between high normative values and leadership in classrooms.

Table 3. Correlations between Normative Commitment and Leadership Subscales with Cronbach's Alpha and (K.M.O) Goodness of Fit

Scales	Statistics	Identifying and Articulating a Vision	Fostering the Acceptance of Group Goals	Having High Performance Expectation	Providing Individual Support	Providing Intellectual Stimulus	Being an Appropriate Model	K.M.O (Goodness of fit)	Cronbach's Alpha
Normative Commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.128	0.192	0.337	0.282	0.21	0.252	0.697	0.647
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.247	0.082	0.002	0.01	0.057	0.021		

Source: UWI-FDCRC Survey on Shared Leadership among Caribbean Teachers, 2010

Conclusion

The research demonstrated several key findings from the Caribbean context which correspond with previous studies on shared leadership. Educators who perceived themselves as leaders within their school environment demonstrated higher levels of affective and normative commitment to their job. Three critical components of leadership were highly correlated with affective and normative commitment, these were: 1) having high performance expectations, 2) providing individual support, and 3) being an appropriate model. These findings were consistent with existing bodies of research (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006; Houghton, Neck, & Manz, 2003).

Caribbean teacher-leaders typically hold high performance expectations for themselves. According to Rodd (2006), Manz and Neck (1999) and Houghton et al. (2003), such individuals tend to exert greater effort in dealing with challenges and difficulties. These Caribbean teacher-leaders, not unlike their findings and observations, had positive self-esteem and high expectations of their worth within the school setting. They were also more likely to employ specific strategies which make them less susceptible to setbacks, and more likely to be intrinsically motivated to achieve the organisation's goals. This in turn had a positive impact on a teacher's attachment to the organisation (Bligh et al., 2006). This may be what our research is demonstrating. One potential extrapolation from the data is that educators, within their settings are intrinsically motivated to achieve their internalised acceptance of the setting's values and goals, and as such are demonstrating high levels of affective and normative commitment.

Moreover, teacher-leaders exerted influence across and within their peer groups. They engage in motivational dialogue with peers within the organisation. They also take it upon themselves to create opportunities for peers to demonstrated their strengths and improve upon their weaknesses. Therefore, teacher-leaders provide peers with opportunities to grow, demonstrating support for individuals within their environment. This, in turn, assists teacher-leaders to perceive themselves as more empowered within their setting and translates to greater levels of organisational commitment.

Redefined teacher-leadership theory (Donghai, 2008; Harris & Muijs, 2007; Lambert, 2003) also suggest that strategies are verbally and behaviourally communicated within an organisation, the more likely

others within the team may become committed to the institution. Teacher-leaders may therefore, exert positive peer influence, thus facilitating the acceptance of organisational goals and values. These are implications which require further examination. Additionally, the current study requires further elucidation of key findings. In particular, within the contexts of early childhood environments it may be critical to examine the role of formal shared leadership teams, as well as informal leadership groups and individuals which may exist and the interaction of these leadership styles on teacher commitment within the organisation. Further, one may need to closely examine the leadership structure within early childhood settings, investigating whether patterns of shared leadership gathered through the data are indeed patterns which exist within the formal educational leadership structure. It is also important to note that the research currently conducted, in this study and in others, tends towards descriptive explanations of existing structures, and may require further unearthing of testable variables which may elucidate the existence of shared leadership and the ways in which it impacts not only organisational commitment but also aspects of job performance, quality outcomes and provision within early childhood contexts. Leadership styles also need to be further examined to determine its link to differing styles may relate to differing levels of organisational commitment.

At present these findings demonstrate important implications for shared leadership, and the potential impact of teacher-leadership as an antecedent which correlates with levels of affective and normative commitment. While further explorations are still needed to make more definitive conclusions, this research provides an important first step into the exploration of shared leadership within early childhood environments in the Caribbean.

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