

MANAGING EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION: SELF DETERMINATION THEORY

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Abstract: This study examines the sustainability of educational innovations within a high school setting, focusing on a case study involving at-risk students. The purpose of the research is to explore how the principles of Self-Determination Theory (SDT)—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—contribute to the sustainability of educational innovations. Methodology involved semi-structured interviews with two teachers and one school leader to gather qualitative data on their experiences and perspectives regarding the implemented curriculum.

Results indicate that teacher autonomy, as facilitated by distributed leadership, plays a pivotal role in sustaining innovation. Teachers reported significant discretion in developing and adapting their instructional methods, which enhanced their job satisfaction and promoted self-reflection. School administrators highlighted the necessity of decentralized leadership and collaborative sense-making to balance autonomy effectively, ensuring the innovation's viability. The need for continuous professional development was emphasized to enhance teacher competence, linking it to the flow of learning and the overall success of the innovation.

Conclusions drawn from the study suggest that a balanced approach to autonomy, fostering competence through ongoing professional development, and enhancing relatedness are critical for the long-term sustainability of educational innovations. Recommendations for future research include exploring these dynamics in diverse educational contexts to develop comprehensive strategies for supporting sustainable innovation. Additional data underscore the importance of context-aware leadership and the role of collaborative networks in facilitating innovative teaching practices.

Keywords: educational innovation, self-determination theory, teacher autonomy, professional development

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovations in educational environments find great difficulty in long-term sustainability. Many innovations have fleeting success, go through long development stages, and then disappear within the everyday demands of classroom activity. The viability of educational innovations depends on people learning fresh ideas and techniques. Investigating the learning mechanisms connected with sustainable innovation and spotting important factors influencing these processes is thus very vital. Three ongoing educational innovations are investigated in this paper along with their salient features that have helped them to be successful (Fix, 2018; Fix et al., 2019). The proved sustainability of these situations merits their examination in respect to basic criteria of sustainability. Aiming at children at risk of leaving out, the three participating schools developed a fresh and creative curriculum. The program's stated goal was to improve student endurance by guaranteeing that they successfully completed high school (Fix, 2018).

A well-established paradigm for comprehending how individual learning could be improved is offered by Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which According to SDT, motivating and successful learning depend on the satisfaction of three fundamental human needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Promoting perceived autonomy, competency, and relatedness, SDT contends that people may reach greater degrees of self-regulated learning, enhanced interest, and pleasure, which link favorably with job performance and well-being. Focusing on how these ideas interact in the viewpoints of school managers and teachers about sustainable educational innovation, this paper explores learning processes and other Integrated Model of Sustainable Innovation (IMSI) concepts using the SDT framework.

2. SDT IS AN ACRONYM FOR SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

We used the Self-Determination Theory framework (Fix et al., 2019) to investigate further the learning strategies and other IMSI concepts. This is a well-known paradigm illustrating how people could enhance their learning process. Three fundamental objectives SDT aims to satisfy are self-determination, capacity, and relatedness. According to SDT, people's learning process is much influenced by their opinions about their own autonomy, aptitude, and relatedness. All of which are significantly related to how well you do at work and how good you feel about yourself, these emotions help you to regulate your own learning and increase your interest and happiness. Encouragement of teachers' perceived liberty—that is, opportunities to use their own ideas, opinions, and personal experiences—is supposed to enhance the learning of their pupils (SDT). Furthermore included in the social context where autonomous action begins is the sense of worth, which results in self-governance (Fix 2018). By establishing

an atmosphere where instructors feel free to express and discuss their own ideas, school administrators significantly help teachers to develop fresh ideas (Fix et al., 2019).

The novel practices that teachers develop throughout the innovation process are guided by the standards of stakeholders and the innovation objectives. From the standpoint of educators and school administrators, this covers not only the objectives regarding the degree of student learning but also their own personal and professional ones. People desire to accomplish personally significant objectives, so they are motivated to succeed; when they have the potential to do so, they feel confidence in their capacity. Along with the instructors' personal aspirations, values, and life events, artistic ones are considered. The vague or meager objectives of the program might make it more difficult for educators to relate the objectives with their own experiences, attitudes, and ambitions, therefore slowing down the development of competency.

By emphasizing relatedness—the social component of education—SDT satisfies the desire for social contacts. instructors may feel linked to their students when they meet with them as well as to these other instructors. Teachers are more likely to feel like they belong, according to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), when they interact with people in a manner that is honest and true, therefore enabling them to express what they think and feel. Since individual and group learning are clearly acknowledged as vital components of creativity, SDT's research on educational motivation for learning has clearly centered on both levels. The three concepts of SDT—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—can assist to improve the structure for sustained innovation in this field. Since we developed the advanced student program using the SDT system, we chose that one (Fix 2018). We looked to examine if the three new concepts—linked, competent, and independent—that the team of knowledgeable professionals—school management and teachers—used contained these notions. We concentrated our investigation on the very recent model (IMSI) to respond to the following research question:

When school administrators and teachers consider long-term innovations in education, what does the concept of relatedness, competency, and liberty mean to them?

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Two methods were used in gathering the information. We first had three quite similar chats, kind of like inquiries. We spoke with two instructors on the creative team as well as the school administrator overseeing the team. Every talk took around an hour and a half. The participants consented to have their talk filmed and their data utilized in a manner that would not identify them after receiving a thorough explanation of the goal of the research before the interview.

We spoke with school managers and teachers to gain their opinions and experiences so that we would better understand how the principles of IMSI—like context-aware leadership, learning flows, vision and objectives, and spread leadership—were used in classrooms. We utilized graphics to assist some of the students in grasping the four IMSI notions because they lacked knowledge of them. The supporting statements were produced with the researcher who developed the IMSI model and reviewed by instructors not engaged in the study to ensure they were clear and understandable. Though nothing significant needed to be altered, we made some little tweaks to the writing. Before the interview, the subjects were briefed on the concept of distributed leadership. This allowed them to ask any queries they may have and expand their knowledge on it. Those who participated responded to relevant interview questions once their comprehension of the topic was strong. After learning the second principle—context-conscious leadership—they asked additional questions to get more knowledge, and subsequently they responded to the interview questions. This mechanism continued until everyone completed their tasks. The bulk of the talks with school administrators and instructors concerned IMSI. Their conversational style somewhat changed to highlight the part each group played in implementing the fresh concept.

The interview questions deliberately did not explicitly probe the SDT principles of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in order to provide a whole picture of the data within the IMSI framework. These ideas were supposed to remain latent. We invited the subjects to review, comment on, and edit the anonymously created recordings of their discussions in order to raise construct validity. Two of the respondents—both administrators from schools—asked for revisions so that their responses may be more nuanced or thorough. We entered their talks into the database after they approved the content and the necessary adjustments.

The primary researcher—who also served as the principal supervisor—did an extensive data review. Carefully reviewing the interview material, the researcher used an ordered approach to identify tendencies connected to the IMSI concepts of vision and objectives, context-aware leadership, learning processes, and spread leadership. Relevant data were encoded considering the links between the IMSI principles, therefore allowing multiple encoding of a single phrase. The same statement could be accurate for "distributed leadership" and "flow of learning," for example. The lead investigator then checked the labeled data bits with a second author to ensure they matched. Collectively, they developed large concepts illustrating the actors' perspectives on sustainable development.

Using a logical approach and a new coding system based on the SDT ideas of autonomy, relatedness, and competency, the principal researcher once again examined all the data. This dual coding aimed to enable better understanding of IMSI concepts among individuals. The second author and the primary investigator examined the coded data to ensure the labels matched and identify significant SDT related themes. The paper examined how concepts like context-aware leadership, learning strategies, vision and objectives, and distributed leadership matched the values of liberty, competence, and relatedness. This inspired fresh concepts for long-term innovation among scholars.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research examined how teachers and school administrators felt about integrating SDT ideas into the IMSI framework and how those ideas may be used for sustainable innovation. First, one is provided a summary of how the IMSI framework views autonomy. The consequences on relatedness and competency then are discussed. Among the persons displaying a strong awareness of liberty in the framework of spread leadership were the two instructors and the school leader. As long as their instruction aligned with the objectives of the institution, teachers felt they had great leeway in deciding how they should approach their lessons. Though they were allowed to create fresh approaches for instruction and design instructional activities, they still had to gain approval from the head of the school. School authorities connected this freedom—which promoted discourse, self-reflection, and a feeling of ownership—all of which were connected to greater learning. Teachers' level of freedom varied depending on their performance; those who were really outstanding had greater freedom and school administrators kept less eye on them. School administrators were in charge of stimulating innovation, setting objectives, and managing money and had great independence. They believed that increasing independence required different leadership approaches, which helped to make sense of things generally. The president of the institution underlined that the success of the invention depended on individuals at all levels of the company cooperating to make sense of things. He also cautioned against allowing them too much independence as it might lead to certain risks. Teachers had to work on the concept on their own as it was part of their employment responsibility. They said that things had to keep improving and sought fresh ideas by means of their networks both within and outside of the classroom. It was believed that principles inspired fresh ideas more often than they themselves generated. The way the creative team developed the concept on their own considering the constraints and requirements of the particular environment of the school demonstrated context-aware leadership. Teachers and school authorities focused on how the new concept would turn out over time as they believed that fulfilling educational objectives would result in excellent performance at all levels of the company. School administrators made it very evident that not every teacher has the expertise and creative thinking necessary for new approaches of instruction demanding particular understanding. Teachers involved in innovation teams were seen to need professional development. The success of the new approach was attributed mostly to the ability of the teachers, so school officials felt obliged to assist them in developing their skills. The possibilities to cooperate to make sense of things and consider them during classroom innovation enhanced the link between ability and the flow of knowledge. School administrators believed that because instructors were professionals in their industry and understood how to solve the issue, they should be accountable. Distribution of leadership was supposed to result in improved innovation, which would be very advantageous for pupils.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This qualitative research sought the most crucial traits that educational reforms must persist throughout time by considering the points of view of teachers and school officials. Examining relatedness, competence, and liberty as stated by Self-Determination Theory, the research used the IMSI framework. The findings revealed that the distributed leadership model included liberty right into its foundation. Teachers' opinions of their school leaders' trust and regard for them as well as their own ability to modify their approaches revealed this. School administrators underlined, according to Johansen et al. (2023), that teacher liberty was crucial for student development as it let instructors think about themselves, made them happy at work, and helped everyone agree on long-term objectives. Divided leadership was viewed as crucial to inspire autonomy as a balanced approach was required to prevent too much autonomy, which may be detrimental (Cheon et al., 2023). Since new approaches of teaching required certain abilities, teachers and school authorities understood they had to continuously studying if they were to be more competent. Making sense of things together was a crucial component in maintaining innovation going because the flow of knowledge connected to the development of abilities (Chiu et al., 202%). The research emphasizes overall the need of striking a balance between encouraging autonomy, developing skills, and strengthening relationships between individuals to ensure educational concepts persist. More research on these procedures in various

educational environments is necessary to develop long-term strategies supporting innovation sustainability (Fix et al., 2019; Chiu et al., 2023; Johansen et al., 202).

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