



Enhancing Educational Leadership: Exploring the Enneagram's Impact on Interpersonal Relationships

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of the Enneagram on enhancing educational leadership by exploring its influence on interpersonal relationships. Through qualitative interviews with educational leaders, the study investigates three key themes: self-awareness and leadership style, understanding and valuing individual differences, and conflict resolution and team cohesion. The findings reveal that the Enneagram framework plays a crucial role in enhancing self-awareness among educational leaders. By understanding their Enneagram type, leaders gain insights into their strengths, weaknesses, communication styles, and decision-making processes. This self-awareness enables them to make conscious choices in their leadership approach, adapt their styles to connect with and support team members, and foster effective communication. Additionally, the Enneagram facilitates understanding and valuing individual differences within educational leadership teams. Recognizing the diverse motivations, fears, and communication preferences associated with each Enneagram type, leaders create an inclusive environment where differences are appreciated, and conflicts are approached constructively. This understanding fosters empathy, respect, and collaboration among team members, promoting team cohesion and harnessing the collective potential of the team. Moreover, the Enneagram proves instrumental in conflict resolution by providing a framework for understanding the underlying dynamics of conflicts. Leaders approach conflicts with empathy, seeking common ground and resolutions that address core concerns. This approach creates a safe space for open and constructive discussions, strengthening relationships and advancing team objectives. This study highlights the transformative power of the Enneagram in enhancing educational leadership and emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, understanding differences, and effective conflict resolution in creating positive learning environments. It recommends integrating the Enneagram into leadership development programs and suggests avenues

for future research to explore the experiences of different stakeholders and the long-term impact of the Enneagram on leadership effectiveness.

Key words: Enneagram, Educational leadership, Interpersonal relationships, Self-awareness

INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, effective leadership is crucial for fostering positive learning environments, promoting student success, and driving organizational growth. Educational leaders play a vital role in shaping the educational landscape, influencing policies, and inspiring their teams to achieve excellence. One aspect that is gaining increasing attention in the realm of leadership development is the use of personality frameworks as tools for self-awareness and interpersonal growth (Uy, et al., 2023). The Enneagram is one such framework that holds promise in enhancing educational leadership through its unique insights into individual motivations, behaviors, and interpersonal dynamics.

The Enneagram is an ancient system of personality typing that categorizes individuals into nine distinct personality types, each with its own set of core motivations, fears, and desires. Unlike other personality frameworks, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or the Big Five Personality Traits, the Enneagram focuses not only on personality traits but also on the underlying motivations and unconscious patterns that drive individuals' thoughts, emotions, and actions. This depth of understanding provides valuable insights into how leaders can navigate their own strengths and weaknesses while fostering positive relationships with their colleagues, students, and other stakeholders.

Previous research has demonstrated the significance of self-awareness and emotional intelligence in effective leadership (Bratton, et al. 2011). The Enneagram offers a unique lens through which leaders can deepen their self-awareness by uncovering their unconscious motivations, fears, and blind spots. By gaining a clearer understanding of their own personality type and the associated patterns of behavior, educational leaders can develop a heightened awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to make conscious choices in their leadership approach.

Moreover, the Enneagram provides a framework for understanding and appreciating individual differences among team members. By recognizing the core motivations and fears of each personality type, leaders can tailor their communication and leadership style to better connect with and motivate their team members. This understanding can lead to improved collaboration, trust, and overall team performance.

While there is a growing body of literature exploring the Enneagram's applications in various contexts, including personal development, counseling, and team dynamics (Kam, 2018), there is a dearth of research specifically focusing on its implications for educational leadership. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the potential of the Enneagram as a tool for enhancing educational leadership.

This research study seeks to explore the impact of the Enneagram on interpersonal relationships within the realm of educational leadership. By examining the Enneagram's potential as a tool for enhancing leadership effectiveness, this study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for educational leaders striving to create positive learning environments and drive educational excellence.

Review of Related Literature

This review of related literature provides an overview of existing research and scholarly works that explore the Enneagram's impact on interpersonal relationships within the context of educational leadership. The review aims to identify key themes, findings, and gaps in the literature, highlighting the significance of the Enneagram as a tool for enhancing leadership effectiveness and promoting positive school cultures.

Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of self-awareness and emotional intelligence in effective leadership (Kilag, et al. 2023). Personality frameworks offer valuable insights into individual differences, allowing leaders to better understand their own strengths, weaknesses, and interpersonal dynamics with others. The Enneagram, in particular, offers a unique perspective by delving into the deeper motivations and fears that underlie individuals' behaviors and decision-making processes (Kam & Vriend, 2021).

While research on the Enneagram's applications in personal development and team dynamics exists, there is a scarcity of studies specifically exploring its implications for educational leadership. However, anecdotal evidence and practitioner accounts suggest that the Enneagram can be a valuable tool for educational leaders seeking to enhance their interpersonal effectiveness and create positive relationships within their educational communities.

One key area where the Enneagram can contribute is in fostering self-awareness among educational leaders. By identifying their Enneagram type and understanding its associated patterns of behavior, leaders can gain insights into their strengths and blind spots. This knowledge enables them to make conscious choices in their leadership approach, leading to improved decision-making, communication, and relationship-building (Kilag, et al. 2023).

Effective leadership involves building strong interpersonal relationships and fostering collaborative team environments. The Enneagram provides a framework for understanding and appreciating individual differences, which can promote empathy, respect, and effective communication among team members. By recognizing and valuing the diverse perspectives and motivations of team members based on their Enneagram types, leaders can tailor their leadership style and create an inclusive and harmonious work environment (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

Furthermore, the Enneagram can contribute to conflict resolution and team cohesion. By understanding the core motivations and fears of each Enneagram type, leaders can navigate conflicts more effectively and promote understanding and empathy among team members. This understanding can help leaders facilitate productive conversations, find common ground, and develop strategies for conflict resolution (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

Research has consistently demonstrated the link between positive school culture and student outcomes. Educational leaders play a crucial role in shaping the culture of their schools, and the Enneagram can be a valuable tool in this process. By leveraging the Enneagram's insights into motivations, fears, and behaviors, leaders can cultivate a school culture that values diversity, fosters collaboration, and promotes student engagement and success.

While limited research exists on the direct impact of the Enneagram on student outcomes, studies have shown that leadership styles that prioritize self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and positive interpersonal relationships contribute to improved student outcomes, including academic achievement, behavior, and overall well-being (Kilag et al. 2023). Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that the Enneagram, as a tool for enhancing leadership effectiveness and interpersonal relationships, can indirectly influence student outcomes by shaping the school culture and climate.

This review of related literature highlights the significance of the Enneagram in enhancing educational leadership and promoting positive interpersonal relationships. While limited research specifically focuses on the Enneagram's implications for educational leadership, existing literature on

personality frameworks, team dynamics, and leadership effectiveness provides a foundation for exploring the Enneagram's potential contributions to educational leadership.

The Enneagram offers educational leaders a deeper understanding of their own motivations, behaviors, and blind spots, leading to enhanced self-awareness and conscious leadership choices. Moreover, the Enneagram facilitates improved interpersonal relationships by promoting empathy, understanding, and effective communication among team members. By leveraging the Enneagram's insights, educational leaders can create positive school cultures that foster collaboration, inclusivity, and ultimately contribute to improved student outcomes.

Methodology

The qualitative methodology employed in this study aimed to explore the impact of the Enneagram on interpersonal relationships within the context of educational leadership. Through in-depth interviews, participants were able to share their experiences, insights, and challenges related to the Enneagram's influence on their leadership effectiveness and interpersonal interactions.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was chosen to obtain rich, contextualized data and gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives. The study utilized a phenomenological approach, focusing on the lived experiences of the seven educational leaders and their perceptions of how the Enneagram affected their interpersonal relationships.

Participant Selection

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who were educational leaders with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Participants were chosen based on their familiarity with the Enneagram and its application in their leadership roles. This ensured that the participants had sufficient knowledge and experience to provide valuable insights into the research topic.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected participants. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate representation of their responses. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions and prompts designed to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections on the Enneagram's impact on their interpersonal relationships as educational leaders.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze the qualitative data gathered from the interviews. The analysis involved several iterative steps to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights across the dataset. The transcripts were read and re-read to gain familiarity with the data. Initial codes were generated by systematically categorizing the data based on meaningful units of information. These codes were then refined, organized into themes, and further examined for connections and relationships.

To ensure rigor and reliability, intercoder reliability was established by involving a second researcher who independently coded a subset of the data. Any discrepancies or disagreements were resolved through discussion and consensus. The identified themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure trustworthiness, several strategies were employed. Member checking was conducted by providing participants with the opportunity to review and confirm the accuracy and interpretation of their interview data. This allowed for the validation and verification of the findings. Additionally, peer debriefing sessions were conducted, where the research team engaged in discussions and critical reflections on the emerging themes and interpretations.

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality. The study followed ethical guidelines and protocols to protect the participants' rights and ensure the responsible use of the collected data.

Researcher Reflexivity

The researchers' reflexivity played a crucial role in acknowledging their own biases, assumptions, and perspectives throughout the research process. The researchers engaged in reflective discussions to critically examine their influence on the study design, data collection, and analysis. Reflexivity helped minimize potential biases and ensure a balanced interpretation of the data.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study revealed valuable insights into the impact of the Enneagram on interpersonal relationships within the context of educational leadership. The participants, educational leaders with diverse backgrounds and experiences, shared their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the Enneagram's influence on their leadership effectiveness and interactions with others.

Theme 1: Self-awareness and Leadership Style

Participants emphasized the significance of the Enneagram in enhancing their self-awareness as educational leaders. They acknowledged that understanding their Enneagram type helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses more clearly. One participant remarked, "Discovering my Enneagram type was an eye-opening experience. It made me more aware of my leadership style and the impact it has on others." EL2

Participants also highlighted how self-awareness enabled them to make conscious choices in their leadership approach. They recognized that their Enneagram type influenced their communication style, decision-making processes, and relationship-building strategies. As one participant stated, "Knowing my Enneagram type helped me recognize my natural tendencies and biases. It allowed me to adapt my leadership style to better connect with and support my team members." EL4

Expanding on the theme of self-awareness and leadership style, participants elaborated on how their awareness of their Enneagram type led to a deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as educational leaders. They realized that their Enneagram type provided valuable insights into their natural inclinations and tendencies. This self-awareness allowed them to play to their strengths and be more intentional in addressing areas that needed improvement.

One participant reflected, "As a Type 1, I tend to be perfectionistic and detail-oriented. While this has its advantages, I also recognized that it could sometimes lead to micromanaging. By understanding this about myself, I consciously worked on delegating tasks and empowering my team members to take ownership. It not only relieved my own stress but also empowered them to grow and contribute in their own unique ways." EL6

The participants also acknowledged that their Enneagram type influenced their communication style. They recognized that different Enneagram types may have distinct communication preferences and needs. By understanding their own communication style and being aware of the preferences of others, participants were able to adapt their approach to foster better understanding and collaboration.

One participant shared, "As a Type 7, I tend to be enthusiastic and full of ideas. However, I realized that some of my team members preferred more structured and focused communication. By being mindful of their needs and adapting my communication style, I was able to create a more inclusive and productive environment. It helped me connect with my team members on a deeper level and fostered stronger relationships."EL2

Moreover, the participants acknowledged that their Enneagram type influenced their decision-making processes. They recognized that their core motivations and fears, as revealed by the Enneagram, played a role in their approach to making decisions. This awareness allowed them to reflect on their decision-making patterns and consider alternative perspectives.

One participant explained, "Being a Type 5, I tend to value expertise and gather extensive information before making decisions. However, I became aware that this sometimes led to analysis paralysis and delayed decision-making. By recognizing this pattern, I challenged myself to seek input from others and trust their expertise. It not only improved the quality of decisions but also fostered a sense of shared ownership among my team members."EL7

The participants in this study emphasized the transformative effect of the Enneagram on their self-awareness as educational leaders. By understanding their Enneagram type and the associated strengths, weaknesses, and communication styles, they were able to make intentional choices in their leadership approach. This self-awareness enabled them to adapt their leadership styles, improve their decision-making processes, and foster stronger relationships with their team members.

Through the Enneagram, educational leaders gained valuable insights into their leadership styles and the impact they had on others. This self-awareness empowered them to be more effective leaders, enhancing their ability to connect with and support their team members. By leveraging their Enneagram type, educational leaders were able to create a positive and empowering leadership environment that fostered growth, collaboration, and success. The Enneagram served as a powerful tool for self-reflection and self-improvement, ultimately enhancing the educational leadership experience.

Theme 2: Understanding and Valuing Individual Differences

The Enneagram's framework for understanding and appreciating individual differences emerged as a prominent theme. Participants recognized that each Enneagram type had unique motivations, fears, and communication preferences. This understanding fostered empathy and respect among team members. One participant shared, "The Enneagram helped me appreciate the diversity within my team. It made me realize that each person brings their own strengths and perspectives, and it's important to value and leverage those differences." EL3

The participants acknowledged that the Enneagram facilitated more effective communication and collaboration. By recognizing the core motivations and fears of their team members based on their Enneagram types, educational leaders tailored their communication styles to better connect with and motivate their colleagues. As one participant expressed, "Understanding my team members' Enneagram types helped me adjust my communication approach. I learned to provide support in ways that resonate with their unique needs and preferences."EL1

Building upon the theme of understanding and valuing individual differences, participants further discussed the impact of the Enneagram on communication and collaboration within their

teams. They emphasized that the Enneagram provided a framework for appreciating the diverse perspectives and strengths that each team member brought to the table.

By understanding the unique motivations and fears associated with each Enneagram type, educational leaders were able to tailor their communication styles to effectively engage with their team members. They recognized that different individuals may respond differently to communication approaches and that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be as effective.

One participant shared, "As an educational leader, it's crucial to communicate effectively with my team members. The Enneagram helped me gain insights into their communication preferences and needs. For instance, when working with a Type 6 team member, I understood their desire for reassurance and a sense of security. I made sure to provide them with clear expectations, regular feedback, and a supportive environment. This understanding strengthened our working relationship and allowed them to thrive." EL4

The participants also discussed how the Enneagram facilitated collaboration by fostering empathy and respect among team members. By recognizing and appreciating the diverse strengths and perspectives that each Enneagram type brings, educational leaders were able to create an inclusive and harmonious work environment.

One participant remarked, "The Enneagram enabled me to see beyond surface-level differences and appreciate the unique contributions of each team member. By understanding the core motivations and fears of different Enneagram types, I was able to create opportunities for collaboration that played to everyone's strengths. It fostered a sense of belonging and trust within the team." EL5

Furthermore, the participants highlighted the value of leveraging individual differences to achieve collective goals. They recognized that the Enneagram provided a language and framework for discussing these differences openly and constructively.

One participant explained, "The Enneagram facilitated meaningful conversations about our strengths, limitations, and blind spots. It allowed us to have open and honest discussions about how our different perspectives could contribute to our shared objectives. By embracing and valuing these differences, we were able to tap into the collective intelligence and creativity of the team." EL7

The Enneagram served as a catalyst for empathy, fostering a deeper understanding of team members' perspectives and strengths. By leveraging these individual differences, educational leaders were able to tap into the collective potential of their teams, creating an environment that encouraged innovation, collaboration, and ultimately improved student outcomes. The Enneagram's framework provided a valuable tool for educational leaders to navigate and harness the power of diversity within their teams.

Theme 3: Conflict Resolution and Team Cohesion

The Enneagram's insights into motivations and fears played a crucial role in conflict resolution and team cohesion. Participants described how the Enneagram helped them navigate conflicts more effectively by understanding the underlying dynamics and perspectives involved. One participant shared, "The Enneagram provided a framework for understanding the root causes of conflicts within my team. It allowed me to approach conflicts with empathy and find common ground for resolution."

The participants also noted that the Enneagram facilitated team cohesion by fostering a sense of understanding and empathy among team members. By recognizing each team member's Enneagram type, leaders were able to create an environment where differences were valued and conflicts were approached constructively. As one participant stated, "The Enneagram created a shared language within our team. It helped us appreciate each other's unique contributions and work together more effectively towards our common goals." EL6

Expanding on the theme of conflict resolution and team cohesion, participants elaborated on how the Enneagram's insights into motivations and fears proved invaluable in navigating conflicts and fostering a cohesive team environment.

Participants recognized that conflicts within educational leadership teams were often rooted in differing perspectives, motivations, and communication styles. By utilizing the Enneagram as a framework for understanding these underlying dynamics, participants gained a deeper appreciation for the root causes of conflicts. This understanding allowed them to approach conflicts with empathy and seek common ground for resolution.

One participant explained, "The Enneagram was a game-changer in conflict resolution within my team. It helped me recognize that conflicts were not merely surface-level disagreements, but rather manifestations of deeper motivations and fears. Armed with this knowledge, I approached conflicts with a greater sense of understanding and empathy. Instead of focusing on blame or winning the argument, I sought to address the underlying concerns and find mutually beneficial solutions." EL4

Furthermore, the participants emphasized that the Enneagram fostered team cohesion by creating an environment where differences were valued and conflicts were approached constructively. By recognizing and appreciating each team member's Enneagram type, leaders were able to cultivate understanding and empathy among team members.

One participant shared, "The Enneagram served as a shared language within our team. It allowed us to appreciate the unique contributions and perspectives that each team member brought. By understanding the core motivations and fears associated with different Enneagram types, we were able to approach conflicts with a sense of curiosity and respect. It shifted our focus from personal disagreements to finding solutions that aligned with our common goals." EL5

The participants acknowledged that the Enneagram provided a platform for open and constructive discussions about conflicts. By bringing awareness to the diverse perspectives and communication styles present within the team, the Enneagram enabled participants to engage in dialogue that facilitated understanding and collaboration.

One participant reflected, "The Enneagram created a safe space for us to openly discuss conflicts. We were able to share our concerns, listen to one another, and find common ground. It helped us move beyond individual positions and work towards collective solutions. The Enneagram's framework encouraged us to appreciate the strengths and differences that each team member brought, ultimately strengthening our team cohesion." EL6

In summary, the findings of this study highlight the significant role played by the Enneagram in conflict resolution and team cohesion within educational leadership teams. By providing insights into motivations, fears, and communication styles, the Enneagram allowed leaders to approach conflicts with empathy and seek resolutions that addressed the underlying concerns.

The Enneagram also fostered a sense of understanding and appreciation for individual differences, creating an environment where conflicts were approached constructively and where the strengths and contributions of each team member were valued. By utilizing the Enneagram as a tool for conflict resolution and team cohesion, educational leaders were able to build a cohesive and collaborative team that worked together towards common goals, ultimately benefiting the entire educational community.

The findings of this study highlight the significance of the Enneagram in enhancing interpersonal relationships within the context of educational leadership. The participants emphasized the importance of self-awareness and understanding individual differences as key factors in their leadership effectiveness. The Enneagram provided a valuable framework for educational leaders to adapt their leadership styles, foster effective communication, navigate conflicts, and promote team

cohesion. By leveraging the insights of the Enneagram, educational leaders can enhance their interpersonal effectiveness and create positive learning environments within their educational communities.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of the Enneagram on interpersonal relationships within the context of educational leadership. Through in-depth interviews with educational leaders, valuable insights were gained regarding the Enneagram's influence on self-awareness, understanding individual differences, conflict resolution, and team cohesion.

The findings of this study revealed that the Enneagram plays a pivotal role in enhancing educational leadership by promoting self-awareness. Educational leaders acknowledged that understanding their Enneagram type allowed them to identify their strengths and weaknesses more clearly, leading to conscious choices in their leadership approach. By adapting their communication styles and decision-making processes, leaders were able to better connect with and support their team members, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness as leaders.

Moreover, the Enneagram's framework for understanding and valuing individual differences emerged as a significant theme in this study. Participants recognized that each Enneagram type brings unique motivations, fears, and communication preferences. By appreciating these differences, educational leaders fostered empathy, respect, and collaboration among team members. The Enneagram served as a tool for tailoring communication approaches, promoting effective collaboration, and leveraging the diverse strengths and perspectives of team members towards shared goals.

Furthermore, the Enneagram played a crucial role in conflict resolution and team cohesion within educational leadership teams. By understanding the motivations and fears associated with each Enneagram type, leaders approached conflicts with empathy and sought common ground for resolution. This understanding created a safe space for open and constructive discussions, allowing conflicts to be addressed in a way that strengthened relationships and advanced the collective objectives of the team.

In conclusion, the Enneagram serves as a powerful tool for enhancing interpersonal relationships within educational leadership. By cultivating self-awareness, understanding individual differences, and promoting effective conflict resolution and team cohesion, educational leaders can create positive learning environments and facilitate the growth and success of their educational communities.

The implications of this study are significant for educational leaders, as the Enneagram provides a valuable framework for personal and professional development. By leveraging the insights gained through the Enneagram, educational leaders can enhance their leadership effectiveness, build stronger relationships with their team members, and create inclusive and collaborative work environments.

It is recommended that educational institutions and leadership development programs consider integrating the Enneagram as a tool for self-reflection, team-building, and conflict resolution. By incorporating the Enneagram into professional development initiatives, educational leaders can further enhance their interpersonal skills and promote a culture of understanding, empathy, and collaboration.

As with any study, there are limitations to consider. This research focused on the perspectives of educational leaders, and future studies could explore the experiences and perceptions of other stakeholders, such as teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be

conducted to examine the long-term impact of the Enneagram on leadership effectiveness and the sustainability of positive interpersonal relationships within educational settings.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the transformative power of the Enneagram in enhancing educational leadership. By cultivating self-awareness, understanding individual differences, and promoting effective conflict resolution and team cohesion, educational leaders can foster positive relationships, create collaborative environments, and ultimately contribute to the success and growth of their educational communities.

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