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Leadership Practice Differences in Positive Climate Schools

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LEADERSHIP PRACTICE DIFFERENCES IN POSITIVE CLIMATE SCHOOLS

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family. Without the support and love of my mother, Linda, my sisters, Tonya and Elisa, and many supportive friends and colleagues, I could have never accomplished this great task. Thank you for your support, your words of encouragement, your understanding, and faith in me. Your support and love means the world to me and throughout this process, it carried me during the most difficult and challenging moments.

To my mother, who has been a steady force of love, wisdom, and encouragement in my life, thank you for teaching me to believe in myself, my abilities, and in the value of hard work and perseverance. It is because of you, that I believed that this was a task I could actually accomplish. Thank you for the sacrifices you have made and continue to make for our family because your greatest wish was for us to be educated, independent, and self-sufficient contributing members of society. Your unconditional love and unwavering commitment to our family has helped me accomplish many of my goals in life.

I also dedicate this work to my Grandmother, Annie Mae Watkins Chisholm, whose wisdom and words live on in my heart and remind me of why it is so important to work hard, persevere, and rely on a strong sense of faith. It is your example that gives me strength to continue in the face of difficulty. I hope you are proud.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the leadership practice differences in positive climate schools when grouping for school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal. This study utilized Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practice-Self inventories as a tool for measuring perceptions of leadership practice.

The researcher surveyed 47 South Carolina elementary principals to measure leadership practices in schools with documented positive climate. Principals self assessed their leadership practices on the inventories, measuring 30 behaviors on a ten point Likert scale. The 30 behaviors are categorized into five leadership practices: 1) Model the Way, 2) Inspire a Shared Vision, 3) Challenge the Process, 4) Enable Others to Act, 5) Encourage the Heart. Six questions address each of the five leadership practices (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Results were grouped by school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal and then analyzed to find leadership practice differences.

Based on the findings of this study, positive climate is not a factor in leadership behavior because there were few differences found in leadership practices among study participants when grouped for school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MTW ....Model the Way

ISV.. Inspire a Shared Vision

CP ....Challenge the Process

EO.. Enable Others to Act

ETH ....Encourage the Heart

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, all students must demonstrate yearly academic progress on standardized assessments and schools must rise to the task of making this progress a reality (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). While some schools focus their improvement efforts solely on curriculum or programs, a school's climate is another potential focal point through which to improve student achievement. School climate consists of shared perceptions about the characteristics of an organization and its members. School climate serves as the filter through which students establish expectations and interpret events that happen at school. The climate may have conditions that enhance satisfaction and accomplishment and other conditions that impede satisfaction and discourage accomplishment. If the goal is to ensure schools teach all students, regardless of their backgrounds or financial circumstances, an analysis of the climate in schools that have accomplished this task is warranted (Barth, 1990). Because of its potential to make a difference in the effectiveness of schools many principals are looking for ways to shape school climate as a means of enhancing school improvement.

Schools often choose to focus on climate because studies have shown that school climate often positively relates with student performance (Tschannen-Moran, Parish, &

DiPaola, 2006). School climate is a broad term with varying definitions. Focusing on key components or dimensions of school climate is a more manageable task. According to Fan, et al. (2011), specific "aspects of school climate capture the safety, discipline, fairness, warmth, and support of both the social and physical environment of schools, and play a central role in improving schools' effectiveness and assisting students' social and academic success" (p.632-633). Recent research has acknowledged the complexity of school climate and advocated that this construct is multi-dimensional (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997; Verkuyten & Thus, 2002). Peterson and Deal (1998) note the climate of a school as a key factor in productivity and success. As a result of the pressure from legislation such as No Child Left Behind, and other school reform mandates that place greater emphasis on accountability, many schools have become more focused on factors that contribute to student achievement. According to Hargreaves and Fink (2003), "Educational change that enhances deep learning among students is particularly problematic, and sustaining such change over time has presented several challenges for educational reformers" (p.693). In response to state and national mandates, almost every school is engaged in some type of reform (Strahan, 2003). Schools have faced immense pressure to produce high results regardless of a student's socio-economic status, cognitive ability, ethnicity, or cultural differences. It is the expectation of many federal mandates, policies, and legislation that public schools provide an educational environment that is conducive to all students learning at high levels. Researchers also note, however, that the enduring nature of climate can make establishing a positive climate difficult to implement and sustain (Hoy & Hannum, 1997).

Good climate seldom develops by chance or occurs naturally (Gardin, 2003). Stover (2005) argued that one cannot separate leadership, instruction, and climate and concluded that climate was probably the best predictor of high achievement in a school, even when considering socio-economic status. Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1994) suggested that school restructuring efforts have given little attention to the need to improve the culture, climate, and interpersonal relationships in school. According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2000), the effect of school climate on student achievement is relatively unstudied. School climate remains a missing component in the school improvement focus (Elmore, 2004).

Studying differences contributing factors to climate can bring new insights. Hoy and Miskel (2001) noted that the climate of an organization is one of the key elements that promotes or inhibits performance. Peterson and Deal (2002) recommend that administrators proactively shape climate by reinforcing positive features and work to change negative features. The school principal must adopt appropriate leadership skills and leadership behaviors to promote the improvement of school climate and culture (Peterson & Deal, 2002). Marzanno et al. (2005) found leadership responsibilities and behaviors of principals referred to as change agents to be related to improved climate and culture and ultimately to improved student outcomes in school. Understanding the perceptions of all stakeholders in a school, students, teachers, and parents, is essential to the maintenance and sustainability of school climate and its' use as an intervention strategy for school improvement.

Great leaders shape the climate or culture of an organization in a manner that it facilitates success and inspires others to do extraordinary things by turning challenges

into opportunities (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). Sun (2004) found that supportive and encouraging principals who were also intellectually stimulating and living examples of excellence built better working relationships and environments. Leaders who demonstrated behaviors of a more transformational nature resulted in a more positive morale among stakeholders (Sun, 2004). To create a climate of mutual respect, commitment, collaboration, and trust, leaders behaved in a particular manner. Leaders whose organizations reported positive climate and teacher morale enabled teachers to participate in shared decision making, feel supported, and created a collaborative and collegial environment (Korkmaz, 2007). It is possible that leadership behavior may be a key factor in creating a positive work environment and that leaders may alter their behavior or leadership practices to create a more positive climate.

Leithwood et al. (2004) states leadership is "second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p.17). Sergiovanni (1992) states that truly effective schools are those with a shared covenant clearly articulating the school's core values and providing a standard by which actions will be judged. Leaders must not only take the lead in developing the covenant, but also support and enforce it. Sergiovanni (1992), in his book, Moral Leadership, shows how creating a leadership practice with a moral dimension built around purpose, values, and beliefs can transform a school from an organization to a community and inspire the kinds of commitment, devotion, and service that can make schools successful. Leaders can, by deploying their talents, choose purposes and visions that are based on the key values of the workforce and create the social architecture that supports them. Leadership can move followers to higher degrees of consciousness and self-actualization.

Throughout history, research studies have shown that leadership style makes a difference. According to Beatty and Buzzotta (2010), a study by Psychological Associates revealed that one of the biggest factors in determining executive success is leadership style. The assumption that the principal is one of the most influential persons in the school warrants the examination of leadership practices. Principals need to understand leadership practices and be skillful in executing leadership behaviors to achieve desired results.

As noted above, leadership behaviors make a difference and school leaders have a primary responsibility in strategically utilizing their behavior as a leader to shape the climate of their schools. According to Norton (2002), leadership style is important to organizational climate and helps to shape members of the organization. What has not been thoroughly researched is the strength or the nature of the linkage between leader behaviors and positive school climate. In this study, this understudied connection will be examined.

Design

The researcher will explore the extent to which similarities and differences exist between leadership practices and school climate, when controlling for school size, principal gender, and poverty index. School climate is a set of characteristics that capture the distinctive tone or atmosphere of a school (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). In this study, school climate will refer to individual stakeholder's perceptions (students, teachers, and parents) of the school environment as they have experienced it for themselves and as they observed it in other fellow students or adults in the school.

In South Carolina a database identifying positive climate organizations exists. For each of the climate respondent categories, schools in this study exhibited a percentage of no less than 70% satisfaction rates for each climate indicator according to the 2011 Elementary School Fact File. These schools also met the criteria to earn a Palmetto Silver or Gold award for student performance on the 2011 Palmetto Assessment of State Standards. Schools that received Palmetto Gold and Silver recognition also had positive climate indicators for each respondent category according to the 2011 Elementary School Fact File. The South Carolina Department of Education provides Annual School Report Card data for each public elementary school in the state. By utilizing the 2011 South Carolina Department of Education Annual School Report Card data. For each of the climate respondent categories, schools in this study exhibited a percentage of no less than 70% satisfaction rates for each climate indicator according to the 2011 Elementary School Fact File.

The following variables were identified in the 2011 Elementary School Performance Fact File:

1. Poverty Index

2. School Size or Average Daily Membership

3. Teachers returning from previous year

4. Principal/director's number of years at the school

5. Percentage of teachers satisfied with the learning environment

6. Percentage of students satisfied with the learning environment

7. Percentage of parents satisfied with the learning environment

8. Percentage of teachers satisfied with the social and physical environment

9. Percentage of students satisfied with the social and physical environment

10. Percentage of parents satisfied with the social and physical environment

11. Percentage of teachers satisfied with home-school relations

12. Percentage of students satisfied with home-school relations

13. Percentage of parents satisfied with home-school relations

Gettys' (2003) examined the effect of school size on school climate in South Carolina public middle schools using School Report Card Data from 2001. She found a negative correlation between school size and student satisfaction of the climate indicators when controlling for percentage of students with disabilities other than speech and socio-economic status. White (2005) examined the relationship between school climate and school size using 2001 School Report Card Data and found no correlation between school climate and school size. In addition, a 2011 South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (S.C. E.O.C.) Education Improvement Act (E.I.A.) report, cites previous research completed by the University of South Carolina Educational Policy Center which indicates schools with a more positive school climate have better outcome measures on state standardized testing.

While the relationship between school size, leadership, school climate, and achievement has been explored in previous research, what has not been examined is how

leadership practices of the principal influence school climate. In this study principals in

high climate schools are surveyed to determine their most frequently practiced leadership

behaviors based on how they perceive themselves. These schools also met the criteria to

earn a Palmetto Silver or Gold award for student performance on the 2011 Palmetto

Assessment of State Standards.

The study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between small enrollment

schools and large enrollment schools in high climate elementary schools?

2. What are the self- perceived leadership practice differences between low poverty index

schools and high poverty index schools in high climate elementary schools?

3. What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between male and female

administrators in high climate elementary schools?

Importance of Leader Behavior

Researchers have investigated the impact of behaviors and leadership traits, but

have not adequately described the attributes that influence leadership behaviors (Zaccaro,

2007). Increased accountability demands and greater awareness of effective leadership

practices grew the need to differentiate between effective and non-effective leadership

skills. Kelley, Thornton, & Daughtery (2005) state that leaders must understand the

processes necessary to create conditions for improvement. They further state, "skilled

leaders correctly envision future needs and empower others implement that vision"

(p.17). Effective leadership is a necessity in the current accountability era, and it has

proven to be complex. One cannot determine effective leadership by a single set of skills, traits, or behaviors. Effective leadership behaviors influence student achievement, staff, morale, and school climate (Interstate School Licensure Consortium, 1996; Marsh, 1997; Reeves, 2006). According to Hoer (2005), "Leadership is not just about their vision, intellect, and skills. Effective leadership is characterized by the leader's ability to make others better, to help them grow, to support and challenge and learn from and with them" (p.191).

Building principals must be able to assess and evaluate the impact and perceptions of their leadership (Kelley, Thornton, & Daughtery, 2005). This suggests that leaders should review their self-perceptions of leadership practices and consider the affect they have on the organization. Research (Donohue, R. & Stevenson, L., 2006; Dyer & Carothers, 2000; Goleman, 1995) indicates that effective leaders must possess higher emotional intelligence, be current on effective leadership behaviors that are conducive to varying environments, and understand themselves through high self-awareness. Principals must be able to assess their leadership behaviors based on a combination of cognitive and emotional intelligence to enhance their capacity for increased effectiveness. Fullan (2002) reveals a major factor in school effectiveness, school improvement, and academic achievement as the principal's ability to evaluate and understand the circumstances necessary for a healthy school climate through positive change. Leadership is developed when a leader is able to self-analyze and adjusts his or her leadership practices and behaviors based on accurate self-perceptions.

Norton (2002) defines leadership as the process by which direction of an organization and influences of individuals are used to accomplish organizational goals.

The leader's ability to create a collaborative group in which individuals develop a sense of mutual interdependence and achieve above their personal means is what defines leadership. Reeves (2004) emphasized that internal leadership development is essential to the leader and the organization functioning effectively with a uniform sense of purpose. Norton (2002) acknowledges that the principal's influence is more direct, hopefully creating a more favorable climate and acting often in a more supportive capacity rather than supervisory or managerial role. In order for principals to be effective, leaders must focus on strengthening the roles of others such as teachers and community leaders and include them in decision making to gain a commitment from stakeholders. Leadership is not an individual, heroic act, but a relationship that can be measured from an intrapersonal perspective as well as an interpersonal perspective.

The Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory can serve such purposes. Effective school leaders understand the importance of enhancing their strengths as well improving their weaknesses and how to use both as tools for greater effectiveness. If a leader is willing to be honest regarding his or her leadership practices, their potential for effectiveness may increase. Exemplary leadership behavior is based on honesty, forward vision, inspiration, competence, and credibility (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Effective leaders willingly assess themselves and use the results to improve their success. In the Leadership Challenge Kouzes and Posner (2007), list five leadership practices that make leaders successful: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.

1) Model the Way: means leaders work to exemplify the behaviors they wish for members of the organization to emulate. The leaders serves as the example for

others in the organization and gains trust, commitment, and credibility based on observed actions.

2) Inspire a Shared Vision: means leaders motivate members of the organization by developing a common vision and goals for the organization that has been shaped and defined by stakeholders. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), "they are able to develop an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good" (p.105).

3) Challenge the Process: means leaders search for innovative and experimental ways to solve problems. They are not afraid to take risk and view such challenges as an opportunity for growth when and if mistakes are made. Leaders who challenge the process encourage members of the organization to take risks as well.

4) Enabling Others to Act: means leaders make others feel competent, committed, and empowered. Members of the organization take ownership in decisions being made and feel they are empowered to take action on behalf of the organization due to an atmosphere of teamwork and collaboration

5) Encouraging the Heart: means leaders are able to help others feel passionate about their jobs and the importance of their work. Leaders who exemplify this practice show appreciation for the community, care about others, and encourage the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2007)

Significance

Covey (2004) indicated, "human beings are not things needing to be motivated and controlled; they are four dimensional – body, mind, heart, and spirit" (p. 21).

Exemplary leaders take care of every aspect of the organization's employees' mind, body, and spirit (Covey, 2004). Some scholars have argued that the climate of a school is the most important factor in initiating and sustaining change efforts (Fox et al., 1973; Gonder & Hymes, 1994). While an individual school can develop a climate independent of the larger organization, changes in school climate at the district level can affect school climate at the building level in either a positive or an adverse manner (Tableman & Herron, p.1). School climate is a construct that is inclusive of interactions involving those among stakeholders, including faculty, between faculty and students, among students, and between school and home (Barnett & McCormick, 2004). School climate may be closely related to the quality and consistency of interpersonal relations in the school community that influences the cognitive, social and psychological development of children. Creating a positive school climate is often a primary objective of school reform efforts (Roach & Kratochwill, 2004). Many scholars have argued that the climate of a school is the most important factor in initiating and sustaining change efforts (Fox, et al., 1973; Gonder & Hynes, 1994).

Although the leader's preferred style and decisions closely related to his or her personality and morale value system, he or she may benefit from the use of multiple styles depending on the situation at hand (Howard, 2005). Studying the leadership differences in high climate schools may provide insight into how the behavior and practices of leaders vary and contribute to the positive climate of the school. In effective and positive school climates of the 21st century, the principal's role has shifted from manager to that of instructional leader who is also responsible for the culture and climate of the organization. Additional research on the role of the school leader and the behaviors

that make for a successful organization and contribute to a positive climate may benefit the education profession. Collins (2001) found that leaders demonstrated the use of extremely strategic maneuvers during the move to excellence. In other words, if schools improved, effective leadership was at the forefront of the change. This study will add to a growing body of research about the importance of behaviors and practices of the school leader and how those leadership practices impact positive climate.

Conceptual Framework

Many theories of organizational climate are available for application to this research on leadership differences in high climate schools. Fullan (2002) reveals a major factor in school effectiveness, school improvement, and academic achievement is the principal's ability to evaluate and understand the circumstances and practices necessary for a healthy school climate through positive change. Bandura's social cognitive theory is applicable to this study. Social cognitive theory provides a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. The theory identifies human behavior as an interaction of personal factors, behaviors, and the environment (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986). In the model, (see Fig. 1.1), the interaction between the person and behavior involves the influences of a person's thoughts and actions. The interaction between the person and the environment involves human beliefs and cognitive competencies that are developed and modified by social influences and structures within the environment. The interaction between the environment and behavior, involves a person's behavior determining their environment and in turn, that environment modifies their behavior.

BEHAVIOR

Figure 1.1 Model of the relations between the three classes of determinants in Bandura's (1986) conception of triadic reciprocality

In this model, behavior, personal factors, and environmental influences all operate as interacting factors that influence each other bi-directionally. This does not mean that each source of influence is equal in strength or occurs at the same time. What people think, believe, and feel, affect how they behave (Bandura, 1986; Bower, 1975; Neisser, 1976). In this model, the environment has the potential to influence behavior and performance. Social cognitive theory proposes that a triadic reciprocal causation among cognitive factors, environmental factors, and human behavior exists. Behavior is affected by both cognitive factors and environmental factors (Wood and Bandura, 1989). Cognitive factors refer to the personal cognition, affect, and biological events. Environmental factors refer to the social and physical environments that can affect a person's behavior. The environment influences an individual's behavior through his or her cognitive capabilities. Because of the interaction between behavior, personal factors, and the school environment, leadership practices are likely to influence the climate of the school. The environment, according to Anderson (1982), is a powerful influence on the perceptions and, therefore, behaviors of individuals.

The implications, based on all of the aforementioned theories, for school leaders is that the social environment of schools or school climate, should be carefully evaluated to identify any barriers to student learning. Analyzing the leadership practice differences in high climate schools will help determine the best practices that promote the effective development of children, academic achievement, and promote a positive and healthy school climate. The aforementioned theories are applicable to the research problem and questions explored to determine the extent to which leadership practices are similar and different in high climate schools.

Delimitations

This study is limited to South Carolina public elementary schools. It will only include elementary schools with documented positive climate. Other elementary schools in South Carolina will not be included. It will not include middle schools or high schools. Private or parochial schools will not be included in this study. The study is limited to the data for elementary schools with documented positive climate and to the responses and individual perceptions of school principals. The results are not to be used to assume similar relationships in middle and high schools, nor in other geographic areas. This study will be limited to the results of the school climate survey, as provided by South Carolina State Department of Education on the annual school report card, and the principal's perception of self-assessed leadership practices.

Definition of Terms

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Bandura (1986) developed and defined the social cognitive theory, which proposes that people are not driven by inner forces or

automatically shaped and controlled by external stimuli. Rather, human functioning is explained in terms of a model of triadic reciprocal determinism. In this model, behavior, cognitive and other personal factors and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other.

Climate: refers to the atmosphere of school and is determined by physical, sociological, and emotional elements of the culture.

Culture: is the underlying beliefs and assumptions the organization has about the world, their relationships with others, and their role in the world. It is represented through traditions, symbols, rules, norms and a shared consensus..

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): Reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to incorporate the principals and strategies proposed by President George W. Bush. These included increased accountability for States, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for States and local educational agencies in the use of Federal education dollars; and as stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our younger children (USDE)

Perceptions of the principals: the principals' attitudes toward leadership practices as measured by the LPI-Self

Seven Correlates of Highly Effective Schools: The only set of research-based characteristics of a school's climate associated with improved, better student learning. These seven correlates are safe and orderly environments, climates of high expectations for successful instructional leadership, monitoring of student progress, a clear and

focused missions, opportunities to learn, time on task, and good home-school relations (Edmonds, 1979; Lezottte, 1991, 1992, 2001).

Palmetto Gold & Silver Schools: South Carolina's education oversight committee established the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to give recognition to schools that attain high levels of absolute performance and schools that attain high rates of growth. The recognition program was amended in 2008 to include awards for schools that close the gaps in achievement between historically lower- and higher-achieving demographic groups of students as an additional criterion to overall school performance for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program. The Accountability Division of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) establishes the specific criteria used to identify schools to be recognized. The State Department of Education applies the criteria to determine schools to be recognized.

Organization of Dissertation

This study includes five chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction of issues related to climate and leader behavior, including the problem, significance, design, delimitations, and summary related to this study. Chapter two is a review of literature concerning the history of leadership practices, school climate, effective leadership practices, leadership and school climate. This organizational structure will provide a context for the study. Chapter 3 will provide details regarding the methodology implementation and describe the research methodology used in the study. Chapter 4 will provide an analysis of the literature and all data collected in response to the research questions. Chapter 5 will conclude the study and present a summary of the conclusions drawn based on data provided in chapter four.

Summary

School climate includes the total environmental quality within a given school building; it is a broad construct defined by a composite of variables from four dimensions**:** ecology, milieu, social system, and culture (Anderson, 1982; Fisher, 2003; Hoy & Miskel, 1996). Ecology, involves physical aspects of climate, such as the building of an organization. Milieu applies to the presence of individuals who all share commonalities, such as social class. Social system is described as a pattern of relationships that exist between individuals or groups or both. Many scholars recognize positive school climate as a key element of successful schools and a strong predictor of the academic success of students (Van Horn, 2003). Researchers have found that the experience of the teachers working in a school with a positive climate then benefits the learning and success of their students (Van Horn, 2003).

Research has revealed that the principal leadership influences the climate of a school and, in turn, the achievement of its students (Norton, 2002). According to Fullan, (2002) a principal's success stems from his or her values, character and leadership style, creating a climate where everyone is working toward the same goals. According to Roland Barth, (2002) a successful school leader today is "one who discovers what is needed and has the courage and resourcefulness to provide conditions within the school that is hospitable to human learning"(p.32).

The researcher reviewed the elements of school climate and examined the perspectives of principals regarding their leadership practices. The researcher examined the 2011 annual climate survey results of South Carolina Palmetto Silver and Gold

elementary schools that were recognized for closing the achievement gap as published on their annual South Carolina school report card. Climate survey respondents include 5th grade students, parents, and teachers. Climate survey indicators include statements that fit into one of the four dimensions of climate as defined by Anderson (1982): ecology, milieu, social system, and culture. The researcher seeks to explore the extent to which similarities and differences exists between leadership practices in high climate schools when controlling for school size, principal gender, and poverty index.

Strong leadership, a climate of expectation, and an orderly but not rigid, atmosphere (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte, 1991) characterize school effectiveness. Principals have the opportunity to create a positive school climate. Information obtained through school climate scales allows principals to assess the status of perceptions and opinions of stakeholders in the school (Marshall, 2003). When school leaders are able to accurately assess their own leadership behaviors and determine how their leadership practices affect the climate of their school, the potential for school improvement is greater.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective schools research also recognized the importance of quality leadership by consistently identifying strong instructional leadership as instrumental in creating a positive school climate. Furthermore, studies reveal that effective schools have consistently identified strong instructional leadership by the principal as a correlate of high-achieving schools (Edmonds, 1979). A *Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983) specifically recommended leadership as a means for school improvement. With the Federal Government's passage of the *NCLB* in 2001, effective leadership once again has become an important focus of public schools as they work to improve the academic achievement of all students.

History of Leadership Practices

According to a U.S. Senate report (1972):

> In many ways, the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. (p.305)

Leadership has been a significant topic of interest since the early 20th century. Leadership practices have been examined from many points of view in an effort to determine the

uniqueness of characteristics that make an effective leader. Initial leadership research beginning in the 1940's led people to believe that leaders were born, not made and had an innate combination of traits and abilities (Bass,1990; Stogdill, 1948). Stogdill (1948) analyzed 124 trait studies of leadership from 1904 to 1947 and found personal factors associated with leadership. These factors were achievement, capacity, participation, responsibility, and status. According to Hoy and Miskel (2001), Stogdill concluded that the trait approach alone had produced insignificant results and therefore added a sixth factor, situational, associated with leadership. As a result, attempts to find common characteristics of leadership were deemed unsuccessful. According to Bass (1990), the theory that leaders are simply born to lead was not accepted. As cited in Hoy and Miskell (2001), personality traits were thought to have a correlation with the success of a leader included birth order, intelligence, and wealth and later focused on leader identification based on physical, emotional, and intellectual characteristics.

Fiedler (1967) developed the first major theory for specific contingency relationships in the study of leadership. Fiedler's Contingency Model (1967) predicted that the effectiveness of leaders depends on both the qualities of the leader and how positive the situation may be. In an effort to determine leadership style, Fielder (1967) used the "Least Preferred Co-Worker" scale to determine the worst characteristics of workers. People who scored the highest on the scale were expected to be able to work with difficult people (Fielder, 1967). Fiedler (1967), differentiating between leadership styles and behaviors, concluded that leadership styles indicate leaders' motivational system and leadership behaviors are leaders' specific actions.

House's (1971) Path-Goal Theory included the interaction of leadership behaviors with situational characteristics in determining leadership effectiveness. House identified four leadership behaviors: directive, achievement-oriented supportive, and participative, and two situational variables (subordinates' personal characteristics and environmental demands such as the organization's rules and procedures) that most strongly contributed to leaders' effectiveness. Based on a synthesis of more than 75 research studies,

Persell and Cookson (1982) have identified nine recurrent behaviors that effective principals display. These behaviors are (a) effective time management, (b) creation of a climate of high expectations, (c) evaluation of results, (d) forceful and dynamic leadership skills, (e) effective consultation with others, (f) creation of order and discipline, (g) wise use of resources, (h) demonstrated commitment to academic goals, and (i) functioning as an instructional leader.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2000) has identified six characteristics of instructional leadership to help principals reflect on and improve their practice. These characteristics include: (1) lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the center, (2) set high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students and adults, (3) demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed upon results, (4) create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals, (5) use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement, and (6) actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2000).

As leadership theories evolved over time, Bennis and Nanus (1985) declared the following to be falsehoods: 1) leadership is a rare skill, 2) leaders are not born or made, 3) leaders are charismatic, and 4) leadership exists only at the top of an organization. Kouzes and Posner (2007) also agree that leaders are not born but are a product of situations and development of skills. Cotton (2003), in *Principals and Student Achievement: What the Research Says*, identified 26 specific traits and behaviors of principals that positively influence student achievement. Based on a review of 81 key research articles from the last 20 years, she explained how certain practices could affect student achievement. Some of these practices include communication and interaction with staff and community, classroom observation and feedback to teachers, recognition of student and staff achievement, dedication to a safe and orderly school environment, support of professional development of staff, staff empowerment, rituals and ceremonies, and role modeling.

According to Linda Darling-Hammond (2007), a professor at Stanford University, researchers identified the following behaviors that describe effective leadership: "1. Set direction, by developing a consensus around vision, goals, and direction; 2. Help individual teachers, through support, modeling, and supervision, and develop collective teacher capacity, through collaborative planning and professional development that creates shared norms of practice; 3. Redesign the organization to enable this learning and collaboration among staff (and personalization/support for students), as well as to engage families and community; and 4. Manage the organization by strategically allocating resources and support" (p. 19). According to Petrie, Lindauer, and Tountasakis (2000), "good leaders in any field aren't born, but are developed over time through hundreds,

even thousands, of experiences dating from early childhood" (p. 355). The complexity of effective leadership supports a focus on research to examine these behaviors and determine if these dimensions are inherent, or learned, and how they can best be measured.

School leaders play a significant role in modeling the interactions and pro-social behaviors that are expected of other members in the school community. Leaders can promote positive, safe learning environments by focusing on exercising the necessary leadership practices to create a positive climate, which may have conditions that enhance satisfaction and accomplishment of students, parents, and staff. Effective school leaders take the time to examine their experiences to develop their leadership practices so that they may lead others in a more effective manner.

School Climate

The 185 elementary schools in this study, with documented positive climate, earned the Palmetto Gold or Silver award for general student performance and/or closing the achievement gap on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards during the 2011-2012 testing window. Effective schools research also recognized the importance of quality leadership by consistently identifying strong instructional leadership as instrumental in creating a positive school climate. Furthermore, studies reveal that effective schools have consistently identified strong instructional leadership by the principal as a correlate of high-achieving schools (Edmonds, 1979). Many researchers have viewed school climate as a global construct encompassing studies of school environment, learning environment, learning climate, sense of community, leadership,

academic climate, and social climate (Carter, 2000; DuFour, 2000; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Edmonds, 1979; Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Klinger, 2000; Lezotte, 1991, 1992, 2001). School climate is a reflection of the positive or negative feelings regarding the school environment, and it may affect a variety of learning outcomes directly or indirectly (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Some scholars describe school climate as the feeling that students and staff have about the school environment over a period of time (DuFour, 2000; Fullan, 1999).

Some scholars define school climate as a collective perspective of the school's atmosphere. Roney, Coleman, and Schlichting (2007) defined school climate as "the relatively stable property of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behaviors, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior in schools" (p.292). Freiberg and Stein (1999) describe climate as "the heart and soul of a school". The pervasive quality of a school environment experienced by students and staff, which affects their behaviors may also describe school climate (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). The collective experiences of students, parents, and teachers, and the ways in which stakeholders internalize their experiences often contribute to a school's climate.

Other scholars define school climate as an issue of quality. The character and quality of life within a school that is shaped by its organizational structure, physical environment, instructional practices, interpersonal relationships, and over arching values, objectives, and customs may define a school's climate (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral, 2009). The climate of a school may be described as "the quality and character of school life-reflecting norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures" (Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie,

1997, p.322). The climate of a school involves a "composite of norms, expectations, and beliefs which characterize the school social system as perceived by members of the social system" (Brookover et al., 1979). A school's climate refers to teachers' perceptions of their overall work environment, the quality of relationships within the school, and how those relationships affect staff members' experiences (Hoy, 1990).

School climate has also been defined as an interaction of multiple factors in the total school environment. School climate affects the quality of the total school environment, which then affects the school community as a whole (Hoy & Hannum, 1997). Kowalski and Reitzug (1993, as cited in Dietrich & Bailey, 1996) define "climate as a comprehensive structure made up of culture, physical plant, organizational structure, social relationships, and individual behaviors" (p. 5). Continuous school improvement requires continuous information about the learner and the learning environment (Frieberg & Stein, 1999). In organizations, the quality of the internal environment as experienced by organizational members is generally referred to as organizational climate (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). School climate is a construct that is inclusive of interactions involving those among stakeholders including faculty, between faculty and students, among students, and between school and home (Barnett and McCormick, 2004).

A school's climate plays a direct and critical role in determining what the school is and what it might become (Fisher, 2003). Lezotte (1980) felt that staff morale, achievement, and the perceptions of external observers were the key to school climate. Rossow (1990) saw school climate as the overall character of the school. In other words, how teachers feel about the school and whether they embrace both physical and social

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elements help to determine the school climate and leaders can perform in a manner consistent with their beliefs.

Leadership Theory

Researchers have made multiple attempts to quantify and establish the relationship between dimensions of leadership, school climate, and student learning (Peterson & Deal, 1998). The goal of most school climate research has been to determine leadership strategies that will assist administrators in facilitating climate change (Hoy, et al., 1991). Early research by Brookover (1979) & Edmonds (1979) found that correlates of effective schools include strong leadership, a climate of expectation, and an orderly but not rigid atmosphere, and effective communication. Adequate principal leadership in schools is linked to improved school climate. School climate can be difficult to change and assess, but a review of leadership theory and an assessment of leadership practices can prove to be meaningful tools to achieve a positive climate.

Transformational leadership was a theoretical concept developed by Burns (1978). Transformational leadership involves building competence in others, working as a team, and appreciating all followers (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Sosik and Dionne (1997) note that individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence characterize the behaviors of transformational leaders. Individual consideration is the leader's ability to establish trust and gain respect from subordinates by being attentive to their needs. Intellectual stimulation refers to the leader's ability to challenge members of the organization to challenge traditional ways of solving problem through the encouragement of innovative thinking. Inspirational motivation refers to the

leaders ability to communicate a shared vision and gain commitment of making the vision a reality from members of the organization. Idealized influence refers to the leader's ability to model "behavior through exemplary personal achievements, character, and behavior" (Bass, 1990, p.218). These four components are often referred to as the four I's of transformational leadership. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) further researched transformational leadership and found six key characteristics of this style of leadership: 1) building school vision and goals, 2) providing intellectual stimulation, 3) offering individualized support, 4) Symbolizing professional practices and values, 5) demonstrating high performance expectation, 6) developing structures to foster participation in schools (p.114). According to Treslan (2006), leadership is a "reciprocal influence relationship between leaders and the led" (p.247). Effective school principals are able to communicate a shared and compelling vision, build collegial relationships that increase collaboration, include staff members in decision making, and act as models to demonstrate the behaviors they desire to see in members of the organization. Principals who are transformational leaders encourage subordinates to solve problems creatively and inspire staff members

Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee (2004) have developed a theory of leadership that consists of four key dimensions: 1) self-awareness, 2) social awareness, 3) self-management, and 4) relationship management. Self-awareness refers to the leader's ability to remain aware of their feelings and how their feelings affect their work. Leaders who possess strong self-awareness ability are able to accurately assess their own strengths and weaknesses, welcome constructive criticism, seek feedback and request help, and work to improve their weaknesses and enhance their strengths. Self-

management refers to the leader's ability to control emotions and work toward positive results. Leaders who self manage well are open regarding their actions and admit their weakness while holding themselves and others to high standards. Principals who self manage well are focused on continuous improvement and are self-motivated. Relationship management refers to the leader's ability to effectively engage, inspire, influence, and develop others while being a change catalyst and managing conflict. Principals who are skilled in relationship management are able to encourage and model collaborative work needed to accomplish a common goal. Social awareness refers to the leader's ability to attend to the emotional needs of others via empathy. Principals who exhibit strengths in social awareness understand how to utilize social skills to influence others and achieve goals of the organization without relying on positional power.

"The behaviors of the building level principals are linked to the climate of school building. Effective leadership is critical" (Daughtery, Kelley, & Thornton, 2005, p.19). Kelley et al. (2005) reported that principals can impact school climate in positive ways when they "develop feelings of trust, open communication, collegiality, and promote effective feedback" (p.5). Positive school climate has become part of the school reform rhetoric and is commonly advocated by practitioners as means for improving student achievement (Hoy et al., 1991). Researchers have related principal behaviors to school climate (Bulach, Booth, & Pickett, 1998; Peterson, 1998). The climate of a school can be influenced by the actions and behaviors of the building principal (Sergiovanni & Staratt, 1998).

Leadership and School Climate

Leadership behaviors, school climate, and student achievement are all interrelated (Gardin, 2003). In an era of school reform, principals must be able to handle the task of improving schools while affecting and sustaining high-levels of student achievement. The school principal must create a positive school climate conducive to high levels of student learning, transforming the school's environment by creating a sense of teamwork among parents, teachers, and community members (Barth, 2002; Farmer, Slater, & Wright, 1998). The climate of a school has a major impact on the organizational behavior within the school and the administrator can have considerable influence on the development of the climate in school (Comer, 2001; DuFour and Eaker, 1998, Hallinger and Heck, 1998; Levine, 1991; Schaps, 2003; Schmoker, 1999). The ability of the principal to establish a climate that is conducive to learning for students, teachers, and themselves is paramount to student academic achievement (DuFour, 2000; Fullan, 1999).

Two of the most essential and consistently recognized components of an effective school are the existence of a strong instructional leader and a positive school climate (Whitaker, 2002). Effective schools have effective leaders who develop and maintain a positive school climate focused on student achievement (Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Keefe and Kelley, 1990; Tableman and Herron, 2004). Stover (2005) argued that the climate of an organization cannot be analyzed without consideration being given to the leadership of the organization. According to Perry et al., (2005), the behaviors of the manager of an organization are the most important determinant of organizational climate.

Gardin (2003) maintained that the principal is the person in the school possessing the influence necessary to alter existing behavior patterns. Hoerr (2006) and Nelson (1988) identified the principal's ability to foster a positive climate as a vital component of quality schools. Mendel, Watson, and MacGregor (2002) examined principals' leadership styles and school climate in 34 elementary schools, surveying 169 teachers. They examined three leadership styles: directive, nondirective, and collaborative. They found that the collaborative leadership style correlated with positive school climate. When the school climate reflects positive student development, positive academic outcomes result. As Comer (2004) states, "when we create conditions that support the development of children, they will learn" (p.22).

Much of the research has been inconclusive regarding the most successful leadership style for improving school climate. Other researchers found that any leadership style could result in a positive school climate depending on the maturity level of the staff (Bulach, Lunenburg and McCallon (1995). This is a significant result as it reveals a need for school leaders to identify the needs of the staff and adjust their leadership style accordingly. More specifically, Kelley, Thornton, and Daugherty (2005) stated that principals must deal with the various skills and abilities of their staff in a wide range of situations and complex environments. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) examined the factors of preferred style of leadership, maturity of followers, expectations of followers and task at hand in designing the Situational Leadership Model that established four styles of leadership. These are autocratic (telling), democratic (selling), social and encouraging (participating), and laissez-faire (delegating). Leaders who use the 'situational' approach must choose the appropriate response based on the situation and

circumstances of an event in the school. Burns (1978) introduced the concept of transformational leadership, describing it as not a set of specific behaviors but rather a process by which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. Bass (1985) asserts that these leaders motivate followers by appealing to strong emotions regardless of the ultimate effects on the followers and do not necessarily attend to positive moral values. Transformational leadership goes beyond individual needs, focusing on a common purpose, addressing intrinsic rewards and higher psychological needs such as self- actualization, and developing commitment with and in the followers.

Despite the lack of consistency in the literature regarding leadership styles, principals require a broad range of skills and knowledge to both assess the staff needs and adjust leadership accordingly. Leadership plays an important and critical role in the establishment and sustainability of school climate. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) note: "organizations need leaders who can impart a persuasive and durable sense of purpose and direction deeply rooted in values and the human spirit. Leaders must be deeply reflective, actively thoughtful, and dramatically explicit about core values and beliefs. Success requires artistry, skill and the ability to see organizations as organic forms in which needs, roles, power and symbols must be integrated to provide direction and shape behavior" (p.8). Generating a positive school climate in turn leads to high levels of employee engagement (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). According to Gordon (2006), there is a significant positive relationship between teacher engagement and student performance. The behaviors and actions of the principal can shape school climate (Kelley et al., 2005; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998). "Studies on school effectiveness, school

climate, and student achievement reveal one commonality, the fact that good happenings in schools depend to a great extent on the quality of school leadership" (Norton, 2002, p. 2).

Summary

Defining effective leadership practices can be difficult, but necessary action for school improvement. The difficulty is determining which leadership practices influence student achievement and school climate, and which ones do not. Principals can only improve their schools by tailoring their behaviors and practices to meet the needs of students. Increased self-awareness of leadership practices may allow a principal to be more deliberate in his or her practices, thus having a greater ability to influence the success and climate of the school. The Institute for Educational Leadership (2001) defined leadership in this manner:

> It is clear principals today must also serve as leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must work with teachers to strengthen skills. They must collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence. They must rally students, teachers, parents, local health and family service agencies, youth development groups, local businesses and other community resident and partners around the common goal of raising student performance. They must have the leadership skills and knowledge to exercise the autonomy and authority to pursue these strategies, (p. 2).

There is a critical gap in educational research between what scholars know about the importance of effective leadership practices, a healthy school climate, how to measure

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such, and what is implemented at schools sites. Leaders lack training and exploration in the matter of implementing effective leadership practices as a means of improving school climate.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to examine the perceived leadership styles of principals in high climate schools and its relationship to school climate. The descriptive study examines the results of the LPI-Self to determine if principals' perception of personal leadership practices correlates with high school climate, when controlling for school size, principal gender, and poverty index. This descriptive study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between small enrollment schools and large enrollment schools in high climate elementary schools?

2. What are the self- perceived leadership practice differences between low poverty index schools and high poverty index schools in high climate elementary schools?

3. What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between male and female administrators in high climate elementary schools?

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       │     Variables       │                    │      Variable       │
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       ┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
       │      Gender         │───────────┐        │ Leadership Practices│
       └─────────────────────┘            ───────▶│ in Positive Climate │
                                                  │ Elementary Schools  │
       ┌─────────────────────┐                    │                     │
       │   Poverty Index     │───────────────────▶│                     │
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Figure 3.1 Model of the variables in the study

This study explores how the dependent variable of leadership practice is affected by the independent variables of gender, school size, and poverty index. The researcher will create school groups by separating the schools by level of student enrollment, principal gender, and level of poverty index.

Sample

The targeted population for this quantitative study consisted of 185 elementary schools located in South Carolina. These 185 elementary schools, with documented positive climate, earned the Palmetto Gold or Silver award for general student performance and/or closing the achievement gap on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards during the 2011-2012 testing window. South Carolina's education oversight committee established the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to provide recognition to schools that attain high levels of absolute performance and high rates of

growth. The recognition program was amended in 2008 to include awards for schools that close the gaps in achievement between historically lower- and higher-achieving demographic groups of students as an additional criterion to overall school performance for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program. The Accountability Division of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) establishes the specific criteria used to identify schools to be recognized. The State Department of Education applies the criteria to determine schools to be recognized.

Principals of each elementary school were administered the LPI-Self (Kouzes and Posner, 2003) to assess their perceptions of their leadership behavior. The sample was identified utilizing the 2011 Elementary School Fact File from the South Carolina Department of Education. To control for the potential effect of variations of perceptions due to principal length of service and teacher turnover rate, the study required that the school principal had a minimum of three years experience at the same school and that the teacher retention rate was at least 80%. Separating the schools by student enrollment, poverty index, and gender of the principal created school groups. Although groups were not equal in size, schools contained in each group were more similar to each other in terms of individual school size or individual poverty index.

To control for school size, the two school size groups created were:

A. School Size Group 1: Small Enrollment Schools

B. School Size Group 2: Large Enrollment Schools

To control for principal gender, schools will be divided into two groups:

A. Principal Gender Group 1: Female Principals

B. Principal Gender Group 2: Male Principals

To control for poverty index, schools will be divided into the following groups:

A. Poverty Index Group 1: Low Poverty Index Schools

B. Poverty Index Group 2: High Poverty Index Schools

The population for this study consisted of one hundred eighty-five (N=185) elementary schools in South Carolina. The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee and the South Carolina Department of Education recognized these schools for closing the achievement gap and/or high academic achievement based on student performance on the annual state standardized assessment in the spring of 2011. The researcher obtained a list of all elementary schools that fit this criterion from the South Carolina Department of Education. This type of purposeful sampling was used to identify schools within the population meeting such specific criteria, which made them eligible to receive the Palmetto Silver or Palmetto Gold Award.

The researcher obtained Intuitional Review Board approval and sent an email to accompany each survey sent to each elementary school principal in the sample. A copy is provided in Appendices B and C, respectively. Upon receipt of the email, principals completed the LPI-Self. Selected elementary school principals received an email with a brief statement explaining the purpose of the survey. The researcher sent a reminder email to those who had not responded within two weeks and thanked those who had already responded. The researcher sent a second reminder one week after the previous

reminder email. Principals completed the LPI-Self. Because participation in this research is voluntary, to protect the identity of participants, the researcher identified elementary schools as ES1-ES185 and principals as ESP1 and ESP 185.

The researcher obtained the sample population from information provided by the South Carolina Department of Education Elementary Fact File for 2011 via website. It includes all South Carolina Elementary schools who achieved 2011 Palmetto Gold or Silver status for the 2011 testing window. 47 elementary school principals completed the survey.

Instrumentation

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was developed by James Kouzes and Barry Posner in 1983. The survey measures leadership practices on a ten point Likert scale. The leadership practices are divided into five areas: 1) Model the Way, 2) Inspire a Shared Vision, 3), Challenge the Process, 4) Enable Others to Act, and 5) Encourage the Heart. Six questions regarding leadership practices address each of the five areas. Respondents are asked to rate each statement from 1 to 10. Higher values represent more frequent use of the behavior, while lower values represent less regular use of the behavior.

Kouzes & Posner (2002a) began a research project in 1983 that focused on discovering what ordinary people did when they were at their best. Conducting over 550 interviews, the research produced a framework of the five best leadership practices. Kouzes and Posner (2002a) developed these five best leadership practices based on the demand for accountability, change in leadership environment, change in perception of leadership, and analysis of common behaviors and practices of leaders. Believing that

leadership is a teachable skill, Kouzes and Posner offer five best practices in their model: 1. Model the Way, 2. Inspire a Shared Vision, 3. Challenge the Process, 4. Enable Others to Act, and 5. Encourage the Heart

The LPI was developed by creating a set of statements describing each of the leadership actions and behaviors. Kouzes and Posner originally cast the LPI on a five point Likert scale, but reformulated it to a ten-point Likert scale, resulting in a more robust and sensitive rating. The ten point scale represents: 1. Almost never do what is described in this statement, 2. Rarely, 3. Seldom, 4. Once in a while, 5. Occasionally, 6. Sometimes, 7. Fairly Often, 8. Usually, 9. Very Frequently, 10. Almost always demonstrate what is described in this statement. The behaviorally based statements in the LPI-Self have been modified, discarded, or included following much research and analysis of over 350,000 respondents. Responding to the LPI takes approximately 8 to 10 minutes to complete and can be scored by hand or computer. It consists of 30 questions, with six statements for each of the five leadership practice scales. A copy is provided in Appendix D.

Sheppard (2007) utilized the LPI to determine if a relationship existed between student performance and leadership practices as perceived by principals and selected site based decision committee members of middle schools in Texas. While no relationship was found between the two variables, the data indicated that principals rated themselves higher than did observers. Pringle (2004) studied the relationship of leadership practices of South Carolina elementary school principals and academic success. Using the LPI, Pringle found a statistically significant relationship existed between the leadership practices of principals in academically successful schools and academically unsuccessful

schools as perceived by the teachers. Holt (2003) completed a study using the LPI on perceived leadership practices to determine if self-perception and subordinate perception were the same. Holt found that subordinates perceived their school administrators as being less engaged in best leadership practices.

LPI Leadership Categories

Modeling the way means that leaders clarify values and set examples. Leaders must be habitual about identifying and communicating their own values to their constituents (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Leaders must utilize their values and convictions as examples for others to follow. Once a leader confirms his or her values, then he or she must proceed to obtain agreement on the shared values that everyone will follow in the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Shared values help to enhance school climate by ensuring that all stakeholder are participatory in agreement regarding the ways in which members of the organization interact with one another. More importantly, it is very important for leaders to reinforce the behaviors they wish to see repeated in their organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). "Modeling the way is essentially about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct involvement and action. People first follow the person, then follow the plan" (Kouzes and Posner, 2002b, p. 15). According to Kouzes and Posner (2002b), "Exemplary leaders go first. They go first by setting the example through daily actions that demonstrate they are deeply committed to their beliefs "(p.14). Leaders must model the behaviors they expect to see in their subordinates in both their words and actions.

To inspire a shared vision, principals must be able to communicate their values in their own words (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Visionary leaders are principals who work collaboratively with other members of the organization to establish a set of common beliefs and can clearly articulate the vision of the organization to others. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), "Leaders breathe life into hopes and dreams of others and enable them to see the exciting possibilities the future holds. Leaders forge a unity of purpose by showing constituents how the dream is for the common good." (p.18). Leaders inspire a shared vision by envisioning the future and enlisting others in a common vision (Kouzes and Posner, 2002b, p. 13). "To enlist people in a vision, leaders must know their constituents and speak their language. People must believe that leaders understand their needs and have their interests at heart" (Kouzes and Posner, 2007, p. 17).

Challenge the process includes elements of leadership practices that suggest effective leaders seek opportunities to grow and are not afraid of taking risks. A climate of innovation and experimentation is encouraged. Kouzes and Posner (2007) note that leaders who challenge the process "approach change through incremental steps and small wins". (p.19) "Leaders challenge the process by searching for opportunities and by experimenting taking risks, and learning from mistakes" (Kouzes and Posner, 2003, p.4). "Leaders are pioneers-people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve" (Kouzes and Posner, 2002b, p.17). An effective leader will build confidence through incremental achievements thus providing a sound environment where others are willing and encouraged to learn from experimentation and failures (Kouzes and Posner, 2002b).

According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), leaders who enable others to act include as many people as possible and encourage collaborative efforts. Leaders who enable others to act foster collaboration and build trust by empowering their subordinates to utilize their energy and resources to solve problems and face challenges. Kouzes and Posner (2007) state that when a leader gives power away so that workers feels strong capable, and committed, the workers are more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results.

Leaders encourage the heart of the constituents to carry on despite difficulties by showing appreciation for individual excellence (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Encouraging the heart means practicing behaviors that acknowledge the efforts of others, demonstrate sincere concern for others, and understand that their encouragement and care help to build positive relationships and establish a sense of community within the organization.

Research to assess best leadership practices both in private ad public organizations including educational institutions extensively uses the LPI. According to Kouzes & Posner (2002b), "validation studies that we (Kouzes & Posner), as well as other researchers, have conducted over a fifteen year period consistently confirm the reliability and the validity of the Leadership Practices Inventory and the Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders model" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002b, p.2)

Reliability and Validity of the LPI-Self

The LPI is easy to understand and the results are significantly correlated with various performance measures making it useful for predictions about leadership effectiveness according to Kouzes and Posner (2002a). Factor analysis provides for the grouping of

items within the five headings based on correspondence of those pieces of information. The stability of this information was tested in different sub-samples and within a variety of organizational settings.

Validity addresses the question of whether or not an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, and whether its scores have significance or meaning for a respondent. Face validity considers whether an instrument appears to measure, what it intends to be measuring. Given that the items on the LPI are related to the statements that workshop participants generally make about their own or others' personal best leadership experiences, respondents have found the LPI to have excellent face validity. Validity of the LPI has been determined both at face value and empirically. According to Kouzes and Posner (2003), since the items on the LPI are based on statements that participants generally make regarding personal best leadership experiences, respondents have found the LPI to have excellent face validity.

This instrument was selected by the researcher because of its extensive use in research to assess leadership practices in management across both public and private organizations. LPI provides a profile of practices and behaviors that leaders use to influence others and achieve organizational goals. Reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument contains "measurement errors" that cause scores to differ for reasons unrelated to the individual respondent. The fewer errors contained, the more reliable the instrument, and instrument reliabilities above .60 are considered good". (Kouzes and Posner, 2002, pg.1) Reliability coefficients for the LPI range from .75 to .87. Other researchers have reported similar levels of internal reliability in their studies. For example, reliabilities ranged from .80 to .92 in a study of engineering managers and their

constituents. With college presidents, internal reliability for the LPI-Self ranged

between .71 to .84. Test-retest reliability for the five leadership practices has been

consistently strong at the .90 level and above. In a study involving school administrators,

test-retest reliabilities were reported to be .86 for superintendents and .79 for school

principals. Other researchers have obtained similar reliability results. Fields and Herold

(1997) reported a score range from .82 to .92 which is similar to the LPI ranges. Posner

completed the most recent data analysis for the LPI as a reliable and valid instrument.

Survey results, in-depth interviews, and written case studies from personal-best

leadership experiences were conducted by Kouzes and Posner as they created the LPI and

triangulated the data for the instrument. The LPI has undergone several psychometric

processes, including validation studies conducted over a fifteen-year period.

Table 3.1

LPI-Self Means and Standard Deviations

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Model the Way	47.0	6.0
Inspire a Shared Vision	40.6	8.8
Challenge the Process	43.9	6.8
Enable Others to Act	48.7	5.4
Encourage the Heart	43.8	8.0

Data Analysis

Using a descriptive research design, the researcher sought to determine if there were self-perceived leadership practice differences between:

A. Small enrollment and large enrollment high climate schools

B. Low poverty and high poverty high climate schools

C. Male and female principals in high climate schools

Descriptive statistics such as mean score, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value will help to determine the most practiced leadership practices in positive climate schools when controlling for gender, school size, and poverty index.

The LPI-Self scoring software provided by Kouzes and Posner (2003) will help to calculate the results of the LPI. Total scores for each of the five categories of the LPI-Self will be calculated. A raw score and standard deviation will be obtained from the surveys and categorized to control for gender of the respondent, size of the school, and poverty index of the school. Data will include the mean and standard deviation that indicate the most significant leadership practices represented in the various groups (gender, poverty index, school size).

The 2011 school report card data and data from the 2011 Elementary Fact File on the South Carolina Department of Education website were gathered. Data were gathered from the categories of principal's number of years at the school, student enrollment (i.e. school size), teacher turnover (percentage of teachers returning from previous year), and poverty index. Data included the 185 public elementary schools.

Since the data used for the 185 schools in the sample is provided through the South Carolina State Department of Education, accuracy of findings is dependent on the information provided by that source.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the similarities and differences in principal leadership practices in high climate elementary schools while controlling for principal gender, school size, and poverty index. The data sets obtained from the LPI-Self were analyzed using descriptive statistics. An existing database identifying positive climate organizations exists. This study utilized the 2011 South Carolina Department of Education Annual School Report Card data. The following variables were identified in the 2011 Elementary School Performance Fact File: Percentage of teachers, students, and parents satisfied with the learning environment, Percentage of teachers, students, and parents satisfied with the social and physical environment, Percentage of teachers, students, and parents satisfied with home-school relations.

The researcher analyzed data using Statistical Analysis System. The researcher organized the data into tables and narratives for the purpose of reporting and interpreting the findings. Chapter 4 will present results and data analysis for each research question. Chapter 5 will provide a conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANAYLSIS OF DATA

This dissertation reports the results of a descriptive study that examined the similarities and differences in principal leadership practices in positive climate schools while controlling for principal gender, school size, and poverty index. This chapter reports the findings of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) self survey and looks at the similarities and differences in leadership practices in relation to school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal. In August 2013, One hundred and eighty five principals of high climate South Carolina elementary schools received an email inviting them to participate in the research by completing the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self survey. Forty

The purpose of this study was to determine the self-perceived leadership practice differences between elementary schools with documented positive climate ratings when controlling for gender, poverty, and school size. The variables were summarized using descriptive statistics. The research questions addressed were:

1. What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between small enrollment schools and large enrollment schools in high climate elementary schools?

2. What are the self- perceived leadership practice differences between low poverty index schools and high poverty index schools in high climate elementary school?

3. What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between male and female administrators in high climate elementary schools?

Demographic Data

The sample in this study consisted of 47 elementary principals in South Carolina. The rate of return for the LPI-Self Survey was 25.4%. The respondents were 16 male elementary principals and 31 female elementary principals. Responses were categorized by school size, poverty index, and gender. Twenty-six surveys were from principals with small enrollment schools. Twenty-one surveys were from principals with large enrollment schools. Responses were also grouped by the poverty index of each school. Low poverty index schools were schools with a poverty rate of 50-75% and High poverty index schools were schools with a poverty index of 76-100%. Twenty-five completed surveys were from low poverty index schools. Twenty-two completed surveys were from high poverty index schools.

Principals completed the LPI-Self, which consisted of 30 statements based on Kouzes and Posner's (2003) five leadership practices. Principals could assign a score ranging from 1 (almost never) to 10 (almost always) for each statement. Six statements addressed each leadership practice. The five practices are: 1. Model the Way, 2. Inspire a Shared Vision, 3. Challenge the Process, 4. Enable Others to Act, and 5. Encourage the Heart.

Descriptive Results

Descriptive statistics such as minimum, maximum, standard deviation, and mean score were calculated to address each research question. The mean represents the average of all

the respondents' ratings for each of the five exemplary leadership practices. The standard deviation describes the dispersion of scores, the extent of agreement among all principals participating in the study, and indicates how much each score deviates from the mean score. LPI-Self components are abbreviated for tables 1-4 and figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 as follows: Model the Way-MTW; Inspire a Shared Vision-ISV; Challenge the Process-CP; Enable Others to Act-EO. Encourage the Heart-ETH. Figure 4.1 presents the descriptive results for the full sample.

Table 4.1

LPI-Self Results for Full Sample

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
MTW	51.29	5.336	34-60
ISV	49.02	6.545	29-60
CP	47.14	7.288	27-60
EO	52.51	4.652	43-60
ETH	49.85	7.351	32-60

N=47

The mean scores for the leadership practices of Enabling Others to Act and Modeling the Way were 52.51 and 51.29 respectively. The average score for Encourage the Heart was 49.85. The average scores for Inspiring a Shared Vision and Challenging the Process were 49.02 and 47.14 respectively.

The standard deviation score for Model the Way was 5.336 while the standard deviation sore for Inspire a Shared Vision was 6.545. Challenge the Process' standard

deviation score was 7.288 while the standard deviation score for Enable Others to Act was 4.652. The standard deviation for Encourage the Heart was 7.351. The range scores reflected a twenty-six-point difference for Model the Way. The range scores reflected a thirty-one-point difference for Inspire a Shared Vision and a thirty-three-point difference for Challenge the Process. The range scores reflected a twenty-eight-point difference for Encourage the Heart. The range scores for Enable Others to Act reflected a seventeen-point difference.

Elementary principals scored Enable Others to Act as the leadership practice they utilized most. Model the Way and Encourage the Heart ranked second and third. Principals ranked Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenging the Process as the leadership practices they employed the least. There is a 5.37 difference between the means of Enable Others to Act, the leadership practice most often employed, and Challenge the Process, the leadership practice least often utilized by the sample. There is a greater range of difference in mean scores between Inspire a Shared Vision and Enable Others to Act. The range of mean scores for Inspire a Shared Vision among survey participants was 23 to 60, while the range of mean scores for Enable Others to Act was 43 to 60. There is a larger variation, 37 points, found in the range of means for Inspire a Shared Vision as compared to the 27-point range found in the mean scores for Enable Others to Act.

To further analyze the data for significance when grouping for school size, poverty, and gender, five t-tests were conducted. Because these tests were performed using the same principals, these t-tests are not independent of one another. As a result the level of significance for each test was modified using the Bonferroni adjustment so that the critical p-value for each test was .01. Table 4.2 presents the results of the LPI-Self

survey when dividing the sample by school size. These data are presented visually in

figure 4.1.

Table 4.2

LPI-Self Results for School Size Category

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	*p*-value of differences
MTW	Large	21	51.04	4.984	34	59	0.7616
	Small	26	51.50	5.255	35	60	
ISV	Large	21	48.76	6.602	32	58	0.8097
	Small	26	49.23	6.623	29	60	
CP	Large	21	46.23	8.239	27	58	0.4461
	Small	26	47.88	6.485	36	60	
EO	Large	21	52.38	4.984	43	60	0.8683
	Small	26	52.61	4.463	44	60	
ETH	Large	21	47.42	8.194	32	59	0.0409
	Small	26	51.80	6.066	37	60	

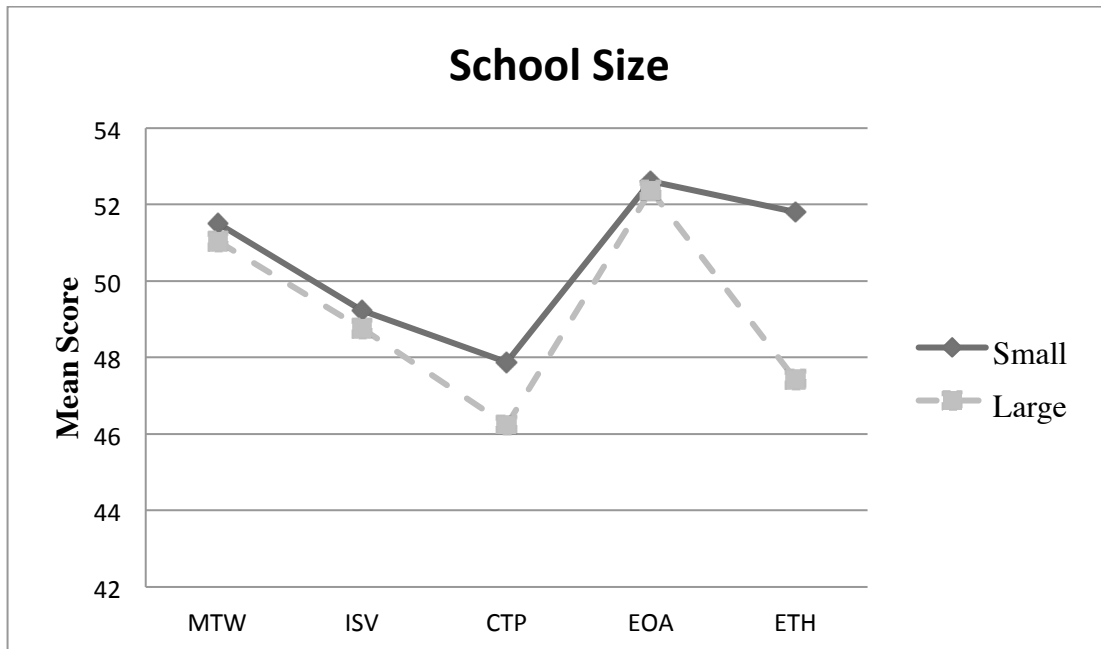*Note:* Critical values of .01 include Bonferroni adjustment

Figure 4.1 This figure is a visual representation of the similarities and differences of principal leadership practices when grouped for school size.

Table 4.2 indicates that the principals rated themselves relatively high on each of the five leadership practices. In small enrollment schools, the mean scores for each practice were between 47.88 and 52.61 with highest possible mean of 60. In large enrollment schools, the mean scores for each practice were between 46.23 and 52.38. Principals in small and large enrollment schools rated themselves most favorably in Enable Others to Act with mean scores of 52.61 and 52.38 respectively. Principals in small and large enrollment scores rated themselves lowest in the category of Challenge the Process, with mean scores of 47.88 and 46.23 respectively.

Based on the results of the t-tests, the differences in the leadership practices of principals in large enrollment schools and small enrollment schools are not significant. Principals in small and large schools had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable

Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Although not statistically significant, principals in small enrollment schools had a slightly higher mean score in the leadership practice of Encourage the Heart than principals of large enrollment schools.

Table 4.3 presents the results of the LPI-Self survey when divided by poverty level. Figure 4.2. provides a visual representation of these data. Table 4.3 indicates that the principals rated themselves relatively high on each of the five leadership practices. In low poverty schools, the mean scores for each practice were between 48.64 and 53.00 with a highest possible mean of 60. In high poverty schools, the mean scores for each practice were between 45.45 and 52.40. Principals in low poverty schools rated themselves most favorably in the category of Model the Way with a mean score of 53.00, while principals of high poverty schools rated themselves most favorably in the category of Enable Others to Act with a mean score of 52.40. Principals in low poverty schools and high poverty schools rated themselves lowest in the category of Challenge the Process with mean scores of 48.64 and 45.45 respectively.

Based on the results of the t-tests, the differences in the leadership practices of principals of high poverty schools and low poverty schools are not significant. Principals in low poverty and high poverty schools had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Although not statistically significant, there are some observed areas of difference noted in the leadership categories of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart when comparing the mean scores of principals in low poverty and high poverty schools. On

these four dimensions, principals of low poverty schools had slightly higher mean scores than that of principals in high poverty schools.

Table 4.3

LPI-Self Results for Poverty Index Category

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	*p*-value of differences
MTW	High	21	49.36	5.711	34	54	.0190
	Low	25	53.00	4.425	44	60	
ISV	High	21	46.45	7.096	29	56	.0108
	Low	25	51.28	5.168	43	60	
CP	High	21	45.45	7.169	27	56	.1410
	Low	25	48.64	7.205	35	60	
EO	High	21	52.40	4.113	47	60	.8867
	Low	25	52.60	5.163	43	60	
ETH	High	21	47.72	7.654	32	58	.0649
	Low	25	51.72	6.674	37	60	

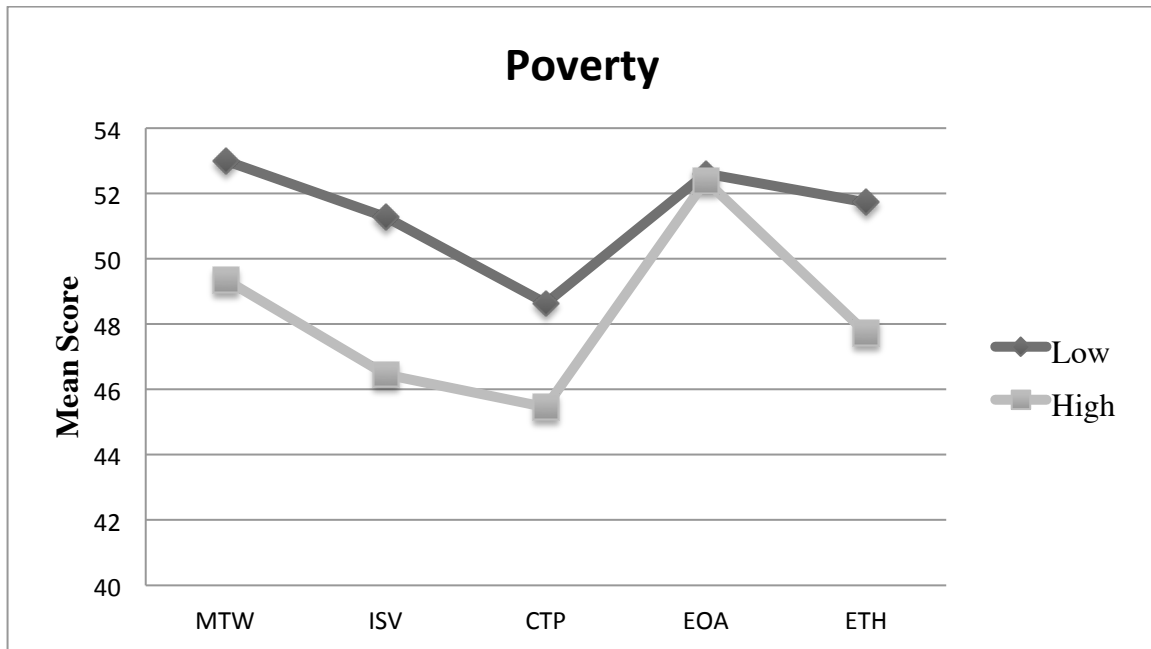*Note:* Critical values of .01 include Bonferroni adjustment

Figure 4.2 This figure is a visual representation of the similarities and differences of principal leadership practices when grouped for poverty.

Table 4.4 presents the results when grouping for gender of the principal. Figure 4.3 provides a visual representation of these data. Table 4.4 indicates that the principals rated themselves relatively high on each of the five leadership practices. Among male principals, the mean scores for each practice were between 43.75 and 52.81 with highest possible mean of 60. Among female principals, the mean scores for each practice were between 48.90 and 52.35. Male and female principals rated themselves most favorably in the category of Enable Others to Act with mean scores of 52.81 and 52.35 respectively. Male and female principals rated themselves least favorably in the category of Challenge the Process with mean scores of 43.75 and 48.90 respectively.

Based on the results of the t-tests, the differences in the leadership practices of male and female principals are not significant. Male and female principals had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision,

Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Although not

statistically significant, there is an observed area of difference noted in the leadership

categories of Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process. On these two

dimensions, female principals had slightly higher mean scores than that of male

principals.

Table 4.4

LPI-Self Results for Gender Category

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	*p*-value of differences
MTW	Male	16	51.06	5.543	34	55	55
	Female	31	51.41	5.315	35	60	60
ISV	Male	16	46.00	5.621	32	54	54
	Female	31	50.28	6.520	29	60	60
CP	Male	16	43.75	7.353	35	54	54
	Female	31	48.90	6.714	36	60	60
EO	Male	16	52.81	3.919	44	60	60
	Female	31	52.35	5.043	43	60	60

| ETH | Male | 16 | 49.18 | 7.194 | 33 | 58 | 58 |
| | Female | 31 | 50.19 | 7.525 | 32 | 60 | 60 |

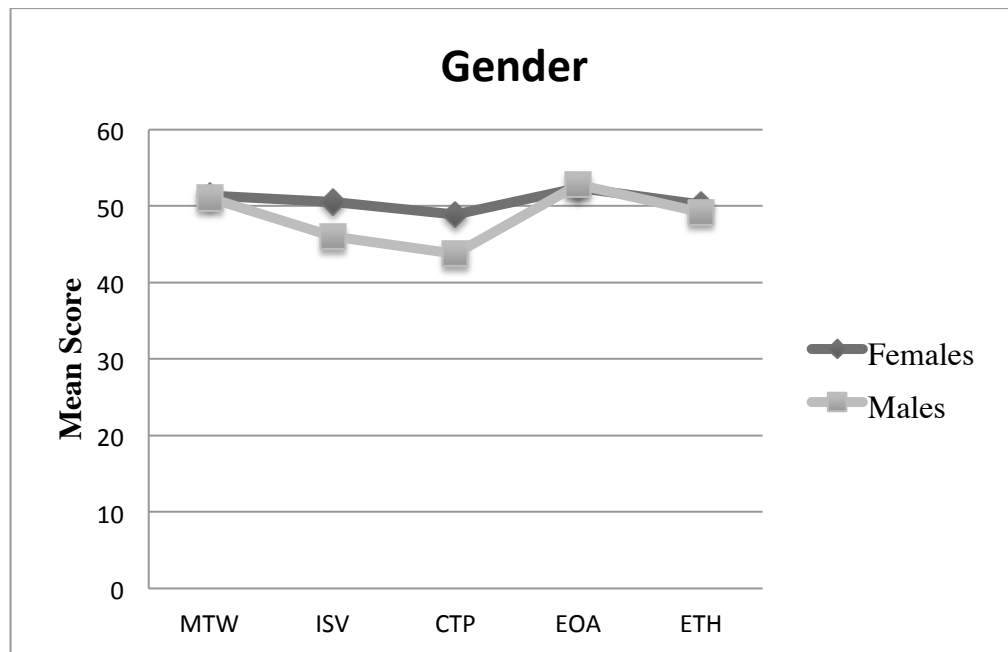*Note:* Critical values of .01 include Bonferroni adjustment

Figure 4.3 This figure is a visual representation of the similarities and differences of principal leadership practices when grouped for gender.

Summary of Findings

This chapter analyzed the data collected to address the three research questions presented in Chapter 1.

Question one addressed the self-perceived leadership practice differences between small enrollment schools and large enrollment schools in high climate elementary schools. LPI-Self reported scores of leadership practices among principals of small and large enrollment schools had a mean above 46 for all five leadership areas. Enabling

Others to Act had the highest mean score while Challenge the Process had the lowest mean score for principals of small and large enrollment schools. Based on the results of the t-tests, the differences in the leadership practices of principals in large enrollment schools and small enrollment schools are not statistically significant. Principals in small and large schools had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Although not statistically significant, one area of observed difference was in the category of Encourage the Heart.

Question two addressed the self-perceived leadership practice differences between high poverty index and low poverty index schools in high climate elementary schools. LPI-Self reported scores of leadership practices among principals of high and low poverty schools had a mean above 45 for all five leadership areas. Enabling Others to Act had the highest mean score among principals of high poverty schools while Model the Way had the highest mean score among principals of low poverty schools. Principals of high and low poverty schools rated Challenge the Process with the lowest mean score. Based on the results of the t-tests, the differences in the leadership practices of principals of high poverty schools and low poverty schools are not statistically significant. Principals in low poverty and high poverty schools had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Although not statistically significant, there are some observed areas of difference noted in the leadership categories of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart when comparing the mean scores of principals in low poverty and high poverty schools.

Question three addressed the self-perceived leadership practice differences between male and female principals in high climate elementary schools. LPI-Self reported scores of leadership practices among male and female principals had a mean above 43 for all five leadership areas. Enabling Others to Act had the highest mean scores while Challenge the Process had the lowest mean scores for male and female principals. Based on the results of the t-tests, the differences in the leadership practices of male and female principals are not statistically significant. Male and female principals had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Although not statistically significant, there are two observed area of difference noted in the leadership categories of Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the self-perceived leadership practice differences between elementary schools with documented positive climate ratings when controlling for gender, poverty, and school size. Kouzes and Posner's (2003) Leadership Practice Inventory-Self was used to collect the data for this study. Forty-seven principals completed surveys and were included in the analysis. All of the principals in the study were South Carolina elementary school principals of schools with documented high climate. This study utilized the 2011 South Carolina Department of Education Annual School Report Card data. The following variables were identified in the 2011 Elementary School Performance Fact File: Percentage of teachers, students, and parents satisfied with the learning environment, Percentage of teachers, students, and parents satisfied with the social and physical environment, Percentage of teachers, students, and parents satisfied with home-school relations. For each of the climate respondent categories, schools in this study exhibited a percentage of no less than 70% satisfaction rates for each climate indicator according to the 2011 Elementary School Fact File.

These schools also met the criteria to earn a Palmetto Silver or Gold award for student performance on the 2011 Palmetto Assessment of State Standards. To control for the potential effect of variations of perceptions due to principal length of service and teacher turnover rate, the study required that the school principal had a minimum of three years experience at the same school and that the teacher turnover rate was 80% or higher. The data was grouped by school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal. To further analyze the data for significance, five t-tests were conducted. Because these t-tests were conducted using the same principals, these t-tests are not independent of one another. As a result, the level of significance for each t-tests was modified using the Bonferroni adjustment method so that the critical p-value for each test was .01.

Research Questions

Excel and SAS software were used to compare the responses of principals. In Chapter Four the results were presented with descriptive statistics used to analyze the three research questions. The data from the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self indicated that South Carolina elementary school principals in this study believed their leadership practices to be high in each area measured by the instrument. In review of the full sample, LPI-Self reported scores had a mean of 49 or higher out of a possible mean of 60 in all five leadership areas. Principals rated their leadership practice most favorably in the area of Enable Others to Act with a mean of 52.51 while Challenge the Process had the lowest overall mean of 47.14.

Research Question 1: What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between small enrollment schools and large enrollment schools in high climate elementary schools?

An analysis of the data from the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self indicated no statistically significant differences in the leadership practices of principals of large and small enrollment schools. Principals in small and large schools had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. LPI-Self reported scores of leadership practices among principals of small and large enrollment schools had a mean above 46 for all five leadership areas out of a possible 60. Principals of small and large enrollment schools rated themselves most favorably in the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act and least favorably in the area of Challenge the Process. One area of observed difference was in the category of Encourage the Heart, although not statistically significant.

Research Question *2:* What are the self- perceived leadership practice differences between low poverty index schools and high poverty index schools in high climate elementary schools?

The data from the Leadership Practices Inventory-self indicated no statistically significant differences in the leadership practices of principals of low poverty and high poverty schools. Principals of low poverty and high poverty schools had similar means in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Principals of high poverty

schools rated themselves most favorably in the practice of Enable Others to Act while principals of low poverty schools rated themselves most favorably in the practice of Model the Way. Principals of high and low poverty schools rated Challenge the Process as the least favorable leadership practice. There were four areas of observed difference between principals of low and high poverty schools: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart. However, none of these differences were statistically significant.

Research Question 3: What are the self-perceived leadership practice differences between male and female administrators in high climate elementary schools?

An analysis of the data from the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self indicated no statistically significant differences between male and female principals. Male and female principals had similar mean scores in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Male and female principals rated the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act as the most favorable leadership practice and Challenge the Process as the least favorable leadership practice. Two areas of observed difference between male and female principals were noted in the leadership categories of Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process, although not statistically significant.

Table 5.1 displays the results of the full sample when compared to Kouzes and Posner norm when surveying the general population.

Table 5.1

LPI-Self Comparison of Kouzes and Posner Norm vs. Full Sample Results

		Mean	Std. Deviation
MTW	Norm	47.0	6.0
	Sample	51.2	5.3
ISV	Norm	40.6	8.8
	Sample	49.0	6.5
CP	Norm	43.9	6.8
	Sample	47.1	7.2
EO	Norm	48.7	5.4
	Sample	52.5	4.6
ETH	Norm	43.8	8.0
	Sample	49.8	7.3

The results of this study were different than the norm provided by Kouzes and Posner (2003) for the general population. The full sample rated themselves higher than the norm group in every leadership practice category. This is a possible important difference. This difference may be due to the selectiveness of the sample in this study. Participants in this study represented elementary schools with documented positive climate and high student achievement. The results may be higher because the participants may perceive themselves to utilize Kouzes and Posner's (2003) leadership practices at a more frequent rate because of the success of their schools. In addition, this

study found that the full sample of principals rated Enabling Others to Act as the most favorable leadership practice. Kouzes and Posner (2003) also found Enable Others to Act to be the highest category when surveying the general population. Challenge the Process was the third highest ranked category based on results of Kouzes and Posner's study when surveying the general population, but was ranked fifth for the full sample and when the sample was grouped for school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal. Kouzes and Posner (2003) found Inspire a Shared Vision to be the lowest of the self-reported norms based on the general population. For the full sample in this study, Inspire a Shared Vision ranked fourth out all five leadership practices.

Limitations

The use of self-reported information from principals regarding leadership practices is one major limitation of this study. Inflated results could be in play as principals rated themselves based on their perception of their own behavior. Increasing the number of participants and conducting a 360-feedback study that includes teachers and staff perceptions of principal leadership behavior could address this limitation. Data collection was also limited to South Carolina elementary school principals whose schools have documented high climate ratings and high student achievement based on the South Carolina School Report Card and Climate Survey. An additional limitation of this study is the selectiveness of the sample. Participants represented schools with documented positive climate and high achievement as measured by the Palmetto Silver and Gold Awards. Surveying principals of low achieving schools or with less successful school climates may have derived different results. The voluntary participation of principals may also be a factor. Principal perceptions were averaged and grouped to control for the

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independent variables of gender, poverty, and school size. The size of the groups for the independent variable category of gender may have also been a limiting factor as the groups were not equal in size. Increasing sample size may help to create groups more equal in size when controlling for the independent variables of gender, poverty, and school size. The data in this study is limited to the responses of individual principals and their perceptions of their leadership practices. The results are not to be used to assume similar relationships in middle and high schools, nor in other geographic areas.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study determined that South Carolina elementary school principals in schools with documented high climate perceive their leadership practices to be more similar than different when controlling for gender and school size. Some differences were noted in principal perceptions of leadership practice when grouping for poverty index. In low poverty schools, principals ranked the leadership practice of Model the Way as first of all five leadership practice categories. In high poverty schools principals ranked Enabling Others to Act as their first out of all five leadership practices categories.

The following recommendations are based upon the review of literature and these research findings:

1. Conduct a follow up study to include a comparative analysis of the leadership practices of elementary schools with less successful climate scores and compare the results to elementary schools with documented positive climate scores. Broadening this study to compare and contrast schools with positive and less positive climate scores is important to understand which leadership practices have

contributed to the success or lack thereof in elementary schools. According to Kelley et al. (2005), principals have the power, authority, and position to impact the climate of the school. In the complex and dynamic environment of schools, principals need to understand effective leadership behaviors and how to utilize them in a way that empowers them to share the vision and enables them to create an effective school climate.

2. Conduct principal leadership practice research using a larger sample. In the present study, for example, the sub group of gender consisted of sixteen male participants. A larger sample may derive different results. Surveying a larger sample might possibly allow for control groups that are more similar in size. This study consisted of voluntary participants. There is a possibility that because participants in this study volunteered to assess themselves, their scores could possibly be inflated.

3. Conduct a study that focuses on principal perception of leadership practice versus teacher perception of principal leadership practice in high achieving schools and compare the results to that of low achieving schools. Kouzes and Posner (2002b) discussed the importance of honesty in self-reflection. It is important that principals not only self-reflect, but also seek the feedback of others when assessing their leadership practices. Obtaining a realistic description of the school's climate and understanding how the principal can positively impact the environment has great implications for school leaders. According to Perry, et al. (2005), the behaviors of the leader of an organization are the most important determinant of organizational climate. If leaders gain additional views on the

subject, they may improve their ability to be objective regarding the climate of their schools and their leadership practices.

4. The comparison of the sample means to the Kouzes and Posner norm means warrants an investigation to determine why mean scores are substantially higher in South Carolina high climate elementary schools. These high self-ratings are consistent with what has been referred to as a "Halo Effect" when analyzing self-reported data in research. The norms presented by Kouzes and Posner (2003) found high principal self-reported ratings. Shannon (2008) and Etheridge (2009) also found high self-reported principal leadership ratings in each of their leadership studies. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study in which a comparative analysis is conducted to examine the differences and similarities in the leadership practices of principals in South Carolina to that of other geographic areas.

5. Conduct a study that focuses on gaining multiple points of view. Assess not only principal perception of leadership practices, but also teacher, supervisor, and community stakeholder perceptions to gain an alternative point of view and address inflation of self reported data. This 360 approach may provide leaders with a more objective view of their leadership practices.

Recommendations for Practitioners

According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), principals who better understand their own leadership behaviors are more likely to capitalize on their strengths and improve their weaknesses. Principals can create a school climate that improves productivity of

both staff and students and the leadership style of the principal has the potential to enhance or restrict teacher effectiveness (Hughes, 1992). Tirozzi (2001) emphasizes that the role of the principal is to establish a climate for excellence, establish a vision of continuous improvement of student achievement, and demand excellence from teachers. Deal and Peterson (2009) emphasize that positive school environments have leadership "emanating from many people…and principals who can cope with the paradoxes of their work take advantage of opportunities for the future" (p. ix). The following are recommendations for present practitioners:

1. Practicing principals will benefit from knowledge of Kouzes and Posner's (2002) five leadership practices and utilize such knowledge to self-manage their behavior and professional growth. Obtaining this body of knowledge will allow principals to increase their effectiveness by reflecting upon their leadership practices. Kouzes and Posner (2002b) note that it is important for principals to self-reflect on their behavior and seek the feedback of others. Barbuto and Burbach (2006) revealed that leaders who are self-aware are often self-critical and spend more time trying to improve.

2. Principals must recognize the need to enlist the assistance of others and utilize collaborative efforts to accomplish the goals of the school. School leaders face increased accountability mandates and the nature of the job of school leadership has become more demanding. Marzano, et al. (2005) presented a theory on leadership theory that shifts from individual leadership to a leadership team approach and the development of the concept of a purposeful community where leadership and decision making is shared. Further research by Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) offers a plan for effective school leadership that includes five key components: 1) develop a strong leadership team,

2) distribute responsibilities throughout the team, 3) choose the right work, 4) identify the order of magnitude of the work, and 5) match management style to the order of magnitude of the change initiative. Hoy and Miskel (2005) further emphasized this need to work together as a group with their research on transformational leadership. The researchers note that transformational leaders help followers work toward collective goals and emphasize the need to work together as a group. In this study, principals ranked the leadership practice of Enabling Others to Act as the practiced they utilized most. This remained true when the data was grouped based on school size and gender of the principal. Principals of high poverty index schools also ranked Enabling Others to Act as the leadership practice they utilized most.

3. Practicing principals need training in how to use reflective practices to improve their leadership and better self-manage their behaviors to positively impact the climate of their schools. Barth (2002) explains why this training is important:

> If we devise ways to help principals reflect thoughtfully and systematically upon the work they do, analyze that work, clarify their thinking, through spoken and written articulation, and engage in conversations with others about that work, they will better understand their complex schools, the task confronting them, and their own styles as leaders. Understanding practice is the single most important precondition for improving practice. (p.160)

Training in the use of self-reflection as a means to improve effectiveness will provide principals with greater ability to differentiate between the leadership practices they utilize in a given situation. If principals know and understand their own leadership behaviors,

they may be able to enhance their strengths and improve their weaknesses. Reeves (2004) suggest that internal leadership development is critical to moving accomplishing organizational goals. Nettles (2007) notes that effective principals reflect and consistently assess their own behavior in an effort to understand why certain behaviors may not be reaching desired outcomes.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the similarities and differences in principal leadership practices in high climate elementary schools while controlling for school size, poverty index, and principal gender. Kouzes and Posner's (2003) Leadership Practice Inventory-Self was utilized to collect the data. Forty-seven principals completed the survey and were included in the analysis. To further analyze the data for significance, five t-tests were conducted. Because these t-tests were conducted using the same principals, these t-tests are not independent of one another. As a result, the level of significance for each t-tests was modified using the Bonferroni adjustment method so that the critical p-value for each test was .01.

The findings of this study indicate no statistically significant differences in the perceived leadership practices of principals of large and small enrollment schools. Principals in both categories rated the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act as the most favorable leadership practice. Enabling Others to Act involves empowering members of the organization to make decisions and take ownership in the actions required to meet organizational goals. Leaders who exemplify the practice, Enable Others to Act, understand that excellent results are often achieved through a collaborative

effort and not through individual or heroic action. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), empowering others builds collective responsibility and allows organizations to achieve exceptional results. Kouzes and Posner (2003) believe that when leaders empower workers, they feel strong, competent, and committed. Leaders who Enable Others to Act teach members of the organization how to take initiative, work together and make decisions that increase overall school effectiveness. Kouzes and Posner (2007) emphasize that the skills needed be an effective leader in the area of Enable Others to Act include fostering collaboration and enlisting others in a shared vision or mission. By building teams and actively involving others in decision making, leaders who Enable Others to Act create an atmosphere of trust and respect, in which others feel empowered to take action to achieve the goals of the organization. Cotton (2003) notes that involving staff in decision-making has the greatest impact on achievement and teacher morale. "Great leaders seek out other people who will make the institution shine, not make the leader shine" (Brower & Balch, 2005, p.40).

Although not statistically significant, one observed difference between principals of large enrollment and small enrollment schools was in the category of Encourage the Heart. This finding suggests that principals in small enrollment schools may focus more heavily on building relationships with their staff than do principals of large enrollment schools. Leaders who Encourage the Heart focus on building relationships by recognizing contributions and appreciating individual excellence. Glickman (2003) emphasized that school leaders who connect with the hearts of staff, encourage teachers and students and develop practices that celebrate members of the organization. Leaders who Encourage the Heart celebrate the values and success of individuals by creating a

spirit of community (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). Kouzes and Posner (2003) note, "Leadership development is self development; getting feedback in our daily lives, setting self-improvement goals, learning from others and from experience, making changes in how we do things so as to continuously expand our ability and then getting more feedback to check our progress" (p.34). Providing effective feedback to a large number of staff members focused on specific and observed behaviors may be less challenging for principals of small enrollment schools. Principals of large enrollment schools may find this to be a more challenging task. Recognizing the individual accomplishments of many staff members requires leaders to utilize a great deal of time keeping up with the individual efforts of staff members and purposefully planning ways to recognize each person's accomplishments.

The findings of this study indicate no statistically significant differences in the perceived leadership practices of principals of low poverty and high poverty elementary schools. Principals in both categories had similar means in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Principals of high poverty schools rated themselves most favorably in the practice of Enable Others to Act while principals of low poverty schools rated themselves most favorably in the practice of Model the Way. Principals of high and low poverty schools rated Challenge the Process as the least favorable leadership practice. There were four areas of observed difference between principals of low and high poverty schools: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart. Principals of low poverty schools had slightly higher mean scores

than principals of high poverty schools in all five leadership dimensions. However, none of these differences were statistically significant.

Although not statistically significant, there were four observed areas of difference between principals of low poverty and high poverty schools: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart. In each of the aforementioned categories, principals of low poverty schools had slightly higher mean scores. This finding suggests that principals of low poverty schools perceive themselves to utilize the leadership practices of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart slightly more often when compared to the mean scores of principals of high poverty schools in this study. This difference could be due to the additional challenges that principals of high poverty schools face. Given the complexity of serving as the instructional leader of a school with a larger amount of students of impoverished backgrounds, principals of high poverty schools may possess the ability to be more objective and self-reflective about their own behavior. Their experience in working toward goals with a more challenging student body, may have impacted the way they rated themselves on each leadership practice thus causing them to report lower scores than their low poverty principal counterparts.

It is important to note that principals of low and high poverty schools rated the leadership practice of Challenge the Process similarly, as the least favorable leadership practice. This finding suggests that Challenge the Process may be a difficult leadership practice to implement. Leaders who Challenge the Process are comfortable taking risks, questioning policy and procedures, and understand that assessing the current reality of the organization is not always a harmonious activity. "Leaders challenge the process by

searching for opportunities and by experimenting, taking risks, and learning from mistakes (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p.4). Risk taking and experimenting can be uncomfortable for school leaders who face increased accountability measures and public ratings of their school. Experimentation can be costly and bring scrutiny among leaders who attempt to be innovative in their efforts, but do not yield excellent results in student achievement. While leaders who Challenge the process, view errors as learning opportunities, practicing principals may see errors as highly consequential resulting in being labeled as a school in need of improvement or even receiving a low rating among federal and state accountability measures. Because of the complexity involved in encouraging subordinates to experiment, take risks, and develop innovative solutions to problems, principals may shy away from this practice.

The findings of this study indicate no statistically significant differences in the perceived leadership practices of male and female principals. Principals in both categories had similar means in all five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. This finding is consistent with the literature of Kouzes and Posner (2002b). According to Kouzes and Posner (2002a), "generally, the leadership practices are not significantly different for males and females on the LPI-Self. Both groups report engaging in Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, and Enabling Others to act with about the same approximate frequency. Female managers report engaging in the leadership practice of Encouraging the Heart significantly more often than do their male colleagues" (p.10). Unlike the general population as measured by Kouzes and Posner (2002a), female principals reported to engage in the leadership

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practice of Encourage the Heart at the same approximate frequency as male principals.

In this study, two areas of observed difference between male and female principals were

noted in the leadership categories of Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process,

although not statistically significant. Male and female principals rated the leadership

practice of Enable Others to Act as the most favorable leadership practice and Challenge

the Process as the least favorable leadership practice.

The combined results of the forty-seven LPI-Self surveys revealed that principals

in this study rated themselves highly in all five categories of the Leadership Practice

Inventory-Self. The mean score in each category was 49 or higher out of a possible mean

score of 60. In review of the data collected by the full sample, principals rated Enable

Others to Act as the most favorable leadership practice and Challenge the Process as the

least favorable leadership practice. Enable Others to act was also the highest rated

leadership practice among principals of small and large enrollment schools, among

principals of high poverty schools, and among male and female principals. Similarly,

Challenge the Process was the least favorable leadership practice among principals of

small and large enrollment schools, principals of low and high poverty schools, and male

and female principals.

Kouzes and Posner (2003) also found Enable Others to Act to be the highest

leadership practice when surveying the general population. Similarly, the findings of this

study suggests that in general, participants perceived the practice of Enable Others to Act

to be the most frequent leadership dimension they utilize. The practice of Enabling

Others to Act is evident in the literature of Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee (2004) note that

effective school leaders are collaborative and highly skilled at influencing others in

pursuit of a common organizational goal. Due to their willingness to collaborate with members of the organization the establish trust and create an atmosphere where others feel safe to act and empowered to help make decisions. As the demands of accountability increase, it is possible that principals view the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act as a way to meet the increased demands of accountability and reach optimal organizational effectiveness. Elmore (2000) states:

> The job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of the people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective results. (p.16)

As leaders of elementary schools with documented positive climate and high levels of student achievement, participants in this study may feel strongly regarding this leadership practice. It is possible, that this practice of being collaborative and creating an atmosphere of trust is what has caused these schools to have the positive climates they all possess. Principals who Enable Others to Act build a sense of teamwork and utilize shared decision making to meet the goals of the organization. They understand that the job of the principalship cannot be done alone and work to create and maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002b), leaders who Enable Others to Act strengthen others by making each person feel capable and powerful. They recognize the need to enlist the assistance of others and work to

affirm employees to give them the confidence needed to make decisions for the good of the organization.

Challenge the Process was the third highest ranked category based on results of Kouze's and Posner's (2003) study when surveying the general population, but was ranked fifth in this study when analyzing the data of the full sample as well as when the sample was grouped for school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal. This finding suggests that leaders may be uncomfortable with the leadership practice of Challenge the Process. In each analysis, Challenge the Process was the least favorable practice among study participants. Challenge the Process can be a complex task that involves taking risks and experimentation. Principals may shy away from this practice because they view it as an uncomfortable activity, even though it may push the organization beyond the status quo. In addition, the pressures of accountability may affect the way principals view the practice of Challenge the Process. Innovation, experimentation, and risk taking may not bring about the results needed as prescribed by accountability measures. Instead of viewing experimentation as a learning opportunity, principals may see the opportunity to be innovative and challenge the status quo, as having punitive consequences should they not meet state and federal accountability standards.

Kouzes and Posner (2003) found Inspire a Shared Vision to be the lowest of the self-reported norms based on the general population. Similarly, the full sample in this study ranked Inspire a Shared Vision as fourth of the five leadership practices. In addition, there was a large variation (37 points) in the range of scores for this practice in the analysis of the full sample. This finding suggests that visioning is a complex

leadership practice. Cox (2005) found that principals view visioning as a key competency for school leadership. Leading and facilitating efforts that build on the strengths of members of the organization and focus efforts toward a shared vision are key components of strong leadership (Cox, 2005). According to Kelley, Thornton, and Daughtery (2005), "Skilled leaders correctly envision future needs and empower others to share and implement that vision" (p.17). Moving from and individual vision to a shared vision can be a difficult task for school leaders. Kouzes and Posner (2007) note, "our individual set of ideals serve to reveal our economic, political, familial, and professional preferences" (p.133). Leaders who Inspire a Shared Vision are challenged with the task of finding a common purpose for the good of the organization. They imagine the future of the organization, enlist the support of others to carry out the vision, and commit to changing the status quo (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). This may be a challenging task for principals, as it requires them to obtain a commitment from employees to carry out and accept the vision. "Leaders cannot command commitment, only inspire it" (Kouzes and Posner, 2002a, p.15). According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), "To enlist people in a vision, leaders must know their constituents and speak their language. People must believe that leaders understand their needs and have their interests at heart" (p.17). The large variation in the range of mean scores for Inspire a Shared vision indicates that the task is as challenging as Kouzes and Posner suggests.

In review of the full sample, principals in this study rated themselves highly and had a mean of 49 or higher out of a possible mean of 60 in all five leadership areas. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies. Shannon (2008) found that principals rated themselves very high with mean scores of 54 or higher in all five

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leadership practice categories out of a possible 60. Ethridge (2009) found that principal

rated themselves highly on the LPI- Self with means of 50 or higher in all five leadership

practice categories. All self-reported leadership behavior categories in this study were

rated higher than the Kouzes and Posner norm with differences of 2 to 9 points between

category means. Pingle (2004), Shannon (2008), and Ethridge (2009) all found high self

reported principal leadership ratings in each of their leadership studies of South Carolina

principals. This finding suggests that principals in South Carolina view their leadership

abilities with high regard or may be unrealistic in assessing their own behavior. This may

be due to an increased focus on accountability, which leads principals to believe they

really are putting forth their best efforts. Dealing with the consequences of low test

scores and the pressure to meet state and federal mandates may have an impact on how

principals view their own behavior. Because they face intense scrutiny regarding the

academic success or lack their of regarding their schools, which includes public ratings,

they may sincerely feel they practice the leadership dimensions as they self reported

themselves to do so. Principals may believe they accurately reported and assessed

themselves in each of the leadership practice categories or may be of the belief that they

exemplify these practices in high regard due to the fact that each school in this study has

a documented positive climate and was recognized for exemplary student achievement

through the Palmetto Sliver and Gold Awards Program.

Similar to this study, Shannon (2008) completed a study regarding leadership

practices and academic success and found Enable Others to Act as the highest category

when surveying principals using the LPI-Self. Martin (2011) completed a study

regarding leadership practices and principal experience and also found Enable Others to

Act as the most favorable leadership practice among surveyed principals. Pingle (2004) also found that principals rated themselves most favorably in the category of Enable Others to Act. Participants in this study rated Enable Others to Act as the most favorable leadership practice which is also consistent with the results of Kouzes and Posner (2003) research when surveying the general population as well. Similar to this study, Pingle and Cox (2007) found no significant differences in the self-reported leadership practices of elementary school principals in academically successful and less academically successful schools. Floyd (1999) found no significant difference between principals' self-assessments of their leadership behaviors and those behaviors perceived by their teachers. In this study, no statistically significant differences were found between principals of small enrollment and large enrollment schools, low poverty and high poverty schools, and male and female principals. Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences found in the leadership practices of elementary principals in positive climate schools when grouping for school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal.

The LPI-Self results of this study reflected many similarities in the leadership practices of elementary school principals of schools with documented positive climate in South Carolina. Based on the findings of this study, positive climate is not a factor in leadership behavior because there were no statically significant differences found in leadership practices among study participants when grouped for school size, poverty index, and gender of the principal.

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APPENDIX A – LPI PERMISSION LETTER

JOSSEY-BASS™
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News

June 25, 2013

Latoya Dixon
2149 Pavillion Court
Rock Hill, South Carolina 29732

Dear Ms. Dixon

Thank you for your request to use the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in your dissertation. We are willing to allow you to *reproduce* the instrument in written form, as outlined in your request, at no charge. If you prefer to use our electronic distribution of the LPI (vs. making copies of the print materials) you will need to separately contact Lisa Shannon (lshannon@wiley.com) directly for instructions and payment. Permission to use either the written or electronic versions requires the following agreement:

(1) That the LPI is used only for research purposes and is not sold or used in conjunction with any compensated management development activities;
(2) That copyright of the LPI, or any derivation of the instrument, is retained by Kouzes Posner International, and that the following copyright statement is included on all copies of the instrument; "Copyright 8 2003 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. All rights reserved. Used with permission",
(3) That one (1) **electronic** copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data be sent **promptly** to our attention; and,
(4) That you agree to allow us to include an abstract of your study and any other published papers utilizing the LPI on our various websites.

If the terms outlined above are acceptable, would you indicate so by signing one (1) copy of this letter and returning it to me either via email or by post to; 1548 Camino Monde San Jose, CA 95125. Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

Ellen Peterson
Permissions Editor
Epeterson4@gmail.com

I understand and agree to abide by these conditions:

(Signed) _Latoya N. Dixon_ Date: _6/25/13_

Expected Date of Completion is: _Dec. 9, 2013_

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APPENDIX B – IRB LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

July 26, 2013

Ms. Latoya Dixon
College of Education
Education Leadership & Policies
Wardlaw
Columbia, SC 29208

Re: **Pro00027591**
Study Title: *Leadership Practice Differences in Positive Climate Schools*

FYI: University of South Carolina Assurance number: FWA 00000404 / IRB Registration number: 00000240

Dear Ms. Dixon:

In accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(**2**), the referenced study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **7/26/2013**. No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. However, you must inform this office of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research protocol could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

Research related records should be retained for a minimum of three years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the USC Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, please contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager

cc: Edward Cox

Dear ESP #1,

My name is Latoya Dixon and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Carolina in the Educational Leadership Program. I am writing to request your participation in my dissertation research study of leadership practices in positive climate schools. You have been selected to be a part of this because of your positive school climate ratings on the South Carolina School Climate Survey and the high academic achievement of your school. The information gathered in this study will serve to add to current research on leadership practices. No payment or course credit will be earned by participating in this study, as the results will be used strictly for my dissertation research and all results will be kept confidential.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your responses will be reported anonymously. I will send the LPI-Self survey to you via email and would be most appreciative if you would complete it. You will submit your survey responses via the submit link at the end of the survey. The total time needed to complete the LPI-Self survey should not exceed 20 minutes.

I am most aware of your taxing schedule and I am very appreciative of your time. We are both aware of the challenges individuals face in gathering enough responses to ensure the validity of any study, thus your participation would be greatly appreciated. I will gladly speak with you over the phone or via email if you have questions or comments. Please feel free to contact me at (803) 517–6860 or email me at ldixon@rhmail.org should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Latoya N. Dixon

II. LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY - SELF
James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner ©2003

This part of the survey will give you an opportunity to express your opinion about your primary leadership traits.

Directions: To what extent does you typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement. Please **do not** record your name on this document.

1 = Almost Never 2 = Rarely   3 = Seldom   4 = Once in a While   5 =Occasionally
6 = Sometimes   7 =Fairly Often 8 = Usually   9 = Very Frequently   10 = Always

#	Description	Rating
1	I set a personal example of what I expect of others.	
2	I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	
3	I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.	
4	I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.	
5	I praise people for a job well done.	
6	I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principals and standards we have agreed on.	
7	I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.	
8	I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	
9	I actively listen to diverse points of view.	
10	I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.	
11	I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.	
12	I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	
13	I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.	
14	I treat others with dignity and respect.	
15	I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.	
16	I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance.	
17	I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	
18	I ask "what can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.	
19	I support the decisions that people make on their own.	
20	I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	
21	I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	

22	I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	
23	I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.	
24	I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	
25	I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.	
26	I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.	
27	I speak with a genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	
28	I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.	
29	I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	
30	I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contribution.	