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PRINCIPAL LONGEVITY, LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS, AND STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

by

Jennifer McLeod Swearingen

Bachelor of Science
The College of Charleston, 1997

Master of Education
The Citadel, 2000

Educational Specialist
The Citadel, 2009

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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College of Education

University of South Carolina

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Accepted by:

Zachary Kelehear, Major Professor

Peter Moyi, Committee Member

Lynn Harrill, Committee Member

Rhonda Jeffries, Committee Member

Lacy Ford, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing Pearson's correlation and other forms of data analysis, the researcher explored relationships between principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and student academic achievement in this study. Additionally, the study considered the degree to which leadership behavior ratings seem to be associated with student academic achievement.

The researcher found positive correlations among all three variables, with the strongest correlation being between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The only correlation that was found to be statistically significant was between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The researcher was also able to identify the highest and lowest rated leadership behaviors for principals with the most years of experience.

The study indicated a need for school districts, and larger scale public school institutions, to study trends of principal longevity, and principal turnover, particularly in high poverty schools and schools with a history of underachievement. Strategies should be implemented to attract and retain high performing principals. All students would greatly benefit by the existence of systems that prevent turnover of effective principals.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Public schools play an important role in our society; possibly one of the most important roles in societal advancement. So what makes a successful school – the facility, the students, the parents, the principal, or a combination of variables? Is it practicable to measure the impact of individual school variables, such as principal contribution, to overall school success? Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2013) stated:

> The fundamental challenge to measuring the impact of school leaders is separating their contributions from the many other factors that drive student achievement. For example, a school that serves largely affluent families may create the illusion that it has a great principal, when family backgrounds are the key cause of high achievement. Alternatively, a school that serves disadvantaged students may appear to be doing poorly but in fact have a great principal who is producing better outcomes than any other principal would (p. 64).

There is some debate on how much, if any, school based principals affect student achievement and overall school success. If principal influence and effectiveness are heavily weighted variables in the successful school equation, what impact could a 'good' or 'bad' principal really have on an individual school? Branch, Hanusheck, and Rivkin (2013) conducted a study to measure the impact of effective principals and stated, "Our

results indicate that highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount" (p. 63).

If principal effectiveness impacts student achievement to the degree, or extent, that Branch et al. suggest, then exploring ideas and potential correlated factors surrounding principal effectiveness might prove beneficial to the current educational system. Marzano (2005) echoes the idea of school level leadership being important by stating that:

> Principal effectiveness is central to raising student achievement. Nearly 60 % of a school's total impact on student achievement is attributable to principal and teacher effectiveness. Moreover, a comprehensive review of the research on school leadership found that the quality of the principal alone accounts for 25% of a school's impact on student achievement (Fenton, Kelemen, Norskog, Robinson, Schnur, Simmons, Taliaferro, and Walker, 2010).

If, as Marzano suggested, one fourth of school success can be contributed to the "quality of the principal", then what leadership qualities are important? The MetLife survey (2012) results indicated that:

> Principals and teachers give each other high marks but disagree somewhat on the skills and experiences school leaders need. Teachers provide a positive report on the job their principal is doing, and nearly all principals give high ratings to the classroom teachers in their schools as do teachers to the other teachers in their schools. Principals and teachers do not fully agree, however, on what experiences

> and skills they think are necessary for a principal to be effective. While principals place greatest importance on being able to use data about student performance to improve instruction as well as to lead the development of strong teaching capacity across a school, teachers say that it is most important for a principal to have had experience as a classroom teacher (p. 4).

This study explored the relationship between leadership behaviors, as determined by employee survey results, and academic achievement, as determined by student standardized test scores. Further, the study determined the correlations between principal longevity, employee survey ratings, and student academic achievement. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) piloted an educator evaluation system in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 and according to the pilot study findings:

> When considering ratings based on principals' years of experience, principals with more experience (overall and in their current school) received higher ratings. Principals with over five years of experience as a principal overall or in their current school receive the highest ratings. Considering only experience in their current school, principals who are new or only have one year of experience in their current school receive the lowest ratings (p. 14).

If previous studies suggest that principals who have been at schools for longer periods of time have higher employee survey ratings, does the same apply to the academic achievement level of students? Specifically, do principals who have been at schools for longer periods of time tend to have greater increases in their student

achievement data each year or have the capacity to maintain high student achievement data? Fuller (2012) stated:

> Indeed, a number of recent research efforts have found that principal turnover is important for three primary reasons. First, research has shown that high principal turnover often leads to greater teacher turnover (Béteille et al., 2011;Fuller et al.2007) which, in turn, can have a negative impact on student achievement and other schooling outcomes (Ronfeldt et al., 2011; Fuller et al.2007), as well as increase fiscal costs (Levy et al., 2006). For instance, Ronfeldt and his colleagues found that, "teacher turnover has a significant and negative effect on student achievement in both math and ELA and is particularly harmful to students in schools with large populations of low performing and black students" (p. 16). Second, emerging research and theory has found that principal turnover has direct negative effects on student- and school-level achievement, and that the strongest impact appears immediately after turnover occurs (Burkhauer et al. 2012; Miller, 2009; Béteille et al., 2011). Finally, research suggests that regular principal turnover can lead to teachers not investing in any change efforts and learning to simply "wait principals out." (Hargreaves et al. 2003, p. 8). As a result, it also decreases the probability of school improvement (Fullan 1991). Thus, research suggests that principals must be in place at least five years for the full implementation of a large-scale change effort, including the recruitment, retention, and capacity-building of staff (McAdams 1997; Seashore-Louis et al. 2010).

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As data become more frequently used in schools and readily available to the public, transparency of school performance and leadership accountability has become increasingly present in the field of education. With a heightened sense of urgency, school districts are searching for strategies to enhance school leadership performance that increase student academic achievement. Chapman (2005) stated:

> The recruitment, retention, and development of school principals are matters of great importance for all school systems because effective educational leadership is absolutely vital to bringing about improvements and advances in all those activities, institutions, and processes that foster the provision of education and student learning. Governments, school system authorities, school-based personnel, universities, leadership institutes, and professional associations are therefore increasingly turning their attention to the development of policies and strategies to address concerns in this area (p. 2).

Understanding leadership development could possibly enhance school performance and potentially help with educational leadership preparation at the college level, as well as contribute to the design of professional development of aspiring and current school level administrators. In addition, the study may encourage district level administrators to consider the importance of principal retention at individual schools, especially schools with high levels of poverty and/or a history of underachievement. Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, and Ikemoto (2012) stated:

> Schools that lose a first-year principal do not do well in the subsequent year, indicating that a poor match between a principal and a school can have lingering consequences. This suggests that improving the principal placement process to ensure that individuals are truly ready for and supported in their new roles could have important implications for student achievement, particularly in low-performing schools (p. 15).

This study explored relationships between principal longevity (years of experience in the same school), leadership behaviors (as measured by employee survey results), and student academic achievement (as measured by PASS – Palmetto Assessment of State Standards), providing insight on which leadership behaviors are most affected by principal longevity and which leadership behaviors appear to be untouched by principal longevity. Additionally, this study considered the degree in which leadership behavior ratings seem to be associated with student academic achievement.

Nineteen elementary school principals in the Charleston County School District (CCSD) were selected for this study. Pearson's correlation analysis was completed on the following using 2013 data: 1) principal longevity and leadership behaviors; 2) principal longevity and student academic achievement; 3) leadership behaviors and student academic achievement.

Correlations were completed in an effort to understand the relationships between principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and student academic achievement. The correlations were determined and the statistical significance for each correlation was interpreted. The researcher also analyzed the relationship between principal longevity and

certain leadership behaviors, focusing on which leadership behaviors are most affected by principal longevity and which leadership behaviors appear to be untouched by principal longevity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings?
2. What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and student academic achievement?
3. What is the correlation and statistical significance between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement?
4. Which leadership behavior ratings are highest and lowest for principals with the most years of experience?

RESEARCHER HYPOTHESIS

Research question one – What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between longevity and leadership behavior ratings.

Research question two – What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and student academic achievement? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between principal longevity and academic achievement. The

researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement.

Research question three – What is the correlation and statistical significance between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between leadership behavior ratings and academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement.

Research question four – Which leadership behavior ratings are highest and lowest for principals with the most years of experience?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

All students need access to schools that prepare them for their future pursuits. Educating, training, and preparing school based leaders are imperative to the process of providing high quality education for all children. Understanding leadership behaviors of the building level principal and the effect that these behaviors have on student achievement could possibly help with educational leadership preparation at the college level, as well as contribute to the design of professional development of aspiring and current school level administrators. In addition, the study may encourage district level administrators to consider the importance of principal retention at individual schools where they have made positive, measurable gains in student academic achievement, especially in schools with high levels of poverty and/or a history of underachievement.

METHODOLOGY

Nineteen neighborhood elementary school principals in the Charleston County School District (CCSD) were selected for the study. All 19 principals led a neighborhood school, as defined by the CCSD. A neighborhood school is defined as a school that uses a geographical attendance zone for student enrollment.

Neighborhood schools were used for this study in an effort to maintain a constant variable, in that all of these schools follow the same residency requirement policies for student enrollment. No non- neighborhood schools, or choice schools, in the CCSD were used in this study – including, but not limited to, charter, magnet, and partial magnet schools.

The leadership behaviors used in this study were found on the employee engagement survey that the CCSD gives employees to rate their direct supervisor on their leadership abilities. Teachers complete two surveys per year on their building level principal and principals complete two surveys a year on district level employees. These surveys are referred to as employee engagement surveys. The mean for the first ten leadership behaviors from the last survey window from 2013 are used in this study. Academic achievement was measured utilizing 2013 PASS scores for all students in grades 3-5 in English Language Arts (ELA). PASS scores listed reflect the percentage of students in grades 3-5 who scored met or exemplary in ELA.

This study used Pearson's correlation to analyze the following data for all 19 schools: principal longevity 2013 and leadership behaviors 2013, principal longevity

2013 and academic achievement 2013, and leadership behaviors 2013 and academic achievement 2013.

In an effort to determine which leadership behaviors, of the ten on the survey, are rated the highest with experience and which are the lowest with experience the researcher grouped the principals' level of experience into three groups: group A = 1 – 4 years of experience, group B = 5 – 8 years of experience, and group C – 9 or more years of experience. The researcher then averaged the individual leadership indicators, items 1 through 10, for each group to determine which group had the highest average and which group had the lowest average for each of the ten leadership behaviors.

This allowed the researcher to discover which three leadership behaviors were rated highest for principals with the most experience and which three leadership behaviors were rated lowest for principal with the most experience.

DELIMITATIONS

The number of schools used in this study was limited to 19 neighborhood schools. This was done in an effort to maintain a constant variable, in that all of these schools follow the same residency requirement policies for student enrollment. Choice school factors, such as academic requirements for admission, parental involvement level needed for initially choosing school choice alternatives and completing the application process, and transportation factors that can limit student access may contribute to academic achievement levels at these schools; therefore these schools were not used in this study. Choice schools can be defined as any school in the CCSD that is not considered a

neighborhood school. Choice schools include charter schools, magnet schools, partial magnet schools, constituent magnet schools, specialized or program schools.

The study will only include typical grade assignment elementary schools because the academic achievement data used in the study, PASS scores for students in grades 3-5, is only available at the elementary school level. No primary (K-2) schools were included because they do not have PASS data.

The study utilized the first ten leadership behaviors on the Studer employee engagement survey and eliminated the last four items on the survey, only using the first ten when averaging each principal's mean. The last four behaviors were eliminated because they are ratings for the CCSD superintendent, not the individual school based principal. The last four leadership behavior ratings varied from school to school depending on how the employees in the individual schools rated the superintendent in these four leadership behaviors. Each school was affected differently by the initial inclusion and the elimination of these four items; therefore these four items were eliminated from each principal's mean.

LIMITATIONS

The Studer employee engagement surveys are voluntary and anonymous. The CCSD does not require employees to take part in the surveys, nor do they have any type of tracking system that allows them to know who has completed the survey or the number of times the same employee completed the survey. Therefore, it is possible for an employee to complete the same survey multiple times. The number of participants, as well as the percentage of staff participation at each school, completing the survey varies

from school to school. The number of participants from each school is listed for each survey window but not the percentage of participants for each school. Also, the number of participants within individual schools fluctuated for each survey window. For example, one school had thirty-two participants in one survey window and seventy-five in a different survey window.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Choice School – any school in the CCSD that is not considered a neighborhood school; choice schools include charter schools, magnet schools, partial magnet schools, constituent magnet schools, specialized or program schools.

Neighborhood School – each school-aged child is assigned to a neighborhood school based on grade level and home address.

The Studer Group – a business that provides coaches that partner with organizations to create an aligned culture accountable to achieving outcomes together. They advertise that they establish, accelerate, and hardwire the necessary changes to create a culture of excellence. This leads to better transparency, higher accountability, and the ability to target and execute specific, objective results that organizations want to achieve.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium **(**ISLLC) Standards – standards that represent the broad, high-priority themes that educational leaders must address in order to promote the success of every student. These six standards call for:

Standard 1: Setting a widely shared vision for learning – an education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders;

Standard 2: Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth – an education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;

Standard 3: Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment – an education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;

Standard 4**:** Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources – an education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;

Standard 5: Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner **–** an education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner;

Standard 6: Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts – an education leader promotes the success of every student by

understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) – the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was first administered in the spring of 2009. It is administered to South Carolina public school students, including charter school students, in grades three through eight.

Pearson correlation analysis – a technique for investigating the relationship between two quantitative, continuous variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of the association between two variables.

ORGANIZATION OF DISSERTATION

After the introductory chapter, the dissertation is organized into four additional chapters. The second chapter is the literature review. The third chapter provides detailed information on the methodology used in this study. The fourth chapter presents the results of the research and provides information on the findings in regards to the established research questions. The final chapter discusses the findings of the study and makes recommendations for application in general educational settings and also provides suggestions for future research on principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and student academic achievement.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF THE BUILDING LEVEL PRINCIPAL

The role of the building level principal can be difficult to define, as the responsibilities and duties can vary from school to school. One can find a variety of defined responsibilities when reviewing literature on the role of the principal. Research is suggesting that principals contribute to school success by creating an environment of collegial and productive collaboration among staff where optimal learning environments are created versus directly affecting student academic outcomes through identified leadership behaviors or roles (MetLife Project, 2012).

Habegger (2008) stated "the job description of a school principal cannot be adequately described in a 1,000-word essay, let alone in a short paragraph; today's principal is constantly multitasking and shifting roles at a moment's notice". The principal's role and responsibilities can be dependent upon the school level, whether elementary, middle, or high school. Hull (2012) stated that "principals also have more of an impact at the lower grades. As a matter of fact, principals have the greatest impact in elementary schools, less over middle schools, and the least over high schools" (Leithwood, et al. 2004, Seashore-Louis, et al. 2010). Roles can also differ based on the type of program the school offers, such as an arts infusion or Montessori focus.

Research suggests that an important part of a principal's role is providing a positive and collaborative school culture where collegial, productive relationships are

established. Creating a positive school culture allows many important educational and operational components to occur, such as teacher collaboration, parental involvement, etc. The role of the principal can also be influenced by the particular needs of the students served.

Principals that serve in high performing schools with students of low socioeconomic status report the importance of developing relationships with both teachers and students, as students from backgrounds of poverty report that positive adult and student relationships are key motivators for success. These principals also report that the greatest learning occurs when positive relationships are developed and nurtured in school settings that allow for these connections to be made; and that it is also important for connections to be made between students' personal knowledge and experiences and the content standards (Habegger, 2008).

The CCSD is the school district used in this study. It is assumed that the principal position description for individual school districts provides the expected role and responsibilities of the principal within that district. A general principal position description is available on the CCSD website.

The description states:

> Eighty-five percent of the time for this position should be used for these primary functions: Plans, organizes and directs the activities of a school; Cultivates a vision for the school with measurable goals and strategies for implementation; Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the school district's policies, procedures and applicable laws; Utilizes data to develop and monitor educational goals and initiatives that promote improved academic achievement

> for all students; Utilizes data to develop and monitor student behavioral/health initiatives; Confers with teachers and students concerning educational and behavioral initiatives in the school; Supervises the instructional program and assists teachers in personal growth improvement; Manages subordinate supervisors, teaching staff and support staff within assigned school; Plans, assigns and directs employees' work responsibilities; Assumes responsibility for interviewing, hiring, training and appraising the work performance of all employees; Assumes responsibility for the overall direction, coordination and evaluation of all activities within assigned school; Plans and monitors the school budgets, including the requisition and allocation of supplies, equipment and instructional materials as needed; Directs preparation of class schedules, cumulative records and attendance reports; Addresses concerns and resolves problems; Provides for the safety and security of all students and staff by walking about the school campus and facility and planning and directing building maintenance; Develops and implements a professional growth plan; Establishes and maintains relationships with colleges, community organizations and other schools to coordinate educational services.

The position description states that the other fifteen percent of the time should be used to "perform all duties as assigned by supervisor".

The principal position description provided by the CCSD is reflected, generally, in the leadership behaviors used on the employee engagement survey. For example, leadership behavior one on the employee engagement survey is my principal provides good processes and resources for me to do my job. This leadership behavior can be

aligned to the statement in the CCSD principal position description "plans and monitors the school budgets, including the requisition and allocation of supplies, equipment and instructional materials as needed". If the principal is the instructional leader of the school, as many school districts assume and expect, then what impact does a school based leader have on the overall success of the school, more specifically the school climate as indicated by employee survey results and student academic achievement as indicated by standardized test scores?

Many would agree that principal leadership is a factor in overall school success; the debate lies in how much of a factor it is in the overall successful school equation. Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (as cited in Gill, 2012) stated that "in a six-year study analyzing data from 180 schools in nine states, researchers from the University of Minnesota and Toronto found that leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors as an influence on student learning" (pp. 24-25).

Current educational research confirms that both teacher quality and principal leadership are key priorities for school reform. Cultivating and improving principal leadership is critical as research continues to suggest that effective principals create school climates that allow for individual school related factors to combine and provide an environment where increased student achievement can occur (The Wallace Foundation, 2012).

Additionally, the Wallace Foundation (2012) suggests that school districts that pair schools with students that have academically at-risk characteristics and inexperienced principals can be systemically contributing to the achievement gap among groups of students. Branch et. al. (2013) stated:

> Texas schools serving a high proportion of low-income students are more likely to have first-year principals and less likely to have leaders who have been at the school at least six years. The least effective principals are also least likely to remain in their current position and more likely to leave the public school system entirely (p. 67).

Research is suggesting that some school districts place first year principals, or relatively inexperienced principals, in schools that have the most challenges related to student achievement and that there may be a need for school districts to systemically motivate and encourage principals to go to or remain at historically underachieving schools. Miller (2009) stated:

> Principal turnover is a common phenomenon nationwide. Using administrative data from Texas, Cullen and Mazzeo (2008) report that about 22% of principals switch jobs from one year to the next. Papa Jr. (2007) follows several cohorts of new principals hired in New York finds that after four years only 46% are still principals at the same school. Gates et al. (2006) followed a cohort of new principals and found that after six years, only 37% of the Illinois cohort and 21% of the North Carolina cohort remained principals at the same school. In addition, it is known that more turnover takes place at low performing schools (Besley and Machin (2008) and Cullen and Mazzeo (2008)), schools located in high poverty communities, (Partlow and Ridenour (2008)), and schools with more minority and limited English proficiency students (Gates et al. (2006) and Papa Jr. (2007)) (pp. 1-2).

Literature is suggesting that experienced principals may contribute to better academic outcomes for students; therefore, more research is needed on the importance of connecting the most experienced principals, with positive, measurable academic data, with schools that have a history of academic underachievement.

LEADERSHIP STANDARDS AND BEHAVIORS

It may be difficult to identify, in measurable terms, the weight of principal influence; however, discovering patterns in leadership behaviors associated with environments of high academic achievement could prove beneficial to training and educating future school building level leaders as well as contribute to principal professional development plans for school districts.

One factor to consider in relation to leadership behaviors is that school districts play an important role in the level of freedom, sometimes referred to as autonomy, that school based leaders have within their position. That can have great impact on their behaviors and, in turn, their level of effectiveness and success. Branch, et. al. (2013) stated that "there are many channels through which principals influence school quality, although the precise mechanisms likely vary across districts with the regulatory and institutional structures that define principal authority" (p. 69).

Principals must function within the parameters that a school district provides for them. There may be times when a principal might not agree with the policies that are in place but must abide by these policies as required. Principals must also possess certain academic requirements and leadership behaviors in order to apply for these positions, depending on the needs of school districts.

Key leadership standards and behaviors exist in most states and are often based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. The professionalization of the standards only holds true when individual school districts utilize them to recruit, develop, and evaluate school based leaders and leadership systems (Mendels and Mitgang, 2013).

The CCSD conducts the employee engagement surveys in an effort to create a way to connect measurable data points with identified leadership behavior standards. Clifford, Menon, Gangi, Condon, and Hornung (2012) support the idea of the need for school districts to partner leadership standards with principal performance measurement by stating that "although professional standards are in place to clearly articulate what principals should know and do, states and school districts are often challenged to determine how to measure principal performance in ways that are fair, systematic, and useful" (p. 1).

The CCSD has selected the following ten leadership behaviors for the employee engagement survey: my principal/supervisor provides good processes and resources for me to do my job, my principal/supervisor has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee, principal/supervisor led staff meetings make efficient use of time and are productive, my principal/supervisor recognizes good performance, my principal/supervisor demonstrates a genuine care for my welfare, my principal/supervisor makes the best use of available funds, my principal/supervisor consults me on the decisions that affect my job, the expectations for judging my performance are clear, my principal/supervisor provides the support needed to accomplish my work objectives, and

my principal/supervisor has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRINCIPAL LONGEVITY, LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS, AND STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

An important consideration when analyzing leadership behaviors, through employee engagement surveys, might be the number of years a principal has been at the school in which they are being rated. Some data trends indicate that principals that have been at schools for longer periods of time have higher employee ratings. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) piloted an educator evaluation system in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. The pilot study revealed:

> Principals with over five years of experience as a principal, overall or in their current school, receive the highest ratings. Considering only experience in their current school, principals who are new or only have one year of experience in their current school receive the lowest ratings (p. 14).

District level employees should consider evidence presented in recent educational research that suggests that school improvement occurs most often when building level leadership is consistent. Some research is suggesting that school improvement takes time and that it takes five to seven years for a principal to provide beneficial impact to a school. High principal turnover is associated with a lack of a shared vision by employees, a decreased commitment to school initiatives and school improvement goals, and can result in a poor school climate (The Wallace Foundation, 2012).

It often takes time and experiences for a building level principal to build a level of trust, or lack thereof, with their staff. That level of trust would typically be reflected in employee engagement survey results. It is also suggested that high turnover in the principal position at a school can possibly decrease moral which may, in turn, decrease employee engagement survey ratings.

Some would agree that typically the longer a person spends in a profession, the better they become at their craft. This theory could apply to many professions. Some research indicates that principals are more effective, as indicated by student achievement data, with experience. Hull (2012) stated:

> Principals become more effective as they gain more experience. Just as teachers become more effective with experience, so do principals, especially in their first three years (Clark, Martorell and Rockoff 2009). Furthermore, no matter how effective a principal was at his or her previous school, when he or she transfers to a new school it takes approximately five years to fully stabilize and improve the teaching staff as well as fully implement policies and practices to positively impact the school's performance (Seashore-Louis, et al. 2010). Effective principals still make significant improvements in their first few years; however, their effectiveness definitely increases over time.

Today's building level principal is required to continually conduct needs assessments regarding student achievement and each year these data points and needs change. Research is supporting the idea that gaining traction in efforts to increase academic achievement is more likely to occur when the same principal stays in the same school over time; yet data on principal movement is suggesting that this is not occurring.

Toner (2013) stated that across the country, schools are increasingly churning through principals – and the problem is worse in urban districts with dwindling resources; nearly one-fifth of Milwaukee's public schools have new principals this year.

Principals have personalized ideas and perspectives on what they deem important; and the strategies they incorporate to address these identified areas of importance vary from person to person. If a school is experiencing high principal turnover it can be difficult for the school to experience consistent academic success or continual gains. Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff (2009) summarize research conducted in New York City (NYC) by stating:

> An important finding to emerge from our analysis is the positive impact of principal experience, particularly over the first few years of principals' careers. Since this implies that new, inexperienced principals will, on average, hurt school performance, it has at least two implications. First, it implies that policies that lengthen principals' careers will, on average, improve school performance, since there will be fewer first-year principals. Second, it implies that a positive correlation between principal experience and student background may exacerbate inequality within the NYC education system (p. 34).

Today's most challenging schools, serving the most challenging students, are often being lead by principals and leadership teams with the least amount of experience. Literature reviewed connects inexperienced leadership to adverse impacts on teacher retention, student achievement, and overall school climate. Knowing that principal and teacher effectiveness are two indicators closely aligned with student achievement, school

districts should be aware that principal turnover can deter the mission of high quality school systems.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The roles and responsibilities of the building level principal can vary, depending on the school level (elementary, middle, or high school) and the type of school (i.e. arts infused, Montessori, or traditional). Research indicates that principal leadership is a factor in overall school success. However, it can be difficult to isolate the contribution of individual variables, such as principal longevity or leadership behaviors, in the overall success of the school. More research is needed on initiatives that current public school districts are implementing to retain effective principals in their current schools and more study is needed on the patterns in leadership behaviors that contribute to positive student academic achievement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher used Pearson's correlation analyses in the study to investigate the relationships among principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and academic achievement. Principal longevity is the number of years a principal has been at their current school. The leadership behaviors are selected by the CCSD and are a part of the Studer employee engagement survey. The employee engagement survey is given to all employees in the CCSD twice per school year and was given in December and March during the 2012-2013 school year. Each principal is scored on a scale of 0-5 on the ten leadership behaviors selected by the CCSD. The data from the last survey window in 2013 was used for the correlations. 2013 PASS scores for all students in grades 3-5 in ELA were used in this study. PASS score figures listed reflect the percentages of students in grades 3-5 who scored met or exemplary in ELA.

Pearson's correlation analysis was completed for each of the first three research questions. Additionally, in an effort to determine which leadership behaviors, of the ten on the survey, were the highest with experience and which were the lowest with experience the researcher grouped the principals into three groups based on years of experience: group A = 1 – 4 years of experience; group B = 5 – 8 years of experience; and group C = 9 or more years of experience. The researcher averaged the individual leadership indicators, items 1 through 10, for each group to determine which group had

the highest and which group had the lowest for each of the ten leadership behaviors. This allowed the researcher to discover which three leadership behaviors were highest with experience and which three leadership behaviors were the lowest with experience. More specifically, the researcher identified which three behaviors were the highest and which behaviors were the lowest for all three groups of principals.

PARTICIPANTS

Nineteen neighborhood elementary school principals in the Charleston County School District (CCSD) were selected for the study. A neighborhood school is defined as a school that uses a geographical attendance zone for student enrollment. All nineteen principals led a neighborhood school, as defined by the CCSD, during the 2012-2013 school year.

Neighborhood schools were used for this study in an effort to maintain a constant variable in that all of these schools follow the same policies for student enrollment. Choice school factors, such as academic requirements for admission, parental involvement level needed for initially choosing school choice alternatives and completing the application process, and transportation factors that can limit student access may contribute to academic achievement levels at these schools; therefore these schools were not used in this study. No choice schools in the Charleston County School District were used in this study – including, but not limited to, charter, magnet, and partial magnet schools.

Schools selected for the study: Angel Oak Elementary School, Belle Hall Elementary School, Drayton Hall Elementary School, Goodwin Elementary School,

Harbor View Elementary School, James Island Elementary School, Ladson Elementary School, Mary Ford Elementary School, Mt. Pleasant Academy Elementary School, Mt. Zion Elementary School, Oakland Elementary School, Pepperhill Elementary School, Charles Pinckney Elementary School, Pinehurst Elementary School, Springfield Elementary School, Stiles Point Elementary School, Stono Park Elementary School, Sullivans Island Elementary School, and Whitesides Elementary School.

INSTRUMENTS

The number of years each principal has been at their current school, known as principal longevity, can be found on the South Carolina Department of Education's website. Every public school in South Carolina is given a school report card each year and one of the data points listed on the school's report card is the number of years the principal has been at that school at the end of that school year.

The CCSD contracts with The Studer Group to assess school district leadership positions, including building level principals. Principals are assessed on ten leadership behaviors, selected by the CCSD. The behaviors are as follows:

1 – My principal/supervisor provides good processes and resources for me to do my job.

2 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee.

3 – Principal/supervisor led staff meetings make efficient use of time and are productive.

4 – My principal/supervisor recognizes good performance.

5 – My principal/supervisor demonstrates a genuine care for my welfare.

6 – My principal/supervisor makes the best use of available funds.

7 – My principal/supervisor consults me on the decisions that affect my job.

8 – The expectations for judging my performance are clear.

9 – My principal/supervisor provides the support needed to accomplish my work objectives.

10 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance.

The survey is given to all employees twice per school year and was given in December and March during the 2012-2013 school year. Each principal is rated on a scale of 0-5 by their employees on the ten leadership behaviors selected by the CCSD. Using the Likert scale, Studer is able to quantify the ratings as follows:

1 – strongly disagree

2 – disagree

3 – mixed feelings

4 – agree

5 – strongly agree

Four additional survey questions, questions 11-14, are included on the building level principal's overall average. However, these survey questions are on the CCSD superintendent's leadership behaviors. Therefore, the last four questions were eliminated when calculating each principal's mean score for each leadership behavior. The last four questions are: the superintendent manages district finances effectively, the superintendent

uses a variety of methods to promote effective communication throughout the district, the superintendent makes informed decisions based on the best interest of the district, and if given a choice, I would recommend that a parent select this district for his or her child.

The CCSD contracts the Studer Group to assist in evaluating school based principals and district office staff. The Studer Group provides the employee engagement surveys for the CCSD as part of their K12 Accountability System and Continuous Improvement Process department. Initially The Studer Group worked in the health care field; however, they have expanded into the educational field. The Studer Group terms their expansion into the educational field initiative Evidence Based Leadership (EBL) K12. The Studer Group website provided the following statement as to the history of their involvement in the educational field:

> For the past 15 years, Studer Group coaches have worked side by side with leaders in healthcare organizations to help them achieve measurable results that produce positive clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction, and employee engagement. In 2010, Dr. Janet Pilcher initiated the education division to apply the Evidence-Based Leadership Framework in school districts. Dr. Pilcher started the first effort in the School District of Janesville to pilot the model and make adaptations to align to K12 education. Since the inception of Studer Education, Dr. Robin Largue and Dr. Pilcher have coached several early adopters – these early adopters have seen improvements in student achievement, employee engagement, parent satisfaction, district support services, and financial efficiencies and productivity. As part of the EBL K12, employee engagement is defined as the extent to which leaders provide a work environment that supports

and coaches employees to reach their highest potential. The Studer Education Employee Engagement Survey measures this construct.

In this study, academic achievement was measured using 2013 Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) ELA scores for students in grades 3-5 in all nineteen schools. The PASS data represented is the percent of all students scoring met and exemplary in ELA. This data is reported on the school's annual report card.

PROCEDURES

The researcher utilized Pearson's correlations in the study to analyze the relationships between principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and academic achievement. Principal longevity is the number of years a principal has been at their current school. The leadership behaviors are selected by the CCSD and are a part of the Studer employee engagement survey. The employee engagement survey data from the last survey window for the 2012-2013 was used in the correlations. PASS scores for all students in grades 3-5 in ELA were used in this study. PASS score figures listed reflect percentage of students in grades 3-5 who scored met or exemplary in ELA.

The researcher completed three correlations on the following: principal longevity and employee survey results, principal longevity and student academic achievement, and employee survey results and student academic achievement.

Additionally, in an effort to determine which leadership behaviors, of the ten on the survey, were rated highest with principal experience and which were rated lowest with principal experience the researcher grouped the principals into three groups based on their years of experience. These groups are as follows: group A = 1-4 years of experience, group B = 5-8 years of experience and group C = 9 or more years of experience. The researcher averaged the individual leadership indicators, items 1 through 10, for each group to determine which group had the highest and which group had the lowest for each of the ten leadership behaviors. This allowed the researcher to discover which three leadership behaviors were rated highest with experience and which three leadership behaviors were rated lowest with experience.

SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

The researcher utilized Pearson's correlation to analyze the relationships among principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and academic achievement. The analysis of these correlations in the CCSD between principal longevity and high ratings on employee engagement surveys on certain leadership behaviors were analyzed in an effort to identify which leadership behaviors might need to be further developed through principal induction programs or programs for development of school based leaders in their first few years of leadership. High ratings on the employee engagement survey on certain leadership behaviors in correlation to high student achievement were analyzed as well. Studying the relationships among these three variables could provide an outline of best practice for training and preparing school based principals at the college level, as well as at the school district level, through professional development for school based leaders.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

DATA OVERVIEW

Nineteen neighborhood elementary school principals in the CCSD were selected for the study. All nineteen principals led a neighborhood school, as defined by the CCSD, during the 2012-2013 school year. A neighborhood school is defined as a school that uses a geographical attendance zone for student enrollment.

Only neighborhood schools were used for this study in an effort to maintain a constant variable, in that all of these schools follow the same residency requirement policies for student enrollment. Choice school factors, such as academic requirements for admission, parental involvement level needed for initially choosing school choice alternatives and completing the application process, and transportation factors that can limit student access may contribute to academic achievement levels at these schools; therefore these schools were not used in this study. No choice schools in the CCSD were used in this study – including, but not limited to, charter, magnet, and partial magnet schools.

The name of each school and the number of years the principal had been at that school at the end of the 2012-2013 school year are listed in the table below.

Table 4.1

Elementary School and Principal's Years of Experience

Elementary School	Years of Experience
Angel Oak	5
Belle Hall	5
Drayton Hall	9
Goodwin	5
Harbor View	3
James Island	3
Ladson	3
Mary Ford	3
Mt. Pleasant Academy	25
Mt. Zion	9
Oakland	5
Pepperhill	6
Pinckney	9
Pinehurst	4
Springfield	3
Stiles Point	17
Stono Park	3
Sullivan's Island	9
Whitesides	10

South Carolina Department of Education

Leadership behaviors used in this study are found on the employee engagement survey. The CCSD gives employees these surveys to rate their direct supervisor on their leadership behaviors. Teachers complete two surveys per year on their building level principal and principals complete two surveys a year on district level employees. The mean for the first ten leadership behaviors from the last survey window from 2013 were used in this study. The following tables, Table 4.2 through Table 4.11, display the school name and the employee engagement survey rating score for each leadership behavior for each school.

Table 4.2

Leadership Behavior One – My principal provides good processes and resources for me to do my job.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.62
Belle Hall	4.95
Drayton Hall	4.72
Goodwin	4.71
Harbor View	4.43
James Island	3.92
Ladson	4.10
Mary Ford	4.61
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.52
Mt. Zion	4.20
Oakland	4.48
Pepperhill	4.45
Pinckney	4.83
Pinehurst	4.40
Springfield	3.30
Stiles Point	4.79
Stono Park	4.47
Sullivan's Island	4.46
Whitesides	4.44

Charleston County School District

Table 4.3

Leadership Behavior Two – My principal has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.48
Belle Hall	4.83
Drayton Hall	4.28
Goodwin	4.22
Harbor View	4.11
James Island	4.00
Ladson	3.72
Mary Ford	4.35
Mt. Pleasant Academy	3.84
Mt. Zion	4.20
Oakland	3.88
Pepperhill	4.11
Pinckney	4.55
Pinehurst	4.38
Springfield	3.07
Stiles Point	4.43
Stono Park	4.47
Sullivan's Island	4.17
Whitesides	4.15

Charleston County School District

Table 4.4

Leadership Behavior Three – Principal led staff meetings make efficient use of my time and are productive.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.05
Belle Hall	4.95
Drayton Hall	4.64
Goodwin	4.68
Harbor View	4.49
James Island	3.54
Ladson	3.91
Mary Ford	4.36
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.52
Mt. Zion	4.20
Oakland	4.40
Pepperhill	4.10
Pinckney	4.90
Pinehurst	4.52
Springfield	3.19
Stiles Point	4.68
Stono Park	4.59
Sullivan's Island	4.17
Whitesides	4.34

Charleston County School District

Table 4.5

Leadership Behavior Four – My principal recognizes good performance.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.62
Belle Hall	4.85
Drayton Hall	4.32
Goodwin	4.41
Harbor View	4.40
James Island	3.96
Ladson	3.78
Mary Ford	4.26
Mt. Pleasant Academy	3.92
Mt. Zion	3.60
Oakland	3.65
Pepperhill	4.41
Pinckney	4.67
Pinehurst	4.34
Springfield	2.89
Stiles Point	4.36
Stono Park	4.59
Sullivan's Island	4.08
Whitesides	4.17

Charleston County School District

Table 4.6

Leadership Behavior Five – My principal demonstrates a genuine concern for my welfare.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.52
Belle Hall	4.95
Drayton Hall	4.48
Goodwin	4.41
Harbor View	4.56
James Island	3.92
Ladson	3.87
Mary Ford	4.48
Mt. Pleasant Academy	3.76
Mt. Zion	4.20
Oakland	4.23
Pepperhill	4.52
Pinckney	4.74
Pinehurst	4.16
Springfield	2.96
Stiles Point	4.50
Stono Park	4.47
Sullivan's Island	4.54
Whitesides	4.61

Charleston County School District

Table 4.7

Leadership Behavior Six – My principal makes the best use of available funds.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.38
Belle Hall	4.90
Drayton Hall	4.72
Goodwin	4.68
Harbor View	4.54
James Island	3.50
Ladson	3.87
Mary Ford	4.13
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.32
Mt. Zion	4.00
Oakland	4.27
Pepperhill	4.59
Pinckney	4.81
Pinehurst	4.50
Springfield	3.31
Stiles Point	4.79
Stono Park	4.41
Sullivan's Island	4.25
Whitesides	4.45

Charleston County School District

Table 4.8

Leadership Behavior Seven – My principal consults me on decisions that affect my job.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.14
Belle Hall	4.90
Drayton Hall	4.40
Goodwin	4.34
Harbor View	4.32
James Island	3.54
Ladson	3.72
Mary Ford	4.26
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.28
Mt. Zion	3.60
Oakland	3.88
Pepperhill	4.14
Pinckney	4.60
Pinehurst	4.27
Springfield	2.63
Stiles Point	4.36
Stono Park	4.41
Sullivan's Island	4.38
Whitesides	4.00

Charleston County School District

Table 4.9

Leadership Behavior Eight – The expectations for judging my performance are clear.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.48
Belle Hall	4.93
Drayton Hall	4.40
Goodwin	4.71
Harbor View	4.37
James Island	4.42
Ladson	4.16
Mary Ford	4.52
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.32
Mt. Zion	4.20
Oakland	4.04
Pepperhill	4.24
Pinckney	4.74
Pinehurst	4.40
Springfield	3.19
Stiles Point	4.59
Stono Park	4.59
Sullivan's Island	4.38
Whitesides	4.44

Charleston County School District

Table 4.10

Leadership Behavior Nine – My principal provides the support needed to accomplish my work objectives.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.43
Belle Hall	4.95
Drayton Hall	4.60
Goodwin	4.56
Harbor View	4.43
James Island	3.83
Ladson	3.94
Mary Ford	4.35
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.20
Mt. Zion	4.00
Oakland	4.23
Pepperhill	4.38
Pinckney	4.71
Pinehurst	4.42
Springfield	2.96
Stiles Point	4.71
Stono Park	4.47
Sullivan's Island	4.50
Whitesides	4.44

Charleston County School District

Table 4.11

Leadership Behavior Ten – My principal has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance.

Elementary School	Rating
Angel Oak	4.33
Belle Hall	4.95
Drayton Hall	4.44
Goodwin	4.34
Harbor View	4.23
James Island	4.17
Ladson	3.87
Mary Ford	4.35
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.08
Mt. Zion	3.40
Oakland	3.88
Pepperhill	4.07
Pinckney	4.64
Pinehurst	4.54
Springfield	3.19
Stiles Point	4.54
Stono Park	4.47
Sullivan's Island	4.21
Whitesides	4.17

Charleston County School District

The researcher averaged each leadership behavior to identify which behaviors had the highest and lowest ratings for the 19 schools in the study. The following table displays this information.

Table 4.12

Leadership Behavior Averages for All Schools

Leadership Behavior	Average	Rank (Highest to Lowest)
One	4.44	1
Two	4.17	Tie 8
Three	4.33	4
Four	4.17	Tie 9
Five	4.31	6
Six	4.34	3
Seven	4.11	10
Eight	4.37	2
Nine	4.32	5
Ten	4.20	7

The highest rated leadership behavior was behavior one – My principal provides good processes and resources for me to do my job. The second highest rated leadership behavior was behavior eight – The expectations for judging my performance are clear. The third highest rated leadership behavior is behavior six – My principal makes the best use of available funds.

The lowest rated leadership behavior was behavior seven – My principal consults me on decisions that affect my job. There was a tie for the second lowest rated leadership behavior between behaviors two – My principal has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee and behavior four – My principal recognizes good performance. The third

lowest rated leadership behavior was behavior ten – My principal has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance.

The researcher observed that the highest rated behaviors for the 19 schools are more measurable and the lowest rated behaviors are somewhat less measurable. Although all ten of the leadership behaviors allow for subjective, versus objective, thought by employees completing the survey, it is the belief of the researcher that the 19 principals in the study were rated higher when the behavior was able to be more clearly measured.

The study utilized the first ten leadership behaviors on the Studer employee engagement survey and eliminated the last four items on the survey, only using the first ten when averaging each principal's mean. The last four behaviors were eliminated because they are ratings for the CCSD superintendent, not the individual school based principal. The last four leadership behavior ratings varied from school to school depending on how the employees in the individual schools rated the superintendent on these four leadership behaviors.

Each school was affected differently by the initial inclusion and the elimination of these four items; therefore these four items were eliminated from each principal's mean. The following table displays the differentials:

Table 4.13

Leadership Behavior Differentials

Elementary School	All 14 Leadership Behaviors	Without Behaviors 11-14	Differential
Angel Oak	4.33	4.405	+0.075
Belle Hall	4.79	4.916	+0.126
Drayton Hall	4.30	4.500	+0.200
Goodwin	4.34	4.506	+0.166
Harbor View	4.27	4.388	+0.118
James Island	3.80	3.880	+0.080
Ladson	3.95	3.894	-0.056
Mary Ford	4.25	4.367	+0.117
Mt. Pleasant	4.21	4.176	-0.034
Mt. Zion	3.74	3.960	+0.220
Oakland	4.12	4.094	-0.026
Pepperhill	4.22	4.301	+0.081
Pinckney	4.62	4.719	+0.099
Pinehurst	4.31	4.393	+0.083
Springfield	3.26	3.069	-0.191
Stiles Point	4.39	4.575	+0.185
Stono Park	4.43	4.494	+0.064
Sullivan's Island	4.35	4.339	-0.011
Whitesides	4.25	4.323	+0.073

Charleston County School District

Academic achievement was measured utilizing 2013 PASS scores for all students in grades 3-5 in English Language Arts (ELA). PASS scores listed reflect percentage of students in grades 3-5 who scored met or exemplary in ELA. The following table displays the PASS scores for each school:

Table 4.14

PASS Percent Met and Exemplary in English Language Arts

Elementary School	% Met & Exemplary
Angel Oak	66.3
Belle Hall	94.8
Drayton Hall	87.4
Goodwin	73.0
Harbor View	92.3
James Island	80.6
Ladson	72.5
Mary Ford	77.5
Mt. Pleasant Academy	96.7
Mt. Zion	75.3
Oakland	84.7
Pepperhill	75.0
Pinckney	95.6
Pinehurst	63.0
Springfield	87.3
Stiles Point	94.0
Stono Park	87.2
Sullivan's Island	97.9
Whitesides	89.5

South Carolina Department of Education

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

Research question one – What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between longevity and leadership behavior ratings.

The researcher found that there was a positive correlation between principal longevity and the overall mean of the ten leadership behaviors for each school. Using a one tailed test, an alpha level of 0.05, a degree of freedom of 17, and the Table of Critical

Values for Pearson's r, the researcher determined that in order for this correlation to be considered statistically significant, the correlation would need to be higher than 0.389. The value of r for this correlation is 0.1599. Although this is a positive correlation, the relationship between principal longevity and leadership behaviors does not have statistical significance.

The following table displays the name of each school, the number of years the principal had been at the school as of 2013, and the mean of the ten leadership behaviors for each principal. The correlation between principal longevity and overall leadership behavior ratings is listed at the bottom of the table:

Table 4.15

Principal Longevity and Overall Leadership Behavior Rating

School Name	Longevity	Overall Rating
Angel Oak	5	4.405
Belle Hall	5	4.916
Drayton Hall	9	4.500
Goodwin	5	4.506
Harbor View	3	4.388
James Island	3	3.880
Ladson	3	3.894
Mary Ford	3	4.367
Mt. Pleasant Academy	25	4.176
Mt. Zion	9	3.960
Oakland	5	4.094
Pepperhill	6	4.301
Pinckney	9	4.719
Pinehurst	4	4.393
Springfield	3	3.069
Stiles Point	17	4.575
Stono Park	3	4.494
Sullivans Island	9	4.339
Whitesides	10	4.323
Longevity and Overall Rating Correlation	0.159856894	

The null hypothesis was found to be incorrect because there was a correlation between principal longevity and the overall mean of the ten leadership behaviors for each school. The researcher's hypothesis was correct; however the strength of the correlation was weaker than the researcher expected and statistically insignificant.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

Research question two – What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and student academic achievement? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement.

The researcher found that there was a positive correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement. Using a one tailed test, an alpha level of 0.05, a degree of freedom of 17, and the Table of Critical Values for Pearson's r, the researcher determined that in order for this correlation to be considered statistically significant, the correlation would need to be higher than 0.389. The value of r for this correlation is 0.4795. This is a positive correlation and determined to be statistically significant.

The following table displays the name of the school, the number of years the principal had been at the school as of 2013, and the percent of students in grades 3-5 that scored met or exemplary on the ELA section of the 2013 PASS test. The correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement is listed at the bottom of this table:

Table 4.16

Principal Longevity and Student Academic Achievement

School Name	Longevity	PASS
Angel Oak	5	66.3
Belle Hall	5	94.8
Drayton Hall	9	87.43
Goodwin	5	73
Harbor View	3	92.3
James Island	3	80.6
Ladson	3	72.5
Mary Ford	3	77.5
Mt. Pleasant Academy	25	96.7
Mt. Zion	9	75.3
Oakland	5	84.7
Pepperhill	6	75
Pinckney	9	95.6
Pinehurst	4	63
Springfield	3	87.3
Stiles Point	17	94
Stono Park	3	87.2
Sullivans Island	9	97.9
Whitesides	10	89.5
Longevity and PASS Correlation	0.4795	

The null hypothesis was found to be incorrect because there was a correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis was correct. The researcher recognizes that this correlation is the strongest among the correlations performed and also the only correlation that was considered statistically significant.

In an effort to analyze additional data related to principal longevity and student academic achievement, the researcher divided the principals into three categories. These categories are as follows: group A are principals with 1 – 4 years of experience, group B are principals with 5 – 8 years of experience, and group C are principals with 9 or more

years of experience. The principal longevity groups are as follows: Group A (n=7): Harbor View (3), James Island (3), Ladson (3), Mary Ford (3), Pinehurst (4), Springfield (3), Stono Park (3); Group B (n=5): Angel Oak (5), Belle Hall (5), Goodwin (5), Oakland (5), Pepperhill (6); and Group C (n=7): Drayton Hall (9), Mt Pleasant Academy (25), Mt. Zion (9), Pinckney (9), Stiles Point (17), Sullivans Island (9), Whitesides (10).

The researcher calculated the average PASS scores for each of the groups to further analyze the relationship between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The table below provides this information:

Table 4.17

Average PASS Scores with Years of Experience

School	Number of Years	PASS
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	92.3
James Island	3	80.6
Ladson	3	72.5
Mary Ford	3	77.5
Pinehurst	4	63.0
Springfield	3	87.3
Stono Park	3	87.2
Group A Averages	3.14	80.1
	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	66.3
Belle Hall	5	94.8
Goodwin	5	73.0
Oakland	5	84.7
Pepperhill	6	75.0
Group B Averages	5.20	78.8
	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	87.4
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	96.7
Mt. Zion	9	75.3
Pinckney	9	95.6
Stiles Point	17	94.0
Sullivans Island	9	97.9
Whitesides	10	89.5
Group C Averages	12.57	90.9

Group C, the group with the most experience, had the highest level of student academic achievement, with 90.9 % of students scoring met or exemplary on the 2013 ELA section of the PASS test. However, group A, the group with the least amount of experience, outscored group B by 1.3 percentile points. It is the belief of the researcher that the outcome of group A outscoring group B by 1.3 percentile points may be attributed to a

small sample size and that a study using a larger sample size could produce different and, potentially, more reliable data.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

Research question three – What is the correlation and statistical significance between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement.

The researcher found that there was a positive correlation between the overall mean of the ten leadership behaviors for each school and student academic achievement for each school. Using a one tailed test, an alpha level of 0.05, a degree of freedom of 17, and the Table of Critical Values for Pearson's r, the researcher determined that in order for this correlation to be considered statistically significant, the correlation would need to be higher than 0.389. The value of r for this correlation is 0.1791. Although this is a positive correlation, the relationship between principal longevity and leadership behaviors does not have statistical significance.

The following table displays the school name, the overall employee engagement survey rating per school, and the percent of students in grades 3-5 that scored met or exemplary on the ELA section of the 2013 PASS test. The correlation between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement is listed at the bottom of this table:

Table 4.18

Overall Leadership Behavior Rating and Student Academic Achievement

School Name	Rating	PASS
Angel Oak	4.405	66.3
Belle Hall	4.916	94.8
Drayton Hall	4.500	87.43
Goodwin	4.506	73
Harbor View	4.388	92.3
James Island	3.880	80.6
Ladson	3.894	72.5
Mary Ford	4.367	77.5
Mt. Pleasant Academy	4.176	96.7
Mt. Zion	3.960	75.3
Oakland	4.094	84.7
Pepperhill	4.301	75
Pinckney	4.719	95.6
Pinehurst	4.393	63
Springfield	3.069	87.3
Stiles Point	4.575	94
Stono Park	4.494	87.2
Sullivans Island	4.339	97.9
Whitesides	4.323	89.5
Rating and PASS Correlation	0.1791	

The null hypothesis was found to be incorrect because there was a correlation between the overall mean of the ten leadership behaviors and student academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis was correct; however the strength of the correlation was weaker than the researcher expected and statistically insignificant.

RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

Research question four – Which leadership behavior ratings are highest and lowest for principals with the most years of experience? The following three behaviors were rated highest for principals with the most years of experience (group C): my

principal/supervisor provides good processes and resources for me to do my job, principal/supervisor led staff meetings make efficient use of time and are productive, and my principal/supervisor makes the best use of available funds.

Due to a tie for third lowest rated leadership behavior for group C the following four behaviors were rated lowest for principals with the most years of experience (group C): my principal/supervisor recognizes good performance, my principal/supervisor has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance, and the third lowest was a tie between two behaviors, my principal/supervisor has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee and my principal/supervisor consults me on the decisions that affect my job. The following tables display this information:

Table 4.19

Highest Rated Leadership Behaviors per Group

Group	Highest	Second Highest	Third Highest
A	8 – The expectations for judging my performance are clear. (4.41)	1 – My principal/supervisor provides good processes and resources for me to do my job. (4.32)	10 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance. (4.27)
B	1 – My principal/supervisor provides good processes and resources for me to do my job. (4.57)	6 – My principal/supervisor makes the best use of available funds. (4.48)	5 – My principal/supervisor demonstrates a genuine care for my welfare. (4.42)
C	1 – My principal/supervisor provides good processes and resources for me to do my job. (4.57)	3 – Principal/supervisor led staff meetings make efficient use of time and are productive. (4.53)	6 – My principal/supervisor makes the best use of available funds. (4.48)

Table 4.20

Lowest Rated Leadership Behaviors per Group

Group	Lowest	Second Lowest	Third Lowest
A	7 – My principal/supervisor consults me on the decisions that affect my job. (4.09)	6 – My principal/supervisor makes the best use of available funds. (4.16)	2 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee. (4.17)
B	7 – My principal/supervisor consults me on the decisions that affect my job. (4.13)	10 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance. (4.16)	2 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee. (4.17)
C	4 – My principal/supervisor recognizes good performance. (4.16)	10 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance. (4.21)	2 – My principal/supervisor has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee. (4.23) and 7 – My principal/supervisor consults me on the decisions that affect my job. (4.23)

Although question four was answered by identifying the highest and lowest rated behaviors for principals with the most years of experience, group C, the researcher felt that additional data analysis was needed to gain a better understanding of the answer to the question.

As done previously, the researcher divided the principals into the same three categories – group A are principals with 1-4 years of experience, group B are principals with 5-8 years of experience, and group C are principals with 9 or more years of experience. The principal longevity groups were: Group A (n=7): Harbor View (3),

James Island (3), Ladson (3), Mary Ford (3), Pinehurst (4), Springfield (3), Stono Park (3); Group B (n=5): Angel Oak (5), Belle Hall (5), Goodwin (5), Oakland (5), Pepperhill (6); and Group C (n=7): Drayton Hall (9), Mt Pleasant Academy (25), Mt. Zion (9), Pinckney (9), Stiles Point (17), Sullivans Island (9), Whitesides (10).

The researcher averaged the ratings for the principals in each group for each of the ten leadership behaviors in an effort to see which group had the most number of leadership behaviors rated the highest. After completing this, the researcher observed that group B had the most number of leadership behaviors rated the highest. Upon further data analysis, the researcher realized that two schools, Springfield and Belle Hall, were outlying data points and were possibly skewing the results due to the small sample size overall (19) and the small size of each group (A=7, B=5, C=7). Therefore, the researcher removed Springfield's data from group A due to outlying low scores and Belle Hall data from group B due to outlying high scores. The following tables show the results of these steps per leadership behavior:

Table 4.21

Leadership Behavior One – My principal provides good processes and resources for me to do my job.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.43
James Island	3	3.92
Ladson	3	4.10
Mary Ford	3	4.61
Pinehurst	4	4.40
Springfield	3	3.30*
Stono Park	3	4.47
Group A Average	3.14	4.18

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.32

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.62
Belle Hall	5	4.95*
Goodwin	5	4.71
Oakland	5	4.48
Pepperhill	6	4.45
Group B Average	5.20	4.64

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.57

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.72
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	4.52
Mt. Zion	9	4.20
Pinckney	9	4.83
Stiles Point	17	4.79
Sullivans Island	9	4.46
Whitesides	10	4.44
Group C Average	12.57	4.57

Table 4.22

Leadership Behavior Two – My principal has provided feedback on my strengths as an employee.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.11
James Island	3	4.00
Ladson	3	3.72
Mary Ford	3	4.35
Pinehurst	4	4.38
Springfield	3	3.07*
Stono Park	3	4.47
Group A Average	3.14	4.01

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.17

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.48
Belle Hall	5	4.83*
Goodwin	5	4.22
Oakland	5	3.88
Pepperhill	6	4.11
Group B Average	5.20	4.30

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.17

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.28
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	3.84
Mt. Zion	9	4.20
Pinckney	9	4.55
Stiles Point	17	4.43
Sullivans Island	9	4.17
Whitesides	10	4.15
Group C Average	12.57	4.23

Table 4.23

Leadership Behavior Three – Principal led staff meetings make efficient use of time and are productive.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.49
James Island	3	3.54
Ladson	3	3.91
Mary Ford	3	4.36
Pinehurst	4	4.52
Springfield	3	3.19*
Stono Park	3	4.59
Group A Average	3.14	4.09

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.24

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.05
Belle Hall	5	4.95*
Goodwin	5	4.68
Oakland	5	4.40
Pepperhill	6	4.10
Group B Average	5.20	4.44

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.31

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.64
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	4.52
Mt. Zion	9	4.20
Pinckney	9	4.90
Stiles Point	17	4.68
Sullivans Island	9	4.42
Whitesides	10	4.34
Group C Average	12.57	4.53

Table 4.24

Leadership Behavior Four – My principal recognizes good performance.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.40
James Island	3	3.96
Ladson	3	3.78
Mary Ford	3	4.26
Pinehurst	4	4.34
Springfield	3	2.89*
Stono Park	3	4.59
Group A Average	3.14	4.03
Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.22		
	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.62
Belle Hall	5	4.85*
Goodwin	5	4.41
Oakland	5	3.65
Pepperhill	6	4.41
Group B Average	5.20	4.39
Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.27		
	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.32
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	3.92
Mt. Zion	9	3.60
Pinckney	9	4.67
Stiles Point	17	4.36
Sullivans Island	9	4.08
Whitesides	10	4.17
Group C Average	12.57	4.16

Table 4.25

Leadership Behavior Five – My principal demonstrates a genuine concern for my welfare.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.56
James Island	3	3.92
Ladson	3	3.87
Mary Ford	3	4.48
Pinehurst	4	4.16
Springfield	3	2.96*
Stono Park	3	4.47
Group A Average	3.14	4.06

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.24

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.52
Belle Hall	5	4.95*
Goodwin	5	4.41
Oakland	5	4.23
Pepperhill	6	4.52
Group B Average	5.20	4.53

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.42

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.48
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	3.76
Mt. Zion	9	4.20
Pinckney	9	4.74
Stiles Point	17	4.50
Sullivans Island	9	4.54
Whitesides	10	4.61
Group C Average	12.57	4.40

Table 4.26

Leadership Behavior Six – My principal makes the best use of available funds.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.54
James Island	3	3.50
Ladson	3	3.87
Mary Ford	3	4.13
Pinehurst	4	4.50
Springfield	3	3.31*
Stono Park	3	4.41
Group A Average	3.14	4.04
Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.16		
	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.38
Belle Hall	5	4.90*
Goodwin	5	4.68
Oakland	5	4.27
Pepperhill	6	4.59
Group B Average	5.20	4.56
Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.48		
	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.72
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	4.32
Mt. Zion	9	4.00
Pinckney	9	4.81
Stiles Point	17	4.79
Sullivans Island	9	4.25
Whitesides	10	4.45
Group C Average	12.57	4.48

Table 4.27

Leadership Behavior Seven – My principal consults me on the decisions that affect my job.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.32
James Island	3	3.54
Ladson	3	3.72
Mary Ford	3	4.26
Pinehurst	4	4.27
Springfield	3	2.63*
Stono Park	3	4.41
Group A Average	3.14	3.88

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.09

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.14
Belle Hall	5	4.90*
Goodwin	5	4.34
Oakland	5	3.88
Pepperhill	6	4.14
Group B Average	5.20	4.28

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.13

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.40
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	4.28
Mt. Zion	9	3.60
Pinckney	9	4.60
Stiles Point	17	4.36
Sullivans Island	9	4.38
Whitesides	10	4.00
Group C Average	12.57	4.23

Table 4.28

Leadership Behavior Eight – The expectations for judging my performance are clear.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.37
James Island	3	4.42
Ladson	3	4.16
Mary Ford	3	4.52
Pinehurst	4	4.40
Springfield	3	3.19*
Stono Park	3	4.59
Group A Average	3.14	4.24

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.41

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.48
Belle Hall	5	4.93*
Goodwin	5	4.71
Oakland	5	4.04
Pepperhill	6	4.24
Group B Average	5.20	4.48

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.37

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.40
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	4.32
Mt. Zion	9	4.20
Pinckney	9	4.74
Stiles Point	17	4.59
Sullivans Island	9	4.38
Whitesides	10	4.46
Group C Average	12.57	4.44

Table 4.29

Leadership Behavior Nine – My principal provides the support needed to accomplish my work objectives.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.43
James Island	3	3.83
Ladson	3	3.94
Mary Ford	3	4.35
Pinehurst	4	4.42
Springfield	3	2.96*
Stono Park	3	4.47
Group A Average	3.14	4.06

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.24

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.43
Belle Hall	5	4.95*
Goodwin	5	4.56
Oakland	5	4.23
Pepperhill	6	4.38
Group B Average	5.20	4.51

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.40

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.60
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	4.20
Mt. Zion	9	4.00
Pinckney	9	4.71
Stiles Point	17	4.71
Sullivans Island	9	4.50
Whitesides	10	4.44
Group C Average	12.57	4.45

Table 4.30

Leadership Behavior Ten – My principal has provided feedback concerning areas for improving my performance.

School	Number of Years	Rating
	Group A	
Harbor View	3	4.23
James Island	3	4.17
Ladson	3	3.87
Mary Ford	3	4.35
Pinehurst	4	4.54
Springfield	3	3.19*
Stono Park	3	4.47
Group A Average	3.14	4.12

Note. *= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group A without Springfield 4.27

	Group B	
Angel Oak	5	4.33
Belle Hall	5	4.95*
Goodwin	5	4.34
Oakland	5	3.88
Pepperhill	6	4.07
Group B Average	5.20	4.31

Note.*= Average overall mean of leadership behavior one for group B without Belle Hall 4.16

	Group C	
Drayton Hall	9	4.44
Mt Pleasant Academy	25	4.08
Mt. Zion	9	3.40
Pinckney	9	4.64
Stiles Point	17	4.54
Sullivans Island	9	4.21
Whitesides	10	4.17
Group C Average	12.57	4.21

The researcher was able to determine which group had the highest score per leadership behavior in three ways: with all schools included, with all schools minus Springfield, and with all school minus Springfield and Belle Hall. The following table displays this information:

Table 4.31

Highest Rated Group per Leadership Behavior

Leadership Behavior	With all schools	Without Springfield	Without Springfield and Belle Hall
One	B – 4.64	B – 4.64	B and C – 4.64
Two	B – 4.30	B – 4.30	C – 4.23
Three	C – 4.53	C – 4.53	C – 4.53
Four	B – 4.39	B – 4.39	B – 4.27
Five	B – 4.53	B – 4.53	B – 4.42
Six	B – 4.56	B – 4.56	B and C – 4.48
Seven	B – 4.28	B – 4.28	C – 4.23
Eight	B – 4.48	B – 4.48	C – 4.44
Nine	B – 4.51	B – 4.51	C – 4.45
Ten	B – 4.31	B – 4.31	A – 4.27

Group C had the most behaviors rated highest among all three groups once the researcher removed the outlying data points for Springfield and Belle Hall. The researcher removed Springfield's data from group A due to outlying low scores and Belle Hall data from group B due to outlying high scores. This was done because the researcher, during data analysis, realized that two schools, Springfield and Belle Hall, were outlying data points and were possibly skewing the results due to the small sample size overall (19) and the small size of each group (A=7, B=5, C=7).

In an effort to gain a deeper understanding of research question four, the researcher decided to calculate the differences between the group C and group A for each

leadership behavior to determine which leadership behaviors had the largest differentials. The researcher observed that leadership behavior six, my principal makes the best use of available funds, had the largest positive differential from group C to group A (+.32). The researcher observed that leadership behavior three, principal led staff meetings make efficient use of my time and are productive, had the second largest positive differential from group C to group A (+.29). The researcher observed that leadership behavior one, my principal provides good processes and resources for me to do my job, had the third largest positive differential from group C to group A (+.25). The following table displays this information:

Table 4.32

Differences Among Groups per Leadership Behavior

Leadership Behavior	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group C – Group A
One	4.32	4.57 (+.25)	4.57	+.25
Two	4.17	4.17	4.23 (+.06)	+.06
Three	4.24	4.31 (+.07)	4.53 (+.22)	+.29
Four	4.22	4.27 (+.05)	4.16 (-.11)	-.06
Five	4.24	4.42 (+.18)	4.40 (-.02)	+.16
Six	4.16	4.48 (+.32)	4.48	+.32
Seven	4.09	4.13 (+.04)	4.23 (+.10)	+.14
Eight	4.41	4.37 (-.04)	4.44 (+.07)	+.03
Nine	4.24	4.40 (+.16)	4.45 (+.05)	+.21
Ten	4.27	4.16 (-.11)	4.21 (+.05)	-.06

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In chapter five, the researcher provides a summary of the data analysis, the conclusions of the study, and makes recommendations of potential applications for school districts and provides a recommendation to future researchers interested in completing studies on principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and student academic achievement.

SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS

Research question one – What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between longevity and leadership behavior ratings. The researcher presumed that experience, in any field, would lead one to better skills within a particular field and that experience would provide opportunities for one to evolve and hone his or her skill set.

The researcher found that there was a positive correlation between principal longevity and the overall mean of the ten leadership behaviors for each school. The value of r for this correlation is 0.1599. Although this is a positive correlation, the relationship between principal longevity and leadership behaviors is not considered statistically significant. In order for this correlation to be considered statistically significant, the correlation would need to be higher than 0.389.

The correlation was not as strong as the researcher presumed it would be. This could be due to a number of factors in this particular relationship between principal longevity and employee engagement survey results. Examples of these factors include staff turnover from year to year within the school during the principal's time at the school, differing local, state, and federal mandates that principals must follow that affect school personnel's perceptions and ratings of their principal, and individual school based issues that vary from year to year that result in disproportionate time consumption of the building level principal, such as school construction or a community tragedy.

These are just a few possible factors, or reasons, that employee survey ratings on a principal's leadership behavior could deviate from year to year with little connection to the principal's years of experience at that particular school and/or their leadership behavior qualities. Limited research and literature is available on principal longevity and employee survey results.

Research question two – What is the correlation and statistical significance between principal longevity and student academic achievement? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement.

The researcher found that there was a positive correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The value of r for this correlation is 0.4795. This is a positive correlation and determined to be statistically significant according to the Table of Critical Values for Pearson's r, because it is higher than 0.389.

The null hypothesis was found to be incorrect because there was a correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The researcher recognizes that this correlation was the strongest among the correlations performed and was the only correlation that was statistically significant.

To look at additional data regarding the relationship between principal longevity and student academic achievement, the researcher divided the principals into three categories. These categories are as follows: group A are principals with 1 – 4 years of experience, group B are principals with 5 – 8 years of experience, and group C are principals with 9 or more years of experience. The principal longevity groups are as follows: Group A (n=7): Harbor View (3), James Island (3), Ladson (3), Mary Ford (3), Pinehurst (4), Springfield (3), Stono Park (3); Group B (n=5): Angel Oak (5), Belle Hall (5), Goodwin (5), Oakland (5), Pepperhill (6); and Group C (n=7): Drayton Hall (9), Mt Pleasant Academy (25), Mt. Zion (9), Pinckney (9), Stiles Point (17), Sullivans Island (9), Whitesides (10).

The researcher looked at the average PASS scores for each of the groups to further analyze the relationship between principal longevity and student academic achievement. Group C, the group with the most experience, had the highest level of student academic achievement, with 90.9 % of students scoring met or exemplary on the 2013 ELA part of the PASS test. However, group A, the group with the least amount of experience, outscored group B by 1.3 percentile points. It is the belief of the researcher that the outcome of group A outscoring group B by 1.3 percentile points may be attributed to a small sample size and that a study using a larger sample size could produce different and, potentially, more reliable data.

Principal longevity and student academic achievement had the strongest correlation among the first three research questions and was the only correlation to have statistical significance. The outcome of this correlation contributes to the confirmation of the importance of school districts encouraging principals who are making positive student academic achievement gains to remain in their current schools versus being successful in one school and then moving to a different school. Some research suggests that often principals, when successful as measured by student achievement academic data, move to different, sometimes perceived as easier, schools. Hull (2012) stated:

> Many principals gain their initial experience at challenging schools, then transfer to easier-to-manage schools as those positions open up. A study of one large urban district found that principals' second or third schools typically enrolled 89 percent fewer poor and minority students than their first position.

Supporting this line of thought, Beteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2012) stated:

> More than one out of every five principals leaves their school each year. In some cases, these career changes are driven by the choices of district leadership. In other cases, principals initiate the move, often demonstrating preferences to work in schools with higher achieving students from more advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Principals often use schools with many poor or low achieving students as stepping stones to what they view as more desirable assignments (p. 904).

If data trends are showing that principals are using historically underachieving schools as 'stepping stones', or pathways to higher achieving schools, then the researcher

feels there is value to school districts, states, and federal entities analyzing and strategically attempting to discourage this occurrence.

Research question three – What is the correlation and statistical significance between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement? The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis is that there will be a positive correlation between leadership behavior ratings and student academic achievement.

The researcher found that there was a positive correlation between the overall mean of the ten leadership behaviors and student academic achievement. The value of r for this correlation is 0.1791. Although this is a positive correlation, the relationship between principal longevity and leadership behaviors is not considered statistically significant. In order for this correlation to be considered statistically significant, the correlation would need to be higher than 0.389.

The null hypothesis was found to be incorrect because there was a correlation between the overall mean of the ten leadership behaviors and student academic achievement. The researcher's hypothesis was correct; however the strength of the correlation was weaker than expected. The researcher presumed that the correlation between leadership behaviors and student academic achievement would have been stronger, especially considering the information gathered while completing chapter two, the literature review.

As discussed in chapter two, research suggest that principals do have an impact on the success of the overall school organization; therefore, the researcher expected a

stronger correlation between principal leadership behaviors and student academic achievement. Upon further research of the relationship between leadership behaviors and student academic achievement, the concept of direct versus indirect impact of the principal appears throughout the literature.

Research question four – Which leadership behavior ratings are highest and lowest for principals with the most years of experience? Research question four was the easiest to answer for the researcher; however the most challenging to explore and analyze. It involved multiple types of data analysis that evolved throughout the process. The researcher went on a data journey, in a sense, because one type of data analysis led to more questions and a need for validation of sorts, which in turn, caused the researcher to do further data analysis, as described throughout the study.

The researcher was able to answer research question four by simply identifying the three highest and the three lowest rated leadership behaviors for group C. Furthermore, the researcher averaged the ratings for the principals in each group for each of the ten leadership behaviors in an effort to see which group had the most leadership behaviors rated the highest. After completing this, the researcher observed that group B had the most number of leadership behaviors rated the highest. Upon further data analysis, the researcher realized that two schools, Springfield with low outlying data and Belle Hall with high outlying data, were possibly skewing the outcome due to the small sample size overall (19) and each group (A=7, B=5, C=7). Therefore, the researcher removed Springfield's data from group A due to outlying low scores and Belle Hall data from group B due to outlying high scores.

After completing that process, the researcher then decided to analyze the differences between the three groups, specifically analyzing the differentials between group C and group A for each leadership behavior. The researcher observed that leadership behavior six, my principal makes the best use of available funds, had the largest positive differential from group C to group A (+.32). The researcher observed that leadership behavior three, principal led staff meetings make efficient use of my time and are productive, had the second largest positive differential from group C to group A (+.29). The researcher observed that leadership behavior one, my principal provides good processes and resources for me to do my job, had the third largest positive differential from group C to group A (+.25).

In summary, all three correlations in the study were positive with the correlation between principal longevity and student academic achievement being the strongest and the only correlation to have statistical significance. Research question four was answered easily by simply noting the three highest and three lowest behaviors for group C, the group of principals with the most experience. However, question four led the researcher to further data analysis. The researcher concluded that a larger sample size might prove beneficial to future studies on principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and student academic achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher was able to answer all four research questions used in this study. There were positive correlations between principal longevity and leadership behaviors, principal longevity and student academic achievement, and leadership behaviors and

student academic achievement. The strongest correlation, and the only correlation with statistical significance, was between principal longevity and student academic achievement. The weakest correlation was between principal longevity and leadership behavior ratings.

Question four was answered, in simple terms, in that the researcher was able to identify the three leadership behaviors rated highest and the three leadership behaviors rated lowest for principals with the most years of experience (group C). However, the researcher realized when analyzing research question four that this particular question needed to be explored further. Partially due to having a sample size of 19, the researcher realized that a more in depth process of data analysis would be beneficial in gaining a deeper understanding of question four. This process was discussed in great detail in chapter four and the researcher believes there was value to this process in understanding the relationship between principal longevity and leadership behaviors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher has a few recommendations after completing the study. One recommendation is for school districts, and larger scale public school institutions, to study trends of principal longevity, and principal turnover, particularly in high poverty schools and schools with a history of underachievement. McKibben (2013) stated:

> An emerging body of research suggests the high-quality principals systemically use lower-quality schools as stepping stones to build experience and move into better schools, while low-quality principals simply transfer to low-quality schools, each doing so at the expense of equity. It is a matter of national urgency,

> therefore, for schools and districts to devise programs and policies that not only increase principal quality, but also keep effective principals in the highest-need schools (p. 70).

Are school districts unintentionally allowing principals to use underachieving schools as 'stepping stones', or pathways, to positions where they can lead more academically successful schools? The necessary data is available for government entities to monitor the prevalence of this occurrence. Strategies should be explored and implemented to alter this trend, if it is present, when possible. Advocates for Children and Youth (2007) stated:

> Principals with a track record of success are vital to combat the challenges of poverty and poor educational achievement. To change the trajectory of low-income students there should be incentives and conditions that attract talented professionals who can turn around a school. Chosen principals must be supported in a system that provides mentoring, resources, flexibility, accountability, and evaluation (p. 2).

Research is indicating a trend in higher principal turnover rates for historically underachieving schools. Strategies to decrease this trend are not easily conjured. School districts could possibly utilize systems that discourage these trends that are aligned to the characteristics of their districts.

Samuels (2012) stated:

> The solution to the problem of churn [principal turnover] is not a one-size-fits-all formula. In some cases, it makes sense to give principals more time to make

> progress. However, policymakers and districts leaders must also put better principal selection processes in place to find the best candidates to fill positions in struggling schools (p. 2).

The researcher also recommends further studies on direct impact versus indirect impact of the building level principal on overall school success. For example, do principals affect student academic achievement directly or do principals affect the teachers' work environment, which in turn affects student academic achievement, thus creating a situation in which the principal indirectly affects student academic achievement? MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) stated that "organizational theorists have long reported that paying attention to culture is the most important action that a leader can perform and educational theorists have likewise reported that the principals' impact on learning is mediated through the climate and culture of the school and is not a direct effect" (p. 73).

Lastly, if another researcher were to replicate this study it is the recommendation of the researcher that a larger sample size be used in an effort to obtain more reliable data. As mentioned earlier in the study, using a sample size of 19 was problematic in that two outlying pieces of data, one low and one high, possibly created an issue with reliability within some parts of the data. Even after removing the two outlying data points for some parts of the analysis, the researcher continued to feel that the data outcomes of the study would have been more reliable if a larger sample size was used in the study.

The researcher was limited to 19 schools for this study because there are only 19 neighborhood schools with grades 3-5 within the CCSD. The researcher was limited to

only using the CCSD because it is the only school district that uses the Studer employee engagement survey. The survey used in the CCSD is not currently being used by any other school district in South Carolina. If the researcher were to have used schools in other states that are using the Studer employee engagement survey, then those states do not administer the PASS test, which is only administered in the state of South Carolina.

In conclusion, if another study is conducted on the correlations and relationships among principal longevity, leadership behaviors, and student academic achievement it is the suggestion of the researcher that when selecting the sample size for the study that the tool used to measure leadership behaviors and the standardized test data used to measure student academic achievement be considered in an effort to obtain a larger sample size. This may allow for more reliable data outcomes in the study.

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APPENDIX A - IRB APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DECLARATION of NOT HUMAN SUBJECTS

This is to certify that research proposal: **Pro00038752**

Entitled: *The Effect of Principal Longevity on Leadership Behaviors and Student Achievement*

Submitted by:

Principal Investigator:	Jennifer Swearingen
College:	College of Education
Department:	Education Administration
Address:	Wardlaw
	Columbia, SC 29208

was reviewed by the Office of Research Compliance, an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). The Office of Research Compliance, on behalf of the Institutional Review Board, has determined that the referenced

study meets the Not Human Research criteria set forth by the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) of:

a. the specimens and/or private information/data were not collected specifically for the currently proposed research project through an interaction/intervention with living individuals AND

b. the investigator(s) including collaborators on the proposed research cannot readily ascertain the identity of the individual(s) to whom the coded private information or specimens pertain

No further oversight by the USC IRB is required; however, the investigator should inform the Office of Research Compliance prior to making any substantive changes in the research methods, as this may alter the status of the project.

If you have questions, contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager