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# The Relationship Between the Faculty's Perception of the Principal's Instructional Leadership Behavior and Principal Personality Characteristic

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FACULTY'S PERCEPTION OF THE  
PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND PRINCIPAL  
PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTIC

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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## **Dedication**

To the memory of William B. Royster, Ed.D. University of Maryland, M.Ed. University of South Carolina, and AB Wofford College, a Teacher/Coach, Principal, Superintendent, Professor, and President of the American Association of School Administrators. He was a dedicated educator, visionary, courageous and principled leader, but most importantly, a great father.

## **Acknowledgments**

To Tina, my wife, for her love and support through the Ph.D. process and throughout my personal and professional life.

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To my dissertation committee for their willingness to serve and their supportive and helpful critique.

To all the friends, family, and colleagues who offered encouragement and support throughout this process.

## **Abstract**

Significant research has been conducted into the relationship of the school principal to the success of the school program. This success is often measured by metrics that assess the academic accomplishments of the school's students. The value of quality leadership is effectively summarized by an observation made more than 30 years ago from *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America*. The author of that report, Ernest Boyer, concluded that in schools where achievement is high and there exists a feeling of community, it is found without exception that the principal made the difference (Boyer, 1983).

There is a great body of research and theory postulating the attributes of effective leadership. These findings cross the full spectrum of leadership sectors: public, private, non-profit, and the military. There exists a wealth of information relating the effectiveness of leadership to quality, productivity and longevity across all these sectors. Significant information also exists establishing the relationship between the effective instructional leadership of a principal and increased student achievement. Additional research, observation, and analysis has been recorded regarding the leadership styles of individuals. Less fully researched is a link between personality traits and the instructional leadership of a school principal.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the relationship between the leadership personality of a principal and the perception of that principal as an instructional leader. More specifically it seeks to determine if a principal's dominant

personality characteristic, as defined by a four quadrant analysis, relates to the faculty's perception of that principal's instructional leadership.

This study addresses that over-arching question by comparing the primary personality characteristic of a principal to the responses given by that principal's faculty in a survey rating their perception of that principal as an instructional leader. That perception is also examined in light of several other demographic traits of the principal: gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, Title I-eligibility of the school, and grade level of the school.

The results of this study indicate that a principal's predominant personality characteristic does not impact that individual's perception as an instructional leader by the faculty. Faculty perception of a principal's instructional leadership was also not affected by principal gender or Title I-eligibility of the school. A weak to moderate relationship between the faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and principal ethnicity, years of principal experience, and the grade level of the school was indicated in the research as conducted.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **The Nature and Scope of the Study**

#### **Introduction**

As the demands for accountability have increased, the role of the school principal has evolved from manager to instructional leader. Significant interest has arisen among educators to better understand and implement the newly defined role of instructional leader. The need for development, recruitment, and retention of instructional leaders as school principals has become a focus for district leaders.

The importance of the principal as an instructional leader is very effectively summarized by Dr. Larry Lezotte, whose research indicates that “...without strong administrative leadership, disparate elements of good schooling could be neither brought together nor kept together” (Lezotte, 1997). The preeminent professional organizations for principal leaders at the elementary and secondary levels both promote the primacy of effective leadership to successful schools and student achievement. A basic tenet of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) states that elementary and middle school principals are the “primary catalysts for creating a lasting foundation for learning, driving school and student performance, and shaping the long term impact of school improvement efforts” (NAESP, 2011). The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) asserts that “effective school leaders focus their work on the core issues of teaching and learning and school improvement” (NASSP, 2011).

## **Problem**

Through its publications and website the NASSP supports the assertion that school principal leadership is the guiding force for school success and student performance, but additionally cites concerns over the shortage of effective leaders. The organization argues, “Successful schools require leaders who are able to perform at optimum levels and who have the knowledge, skills and disposition to meet complex challenges” (NASSP, 2011). This preeminent professional group further complicates the issue of effective school leadership by citing its concern over the need for new leadership and the lack of quality applicants.

This research sought data that would provide a foundation for a model that might be developed to assist school district leaders in screening applicants for the leadership personality characteristics that evidence the “skills and disposition” (NASSP, 2011) required of a successful school leader. The establishment of such a screening model could also be used as a basis for developing key characteristics of effective leadership within individual leaders and leadership teams. Such a model could reduce the number of unsuccessful principal hires and better match principals to positions.

## **Research Questions**

Three questions were proposed to form the framework of this research:

1. What is the individual personality characteristic for Greenville County Schools Principals?
2. Is there a correlation between the individual principal’s personality characteristic and the perception by faculty of that principal’s instructional leadership behavior?

3. What is the relationship between the principal's gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, socio-economic status of the school, and grade level of the school, and the perception by faculty of that principal's instructional leadership behavior?

### **Significance**

If an analysis of the data had revealed a correlation between a quantifiable dominant leadership personality characteristic of a school principal and the faculty's perception of the instructional leadership of that principal, several significant implications may have resulted. First, an analysis of a potential principal's leadership personality may have been used by district leadership to guide the selection or assignment of a principal to a school. A second implication may have been the usefulness of this type analysis to determine appropriate staff development opportunities. If a leader or leadership team in a school individually or collectively possessed minimal levels of characteristics determined to be positively correlated to student achievement, it would be possible to further develop or highlight those underrepresented characteristics by recognizing their importance and focusing staff development on efforts to enhance them. Likely, a more effective means to ensure the presence of those characteristics in the leadership of a school is through the leadership team. A third significance would have been in assisting district leaders in developing school level administrative teams that collectively evidence the leadership personality associated with instructional leadership, thereby enhancing the academic success of the school through the combined leadership personality of the aggregate team.

## **Delimitations**

The data for this research was collected from school principals and their faculties in a large upstate South Carolina school district. According to the South Carolina State Department of Education The School District of Greenville County (GCS), the largest in South Carolina, represents approximately 10% of the students served in public schools in the state (South Carolina Department of Education, 2014). This district includes rural, urban, and suburban populations and is a representative cross section of those diverse segments of the population. However, there may be limitations in the transfer of conclusions to districts with a student population that is not as diverse. Additionally, the structure of the district, due to its size, may affect the performance of principals in a manner that varies from the effect of the structure of a smaller district.

In pursuing data for this study there was no control in effect for the total years of experience or educational level of the principal. There was also no provision for an analysis of the experience of the principal in administrative positions prior to the current principalship.

Voluminous research exists establishing a relationship between student achievement and the instructional leadership behavior of the principal (Lewis, 1989; AASA, 2012; Duke, 1987; Seyfarth, 1999; Hughes, 1994; Withrow, Long, & Marx, 1999). The analysis of the data collected through this research study does not include a link to specific measures of school academic achievement. Though not considered here, subsequent study of this topic might include specific indicators of academic success, such as Advanced Placement scores, SAT average scores, ACT average scores, graduation rate, dropout rate, and end of course test results or state report card grades.

A determination of the leadership personality of each principal included in the study is based on the assessment of those individuals using a behavior analysis tool that quantifies an individual's personality characteristic by placement in one of four quadrants: Dominance, influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness (DiSC). This method of personality analysis, based on the work of Dr. William Moulton Marston, is dependent on the collection of self-reported data from each principal. There may be an inherent questioning of the accuracy of self-reported data.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Chi Square:* Chi square is the measure of deviation between an expected result, one that occurs by chance, and an observed result. This calculation results in a *p*-value. If that value exceeds .05, there is reason to believe the finding was not a chance result.

*DiSC Analysis:* This refers to an analysis of the behavior of individuals within their environment. The acronym represents four quadrants of behavior: Dominance, influence, Steadiness and Compliance. The analysis is based upon the theoretical work of Dr. William Moulton Marston (1893-1947). Marston was an eminent researcher in the field of human behavior who defined a system of observable behaviors that form the basis of a number of devices that may be used to gauge an individual's personality (Marston, 1928). This theoretical framework was further developed and evolved through the work of Dr. Walter Clarke (Clarke, 1956) and Dr. John Geier, on whose model the DiSC device utilized in this research is based (Geier & Downey, 1989)

*DiSC Categories:* A DiSC analysis provides for the categorization of personality within and/or across four primary classifications:

Dominance, which may be described as:

- Willful
- Determined
- High spirited
- Self-seeking
- Bold
- Persistent
- Nervy
- Forceful
- Powerful
- Ego-centric
- Self-assertive

Influencing, which may be described as:

- Persuasive
- Alluring
- Seductive
- Charismatic
- Convincing
- Charming
- Magnetic
- Attractive



Steadiness, which may be described as:

- Willingness
- Docility
- Sweetness
- Good nature
- Kindness
- Tender-heartedness
- Benevolent
- Generous
- Considerate
- Obedient
- Altruistic

Conscientiousness, which may be described as

- Timid
- Cautious
- Weak-willed
- Conforming
- Open-minded
- God fearing
- Respectful
- Tolerant

*PAS-A: The Performance Assessment System for Administrators (PAS-A)* is the evaluation instrument for school administrators utilized in the large upstate school district being studied. One component of this evaluation model provides for a survey of faculty related to the effectiveness of the school principal. Specifically, teachers are asked to rate their perception of the school principal as an effective instructional leader through their level of agreement with the statement, “My principal provides leadership for the school’s curriculum” (Greenville County Schools, 2015).

*Spearman’s Rho Correlation:* Spearman’s rho correlation is a measure of the relationship between two sets of data. The mathematical analysis of the two sets of data results in the determination of an  $r$  value between -1 and 1. A value closer to -1 indicates a negative relationship between the data and a value closer to 1 indicates a positive relationship between the data (Ware, Ferron, & Miller, 2013).

*The School District of Greenville County:* The School District of Greenville County is the largest school district in South Carolina (44<sup>th</sup> largest in the United States). Known as Greenville County Schools (GCS), its 76,000 students represent approximately 10% of the public school enrollment in the state. It is a county-wide urban/suburban school district with a poverty rate of 50%. Consolidated in 1952, it is governed by a 12-member Board of Trustees elected at large. Its current superintendent is the district’s 10<sup>th</sup> appointed leader since its establishment (Greenville County Schools, 2015).

### **Conceptual Framework**

This is a quantitative study of the primary personality characteristic of school leaders to determine if that characteristic influences effective instructional leadership. Instructional leadership, by its very nature, involves dealing with a faculty of experts,

often closely held beliefs, and frequently contentious discourse, which present unique challenges to the school administrator (Seyfarth, 1999).

This study was constructed upon a conceptual framework that examines this question of effectiveness as it relates to personality characteristic of school principals, based upon evidence from past research into the relationship of effective instructional leadership of the principal and enhanced school success. The study focused on the core characteristics of selected leaders, which may be viewed as their authentic leadership, defined as that which achieves credibility with followers (Pellicer, 1999).

The literature provides a context for the study. The research is a determination of the correlation between an analysis of the leadership style of selected school principals and the perception of their instructional leadership behavior by the school's faculty. The analysis of the principal's primary leadership personality characteristic is based on an assessment of that trait utilizing a DiSC based instrument. Other variables possibly affecting the faculty perception of the principal's instructional leadership behavior are also examined. Those variables of principal gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, and the socio-economic status and grade level of school were gathered from the research participants.

Effective leadership has long been a topic of study and an area of interest to those who examine the traits of individuals perceived to be effective in their work. Prior to World War II, the Richard's Formula for Job Performance was developed to assess the personal qualities essential to job competency (Pierce & Albright, 1960). A more refined mechanism known as the Critical Incidents Technique (Pierce & Albright, 1960) was developed as a means to pair the right person to the right job. Driven by the expediency

to meet the wartime demands of the Second World War, this concept was based on three tenants:

1. Jobs are defined by the behavior requirements necessary to ensure satisfactory performance.
2. Ability cannot exist independent of observable behavior.
3. Observations of a worker's behavior or its product are the only source of valid data.

In their research for the Southern States Cooperative Program in Educational Administration, Truman Pierce and A.D. Albright transition the concepts of competency, as presented in both Richard's Formula and Critical Incidents Technique, to the arena of educational leadership. Although Pierce and Albright do not utilize the term instructional leader in their research, the central competencies they identify as core elements of school leaders are:

- Developing curriculum
- Promoting a clear understanding of child growth and development
- Organizing objectives for the behavior of pupils
- Collecting and making available to the instructional staff needed materials and information
- Ability to summarize and coordinate progress in terms of educational objectives

These core competencies, as expressed in their research, provide a solid and clear connection between school leadership and curriculum, instructional supervision, and staff development (Pierce & Albright, 1960).

In 1970, at a Phi Delta Kappa symposium, little agreement could be reached among participants as to the definition of effective school leadership. Participants agreed that “leadership is not domination or coercion but the promotion of followship” (Morphet, Johns, & Reller, 1982). This expression of school leadership is evidence of the beginning shifts from the authoritarian manager to leader. Leaders of this type were essential to the coming emphasis on school-based management. The description of the principal as “closer to the instructional functions of the school and the staff” (Lewis, 1989), sets the stage for the principal skills identified by the National Executive Development Center. This effort of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) defines an outstanding school administrator as one who possesses the ability to:

- Evaluate teacher performance;
- Employ motivational techniques;
- Develop and utilize valid and reliable performance measures for instructional outcomes;
- Implement sound curriculum design and instructional delivery systems.

Although the term instructional leader is not used in the writing, these key attributes of effective school leadership are clearly and directly instructional in nature (Lewis, 1989).

Into the late 1980s and the early 1990s, direct reference to the principal as instructional leader appears in research, scholarly publications, and generally in the professional discourse of educators. Daniel Duke, writing in 1987, cites the research of Wilbur Brookover and Lawrence Lezotte in concluding that principals of improving schools were more likely to be instructional leaders (Duke, 1987).

John Seyfarth, in his text on the principalship, views the position from three distinct roles: organizational leader, instructional leader, and manager. In the epilogue, he summarizes changing expectations for the role that are best captured in the sentiment that communities now expect the principal to be an accountable instructional leader (Seyfarth, 1999).

As we approached the millennium, the study of the principalship further progressed as the role expanded from managerial, to its more current focus on leadership. In the nineties, Paula Cordeilo wrote, “The firefighting metaphor of the principalship is an image from the past.” She further described skills needed by principals as those related to building and sustaining a learning organization (Hughes, 1994).

Having now entered the millennium, scholars are focusing their efforts on the relationship between academic results and instructional leadership. Research indicates strong links between student learning and effective principal leadership. Specifically, leadership that sets the stage for learning, develops people within the organization, and constructs a school culture of learning, which encourages collaboration among stakeholders (Knapp, Copeland, Honig, Plecki, & Portin, 2010).

## **Methodology**

This research is a quantitative study of the primary personality characteristic of a school’s principal and faculty perception of that principal’s instructional leadership behavior. The focus of the study is 84 school principals in a large, upstate South Carolina school district, which represents 10% of the total public school enrollment in the state (South Carolina Department of Education, 2015).

The leadership personality of each of the selected principals was assessed with a DiSC instrument, which utilizes a descriptive self-analysis to quantify an individual's dominant leadership personality in one of four quadrants of behavior. Those quadrants are Dominance (D), Influence (i), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C).

There are numerous assessment tools available to quantify personality preferences. Among others, there are Myers-Brigg, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Thematic Apperception Test, Jung Topology Profiles, California Personality Inventory, Management by Strengths, and the DiSC. The DiSC was selected for this research due to its longevity as an instrument for personality assessment, its solid foundation on the research of Marston, Clark, and Geir (Geir & Downey, 1989), its relative ease of administration due to its concise format and length, and its clear presentation of a dominant personality characteristic.

Additionally, principal self-reported demographic data regarding gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, and socio-economic status and grade level of the school was utilized to obtain correlations with those independent variables.

Each of the principals in the selection group for the study participates annually in a school district-created administrative evaluation instrument, the Performance Assessment System for Administrators (PAS-A). A review of each of the participating individual's PAS-A evaluation was conducted to determine the faculty's perception of that principal's instructional leadership. That determination was based on the overall percentage of respondents indicating they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the statement, "My principal provides leadership for the school's curriculum." Data was disaggregated by gender of the principal, ethnicity of the principal, the

principal's years of experience, the socio-economic status of the school (Title I-eligibility), and grade level of the school.

The analysis of the principals' primary personality characteristic was based on an assessment of the individual's personality characteristic, as quantified by their self-selected responses to a DiSC instrument. Those characteristics were categorized within and across four dimensions: Dominance (D), influence (i), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C).

Also examined was the relationship between the faculty's perception of the principal's instructional leadership behavior and principal gender, ethnicity, and years of experience, and the socio-economic status and grade level of the school. This provided information for a post hoc descriptive analysis of the degree to which the faculty's perception of the principal's instructional leadership behavior in relation to principal personality characteristic compares to the relationship determined to exist with other attributes of the school and principal.

## **Summary**

This study was predicated on the belief in the importance of the principal as instructional leader, based at least in part on the perceptions of that leadership by the school faculty. If a relationship was determined between the principal's leadership personality characteristic and the degree to which the school's faculty perceives the principal to be an instructional leader, implications would exist in principal selection, principal development, and the selection, assignment, and development of administrative teams. This research offers the opportunity for insight, which may help inform the



selection and assignment of leaders and serve as guidance for the development of leadership traits in individuals and teams.

This quantitative study is organized into five chapters and references. Chapter II presents a thorough review of the literature related to leadership, principal leadership, instructional leadership, leadership personality, and the relationship between instructional leadership and academic success. Chapter III explains the research design and methodology in detail. An analysis of the data and discussion of the findings occur in Chapter IV. Conclusions and recommendations for further study comprise Chapter V, with references following its conclusion.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **A Review of the Literature**

#### **Literature Review**

A review of the literature provides a context for the study. The research for the study is a determination of the correlation between an analysis of the leadership style of school principals and their status as an instructional leader as perceived by their respective faculty.

A principal's perceived ability as an instructional leader was assessed through analysis of faculty feedback on a written survey collected as a part of the principal's annual evaluation (PAS-A). An opportunity to complete this survey item was provided to every faculty member in each of the subject district's 84 schools.

As previously noted, much research has been conducted into the relationship of a principal to the success of a school program, as measured by multiple means of academic accomplishment. This provides a rich basis for and compelling reason to analyze aspects of that relationship. The value of quality leadership is effectively summarized by an observation made almost 30 years ago from "High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America," whose author concludes that in schools where achievement is high and there exists a clear feeling of community, it is found without exception that the principal made the difference (Boyer, 1983).

For this study, the analysis of a principal's primary leadership personality characteristic was based on an assessment of the individual's leadership personality traits utilizing a DiSC based instrument. A DiSC instrument is one of a series of self-reported assessments of an individual's behavioral characteristics as defined within and across four personality dimensions:

- Dominance (D)
- influence (i)
- Steadiness (S)
- Conscientiousness (C) (Spies & Plake, 2005)

## **Leadership**

Leadership in the educational arena does not differ greatly from that in the non-profit, business, government, or military, particularly where the primary mission of the organization is conducted by people, with people, and for people. In that perspective, a similarity may be drawn with military leadership. The United States Navy, in preparing its officers, defines the role of leader as, "the art, science or gift by which a person is enabled and privileged to direct the thoughts, plans and actions of others in such a manner as to command their obedience, their confidence, their respect, and their loyal cooperation" (Wolfe et al., 1967).

It is interesting to note that in the military, where authority is devolved from rank and obedience required by oath and application of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the thrust of leadership development does not rely on those formal structures, but on developing confidence, respect, and cooperation.

Writing several years later, in one of the preeminent books on organizational and business excellence, Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman suggest that developing the traits of confidence, respect, and cooperation is best accomplished through “transforming leadership” (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The authors describe this as a leadership construct that seeks to fill man’s need for meaning by creating an organizational purpose that fulfills that void. John Roueche and George Baker conclude in their research that the “Peters and Waterman attributes, which characterize the best companies, also define qualities of excellence in effective schools” (Roueche & Baker, 1986). This link further strengthens the commonality of leadership skills and traits across the sectors of government, private enterprise, and education.

More than 20 years later, writing in The World is Flat, Friedman provides additional insight into the import of leadership in both the public and private sector, which he describes as vital for competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His writing challenges leaders to both “explain and inspire.” It is easy to divine a common thematic link across the decades that a leader must “explain and inspire” as a primary means to develop obedience, confidence, respect, and cooperation (Friedman, 2006).

Although initially writing for a corporate and business audience, author Steven Covey provides through his work a structure based on explanation and inspiration as a means by which leaders may instill obedience, confidence, respect, and cooperation. In Principle Centered Leadership (Covey, 1991), Covey suggests that a leader develop his abilities centered on four core principles of “security, guidance, power and wisdom.” These principles are offered as both a base upon which an individual should conduct his leadership and also a means by which that person can develop a loyal following. Covey

presents the concept that it is the adherence to core principles that inspire others to follow, not the charisma of the leader. This provides for a more solid, stable, and sustained form of followership, which is more favorable to the long-term interest of the organization than that which is tied to the charisma of an individual. In the realm of educational leadership, this might be viewed as the type of authentic leadership envisioned by Leonard Pellicer, which he defines as that which achieves credibility with followers (Pellicer, 1999).

In The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Covey brings forth a structure that although principle based is more clearly linked to developing a relationship between leader and follower that features benefits to both (Covey, 1990). There is an emphasis to the leader to seek to understand others, structure outcomes where there is no loser, develop synergy through encouraging and involving others, and developing a caring, respectful and positive atmosphere. Covey's habits and his suggested core principles not only provide a framework on which to build leadership, but a clear methodology by which to build confidence, respect and cooperation.

Whether in the military, public, or private sector, effective leadership has long been a topic of study and an area of interest to those who examine the traits of individuals perceived to be effective in their work. Prior to World War II the Richard's Formula for Job Performance was developed to assess the personal qualities essential to job competency (Pierce & Albright, 1960). A more refined mechanism known as the Critical Incidents Technique was developed as a means to pair the right person to the right job (Pierce & Albright, 1960). Driven by the expediency to meet the wartime demands of the Second World War, this concept was based on three tenants:

1. Jobs are defined by the behavior requirements necessary to ensure satisfactory performance.
2. Ability cannot exist independent of observable behavior.
3. Observations of a worker's behavior or its product are the only source of valid data.

### **Principal Leadership**

In their research for the Southern States Cooperative Program in Educational Administration, Truman Pierce and A.D. Albright transition the concepts of competency, as presented in both Richard's Formula and Critical Incidents Technique, to the arena of educational leadership. Although they do not utilize the term instructional leader in their research, the central competencies they identify as core elements of school leaders are:

- Developing curriculum;
- Promoting a clear understanding of child growth and development;
- Organizing objectives for the behavior of pupils;
- Collecting and making available to the instructional staff needed materials and information;
- Ability to summarize and coordinate progress in terms of educational objectives.

These core competencies as expressed in their research provide an early, yet solid and clear connection from school leadership to curriculum, instructional supervision and staff development (Pierce & Albright, 1960).

Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), a professional association for educators, provides its members with a number of services, professional development opportunities, research studies, and fraternal opportunities for engaging in professional discourse (Phi Delta Kappa, 2012). During a PDK symposium, held in 1970, little agreement could be reached among participants as to the definition of effective school leadership. Participants did agree that, “leadership is not domination or coercion but the promotion of followship” (Morphet et al., 1982). In their text, Morphet, Johns, and Reller discuss the belief that in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was widely held that individuals fell in one of two categories, either leader or follower. This belief is largely based on the assumption that leaders are born, not made. In their writing, the authors cite the work of Ralph M. Stogdill (Stogdill, 1948). Stogdill determined through his examination of 124 different studies on the relationship of personality factors to leadership that:

1. The average person who occupies a position of leadership in a group exceeds the average members of his group in the following respects :
  - (A) Intelligence
  - (B) Scholarship
  - (C) Dependability and responsibility
  - (D) Activity and social participation
  - (E) Socioeconomic status.
2. The qualities, characteristics, and skills required of a leader are situationally driven.

3. There is uniformly positive evidence that the average person who occupies a leadership position exceeds the average member of his group to some level in the following:

(A) Sociability

(B) Initiative

(C) Persistence

(D) Knowing how to get things done

(E) Self-confidence

(F) Alertness and insight

(G) Cooperativeness

(H) Popularity

(I) Adaptability

(J) Verbal facility (Stogdill, 1948)

Stogdill concluded in this analysis, and in subsequent work from 1948 to 1971, that the belief leaders are born, not made, is unsubstantiated with only one inherited trait, that of intelligence, being among the many identified as characteristics of a leader (Morphet et al., 1982).

In the post-World War II years, considerable interest and study occurred about leadership qualities, characteristics and attributes. Leadership in school administration paralleled this emphasis as the principal moved from the role of manager of the school to leader.



While the authors, and the conclusions they record of the Phi Delta Kappa Symposium, set a stage for the importance of leadership, it was leadership most directly related to the management function of the organization. Although focused on the leader as manager, it does foretell the coming importance of leadership at the school level and the shift from authoritarian manager to leader. This shift in type was essential to the coming emphasis on school based management.

### **Instructional Leadership**

In the shift to school based management, the principal becomes the key leader. The description of a principal as “closer to the instructional functions of the school and the staff” (Lewis, 1989), establishes a need for a principal to conduct instructionally related leadership functions such as those identified by the National Executive Development Center. It also suggests the principal be viewed as an instructional leader by the faculty. The National Executive Development Center and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) define an outstanding school administrator as one who possesses the ability to:

- Evaluate teacher performance;
- Employ motivational techniques;
- Develop and utilize valid and reliable performance measures for instructional outcomes;
- Implement sound curriculum design and instructional delivery systems.

Interestingly, the term instructional leader is not used in the writing, yet these key attributes of effective school leadership as defined are clearly and directly instructional in nature (Lewis, 1989).

AASA now prominently promotes the value and essential nature of instructional leadership. Through its partnership with the Wallace Foundation, the organization provides a range of leadership and training opportunities designed to develop and enhance instructional leadership for administrators recognizing the defining role of the principal as instructional leader in the academic success of students (AASA, 2012).

In the late 1980's, this concept of the principal as an instructional leader was just gaining favor as schools of education and professional organizations such as the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) began a two-decade transition from instruction being a checklist task of the building administrator to the evolving importance of true instructional leadership as a core value of the principalship.

Into the late 1980s and the early 1990s, direct reference to the principal as an instructional leader appears in research, scholarly publications, and generally in the professional discourse of educators. Daniel Duke, writing in 1987, cites the research of Wilbur Brookover and Lawrence Lezotte in concluding that principals of improving schools were more likely to be instructional leaders (Duke, 1987). He postulates that no "single set of behaviors characterizes all successful instructional leaders" (Duke, 1987). He continues with the approach to the instructional leadership component of school

administration as a completion of certain tasks, as opposed to particular qualities. This model offers only slight variation from principal as manager.

The tasks Duke attributes to the instructional leader include:

- Teacher supervision and development;
- Teacher evaluation;
- Instructional management and support;
- Resource management;
- Quality control;
- Coordination;
- Troubleshooting (Duke, 1987).

A review and consideration of these tasks lends credibility to the argument that a principal thus described is more instructional manager than leader. However, this late 1980's work is a predictor of future study in its emphasis on instruction, curriculum, and effective schools indicators as important considerations in principal leadership.

John Seyfarth, in his text on the principalship, views the position from three distinct roles: organizational leader, instructional leader, and manager. In the epilogue, he summarizes changing expectations for the role that are best captured in the sentiment that communities now expect the principal to be an accountable instructional leader (Seyfarth, 1999).

Seyfarth presents the principal, not as a manager of instructional tasks that may be maintained as a list, assigned out for completion and checked off when accomplished, but

as a leader integrally involved in the instructional process. While recognizing that an individual professional cannot be expert in every subject area, there is the expectation that the principal be well-versed in teaching techniques, expert in the learning process, knowledgeable in human growth and development, immersed in the coordination and implementation of the instructional program, and most importantly, viewed as a leader in those aspects of the profession.

As we approached the millennium, the study of the principalship further progressed, as the role expanded from managerial to its more current focus on leadership. In the nineties Paula Cordeilo wrote that “the firefighting metaphor of the principalship is an image from the past.” She further described skills needed by principals as those related to building and sustaining a learning organization (Hughes, 1994).

In an effort to prepare school leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in 1999 the American Association of School Administrators commissioned the Council of 21, a blue ribbon group comprised of scholars, educational practitioners, and representatives from the private sector, non-profits, and government. The Council was chaired by former astronaut and then U.S. Senator, John Glenn. This distinguished panel developed 16 characteristics deemed necessary to ensure schools and school systems were structured to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Withrow, Long, & Marx, 1999). The 16 characteristics established by that group in the late 90s seem prescient of the qualities currently considered best practices. Most importantly, the group offered this direction to school leaders, “Administrators of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools must be leaders in the very best sense. They will take the lead in setting a vision and in offering direction, guidance, recognition, credit, and support.... these thoughtful statespersons will be intellectual

leaders who help others solve their own problems” (Withrow, Long, & Marx). This description, while differing from the usual, presents a compelling definition of instructional leader.

Having now entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, scholars are focusing their efforts on the relationship between academic results and instructional leadership. Research indicates strong links between student learning and effective principal leadership. Specifically, leadership that sets the stage for learning, develops people within the organization, and constructs a school culture of learning which encourages collaboration among stakeholders (Knapp et al., 2010).

In the words of Mike Schmoker, “schools won’t improve until the average building leader begins to work cooperatively with teachers to truly, meaningfully oversee and improve instructional quality” (Schmoker, 2006, p.29). Through his work, Schmoker advances the concept of the professional learning community, which provides structure that focuses the work in the building on student learning, both through the curriculum, and its delivery. He recognizes and advances the key role of the principal as instructional leader through the development, implementation and sustaining of a professional learning community as the backbone of the organizational structure of an effective school.

The work of Wilma Smith and Richard Andrews presents the principal as instructional leader through four dimensions: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). In reflecting on these established roles, it is clear that the principal as an effective leader is immersed in the instructional process, knowledgeable about all aspects of instruction, and personally facilitates the improvement of curriculum and instruction among the faculty.

Marzano views leadership as an over-arching variable that influences all factors of school success and is the “single most important aspect of effective school reform” (Marzano, 2003).

Today the common expectation of the chief role of the principal is that of instructional leader. Dr. Larry Lezotte very effectively summarizes that importance in his research, which indicates that “...without strong administrative leadership, disparate elements of good schooling could be neither brought together nor kept together” (Lezotte, 1997). The preeminent professional organizations for principal leaders at both the elementary and secondary levels promote the primacy of effective leadership to successful schools and student achievement. A basic tenant of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) states that the elementary and middle school principals are “the primary catalysts for creating a lasting foundation for learning, driving school and student performance, and shaping the long term impact of school improvement efforts” (NAESP, 2012). The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) asserts that “effective school leaders focus their work on the core issues of teaching and learning and school improvement” (NASSP, 2012). Speaking specifically of middle level principals Turning Points 2000 states simply, “No single individual is more important to initiating and sustaining improvement in middle grade schools’ student performance than the school principal” (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

In its publication “Indicators of Schools of Quality,” the National Study of School Evaluation emphasizes that quality schools are those that focus on quality student work, possess a shared vision among faculty, community, and students, have both discipline based and cross discipline goals, and continuously monitor student progress (Fitzpatrick,

1997). The results of this study conclude that the attributes of a quality school may best be developed through effective instructional leadership for improvement. That leadership is manifest by principals who demonstrate and reinforce a shared vision, maintain knowledge of effective instructional practices, actively participate in planning and evaluating instruction, encourage innovation, serve as an instructional resource, and show personal interest in the work of teachers.

The importance of shared vision and goals (Cotton, 2003), the value of community inclusion (Leithwood et al., 2004), and open, honest discussion of instruction and program management among all stakeholders (Blase & Blase, 1999), are commonalities in defining the attributes of effective instructional leaders. Principals must be curriculum and instruction driven, but to lead most effectively must distribute leadership (Tucker & Tschannen-Moran, 2002).

The emphasis in today's schools, colleges of education, professional organizations, and informal conversations among colleagues about school leadership, centers on instructional leadership. In this age of accountability, a clear connection to improved academic performance of the school is essential to the expectations for and discussion, training, and selection of, school leaders. What then is the nexus from instructional leadership to academic performance?

Teacher quality directly impacts academic performance. The selection, retention, and development of quality teachers and the environment established for their work is the responsibility of the principal, as effectively defined by Linda Darling-Hammond when she states, "It is the leader who must develop this organization" (Hammond, LaPointe, Myerson, & Orr, 2007).

That leader, the effective principal, also greatly shapes the school culture, a defining parameter of academic achievement (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Research conducted within public schools in Texas offers additional insight into the strategic role of the principal in academic attainment. Looking at principal stability as a function of time in a school, transitions in a career, principal leadership in addressing teachers in low performing grades or subject areas, and the common attributes of principals leading high performing schools offers a data-based linkage between student academic achievement and effective principal leadership (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013).

Another Texas-based study, this one originating from Texas A & M University, further validates connectivity between principal instructional leadership and elementary level student achievement. Specifically, the determination of a direct effect between principal leadership upon teacher collaboration was quantified. A relationship was also determined to exist between teacher collaboration and the academic achievement of students. The indirect effect of the instructional leadership upon pupil academic attainment was reported to be significant (Miller, Goddard, Goddard, Larsen & Robin, 2010).

A RAND Corporation study of the New Leaders Program, an instructional leadership centered training for non-traditional principal candidates, offers additional support of the effect of principal leadership on student performance. Researchers concluded successful leadership plays a “key role” in teaching and learning, and that principals can “positively affect student achievement” (Gates et al., 2014).



## **Personality and Leadership**

In addition to the indirect effect that school leaders have on student achievement, research supports a more direct impact as well. In a multi-tiered approach to examining this subject, researchers assessing this effect in Cyprus studied the differentiated aspects of school-wide and classroom-level impacts to achievement. Their study reached the conclusion that “human leadership style,” characterized by the researchers as one which entails a sharing of power at the school level, positively impacted student performance at the elementary level (Kythreotis & Pashiardis, 2003).

Whether the effect of leadership on academic achievement is the result of an indirect effect gained by the principal’s influence through the faculty, or a more direct influence on students, the aforementioned research indicates a link. A link opens the question of how the personality of an instructional leader might be related to that influence. Less research exists as an effective instructional leader’s type of personality than appears in the literature for the attributes and importance of an effective instructional leader. One method to view the personality of instructional leadership is a model offered in the research of C.D. Glickman. His construct offers a continuum, with maximum teacher responsibility and minimum principal direction at one end and maximum teacher involvement and minimum principal direction at the other (Glickman, 2002). Although advocating situational utilization of this model, it also lends itself to becoming a framework that lends itself to may be utilized to calculate leadership personality preferences along that same continuum. Examining leadership personality in that framework offers evidence that an alignment of a particular leadership personality

preference may not only be viewed in that way, but as it is further understood, may be situationally altered.

Although not offering a specific description of an effective leader, nor a relationship between a specific personality preference and effective leadership, Schneider and Burton suggest that effective instructional leadership is best described by personality preferences (Schneider & Burton, 2005). Consideration should also be given as to the effectiveness of certain personality preferences, the ineffectiveness of others, and the situational effectiveness of leadership personality preferences (Zaccaro, 2007).

As previously discussed, significant interest has developed in the study and assessment of the traits of effective leaders in all aspects of work and life, particularly since the beginning of the twentieth century. Among other theorists, Dr. William Moulton Marston (1893-1947), an American psychologist, developed a basis for the analysis of personality on four types of behavioral tendencies. His theories form the foundation of numerous currently utilized behavioral analysis that are frequently used to define the personality traits of individuals along and among four basic types.

An argument might be made that this four-trait model derives its base origins as early as the work of Greek physician Hippocrates, some 300 to 400 years before the birth of Christ. Hippocrates offered the theory that there exist four temperaments of man (Montgomery, 2002):

1. Sanguine- pleasure seeking and sociable;
2. Choleric-ambitious and leader like;
3. Melancholic-introverted and thoughtful;

#### 4. Phlegmatic-relaxed and quiet.

Stephen Montgomery, in his book People Patterns: A Modern Guide, recognizes the work of Hippocrates, but traces the origins further to almost 600 years before Christ, citing the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel. Montgomery attributes four distinctive faces of personality to the four faces of mankind found in the book of Ezekiel, “As for the likenesses of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they also had the face of an eagle” (Ezekiel 1:10 King James Version).

Although a clear tie may be made to Hippocrates’ theories of medicine, significant psychological study advancing these theories into the modern realm of behavioral understanding through the discipline of psychology, was conducted by William Marston. His work provided the basis for further behavior and personality analysis now more commonly described as Dominance, influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness (DiSC). These groups of four quadrant personality assessment are based largely on the concepts developed in Marston’s 1928 work, Emotions of Normal People. In that work, he defined four types of human behavioral styles (Marston, 1928). Those four, now more often referenced to as dominance, influencing, steadiness, and compliance, were originally referred to by Marston as dominance, inducement, submission and compliance. Although he proposed this classification of normal human behaviors, he did not provide any particular assessment tool to analyze an individual’s proclivity to behave in relationship to the four defined dimensions.

Marston conducted his research utilizing two primary methodologies, “First, a series of clinical studies of child and adult behavior, somewhat after the Watsonian

fashion. Second, an objective analysis of the behavior observed with a view to discovering its common factors and least common denominator if possible” (Marston, 1928).

In his work he defines the first behavioral style, Dominance, as being similar to a “force of nature,” referring to it as the most “fundamental and primitive type of emotional integration found.” He most simply defines dominance as the “outrush of energy to remove opposition” (Marston, 1928).

In providing insight to the dominant personality Marston offers the following descriptors:

- Willful
- Determined
- High spirited
- Self- seeking
- Bold
- Persistent
- Nervy
- Forceful
- Powerful
- Ego-centric
- Self-assertive

Marston identifies the second primary dimension of behavioral personality as inducement. In continuing the metaphoric comparison to nature, he describes this

personality as the “gravitational influence of a larger, stronger force on a smaller, weaker force” (Marston, 1928). This form of personality relies chiefly on the charisma of the individual in persuading others to follow or comply. This creates the referenced gravitational pull through the force of an individual’s personality.

An inducing personality might be described as:

- Persuasive
- Alluring
- Seductive
- Charismatic
- Convincing
- Charming
- Magnetic
- Attractive

In developing the concept of submission, Marston again relies on a comparison in nature to illustrate his point. Describing this emotion he cites the example of “cohesive forces of nature may be said to submit to one another” (Marston, 1928). Submission, he argues, is a mutually beneficial existence, which is easily and readily adapted.

Characteristics of a submissive type personality may be expressed as:

- Willingness
- Docility
- Sweetness
- Good nature
- Kindness
- Tender-heartedness
- Benevolent
- Generous
- Considerate
- Obedient
- Altruistic

In developing his theory of compliance, he strikes the chord of a comparison with nature as well. Marston likens this emotion to the phenomenon of a river altering its course over time to evade a barrier that possesses greater strength than the energy of the river. The comparisons compel one to consider the phrase “one with nature.” This connotes a personality type that might be described as one who goes along to get along, in other words, developing responses to an external pressure focused on minimizing conflict.

In describing the compliant personality Marston offers these adjectives:

- Timid
- Cautious
- Weak-willed
- Conforming
- Open-minded
- God fearing
- Respectful
- Tolerant

Although Marston proposed this classification of normal human behaviors, research does not disclose any particular assessment tool designed by him to analyze an individual's proclivity to behave in relationship to the four defined dimensions.

Dr. Walter Clarke, an industrial psychologist utilizing the theories brought forth through Marston's work, developed a four-quadrant model of human behavior analysis designed to measure the four preferences of behavioral styles (Clarke, 1956). Clarke utilized a checklist of 81 descriptive adjectives on which he asked individuals to characterize their true selves. This device, published under the name Activity Vector Analysis, was intended for use by businesses in selecting personnel. Although based on the theories advanced by Marston in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he used the terms aggressive, sociable, stable, and avoidant for his descriptors of the four types of personality initially theorized by Marston.

Building on the early work of Marston and the practical refinements of Clark, Dr. John Geier, a professor at the University of Minnesota, constructed a four-quadrant

assessment of human behavior traits. (Geier & Downey, 1989) Geier's original tool, titled Personal Profile System, is a foundational instrument of DiSC analysis, from which numerous variations and derivatives have been developed for applications in real world settings. The currently available DiSC Classic utilized in this research is the direct result of Geier's work.

This instrument utilizes a forced choice model that requires participants to self-select the one of four adjectives that is "most like me" and the one which is "least like me." There are 28 most/least choice selections from 112, each of which reflects a "positive and socially acceptable response" (Inscape, 2008). An assessment of the results places an individual's dominant personality characteristic in one of the four quadrants, as defined by Marston and further refined by Geier (Geier & Downey, 1989).

The literature review traces the evolution of leadership across the spectrum of public and private sectors. An understanding of the literature shows the predominant thinking progress from a belief that leaders are born, to the belief they may be made. In the educational realm, a similar pattern is evidenced in the literature as principal leadership evolves from manager to instructional leader.

The utilization of a personality assessment, and its relatedness to faculty perception of the principal, is a timely exploration of leadership. As Marzano and his co-authors state, "The art of teaching is rapidly becoming the science." They argue that until thirty years ago, teaching had not been studied in a scientific manner, but the challenges of the millennium require it (Marzano et al., 2001). If principals are to be the instructional leaders of a new breed of teacher and a new approach to instruction, it is both appropriate and necessary that the scientific approach be used in the study of their effectiveness.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **Study Design**

This chapter addresses the methodology used to answer the three research questions posed in the study. In it, the purpose of the study is explained and details are provided on the sampling, data collection and statistical analysis utilized

#### **Purpose of the Study/Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the leadership personalities of principals and the faculty's perception of principals as instructional leaders. The questions that framed the research are:

1. What is the individual personality characteristic for Greenville County Schools Principals?
2. Is there a correlation between the individual principal's personality characteristic and the perception by faculty of that principal's instructional leadership behavior?
3. What is the relationship between the principal's gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, grade level of the school, or socio-economic status of that school community and the perception by faculty of that principal's instructional leadership behavior?

## **Methodology**

This study utilized quantitative methods to assess the personality preference of a principal and determine if a correlation exists between that personality and the faculty's perception of a principal as an instructional leader. If a correlation exists, it also assessed how that correlation compares to correlations for the gender of the principal, ethnicity of the principal, or the individual's years of principal experience.

Spearman's rho and Chi-square statistical tests are utilized as quantitative assessments of the relationship, if any, between variables and to determine if there is significance to that relationship. Where a relationship is determined, an appropriate follow-up test based upon the factorial number of variables is utilized to assess the strength of the identified relationship.

This study includes a one-time administration of a DiSC personality assessment and a collection of teacher responses to a question on a survey utilized as part of the GCS annual principal evaluation process. The principal's primary personality characteristic and the self-reported demographic attributes (gender, ethnicity, principal experience, school's socio-economic state, and the grade level of the school) of the principal and affiliated school are independent variables. The summary response of faculty to the principal perception question is a dependent variable.

Table 3.1

*Research Questions and Variables*

Question	Variable	Data Source	Data Analysis
1. What is the individual personality characteristic for Greenville County Schools Principals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal Dominant Personality Preference (Independent)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(D) Dominance</li> <li>(i) Influence</li> <li>(S) Steadiness</li> <li>(C) Conscientiousness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DiSC Self-Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive</li> </ul>
2. Is there a correlation between the individual principal's personality characteristic and the perception by faculty of that principal's instructional leadership behavior?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal Dominant Personality Preference (Independent)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(D) Dominance</li> <li>(i) Influence</li> <li>(S) Steadiness</li> <li>(C) Conscientiousness</li> </ul> </li> <li>Faculty Perception of Principal's Instructional Leadership (Dependent)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DiSC Self-Assessment</li> <li>Greenville County Schools' Survey of Faculty Attitudes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spearman's rho correlation</li> <li>Chi-square test</li> </ul>
3. What is the relationship between the principal's gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, socio-economic status of the school (Title I eligibility), and the level of the school (elementary, middle, or high), and the faculty's perception of the principal's instructional leadership behavior?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender of the principal (Independent)</li> <li>Ethnicity of the principal (Independent)</li> <li>Years of principal experience (Independent)</li> <li>Socio-economic status of the school/Title I-eligibility (Independent)</li> <li>Grade level of school: Elementary Pk-5, Middle 6-8 or High 9-12 (Independent)</li> <li>Faculty Perception of Principal's Instructional Leadership (Dependent)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal's self-reported demographic data</li> <li>Greenville County Schools' Survey of Faculty Attitudes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spearman's rho correlation</li> <li>Chi-square test</li> </ul>

**Instrumentation**

The dominant individual personality characteristic was assessed through a self-administered DiSC Classic Personal Profile (© 2001 John Wiley & Sons). This DiSC analysis tool product is based on the theoretical framework of DiSC as initially

formulated by William Marston Moulton, revised by Walter Clark and further revised to its current format through the work of John Geier. The self-assessment required the voluntary participant to respond to 28 one word items. Each of the 28 items required the individual to select one of four words which most describes them and one which least describes them.

Upon completion of the instrument the individual responses were graphed utilizing the DiSC Personal Profile. The resulting graph was then assessed in accord with the instrument to identify the individuals' predominant personality characteristic as Dominant, influencing, Steadiness or Conscientiousness. These individual results were then utilized to place the 80 participants in one of the four DiSC categories for comparison purposes.

### **Population and Sample**

The sample consists of the principals employed by Greenville County Schools (GCS). GCS, with its 76,000 students, is the largest public school district in South Carolina and, as of this writing, the 44th largest in the nation. There are 84 schools in the district organized in a pattern of elementary (Grades PK-5), middle (Grades 6-8) and high schools (Grades 9-12). There are also pre-kindergarten centers, career centers, special centers and a district fine arts center. For purposes of this study, only those principals of elementary, middle and high schools are included. The student population of GCS represents 10% of the public school students in the state of South Carolina. The district free and reduced meal recipients reflect 50.24 % of the total district population (GCS, 2015). Schools throughout the county serve rural, urban and suburban populations. There is diversity in that population of 58% white, 23% African-American, 13% Hispanic, and

6% other (GCS, 2015). By its population, size, and demographics, it represents in microcosm schools and populations that are found throughout South Carolina. The 84 schools range in size from 270 to 2,200 students. (GCS, 2015).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collections for the three questions began in the spring of 2015 with the administration of faculty surveys by school, which include responses to the statement “my principal provides leadership to the school’s curriculum.” This is a part of the GCS system’s annual evaluation of all school principals, which provides data for the second and third questions that are posed. In the late spring of 2015 a DiSC self-assessment instrument was administered to a voluntary group of principals from each of the 84 elementary, middle and high schools in GCS. The results of that assessment were utilized in addressing all three questions in the study. Since the potential participants were all subordinate to the principal researcher, the opportunity to participate was communicated to them anonymously as assisting a colleague in completing dissertation research. The identity of that colleague was not revealed until after individuals selected to participate.

The DiSC analysis is based upon the work of Dr. William Moulton Marston. Marston, a researcher in the field of human behavior, defined a system of observable behaviors. Dr. Walter Clark, an industrial psychologist utilizing Marston’s theories, developed a four quadrant model of human behavior analysis to categorize the four types of human behavior styles (Clark, 1956).

Building on the early work of Marston and the practical refinements of Clark, Dr. John Geier, a professor at the University of Minnesota, constructed a four quadrant assessment of the human behavior traits. This original tool, titled Personal Profile System

by Geier, is a foundational instrument of DiSC analysis from which numerous variations and derivatives have been developed for applications in real world settings. The currently available DiSC Classic is the direct result of Geier's work (Geier & Downey, 1989).

This instrument utilizes a forced choice model that requires participants to select one of four adjectives that is "most like me" and one which is "least like me." There are 28 most/least choice selections from 112, each of which reflects a "positive and socially acceptable response" (Inscape, 2008). An assessment of the results places an individual's dominant personality trait in one of the four quadrants, as defined by Marston and further refined by Geier (Geier & Downey, 1989).

The DiSC analysis rating of dominant personality traits has been assessed for reliability and validity. The re-test reliability reports coefficients as late as one year later of .71 to .80, which are considered acceptable to very good (Inscape, 2008). Analysis of internal reliability of the scale using Cronbach's Alpha calculates reliability of the four quadrants ranging from .85 to .92 (Inscape, 2008). This is considered to be a high internal consistency (Lewicki & Hill, 2006).

Research also provides insight into the validity of the DiSC instrument, as compared with other psychological instruments. The results of a comparison between the DiSC Assessment and the Catell 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire developed by Raymond Cattell in 1940, report  $r$  values that reflect positive correlations between similar items on the two instruments (Inscape, 2008).

There are numerous assessment tools available to quantify personality preferences. Among others, there are Myers-Brigg, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Thematic Apperception Test, Jung Topology Profiles, California Personality

Inventory, Management by Strengths and the DiSC. The DiSC was selected for this research due to its longevity as an instrument for personality assessment, its solid foundation on the research of Marston, Clark and Geir (Geir & Downey, 1989), its retest and internal reliability, its relative ease of administration due to concise format and length, and its clear presentation of personality preference information.

### **Data Analysis**

This research was driven by the hypothesis that there is a correlation between the primary personality characteristic of a school principal and the perception of that principal as an instructional leader by the faculty of the school. The study sought to determine that correlation and any correlation of that faculty perception by the gender of the principal, ethnicity of the principal, or the number of years of principal experience.

The data was examined by a quantitative analysis designed to determine the existence of the hypothesized relationship, the degree of any determined relationship, and a post hoc comparison of the degree of that relationship to those relationships determined for the other identified demographic factors.

To address the first question, “*What is the individual personality characteristic for Greenville County Schools principals?*” the principal’s response to a self-administered DiSC assessment was examined individually, and each principal assigned to a quadrant matching one of the four determined characteristics based on their responses. Those characteristics are Dominance, influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness.

The second question asked, “*Is there a correlation between the individual principal’s personality characteristic and the perception by faculty of that principal’s instructional leadership behavior?*” Spearman’s rho correlation and a chi-square test

were used to determine the existence of a relationship between the principal's personality quadrant and the teacher's rating. The principal's personality preference was denoted by the category determined by the DiSC assessment. The faculty perception of the principal was expressed on a continuous scale of 1-4 based on response to the statement, "My principal provides leadership for the school's curriculum." A designation of 4 equated to strongly disagree, 3- disagree, 2-agree, and 1-strongly agree.

The third and final question, "*What is the relationships between the principal's gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, socio-economic status of that school community, or grade level of the school and the perception by faculty of that principal's instructional leadership behavior?*" was assessed with a correlation by category, utilizing Spearman's rho and chi-square. Ethnicity was categorized as Caucasian or non-Caucasian. Years of experience was grouped into three categories: low 0-3, moderate 4-7, considerable 8+. Experience denotes the total number of years of experience as a principal, not years in the current school assignment or total years of administrative experience. The demographics of gender, ethnicity, and years of principal experience was self-reported by the participants. When results indicated a relationship between variables, an appropriate follow up test of the strength of that relationship was performed.

## **Summary**

Substantial research has been conducted into the relationship of a school principal to the success of the school program. This success is gauged by multiple means of academic accomplishments and public perception. The value of quality principal leadership is effectively summarized in an observation made almost 30 years ago in "High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America." Its author concludes that



in schools where achievement is high, and there exists a clear feeling of community, it is found without exception that the principal made the difference (Boyer, 1983).

This study presents an analysis of the relationship between a principal's personality preference, the perception of that principal's instructional leadership by the school's faculty, and other factors which may affect that relationship. Those relationships have important implications in selecting, assigning, and developing school leaders in a manner that increases the likelihood of academic accomplishment and school success.

Chapter III describes the design of the research and methodology for the collecting and analyzing of the data. Chapter IV presents the data analysis, followed by conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

As stated in Chapter I, the focus of this study is to determine the primary leadership personality characteristic of a principal and assess whether a relationship exists between that characteristic and the perception of that principal as an instructional leader. Chapter IV presents the data collection procedures, demographics of the study, and the quantitative findings.

#### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data were collected from 80 of 84 regular school site principals in Greenville County Schools (GCS). GCS is the largest school district in South Carolina and the 44<sup>th</sup> largest in the United States. There are 51 elementary schools (grades PK-5), 19 middle schools (grades 6-8) and 14 high schools (grades 9-12). Principals were asked to voluntarily participate in this research. All but 4 principals chose to do so.

Each principal participant was administered a DiSC Analysis self-reporting personality assessment tool. Each completed assessment was analyzed by the researcher and a single dominant personality type determined for each participant, based on the DiSC evaluation of 28 self-selected response items. The resulting information was utilized in the study.

As a part of the GCS principal evaluation system, PAS-A, a survey is administered annually to each faculty member in all schools in the district. One particular item response on that survey was utilized in this research, “My principal provides

leadership to the school's curriculum." Of the district's 6,600 teachers 4,171 responded to that item regarding their perception of their school's principal.

### **Demographic Information**

Data was collected on a voluntary basis from principals in Greenville County Schools (GCS). GCS serves approximately 10% of the total public school population in South Carolina. Students are served at 101 locations, 84 of which are traditional school sites.

The population of GCS is spread over 800 square miles, including most of Greenville County and portions of surrounding Spartanburg and Laurens Counties. There is a diverse population served by schools in rural, suburban, and urban settings. More than 50% of the district's population is eligible for free or reduced meal status. The poverty levels of school populations in GCS range from less than 5% up to 99% free or reduced meal status. Schools are organized in K-5 elementary, 6-8 middle, and 9-12 high grade levels and range in size from 270-2200 students. The diversity of the student population is 58% white, 23% African-American, 13% Hispanic, and 6% other.

There were 80 total principal participants. Of the participants, 47 were female and 33 male, 64 Caucasian and 16 non-Caucasian. The experience level of the principals included 20 at 0-3 years, 16 at 4-7 years, and 44 with more than 8 years. Of the principals surveyed, 62 serve non-Title I-eligible schools and 18 serve Title I- eligible schools. There were 48 elementary principals, 18 from the middle level and 14 who serve high schools.

Table 4.1 illustrates the principal participants by gender, 4.2 by ethnicity, 4.3 by principal experience, 4.4 by Title I eligibility and 4.5 by school grade level.

Table 4.1

*Descriptive Statistics for Principal Gender*

	Frequency	Percent
Female	47	58.8
Male	33	41.3
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.2

*Descriptive Statistics for Principal Ethnicity*

	Frequency	Percent
Caucasian	64	80.0
Non-Caucasian	16	20.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.3

*Descriptive Statistics for Principal Experience*

	Frequency	Percent
Low (0-3 years)	20	25.0
Moderate (4-7 years)	16	20.0
Considerable (8+ years)	44	55.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.4

*Descriptive Statistics for Title I Eligibility of Principal's School*

	Frequency	Percent
Non-Title 1	62	77.5
Title 1	18	22.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.5

*Descriptive Statistics for Grade Level Configuration of Principal's School*

	Frequency	Percent
Elementary	48	60.0
Middle	18	22.5
High	14	17.5
Total	80	100.0

### **Responses to Research Questions**

Question one led to the categorization of each principal's primary leadership personality characteristic, as determined by analysis of their individual responses to a DiSC evaluation instrument. The result of that analysis is presented as a descriptive summary.

Question two examined whether a correlation exists between the individual principal's personality preference and the perception by the faculty of that principal's instructional leadership behavior. This question was analyzed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to conduct a Spearman's rho correlation and a chi-square test, with a follow-up test of correlation strength where appropriate.

Question three addressed the relationship between the faculty's perception of the principal's leadership behavior and the principal's gender, ethnicity, or years of principal experience, the socio-economic status of the school (Title I-eligible or not) and school level (elementary, middle or high). This question was analyzed utilizing SPSS software to conduct a Spearman's rho correlation and a chi-square test, with a follow-up test of correlation strength where appropriate.

In both questions two and three, the cumulative responses of individual faculty on a scale of 1-4 (strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree) to the survey question, “My principal provides leadership to the school’s curriculum,” provided the data for the faculty perception component.

Research question one asked: What is the individual personality characteristic for Greenville County Schools' principals?

This question was answered through a self-administered DiSC assessment, voluntarily completed by 80 of the 84 principals in the selected school district and analyzed in accord with the DiSC instrument by the researcher. A principal’s assessment responses placed them in one of four categories as a dominant personality preference. The categories and response frequency were Dominance (D) - 15, influence (i) - 22, Steadiness (S) - 7 or Conscientiousness (C) - 36. These responses, (D) – 19%, (i) – 28%, (S) – 9%, and (C) – 45% compare with the DiSC style breakdown of the overall population (all individuals assessed with a DiSC instrument) of an equal 25% in each category (Inscape, 2008)

These findings are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

*Summary Descriptive Statistics of Dominant Personality Category of Principal Participants*

	Frequency	Percent
Dominance	15	18.8
Influence	22	27.5
Steadiness	7	8.8
Conscientiousness	36	45.0
Total	80	100.0

Question two asked: Is there a correlation between the individual principal's personality preference and the perception by the faculty of the principal's instructional leadership behavior?

This question was examined utilizing the DiSC assessment results for each participant and that principal's cumulative response to the Greenville County Schools principal evaluation instrument (PAS-A) survey item, "My school's principal provides leadership to the school's curriculum." Faculty members were able to select strongly agree (valued at 1), agree (valued at 2), disagree (valued at 3) or strongly disagree (valued at 4). An average, by principal, was calculated. Principals whose scores averaged 1.48 or less were considered to be strongly perceived as an instructional leader. This is reflected in the accompanying tables as a Faculty Perception of 1. Principals with an average rating between 1.49-2.49 were classified as being perceived as an instructional leader. This is reflected in the accompanying tables as a Faculty Perception of 2. There were no principal scores above 2.48.

The categorization of a principal's primary personality characteristic as Dominance (D), influence (i), Steadiness (S), or Conscientiousness (C) was cross tabulated to the faculty's perception of the principal as an instructional leader.

This information is reflected in Table 4.7

Table 4.7

*Cross Tabulation of Principal Personality Categorization with Faculty Perception of Principal Instructional Leadership*

		DiSC					
		D	i	S	C	Total	
Faculty Perception Category	1	Count	6	10	5	20	41
		% within Faculty Perception Category	14.6%	24.4%	12.2%	48.8%	100.0%
	2	Count	9	12	2	16	39
		% within Faculty Perception Category	23.1%	30.8%	5.1%	41.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	15	22	7	36	80
		% within Faculty Perception Category	18.8%	27.5%	8.8%	45.0%	100.0%

*Note.* D= Dominance; i=Influence; S=Steadiness; C=Conscientiousness.

A two-way contingency table analysis of this question was conducted utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A chi-square analysis indicated no significant proportional difference between a principal's dominant personality characteristic and the faculty perception of that principal as an instructional leader,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 80) = 2.46, p = .49$ . Spearman's rho test identified no significant correlation,  $r_s(30) = -1.61, p = .155$ . As such, no follow up test of association was conducted.

Question three asked: What is the relationship between the faculty's perception of the principal's leadership behavior and the principal's gender, ethnicity, years of



principal experience, socio-economic status of the school (Title I eligible or non-Title I eligible), or grade level of the school?

## Gender

Faculty responses rated 25 females strongly perceived as instructional leaders and 22 perceived as instructional leaders. The ratings for males were 16 strongly perceived and 17 perceived.

Table 4.8

*Descriptive Statistics for the Faculty Perception of Principal's Instructional Leadership by Gender*

			Faculty Perception Category		
			1	2	Total
Gender	Female	Count	25	22	47
		% within Gender	53.2%	46.8%	100.0%
	Male	Count	16	17	33
		% within Gender	48.5%	51.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	41	39	80
		% within Gender	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%

A two-way contingency table analysis and a correlation analysis were conducted. Chi-square indicated no significant proportional difference between the faculty's perception of the principal's instructional leadership and the principal's gender.  $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = .172, p = .68$ . A Spearman's rho test identified no significant correlation,  $r_s(80) = .155, p = .171$ . Based on these findings, no follow up test was conducted.

## Ethnicity

The faculty perception for ethnicity indicated 37 Caucasians were strongly perceived as instructional leaders, while 27 were perceived as instructional leaders. Among non-Caucasians, 4 were strongly perceived and 12 were perceived as instructional leaders.

Table 4.9

*Descriptive Statistics of Faculty's Perception of Principal's Instructional Leadership by Ethnicity*

		<u>Faculty Perception Category</u>			
		1	2	Total	
Ethnicity	Caucasian	Count	37	27	64
		% within Ethnicity	57.8%	42.2%	100.0%
	Non-Caucasian	Count	4	12	16
		% within Ethnicity	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	41	39	80
		% within Ethnicity	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%

A two-way contingency table and correlation analysis were conducted. Chi-square results indicated a relationship between faculty perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the principal's ethnicity,  $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 5.52$ ,  $p = .02$ . A follow up test of this 2 x 2 factorial table utilizing Phi found a weak association at .019. Spearman's rho analysis,  $r_s(80) = .246$ ,  $p = .028$ , also indicates a statistically significant correlation. This analysis indicates that Caucasian principals are considered by teachers to be stronger instructional leaders than non-Caucasians.

## Years of Principal Experience

The faculty perception, broken out by principal experience, rated 14 of those with low experience (0-3 years) as strongly perceived and six as perceived instructional leaders. Considering those of moderate experience (4-7 years), four were strongly perceived and 12 were perceived as instructional leaders. Of the principals with considerable experience, 23 were strongly perceived as instructional leaders and 12 were perceived as instructional leaders.

Table 4.10

*Descriptive Statistics of Faculty's Perception of Principal's Instructional Leadership by Principal Years of Experience*

		Faculty Perception Category		
		1	2	Total
Experience Low	Count	14	6	20
	% within Experience	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%
Moderate	Count	4	12	16
	% within Experience	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Considerable	Count	23	21	44
	% within Experience	52.3%	47.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	41	39	80
	% within Experience	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%

*Note.* Low = 0-3 years; Moderate = 4-7 years; Considerable = 8+ years.

A two-way contingency table analysis utilizing chi-square indicated a significant proportional difference between a faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the years of experience as a principal,  $\chi^2(2, N = 80) = 7.25, p = .03$ . Since a relationship was identified, a follow-up Cramer's V test was conducted. The Cramer's V value of .30 indicated a moderate to weak association between principal experience and

faculty perception of a principal's instructional leadership. That is, teachers rate their principals as stronger instructional leaders as principals' experience increases.

Spearman's rho testing,  $r_s(80) = .105, p = .352$ , did not indicate a statistically significant relationship.

### **Title I-Eligible Status of School**

The tabulation of the perception of instructional leadership for principals between Non-Title I-eligible and Title I-eligible school sites indicated 34 Non-Title I-eligible school principals were strongly perceived, while 28 were perceived as instructional leaders. In Title I-eligible schools, seven were strongly perceived and 11 were perceived as instructional leaders.

Table 4.11

*Descriptive Statistics of the Faculty's Perception of the Principal's Instructional Leadership by Socio Economic Status as Reflected by the School's Title I Eligibility*

			Faculty Perception Category		
			1	2	Total
Title I	Non-Title 1	Count	34	28	62
		% within Title I	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%
	Title 1	Count	7	11	18
		% within Title I	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	41	39	80
		% within Title I	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%

A two-way contingency analysis table utilizing chi-square indicated no significant relationship between a faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the Title I-eligibility of a school,  $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 1.42, p = .23$ . A Spearman's rho

analysis,  $r_s(80) = .166$ ,  $p = .141$ , indicated no significant correlation. Having found no relationship, follow up testing was not conducted.

### Level of School

When tabulated by school level, 30 elementary principals were strongly perceived as instructional leaders and 18 were perceived. Among middle level principals, six were strongly perceived, while 12 were perceived as instructional leaders. Five high school principals were strongly perceived as instructional leaders, while nine were identified as perceived.

Table 4.12

*Descriptive Statistics of the Faculty's Perception of the Principal's Instructional Leadership by Grade Level of the School*

			Faculty Perception Category		
			1	2	Total
Level	Elementary	Count	30	18	48
		% within Level	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
	Middle	Count	6	12	18
		% within Level	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	High	Count	5	9	14
		% within Level	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	41	39	80
		% within Level	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%

A two-way contingency table analysis utilizing chi-square indicated a significant relationship between the faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the school's grade level,  $\chi^2(2, N = 80) = 6.10$ ,  $p = .05$ . A Spearman's rho was conducted,  $r_s(80) = .367$ ,  $p = .001$ , indicating a significant correlation between the variables. A

follow-up test of this 2 x 3 factorial utilizing Cramer's V indicates a moderate relationship at .27. The Cramer's V value of .27 indicates a moderate to weak association between school level and faculty perception of instructional leadership. That is, teachers rate their principals' instructional leadership strongest in elementary schools, followed by middle, then high.

### **Summary of Findings**

This Chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for the three research questions presented in Chapter I. The major findings are as follows:

1. The researcher found no significant relationship between the faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the principal's categorization in one of four dominant leadership categories as assessed on a DiSC profile assessment.
2. The researcher found no significant relationship between a faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the principal's gender, or the Title I-eligibility of a school.
3. The researcher found a moderate to weak relationship between principal experience and perception of instructional leadership.
4. The researcher found a statistically significant, but weak relationship, between a faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the ethnicity of a principal.
5. The researcher found a statistically significant, moderate to weak relationship, between a faculty's perception of a principal's instructional leadership and the grade level of a school.

Chapter IV presented the description, analysis, and discussion of the data collected in this study. Chapter V reviews the purpose of the study, summarizes and discusses the findings, and offers recommendations for additional opportunities for research.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

This chapter presents a summary of the research study and conclusions derived from the findings presented in Chapter IV. It also provides actions for consideration, expresses limitations of the study, and explores additional research that might be pursued, given the findings.

#### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the primary leadership personality of a principal and the perception of that principal as an instructional leader. More specifically, it sought to determine if a principal's dominant personality characteristic, as defined with a four quadrant analysis, related to the faculty's perception of the principal's instructional leadership.

The principal's dominant leadership personality characteristic was assessed through a self-administered DiSC personality profile analysis. Based on individual responses, the participant was placed in a one of four categories that reflect dominant leadership behavior. The categories of classification were Dominance (D), influence (i), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C).

The perception of a principal's instructional leadership was determined through faculty response to an independently administered survey, included as a part of the subject district's annual principal assessment process. Respondents gauged the leadership



of the principal in the school's curriculum on a scale of 1-4, with 1 representing the greatest degree of leadership.

### **Study Design**

The study design included principals of regular school programs at the elementary (K-5), middle (6-8) and high school (9-12) levels in Greenville County Schools. At the time of the study there were 84 regular school principals. Principal participation in the research was voluntary and 80 of the 84 participated. Greenville County Schools is the largest school district in the state and the 44<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation. Its student population represents approximately 10% of the state's public school enrollment (SDE, 2015). The school district serves students in rural, urban, and suburban settings across 800 square miles. School communities range from some of the wealthiest in the state to some of the most impoverished.

For each principal participant, the results of an annual faculty survey, conducted as part of an annual performance evaluation, were utilized. Specifically measured was the faculty's degree of agreement to the statement, "My school's principal provides leadership to the school's curriculum" (GCS PAS-A, 2014). In the schools with principals who chose to participate, there were 4,171 responses to that survey item.

### **Cautions/Limitations/Delimitations**

The following considerations should be taken into account when considering the results and/or implications of this research study:

- Although the sample size was large, it was taken from a single school district. Every district has its own culture, which may affect the perceptions of participants.

- The study was conducted in an extremely large school district, which by its size may impact the district culture in ways that are not readily identifiable.
- The DiSC personality assessment was self-administered, which might affect individual responses. It is human nature to view one's own actions or behaviors in a positive light.
- The faculty responses on the PAS-A survey only allowed a respondent to assess on a four-point scale the degree to which they view an individual's alignment with the proffered statement. A wider point spread would provide a more specific degree of assessment.
- The faculty of a school may be predisposed to a skewed view of the principal out of a desire to please or a concern that their identity may become known to the principal.

### **Research Questions**

This quantitative research study sought answers to three questions. The first question was reported as descriptive of the participant's dominant personality characteristic. Question two sought to determine whether a relationship exists between that personality and the perception of the principal as an instructional leader. Question three examined several demographic attributes of principals and their schools to determine if relationships exist between those factors and the faculty's perception of the principal's instructional leadership. While not the primary focus of this study, these factors assist in providing context for any findings in question two, which is the central focus of the research.

**Question one:** What is the individual personality preference for Greenville County Schools' principals?

Analysis of this question utilizing the DiSC self-assessment resulted in the 80 participants being categorized as one of four dominant personalities. The largest number of participants, 36 of 80 (45%), was placed in the category Conscientiousness (C). The second highest number, 22 (28%), was categorized under influence (i). The category of Dominance (D) contained 15 (19%) respondents and 7 (9%) were grouped in Steadiness (S).

**Question two:** Is there a correlation between the individual principal's personality preference and the perception by the faculty of that principal's instructional leadership behavior?

Neither a Spearman's rho statistic nor a chi-square test revealed a significant relationship between the principal's dominant personality characteristic and the faculty's perception of that principal's instructional leadership.

**Question three:** What is the relationship between the principal's gender, ethnicity, years of principal experience, socio-economic status of the school (Title I eligibility) and the level of the school (elementary, middle, or high), and the faculty's perception of the principal's leadership behavior?

Spearman's rho and chi-square tests were applied to each of these comparisons. Neither revealed a relationship between a principal's gender or socio-economic status of the school and the faculty perception of the instructional leadership strength of the principal. A chi-square analysis indicated a relationship between principal experience and

faculty perception of instructional leadership. A Cramer's V analysis of this 3x2 factorial indicated a moderate to weak association.

Both Spearman's rho and chi-square testing indicated a relationship between principal ethnicity and faculty perception of the principal's instructional leadership. A follow-up test of this 2 x 2 factorial, utilizing Phi, indicated a weak correlation at .019. Testing with Spearman's rho and chi-square also revealed a relationship between the grade level of a school and the perception of the principal's instructional leadership by the faculty. A follow up test of this 2 x 3 factorial, utilizing Cramer's V, indicated at .047 a moderate relationship.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The primary purpose of this research was to determine if a relationship exists between the leadership personality of a school principal and the perception of that principal as an instructional leader by the faculty. The determination of a relationship between the most essential principal responsibility (instructional leadership) and a quantifying assessment of personality has implications for the selection and development of school principals, as well as the structuring of administrative teams.

While this research revealed a predominant leadership personality category (Conscientiousness) for principals in Greenville County Schools, no relationship was determined between any of the four types of dominant personality and the perception by a school's faculty of the instructional leadership strength of the school's principal. The absence of a correlation between a principal's primary personality characteristic and faculty's perception as an instructional leader is important in reinforcing the precept that leaders are not born with some defined leadership personality, but may be developed in numerous types of people (Morphet, Johns, & Reller, 1982). The research findings did

identify relationships between the faculty's perception of a principal's strength as an instructional leader and three other demographic attributes. Although included in this study as context for the primary focus, these three demographic attributes offer opportunities for additional research of both a quantitative and qualitative nature that may be of benefit to better understanding principal leadership, improving that leadership, and addressing perceptions of leadership.

Most important were the findings in this study indicating a relationship between the school level and the faculty perception of the principal's instructional leadership, between principal ethnicity and instructional leadership perception, and between principal experience and leadership perception. These findings offer considerable opportunities and impetus for future study.

While researchers have attributed some explanation for the grade level disparity in the perception of principal instructional leadership, less researched is the relationship that appears to exist between ethnicity and perception of principal instructional leadership. Research indicates that there are more elementary principals perceived to be in the top tier of instruction leaders and more secondary perceived in the lowest tier of instructional leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). It is also reasonable to the practitioner familiar with the daily responsibilities of leaders at both the elementary and secondary levels that the scope of secondary leadership is broader than the elementary level. Secondary principals typically oversee larger student populations, have more employees, larger campuses, more numerous and difficult disciplinary issues, and other responsibilities not directly related to the instructional program. Chief among these is the large and complex leadership and oversight of extensive extracurricular

programs. The very structure of the secondary principal's job differs in a manner that may cause the utilization of more indirect instructional leadership. The use of Department Heads, Instructional Coaches, and Assistant Principals for instruction may contribute to both the perception and reality of a more indirect approach (Hardman, 2011).

Exhibiting a somewhat less strong correlation, and little research, is the finding of a relationship between principal ethnicity and perception of the strength of instructional leadership. This finding merits additional scrutiny and offers fertile ground for further research and the opportunity to better understand and address what could be a troubling finding. This is an area requiring great sensitivity, but one which compels open and honest discussion based on research findings. Some existing research indicates there is no difference in instructional leadership practices based on ethnicity (Peariso, 2011). Other research indicates that Caucasian principals are more likely to risk distributing leadership among the faculty, which may provide insight into the difference in perception (Grant, 2011). While important to recognize that the findings in this study indicated all principals were perceived as instructional leaders, the degree of that perception varied based on ethnicity. These findings offer a gateway to further exploration and discussion of this important and timely topic.

The finding of a weak to moderate relationship between principal experience and instructional leadership, in that more experienced principals are somewhat perceived more strongly as instructional leaders, offers less promise for pursuit, as it appears a somewhat obvious conclusion.

## **Conclusions**

This study revealed no correlation between the predominant leadership personality category of a principal and the degree to which that principal is viewed by faculty as an instructional leader. The research involved 80 principals, 80 schools, and the perceptions of more than 4,000 faculty members. The schools represented cross sections of rural, urban, and suburban communities, varying degrees of community socio-economic status, and a student population of 76,000, or about 10 % of the state's total.

While the most powerful conclusion drawn relative to the primary purpose of this research is that principal instructional leadership is not limited to a particular personality type, the data accumulated and the relatively large size of the population studied, as well as its cultural and economic diversity, offers opportunities for additional in-depth analysis of potential relationships between personality and the perception of a principal's instructional leadership strength. This also supports the review of research, which historically indicates a shift in the theory and belief that leaders are born to support the belief that leaders can be developed. Additionally, the relationships revealed between principal ethnicity and instructional leadership perception, as well as the stronger degree of relationship determined between school level and the perceived strength of principals' instructional leadership, merit further consideration.

## **Recommendations**

Given that no relationship was found between the dominant personality characteristic of a principal, as defined in one of four DiSC categories, and the perceived strength of that principal's instructional leadership, there are only modest recommendations directly related to the primary focus of this study. More fully

developing the individual principal personality profiles with a further defined descriptor of personality, in order to examine any possibility of a relationship between the two, might be warranted. Each DiSC profile allows for an analysis of an individual's more specific personality by viewing the composite of their personality proclivity in each of the four areas, thereby forming a descriptor of their personality. This provides a fuller picture of the individual, which could then be tested for a correlation with that individual's faculty perception as an instructional leader.

Since no relationship was identified between the dominant leadership personality of a principal and the degree to which that principal is perceived by the school's faculty as an instructional leader, there are limited implications for action. One obvious implication serves as a cautionary note to those practitioners responsible for developing, selecting, or supervising principals. The utilization of personality assessment tools can offer insight into the behavior, motivation, communication styles, and many other aspects of an individual. While those insights can be helpful to the selection, development, and placement of individuals to maximize individual and team effectiveness, this study determined no relationship between that personality and the faculty's perception of the strength of its principal's instructional leadership. The results of this study compel the argument that application of personality assessment might best serve as insight into an individual, rather than a predictor of ability or success. The results also reinforce the necessity for staff development for less experienced principals in the area of instructional leadership.

The results obtained provide impetus to consider additional research.

Recommendations for future research of these questions are as follows:



1. Conduct further detailed analysis of the more specific personality profile of a principal for quantitative analysis to determine if a more detailed categorization of personality shows a relationship to a faculty's perception of their principal's instructional leadership.
2. Conduct quantitative research assessing whether a correlation between a principal's ethnicity and the degree to which that principal is perceived as an instructional leader is affected by the ethnicity of the respondent faculty members.
3. Conduct qualitative research inquiring more deeply into the relationship between the perception of a principal's strength as an instructional leader and the principal's ethnicity.
4. Conduct quantitative research to further examine the degree of relationship by specific school levels between the level of a school and its faculty perception of the strength of a principal's instructional leadership.
5. Conduct qualitative research to further and more deeply examine the aspects of the relationship between the grade level configuration of a school and the degree to which principals at that level are perceived as instructional leaders.
6. Conduct quantitative research to examine other aspects of principal leadership, such as management, community relations, personnel selection, and motivation of faculty and students, and any relationships between these functions and a principal's primary personality characteristic.

Professional organizations for school administrators such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of

Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) all recognize and exhort the importance of the instructional leadership of the principal. Numerous researchers also extoll the key importance of instructional leadership to student and school success (Duke, 1987; Schmoker, 2006; Seyfarth, 1999). Whether it is the evidence-based assertion of a professional organization, the findings of a respected researcher or researchers on the topic, or simply the gut instinct of the daily practitioner, there is little doubt as to the primacy of importance to student and school success of the school principal's instructional leadership. This research study was an effort to shed additional light on the understanding of a principal's instructional leadership and how defined personality types influence a faculty's perception of that leadership. While no relationship was determined, the insights gained through the study offer suggestions for additional work that may provide future benefit on this most important topic.

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