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HOW DO PRINCIPALS ALLOCATE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY?**

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A STUDY OF THE DIMENSIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP:
HOW DO PRINCIPALS ALLOCATE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY?

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
to the faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
of
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
at
ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY
New York
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Submitted Date April 27, 2020

Approved Date April 27, 2020

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE DIMENSIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: HOW DO PRINCIPALS ALLOCATE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY?

Michael L. Genovese

School principals have important roles in instructional leadership, building management, visionary leadership, culture and climate, and emotional intelligence. The main purpose of this dissertation was to determine how principals allocate their time and energy among these five dimensions of school leadership.

The research methodology used was an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. In the quantitative component of the research, a survey was distributed to elementary, middle school, and high school principals in Suffolk County, New York. Demographic information was collected from participants, including gender, years of experience as a principal, grade level of the school (elementary, middle, high), and whether the principal has one or more assistant principals. The survey consisted of twenty questions using a Likert scale for responses. The data collected from this survey were analyzed for descriptive statistics, variance, standard deviation, and correlation values. In the qualitative component of the research, an interview was conducted with a focus group of principals. The interview consisted of open-ended questions that were derived from the statistical analysis of the quantitative survey. The responses were recorded and hand-coded to identify themes, patterns, and discrepancies.

The intended significance of this study included providing results to principals, and the educational community at large, on the allocation of time and energy across five dimensions of school leadership. The goal is for principals to use this information to reflect on their own practices to ensure all the needs of the school building are met.

Throughout the qualitative portion of this study, the goal was to explain why principals of different levels, years of experience, gender, and administrative support report on the dimensions as they do. The benefit of this portion of the study may include the identification of the traits of successful building leaders. If successful, this study may provide a sort of “roadmap” to success for school principals.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the family and friends who have supported me throughout this process, and throughout my life. This dissertation was completed during a challenging time for me personally, and without your constant presence, it would not have been possible.

Special thanks to my outstanding professors, particularly Dr. A, Dr. B, and Dr. C. I learned how to conduct doctoral research from you, and more importantly, how to be a better leader.

I am inspired every day by the students and staff of Norwood Avenue Elementary School—best school of them all. I am blessed to work with a remarkable team, who not only make running a school possible, but have taken care of me during my times of need.

Special thanks to my mom, Maryann, who is a distinguished elementary educator in her own right. Your love and support make all things possible.

Last, but most certainly not least, I dedicate this dissertation to my children. Everything I do, every decision I make, is for you. You provide meaning to my life, and I could not be more proud of you. Part of this doctoral program was growing as an educational leader, but the most important role I will ever play in life is just trying to be a good dad.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”

- John F. Kennedy

Purpose of the Study

Historically, the principal served as the school’s disciplinarian and the teachers’ boss (Mills, 1974, as cited in Lynch, 2012). Today, the principal’s role has evolved to include more complex and demanding responsibilities. This evolution requires today’s principals to be leaders of personnel, students, government and public relations, finance, instruction, academic performance, and cultural and strategic planning (Cruzeiro & Morgan, 2006, as cited in Lynch, 2012). The purpose of this research is to focus on how school principals balance five domains of educational leadership—specifically, building management, emotional intelligence, visionary leadership, culture and climate, and instructional leadership. Through both quantitative and qualitative research with school principals, this study helps school leaders develop a better understanding of the principal’s role as a school and community leader.

Significance of the Study

School principals have important roles as administrative managers. Particularly in cases where there is no other administrator in a building, the principal is responsible for student management, finances, scheduling, staff supervision and evaluation, and other managerial tasks. While all these roles are critical to the functioning of the school, they may not leave much time for principals to serve as instructional leaders, emotional leaders, visionary leaders, and leaders of culture and climate. As pressure mounts for school systems to raise students' academic proficiency, principals face greater challenges in all five dimensions. The 21st-century leader is the "chief learning officer" of the school, an individual with a vision for the future who can articulate that vision to all stakeholders. Leaders collaborate with other individuals and groups to create, manage, and implement an instructional program to meet the needs of all students. This is a shift from the definition offered in the previous era, which presented managerial functions as the major focus of school leadership. Even though the functions are different, effective leaders are also effective managers, requiring them to divide their functions (Green, 2010).

Are school principals able to balance their managerial responsibilities with visionary leadership, instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, and culture and climate? Through the surveying and interviewing of principals, and analyzing the resulting data, this study has information to inform principals and provide guidance for self-reflection on their leadership practices.

Research Questions

- Research Question 1: To what extent are principals able to balance their time and energy across five domains of educational leadership: instructional leadership, building management, emotional intelligence, visionary leadership, and culture and climate?
- Research Question 2: To what extent do variables such as gender, school level, experience, and other administrative staff predict time spent in each domain?
- Research Question 3: What values and beliefs do principals have that explain differences in priority areas within leadership?

Design and Methods

The research methodology that was used in this study was an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. In the quantitative component of the research, a survey was distributed to elementary, middle school, and high school principals in Suffolk County, New York. Demographic information was collected from participants, including gender, years of experience as a principal, grade level of the school (elementary, middle, high), and whether the principal has one or more assistant principals. The survey consisted of twenty questions using a Likert scale for responses. The data collected from this survey were analyzed for descriptive statistics, mean responses, analysis of variance, standard deviation, and correlation values. In the qualitative component of the research, an interview was conducted with a focus group of principals. The interview consisted of

open-ended questions that were derived from the statistical analysis of the quantitative survey. The responses were recorded and hand-coded to build a description and themes.

For the quantitative component of this study, a twenty-question survey was distributed electronically to approximately 200 principals in Suffolk County, New York. There are approximately 340 school principals in Suffolk County's 60 school districts. Using a random number generator, 40 school districts were selected for the survey.

In the qualitative component of this study, an interview was conducted with a focus group of principals. This focus group included three elementary principals, two middle school principals, and one high school principal. The interview consisted of open-ended questions designed to ask principals for their reactions to the results of the quantitative study. Questions for the focus group consisted of general prompts such as, "Why did you become a principal?" and more specific prompts such as, "Why do you believe elementary principals reported spending less time on visionary leadership than high school principals?" All responses were recorded and later hand-coded to identify themes.

Definitions of Key Terms

Instructional Leadership: The domain of school leadership that incorporates tasks of direct assistance to teachers, such as staff development, curriculum development, and action research; an inquiry-oriented endeavor, that encourages teacher voice in a critical study of classroom interactions.

Emotional Intelligence: The domain of school leadership that includes communication, personalization, establishing partnerships, and serving the emotional needs of the school community.

Visionary Leadership: The domain of school leadership that includes 21st century thinking, entrepreneurial skills, risk-taking, and situational leadership.

Culture and Climate: The domain of school leadership that includes the practices, beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and values of the organization.

Building Management: The domain of school leadership that includes the structures, resources, personnel, technology, evaluations, and conflict/crisis management.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Theoretical Framework

This review of the literature and related research will be structured as follows: first, past and present understandings of leadership will be explored, such as Bolman and Deal's four frames and the PSEL standards. Next, the five domains of leadership will be explored through relevant theory and supporting research. These dimensions will include instructional leadership, building management, culture and climate, visionary leadership, and emotional intelligence. As illustrated in figure 2.1, authors and theorists are listed under the dimensions to which each has contributed. The five dimensions will be presented together as a theoretical framework. After describing the existence and importance of each domain, an argument will be made that there is value in new research on the allocation of time and energy among the five dimensions by principals.

Related Literature and Research

Organizations require leadership to be successful, and a school is no different. Leadership theory has evolved over time, including the "Great Man Theory," which suggests that leaders are born, not made. More recent discussion around leadership theory might compare transactional leadership with transformational leadership. The concept of transformational leadership was popular in the 1980s and 1990s as a suggested

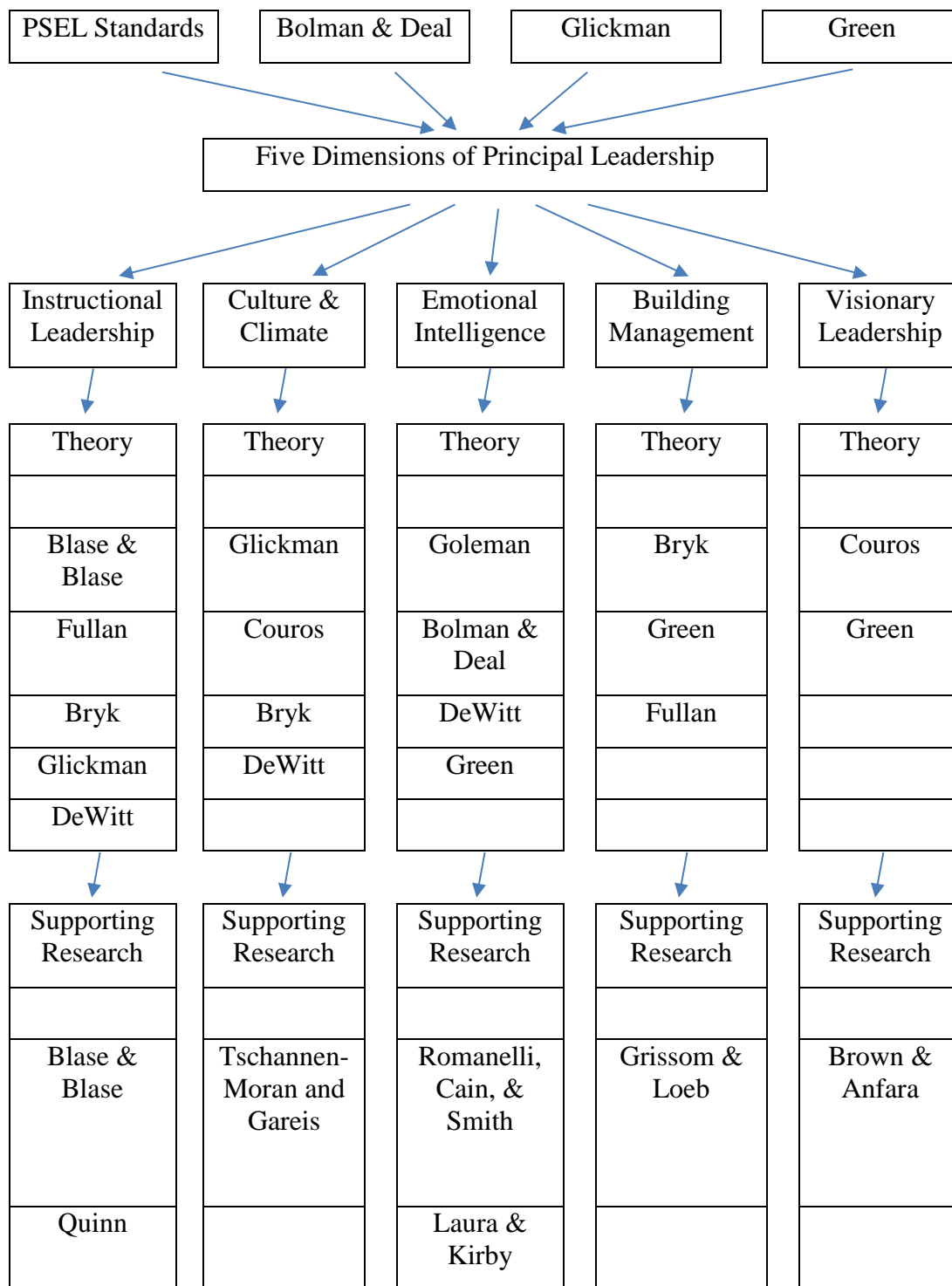


Figure 2.1. Theoretical Framework

improvement over transactional leadership. Over the past thirty years, theories on leadership have evolved into even more complex descriptions of what leaders do. Why are there multiple frames or dimensions of leadership? Why don't we describe just one? "Because organizations are complex, surprising, deceptive, and ambiguous, they are formidable difficult to comprehend and manage. The world of most managers and administrators is a world of messes: complexity, ambiguity, value dilemmas, political pressure, and multiple constituencies" (Bolman & Deal 2013, p. 39).

Individual theorists have created frameworks for leadership, such as Reginald Leon Green's (2009) four dimensions of Understanding Self and Others, Engaging in Leadership Best Practices, Building Bridges through Relationships, and Understanding the Complexity of Organizational Life. Green suggests that, "The 21st-century school leader is the 'chief learning officer' of the school, an individual with a vision for the future of the school who can articulate that vision to all stakeholders." In introducing the need for four dimensions to understand school leadership, Green also explains, "This new definition emphasizes that 21st-century school leaders are instructional leaders responsible for developing and supporting a collaborative school culture focused on teaching and learning."

Bolman and Deal (2013) describe four frames, including structural, political, human resources, and symbolic. Often called structures, dimensions, or domains, the "frame" is a coherent set of ideas or beliefs forming a prism or lens that enables you to see what goes on from day to day (p. 41). The structural frame includes leadership responsibilities such as setting goals, designing and enforcing rules, integrating technology, and assigning roles. The political frame includes leadership responsibilities such as

developing an agenda and power base, managing organizational politics, identifying and resolving conflict, and managing competition. The human resources frame includes leadership responsibilities such as building relationships, empowering staff, matching staff skills with organizational needs, and creating organizational alignment. The symbolic frame includes leadership responsibilities such as culture and climate, celebrating heroes, finding beauty and meaning, and managing rituals and ceremonies.



Figure 2.2. PSEL Standards

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (formerly ISLLC) include ten standards. The Council of Chief State School Officers published the first standards for educational leaders in 1996, with minor changes made for the 2008 release. In 2015, the standards were recast with a stronger, clearer emphasis on students and student learning, outlining foundational principles of leadership to help ensure that each child is well-educated and prepared for the 21st century. Illustrated in figure 2.2, these standards were designed to ensure that all realms of school leadership receive attention, not just curriculum and instructional practices. “The PSEL Standards are designed to ensure that educational leaders are ready to meet effectively the challenges and opportunities of the job today and in the future as education, schools and society continue to transform” (PSEL, 2015).

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2010) describe three dimensions of school leadership that principals can use to transform schools from conventional to collegial. These dimensions are knowledge, interpersonal skills, and technical skills.

Each of these theories and frameworks may help school administrators understand the complexities of school leadership. For this study, it is suggested that the five domains of principal leadership are instructional leadership, building management skills, culture and climate, visionary leadership, and emotional intelligence. It is suggested that to be successful, a school principal must balance responsibilities in each of these domains. It would be foolish to think that all principals will excel in every domain, but a principal who wishes to serve students, staff, and the larger community, will need to devote time and energy to each area.

Never before has a school principal's job been more important and never before has the job been more difficult. Today's school leaders are caught between current expectations of improving test results and expectations of the past in which the principal's job was to see that the school ran smoothly and the principal was responsive to students, parents, and other stakeholders. (Pepper, 2010)

Pepper suggests that balancing ever-changing expectations requires a balance of transactional and transformational leadership. Pepper concludes that, "Training programs for new principals should include guidance on balancing transformational and transactional leadership styles in order to facilitate positive, collaborative learning environments for teaching and learning. Experienced principals already in the field should receive similar training."

Lynch (2012) agrees that principal preparation programs play a key role in assisting new administrators in understanding the wide variety of roles a principal must play. Lynch concludes, "Principal preparation programs, however, failed to prepare graduates for the role of the instructional leader, especially regarding students with disabilities." Lynch further describes a need for principals to have an understanding of instructional leadership, particularly as it relates to special-needs learners:

Traditionally, the principal assumed responsibility for general education students and the director of special education assumed responsibility for students with disabilities. As part of the contemporary role as instructional leader, the principal now manages special education matters previously managed by the school system's director of special education. (Lynch, 2012)

Therefore, it is imperative that principal preparation programs restructure the traditional approach to principal preparation focused on the theoretical foundations of the principal to a functional approach focused on the role of the instructional leader. The process of restructuring needs to originate from a change in the requirements each state has for principal certification. Then, institutions of higher education will reform the way principals receive instruction regarding students with disabilities. A reform may be long overdue to ensure all students, regardless of disability, receive the same high-quality instruction.

In the following five sections, each of the five domains of principal leadership will be explored. These are not intended to be separate and distinct—there is certainly overlap between and among them. These descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive. The role of the school principal is always changing, which perhaps points to one of the most important characteristics required: flexibility. Leaders who prefer a traditional managerial style, which has rules and predictability, may need to adapt to a leadership role that can be different each day. Hallinger (1992) may have summarized this idea in stating:

For principals whose careers have spanned the eras of the school manager and instructional leader, this represents a significant increase in the degree of uncertainty and ambiguity they experience in their work. A stock phrase in the restructuring literature is that school leaders will need a greater tolerance for ambiguity. While under some conditions, ambiguity may contribute to creativity, it is also true that there is a long tradition in which managers seek to reduce role ambiguity and task uncertainty.

Instructional Leadership

One critical daily role for a school principal is instructional leadership. The term ‘instructional leadership’ can be difficult to define, as it has so many aspects. Blase and Blase (2000) offer the following components based on their body of research:

“Instructional leadership should incorporate tasks of direct assistance to teachers, such as staff development, curriculum development, and action research, and should be an inquiry-oriented endeavor, that encourages teacher voice, in a critical study of classroom interactions.”

Though the principal rarely has the opportunity to provide direct instruction to students, the principal must create an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. Fullan (2014) suggests that this can be accomplished through establishing goals and expectations, resourcing strategically, ensuring quality teaching, leading teacher learning and development, and ensuring an orderly and safe environment. How can all of this be accomplished?

This aspect of school leadership now stands at the core of many reform efforts. Its centrality is a function of the fact that instructional leadership directly impacts the dynamics of student engagement and learning. Deliberate actions by a school’s principal can enhance instructional time and the effectiveness of supplemental programs. Principals can enhance student learning through initiatives aimed at building the school’s professional capacity and the quality of its instructional guidance subsystem. (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 62).

Principals certainly have encountered resistance from teachers in their role as instructional leaders. “Given the fact that the historic role of supervision has been inspection and control, it is not surprising that most teachers do not equate supervision

with collegiality” (Glickman, 2010, p. 7). If instructional leadership is presented as a system of classroom observations where labels such as “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” are assigned, with nothing more, principals are unlikely to be successful in this domain. “The history of instructional supervision is viewed most often as an instrument for controlling teachers” (Glickman, 2010, p. 8). Principals must develop relationships with teachers so that instructional leadership is a collaborative process based on teacher and student growth. This challenge will be explored further in two sections below, on emotional intelligence, and culture and climate. This is not meant to suggest that principals should not exert their authority to make change where it is needed for the benefit of the teaching-learning process.

Finally, instructional leaders are not reticent about using their role authority to ‘make things happen.’ They are willing to stake out significant positions for improving teaching and learning, challenge those who may be blocking these efforts, and use the full resources of their office to promote change. (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 63)

Another important component to instructional leadership is the system of professional development offered to teachers. Districts must move away from systems where teachers participate in “whatever is available” just to fulfill a contractual obligation, toward a model where professional development is differentiated, sustained, and meaningful.

Our results affirm that quality professional development is a key instrument for school change. Most significantly, maximum leverage is achieved from reform efforts when this professional development occurs within a supportive professional work environment where teaching is grounded in a common, coherent, and aligned instructional system. (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 134)

Finally, it is suggested that instructional leaders must base their efforts in research on best practice. DeWitt (2017) says, “As instructional leaders, we take actionable steps to improve the learning climate in our schools, but these steps must be based in research, and not just on gut feelings” (p. 19). This practice requires principals to be learners, open to investigating best practice both individually and as part of collegial groups.

In addition to the information presented by these authors, researchers have investigated the role of the principal in the instructional process. This is often done through surveys of teachers. Blase and Blase (2000) surveyed 809 American teachers using an open-ended questionnaire (responses were approximately 500 words per respondent). The authors developed an open-ended questionnaire, the Inventory of Strategies Used by Principals to Influence Classroom Teaching (ISUPICT), to investigate the question: What characteristics (e.g. strategies, behaviors, attitudes, goals) of school principals positively influence classroom teaching, and what effects do such characteristics have on classroom instruction? Results were coded using comparative analysis, and the authors found that in effective principal–teacher interaction about instruction, processes such as inquiry, reflection, exploration, and experimentation result, teachers build repertoires of flexible alternatives rather than collecting rigid teaching procedures and methods. This model of effective instructional leadership was derived directly from the data. It consists of the two major themes: talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth.

The data revealed strategies of effective instructional leadership. Five of these strategies fall under the heading “talking with teachers” and six strategies fall under the heading “promoting professional growth”. The recommended strategies related to talking

to teachers are: making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions, and giving praise. Principals used six strategies to promote teachers' professional growth, including: emphasizing the study of teaching and learning; supporting collaboration efforts among educators; developing coaching relationships among educators; encouraging and supporting the redesign of programs; applying the principles of adult learning, growth, and development to all phases of staff development; and implementing action research to inform instructional decision-making (Blase & Blase, 2000).

Quinn (2002) also studied the role of the school principal as an instructional leader. "While there may be general agreement that a principal should be a strong instructional leader, there does not appear to be agreement on the characteristics of instructional leadership, or how those characteristics translate to improved classroom instruction" (Quinn, 2002). Is a principal's role simply to set clear expectations, be the school's disciplinarian, and create high standards? Should the role of an instructional leader also include informing teachers about new educational methodologies and technologies? Does a strong instructional leader provide opportunities for teacher growth, such as targeted professional development? Perhaps a principal, who cannot have the direct impact on student learning that a teacher can, is simply meant to influence teacher attitudes?

Quinn (2002) analyzed existing research on the concept of instructional leadership. The existing research is varied and inconclusive. In each research study Quinn analyzed, there appears to be a different definition of instructional leadership and different

descriptions of the domains of this leadership. There is also great disagreement on how much a principal can actually influence instruction at all.

Andrews and Soder (1987, pp. 9–20) concluded that an effective instructional leader is successful in four dimensions of leadership: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence in the school. Heck et al. (1990) found that a principal cannot have nearly the impact on instructional outcomes as a teacher can, but Heck (1992) also found that principals in high-achieving schools, as measured by academic achievement in a variety of areas, are more effective instructional leaders than their counterparts in consistently low-achieving schools. Siens and Ebmeier (1996) found that principals may have influence over variables such as teacher attitudes, but have little direct effect on student outcomes.

Complicating the definition of instructional leadership is the ever-changing landscape of classroom instruction: “A common predicament that principals encounter as instructional leaders is the growing complexity of current visions of teaching and learning” (Quinn, 2002, p. 451). The shift from pedagogical approaches that are based on lectures and worksheets to approaches that are more constructivist in their approach has profound implications for the nature of practice.

Quinn concluded that there is no single leadership style or approach that is fitting for all school settings. However, a narrow focus on management issues alone is a disservice to teachers and students. Principals must provide instructional leadership to facilitate and promote active learning experiences for all students. Through their words and their

actions, principals model the importance of students being actively engaged in their learning and highlight the achievement gains that are a product of this engagement.

Quinn's study was designed to identify correlational relationships between principal leadership behaviors and instructional practice descriptors and to determine whether instructional leadership is a predictor of instructional practices. The data was collected during Project ASSIST (achieving success through school improvement site teams), a systemic school-improvement process in Missouri. The population of this study was limited to schools participating in Project ASSIST. These schools consisted of eight elementary schools, eight middle schools, and eight high schools.

Two instruments were used in this study to collect data. A staff assessment questionnaire (SAQ) was used to identify and examine four dimensions of instructional leadership. This instrument established teacher views of principal leadership as the independent variable. A random selection of one-third of the faculty at each school completed the questionnaire, and a cumulative school score was calculated for each characteristic. The second tool was the Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI). Initial observations are coded as one of six types of teacher-student instructional engagement, including active learning/active teaching, teacher-led conversation, teacher-led instruction, student seatwork/teacher engaged, and student seatwork/teacher disengaged. This tool established classroom practices as the dependent variable.

Pearson-product moment correlational analysis was used to determine if any of the four instructional leadership subscales (resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence) from the SAQ correlated with the instructional

practices subscales (active learning/active teaching, teacher-led conversation, teacher-led instruction, student seatwork/teacher engaged, student seatwork/teacher disengaged, and total disengagement) as measured by the IPI.

Multiple linear regression was used to identify leadership factors that predicted instructional practice. The four subscales of instructional leadership (resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence) from the SAQ were used as the predictor variables for each of the six IPI scales (active learning/active teaching, teacher-led conversation, teacher-led instruction, student seatwork/teacher engaged, student seatwork/teacher disengaged, and total disengagement).

The Pearson-product moment correlational coefficient was utilized, and a 0.05 level of significance was established for all correlations. Quinn found the following relationships between the independent variable (teacher descriptions of principal leadership) and the dependent variable (instructional practice):

IPI rawscore correlated significantly with instructional leadership factor at a large effect size of 0.507 ($p < 0.05$). In schools where teachers described their principal as more competent on the instructional leadership factor the IPI rawscore tended to be higher. The IPI rawscore correlated significantly with resource provider at a medium effect size of 0.456 ($p < 0.05$). In schools where teachers described their principal as more effective on the resource provider subscale the IPI rawscore tended to be higher. The IPI rawscore correlated significantly with instructional resource at a large effect size of 0.596 ($p < 0.01$). In schools where teachers described their principal as more capable on the resource provider subscale the IPI rawscore tended to be higher. The IPI rawscore correlated significantly with communicator at a medium effect size of 0.496 ($p < 0.05$). In schools where teachers described their principal as

more proficient on the communicator subscale, the IPI rawscore tended to be higher. (Quinn, 2002, p. 457)

The results of this study support the notion that leadership impacts instruction. Quinn concludes through correlational relationships that higher levels of active learning and active teaching occur in schools where the principal serves as an instructional resource. Higher levels of student engagement are also present in schools where the principal rates highly as a resource provider. Finally, high levels of active learning/active teaching exist where there is a principal who promotes communication by modeling commitment to school goals, articulates a vision toward instructional goals, and provides for integrated instructional planning and goal attainment (Quinn, 2002).

Building Management

There does not appear to be a large body of research on school leadership managerial tasks. Perhaps researchers have not found topics such as creating a master schedule or ordering student desks to be worthy of empirical study. However, if a master schedule does not accommodate student needs, or if desks are falling apart, it is unlikely a principal will be viewed as successful. Bryk et al. (2010) explains:

This represents the most basic aspect of school leadership. Its effects are most manifest in its absence - for example, a poorly run office, supply shortages, nothing starting or ending on time, poor communication with parents and staff, and little attention to administrative support for implementing new programs. Weaknesses in this domain can undermine teachers' classroom work by eating away at the amount of effective instructional time. It can also

affect how teachers, parents, and community leaders come to ‘see’ a school and influence their willingness to support new ideas and new programs that could potentially improve student learning. (pp. 62–63)

Though principals are expected to be so much more than building managers, this role must not be overlooked. When people consider the term ‘manager’, they may think about management style. Green (2013) reviews two major types of management style: ‘concern for production/task’ is the degree to which leaders focus on task completion, set clear objectives, and establish practices and procedures to achieve those objectives; ‘concern for people/relationships’ is the degree to which leaders consider the needs and interests of followers when selecting approaches to use in completing organizational tasks (p. 35). In any organization, including a school, under a ‘country club’ management style, in which the focus is on relationships and not task completion, there is likely to be high morale but low productivity. Under ‘authority management’, organizations are likely to see higher productivity but low morale. Principals must strive to balance these two management styles. This challenge will be explored further in the section below on emotional intelligence.

While many principals may want to be known as instructional leaders or as visionaries, it is necessary to attend to every detail of building management:

Consequently, as we exhort principals to be instructional leaders, we must also recognize the demands they face, sometimes quite heavy ones, in executing basic managerial affairs of a school community. To simply say that principals must now be instructional leaders and spend at least half their time within classrooms, while simultaneously enhancing their

school's ability to manage its day-to-day affairs, is an educational pipe dream. (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 209)

Fullan (2014) agrees with this assessment. "Lead learner principals are wary of taking on too many innovations: they avoid the allure of more money and high-profile initiatives. They make sure the basics—budget, timetable, health, safety—are addressed effectively." While Fullan encourages principals to be agents of change and build professional capital in schools, he does not discount the need to address everyday managerial tasks. "In fact, leading the development of a culture of professional capital requires strong managerial skills" (Fullan, 2014, p. 56).

One research study that does highlight the importance of management skills was conducted by Grissom and Loeb (2011). The authors used survey responses from principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parents with rich administrative data to identify which principal skills matter most for school outcomes. Factor analysis of a 42-item task inventory distinguished five skill categories, yet only one of them, the principals' organization management skills, consistently predicted student achievement growth and other success measures. Analysis of evaluations of principals by assistant principals confirmed this central result.

An important component of managerial skills is the ability to manage one's own time. Time management is the skill that allows a leader to complete tasks, minimize stress, and improve performance. Grissom, Loeb, and Mitani (2015) conducted a study in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the nation's fourth-largest school district; 287 principals completed a survey that included a time management inventory used to measure four components of principals' time-management skills. The authors then merged principals'

scores on this inventory with several other data sources, including administrative data on personnel and schools provided by the district, surveys of assistant principals (APs) and teachers, and in-person observational data collected for a subset of M-DCPS principals over full days, also in the spring of 2011. The goal of the study was to answer four research questions: How are time management skills distributed across M-DCPS principals, particularly with respect to school and principal characteristics? How do time management skills predict observed principal time use? How are time management skills associated with principal job stress? To what degree, if any, are time management skills predictive of APs' and teachers' perceptions of principal effectiveness? (Grissom et al., 2015).

To assess principals' job stress, the authors designed a short survey instrument to measure these four predictors of job stress based on a teacher stress survey developed by the National Union of Teachers (2007). Their survey was designed to measure six key job stressors: demands, control, support, relationships, role, and change. These concepts overlap a great deal in three of the identified four predictors (i.e. lack of control, unpredictability, and novelty/change).

The analysis of the research conducted was found to be consistent with previous studies that found that good time-management leads to perceived time control, which leads to less job-induced stress. It is suggested that job stress is important both as a predictor of performance and other outcomes. It was also shown that positive correlations exist between strong time-management and perceived effectiveness from assistant principals and teachers. It is further suggested that the major themes derived from the data—that principal time-management is associated with more productive work

behaviors and positive assessment of job performance—provide initial evidence that time-management matters for principal work. With relatively small time and resource costs, even modest benefits of time-management training for school principals can make such investments worth consideration (Grissom et al., 2015).

Culture and Climate

Another vital component of school leadership is creating and maintaining a climate that promotes success for all constituents. The principal cannot accomplish this on his/her own, but is still ultimately responsible for the climate of a school building, particularly in establishing a pattern of basic assumptions shared among members of the organization. Glickman et al. (2010) built on the work of Sergiovanni, Hord and Sommers, and others in encouraging school leaders to create communities as opposed to organizations. Principals are encouraged to promote ideas such as democracy (freedom of choice, free flow of ideas, collaborative leadership, and equitable treatment of all, including minority groups), morals (care, wholeness, connectedness, inclusion, justice, and trust), and professional learning communities that include shared beliefs/norms, distributed leadership, collective learning, de-privatization of teaching, focus on student learning, and collaboration (pp. 462–470).

Couros (2015) encourages principals to use the influence they have in this domain to create a culture of innovation:

As leaders in education, it is our job not to control those whom we serve but to unleash their talent. If innovation is going to be a priority in education, we need to create a culture where

trust is the norm. This must be modeled at the highest level of the organization if we expect teachers to create the same culture in their classrooms. (p. 69)

Couros suggests that teachers often design their classroom cultures based on their own experiences with the school-wide culture. He cautions against a school culture that is built on a deficit model, as this mentality may manifest itself in classrooms. Instead, Couros offers the following advice to school leaders:

As you think about your role as an educational leader and the level of trust in your school or district, consider the following questions:

- Do people often ask me for permission or guidance?
- Have I created an environment where risks are not only taken but encouraged?
- How have I highlighted the great work being done by our school to others in and out of the organization?

These questions are about innovation, but they're also the importance of relationships in creating a 'culture of innovation'. In fact, relationships are crucial for innovation, which is why you'll always hear me say that the three most important words in education are: relationships, relationships, relationships. Without them, we have nothing. (p. 69)

Though professional development is largely geared toward improving instruction, as was explored in the instructional leadership section above, the model for designing and selecting professional development is appropriate here.

'Owning' one's own learning helps ensure that the learning actually happens. Still, much professional learning is delivered from top-down and decided upon for individuals. Allowing

people to explore their passions is more likely to lead people to go deep and embrace what they have learned. (Couros, 2013, p. 187)

Just as teachers are encouraged to learn about their students as learners—strengths and weaknesses, areas of interest—and provide differentiation and academic choice, so must principals collaborate with teachers to design and select meaningful, individualized professional development.

Bryk et al. (2010) agrees with this concept, and further suggests that collaborative decision-making impacts parents and community members as well. “If teachers feel a sense of influence on decisions affecting their work, the necessary ‘buy-in’ or change is more readily established. Outreach to parents and community leaders has similar effects” (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 64). DeWitt (2017) encourages principals to be “approachable” when creating a school climate. “Parents and teachers will be more likely to approach a principal, for both good and bad reasons, if the school climate is inclusive and supportive. Everything school leaders do has an effect on the climate of the school” (p. 47). DeWitt also suggests that school climate should be focused on developing future citizens, school safety, collaboration, and a love of learning (p. 48). Suggestions include hanging student artwork around the building and encouraging teachers to take students on gallery walks, encouraging teachers to have students debate social justice issues, establishing a gay-straight alliance, and making sure teachers use literature in their classrooms that depicts marginalized populations (race, gender, sexuality).

Though the concept of trust will be further explored below in the section on emotional intelligence, it plays a major role in school climate. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) studied the impact of trust, specifically on school climate. This study assessed faculty

trust in the principal using a subscale of the Faculty Trust Scales (FTS). The Faculty Trust in the Principal subscale consisted of eight items that tapped teacher perceptions of the principal's benevolence, honesty, openness, competence, and reliability. Faculty perceptions of the collegial leadership of the principal were assessed using a seven-item measure that was a subscale of the Organizational Climate Index. The perceptions of teachers regarding the instructional leadership of their principal were assessed using a six-item measure with a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). These items were designed by leaders in the urban school district in this study to tap the perceptions of teachers regarding the instructional leadership of the school. The same scale was then used in the suburban sample. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The measure of student achievement was the state-mandated standardized tests for mathematics and English language arts (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

According to the authors, the question that motivated this study was the extent to which trustworthy leadership was related to the cultivation of both a strong and vibrant school climate as well as high student achievement. Conclusions derived from the data, including from over 3,000 teachers nested within 64 schools in both urban and suburban schools, was that such leadership matters a great deal. Teachers seem to be looking for principals who are approachable and open in their attitudes as they engage with teachers about instruction. The findings also pointed to the ways in which principal attitudes and approaches are linked to other aspects of school climate. Collegial leadership, instructional leadership, and trustworthy behavior on the part of the principal were all related to teacher professionalism. That is, where teachers felt that they could put their

faith in the principal and that their principal was someone to whom they could turn for assistance with instructional matters, teachers perceived their colleagues to be more committed to students and believed that they were competent, cooperative, and supportive. A correlation also means that the opposite is true; where teachers did not trust their principals, they were also likely to rate their colleagues less favorably in terms of professional judgment and competence (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

Visionary Leadership

Schools at every level have adopted mission and vision statements. Perhaps there is a sign hanging by the front door of a local school that states, “Main Street Elementary—a great place to work”. Couros (2015) suggests that our vision for what education can look like today should be compelling not only to our students but also to teachers, leaders, and the greater community—and it has to be better than being a “great place to work” (p. 109). Couros further suggests that the process for creating a vision or mission statement may be as important as the statement itself. “It’s important to note, too, that how we go about creating a school or district’s vision and mission statements will determine, in large part, whether it compels people to participate in making it a reality” (Couros, 2015, p. 108).

Couros makes the following suggestions to schools or districts creating a vision. First, a vision statement should be clear and direct enough to memorize. It is also important that it connects with each and every person in the organization. Next, to ensure that the vision is attained, we must break down the mission into small, achievable steps for the

individuals within our school system. Each step achieved toward the end goal helps to build confidence and competence along the way. Finally, Couros encourages a vision of creating learning environments that inspire innovative thinking. “Through my own research and study, I’ve noticed that organizations that are successful at executing their vision have or encourage the following things daily in learning” (Couros, 2015, p. 111). He describes voice, choice, time for reflection, opportunities for innovation, critical thinkers, problem solvers/finders, self-assessment, and connected learning. Perhaps certain schools or districts fall into the trap of creating a vision or mission statement that sounds cheerful, but without considering an appropriate process to make the vision come to be. “Dreaming is important, but until we create the conditions where innovation in education flourishes, those dreams will not become a reality” (Couros, 2015, p. 118).

What role does the principal play in this process? The goal should not be to create the vision in isolation, but to bring together all stakeholders:

Finally, over time, as school principals bring teachers, parents, and community members into new leadership roles, they enlarge the collective capacity to support a more productive and continuously improving school organization. While a principal holds substantial role authority to promote change, no one person can transform a school on his or her own. (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 64)

It is critical for the principal, and all school leaders, to encourage open discussion and dialogue when these groups join together. Green (2013) cautions against sending a message, even inadvertently, that these stakeholders are present merely to listen to the principal. This type of process will result in a vision statement, but the vision will not be shared by the community. “Even if the vision is for the greater good of the organization,

if the followers do not understand it, they are not likely to be inspired about its accomplishment” (Green, 2013, p. 52).

In his book, *Theory U*, Otto Scharmer sets out the core practices principals can use in facilitating change through collaboration. In an interview in 2018, Dr. Scharmer stated:

When you bring a stakeholder group together around a specific issue, you put them on a journey and then through the journey they learn to see the reality through each other’s eyes.

The goal is to not only *know*, but to also *feel* how someone else is looking at that issue, and to feel the pain of those that are the most excluded from the process and so on. (Riley, 2018)

Dr. Scharmer explains that this process relies on “presencing”, or sensing and actualizing the highest future potential and embodying it in the now. This process also requires a focus on the needs of the individuals in the organization, relating and listening and providing emotional support. Dr. Scharmer suggests that in leadership preparation programs, the subtle side of leadership is not cultivated and emotional support is not encouraged (Riley, 2018). While these skills and strategies may be missing to a degree in general, Dr. Scharmer suggests that female leaders display a greater capacity for them.

‘Feminine leadership’ includes when:

Leaders remove themselves from the center. Leaders removed from their own ego create space for others. They are good at listening. They are good at holding the space. Many times, these leaders are good at attending to the whole. They excel at helping people to connect to the edges of the system. They actively engage and connect with emerging future potential and holding the space for that conversation. (Riley, 2018)

All leaders, according to Scharmer, will find more success when they follow these guidelines: suspend your habits of judgment, and also have the capacity to access your empathy and compassion. Give frameworks and offer practices that engage people every

day. Deepen your listening and expose yourself to very different viewpoints within your own system (Riley 2018).

Brown and Anfara (2003) conducted a qualitative case study into visionary leadership based on D.L. Colton's definition of vision.

Broadly conceived, vision is the principal's ability to holistically view the present, to reinterpret the mission of the school to all its constituents, and to use imagination and perceptual skills to think beyond accepted notions of what is practical and what is of immediate application in present situations to speculative ideas and to, preferably, possible futures. (Brown & Anfara, 2003)

The data used in this exploratory, qualitative case study was part of a larger database that was developed over a period of two years. Surveys and semi-structured interviews were the primary methods of collecting data. Survey questions related to the principals' (a) educational, professional, and personal background; (b) knowledge of the middle school concept; (c) experience with and perceptions of school reform and change; (d) attitudes toward parent involvement in school; and (e) knowledge of special education issues.

The researchers concluded that the process of change or reform can be divided into three broad phases: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. The middle-level principals who participated in this study identified these three components during their interviews, which can also be referred to as 'the three Es': exploration, education, and edification (Brown & Anfara, 2003).

Brown and Anfara (2003) concluded that the visionary leader is not a mystical person somehow connected to intelligences or powers beyond what others know. The visionary leader is one who can clearly articulate what is and what ought to be. The visionary

leader in action has the necessary skills and knowledge to build a new reality. Based on their research with middle school principals, the authors make the following suggestions to principals who wish to have success as visionary leaders:

- Understand the nature, needs, strengths, and limitations of staff members;
- Understand the relevance of the reform in terms of need, practicality, and complexity;
- Assess the readiness of staff to become involved;
- Ensure that the necessary resources and support are available, including the time to accomplish the task;
- Work collaboratively with a critical mass of diverse constituents (teachers, community members, parents, etc.);
- Understand that change is difficult and will be met with resistance;
- Acknowledge that teachers must ‘own’ the intended reform;
- Ensure that excessive authority is not imposed from above;
- Provide the professional development and education necessary to properly implement the intended reform;
- Remember that structural changes will not ensure fundamental changes in the purposes, priorities, and functioning of a school by themselves;
- Acknowledge that reform is a developmental process (Brown & Anfar, 2003).

Emotional Intelligence

Goleman (1995) argued that emotional intelligence (EI), rather than intelligence quotient (IQ), is more significant in predicting success among school leaders. Goleman built on the concepts of Thorndike's "social intelligence" and Gardner's "multiple intelligences", as well as Salovey and Mayer's work of the early 1990s. It was Goleman, however, who popularized the concept throughout the 1990s, as schools and businesses started investing in books, exercises, and training programs aimed at helping people improve their emotional intelligence (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence are vital, because personal relationships are a central element of daily life. Many improvement efforts fail not because managers' intentions are incorrect or insincere but because they are unable to handle the social challenge of change. (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 171)

Emotional intelligence in schools is particularly important because of the emotional nature of working with children. When problems arise between children, or between staff, or from an upset parent, the successful school principal will need to manage emotions first. To accomplish this, relationships that are built on trust must already exist.

Components of emotional intelligence include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. A leader who exhibits self-awareness can manage his/her feelings and emotions and be aware of how these impact other people. A leader who exhibits self-management can manage—and perhaps more importantly, *model* for others—self-control, authenticity, adaptability, initiative, and optimism. A leader who exhibits social awareness is 'in tune' with the thoughts and

feelings of others, especially those under his/her supervision. This characteristic includes empathy and commitment to service. A leader who exhibits relationship management is one who develops others, manages conflict, and inspires teamwork (Goleman, McKee, & Boyatzis, 2002).

DeWitt (2017) adds:

Collaborative leadership is about making more deposits than withdrawals, and as we know, schools are complex organizations. It's easier to think about withdrawals. Leaders and teachers need to think less about winning an argument and more about finding opportunities for win-win. (p. 50)

DeWitt offers the following suggestions to make these deposits: "Notice something nice about students, parents, and teachers and say something to them about it; follow up with a parent, teacher, or student after a conversation that may have been rough" (p. 50). The goal is to develop trusting relationships with people before the 'difficult' conversations. Principals will experience more success when talking to a parent about student misbehavior if prior communication with that parent was about something positive; similarly, teachers will be more open to constructive criticism about, for example, a lesson that was not satisfactory, if prior communication included noticing something positive the teacher did for students.

Green (2013), however, cautions against simply focusing on praise. When comparing leadership styles, Green warns that 'country club management', which may include warm relationships and telling everyone how great they are doing all the time, may lead to high morale, but is likely to see low productivity. It is not recommended that too much focus

be placed on authority management either, where the entire focus is on task completion and bottom-line results. Green recommends team management, where there is a balance between high concern for task completion as well as a high concern for positive interpersonal relationships:

Effective leaders were generally task-oriented, set high performance goals, and focused on such administrative functions as planning, coordinating, and fascinating work. It was also found that effective leaders gave consideration to good interpersonal relations, allowing followers some degree of autonomy in deciding how to conduct their work and at what pace. (p. 34)

Green (2013) also reminds principals of the value of communication skills in building and modeling emotional intelligence:

The school leader has to stay connected with the faculty, interact, and exchange information. When the leader does not stay connected with the faculty, conflict can emerge and can become a disruptive force in the communications process. To be effective communicators, leaders must sustain a collaborative position that displays acts of caring about what the other person says, without seeking to either fix the situation or to discord or discount it. (p. 144)

Open communication may seem obvious, but can be challenging. In this analysis of balancing a wide variety of domains and responsibilities where time management is key, principals must fight the desire to end conversations quickly. Green strongly encourages active listening by viewing communication as a “people process” as opposed to a “language process”. It is important to listen to concerns with genuine interest, and not dismiss those issues that are unimportant to the listener. Also, principals should avoid trying to fix the problem quickly, as this may also seem dismissive. It may be beneficial

to collaborate with the teacher, parent, or student, by asking questions such as, “What do you think we can do about this?”. Green adds:

When leaders advocate a conversational process that includes ethics, they advance a sense of value, equity, trust, and acceptance. When these ethical qualities do not exist, some people do not communicate effectively because they feel unappreciated, misunderstood, defensive, hostile, frustrated, or distressed. (p. 147)

Romanelli, Cain, and Smith (2006) studied emotional intelligence with two questions in mind: Is emotional intelligence a predictor of success? Are existing measurement instruments reliable? The authors were aware of criticism of the concept of emotional intelligence, as others have declared it to be based on loose definitions or have pointed out that concepts such as trust and listening are obvious. The authors pointed out how the concept of emotional intelligence had been extensively popularized in the lay press and corporate world as individuals assume the potential ability of emotional intelligence to predict various markers of success. They suggest that emotional intelligence (EI) most commonly incorporates concepts of emotional expression and regulation, self-awareness, and empathy, but question the instruments used to measure these elusive constructs.

Romanelli, Cain, and Smith (2006) begin by describing intelligence in general terms:

First, an intelligence should be capable of reflecting mental performance rather than preferred ways of behaving, a person's self-esteem, or non-intellectual attainments. New forms of intelligence should also meet prescribed correlational criteria. Lastly, intelligence should vary with experience and age. (p. 69)

The authors studied existing research on emotional intelligence, specifically related to the field of education. They attempted to find evidence that emotional intelligence is a greater predictor of success than general intelligence, and that emotional intelligence can be learned or developed. In a study of five sections of a college graduate-level management course, one section incorporated formal instruction on emotional intelligence.

Academic performance was measured by the final project course grade achieved by individual students. Final project grades were selected as the dependent measure since in the intervention group these grades would reflect only learning that occurred following the emotional intelligence instruction. Beginning level of knowledge was controlled for through the examination of GPAs for each subject. Using the Games-Howell post-hoc test, the researchers found statistically significant increases in EQi scores among the students who completed the emotional intelligence curriculum compared with scores of students in the group that was not given the emotional intelligence curriculum, although scores in both groups improved. These findings led the researchers to conclude that emotional intelligence could be taught or learned and is not a fixed parameter.

Additionally, greater levels of emotional intelligence can be expected to correlate with academic performance even when controlling for traditional markers of intelligence, such as GPA.

Based on this study and others, Romanelli, Cain, and Smith (2006) concluded that emotional intelligence does appear to be a predictor of success in leaders, but there are several limitations. Most instruments designed to measure emotional intelligence are either self-report scales or performance-based evaluations involving the completion of

observed problem sets. All assessment instruments may be hindered by the loosely defined nature of emotional intelligence, which makes concrete criteria for measurements difficult to define. Nevertheless, several instruments are available and researchers should recognize the limitations of both self-report and performance-based measures and the specific instrument from either category that is selected for use.

Laura and Kirby (2002) earlier tried to answer the two questions: Is emotional intelligence a predictor of success? Is there a reliable measurement tool? Their findings may be more encouraging on the topic, especially as they relate to the latter. First, Laura and Kirby suggest that emotional intelligence has three components:

Perceiving emotions consists of recognizing and interpreting the meaning of various emotional states, as well as their relations to other sensory experiences. Understanding emotions involves comprehension of how basic emotions are blended to form complex emotions, how emotions are affected by events surrounding experiences, and whether various emotional reactions are likely in given social settings. Regulating emotions encompasses the control of emotions in oneself and in others. An individual's emotional intelligence is an indication of how he or she perceives, understands, and regulates emotions. (Laura & Kirby, 2002)

The research study included 304 undergraduate students (152 men and 152 women) at a university in the western United States. Each participant completed a paper-and-pencil measure of individual cognitive performance, the short version of the MEIS (Multi-factor Emotional Intelligence Scale), the Shipley Institute of Living IQ Scale, and a questionnaire assessing demographic characteristics. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 33 years and were primarily Caucasian (88.5%). The MEIS consists of eight tasks

that are divided into components representing three levels of emotional reasoning ability: perceiving, understanding, and regulating emotions. The scale yields four scores: an overall score reflecting general emotional intelligence and a score for each of the three emotional reasoning abilities. The Shipley Institute of Living IQ Scale was used to assess the participants' general intelligence.

In analyzing the results, the researchers concluded that an individual's ability to perceive and regulate emotions affects performance. The results also yielded some interesting insights into how people may use such abilities in performing stressful cognitive tasks. Overall emotional intelligence was related to performance in that higher emotional intelligence was associated with better scores on one measure of cognitive performance. Also, the MEIS allowed for the investigation of how emotional intelligence affected performance by providing both an overall emotional intelligence score and subscale scores that represented its components. Thus, the usefulness of the MEIS was demonstrated by its versatility in examining either the overall construct or its components (Laura & Kirby, 2002).

Conceptual Framework

Principals have daily, monthly, and annual responsibilities in each of five domains: emotional intelligence, instructional leadership, visionary leadership, culture and climate, and building management skills. It is suggested that completing these responsibilities creates challenges for principals in terms of time management. It is unlikely a principal will achieve everything that needs to be done in all five dimensions on a given day.

However, a principal cannot afford to ignore any of these dimensions for any length of time. The conceptual framework presented in figure 2.3 is the idea that a principal is “pulled” toward five different broad responsibilities across the school day and school year.

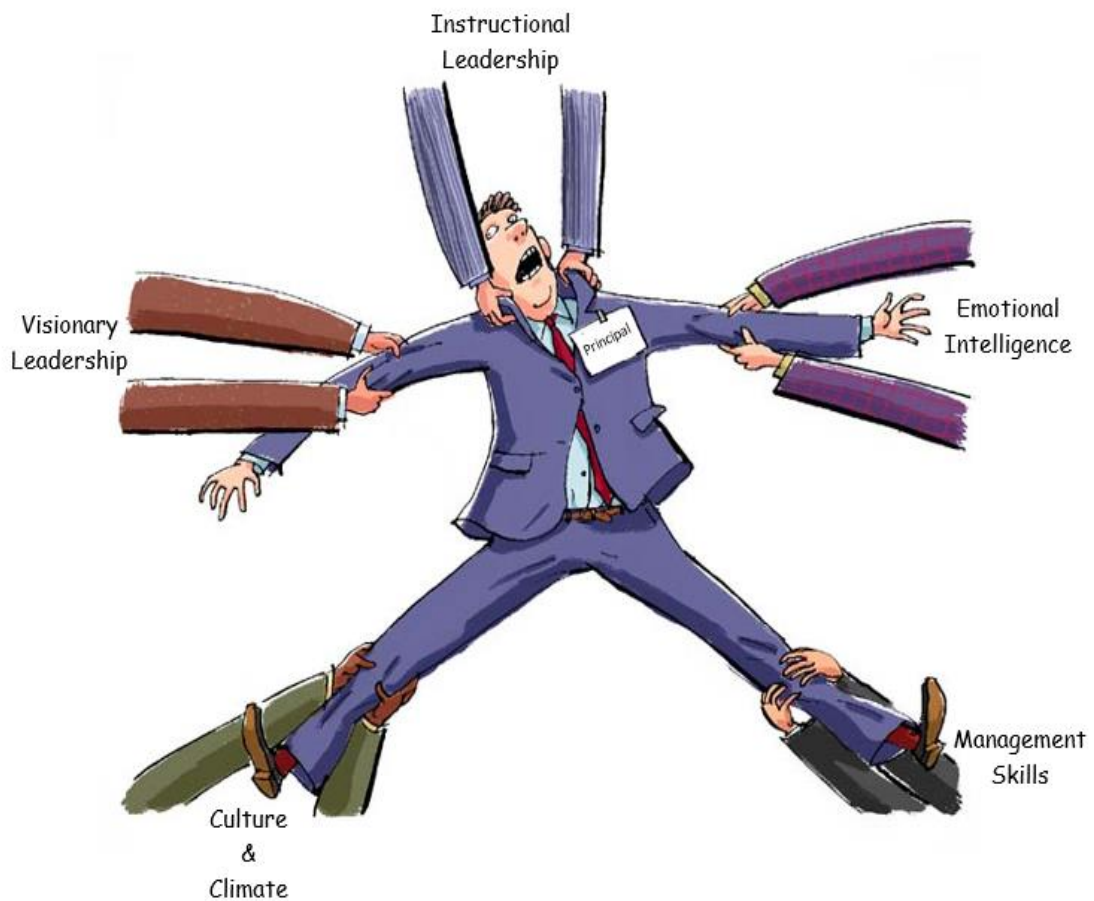


Figure 2.3. Conceptual Framework

Relationship between Prior Research and Present Study

It appears clear that principals have responsibilities in a range of areas. While each dimension is important to a principal's success as a school leader, many questions remain: Do principals accomplish work in all five dimensions each day? Do male principals prioritize these dimensions differently than female principals? Do veteran principals spend more time in certain dimensions than new principals? How does the existence of one or more assistant principals impact the allocation of a principal's time? Through a quantitative survey, the present study can add to prior research by indicating how principals report allocating their time and energy across the five dimensions of school leadership. Through a focus group interview, the present study can add to prior research by explaining why principals may have offered those survey responses.

As stated in chapter one, the purpose of this study is to evaluate how school principals balance five domains of educational leadership—specifically, management skills, emotional intelligence, visionary leadership, culture and climate, and instructional leadership. This literature review was designed to summarize the work of theorists, authors, and researchers who have studied these five dimensions of school leadership. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks presented have suggested that to be successful, a principal must complete responsibilities in all five dimensions. Through both quantitative and qualitative research with school principals, this study will help school leaders develop a better understanding of the principal's role as a school and community leader.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses and Research Questions

The hypotheses for this study included the idea that principals will allocate time and energy across five dimensions of school leadership differently. Possible outcomes that were considered before research included that veteran principals will report spending more time on culture and climate, while novice principals focus on building management. The preferable outcome included the conclusion that principals of all levels and backgrounds successfully (and easily) balance the five dimensions of school leadership. The probable outcome included that principals would report prioritizing certain dimensions over others.

The goal of this research was to answer the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent are principals able to balance their time and energy across five domains of educational leadership: instructional leadership, building management, emotional intelligence, visionary leadership, and culture and climate?
- 2) To what extent do variables such as gender, school level, experience, and other administrative staff predict time spent in each domain?
- 3) What values and beliefs do principals have that explain differences in priority areas within leadership?

Research Design and Data Analysis

The research questions above were answered with an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. The first two research questions were addressed through an original survey tool. The data received from surveying principals were entered into SPSS. The survey results allowed for data analysis to determine how independent variables such as gender and years of experience impact responses.

To answer this question, we need descriptive statistics that indicate general tendencies in the data (mean, median, mode), the spread of scores (variance, standard deviation, and range), or a comparison of how one score relates to all others (z scores, percentile rank). (Creswell, 2012, p. 182)

The survey tool has been created based on the literature review. Specifically, questions asked principals about their time and energy spent in instructional leadership, visionary leadership, emotional intelligence, culture and climate, and managerial tasks.

Irrespective of the level of modification, be clear that your survey questions are grounded in your own literature review, which itself is grounded in the research questions of your study. Having this explicit thread will make your data analysis simple, logical, and powerful. (Butin, 2010, p. 93)

The third research question was addressed by interviewing a focus group of principals. The quantitative component to this research received primary emphasis, and preceded the qualitative component. As such, the overall model for this research was **QUANT -> qual**. The goal was to analyze the “what” (how principals report spending time and energy across five dimensions of leadership), and then analyze the “why” (explain values

and other factors that contribute) through the interview with a focus group. This mixed-method design allowed the qualitative data to refine the results from the quantitative data (Creswell, 2012, p. 543).

An explanatory sequential mixed-method design consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture. (Creswell, 2012, p. 542)

RQ	Data Source(s)	Data Analysis/Process
1	Principal Surveys	Descriptive statistics (quantitative)
2	Principal Surveys	Descriptive statistics (quantitative)
3	Principal Surveys Focus Group Interview	Descriptive statistics (quantitative) Coding for themes, patterns, and discrepancies

Sample and Participants

According to the Suffolk County Government website (2019), Suffolk County occupies the easternmost portion of Long Island, in the southeastern portion of New York State. The county covers 2,373 square miles and is the second-largest county by area in New York. As of 2010, Suffolk County had 1.5 million residents, of whom 15.5% were

born outside the United States. The eastern end of the county splits into two peninsulas, the North Fork and the South Fork. The county is surrounded by water on three sides, including the Atlantic Ocean and the Long Island Sound (Suffolk County Government, 2019). Suffolk County is the 21st most populous county in the United States and had a median home value of \$327,000 as of 2015.

Suffolk County has 60 school districts and 340 schools (Suffolk County Government, 2019). The target population for this study was the 340 school principals representing all schools in Suffolk County. The accessible population was approximately 200 principals chosen at random, using a random number generator. This is an example of random sampling that allowed results to be generalized to all of Suffolk County.

Instruments

Two instruments were used as part of an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. A 20-question survey was distributed electronically to the accessible population (approximately 200 school principals). Creswell (2012) indicates that survey questions must include clear language and be applicable to all participants. This survey was cross-sectional, in that it was designed to assess information at one point in time (as opposed to a longitudinal survey). The survey instrument contained questions related to each of the five dimensions being studied: instructional leadership, building management, culture and climate, visionary leadership, and emotional intelligence. Participants were asked to respond to each of the 20 questions on an interval scale.

The popular Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) illustrates a scale with theoretically equal intervals among responses. It has become common practice to treat this

scale as a rating scale, and assume that equal intervals hold between the response categories. (Creswell, 2012, p. 167)

The second instrument used in this mixed-method design was an interview conducted with a focus group of six principals.

In qualitative research, you ask open-ended questions so that participants can best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings. An open-ended response to a question allows the participants to create the options for responding. (Creswell, 2012, p. 218)

The interview instrument contained general questions such as, “Why did you become a principal?” and, “What advice would you give to a new principal?” The quantitative study informed the creation of more specific questions for the focus group, which included, “Why do you believe principals with one or more assistant principals reported spending more time on visionary leadership than principals who do not have an assistant principal?” Participants were asked to share their own experiences as a means of explaining why principals reported as they did in the quantitative component.

Procedures

The quantitative survey was created in Google Forms. Demographic information was requested from participants, including gender, level of school (elementary, middle, high), years of experience as a principal, and the existence of an assistant principal. The survey was emailed to 196 principals in Suffolk County, with the hopes of receiving a response rate of at least 50%; 101 principals completed the survey. The results were analyzed using SPSS, through t-tests and ANOVA. T-tests and ANOVA helped determine which

independent variables serve as predictors of the dimensions of principal leadership. Since two of the independent variables, years of experience and level (elementary, middle, high), have more than two levels, ANOVA was an effective method of comparing means, finding statistical significance, and more. For example, ANOVA allowed for the analysis of mean differences between elementary, middle, and high school principals in each dimension of leadership. Post hoc results were also analyzed. Tukey and Games-Howell were used to identify statistically significant differences in means between levels for years of experience and school level (elementary, middle, high). T-tests were used to analyze the difference in mean responses to items for independent variables with two levels. This included gender and whether or not a principal has an assistant principal.

Lastly, the qualitative interview was conducted with a focus group of six principals. Creswell (2012) indicates that purposeful sampling is the process of selecting participants who can best help us to understand our phenomenon:

Maximum variation sampling is a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait (e.g., different age groups). This procedure requires that you identify the characteristic and then find sites or individuals that display different dimensions of that characteristic. (Creswell, 2012, p. 208).

To obtain a variation in experiences in the focus group, the six participants included three elementary principals, two middle school principals, and one high school principal. Responses were recorded and hand-coded to identify patterns, themes, and discrepancies.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Research Questions

The goal of this research was to answer the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent are principals able to balance their time and energy across five domains of educational leadership: instructional leadership, building management, emotional intelligence, visionary leadership, and culture and climate?
- 2) To what extent do variables such as gender, school level, experience, and other administrative staff predict time spent in each domain?
- 3) What values and beliefs do principals have that explain differences in priority areas within leadership?

Hypotheses and Study Participants

The hypotheses for this study included the idea that principals will allocate time and energy across five dimensions of school leadership differently. The preferable outcome included the conclusion that principals of all levels and backgrounds successfully balance the five dimensions of school leadership. The probable outcome included the notion that principals will report prioritizing certain dimensions over others.

As detailed in chapter 3, the researcher distributed a 20-question survey to 196 principals in Suffolk County, New York; 101 principals completed the survey through

Google Forms. Of the respondents, 52 are female and 49 are male. Sixty-four respondents reported being elementary principals, 21 reported being middle school principals, and 16 reported being high school principals. Thirty-nine respondents indicated they do not have an assistant principal, and 62 reported having one or more assistant principals. Thirty of the principals who responded to this survey reported one–four years of experience in the role, 19 reported five–eight years of experience, 18 reported nine–12 years of experience, and 34 principals reported 13 or more years of experience. After a data analysis of the survey results was conducted, the researcher conducted a focus group interview with six principals from a school district in Suffolk County. Within this focus group, one principal is a female, elementary level, no assistant principal, 16 years of experience as a principal; one is a female, elementary level, no assistant principal, seven years of experience as a principal; one is a male, elementary level, no assistant principal, 15 years of experience as a principal; one is a male, middle level, one or more assistant principal(s), eight years of experience as a principal; one is a male, middle level, one or more assistant principals, 11 years of experience as a principal; and one is a male, high school level, one or more assistant principals, five years of experience as a principal.

Table 4.1
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

Independent Variable	n	%
School Level		
Elementary	64	63.4
Middle	21	20.8
High	16	15.8
Gender		
Male	49	48.5
Female	52	51.5
Years of Experience		
1–4 Years	30	29.7
5–8 Years	19	18.8
9–12 Years	18	17.8
13+ Years	34	33.7
One or More Assistant Principal		
Yes	62	61.4
No	39	38.6

Note. N = 101.

Factor Analysis

The researcher has suggested that the dimensions of school leadership are separated into five domains: instructional leadership, visionary leadership, culture and climate, emotional intelligence, and building management. The factor analysis of the survey items suggests that principals did not report answers in five distinct dimensions, but that there is an overlap between the dimensions. A factor analysis was initially conducted on the 20 survey items. The Rotated Component Matrix and Total Variance

Explained tables were examined, and it was determined that four of the survey items did not load in the six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. These items were removed from consideration, and the remaining 16 items were analyzed through an additional factor analysis, as illustrated in tables 4.2 and 4.3. The resulting factors were renamed, to be used as composite variables, as illustrated in table 4.4. A composite variable is a variable created by combining two or more individual variables, called indicators, into a single variable. Composite variables are used to measure multidimensional concepts that are not easily observed.

Table 4.2

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	3.178	19.865	19.865	3.178
2	1.825	11.407	31.272	1.825
3	1.623	10.145	41.417	1.623
4	1.458	9.113	50.530	1.458
5	1.202	7.514	58.044	1.202
6	1.152	7.200	65.243	1.152
7	.940	5.874	71.118	
8	.787	4.917	76.034	
9	.675	4.218	80.253	
10	.593	3.707	83.959	
11	.568	3.552	87.511	
12	.531	3.321	90.832	
13	.453	2.829	93.661	
14	.394	2.461	96.122	
15	.319	1.995	98.117	
16	.301	1.883	100.000	

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4.3
Rotated Component Matrix

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Item2	.775	.054	.071	.009	-.038	-.044
Item7	.664	-.048	-.163	.034	-.030	-.032
Item5	.658	.179	.333	-.023	-.082	.101
Item3	.657	.110	-.072	.075	-.018	.309
Item12	-.050	.887	-.001	.136	-.111	.044
Item6	.430	.688	-.023	.022	.005	-.117
Item18	.051	.599	.501	.081	-.034	.160
Item8	.061	-.085	.785	-.076	-.133	.016
Item16	-.084	.102	.749	.068	.049	-.050
Item1	-.149	-.066	-.074	.876	.041	.058
Item4	.220	.199	.007	.749	-.136	-.166
Item17	.125	.314	.353	.589	.072	.140
Item9	.010	-.003	-.148	.005	.838	-.155
Item19	-.126	-.100	.052	-.034	.815	.087
Item14	.120	-.123	.091	-.078	.083	.838
Item13	.020	.351	-.113	.089	-.304	.623

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in five iterations.

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency—that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. When the 16 survey items that loaded into six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were considered, Cronbach's Alpha = .608, as illustrated in table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.569	.608	16

Table 4.5
Factor Loadings with Survey Questions

Factor	New Factor Name	Survey Question
1	Building Relationships	<p>I use my understanding of people's emotions when students, staff, and parents come to my office to ask for guidance on personal issues.</p> <p>Most of my effort goes toward establishing a positive climate in my school.</p> <p>I try to know and understand every cultural group represented in my school.</p> <p>I make sure to devote effort to managing my emotions when receiving criticism or admitting mistakes.</p>
2	Visionary Leadership	<p>I work on my long term goals for this school.</p> <p>I spend a lot of effort planning for the future of my school.</p> <p>I discuss district vision with other administrators.</p>
3	Understanding Community Needs	<p>I attend community events outside the school day.</p> <p>I prefer when students and parents who are upset and need emotional guidance access my counseling staff instead of coming directly to me.</p>
4	Instructional Leadership	<p>Working with teachers and other administrators on curriculum and instruction is the most important part of my job.</p> <p>I put a lot of time and effort into improving instructional practice in my building, such as through teacher observation and professional development.</p> <p>I read articles/research/books or attend conferences on instructional best practice.</p>
5	Building Management	<p>The building budget, master schedule, and other management tasks take up most of my time.</p> <p>I spend time during my day on management tasks such as school budget, building use forms/schedules, discipline referrals, or student/staff attendance issues.</p>
6	School Climate	<p>A staff member asks me to close the door so he/she can talk about a personal issue, trusting I will show empathy and provide useful feedback.</p> <p>I work with my staff on creating a positive school climate.</p>

Research Question 1 and Results

Research question #1: To what extent are principals able to balance their time and energy across five domains of educational leadership: instructional leadership, building management, emotional intelligence, visionary leadership, and culture and climate?

Table 4.6
Descriptive Statistics: Mean Response for Composite Variables

	Relation- ships	Vision	Community	Instruction	Manage- ment	Climate
N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Mean	4.4703	4.0627	3.6386	3.8680	3.2178	4.7178
Standard Deviation	.49154	.64068	.82498	.69933	.86723	.42671

In analyzing the mean and standard deviation for the six composite variables, as illustrated in table 4.6, the highest mean response was in School Climate (factor 6), with a mean response = 4.7178, SD = .4267. The factor with the next highest mean response is Building Relationships (factor 1, includes Emotional Intelligence) with a mean response = 4.4703, SD = .4915. It is noted that these two factors, which include the dimensions of Climate and Culture and Emotional Intelligence, have the highest mean response and the smallest, or tightest, standard deviations of the six factors. Factor 5, Building Management, was reported at the lowest mean response of 3.2178, SD = .86723. The mean response for all survey items was 4.0514, SD = .308. This suggests that principals report spending time and energy in all areas, on average, between “usually” and “always”.

When individual survey items were analyzed (see Appendix D), principals reported spending the most time on item 13 (I work with my staff on creating a positive school climate) with a mean response of 4.76 (SD .472), item 2 (I use my understanding of people's emotions when students, staff, and parents come to my office to ask for guidance on personal issues) with a mean response of 4.74 (SD .627), item 14 (A staff member asks me to close the door so he/she can talk about a personal issue, trusting I will show empathy and provide useful feedback) with a mean response of 4.67 (SD .618), item 20 (I work with my custodial staff to make sure the building is clean and safe) with a mean response of 4.41 (SD .763), and item 3 (Most of my effort goes toward establishing a positive climate in my school) with a mean response of 4.40 (SD .736). Each of these items is related to school climate and emotional intelligence.

The five lowest prioritized items, as reported by principals in this survey, are item 9 (the building budget, master schedule, and other management tasks take up most of my time) with a mean response of 2.80 (SD 1.14), item 15 (building management tasks prevent me from having time for my other responsibilities) with a mean response of 3.29 (SD .739), item 8 (I prefer when students and parents who are upset and need emotional guidance access my counseling staff instead of coming directly to me) with a mean response of 3.35 (SD 1.153), item 17 (I read articles/research/books or attend conferences on instructional best practice) with a mean response of 3.77 (SD .859), and item 1 (I read articles/research/books or attend conferences on instructional best practice) with a mean response of 3.83 (SD .981). Two of these items are related to instructional leadership and two of these items are related to building management.

Table 4.7
Correlations

		Relation- ships	Vision	Comm- unity	Instruc- tion	Manage- ment	Climate
Relationships	Pearson	1	.286**	.056	.132	-.122	.210*
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.575	.190	.222	.035
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Vision	Pearson	.286**	1	.188	.314**	-.157	.157
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.059	.001	.117	.117
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Community	Pearson	.056	.188	1	.067	-.085	.027
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.575	.059		.508	.401	.789
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Instruction	Pearson	.132	.314**	.067	1	-.062	.030
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.190	.001	.508		.538	.764
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Management	Pearson	-.122	-.157	-.085	-.062	1	-.157
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.222	.117	.401	.538		.118
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Climate	Pearson	.210*	.157	.027	.030	-.157	1
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.117	.789	.764	.118	
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of a linear association between two variables and is denoted by r . In analyzing the relationships between the six factors, there are three relationships that are statistically significant, according to the Pearson coefficient. As illustrated in table 4.7, Factor 1, Building Relationships, has a positive association with Factor 2, Visionary Leadership, r

= .286. Though considered a small positive association ($r < .3$), the association is significant at the .01 level ($p = .004$). Similarly, Factor 1, Building Relationships, has a small positive association with Factor 6, School Climate ($r = .210$), which is statistically significant at the .05 level ($p = .035$). The strongest positive association is between factors 2 and 4, Visionary Leadership and Instructional Leadership. The Pearson coefficient of .314 suggests a medium positive association, and is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p = .001$). Though not statistically significant, it is worth noting that Factor 5, Building Management, has a negative association with every other factor. In other words, time spent on building management appears to take time away from the other five factors, whereas time spent in one of the other five factors does not appear to take away from others in that grouping.

Research Question 2 and Results

Research Question #2: To what extent do variables such as gender, school level, experience, and other administrative staff predict time spent in each domain?

A t-test can be used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in means between two groups. As illustrated in table 4.8, female principals reported higher mean responses in Building Relationships, Understanding the Community, Instructional Leadership, School Climate, and the composite “All Survey Items”. Male principals reported higher mean responses in Building Management and Visionary leadership. Though these results are consistent with prior research, as presented in chapter 2, the differences in means were not statistically significant at the .05 level for this sample (Appendix D).

Table 4.8
Composite Variable Mean Responses BY GENDER

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Relationships	Female	52	4.5144	.37838	.05247
	Male	49	4.4235	.58897	.08414
Vision	Female	52	4.0385	.62849	.08716
	Male	49	4.0884	.65890	.09413
Community	Female	52	3.6538	.79544	.11031
	Male	49	3.6224	.86320	.12331
Instruction	Female	52	3.9551	.67649	.09381
	Male	49	3.7755	.71811	.10259
Management	Female	52	3.1442	.85369	.11839
	Male	49	3.2959	.88340	.12620
Climate	Female	52	4.7692	.40173	.05571
	Male	49	4.6633	.44939	.06420
AllSurveyItems	Female	52	4.0733	.30935	.04290
	Male	49	4.0281	.30885	.04412

A t-test also was conducted for composite variables based on whether or not a principal has an assistant principal. In this t-test, as illustrated in table 4.9, principals who have one or more assistant principals reported a higher mean response in Building Relationships, Visionary Leadership, Building Management, and “All Survey Items”. Principals who do not have one or more assistant principals report higher mean responses in Understanding Community, Instructional Leadership, and School Climate. Within these results, the difference in means for Visionary Leadership of .297 was statistically significant at the .05 level ($p = .038$, Appendix D). Principals who have one or more assistant principals report a significantly higher priority on visionary leadership, perhaps because there is another administrator in the school with whom to discuss school vision.

Table 4.9

Composite Variable Mean Responses BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

	Do you have one or more assistant principals in your school?	N	Mean	Std.	Std. Error
				Deviation	Mean
Relationships	No	39	4.3718	.68314	.10939
	Yes	62	4.5323	.30863	.03920
Vision	No	39	3.8803	.77417	.12397
	Yes	62	4.1774	.51469	.06537
Community	No	39	3.6538	.79599	.12746
	Yes	62	3.6290	.84899	.10782
Instruction	No	39	3.9145	.71213	.11403
	Yes	62	3.8387	.69540	.08832
Management	No	39	3.1538	.85957	.13764
	Yes	62	3.2581	.87657	.11132
Climate	No	39	4.7436	.41154	.06590
	Yes	62	4.7016	.43851	.05569
AllSurveyItems	No	39	3.9984	.35601	.05701
	Yes	62	4.0847	.27210	.03456

Individual survey items also were examined as dependent variables (Appendix D).

The mean response on item 3 (most of my effort goes toward establishing a positive climate in my school) for male principals is 4.22 with a standard deviation of .823, while the mean response for female principals is 4.56 with a standard deviation of .608.

Levene's test suggests that equal variances are assumed, so we use the first line in the output table. The difference in means is .34, and the p-value of .022 suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female responses on this item.

Similarly, the mean response on item 4 (I put a lot of time and effort into improving instructional practice in my building, such as through teacher observation and professional development) for male principals is 3.80 with a standard deviation of 1.06.

Levene's test suggests that equal variances are assumed, so we use the first line in the output table. The mean response for female principals for this item is 4.19 with a standard deviation of .886. The difference in means is .39, and the p-value of .044 suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female responses on this item.

By contrast, other items do not appear to have a statistically significant difference in responses between male and female principals. For example, the mean response on item 10 (I spend a lot of effort planning for the future of my school) for male principals is 4.29 with a standard deviation of .913, and the mean response for female principals is 4.25 with a standard deviation of .622. The p-value of .818 suggests that the difference in these means of .04 is not statistically significant (Appendix D).

For individual survey items, a t-test was also conducted to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in mean responses between principals who have one or more assistant principals, and those who do not (see Appendix D). The mean response on item 5 (I try to know and understand every cultural group represented in my school) for principals who have one or more assistant principals is 4.52 with a standard deviation of .504, while the mean response for principals who not have an assistant principal is 4.13 with a standard deviation of .923. Levene's test suggests that equal variances are not assumed, so we use the second line in the output table. The difference in means is .388, and the p-value of .020 suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between responses on this item for principals who have an assistant principal compared to those who do not. Similarly, the mean response on item 6 (I spend a lot of effort planning for the future of my school) for principals who have one or more assistant principals is 4.45

with a standard deviation of 563. The mean response for principals who do not have an assistant principal for this item is 3.97 with a standard deviation of .959. Levene's test suggests that equal variances are assumed, so we use the first line in the output table. The difference in means is .477, and the p-value of .002 suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between responses on this item. The difference in means on this item, and between principals who have one or more assistant principals compared to those who do not, is significant at the .01 level—the only such result in my data analysis.

ANOVA (analysis of variance) is a statistical method of comparing three or more groups, and is particularly useful when t-tests are not applicable. Part of the ANOVA analyzes the mean value for each group, then the mean differences between groups, and whether these are statistically significant. To analyze survey answers by school level, a one-way ANOVA is appropriate because there is one independent variable (level) with three levels (elementary, middle, high).

Table 4.10
ANOVA Composite Variables BY LEVEL

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationships	Between Groups	.192	2	.096	.392	.677
	Within Groups	23.969	98	.245		
	Total	24.161	100			
Vision	Between Groups	1.460	2	.730	1.807	.170
	Within Groups	39.587	98	.404		
	Total	41.047	100			
Community	Between Groups	.794	2	.397	.578	.563
	Within Groups	67.265	98	.686		
	Total	68.059	100			
Instruction	Between Groups	2.383	2	1.191	2.510	.087
	Within Groups	46.524	98	.475		
	Total	48.906	100			
Management	Between Groups	2.489	2	1.245	1.677	.192
	Within Groups	72.719	98	.742		
	Total	75.208	100			
Climate	Between Groups	.548	2	.274	1.520	.224
	Within Groups	17.660	98	.180		
	Total	18.208	100			
AllSurveyItems	Between Groups	.068	2	.034	.353	.704
	Within Groups	9.443	98	.096		
	Total	9.511	100			

Table 4.11
Post Hoc Test Composite Variables BY LEVEL

Dependent Variable		(I) What level is your school?	(J) What level is your school?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Vision Games-Howell	Elementary	Middle	High	.19618	.17390	.504
				.41146	.17530	.067
	Middle	High	Elementary	-.19618	.17390	.504
				.21528	.21281	.575
	High	Middle	Elementary	-.41146	.17530	.067
				-.21528	.21281	.575

When the six composite variables were considered, as illustrated in table 4.10, the greatest difference in mean responses was for factor 4, instructional leadership.

Elementary principals reported a higher mean response of .4115 as compared to high school principals. Though this difference is not statistically significant at the .05 level, it is not far from it as Games-Howell shows $p = .067$, as illustrated in table 4.11. This suggests that elementary principals report spending more time on instructional leadership than high school principals. This result appears to be related to the difference in means based on assistant principals described above. Elementary principals are far less likely to have assistant principals as compared to a high school principal, and high school principals are more likely to share the responsibilities of instructional leadership with chairs and directors.

When the dependent variables are all 16 survey items (see Appendix D), only one survey item, item 6 (I spend a lot of effort planning for the future of my school) showed a difference in mean responses significant at the .05 level. For survey item 6, $F(2, 98) = 3.146$, $p = .047$, as illustrated in table 4.12. Since $p = .047$, we know there is a significant

difference in mean responses between groups. Elementary principals reported the lowest value on this item, while high school principals reported on average .438 higher than elementary principals. Though not significant at the .05 level, Games-Howell shows the .438 difference in means at $p = .070$. By comparison, Games-Howell shows the difference in means between high school principals and middle school principals to be just .086, with very low significance at $p = .896$.

Similarly, to analyze survey answers by years of experience, a one-way ANOVA is appropriate because there is one independent variable (years) with four levels (one–four years, five–eight years, nine–12 years, 13+ years). The dependent variables are the six composite variables, and then the 16 individual survey items.

When the six composite variables are considered as the dependent variables (see Appendix D), newer principals (one–four years' experience) report spending more time on Visionary Leadership than the most experienced principals (13+ years). The mean difference of .2634 suggests newer principals are spending more time on visionary leadership than high school principals, though this difference is not statistically significant at the .05 level ($p = .357$ Tukey). For factor 6 (School Climate), the most experienced principals (13+ years) report spending more time than elementary principals, though the difference is once again not considered statistically significant ($p = .141$ Games-Howell).

When survey items were considered individually, only one survey item, item 6 (I spend a lot of effort planning for the future of my school), showed a difference in mean responses significant at the .05 level. As illustrated in table 4.13, for survey item 6, $F(3, 97) = 2.949$, $p = .037$. Since $p = .037$, we know there is a significant difference in mean

responses between groups. The most significant difference in responses was between the newest principals (one–four years’ experience) and the most veteran respondents (13+ years’ experience). Tukey shows the mean response for new principals to be .496 higher than veteran principals, $p = .047$ (Appendix D). In other words, new principals report spending significantly more time on planning for the future of their schools than veteran principals. The differences in means between other groups were not statistically significant.

Table 4.12
ANOVA Individual Survey Items BY LEVEL

		Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Item6	Between Groups	3.607	2	1.803	3.146	.047
	Within Groups	56.176	98	.573		
	Total	59.782	100			

Table 4.13
ANOVA Individual Survey Items BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

		Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Item6	Between Groups	4.997	3	1.666	2.949	.037
	Within Groups	54.785	97	.565		
	Total	59.782	100			

A seventh composite variable was created to analyze the mean response for all survey items for each respondent. A t-test was performed for this composite variable for gender and assistant principal, and ANOVA was performed for this composite variable for level and years of experience. As illustrated in Table 4.8, female principals reported a higher

mean response for all survey items than males: 4.073 compared to 4.028. However, this difference does not appear to be statistically significant at the .05 level, as $p = .464$. Similarly, principals who have one or more assistant principals report a higher mean response to all survey items than principals who do not have an assistant principal: 4.08 compared to 3.99. However, this difference in means does not appear to be statistically significant, as $p = .118$. ANOVA shows that principals with one–four years of experience report a higher mean response in this composite variable, but this result appears to be almost completely random ($p = .894$ Tukey). Lastly, middle school principals report the highest mean response for the “All Survey Items” composite variable (4.086 compared to 4.052 for elementary and 4.0 for high school), but the differences in means are not significant at the .05 level. Similar to experience, the differences in means for level on this composite variable appear to be mostly random ($p > .5$ all Tukey tests, Appendix D).

These results suggest that female principals report a higher overall mean response to all items than males, principals with one or more assistant principals report a higher overall mean response to all items than those without, principals with one–four years of experience report a higher overall mean response to all items than other levels of experience, and middle school principals report a higher overall mean response to all items than elementary and high school principals. However, none of these differences appear statistically significant at the .05 level.

Research Question 3 and Results

Research Question #3: What values and beliefs do principals have that explain differences in priority areas within leadership?

Interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior (Seidman, 2006). A focus group of six principals from a school district in Suffolk County participated in an interview consisting of 17 questions. Table 4.14 shows demographic characteristics for the participants, and the script in Appendix D reflects the discussion that took place between the researcher/moderator and the six focus group participants.

Table 4.14

Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

Participant	Characteristics
P1	An elementary principal, female, with 16 years of experience, no assistant principal
P2	An elementary principal, female, with 8 years of experience, no assistant principal
P3	An elementary principal, male, with 15 years of experience, no assistant principal
P4	A middle school principal, male, with 8 years of experience, one or more assistant principals
P5	A middle school principal, male, with 12 years of experience, one or more assistant principals
P6	A high school principal, male, with 5 years of experience, one or more assistant principals
M	The moderator/researcher

Themes and Patterns

First-cycle coding methods are codes initially assigned to the data chunks (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). A first-cycle coding analysis of the focus group interview revealed codes in four categories: descriptive coding, emotion coding, values coding, and causation coding. The researcher identified 33 instances of descriptive coding, 21 instances of emotion coding, 24 instances of values coding, and 16 instances of causation coding (Appendix D).

While first-cycle coding is a way to initially summarize segments of data, pattern coding, or second-cycle coding, is a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of categories, themes, or constructs. Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation. The codes from the first-cycle coding are clustered as follows:

Cluster 1: (everything to do with climate) MANAGING EMOTIONS, SCHOOL CLIMATE, HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING, SHARE VALUES

Cluster 2: (everything to do with relationships) MENTORING, COLLABORATION, IMPACT ON OTHERS, RELATIONSHIPS, LISTENING, “PEOPLE BUSINESS”, COMMUNICATION, TRUST

Cluster 3: (everything to do with the student) KIDS, JOY, PRIORITY ON STUDENTS

Cluster 4: (everything to do with challenges and time management) IDENTIFYING VALUES, BUILDING MANAGEMENT, INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP, LIMITED TIME, DOUBT, CRISIS, GENDER

Cluster 5: (everything to do with progress) IMPLEMENTING CHANGE, GROWING AS A LEADER, DEVELOPING SKILLS TO USE IN LEADERSHIP, IMPLEMENT VISION, TECHNOLOGY, LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Theme 1: Climate

Cluster 1 combines two of the dimensions of school leadership: culture and climate and emotional intelligence. The principals in this focus group spoke at length about the need to establish a school climate where students and staff feel safe. Principals reported that other aspects of education, such as instruction and planning for the future, are dependent on school climate. Principals reported having to find anything toxic in their school environments, especially early in their careers, to ensure any issues are addressed collaboratively. Principals reported feeling a strong responsibility of helping those in crisis, especially students and staff under their supervision. The first theme that has emerged from the focus group data analysis is climate.

Theme 2: Relationships

Cluster 2 focuses on the way people interact. Principals reported a high priority placed on communication skills, collaboration, and building relationships. Principals repeatedly discussed the role of mentoring in leadership, both in mentoring they received and the value they place on mentoring others. Principals shared an understanding of education as a “people business”. The second theme that has emerged from the focus group data analysis is relationships.

Theme 3: The Kids

Cluster 3 includes codes from the focus group interview that had to do with students. Principals reported the emotion “joy” when discussing working directly with students. Principals also repeatedly referred back to the priority being on the kids. Principals from all three levels expressed the importance of caring for the needs of students above all else and ensuring that other adults do the same. The third theme that has emerged from the focus group data analysis is the kids.

Theme 4: Challenges

Cluster 4 included the challenges and frustrations principals face. Principals reported time management as an important factor in school leadership, and expressed frustration that building management responsibilities often leave less time for school climate and instructional leadership. To manage time effectively, principals discussed identifying values and priorities, and being able to adjust these when necessary, such as during a crisis. Gender was discussed at length, including the notion that female leaders may feel they have to spend more time building relationships and investing more time in communicating vision. It was suggested that female leaders face more resistance from students, staff, and the community than their male counterparts, and feel a need to spend more time and effort building toward decisions. The fourth theme that has emerged from the focus group data analysis is challenges.

Theme 5: Progress

Cluster 5 includes codes such as implementing change, developing leadership skills, and implementing vision. Principals discussed motivation for becoming school leaders, and each described a desire to have a greater impact on students. Principals placed a high value on learning from other leaders. When asked what the most important part of the focus group interview was, each responded that it was the opportunity to sit with other principals and learn from each other. The fifth theme that has emerged from the focus group data analysis is progress.

Summary

In this chapter, a quantitative survey and a qualitative focus group interview have been analyzed. In the quantitative analysis, six composite variables, derived from a factor analysis, were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA. Individual survey items were also analyzed in the same way. The composite variable “school climate” was reported with the highest mean response by respondents, with the smallest standard deviation. Building management, as a composite variable, was found to have a negative correlation with all other composite variables. Female principals reported spending more time on school climate and instructional leadership than their male counterparts, and novice principals reported spending more time on visionary leadership than more experienced principals. The qualitative analysis aided the researcher in explaining these survey results, and also produced five themes, or patterns, in school leadership. These are climate, relationships, The Kids, challenges, and progress.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine how school principals balance their time and energy across five domains of school leadership: building management, visionary leadership, culture and climate, emotional intelligence, and instructional leadership. In chapter two, the researcher summarized theory and existing research in each of these five dimensions as part of the theoretical framework. The existing body of work seemed to confirm that each of these five dimensions is important to school leadership, but the question remained: how do principals themselves report accomplishing all of these responsibilities? Three research questions were addressed through both quantitative and qualitative research.

- Research Question 1: To what extent are principals able to balance their time and energy across five domains of educational leadership: instructional leadership, building management, emotional intelligence, visionary leadership, and culture and climate?
- Research Question 2: To what extent do variables such as gender, school level, experience, and other administrative staff predict time spent in each domain?
- Research Question 3: What values and beliefs do principals have that explain differences in priority areas within leadership?

Research questions 1 and 2 were explored through a survey completed by 101 principals in Suffolk County, New York. Survey results were analyzed using factor analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA. Research question 3 was addressed through a focus group interview with six principals from a school district in Suffolk County, New York. The discussion from this interview was analyzed using first-cycle and second-cycle coding analysis. The first-cycle analysis yielded 94 codes, and the second-cycle analysis yielded five themes.

Implications of Findings

There are several major findings in this study. The conceptual framework offered in chapter two (figure 2.3) includes the notion that principals have responsibilities in five dimensions: building management, instructional leadership, visionary leadership, culture and climate, and emotional intelligence. However, a factor analysis of the survey results indicated there are six factors for the survey responses. Three of the factors lined up with the dimensions described in chapter two, including instructional leadership, visionary leadership, and building management. The final two dimensions described in chapter two—culture and climate, and emotional intelligence—did not load as distinct factors. Instead, principals responded to survey items in a way that showed a great overlap between these two dimensions. This created additional factors in the factor analysis Rotated Component Matrix, including additional climate-emotion hybrid factors. When these factors were analyzed as composite variables, principals reported the highest priority on school climate and emotional intelligence, and the lowest priority on building

management. Though the principal rarely has the opportunity to provide direct instruction to students, the principal must create an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. Fullan (2014) suggests that this can be accomplished by establishing goals and expectations, resourcing strategically, ensuring quality teaching, leading teacher learning and development, and ensuring an orderly and safe environment. Findings in both the quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis support this concept. Through survey results and focus group interviews, principals indicated less time spent on instructional leadership, and more time spent on establishing school climate.

A second major finding in the study is in the mean response to all survey items, as reported by principals. This finding is the answer to the first research question. The mean response across all survey items and all principals was 4.032, $SD = .278$. Principals report, on average, addressing responsibilities in each dimension between “usually” and “always”. This suggests that principals believe they are addressing all domains of leadership a majority of the time. The conceptual framework presented in chapter two suggests that principals are pulled in different directions and have to manage their time carefully. This finding suggests that principals believe they are accomplishing this balance successfully. Principals in both components of this study clearly prioritized relationships and school climate. An important theme from the focus group interview analysis is relationships, with principals referring to trust, managing emotions, helping those in crisis, and communication.

Interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence are vital, because personal relationships are a central element of daily life. Many improvement efforts fail not because managers’ intentions

are incorrect or insincere but because they are unable to handle the social challenge of change. (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 171)

A third major finding is related to the second research question. Independent variables such as gender, the presence of an assistant principal, years of experience, and school level did impact principals' responses to survey items. A statistical analysis of the survey responses yielded the following: female principals report spending more time on school climate than males, female principals report spending more time on instructional leadership than males, principals who have one or more assistant principals report spending more time on visionary leadership than principals who do not have an assistant principal, and newer principals (one–four years) report spending more time on visionary leadership than veteran principals (13+ years). Each of these findings was supported by a difference in means that was statistically significant at the .05 level.

A fourth major finding in this study resulted from the focus group being asked to explain why newer principals might report spending more time on visionary leadership than veteran principals. Two possible explanations emerged. First, principals suggested that they had spent so much time and energy planning for the future of the school early in their tenure, they did not feel they had to invest as much time during later years. Principals believed they had accomplished setting a climate, establishing appropriate goals, developing relationships, and otherwise ensuring the future of the school would be secure. The second suggested explanation was the concept that ideas in education are cyclical. A newer principal might invest a lot of time and energy planning new initiatives and goals for the future of the building, where a veteran principal has seen the recycling of old ideas and initiatives, and may spend less time being concerned about something

completely new. Couros (2015) encourages principals to use the influence they have in establishing climate to create a culture of innovation. “As leaders in education, it is our job not to control those whom we serve but to unleash their talent” (p. 69). This notion is supported, in particular, by the focus group interview results. One of the five important themes that resulted from the coding analysis is progress. Principals in the focus group repeatedly discussed mentoring others, developing new skills, progressing as leaders, and learning from each other.

A fifth major finding in this study is in the qualitative data analysis of the focus group interview. In response to the third research question, pattern coding of the data yielded five themes: climate, relationships, the kids, challenges, and progress. Principals clearly indicated that time and energy spent on creating and maintaining an appropriate school climate must precede all other efforts. This finding was supported by the survey results, as the statistical data analysis indicated the highest results on the school climate survey items. Principals also described the importance of building relationships based on trust, communication, and collaboration. Principals consistently referred to the first priority, the kids, and described the joy they get from working directly with students. Challenges were discussed, including time, crises, and cultural issues such as those faced by female leaders.

Finally, a sixth major finding is found in the challenges faced by female principals. Female principals in this study reported more time and energy spent on school climate, relationships, instructional leadership, and the composite “all survey items”, as compared to male respondents. Two explanations were offered in the focus group interview—first, that female leaders have a natural tendency toward relationships and nurturing others;

second, that female leaders believe their decisions and initiatives will be challenged if sufficient time has not been spent building relationships. Scharmer (2016) suggests that female leaders may have a greater capacity to set aside ego, listen deeply, and access empathy. The research presented here is consistent with that suggestion, as described in both the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Female leaders report spending more time in the domains of culture and climate, and emotional intelligence. In the focus group interview, female principals described finding more success in making decisions and promoting change after spending more time building trust and relationships. Scharmer suggests that leadership preparation programs need a greater focus on these skills to promote greater success for all leaders (Riley, 2018).

Relationship to Prior Research

Several findings in this study extend prior research. While it is generally accepted that visionary leaders must be collaborative, this study specifically finds that principals who have one or more assistant principals report significantly more time on visionary leadership. In the focus group interview, principals described the benefit of simply having a fellow administrator in the building with whom to discuss vision on a daily basis. “While a principal holds substantial role authority to promote change, no one person can transform a school on his or her own” (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 64). While Bryk and others have stressed the importance of a collaborative approach to implementing vision, this study specifically points to the value of an assistant principal in that process.

Similarly, many theorists and researchers have acknowledged the importance of school climate to any school leader's success. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) studied the impact of trust, specifically on school climate. The results indicated that teachers seem to be looking for principals who are approachable and open in their attitudes as they engage with teachers about instruction. Bryk et al. (2010) agree with this concept, and further suggests that collaborative decision-making impacts parents and community members as well. "If teachers feel a sense of influence on decisions affecting their work, the necessary 'buy-in' or change is more readily established. Outreach to parents and community leaders has similar effects" (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 64). This study, however, adds to the prior research by including a gender component. The survey data analysis indicated that female principals spend more time on school climate than their male counterparts, and the focus group interview analysis confirmed this. Focus group participants, both male and female, suggested that female leaders feel a need to build up to decisions by investing more time in relationships and trust, whereas male leaders feel more comfortable sharing values and decisions without that time investment. Female principals in the focus group reported feeling more resistance than male principals receive concerning initiatives or management decisions.

In a qualitative study by Parylo, Zepeda, and Bengtson (2012), the researchers found that mentoring programs should provide principals with recruitment, socialization, support, professional development, and reciprocal learning. The members of the focus group in the current study mentioned each of these five areas as important in their own mentoring relationships.

As described in chapter two, Brown and Anfara (2003) conducted a qualitative study to find the important components of visionary leadership. Findings included a need to understand the needs, strengths, and limitations of staff members; a need to understand the relevance of the intended reform; a need to assess readiness; and a need to work collaboratively. In the current study, the researcher concluded that an additional component is critical to visionary leadership—namely, relationships. As noted in chapter four, relationships and visionary leadership showed a statistically significant correlation as composite variables.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher has identified several limitations to this study. Threats to internal validity were minimized by selecting participants in the survey using a random number generator. There are approximately 360 principals in Suffolk County, New York, and a random number generator was used to identify 200 at random. Also, there were not threats from history, maturation, or attrition. Threats to external validity were also addressed by the random sampling of principals in Suffolk County; however, it is not known if results can be generalized to larger areas, such as New York State or the United States. Credibility for the qualitative component for this study may have been improved through triangulation, though the research made use of member checks during the interview. Participants were asked at various points if a summary of their responses was accurate, and if anything was missed.

The researcher believes there may be two threats to the statistical conclusions. First, all results, both quantitative and qualitative, were self-reported by principals. This limitation was intentional, but still must be acknowledged. The researcher chose to survey and interview principals only for this study, as gaining a better understanding of leadership from the leaders themselves was the goal. However, it is possible, and even probable, that the results would be different if a field researcher followed one principal and collected data on actual time spent in each dimension. Principals were asked only to report what they believe of themselves in prioritizing time and energy across dimensions of leadership.

A second potential threat to statistical conclusions is the time of year when both the survey and focus group were conducted. The survey was distributed in February, and the focus group was conducted in March. Would the priorities of principals, as self-reported, be different in the summer months? How would the holiday season of December impact results? The timing of the survey and focus group could constitute a limitation for the study.

Finally, a limitation to this study is the survey tool. The research designed an original survey tool, which may be adjusted and improved in future research. After the factor analysis, four of the 20 survey questions were eliminated. Once these survey items were removed, six factors loaded with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, and Cronbach's Alpha was greater than .6.

Recommendations for Future Practice

The following recommendations are made based on both quantitative and qualitative data analysis in this study. First, principals reported more time spent in all areas, more time understanding all cultures represented in the school, and significantly more time spent on visionary leadership when there are one or more assistant principals. When visionary leadership was considered as a composite variable, principals who have one or more assistant principals reported a higher mean response in composite variable 2 (visionary leadership). The difference in means is .2971, which is significant at the .05 level ($p = .038$). This suggests that principals who have one or more assistant principals report a significantly higher amount of time and energy on visionary leadership. With an understanding of financial implications, the researcher believes an administrator alone in a school building is at a significant disadvantage, as are the students and staff. Second, principals must find time to collaborate with other principals. Focus group participants all expressed how important it was to listen to other principals explain values, challenges, and goals. As the researcher thanked the focus group participants for their time, each thanked the researcher for creating the opportunity just for the six principals to meet with each other and discuss leadership. Third, mentoring programs for principals should be established. Many school districts offer mentoring programs for first-year or new teachers. Few similar programs exist for new principals. The focus group interview participants discussed mentoring at length, and the importance of connecting new principals with mentors. The participants agreed that being a school principal can be a lonely existence.

Both mentoring programs and university-level principal preparation programs need a rebalancing of focus between management/instruction and climate/emotional support. In this research, it is clear that principals report school climate and emotional intelligence as the top priorities. Building relationships and overall trust precedes everything else in school leadership. Preparation programs and mentoring programs may not cultivate these things, as the focus is often on how to create a master schedule or building budget, or how to conduct a classroom observation. In a study conducted by Sciarappa and Mason (2014), principals who participated in the NAESP national mentor program reported 96% satisfaction with the mentoring they received. However, only 42% of respondents reported they received important support in “school culture and trust building”. Principals who serve as mentors to new leaders (interns, first-year principals, etc.) must cultivate the “subtle” side of leadership, to create leaders who can later transform systems.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher makes the following recommendations. First, as this study focused solely on the self-reporting of principals, future studies should include feedback from teachers, students, and community members. For example, this survey tool could be used with a group of school principals, and a similar tool could ask teachers in those same schools how they view their principals allocating their time and energy. An analysis of the commonalities and discrepancies would be worthwhile. Second, the researcher was particularly interested in the focus group participants’ thoughts on how female leaders

face challenges that require more time invested in all areas of leadership. Future study on how and why female leaders face resistance on decisions and initiatives, and invest more time building up to these decisions to minimize that resistance, is warranted. Third, a larger sample size is recommended. The researcher found differences in means using t-tests and ANOVA, but most results were not statistically significant at the .05 level. A larger sample size is indicated and may increase statistical significance for the difference in means in a future study. Fourth, future research should find improvements for the survey tool. As noted, 16 of the 20 survey items loaded appropriately into six factors in the factor analysis, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .608. Future researchers may look to add, delete, or improve survey items to improve reliability and have more survey items included in each composite factor. Finally, a fifth recommendation for future research is to continue investigating the relationship between school climate and emotional intelligence. These two dimensions appear critical in building relationships, allowing leaders to enjoy success in all dimensions. The researcher found a small positive association between these dimensions, significant at the .05 level. Principals report the highest mean responses for time and energy spent in these two dimensions, and future research should continue to ask not only why this is true, but what are the implications for all areas of leadership.

Conclusion

The school principal has responsibilities in instructional leadership, building management, culture and climate, visionary leadership, and emotional intelligence.

Clearly, each area must be addressed and balanced through effective time-management and effort. This study was intended to learn more about this process by asking the principals themselves. The resulting data confirmed prior research and added to it, hopefully in a meaningful way. The quantitative analysis suggests that principals do balance their various responsibilities in these domains, and independent variables such as gender, years of experience, level, and assistant principal have significant impacts on responses. The qualitative analysis suggests that principals focus on climate, relationships, the kids, challenges, and progress as building leaders.

The following conclusions are offered:

- 1) To be effective leaders, principals must balance time and energy over five dimensions of school leadership: instructional leadership, culture and climate, visionary leadership, building management, and emotional intelligence. These five dimensions are not separate entities and should not be treated as such. There is significant overlap, particularly between culture/climate and emotional intelligence. An analysis of correlations indicates that most dimensions move together, as time spent in one does not preclude time spent in another. The exception is building management which, as a composite variable, has a negative association with all other factors.
- 2) To be effective leaders, principals must invest the most time and energy in school climate. This includes building relationships, developing trust, establishing clear expectations, prioritizing the emotional needs of students and staff, and encouraging risk taking and innovation. Prioritizing this dimension will allow for

success in the other four. Ignoring this dimension will lead to an overall lack of success in leadership.

- 3) To be effective leaders, principals must identify challenges and address them.

This includes identifying areas for personal growth, acknowledging mistakes and weaknesses, asking for help, identifying any toxic or negative aspects in the school climate, and continually reflecting on time management to ensure one dimension is not pushing the others aside.

- 4) To be effective leaders, principals always maintain focus on the kids. This

includes working with staff, parents, and the entire community to create a vision that focuses on the kids. It is not enough for the principal to prioritize the students personally; he/she must ensure that all staff efforts are similarly focused. While principals must spend time on building management, likely more than any other staff member in the building, they must remember that joy comes from interacting directly with the kids.

Success as a school leader will depend on these conclusions, and more. All five dimensions of school leadership must be carefully balanced and prioritized. While these conclusions suggest that school climate and relationship building must be the priority and that building management must be done correctly but not to the detriment of other areas, a principal should not endeavor to complete all responsibilities alone. Principals who identify and acknowledge weaknesses, while asking others for help, will find greater success. The successful balance of all the responsibilities will allow for the growth and success of the top priority, our kids.

Epilogue

I have been an elementary school principal for 13 years. When I began this research, I wanted to know how I could better balance my responsibilities to be a better school leader. I selected a mixed-methods research design because I wanted to explore both the “what” and the “why” of school leadership. My literature review confirmed that responsibilities in building management, instructional leadership, culture and climate, emotional intelligence, and visionary leadership are all important. No area can be ignored.

From the quantitative research, I learned that one dimension, building management, takes time and energy away from the others. I suppose I knew that, but seeing this result in multiple statistical analysis tables reinforced a need to manage time properly, ensuring the management of my school is done properly without losing focus on my other responsibilities. My other important takeaway is the confirmation that relationships and school climate must be the highest priority.

From the qualitative component to my research, I was reminded just how important it is for school leaders to get together and share challenges, advice, funny stories, and successes. I discovered possible explanations to questions I had after my quantitative study. Specifically, I wanted to know why female principals reported spending significantly more time on school climate, and why experienced principals reported spending significantly less time on school vision. I was fascinated as I listened to the explanations, including the idea that female principals feel an obligation to spend more time on relationships and climate so their decisions are less likely to be challenged, and

the need for novice principals to focus on school vision early on and not wait until later in their careers.

This researcher hopes that the information contained herein is useful to current or prospective principals, either now or at any point in your journey. Whether you are considering a career as a school principal, have just started one, or are well into your leadership role and are exploring options for continued growth, keep your focus at all times on the kids, create a culture of collaboration and innovation, and know that you have a unique opportunity to care for the emotional well-being of everyone in your school community. Godspeed.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Memo



Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Feb 18, 2020 1:41 PM EST

PI: Michael Genovese
CO-PI: Anthony Annunziato
Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2020-325** *A STUDY OF THE DIMENSIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: HOW DO PRINCIPALS ALLOCATE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY?*

Dear Michael Genovese:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *A STUDY OF THE DIMENSIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: HOW DO PRINCIPALS ALLOCATE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY?*. The approval is effective from February 18, 2020 through February 16, 2021

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B

Survey Participation Information and Consent Letter



**ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY**

8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens, NY 11439

Consent Form

Dear fellow principal:

My name is Michael Genovese, and I have been the principal at Norwood Avenue Elementary School in Northport for 13 years. I am currently working on my Doctorate in Administration and Supervision (Ed.D.) at St. John's University. Based on my experience as a school principal, I have questioned both how and why building leaders prioritize our many responsibilities. More specifically, I would like to know how school principals in Suffolk County prioritize building management, instructional leadership, culture and climate, visionary leadership, and emotional intelligence.

I am inviting you to participate in a survey as part of my doctoral dissertation. If you agree to take part in my study, you will complete a 20 question survey I have designed through Google Forms. I expect this survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research, beyond those of everyday life. Each participant will be assigned a number at random, and responses will be maintained with strict confidentiality. I hope my research related to how school principals prioritize responsibilities will be helpful to you and all our colleagues.

If you would like more information about my study or about your participation, please contact me at the email address below. You may also contact my faculty advisor in The School of Education at St. John's University, Dr. Anthony Annunziato, at annunzia@stjohns.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair, at diguiser@stjohns.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and for your consideration in completing my survey.

Sincerely,

Michael Genovese
michael.genovese17@my.stjohns.edu

Agreement to Participate

Subject's Signature

Date

Appendix C

Focus Group Participation Information and Consent Letter



**ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY**

8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens, NY 11439

Consent Form

Dear fellow principal:

My name is Michael Genovese, and I have been the principal at Norwood Avenue Elementary School in Northport for 13 years. I am currently working on my Doctorate in Administration and Supervision (Ed.D.) at St. John's University. Based on my experience as a school principal, I have questioned both how and why building leaders prioritize our many responsibilities. More specifically, I would like to know how school principals in Suffolk County prioritize building management, instructional leadership, culture and climate, visionary leadership, and emotional intelligence.

I am inviting you to participate in a focus group as part of my doctoral dissertation. If you agree to take part in my study, you will participate in an interview I have designed along with four or five other school principals. I expect this interview will take approximately one hour to complete. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research, beyond those of everyday life. The focus group participants will be referred to as "school principals from a school district in Suffolk County, NY," with no other identifying information. Also, responses will be maintained with strict confidentiality. I hope my research related to how school principals prioritize responsibilities will be helpful to you and all our colleagues.

If you would like more information about my study or about your participation, please contact me at the email address below. You may also contact my faculty advisor in The School of Education at St. John's University, Dr. Anthony Annunziato, at annunzia@stjohns.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair, at diguiser@stjohns.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and for your consideration in participating in my focus group interview.

Sincerely,

Michael Genovese
michael.genovese17@my.stjohns.edu

Agreement to Participate

Subject's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

Quantitative Survey

Domains of Principal Leadership

It is my belief that the responsibilities of a school principal fall into five broad categories: instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, building management, culture and climate, and visionary leadership. I am relying on you, my fellow principals, to help me learn about where you spend your own time and energy.

*** Required**

Part 1: For each question, select the option that best describes you.

What level is your school? *

High School

Middle School

Elementary School

Other:

Do you have one or more assistant principals in your school? *

Yes

No

Gender *

Female

Male

How many years have you been a principal (counting this year)? *

1–4 years

5–8 years

9–12 years

13+ years

Domains of Principal Leadership

It is my belief that the responsibilities of a school principal fall into five broad categories: instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, building management, culture and climate, and visionary leadership. I am relying on you, my fellow principals, to help me learn about where you spend your own time and energy.

Part 1: For each question, select one circle based on how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement

Working with teachers and other administrators on curriculum and instruction is the most important part of my job. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

I use my understanding of people's emotions when students, staff, and parents come to my office to ask for guidance on personal issues. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

Most of my effort goes toward establishing a positive climate in my school. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

I put a lot of time and effort into improving instructional practice in my building, such as through teacher observation and professional development. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

I try to know and understand every cultural group represented in my school. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

I spend a lot of effort planning for the future of my school. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

I make sure to devote effort to managing my emotions when receiving criticism or admitting mistakes. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

I prefer when students and parents who are upset and need emotional guidance access my counseling staff instead of coming directly to me. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

The building budget, master schedule, and other management tasks take up most of my time. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

I am proud of my school's commitment to our mission and/or vision statements. *

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Uncertain
Agree
Strongly Agree

For each question, select one circle according to how frequently you engage in the activity described.

I work with directors/chairs/lead teachers to make curriculum decisions. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

I work on my long-term goals for this school. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

I work with my staff on creating a positive school climate. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

A staff member asks me to close the door so he/she can talk about a personal issue, trusting I will show empathy and provide useful feedback. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

Building management tasks prevent me from having time for my other responsibilities. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

I attend community events outside the school day. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

I read articles/research/books or attend conferences on instructional best practice. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

I discuss district vision with other administrators. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

I spend time during my day on management tasks such as school budget, building use forms/schedules, discipline referrals, or student/staff attendance issues. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

I work with my custodial staff to make sure the building is clean and safe. *

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Usually
Always

APPENDIX E

Additional Tables and Results

Descriptive Statistics, Mean Responses to Individual Survey Items

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item1	101	1	5	3.83	.981
Item2	101	1	5	4.74	.627
Item3	101	2	5	4.40	.736
Item4	101	1	5	4.00	.990
Item5	101	1	5	4.37	.717
Item6	101	1	5	4.27	.773
Item7	101	1	5	4.38	.691
Item8	101	1	5	3.35	1.153
Item9	101	1	5	2.80	1.140
Item10	101	1	5	4.29	.817
Item11	101	1	5	3.83	1.087
Item12	101	2	5	4.25	.767
Item13	101	3	5	4.76	.472
Item14	101	3	5	4.67	.618
Item15	101	1	5	3.29	.739
Item16	101	2	5	3.93	.840
Item17	101	2	5	3.77	.859
Item18	101	1	5	3.67	.918
Item19	101	1	5	3.63	.891
Item20	101	2	5	4.41	.764

First-cycle Coding

Item #	Code and Type
1	IMPLEMENTING CHANGE [Value Code]
2	MENTORING [Descriptive Code]
3	GROWING AS A LEADER [Value Code]
4	DEVELOPING SKILLS TO USE IN LEADERSHIP [Value Code]
5	SKILL SET [Descriptive Code]
6	PROGRESSING AS A LEADER [Value Code]
7	PROGRESSING AS A LEADER [Value Code]
8	SKILL SET [Descriptive Code]
9	DEVELOPING SKILLS TO USE AS A LEADER [Value Code]
10	MENTORING [Descriptive Code]
11	MANAGING EMOTIONS [Emotion Code]
12	IDENTIFYING VALUES [Value Code]
13	MENTORING [Descriptive Code]
14	SCHOOL CLIMATE [Descriptive Code]
15	COLLABORATION [Descriptive Code]
16	MANAGING EMOTIONS [Emotion Code]
17	HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS [Emotion Code]
18	PROGRESSING AS A LEADER [Value Code]
19	BUILDING MANAGEMENT [Descriptive Code]
20	SCHOOL CLIMATE [Descriptive Code]
21	BUILDING MANAGEMENT [Descriptive Code]
22	HELPING OTHERS [Emotion Code]
23	MANAGEMENT ISSUES > TIME ON BUILDING MANAGEMENT > LESS TIME ON INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP [Causation Code]
24	MENTORING [Descriptive Code]
25	IMPACT ON OTHERS [Emotion Code]
26	UNDERSTANDING OTHERS [Emotion Code]
27	MENTORING [Descriptive Code]
28	IDENTIFYING VALUES [Value Code]
29	KIDS [Value Code]
30	HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS [Emotion Code]
31	RELATIONSHIPS [Descriptive Code]
32	JOY [Emotion Code]
33	KIDS [Value Code]
34	JOY [Emotion Code]
35	CHALLENGES [Descriptive Code]
36	PRIORITY IS THE STUDENT [Value Code]

- 37 LIMITED TIME > IDENTIFY VALUES > IMPLEMENT VISION
[Causation Code]
- 38 PROGRESSING AS A LEADER [Value Code]
- 39 MANAGING OWN EMOTIONS [Emotion Code]
- 40 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP [Descriptive Code]
- 41 CRISIS > IDENTIFY NEW VALUES > IMPLEMENT VISION
[Causation Code]
- 42 HELPING OTHERS IN CRISIS [Emotion Code]
- 43 TECHNOLOGY [Descriptive Code]
- 44 IMPROVING OWN SKILL SET [Value Code]
- 45 MENTORING [Descriptive Code]
- 46 MANAGING EMOTIONS [Emotion Code]
- 47 WORK WITH COLLEAGUES > IDENTIFY PRIORITIES >
IMPLEMENT VISION [Causation Code]
- 48 COMMUNICATION [Descriptive Code]
- 49 DOUBT > MOTIVATE OTHERS > SUCCESS [Causation Code]
- 50 MENTORING [Descriptive Code]
- 51 CLIMATE [Descriptive Code]
- 52 RELATIONSHIPS [Value Code]
- 53 COLLABORATION / ACCEPT HELP [Value Code]
- 54 COMMUNICATION / LISTENING [Value Code]
- 55 CLIMATE [Descriptive Code]
- 56 RELATIONSHIPS > SHARE VISION > LARGER MOVEMENT
[Causation Code]
- 57 SKILL SET [Descriptive Code]
- 58 KIDS [Value Code]
- 59 RELATIONSHIPS [Descriptive Code]
- 60 LISTENING [Value Code]
- 61 EMPATHY [Emotion Code]
- 62 HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS [Emotion Code]
- 63 “PEOPLE BUSINESS” [Descriptive Code]
- 64 SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING [Emotion Code]
- 65 SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING > CLIMATE > INSTRUCTION
[Causation Code]
- 66 RELATIONSHIPS [Value Code]
- 67 VALIDATION [Emotion Code]
- 68 CLIMATE > PROACTIVE APPROACH > BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
[Causation Code]
- 69 HELP THOSE IN CRISIS [Emotion Code]

- 70 MANAGEMENT ISSUES > LESS TIME FOR INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP > ADJUST VALUES [Causation Code]
- 71 “COMMUNITY” [Descriptive Code]
- 72 HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS [Emotion Code]
- 73 CLIMATE > IDENTIFY A CHALLENGE > DIFFICULT TO ADDRESS
VISION [Causation Code]
- 74 SHARE VALUES [Value Code]
- 75 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE [Emotion Code]
- 76 GENDER > CHALLENGES > MOTIVATION [Causation Code]
- 77 OPPORTUNITY [Descriptive Code]
- 78 RELATIONSHIPS [Value Code]
- 79 NEED TO PROVE YOURSELF [Emotion Code]
- 80 CLIMATE > CHALLENGES FOR FEMALE LEADERS > MORE TIME
SPENT ON RELATIONSHIPS [Causation Code]
- 81 MORE TIME ON RELATIONSHIPS > CLIMATE > MORE SUCCESS
WITH VISION [Causation Code]
- 82 CULTURE [Descriptive Code]
- 83 FEMALE LEADERS > RELATIONSHIPS > MORE REPORTED
INSTRUCTIONAL SUCCESS [Causation Code]
- 84 COLLABORATION [Descriptive Code]
- 85 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS > COMMUNICATE VISION > MORE
SUCCESS [Causation Code]
- 86 IDENTIFY VALUES > COMMUNICATE VISION > CLIMATE
[Causation Code]
- 87 RELATIONSHIPS / TRUST [Descriptive Code]
- 88 COLLABORATION [Descriptive Code]
- 89 COLLABORATION [Descriptive Code]
- 90 LEARNING FROM OTHERS / PROGRESSING AS A LEADER [Value
Code]
- 91 COLLABORATION [Descriptive Code]
- 92 LEARNING FROM OTHERS / PROGRESSING AS A LEADER [Value
Code]
- 93 COLLABORATION [Descriptive Code]
- 94 CLIMATE [Descriptive Code]
-

Independent Samples T-Test Composite Variables BY GENDER

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				
Variable		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Relationships	Equal variances assumed	2.252	.137	.929	99	.355
	Equal variances not assumed			.917	81.057	.362
Vision	Equal variances assumed	.017	.898	-.390	99	.697
	Equal variances not assumed			-.390	97.876	.698
Community	Equal variances assumed	.973	.326	.190	99	.850
	Equal variances not assumed			.190	97.060	.850
Instruction	Equal variances assumed	.303	.583	1.294	99	.199
	Equal variances not assumed			1.292	97.605	.199
Management	Equal variances assumed	.021	.885	-.878	99	.382
	Equal variances not assumed			-.877	98.130	.383
Climate	Equal variances assumed	1.572	.213	1.251	99	.214
	Equal variances not assumed			1.247	96.179	.216
AllSurveyItems	Equal variances assumed	.001	.972	.735	99	.464
	Equal variances not assumed			.735	98.663	.464

Independent Samples T-Test Composite Variables BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

		Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		F	Sig.			
Relationships	Equal variances assumed	6.010	.016	-1.610	99	.111
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.381	47.892	.174
Vision	Equal variances assumed	8.896	.004	-2.318	99	.023
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.120	59.216	.038
Community	Equal variances assumed	.595	.442	.146	99	.884
	Equal variances not assumed			.149	84.794	.882
Instruction	Equal variances assumed	.023	.880	.529	99	.598
	Equal variances not assumed			.526	79.451	.601
Management	Equal variances assumed	.009	.926	-.586	99	.559
	Equal variances not assumed			-.589	82.093	.558
Climate	Equal variances assumed	.546	.462	.479	99	.633
	Equal variances not assumed			.487	84.736	.628
AllSurveyItems	Equal variances assumed	2.492	.118	-1.375	99	.172
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.294	65.544	.200

ANOVA Post Hoc Tests Composite Variables BY LEVEL

Dependent Variable		(I) What level is your school?	(J) What level is your school?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Relationships	Tukey HSD	Elementary	Middle	-.06696	.12437	.853
			High	.07813	.13823	.839
		Middle	Elementary	.06696	.12437	.853
			High	.14509	.16411	.652
		High	Elementary	-.07813	.13823	.839
			Middle	-.14509	.16411	.652
	Games- Howell	Elementary	Middle	-.06696	.10004	.782
			High	.07813	.09916	.712
		Middle	Elementary	.06696	.10004	.782
			High	.14509	.09756	.309
		High	Elementary	-.07813	.09916	.712
			Middle	-.14509	.09756	.309
Vision	Tukey HSD	Elementary	Middle	-.20064	.15984	.424
			High	-.29688	.17765	.221
		Middle	Elementary	.20064	.15984	.424
			High	-.09623	.21091	.892
		High	Elementary	.29688	.17765	.221
			Middle	.09623	.21091	.892
	Games- Howell	Elementary	Middle	-.20064	.13601	.311
			High	-.29688	.13604	.086
		Middle	Elementary	.20064	.13601	.311
			High	-.09623	.14411	.784
		High	Elementary	.29688	.13604	.086
			Middle	.09623	.14411	.784
Community	Tukey HSD	Elementary	Middle	.18787	.20835	.641
			High	-.08594	.23157	.927
		Middle	Elementary	-.18787	.20835	.641
			High	-.27381	.27492	.581
		High	Elementary	.08594	.23157	.927
			Middle	.27381	.27492	.581
	Games- Howell	Elementary	Middle	.18787	.22577	.686
			High	-.08594	.22714	.924
		Middle	Elementary	-.18787	.22577	.686
			High	-.27381	.28759	.612
		High	Elementary	.08594	.22714	.924
			Middle	.27381	.28759	.612
Instruction	Tukey HSD	Elementary	Middle	.19618	.17327	.497
			High	.41146	.19258	.088
		Middle	Elementary	-.19618	.17327	.497
			High	.21528	.22864	.615
		High	Elementary	-.41146	.19258	.088

			Middle	-.21528	.22864	.615
	Games-Howell	Elementary	Middle	.19618	.17390	.504
			High	.41146	.17530	.067
		Middle	Elementary	-.19618	.17390	.504
			High	.21528	.21281	.575
		High	Elementary	-.41146	.17530	.067
			Middle	-.21528	.21281	.575
Management	Tukey HSD	Elementary	Middle	-.39100	.21663	.173
			High	-.02344	.24077	.995
		Middle	Elementary	.39100	.21663	.173
			High	.36756	.28585	.407
		High	Elementary	.02344	.24077	.995
			Middle	-.36756	.28585	.407
	Games-Howell	Elementary	Middle	-.39100	.20528	.152
			High	-.02344	.25161	.995
		Middle	Elementary	.39100	.20528	.152
			High	.36756	.28605	.414
		High	Elementary	.02344	.25161	.995
			Middle	-.36756	.28605	.414
Climate	Tukey HSD	Elementary	Middle	.07515	.10676	.762
			High	.20313	.11865	.206
		Middle	Elementary	-.07515	.10676	.762
			High	.12798	.14087	.636
		High	Elementary	-.20313	.11865	.206
			Middle	-.12798	.14087	.636
	Games-Howell	Elementary	Middle	.07515	.12606	.823
			High	.20313	.12028	.233
		Middle	Elementary	-.07515	.12606	.823
			High	.12798	.16094	.708
		High	Elementary	-.20313	.12028	.233
			Middle	-.12798	.16094	.708
AllSurveyItems	Tukey HSD	Elementary	Middle	-.03358	.07806	.903
			High	.05273	.08676	.816
		Middle	Elementary	.03358	.07806	.903
			High	.08631	.10301	.680
		High	Elementary	-.05273	.08676	.816
			Middle	-.08631	.10301	.680
	Games-Howell	Elementary	Middle	-.03358	.07359	.892
			High	.05273	.06389	.689
		Middle	Elementary	.03358	.07359	.892
			High	.08631	.07633	.502
		High	Elementary	-.05273	.06389	.689
			Middle	-.08631	.07633	.502

ANOVA Composite Variables BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

		Sum of		Mean		
		Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.
Relationships	Between	.335	3	.112	.455	.715
	Groups					
	Within Groups	23.826	97	.246		
	Total	24.161	100			
Vision	Between	1.531	3	.510	1.253	.295
	Groups					
	Within Groups	39.516	97	.407		
	Total	41.047	100			
Community	Between	.739	3	.246	.355	.786
	Groups					
	Within Groups	67.321	97	.694		
	Total	68.059	100			
Instruction	Between	.844	3	.281	.568	.637
	Groups					
	Within Groups	48.062	97	.495		
	Total	48.906	100			
Management	Between	1.041	3	.347	.454	.715
	Groups					
	Within Groups	74.167	97	.765		
	Total	75.208	100			
Climate	Between	.831	3	.277	1.547	.207
	Groups					
	Within Groups	17.377	97	.179		
	Total	18.208	100			
AllSurveyItems	Between	.074	3	.025	.253	.859
	Groups					
	Within Groups	9.437	97	.097		
	Total	9.511	100			

Focus Group Interview Script with Coding

Speaker	Comment	Code
M	<p>Good morning everyone and welcome to our session. I am researching how principals allocate their time and energy across various domains of school leadership. I am suggesting that these domains are instructional leadership, school climate, emotional intelligence, building management, and visionary leadership. I know some or all of you completed my online survey several weeks ago, and I greatly appreciate that. Today, I am asking this focus group to help me understand the results from my quantitative survey. As principals from each level of school, I believe you have a great deal to offer to my research.</p> <p>I am going to ask a number of questions about your experiences and opinions as a principal over the next hour or so. There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. I am just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.</p> <p>Please be assured your responses will be kept strictly confidential. You will only ever be referred to as school principals from Suffolk County, with no other identifying information, in my paper.</p> <p>You have probably noticed I am recording this conversation on my phone. That is because I am going to spend our time together moderating the discussion and really listening to your responses, instead of trying to write everything down. I would ask that only one person speaks at a time, but please feel free to respond to each other and not just to me.</p> <p>Please begin with your name, your school level, and years of experience as a principal.</p>	

- P3 I'm (name), I work in a K-5 building, I've been a principal for 15 years, 10 years in this school district.
- P6 (name), 5th year, high school principal.
- P2 (name), it's my 7th year as principal in a K-5 building.
- P1 (name), elementary principal, 16 years as a principal.
- P4 (name), middle school principal, this is my 8th year as principal.
- P5 (name), xxxx middle school, 11 years.
- M First question, why did you choose to become a principal?
- P6 A professor of mine once said, "If you're not the lead dog, the scene and the smell never changes." So, you can talk about trying to put yourself in a capacity to implement change and target areas of improvement, theoretically on a more global scale, than I could when I was an assistant principal or dean, which is the path I took. ¹IMPLEMENTING CHANGE
- P1 For me, I was an assistant principal for a few years, and my mentor at the time really coached me into doing it, because I was taking on bigger and bigger projects, beyond the classroom, beyond the assistant principalship, so to stretch my thinking, I was coached into it. ¹MENTORING ²GROWING AS A LEADER
- P2 I would say something similar, having been a coach, an instructional coordinator before this, it felt like the logical next step, to utilize some of the skills I developed, to work with teachers on instructional leadership, it felt like that was the logical next step. I know that can be a small piece of the pie, but I felt like that was my interest, what motivated me. ¹DEVELOPING SKILLS TO USE IN LEADERSHIP ²SKILL SET
- P3 Similar to some of these answers, it was taking on additional projects, some that felt administrative, such as being the teacher in charge when the principal was ¹PROGRESSING AS A LEADER

out of the building, it seemed like the natural progression.

- P4 In a similar fashion, it was about taking on larger projects as an assistant principal, especially related to social emotional learning, and really enjoying having a greater influence on kids than just being in the classroom. It was a natural progression from being an AP. ¹PROGRESSING AS A LEADER
- P5 So I was in a 7–12 building for a long time, and was really involved with the 7th and 8th grade kids, and their transition into 9th grade, I became an AP there, and just found a really comfortable wheelhouse in middle level, early adolescence, that I did a lot of work around. I also at the time was living on Long Island, and saw this current position significantly closer to where I live, and it was a 6–8 school instead of a 7–12 school, so it was really like a calling to service early adolescence, and my commute each day went from about 5 hours to 10 minutes, but it was a great fit for the things I had been preparing for. ¹SKILL SET
²DEVELOPING SKILLS TO USE AS A LEADER
- M In what ways did your administrator education program prepare you for your current role, or not prepare you?
- P5 I was thinking about the work I did at Columbia, I remember the professor had us doing mindfulness, they called it transcendental meditation, but we really did about half an hour of mindfulness before every session of that course. I loved it, some people hated it, and he said, “Look, you’re going to get thrown so many spears at you, you have no idea what you’re entering into as a building leader or district leader, you just don’t know. You have to be able to manage your emotions and compartmentalize your life, and think about the things you value, that are important, and you have to be able to take time for yourself.” So he taught us all of these different techniques, breathing, cleansing breaths, body scanning, and I still do that. Even before I go into a meeting, or give a presentation ¹MENTORING
²MANAGING EMOTIONS

- for parents, I'll do a cleansing breath. I'll do a body scan. What do I feel? Some butterflies? Why do I feel butterflies? Well, that's because I'm nervous. Why I am nervous? Because I'm doing something that's important. So, I do that a lot. That has helped me in my personal life as well, and it has been wonderful. I owe that to this professor at Columbia.
- P1 I had two professors, a husband and wife, both superintendents from Indiana, and one did our law classes and one did many of the other classes. My husband and I went through the program together, and they really mentored us, they taught us the legal and analytical pieces when those "spears" come at you, how do you sort that out, what are the legal ramifications. Then I had another professor who was more of the people person, that influence on culture and climate. His lens for everything he taught was through storytelling, and how that storytelling shaped you as a leader. So those were my two takeaways from my preparation program, and I still use those things to this day. But, there are new things that can happen that I'm not sure any program can prepare you for. So it's the cadre of colleagues, or looking at the problem solving piece to be able to solve the dilemmas. There are things that are new.
- M Can you give me an example, and anyone can answer, of an issue where you felt nothing could have prepared you for it?
- P1 I think trauma, moving a building in two days, a natural event, a hurricane or tornado, Superstorm Sandy, \$6 million dollars in damage and 450 kids moved from one school to another in the dark, nothing prepares you for that. Being a good person will help, and hopefully get you through, but no program can prepare you for that kind of trauma.
- P3 As far as the schooling aspect, but not exactly schooling, I was fortunate to have a made up position as an acting assistant principal when I was a teacher.
- ³IDENTIFYING VALUES
- ¹MENTORING
- ²SCHOOL CLIMATE
- ³COLLABORATION
- ¹MANAGING EMOTIONS
- ²HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS
- ¹PROGRESSING AS A LEADER

- It was essentially like an internship, and I view that internship as a tremendous learning experience, because you're really getting a snapshot of the bulk of the day, things like teachers who aren't covered first thing in the morning, or whether it's indoor or outdoor recess, the little questions that come up (all laughed), you get your feet wet with these types of daily smaller decisions, which is something I valued much more than my classroom learning.
- P4 In my administrator studies, I think they did a wonderful job with culture and climate, and the things that help you with everything else that would affect you as an administrator, and I think many of us went in with those rose colored glasses of being an instructional leader of a building, and one professor that I remember the most, who said his PhD stood for "plumbing, heating, and dirt." And his reason was that he had been reamed out by a superintendent that the bushes were not trimmed properly at his building, and another time a pipe burst in the basement and he had to deal with it, or the temperature wasn't right and the teachers were complaining, or there was dirt in the building, so until you're in the position, and we can laugh about it, whether it's indoor or outdoor recess, well just stick your head out the window. What does it look like (all laugh)? Sometimes we deal with such small management issues that take up so much of your day. Every morning, who's here, who's not here. Who needs to be covered? Who doesn't want to cover? It can take up so much time.
- P6 I don't necessarily know that programmatically the administrator program that I did was what stands out, but I do recall specific professors. I still have a folder in my files behind my desk, I bring it everywhere, and it is titled leadership. It's from one class, the professor
- ²BUILDING
MANAGEMENT
- ¹SCHOOL
CLIMATE
- ²BUILDING
MANAGEMENT
- ³HELPING
OTHERS
- ³MANAGEMENT
ISSUES > TIME
ON BUILDING
MANAGEMENT
> LESS TIME ON
INSTRUCTION-
AL LEADERSHIP
- ¹MENTORING

was a systems thinking guy, and he had an influence on me. I was a dean of students at the time, which was considered a teaching position, but it was quasi-administrative in nature, even handling things like gang fights, but I remember from his first class, he put a picture of an iceberg up. He talked about the tip of the iceberg, what you can see, being the event, and then you look further and further down the iceberg to the patterns, the mental model, the thinking that allows what happened to happen, and he explained to us that the greatest thing you get to do, as a principal, as a superintendent, you get to try and shape what is important down here so that the part you can see up here is the best product. His whole approach to class was he had “tattoos.” He would tell us, “Here’s a tattoo, put it in your notebook, this is permanent.” And then he would give us these one liners, and I still hear them to this day. I use them on a regular basis. I share them with my teachers, especially those in administrative internships, to try to get them to shift their thinking, their paradigm, and then I hear them using it, it bring happiness. He had an impact on me, and then it make me feel like the impact I want to have on others is starting to take hold.

²IMPACT ON OTHERS

³UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

⁴MENTORING

⁵IDENTIFYING VALUES

M What’s an example of one of these tattoos?

P6 You have to go slow to go fast.

M My next question may be related to what XXX just shared. What do you like best about being a principal?

P2 For me, I think it’s simple, and maybe cliché, but opportunities to work with kids, whenever you can get those opportunities, even one on one, you can really feel like you can make a difference with kids. Along with that, working with parents, even in really difficult situations, even when it starts out hard, but you can really help them through something, including parenting strategies, I think it’s those personal experiences. Also with teachers, when they’re going through a tough time. It’s just an opportunity, you’re

¹KIDS

²HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS

³RELATIONSHIPS

- really privileged to work with someone else, and have an impact and an influence and steer them onto a better path when they're not seeing it. I think we're so lucky. Not a lot of people have that in their work. People in offices, maybe they don't have that chance. I think that personal interaction, the ability to challenge yourself and figure things out with people. Initially I was going to say just kids, but it's really anybody, kids, staff, parents. That's what keeps me going every day. There's a lot of joy in that. ⁴JOY
- P3 I like working with the kids. The way I view it, the teacher can be like the parent, and as administrators, we get to be like the grandparents. We can go into a classroom, joke around with the kids, stir them up, get them all crazy, and then leave. Then it's up to the teacher get them under control again (all laugh). Those are always the high points of the day. ¹KIDS ²JOY
- P4 It's interesting, working with the kids can be my favorite part of the job, or it can be the most challenging. They really are wonderful most of the time, or they can drive you nuts. I guess the same is true with adults. You can have a wonderful group of educators, or parents, who want to do the best things for kids like you do, and that can be a wonderful thing, or you have the other side when they make it about them, and the child is a second thought, and that becomes so frustrating. But working with people who work with kids, and consistently bring the integrity of putting the kids first, that's the best. None of us would have jobs without the kids. ¹CHALLENGES ²PRIORITY IS THE STUDENT
- M Are there areas in which you fell you need to improve as a principal? Be brave.
- P5 I have tried to reflect on using faculty meeting time better. I do not want to waste people's time. I hate when my time is wasted, and I don't want to waste anyone else's time. Just this morning actually, I was reading a book about energizing your meetings from Responsive Classroom, 15 or 20 strategies, it's a great ¹LIMITED TIME > IDENTIFY VALUES > IMPLEMENT VISION

- book. I don't have the emotional strength at this moment to pull my faculty to do some hokey activity, but they're important. Using the faculty meeting as a means to deliver the message of what is important consistently, and this is something I like about being a principal, is that I have the opportunity to shape people's thinking around teaching and learning. Mastery learning was something totally anathema to the entire staff – how dare you give a kid an opportunity to redo something, that's outrageous, what about all the kids who worked hard the first time? I've used a lot of faculty meetings for that topic, and I'd like to get back to that. But that's an area for me that I struggle with. I have a meeting coming up in a couple weeks, and I'm not sure what we're going to do, because we're separate, but even if we were all together, coming up with something meaningful and not wasting people's time is important. (For context, this principal's school was closed one month ago and students and staff were relocated across three district schools).
- P3 I think improvement can be found in any of those domains you mentioned earlier, I wouldn't say I have any of them mastered.
- P1 I think specifically for me, I'm trying to stretch myself in the area of technology, so that I can model for the staff who may not be as proficient, with how to utilize technology to shape instructional moments for kids, because our kids are pretty far ahead of where we think they are, as compared to our adults. So taking technology and embedding it into instruction, that's a specific area for me where I want to stretch my thinking. I want to look into things like podcasting, become proficient in Google, I'd love to be Google certified, if I could find the time to do it.
- P4 I would say energizing people to learn and grow, moving them from where they are to places they could
- ²PROGRESSING AS A LEADER
- ³MANAGING OWN EMOTIONS
- ⁴INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
- ⁵CRISIS > IDENTIFY NEW VALUES > IMPLEMENT VISION
- ⁶HELPING OTHERS IN CRISIS
- ¹TECHNOLOGY
- ²IMPROVING OWN SKILL SET
- ¹MENTORING

- be, for everyone to have that growth mindset, to feel like they can move forward, like we all want. There are times when we have to coast, when we just have to tread water, even emotionally, so we look for the opportunities for people to push themselves, as we ask the kids to do, just beyond their comfort zone, and I want to work on getting adults to do that.
- P2 I'm listening to my colleagues and thinking, yes that's the thing I need to work on, no that one (all laugh). It feels like everything. I think about trying to move closer to the vision that I have for my building, and how we get there. How do I communicate that message, in a way that is motivating, and gets people as fired up about these crazy ideas as I am? I just feel like I fail on that all the time. But then you'll see little things, moving forward, but how do you keep it going, get them excited and passionate, how do you communicate those things to keep people charged up, and get to that endpoint.
- P3 XXX, you mentioned technology, I don't even know how to check my messages from home (all laugh).
- M What advice would you offer a first-year principal at your level?
- P1 Find two very good mentors so that you can attach yourself to them, and learn two different approaches to help you find your own way.
- P6 Two things I would strongly encourage is, number one, to not be afraid to show that you're human, that you don't know everything, people are going to realize you don't know everything, even though they're going to come to you thinking you will have the answer to everything, that it's okay to surround yourself with people who are a brain trust, who are good at things that you might not be as good at, and then just to remember that leaders build bridges, they don't burn them.
- ²MANAGING EMOTIONS
- ¹WORK WITH COLLEAGUES > IDENTIFY PRIORITIES > IMPLEMENT VISION
- ²COMMUNICATION
- ³DOUBT > MOTIVATE OTHERS > SUCCESS
- ¹MENTORING
- ¹CLIMATE
- ²RELATIONSHIPS
- ³COLLABORATION / ACCEPT HELP

- M How about at the middle level?
- P4 I think the advice transcends every level, what has been said already, I like the quote of building bridges and not burning them. You have to be a great listener. When you are first a principal you are trying to understand the climate and then the culture, and then you look to see if anything about the culture is toxic where you need to address it, or is it a positive one that you can embrace, and just add to. I think you'll find that most places are probably a little bit of both, with great things happening, great people, great energy, but also the other stuff.
- P6 I would add to that by saying find your first follower. That's how you start a movement. That's the most underrated form of leadership, when you can identify your first follower. That's how you start to build a movement.
- P5 I also think it is true for all levels, and what has been said so far is awesome, but if I were giving advice to a new middle school principal, I would say know your audience, know your kids. Know the characteristics of an early adolescent. Be an expert in those characteristics, in what those kids need, because it is different. Their needs, the approaches, be an expert in your age level.
- M The next few questions have to do with the quantitative research that I did. For example, when I started this research, I thought many principals would report that they are spending so much time on building management that they can't get to other areas. Instead, principals reported that as the area where they spend the least time. The top 5 survey questions, of the 20 I asked, that came back in terms of overall mean response, were all in the school climate and emotional intelligence categories. What influences might you suggest would lead to those responses?
- ¹COMMUNICATION / LISTENING
- ²CLIMATE
- ¹RELATIONSHIPS > SHARE VISION > LARGER MOVEMENT
- ¹SKILL SET
- ²KIDS

- P6 I think looking at it from a strictly high school view, and my experience has only ever been in high school, I think my experience, including my teaching experience, was right at the beginning of the digital age. The complete and utter breakdown in interpersonal skills that students, and adults, have is part of why you might see a high rank for that emotional intelligence component. The ability to have a listening conversation, as opposed to advocacy; the ability to genuinely display empathy, and to a certain extent I think that's a microcosm of what's going on in the world around us already, but I think the breakdown of those basic social skills, those soft skills, even at younger ages, for me at the high school level, it has had a massive impact. A lot of times, the job is about putting out fires and picking people up when they are in emotional distress. That's true for students and teachers.
- ¹RELATIONSHIPS
²LISTENING
³EMPATHY
⁴HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS
- P3 I think you get a result like that because we're in the people business, so most of our work is going to be around kids, teachers, parents; so regardless of what we're doing, it's going to feel like it's that social-emotional aspect. If we were in the widget business, it might be different, but we're in the people business so it falls into that category naturally.
- ¹"PEOPLE BUSINESS"
- P4 At the middle level, that feels like the majority of our mindset. Social-emotional, that sets up everything else. As was said, when it comes to children, instruction is not going to happen when they don't have that emotional foundation, resiliency, coping skills. It's the same for the teachers, they won't be successful if they don't feel validated, empowered. It's like when someone pops into your office and asks to leave 5 minutes early and you say ok, and they feel like you see them as a person, someone who has a need. You hope, they reciprocate that in a positive way for kids, and for each other.
- ¹SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING
²SEL > CLIMATE > INSTRUCTION
³RELATIONSHIPS
⁴VALIDATION

- P2 I think we learn very quickly that spending your time proactively, getting ahead of these things, is so important. When you get ahead of things, it really mitigates a world of problems, so I know that's where I spend so much of my time. Knowing that something is coming down the pike, maybe having that conversation with a parent, or having a conversation with a teacher because you know her grade level might change, that could potentially have a ripple effect throughout the building, so putting your time there will save you time later.
- ¹CLIMATE > PROACTIVE APPROACH > BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
- ²HELP THOSE IN CRISIS
- M The bottom five questions, or the five survey items where principals reported the least time, all had to do with building management and improving instructional practice. That doesn't mean principals reported spending little time in these areas, just less than the others. What do you think might have led to that?
- P4 I agree with the instructional practice part, I find myself leaving a lot of that to chairs and the work they do. Building management, I'm surprised. I think we spend far too much time on building management, indoor/outdoor recess, other stuff. Instructional practice, I agree. I think we don't get that opportunity, or enough time getting into classrooms, and I know the reason I got into education in the first place was not to be a principal, but to work with children in class, and be passionate about the things I was teaching, and to be able to get into classrooms as an administrator is so energizing, but not getting that is a challenge for me.
- ¹MANAGEMENT ISSUES > LESS TIME FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP > ADJUST VALUES
- P1 I think in Suffolk County, especially this area, schools are the heart of the community. So, if the heart of the community is experiencing crisis, trauma, stress, it would make sense for the survey results to show that principals are spending more time on culture and climate. Just as crisis or stress occurs at home, we know it walks itself into school, and we are in the people business, so we put our people first, and I think that's a good thing.
- ¹"COMMUNITY"
- ²HELPING THOSE IN CRISIS

- P5 I think for me, instructional practice is the hardest needle to move. It's the thing where people are most intractably stuck on. I teach the way I teach, and I'm going to keep teaching that way, I don't care what data you have or what book you've read, I am going to put desks in rows and I am going to talk at those kids and you're not going to stop me (all laugh).
- M Overall, answers were high. The overall mean response for all survey items was between "usually" and "always." Of course this is all self-reported by principals. What do you think might influence these responses?
- P5 A false sense of accomplishment? We want to believe that we have checked all the boxes. I didn't check off high in every area when I completed your survey, especially emotional intelligence.
- P6 Were you able to disaggregate out where in Suffolk County the principals are?
- M By location, no.
- P6 Because I think the district and level would have a lot to do with it.
- M So I looked at level, years of experience, gender, and whether you have an AP.
- P3 Could this mean that we do all of these things, all of the areas you described, but we don't necessarily do them well?
- M That's a great question – no, I don't think my survey tells me that.
- P2 I was thinking that as well, as these ideas are being generated around the table, I'm thinking yes, all of these things are so important.
- M So yes, and that's why I asked you to be part of the qualitative component to my research. You can try to get to that deeper meaning from this type of discussion. My survey only tells me what people
- ¹CLIMATE >
IDENTIFY
CHALLENGE >
DIFFICULT TO
ADDRESS THE
VISION
- ²SHARE VALUES
- ¹EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE

- reported about themselves. Do they do them well? No idea.
- P5 Was this a survey tool that had been previously used? (For context, P5 recently completed his/her own dissertation research project and has the EdD degree).
- M No, I made up my own survey instrument. I'm not sure if that was the best plan, but I wanted to try it (all laugh).
- M Female principals reported a higher priority than male principals, in a statistically significant way, on the survey item about school climate. What are your thoughts on what would influence those responses?
- P3 They're just better than men? (all laugh)
- P1 Maybe female principals are more detail oriented, task driven, checklist-y sort of creatures. ¹GENDER > CHALLENGES > MOTIVATION
- P6 I think that part of the answer has to be to look at the past 30 years, what has grown more, females stepping into administration, in public schools, that was once so male dominated, and I think in the last 15 years that has changed, and I think that female principals responding that they spend more time on culture and climate might have to do with the overall challenges that they face, when a woman steps into a position of leadership.
- P3 I was thinking about Jordan Peterson, I was listening to something of his on equal opportunity versus equal output, and how equal output is a bad system, and equal opportunity is the correct system, and he talks about the differences between men and women, and he was saying that women are more relationship oriented, and males tend to be more interested in things than in relationships, and so if you go to something like Tech Magazine, it's always guy driven and the advertisements are male driven, but if you look at fields that involve that emotional connection, with other people, women are just more socially involved ¹OPPORTUNITY ²RELATIONSHIPS

than men, and so it makes me think of that. Are women doing more of that social-emotional piece than their male colleagues, and are the males spending their time working on other things, versus the relationship piece.

- P4 The other piece, I think, is that a female in a leadership role, maybe feels she has more to prove, because it wasn't a traditional role. Do female leaders feel they have to prove themselves, or feel more connected? ¹NEED TO PROVE YOURSELF
- P2 It's really interesting that you're saying that, because I do think that there are just some inherent challenges being a female leader, and I do think, and I'll just speak for myself, I feel like I have to invest more time explaining, and developing relationships, and making sure that everything is okay before I get to the things that I want to say, and just my observation, and I feel jealous sometimes, I do think that when a male leader needs to say something, you can be more direct and just say it, with fewer repercussions. I think there's a lot of feathering the nest that you have to do, and I don't know if you have that experience, but I think that sometimes you have to do that to get to your point. ¹CLIMATE > CHALLENGES FOR FEMALE LEADERS > MORE TIME SPENT ON RELATIONSHIPS
²MORE TIME ON RELATIONSHIPS > CLIMATE > MORE SUCCESS WITH VISION
- P4 Is it a perception, is it a reality, but it's there.
- P2 Yes, and I think, working with my counselor, who happens to be a male, we'll have meetings with parents, and I know sitting there that there are things that I cannot say, that he can say in one sentence and we'll be done. And it feels funny to say that, I think it's cultural to a certain degree, not with everything, and I don't feel there's a disadvantage necessarily, but there's an awareness of it. ¹CULTURE
- M That's so interesting, that you feel women need to build up to things, where I (context: as a male) can just say it.
- P2 And I think it's not just in leadership, for example buying a car. When I'm with my husband, it feels like

he can do things just much more quickly. I think it's just cultural.

- M And I will tell you that in my survey results, female respondents reported spending more time in all categories, and it feels like this has something to do with it.
- M The other area where female principals reported a statistically significantly higher priority was in instructional leadership, or improving instructional practice. Any thoughts on what could lead to that?
- P5 This is something just based on a gender lens, which has all sorts of flaws, but I think women are maternal, and there's a feeling of taking care of people, and not just transactions, but social emotional, instructional, they are perhaps, and I would speculate they often imagine themselves, they have to be the mother to the building, in all areas, they would report being more effective, and perhaps they are. ¹FEMALE LEADERS > RELATIONSHIPS > MORE REPORTED INSTRUCTIONAL SUCCESS
- M I found a couple of things that seem to be impacted by whether or not you have an assistant principal. Visionary leadership, planning for the future, showed a statistically significant difference based on whether or not you have an assistant principal. Principals who have an AP reports spending more time planning for the future. Any thoughts on what characteristics could lead to that?
- P1 I think it has so much to do with just having a colleague or a partner to share and define your vision, just like if you're going to roll out a program, you dabble in it, you dip your toe in it, and then you do it. I've used that dabble, dip, and do idea with a change or an initiative, and it helps bring people on board, helps them understand the process what you're doing, and it takes a team. You find your one person to follow, and they find another one, and then you have your small cohort, your group, and you grow your ²BUILD RELATIONSHIPS > COMMUNICATE VISION > MORE SUCCESS

vision. So that result makes absolute sense to me, if the partnership is a good one.

- P3 I would think part of that is if you don't have an AP, the principal is kind of stuck in the weeds, taking care of thing, bus reports, whatever, and if you have an assistant principal to help take care of those things, you might have more time for that visionary aspect of things.
- M Another independent variable that impacted visionary leadership in my survey was experience. Those principals with 13 or more years of experience as a principal reported significantly lower priority on visionary leadership than newer principals. Principals with 1–4 years of experience reported significantly more time spent on visionary leadership. Any thoughts?
- P3 After 13 years, I think you're just tired (all laugh).
- P5 I think part of it is that the things that were there when you started have come back, the cycle of great ideas, the next best thing, it all comes back.
- P6 I was going to say, at that point, it's more established. I know what the transition to the next principal might look like, if I leave, it will be smooth, I have established the systems, as opposed to someone new, out of the gate, if you were to ask me in my first year, I spent all my time trying to change the culture of this building and planning for the future, so that when I leave here the principal could step in and have a relationship with the instructional staff that is not contentious, that is much more team based, that was a massive focus when I started out, because you're trying to build that. Maybe 13 years in, the trust is there. It's already built.
- M Also, elementary principals reported significantly less time spent on planning for the future than middle and

¹IDENTIFY
VALUES >
COMMUNICATE
VISION >
CLIMATE

²RELATION-
SHIPS AND
TRUST

- high school principals. Do you have any thoughts on why that could be?
- P4 They almost always have APs, so that feels like the other question. ¹COLLABORATION
- P5 Right, elementary principals don't have that administrative support. Districts think that if they have a counselor, even part time, that they're fine, but they're not.
- M Of everything we discussed today, what jumped out at you as the most important?
- P5 I got a list of tattoos that I think is outrageously brilliant, the job of a leader is not to relieve tension, but to create it. I love it. Thank you for sharing that. (Context: P6 emailed a list of his "tattoos," that he/she had referenced earlier, to the others while we were talking) ¹COLLABORATION
- P4 I think everything we discussed today was important, to be able to sit in this room, collegially, and just talk about the job. This was very important. We don't get the chance to do that, even when we have administrative council meetings, it's structured, but it's not like this. We don't get that opportunity. Leadership is sometimes a lonely job.
- P2 This was so productive, it makes me feel like we all work on this every single day, and there's just so much you don't know. I'm always amazed at how much I learn just talking to my colleagues. There's a lot of information, a lot of experience, and it almost feels like we should be spending more time engaging in these conversations, things like what was your first year like, what would you do differently, because I would do so much differently. ¹LEARNING FROM OTHERS / PROGRESSING AS A LEADER
²COLLABORATION
- P5 It's like being in an interview, but instead of one person answering, it's a hybrid of everyone's experiences, that's what a good focus group is supposed to be. This was very rich.

- P2 And you're not worried about getting the job, so it's just good conversation.
- P1 I had a colleague who always used to say to his teachers who wanted to go out of the district for professional development, we are our own best resource, and I have adopted that thinking because you're both right, by sharing our experiences, even when you have a dilemma, to have colleagues where you can ask what would you do, that's my big takeaway, that collegially, we are our own best resource.
- M You seem to all be saying that the most important thing today was the opportunity to sit and share with colleagues, and not any one thing from my research or one topic. That seems very important.
- P1 That seems related to your culture and climate results.
- M Here's my last question, just like in an interview. Have I missed anything? Is there anything else you want to add?
- P2 What are you planning to do with the results? What do you have in mind?
- M Well, I hope that if I can do a proper analysis and write it all up, and separate from my dissertation, maybe summarize things into an article of some kind that is more interesting for principals, that maybe some of this is helpful. Maybe principals will be interested in how other people do the job, maybe there is a roadmap somewhere in here. Maybe there's even something in here that can help principal preparation programs, who knows. I hope to produce something that is useful for principals.
- M Let me express how grateful I am. This was so rich, so interesting. I am really looking forward to writing up an analysis of this, you gave me fantastic stuff. Thank you so much.

¹LEARNING
FROM OTHERS /
PROGRESSING
AS A LEADER

²COLLABOR-
ATION

¹CLIMATE

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