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A Comparison Study of Teacher Efficacy and Principal Leadership Behaviors at the Elementary and Middle School Levels

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A COMPARISON STUDY OF TEACHER EFFICACY AND PRINCIPAL
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AT THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL
LEVELS

By
Rodney Keith Ezell

A Dissertation Submitted to the
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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Rodney Keith Ezell under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

A COMPARISON STUDY OF TEACHER EFFICACY AND PRINCIPAL
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AT THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL
LEVELS. Ezell, Rodney Keith, 2020: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.
The single most important factor for the success of a student in school is the teacher, yet
many factors impact the teacher's ability to do the job as effectively as possible. Data
exists regarding the multiple influences that affect the teacher's sense of self-efficacy,
however, specific data regarding leadership behaviors is limited. Research shows that
student achievement is affected by the teacher, therefore it is imperative to determine
what leadership behaviors impact teacher efficacy the most. The purpose of this
quantitative study was to explore the impact of principal behaviors on teacher efficacy.
Also, the study sought to compare the derived results from elementary school data with
that of middle school data to determine if a difference exists between principal behaviors
and teacher efficacy at both levels. A multivariate multiple regression was used to
analyze the findings. This method was used due to the multiple independent, as well as
multiple dependent variables that exist within both measures; the Teacher Sense of Self
Efficacy Scale Long Form and the Leadership Practices Inventory. The study found that
there was no significant impact of principal behaviors on teacher efficacy for the
participating school district. There was, however, a significant difference in the self-
efficacy of elementary school and middle school teachers with regard to student
engagement. While elementary teachers rated themselves relatively high in student
engagement, middle school teachers rated themselves lower in their ability to engage

students in learning. District leaders should consider professional development in building middle school efficacy in student engagement.

Keywords: efficacy, leadership practices, leadership behaviors, model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, encourage the heart

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

A teacher's beliefs in the ability to positively impact the students served in the classroom have demonstrated a better sense of well-being, lower stress, more job satisfaction, and commitment to teaching (Aloe et al., 2014; White, 2014). Research has shown that an effective teacher is the single most important factor to student achievement (Guenzler, 2016; Walker & Slear, 2011). With changes in curricula, class size debates, funding crises, and inconsistent parental involvement, it is critical that schools choose the most effective teachers to positively impact student achievement (Kroner, 2017). Stronge and Hindman (2003) stated that an effective teacher knows how make sure the class runs smoothly, maintains routines, and ensures the students know they are cared for. Wong (n.d.) reported, "there is only one way to obtain student achievement and the research is very specific. It is the teacher and what the teacher knows and can do that is the determining factor with student achievement" (p. 1). With the teacher as the pivotal factor in raising student achievement, the question exists, how do we recruit and retain highly effective teachers? Wong went on to say that "the bottom line is that there is no way to create good schools without good teachers. It is the administrator who creates a good school" (p. 2). With that in mind, it is extremely critical for administrators to be keenly aware of what to do to create a good school.

The responsibilities of a school principal have shifted drastically over the past decade. Smith (2013) stated that in previous years, people were selected to be principal if that person could manage the building, was organized and knowledgeable, and could handle the operations of the school. Today's leadership from the principal looks much

different. "Maintaining continuous improvement in the building, designing instruction for student success, developing partnerships with parents and the community, and nurturing a culture where each individual feels valued" (Habegger, 2008, p. 1) are part of modern day duties for a principal. "The job of a modern-day principal has transformed into something that would be almost unrecognizable to the principals of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1080s" (Alvoid & Black, 2014, para. 2). Alvoid and Black (2014) also stated that a principal is no longer the building manager but today is a team builder, an aspirational leader, an agent of change, and a coach. With these additional roles, however, principals are still expected to be the building manager, disciplinarians, compliance enforcers, instructional designers, and public relations experts (Alvoid & Black, 2014). As the primary leaders in school buildings, principals are expected to set the instructional climate for students as well as teachers (Ladd, 2009). Principals shape the teaching and learning environment and share a continuous vision for improvement. The most effective principals create learning communities where faculty and staff collaborate to help every student reach their potential (Meador, 2019; National Education Association, 2008).

Having a learning community that is supportive of teachers is an expectation for principals. The principal must be a participant in every aspect of the school to influence a learning culture that is encouraging and professionally motivating to teachers. When this happens, teachers thrive. If, however, the culture created by the principal is perceived as non-supportive, teacher morale and commitment is weakened (National Education Association, 2008). Horth and Buchner (2014) stated that principals need to "learn how to create an organizational climate where others apply innovative thinking to solve problems and develop new products and services" (p. 5). The principal's behaviors can

affect the climate of the school, either positively or negatively; and with the middle school concept providing a different structure than an elementary school, the two climates are inherently different to begin with. Sparks (2016) reported, "transition from elementary to middle school can be harder on students than the transition to high school" (para. 4). Sparks also reported that students in Grades 6-8 show lower scores in math and reading and are less connected with the school.

Dwyer (n.d.) stated that if one has ever been called to the principal's office, the experience is quite different in elementary school versus middle school. This could be due to the structural, instructional differences of the duties within each level. Though inherent differences exist in middle school and elementary school based on the nation's efforts to meet the needs of young people, Tamer (2012) stated that students who enter middle school in Grades 6 or 7 lose ground in reading and math. Even though basic duties of principals are similar, there are differences in the positions, given the variables for each level (Dwyer, n.d.). Dwyer reported that one study found that elementary school principals interact more in the educational process than secondary school principals. With this difference in leadership, the question arises, how does the leadership effect the school's performance?

Statement of the Problem

Middle school students transitioning into a middle or junior high school have scored lower on standardized tests than elementary school students enrolled in K-5 schools or K-6 schools (Dhuey, 2011; Lane et al., 2015). "In the 1970s, less than 25 percent of middle schools included sixth grade. Now, the figure is 75 percent nationwide and 90 percent in North Carolina, which has led the trend toward grades 6-8 middle

schools" (Cook, as cited by Kemp, 2007, p. 1). "Grade level configuration may have an effect on student achievement as it can impact schools' practices and policies such as curriculum development and delivery" (Dhuey, 2011, p. 1).

With differences in grade configuration negatively impacting student achievement, it is important to determine the factors that could mitigate the barriers to increased student achievement (Dhuey, 2011; Lane et al., 2015). As students move to a middle school from the more supportive climate of elementary school, there is a myriad of student adjustments that coincide: a new environment, new goals, new expectations, more social stress with adolescence, and possibly multiple teachers (Alvord, 2019). With these changes taking place, the middle schoolers need educational experiences that are structured to meet the physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and moral needs of the students (Casky & Anfara, 2014). "For the last two decades, education researchers and developmental psychologists have been documenting changes in attitudes and motivation as children enter adolescence, changes that some hypothesize are exacerbated by middle-school curricula and practices" (Rockoff & Lockwood, 2010, p. 1).

According to Hirsch et al. (2007), research has consistently shown that teachers make a greater difference in student achievement than any other factor associated with schools. Similarly, Adams (2016) stated, "studies show that student achievement is directly related to the effectiveness of the classroom teacher" (para. 10). Additionally, what a teacher believes and what is practiced are at the heart of student success (Lee, 2002). "There is a positive relationship between high levels of teacher efficacy and increased student achievement as well as a positive link between principal behavior and teacher efficacy" (Walker & Slear, 2011, para. 1). Montague-Davis (2017) reported that

"school leaders play an important role in fostering the development of schools as learning organizations, since principal leadership practices determine the effectiveness of learning organizations as well as teacher perceptions of leader effectiveness" (p. 2). Likewise, having a strong instructional leader that models best practices will more likely see teachers enabling more active engagement in students, thus increasing student achievement (Quinn, 2002). These ideas align closely with the work of Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) who explained that help, support, trust, openness, collective reflection, and collective efficacy are the driving forces of collaborative cultures. Gruenert and Whitaker also spoke of certain target behaviors of collaborative leadership and asserted,

> Leaders value teachers' ideas, seek input from teachers, engage teachers in decision making, trust teachers' professional judgment, support and reward risk taking and innovative ideas designed to improve student achievement, and reinforce the sharing of ideas and effective practices among all staff. (p. 84)

However, some researchers have stated that the best research on school leadership is in question, while others claimed that research has proven that leadership has little to no effect on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). For example, Sheninger (2015) stated, "leadership is about action, not position" (para. 4). Leaders by title only cannot implement change that will sustain, nor is leadership innate. Leadership is learned by the actions we take by analyzing other leaders (Sheninger, 2015). Also, Anderson (2015) opined that many of the proponents for leadership impacting achievement base their findings on performance measures when the performance cannot be said to have been impacted by the leadership style or practice.

School leaders play a vital role in developing learning organizations, and the

practices they employ contribute to the overall effectiveness of the organization (Senge, 2006). "The dynamic school provides a positive learning climate for all students. Positive learning climates possess a number of characteristics" (Glickman et al., 2018, p. 43). Characteristics that foster the best learning atmosphere, according to Glickman et al. (2018), include a safe environment, a deep moral tone, strong relationships, and a sense of empowerment. "Research over the last 35 years provides strong guidance on specific leadership behaviors for school administrators and [those] behaviors have well-documented effects on student achievement" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 7). Marzano et al. (2005) went on to say that academic achievement is dramatically influenced by a highly effective school leader. Graham and Ferriter (2010) mentioned that leaders should model a collaborative tone, share personal experiences, provide structure that is positive, and create an inclusive culture. Hanson (2001) suggested that the culture of a school is shaped around a combination of values, beliefs, and feelings and that culture emphasizes what is most important. A school's culture "can be a positive or negative influence on a school's effectiveness. An effective leader builds a culture that positively influences teachers, who, in turn, positively influence students" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 47). Drago-Severson (2009) reported that it takes a long period of time to change a school's culture, while school climate is more "amenable to influence and change" (p. 6). Gruenert and Whitaker, (2015) stated, "a school's climate is both a window into its culture and a learned response that the culture teaches new members" (p. 10). Understanding that the morale of the school is created and sustained by the administrator, that the morale is a barometer of culture (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015), that culture influences teachers and their practice, and finally that the teacher is the single most important factor in student

achievement (Walker & Slear, 2011), administrators must behave in ways that build the strongest culture and climate possible. West and Schwerdt (2012) found, "suggestive evidence that the overall climate for student learning is worse in middle schools than in schools that serve students from elementary school through 8th grade" (pp. 5-6).

According to the North Carolina School Report Card data for the participating district in this study, student achievement has consistently reported a lower middle school average than the average from the elementary schools within that same district (North Carolina School Report Cards, 2019). Table 1 shows the average middle school scores for the previous 5 years in a rural district of western North Carolina as well as the average for elementary schools during the same period. It is also shown in Table 1 that the difference in averages ranges from -8 to -17, reinforcing the report of lower achievement levels at the middle school level.

Table 1

Comparative Averages from Elementary Schools and Middle Schools

School year	Elementary school average	Middle school average	Difference
2018	71%	63%	-8%
2017	72%	56%	-16%
2016	70%	57%	-13%
2015	69%	52%	-17%
2014	64%	56%	-8%

"Movements students make across the grade span are marked by myriad individual, instructional, and institutional changes that can impact the success of their educational experiences" (Lane et al., 2015, p. 39). The transition to middle school is marked by many changes in students. Developmental changes during early adolescence, social structure changes from elementary to middle school, and changes in the focus from

adults toward more peer relationships can be overwhelming challenges for students who are approximately 10-15 years old (Casky & Anfara, 2014). Kemp (2007) noted, "In the 1970s, less than 25 percent of middle schools included sixth grade. Now, the figure is 75 percent nationwide and 90 percent in North Carolina, which has led the trend toward grades 6-8 middle schools" (para. 4). "No matter whether students enter a middle school in the 6th or the 7th grade, middle-school students experience, on average, a large initial drop in their test scores" (Rockoff & Lockwood, 2010, p. 1). Following a more successful test score in the elementary grades, according to Rockoff and Lockwood (2010), student scores drop when they enter middle school. "The choice of grade configuration at minimum determines the number of structural school transitions students make, the age at which they make these transitions, and the relative age of the peers to whom they are exposed at various ages" (Schwerdt, 2011, p. 1).

Lynch (2015) reported five common elements of success for schools to be effective: quality leadership, high expectations of both teachers and students, continued monitoring of student development, clear goals and vision, and the extent to which the school is safe and secure. Quality leadership supports teachers and creates opportunities and a culture that encourages collaboration, risk-taking, and changes in teaching practices that lead to school improvement (Marzano et al., 2005). Meaningful school improvement begins with a cultural change, and cultural change begins with the school leader (Reeves, 2007).

"Among the mechanisms of agency, none is more central or pervasive than beliefs of personal efficacy. Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). In education, if teachers

feel confident and secure about what they are doing, they will produce a better outcome. "Teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning affect the types of learning environments they create and the level of academic progress their students achieve" (Bandura, 1993, p. 1). Teacher confidence affecting student progress is undergirded by the behaviors exhibited by the principal and how the principal does or does not support the environment of trust and respect. This relationship between principal behaviors and teacher efficacy is one that is worth taking a closer look at.

As the level of pressure continues to rise for teachers in today's schools (Litvinov et al., 2018), the importance of the leader being sensitive to that pressure and providing a supportive, positive workplace in order for teacher efficacy to remain high is paramount. Generally, teachers who possess self-confidence in teaching and instruction and are concerned with student learning have higher expectations which, in turn, produce higher student achievement. If the school principal creates an environment that increases and supports high teacher efficacy, student achievement will increase or remain high. Rath (2008) identified relationship building, one of his four domains of leadership strength, as the "glue that holds a team together" (p. 25). In his work on leading in cultures of change, Fullan (2001) believed in the importance of changing the nature of relationships to see improvements and positive change. "Thus leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups" (Fullan, 2001, p. 5) and "constantly foster purposeful interaction and problem solving" (Fullan, 2001, p. 5). Trust and trusting relationships are fundamental to supporting growth that leads to enhanced student achievement (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

   The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of elementary and middle school principals and to determine how these practices relate to teachers in a western North Carolina school district. Previous research supports the impact of teacher efficacy on student achievement, and many researchers agree that higher efficacy leads to higher achievement (Anderson, 2015; Angelle & Teague, 2014; Curry, 2015; Guenzler, 2016; Kroner, 2017). The study also compared the derived results from elementary school data with those of middle school data to determine if a difference exists between principal behaviors and teacher efficacy at both levels. The results came from two surveys, the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) Long Form (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The findings from the LPI will also allow principals the opportunity to analyze their practices as reported by teachers in order to positively affect teacher efficacy. According to Marzano et al. (2005), leaders must do the right work in order to improve student achievement. Collins (2005) stated this as getting the right people on the bus.

Conceptual Framework

   The conceptual framework for this study is based on two constructs: principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy. The concept map in Figure 1 provides the process showing how the building principal's leadership practices and qualities affect the efficacy of teachers within the school, and research has previously shown how teacher efficacy might impact student achievement. The LPI from the Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Pozner, 2017) was used to obtain the perceptions of teachers as to how the leader (principal) exhibits the five exemplary leadership practices. The TSES Long Form

from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2001) research tools were used to measure

teacher efficacy of the participating teachers.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework
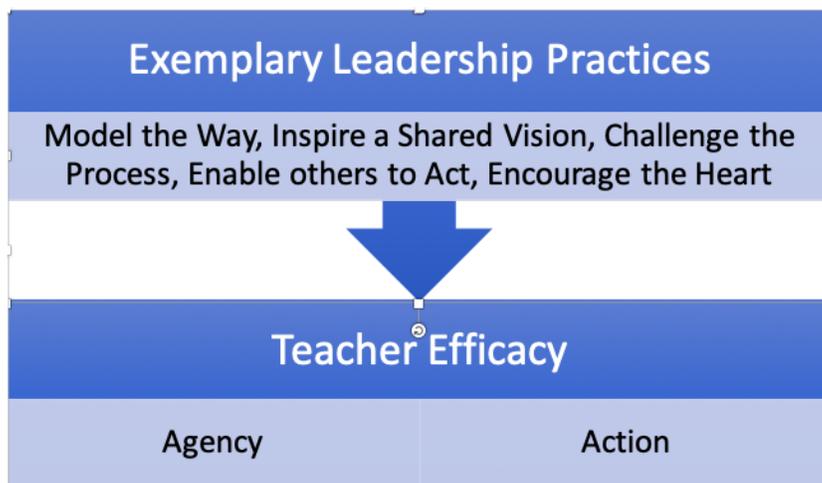
The concept for this study is based on the constructs of Exemplary Leadership

Practices exhibited by the school principals and teacher efficacy including agency and

action. The five exemplary leadership practices defined by Kouzes and Posner (2017)

refer to research-based behaviors of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge

the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. These behaviors have

stemmed from countless case studies and surveys collected by Kouzes and Posner (2017).

Figure 1 identifies the conceptual framework for this study and the influence each

construct has on the following construct. The leadership practices include many of the

qualities employed by principals as the leader of the school. Having a collaborative

mindset and trusting environment are essential elements of leadership (Drago-Severson,

2009; Fullan, 2001; Glickman et al., 2018; Rath, 2008). Relationship building is also a

key component to successful leadership (Adams, 2016; Fullan, 2001; Graham & Ferriter,

2010; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). The exemplary leadership practices outlined by Kouzes and Posner (2017) exhibited by the leader of the school impact teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy has an impact on student achievement in both reading and math in Grades 3-5 in elementary school and Grades 6-8 in middle school (Bellibas & Liu, 2017; Freeman, 2008).

Results of the study could provide insightful information to principals that could assist in determining best practices that would help build the most effective, supportive climate for teachers. Comparisons will also be examined using results from elementary sites and middle school sites. Chapter 2 presents a thorough review of the literature for this topic.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of elementary and middle school principals and to determine how these practices relate to teacher efficacy and student achievement in a western North Carolina school district. To investigate the impact, the following research questions are presented:

1. To what extent is there a difference between elementary and middle school teacher efficacy?

2. To what extent is there a significant association between principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy at the elementary and middle school levels?

Significance of this Study

Teacher efficacy has been studied for decades with regard to its impact on student achievement, yet there is limited information as to what specific practices from the principal have the most positive impact on teacher efficacy. Recognizing that principals

have a direct impact on efficacy, it is critical that the practices employed by the principal are geared toward increasing teacher efficacy. In doing so, teachers would then have a more positive influence on student achievement (Wong, n.d.).

If results indicated that there is a difference between elementary school and middle school efficacy linked to leadership behaviors, the school district could have offered professional development to strengthen principal capacity to exercise the exemplary practices more effectively. For example, if it was found that Model the Way reports a statistically different result for elementary or middle school, the district could have used the data to specify professional development for principals to increase the practice of modeling within the school day. The data could have helped the district determine more effective professional development for all administrators targeted on the exemplary practices as determined by Kouzes and Posner (2017).

Principals and teachers face a myriad of issues and problems in today's schools while trying to juggle the functions of leadership, teaching, and learning. Tschannen-Moran et al. (2006) reported that the most pressing of problems is the increased pressure for student achievement on standardized tests. Litvinov et al. (2018) reported that public schools in the United States face many problems today, such as increased class sizes, higher rates of students living in poverty, increased absenteeism, bullying, student attitudes, and decreased parental involvement. However, teachers today are expected to overcome all these, and other, obstacles and produce student growth and achievement. With the demands of the profession ever increasing, there are teachers who welcome the challenges and face them head on. For those teachers to do the best job they can do, it is essential that the school principal support teachers by exhibiting behaviors that increase

teacher efficacy thus increasing student achievement. Glickman et al. (2018) stated that leaders must use a combination of behaviors that promote the best situation for teacher growth such as directive, collaborative, or nondirective behaviors. The differences in behaviors are based on the professional needs of the teachers and are also ever-changing with the current state of affairs. There are many leadership styles supporting teachers that can be defined with certain behaviors associated with each style of leadership. The issue is that many principals do not "fit" into one style. Many times, principals have to shift from one leadership style to another depending on the situation. It would be more beneficial to investigate the behaviors principals exhibit consistently that assist in building teacher efficacy. Rath (2008) reported that leaders should possess skills that address followers' four basic needs: trust, compassion, stability, and hope; skills that involve interpersonal attention and action. Moreover, Marzano et al. (2005) posited that "specific behaviors associated with effective leadership included monitoring student progress on specific learning goals, supervising teachers, promoting high expectations for student achievement and teacher performance, focusing on basic skills, and monitoring the curriculum" (p. 23). The multifaceted duties of the school leader are constantly in flux depending on the situation at hand, but leaders must be able to manage the complexities of leadership in modern schools (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Operational Definitions

The following definitions are provided in order to maintain a consistent understanding of the terms throughout this study.

Agency

Agency is the capacity to act and effect change and is the ability to exert

intentional influence over actions and events; it is the belief in your own capacity to produce certain action (Bandura, 2009).

Efficacy

A teacher's belief in their capacity to affect student performance; also called the sense of efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Self-efficacy is a teacher's belief in personal capabilities to plan and carry out the action required to produce given achievements (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Student Achievement

Scores from the North Carolina End of Grade tests in Grades 3-8 that report a student as "proficient" or "not proficient." Proficient scores are Levels 3, 4, or 5. Scores of 1 or 2 are considered not proficient. Results are reported as percentages for classes, schools, districts, and subgroups (North Carolina School Report Cards, 2019).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership involves the leader being the "lead learner" (Hoerr, 2015, p. 84). The leader has a strong focus on teaching and learning.

Democratic Leadership

Leadership style that involves team members in making decisions, even though the leader continues to have the final say (Gupta, 2016).

Autocratic Leadership

Leadership style in which an autocratic or authoritative leader leads the team in one direction and is self-confident and empathetic (Gupta, 2016).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

"A philosophy or practice characterized by a usually deliberate abstention from

direction or interference, especially with individual freedom of choice and action"

(Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Transformational Leadership

Leadership style related to identifying needs, creating a vision for improvement,

and using inspirational messages. Transformational leaders use the power of language

and imagery to influence the feelings of those they are leading (Lynch, 2016a).

Leadership Behaviors

Behaviors exhibited by principals that affect the behaviors or actions of

employees and students (Fullan, 2001).

Exemplary Practices

Kouzes and Posner (2002) defined these research-based practices common to

successful leadership consisting of five subgroups: (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a

Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage

the Heart.

Model the Way

When leaders find their voice and set a good example by clarifying their personal

values and aligning with those who share those values (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Setting

a good example, showing respect, and developing shared understanding are elements of

modeling the way (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Inspire a Shared Vision

The capacity to envision the future and to enlist others in a shared vision by

imagining the possibilities and relating with them using shared goals (Kouzes & Posner,

2002).

Challenge the Process

The capacity to search for opportunities, experimenting, taking risks, and learning from mistakes (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Leaders can create and monitor specific challenging achievement goals for the school/student (Marzano et al., 2005).

Enable Others to Act

The capacity to build collaboration and foster growth in others by building trust and promoting cooperation (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Also, enabling others to act includes building others' competence by providing opportunities for growth and leadership (Drago-Severson, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Encourage the Heart

The capacity to recognize contributions and celebrate values and victories while creating a spirit of community (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Crane (2002) suggested that encouraging the heart is the best way to coach others and promote communication and productivity.

LPI

A survey that was designed as a 360-degree feedback form on leadership behaviors. It includes 30 items that refer to leadership behaviors shown by leaders at their best. There are two versions: Self and Observer. The 30 items are divided into five categories of leadership practice: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Summary

  This quantitative study examined the impact of principal behaviors on teacher sense of efficacy in a western North Carolina school district. The study also compared the results from elementary school data with those of middle school data to report the differences between principal behaviors and teacher efficacy.

  Previous research shows the positive effect of higher teacher efficacy on student achievement and how the constructs of agency and influence can be supported by a positive working culture and climate (Anderson, 2015; Angelle & Teague, 2014; Bandura, 1986; White, 2014). The literature review in Chapter 2 presents the theory behind teacher efficacy and the impact of efficacy on student achievement. With the participating school district showing a lower average score in middle school than in elementary school over recent years, determining if principal practices have an impact on teacher efficacy is important. A discussion of leadership styles affecting teacher efficacy, as well as exemplary leadership practices, is included in the literature review. Research in these areas was necessary to offer background for and support of the study's purpose.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of elementary and middle school principals and to determine how these practices relate to teacher efficacy and student achievement in a western North Carolina school district. Chapter 2 includes a background regarding social cognitive theory, leadership styles, exemplary practices, teacher efficacy, and how efficacious teachers positively impact student achievement. The researcher attempted to determine specific leadership behaviors that principals can build upon in order to establish school environments that can support higher teacher efficacy. By building upon these leadership behaviors and increasing teacher efficacy, student achievement could also be increased.

Building on the social cognitive theory, Bandura (1986) developed the efficacy construct supporting teacher sense of confidence in what is done each day in the classroom. Following a discussion of efficacy, a brief historical overview of the role of the school principal with notable changes to that role is included. After historical trends, Chapter 2 presents leadership theories from which several leadership styles have emerged. Also in Chapter 2, a summary of leadership styles associated with schools and the theoretical support for those styles is included.

The literature review concludes with a discussion of the LPI developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002) and the five practices of exemplary leadership. The five practices are Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura is known for his work in social cognitive theory within the realm of psychology and the importance of observational learning. One cornerstone of this theory is the use of personal agency, or one's ability to feel in control of their life (Bandura, 1986; Zee & Kooman, 2016). Social cognitive theory is founded on the premise of triadic reciprocal causation among the cognitive, affective, and biological happenings in one's environment, according to Bandura (1999). In general, what and how people think influences and is influenced by the actual things going on in the environment. Individuals do not merely choose personal behaviors that have no impact on others or the environment; they contribute to their circumstances and are not just products of them.

Social cognitive theory has an agentic perspective in which people influence their lives according to their own development, adaptation, and change as stated by Bandura (1986). "The modes of agency and their environments are interdependent" (Bergman et al., 2019, para. 10). People's agency impacts and is affected by the environment in which they are a part. Individual agency refers to how people determine personal behaviors within the immediate environment. Proxy agency involves asking others to behave for another person's benefit or to help with a desired outcome. Collective agency refers to how a group desires a common outcome and acts interdependently to reach the goal (Bergman et al., 2019). Each of these modes of agency is used daily by teachers who experience many interactions with students, parents, other teachers, and administrators. Figure 2 is a model showing the flow of how an individual's intentions feed into, and are influenced by, agentic modes and the environments to reach a desired outcome.

Figure 2

Model of Bandura's Agency and Triadic Reciprocal Causation
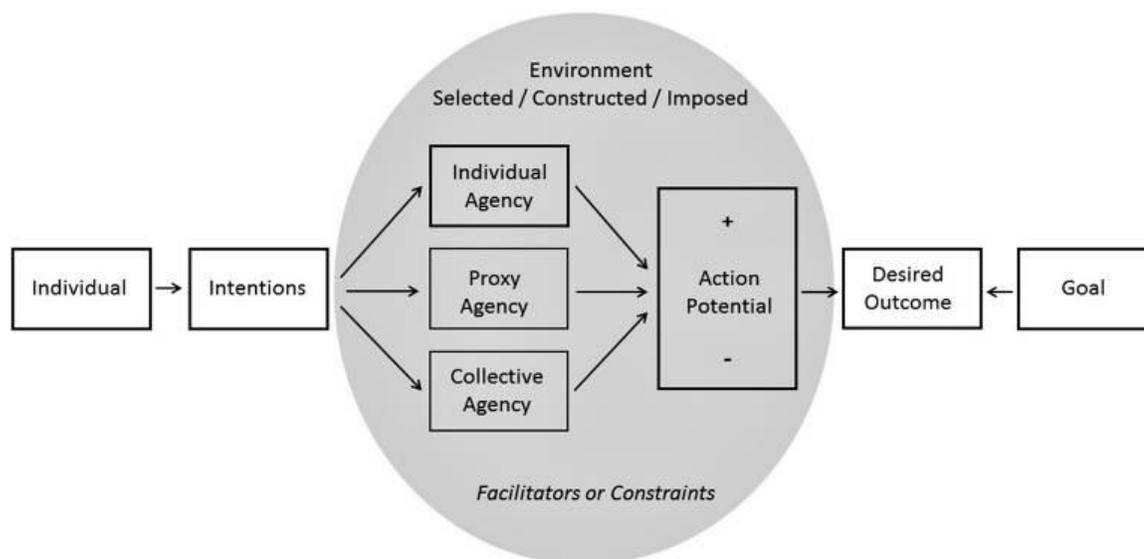
Note. An individual's intentions to reach a desired outcome are influenced by the agency of the individual and the potential action that will be constrained or facilitated by the environment (Bergman et al., 2019).

The four core properties of human agency are intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Intentionality suggests that people create intentions that include actions for realizing them. Most times, the actions include other people in some way and strive to achieve unity. Forethought encompasses more than just future plans; it requires an awareness of possible outcomes that inform or influence an individual's motivations. If an anticipated outcome is less than ideal, the individual will be less motivated to act. Conversely, if an anticipated outcome seems positive or pleasant, the motivation is increased. Next, self-reactiveness has to do with the individual's ability to make choices throughout the plan of action. It is not that people can just sit back and hope for the best, but that they can make appropriate choices that

positively impact the outcomes of actions. Finally, self-reflectiveness insists that individuals become aware of personal functioning. Being able to analyze or reflect upon personal behaviors allows one to make adjustments as necessary.

Social cognitive theory, according to Bandura (1986), provided the foundation from which the construct of teacher efficacy was developed. Within this theory, "human agency is embedded in a self-theory encompassing self-organizing, proactive, self-reflective and self-regulative mechanisms" (Bandura, 1999, p. 1). People do not operate autonomously, nor is their behavior solely based on the influence of the situation. What someone does is a product of the interplay of three types of determinants: interpersonal, behavioral, and environmental (Bandura, 1986). This is the case in every classroom. Teachers are continually faced with interpersonal interactions, not only with students but with parents and administrators as well. The innumerable decisions made on a daily basis concerning interactions, behavioral happenings, and environmental factors must be made quickly and with confidence. Bandura (2009) later went on to include an element of agency that ties together self-efficacy and the capacity to impact one's environment. Teachers who have reported high levels of efficacy hold beliefs concerning teaching and student learning that alter decision-making with regard to planning, time spent with students, and creating learning experiences that positively impact student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

"Through cognitive self-regulation, humans can create visualized futures that tact on the present; construct, evaluate, and modify alternative courses of action to secure valued outcomes; and override environmental influences" (Bandura, 2006, p. 1). The beliefs held by the teacher concerning efficacy have an impact on student achievement,

and those beliefs can also influence, or be influenced by, the environment in which the teacher works. Social cognitive theory implies a causal relationship with an ability to develop competency and to regulate action. As teachers learn, knowledge is used to determine action. These actions are driven and molded by the knowledge and the affirmation or contradiction of the same knowledge (Bandura, 1986; Zee & Kooman, 2016). For example, one might determine to act upon a new concept by asking a question. If others are offended or seem insulted by the question, the individual would not ask a question during the next interaction concerning the concept. "The cognitive capacities of human beings enable them to profit much more extensively from experience than if they functioned as unthinking organisms" (Bandura, 1999, p. 25). The question then arises, what knowledge can be used to increase the self-efficacy for teachers in schools?

Teacher Efficacy Construct

From Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and his work with human behavior, the concept of teacher efficacy was derived. Teacher efficacy is a teacher's belief in their capacity to affect student performance and is called the sense of efficacy (Coladarci, 1992). This concept envelops the ability of the teacher to "process, weigh, and integrate diverse sources of information concerning their capability, and regulate their choice behavior and effort expenditure accordingly" (Bandura, 1986, p. 212). When teachers are processing, weighing, and integrating elements of efficacy information within the environment, Bandura (1993) presented two concepts that are present: outcome expectations and efficacy expectations. Outcome expectations have to do with the individual's estimate that a certain behavior will lead to certain outcomes. Efficacy expectations deal with the individual's belief that they can provide the behavior required

to produce the expected outcome.

Bandura (1993) stated that an individual's activity is influenced by a personal sense of efficacy and that sense will also dictate how much time and effort will be expended on the activity. Bandura (1993) defined self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capability to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p. 1). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) defined efficacy as a teacher's "capability to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task" (p. 233). Both suggested that the stronger the sense of self-efficacy a person experiences, the more effort will be provided, even in difficult situations. The lower the sense of self-efficacy, the less effort or time will be provided. Coladarci (1992) stated, however, that just because a person believes that certain behaviors will create certain outcomes, if they have doubts about personal ability in performing the behaviors, the probability of the desired outcome decreases.

Teacher self-efficacy has an effect on behavior, goals, expectations of outcomes, and perceptions of roadblocks from structural factors dealing with social standing. Teachers who have the perception that success is within reach will be more highly likely to reach the goals of a task due to the fact that highly efficacious persons embrace challenges, persevere through difficulty, are optimistic in the face of adversity, and develop mechanisms for managing stress (Bandura, 1999).

Over time, there has been much research on teacher self-efficacy and the ways it might affect outcomes within the classroom. Zee and Kooman (2016) reported that Bandura's work has been complemented by later investigators and that self-efficacy "not only affects behaviors and actions but also thoughts and feelings" (p. 985). "Such

personal emotions and cognitions are believed to inform and alter future teacher self-efficacy beliefs and accompanying behaviors, which, in turn, affect both the classroom environment and student performance" (Goddard et al., 2004, as cited by Zee & Kooman, 2016, p. 985). With the achievement of students being so strongly affected by a teacher's sense of self-efficacy, it is essential that principals determine how to positively impact teacher self-efficacy by exhibiting behaviors and actions that support that belief. Figure 3 shows Zee and Kooman's (2016) model of teacher self-efficacy in relation to classroom procedures, academic adjustment, and teacher well-being.

Figure 3

Model of Zee and Kooman's Efficacy Relationships
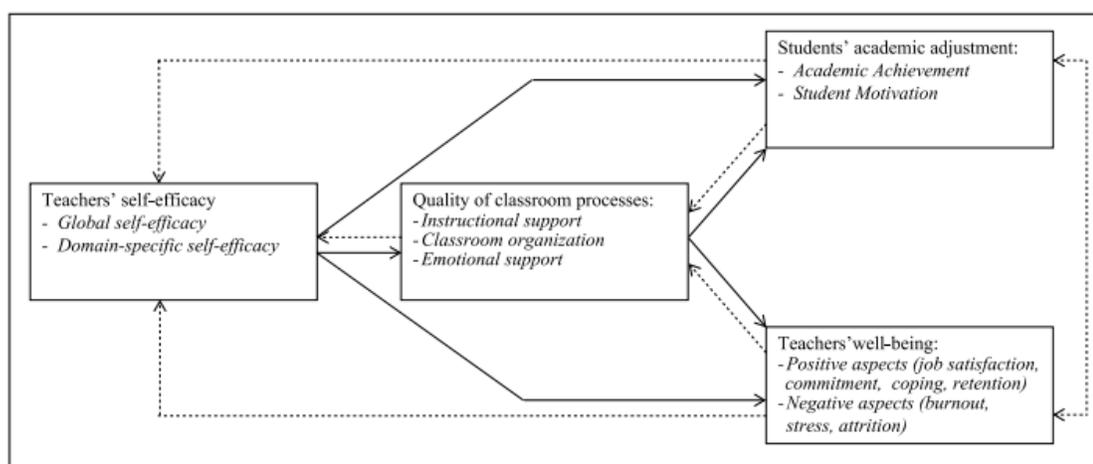
Note. Model of Zee and Kooman's (2016) teacher self-efficacy in relation to classroom procedures, academic adjustment, and teacher well-being. This conceptual model illustrates the process of how self-efficacy affects classroom processes and how those processes affect student achievement and motivation as well as teacher sense of well-being.

Having a higher sense of self-efficacy includes not only a myriad of possibilities

but also influences other facets of making decisions. Making decisions does not imply that the desired outcome will happen but that people who consider themselves highly efficacious would be more likely to give more effort or try multiple strategies to achieve the outcome wanted. Conversely, individuals who perceive themselves as having low efficacy would be more likely to attribute some type of failure as a lack of ability, which is demotivating (Bandura, 1999).

This study sought to examine if a difference exists in teacher sense of efficacy in an elementary school setting and teacher sense of efficacy in a middle school setting. Tschannen-Moran et al. (2006) found elementary teachers reported higher teacher efficacy than their counterparts who taught at the middle school or high school level.

Historical Trends

Leadership in any organization is the driving force behind the success or failure of that organization. In a school, the principal is that force. The style and behaviors exhibited by the principal set the stage for how that school will operate (Barnett, 2016). It is imperative for the principal to be well-versed in working with adult learners as well as students. The role of principal has changed over the past decades. In the early 1800s, schools that previously had one individual in charge who answered to the community grew larger, and the position of "principal teacher" (Kafka, 2009, p. 321) was created. Kafka (2009) reported that this principal teacher was most often a man. He was given administrative duties to keep the school in order such as maintaining proper discipline, assigning classes, attendance, and maintenance. "As the century progressed, the principal teacher eventually lost any teaching responsibility and became primarily a manager, administrator, supervisor, instructional leader, and increasingly a politician" (Kafka,

2009, p. 321). "As urban populations and local school enrollments grew in the mid to late 19th century, many school superintendents in urban areas including Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati and New York began to delegate responsibilities to individuals in school buildings" (Reagan, 2015, p. 26; Pierce, 1935). Nearing the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the duties related to teaching began to disappear, and the principalship evolved into an administrative role in charge of supervising teachers, providing training, and managing the school (Reagan, 2015). As the formalization of the principal's role continued to evolve, superintendent duties became more bureaucratic, and the need to delegate more responsibilities to the school level leaders was present. Also, organizations such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) were created in the early 20th century to assist in the professionalization of the job (NAESP, n.d.).

In the 1920s to 1930s, principals were seen as both the spiritual and scientific leaders, since both the church and scientific community played important roles in society (Kafka, 2009). As the 1940s passed with World War II and the fears of rising communism, the role of principal was even more elevated because they were seen as even more democratic leaders (Kafka, 2009). Finally, throughout the rest of the 20th century, the framework of the principalship developed into a form that is very much like the role today (Reagan, 2015).

Hallinger (2005) reported that the role of the school principal has changed over time. No longer is it the top-down authority, but now it is a leader who can motivate and encourage students and teachers to move beyond the confines of the classroom to transform the school into a learning place that promotes growth.

The basis for looking at leadership lies with what the research says about the development of leadership theory and the trends associated with that theory. There have been several theories that impact the leadership idea, and there have also been changes over time in what is deemed to be effective leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The style of leadership is dependent on the organization and the needs of the members as well as the disposition of the leader himself (Hall & Hord, 2015). In a school, the most common styles of leadership include instructional leadership, transformational leadership, democratic versus autocratic leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. These styles are evident in the behaviors of the principal and what he does on a regular basis to support his leadership style (Lynch, 2016b). These behaviors have an impact on the efficacy of each teacher in the classroom. Teachers with positive self-efficacy who are goal oriented and positive need to be encouraged to reflect on their practice in order to become even more effective (Zee & Kooman, 2016). The school principal may not directly impact the achievement of each student; but by the behaviors they exhibit, teacher efficacy is affected, thus indirectly impacting student achievement (Leithwood & Levin, 2005).

Leadership Styles

Though many leadership styles have been studied at length over the years, no particular style is exclusive to any leader. There are qualities of several styles within each leader depending on the situation and environment (Cherry, 2019; Hall & Hord, 2015; Lynch, 2016b). When considering the construct of teacher self-efficacy, there are many factors that contribute to teacher sense of efficacy. The style of leadership is one factor that has an impact on the confidence level of teachers. "By having the power as 'supervisor' or boss does not automatically place you on a pedestal as a leader. Leaders

motivate their followers to set high, attainable standards that result in successful product outcomes" (Steltz, 2010, p. 1). Leadership has innumerable facets and characteristics. The ability to facilitate collaboration by creating a common purpose and developing a shared vision or sense of direction are crucial elements to being an effective leader (Boudett & City, 2016; Fullan, 2001; Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Hall & Hord, 2015). Understanding the needs and concerns of followers and using the expertise of the group also make for an effective leader (Drago-Severson, 2009; Fullan, 2001; Graham & Ferriter, 2010). In today's schools, problem-solving and decision-making are cornerstone characteristics of what it takes to be a principal. Being able to motivate the unmotivated (Collins, 2005), provide leadership roles to members who are ready (Drago-Severson, 2009), listen without commitment, and provide guidance and direction are key components of being the school leader (Drago-Severson, 2009; Graham & Ferriter, 2010). There are numerous leadership styles that have been studied in order to find the most effective way to increase a desired outcome. By reviewing existing literature, several prevailing leadership styles have been studied extensively and have characteristics that are prevalent in each style. Since styles can overlap or coexist, this study moves beyond the leadership style and looks toward leadership practices.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership involves the leader being the "lead learner" (Hoerr, 2015, p. 84). Leaders who are deemed instructional leaders are well-versed in the teaching and learning within the school building and feel confident offering support and suggestions regarding the content. Hoerr (2015) went on to say that lead learner does not mean the principal knows the most; but rather, it means "they believe their job is to ensure that

good teaching routinely takes place in every classroom" (p. 84). This is done through modeling, being a constant presence in the hallways and classrooms, and being legitimately concerned about what takes place in the classroom. "Instructional leaders provide clarity, support, and resources for teachers to identify the point in instruction and in students' learning, thereby increasing effective teaching" (Adams, 2016, para. 12). The instructional leader knows there is no one-size-fits-all program or practice but encourages best practices regarding current situations within each classroom as well as the school as a whole.

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership involves team members in making decisions, even though the leader continues to have the final say. Leaders encourage members to be creative and are many times engaged with the members in projects and activities. Democratic leaders enjoy highly collaborative organizations and have a "What do you think?" kind of attitude as reported by Gupta (2016). Democratic, or distributed leadership, does not mean that the principal simply delegates the responsibility to others. Timerley (2011) stated that it involves interacting with teachers and creating an environment that has routine and structure as well as materials to promote learning. "The interesting thing about distributed leadership is that it already works with how most public entities handle their affairs" (Lynch, 2016a, para.12). This type of leadership focuses on tasks that need to be accomplished by the group rather than on an individual.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership is needed when changes are required and a clear direction is necessary. Gupta (2016) stated that the autocratic or authoritative leader leads the team in

one direction and is self-confident and empathetic. Being one of the least popular management styles, autocratic leaders care very little about the input or ideas from the followers, and an autocratic leadership has one sole ruler (Mulder, n.d.). Mulder (n.d.) reported, "after employees have worked for an autocratic leader for years…it's difficult for them to get used to a different leadership style. The will initially be suspicious of a participatory leader" (para. 7).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership is a style that is hands off. The team members are decision makers, and the leader mostly delegates what things get completed. Cherry (2019) reported that the characteristics of a laissez-faire leadership style include very little guidance from the leader, complete freedom of followers, leader provided tools and resources, the expectation that group members solve the problems themselves, and that the leader still takes responsibility for group actions and decisions. However, this type of leadership style can be beneficial for both the leader and the team if the team members are experts and highly motivated (Cherry, 2019).

With many leadership styles, it is important to note that the styles themselves are not rigid, and not many individual leaders fall exactly into one style. With the changing demands of what is needed during the course of a school day, characteristics on display by the leader may tend to shift from style to style. "Different forms of leadership are described in the literature using adjectives such as 'instructional,' 'participative,' 'democratic,' 'transformational,' 'moral,' 'strategic' and the like. But these labels primarily capture different stylistic or methodological approaches" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 6). By examining practices that could envelop many different styles, leaders can

determine generalizable practices that are predictable to employees and could increase leadership effectiveness (Barnett, 2016).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders use the power of language and imagery to influence the feelings of those they are leading, according to Lynch (2016a). This type of leader tries to inspire followers by making them feel important to the group and part of the decision-making process. This style requires charisma and energy and deals with the emotions of people while trying to motivate them. Lynch (2016a) went on to say, "transformational leadership is so powerful that research has shown that transformational leaders are appreciated around the world" (para. 8). Transformational leaders are those who can assess the culture of the organization and act accordingly (Hall & Hord, 2015). Transformational leaders use clear communication to build trust, offer support, and strengthen relationships. Identifying human resources as the most important resource the organization can have, the transformational leader understands the developmental needs of the members and creates opportunities for growth (Drago-Severson, 2009). Transformational leaders also are aware of the daily happenings within the organization. They are interested in how people do their jobs and what problems or concerns exist within the workplace. The transformational leader must attend to people's needs by creating an inspiring vision, motivating members to buy in to the vision, building trust-based relationships, and providing a model through personal accomplishments and consistent character (Lynch, 2016b).

Exemplary Leadership Practices

Kouzes and Posner (2017) created the leadership practices model based on

analysis of thousands of case studies. From those analyses, they then developed an instrument called the LPI. This quantitative instrument was used to measure the identified leadership behaviors from the case studies as well as millions of survey responses (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The five practices of exemplary leadership framework include Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). To model the way, leaders show the example or live out the expectation of the behaviors they expect from others. Modeling the way includes building consensus among members around the guiding principles wanted to operate the organization. The principles or values must be clearly defined and lived out with integrity. Inspiring a shared vision follows the same premise. When leaders articulate their dreams and aspirations for the organization, they engage others in connecting their own dreams to the aspirations of the group in order to create the shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Challenging the process includes thinking beyond the present and searching for ways to improve their work and the work of the team. It involves taking risks and being vulnerable. Enabling others to act entails utilizing the talents and traits of the whole team. One key word in enabling others is empower. Great leaders "strengthen everyone's capacity with shared goals and shared roles that bind people together in collaborative pursuits" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 5). To encourage the heart, effective leaders share the spotlight and any credit given for a job well done. They make sure team members believe in their hearts that what they do matters. By providing support and appreciation to the members, leaders send the message that they are essential for the job they do and who they are as individuals.

Model the Way

The exemplary practice of model the way is comprised of two integral parts: clarifying values by finding one's voice and affirming shared values, and setting the example by aligning actions with shared values (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). To find one's voice, it is essential to be able to articulate what is important and what drives the engine. Being reflective enough to determine a personal philosophy and sharing that honestly with the members of the organization are paramount in modeling the way. Also, the leader must be able to identify and build upon shared values (Graham & Ferriter, 2010). Values are enduring; and an effective leader has strong, understood values. Effective leaders understand differences among people and can respond to others accordingly as situations might arise. Kouzes and Posner (2017) stressed the importance of saying things with one's own words. It is difficult to have followers if the leader is unknown. A leader cannot just say what everyone else is saying, because the followers will not be able to know who they are following. People do not follow a technique or a program; people follow a leader. It is essential that a leader find the voice that expresses authenticity and confidence. Modeling the way also includes clarifying and affirming shared values. Working relationships are founded on shared values (Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Hall & Hord, 2015). According to Kouzes and Posner (2017), shared values are the foundation for building productive and genuine working relationships (p. 61). Rath (2008) identified relationship building, one of his four domains of leadership strength, as the "glue that holds a team together" (p. 25). Being able to model the way begins with clarifying values. In order to do that, a leader must identify and articulate personal values, allow others to articulate what values are held within the organization, and build consensus on the values

that are agreed upon (Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Setting the example for others to follow is another component of modeling the way. Consistently reacting and acting with the agreed-upon values from the team is essential. Asking purposeful questions and providing opportunities for leadership and others exemplify great leadership (Drago-Severson, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Inspire a Shared Vision

Exemplary practice number two, inspire a shared vision, consists of envisioning the future by imagining possibilities and enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to their shared aspirations (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Leaders who are considered exemplary are forward-looking. Being able to imagine future possibilities for the organization is paramount in being able to inspire followers. A belief that the organization or school can aspire to higher feats of accomplishment is one that will stir within members the desire to be a part of that work. A vision is a projection of fundamental beliefs about what can happen, according to Kouzes and Posner (2017). The ability to envision the future has a "tremendous impact on people's motivational levels and workplace productivity" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 99).

Hall and Hord (2015) iterated that developing a shared vision is needed in order for a leader to build trust within the organization and to create buy-in from constituents. Graham and Ferriter (2010) also noted the importance of a shared purpose to see what the organization could become. Being able to look forward and see the potential of the school has magnetic power for those employees working in the school. The future success of the organization allows employees to maintain focus on what could be, rather than the task at hand or even the current coworkers (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). To successfully and

effectively see a clear vision for the future, a leader must be driven by passion and beliefs (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Also, the leader must reflect on the past while paying attention to what is happening right now. Doing so requires the involvement of others within the organization and listening to other ideas (Graham & Ferriter, 2010).

"Enlisting others is all about igniting passion for a purpose and moving people to persist against great odds. To make extraordinary things happen in organizations, you have to go beyond reason, engaging the heart" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 119). Great leaders appeal to common ideals. To be more effective as a leader, one must speak to the nuances of the individual organization. For followers to become more proud to be part of something extraordinary, leaders have to make the vision of the future alive by breathing life into the ideals. Using energy and positive language to create enthusiasm, leaders must be convinced of the power that rests within shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Challenge the Process

Exemplary practice three, challenge the process, involves searching for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve and experimenting and taking risks by consistently generating small wins and learning from experience. The most effective leaders are willing and open to receiving ideas from anywhere. Meeting new challenges and taking initiative are characteristics of a leader who is willing to challenge the process. Kouzes and Posner (2017) reported that leaders are seen as more effective when they take initiative. Not only do effective leaders take initiative, but taking initiative is encouraged among every member of the organization. Hall and Hord (2015) suggested that leaders provide continuous assistance while change is happening within an organization. Searching for opportunities means that

routine procedures are less important than innovative thinking.

The change-seeking leader must understand what gives meaning and purpose to the work. Fullan (2001) stated that understanding the change process will allow leaders and members to take risks and manage conflicts. Creating the opportunities for small successes and encouraging meaningful progress are ways for a leader to set achievable goals within a larger initiative. Understanding the ways of knowing within each team member will allow the leader to emphasize how personal accomplishments from each person benefits the risk taking of the organization (Drago-Severson, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The effective leader who challenges the process is willing to make it safe for people to take risks and experiment with how to do things better and to discuss lessons learned.

Enable Others to Act

Enabling others to act is exemplary practice four and consists of fostering collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships as well as strengthening others by increasing self-determination and developing competence. Creating a climate of trust enables leaders and members to be dependent on each other to share the workload. "People who are trusting are more likely to be happy and psychologically adjusted than are those who view the world with suspicion and distrust" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 198). If trust is the norm, team members and leaders are able to work together to make decisions more efficiently and can communicate necessary adjustments as necessary (Fullan, 2001; Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Hall & Hord, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) explained that help, support, trust, openness, collective reflection, and collective efficacy are the driving forces of collaborative cultures. The

culture of trust is undergirded by the concern shown from the leader to the members of the group as well as the success of the organization. By demonstrating empathy and listening actively, leaders show sincere interest in how people are doing (Glickman et al., 2018; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Teachers with high-quality leader relationships have more positive perspectives on climate and also exhibit more cooperative, collaborative attitudes (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989). Kouzes and Posner (2017) stated that exemplary leaders understand the idea that the work cannot be done alone. Making extraordinary things happen takes a team of people enveloped in trust and sharing common values and ideals. Collaboration can be sustained with trust and an understanding of the needs of others.

Strengthening self-determination and confidence creates a climate in which people are more engaged in the work they do and also increases "people's beliefs in their ability to make a difference" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 220). Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) asserted,

> Leaders value teachers' ideas, seek input from teachers, engage teachers in decision making, trust teachers' professional judgment, support and reward risk taking and innovative ideas designed to improve student achievement, and reinforce the sharing of ideas and effective practices among all staff. (p. 84)

By providing an atmosphere in which teachers feel the freedom to take initiative, leaders are able to raise productivity. Offering choice in decision-making and sharing of information builds competence and actually fosters accountability (Marzano et al., 2005).

Encourage the Heart

Exemplary practice five, encourage the heart, embraces the recognition of

contributions and showing appreciation for individual excellence; also celebrating the

values and victories by creating a spirit of community. To recognize the contributions of

others, leaders must expect the best from the members of the team and recognize the

efforts of each individual. Great leaders are able to inspire others to reach higher

expectations by communicating the expectations and sincerely believing that members

can reach the goals. Kouzes and Posner (2017) posited that the highest level of

performance cannot be realized unless the leader lets people know by word and deed that

it can be achieved; social psychologists refer to this as the "Pygmalion Effect" (p. 251).

Exemplary leaders can bring out the best in their people by finding existing potential and

building on that (Collins, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). While searching for the hidden

potential, exemplary leaders share clear goals and rules in order for constituents to

understand what framework to perform in and what the expected outcomes are (Hall &

Hord, 2015). Another pillar of encouraging the heart is to provide and seek meaningful

feedback (Boudett & City, 2016; Drago-Severson, 2009; Graham & Ferriter, 2010;

Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Marzano et al., 2005). This feedback could give members a

more positive outlook and provides motivation to foster energy and drive. Strong leaders

are able to recognize the contributions of the team members and how individual

contributions support the vision and values of the organization (Tschannen-Moran &

Gareis, 2015).

In order to celebrate the small victories along the way while reaching for

extraordinary outcomes, great leaders create a sense of community and are personally

involved in the social aspect of the organization. "When social connections are strong and

numerous, there is more trust, reciprocity, information flow, collective action, and

happiness" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 273). Exemplary leaders set the example by building relationships within the organization and strengthening relationships by creating a strong sense of community and family. The use of stories about individuals who have reached the expectations of the group after extra effort is a great way to enhance personal connections.

Leadership is a relationship (Boudett & City, 2016; Collins, 2005; Drago-Severson, 2009; Fullan, 2001; Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Hall & Hord, 2015). Beginning with a relationship is the foundation for a successful organization. The day-to-day interactions between the principal and teachers are the stepping-stones to how the school culture will be established and maintained. "A successful school…is a collegial school—characterized by purposeful adult interactions about improving schoolwide teaching and learning" (Glickman et al., 2018, p. 6).

Related Research

Leadership and Student Achievement

Research in the field of school leadership and its effects on student achievement is extensive. Many studies have been conducted, and findings have been reported that leadership is extremely important in the climate, morale, achievement, and overall culture of the school building (Boudett & City, 2016; Brennan & Ruairc, 2019; Glickman et al., 2018; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Leadership plays a vital role in the success or failure of the school (Marzano et al., 2005).

The context of the school, with regard to socioeconomic status or ethnic differences, both enables and constrains what leaders do and how they perform their duties (Brennan & Ruairc, 2019). Researchers have found that principals are fundamental

when it comes to an impact on student achievement (Bellibas & Liu, 2017). What a principal does regularly and the responses given to individuals throughout the workday provide the foundation for better working relationships and increased student achievement (Hall & Hord, 2015; Rath, 2008). Branch et al. (2013) stated, "highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year" (para. 3).

Leadership and Teacher Efficacy

Many researchers agree that principals are major contributors to student achievement, though indirectly. The indirect involvement comes from the decisions made concerning structures, policies, processes, and teachers (Bellibas & Liu, 2017). In dealing with teachers and classrooms many times daily, the influence of the leader plays a key role in the social survival of the culture of each school and the efficacy of the teachers (Brennan & Ruairc, 2019). Bandura (2009) reported that "self-efficacy beliefs affect whether people think productively, pessimistically, or optimistically and in self-enacting or self-debilitating ways" (p. 185). Teacher self-efficacy has been widely studied as an independent variable, and it has been found to be a predictor of burnout, job stress, motivation, job satisfaction, student management and control, use of teaching strategies, and other factors within the school setting (Bellibas & Liu, 2017).

> Along with quality leadership and teachers' sense of being able to make a difference in their students' learning, trust between principals and teachers and among the stakeholders of their schools becomes an important factor that should not be taken for granted. (Azodi, 2006, p. 2)

Trust is an attribute of leaders that is prevalent in much of the research on successful

leadership (Drago-Severson, 2009; Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Hall & Hord, 2015). Since principals interact with teachers in a myriad of ways and ideally on a regular basis, those interactions have an impact on teachers. Marzano et al. (2005) asserted that school leaders should understand the value of the teachers in the building and create a culture that would support and connect people by providing skills, knowledge, and resources needed for student success. How principals do that is an important component of the culture of the school. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) stated that the principal's behavior has a major influence on the tone and climate of the school; the principal carries the greatest responsibility for the culture of the school. Principals who choose to establish a culture in which teachers are satisfied with the leader are willing to invest more time and effort (Leithwood & Levin, 2005).

Student Achievement in Elementary School Versus Middle School

Although research has been conducted on teacher efficacy at different levels of schooling, there still exists a difference in achievement concerning grade configuration from elementary to middle school. Byrnes and Ruby (2007) stated that a difference exists between student achievement in a K-8 school and a traditional middle school enrolling students in Grades 6-8. Alvord (2019) reported, "elementary schools and teachers tend to be more supportive and task-oriented in their teaching" (para. 5). The transition to middle school from elementary school occurs at a time that coincides with major developmental changes in the life of early adolescents (Alvord, 2019). "Entry into middle school marks a period of potential change and adjustment. Students typically experience a constellation of developmental changes as they approach early adolescence, which can be complicated for some students to navigate" (Lane et al., 2015, p. 1). With that in mind, schools,

teachers, and principals must be prepared to do everything possible to combat possible barriers to student achievement. One study showed that student scores with a positive achievement trajectory in reading and math from Grades 3-5 drop dramatically as they enter middle school (West & Schwerdt, 2012). "For the last two decades, education researchers and developmental psychologists have been documenting changes in attitudes and motivation as children enter adolescence, changes that some hypothesize are exacerbated by middle-school curricula and practices" (Rockoff & Lockwood, 2010, para. 4). Rockoff and Lockwood (2010) went on to say that when students move to middle school, their achievement on standardized tests in reading and math falls substantially when compared to students who attended a K-8 school.

With the wealth of information regarding how principal leadership impacts teacher sense of self-efficacy and the plethora of research supporting the finding that higher teacher efficacy leads to higher student achievement, there is limited, if any, research comparing the leadership practices in middle school to the leadership practices in elementary school and how those practices impact teacher efficacy.

Summary

The effect of leadership on how teachers perform is crucial to understand if leaders are to assist in affecting student achievement. Educational researchers realize the importance of teacher efficacy and its impact on how students perform (Tejeda-Delgado & Carmen, 2009). Social cognitive theory is the base theory for teacher efficacy. Bandura (1999) reported the significant impact teacher self-efficacy has on student achievement and how the triadic reciprocal causation of cognitive, affective, and biological factors affect efficacy (Klassen, 2015). How people think, what is believed and valued, and the

environmental components of an individual have an impact on behaviors exhibited.

Building on the social cognitive theory, Bandura (1986) developed the efficacy construct supporting teacher sense of confidence in what is done each day in the classroom. Research suggests that strategies and pedagogical practices that effectively prepare principals to support development of adults includes building relationships, teaming, providing opportunities for growth, and trust (Drago-Severson, 2009). With that development, classroom management and classroom practices involving higher level thinking strategies increase (Tejeda-Delgado & Carmen, 2009).

The exploration regarding leadership styles helps principals determine what can increase teacher efficacy. It is not only imperative to consider who is leading the way but also how the leader is behaving (Lynch, 2016a). However, with the innumerable situational changes that occur daily with regard to the role of a principal, fitting into one leadership style category is almost impossible. Realizing the fact that efficacious teachers positively impact student achievement, it would be beneficial for principals to determine what behaviors or practices increase the efficacy of teachers.

Kouzes and Posner (2017) presented five exemplary leadership practices that have been studied for decades and have the most positive impact on the constituents of an organization. The literature review concludes with a discussion of the exemplary practices and how the LPI was developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002). The five practices are Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017), leaders who engage in the five practices more frequently see the impacts in "creating higher performing teams, fostering renewed loyalty and greater organizational commitment,

enhancing motivation, promoting high degrees of student and teacher involvement in schools, and reducing absenteeism and turnover" (p. 22).

Chapter 3 provides a thorough discussion of the quantitative methodology chosen for this study. It includes the rationale for the choice of using quantitative measures as well as the definition of the method. Data collection and analysis procedures are also explained along with how those procedures are aligned with each research question.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of elementary and middle school principals and to determine how these practices related to teacher efficacy and student achievement in a western North Carolina school district. The study also compared the derived results from elementary school data with those of middle school data to determine if a difference existed between principal behaviors and teacher efficacy. This quantitative study gives principals the opportunity to evaluate personal leadership practices and how those practices influence teacher efficacy. Since the teacher is considered the single most important factor to student success (Walker & Slear, 2011), higher teacher efficacy leads to higher student achievement (Bandura, 1993, p. 1). The leadership practices were measured based on Kouzes and Posner's (2002) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership using the LPI. Teacher efficacy was measured using the TSES Long Form (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Effective principals are an essential part in the successful operations of a school. Alvoid and Black (2014) reported that today's principal has to be in charge of the normal operations, safety, instruction, team-building, and creating an environment that fosters growth among staff members. Empowering teachers, celebrating success, collaborating, and listening are key to creating such an environment (Teacher Efficacy, 2018). Leithwood et al. (2004) made an important claim: "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5). Leithwood et al. also stated that successful leaders strengthen the school's culture and build collaborative processes.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), quantitative methods such as determinism suggest that examining the relationships between and among variables is central to answering questions through surveys. Quantitative research methods are either experimental, in which subjects are measured before and after a treatment, or descriptive, in which subjects are measured once to determine relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, descriptive statistics were used to determine the relationship between exemplary leadership practices (modeling the way, inspiring a vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart) and teacher efficacy which is grouped into three categories: student engagement, effective instruction, and classroom management.

Setting

The setting of the study was a rural county in Western North Carolina that consists of one prekindergarten program center, 10 elementary schools, three middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, one alternative learning center for middle and high school students, and one early college high school. The district services approximately 8,000 students enrolled in Grades Prekindergarten through 12 at 19 school sites. The study focused solely on elementary and middle schools. Within the county, School District A includes three elementary schools that feed one middle school. School District B also includes three elementary schools that feed one middle school. Finally, School District C includes four elementary schools that feed one middle school. All schools involved were Title I schools, meaning that at least 50% of the students are in the economically disadvantaged category.

Participants

Participants included 12 school principals: nine elementary and three middle. The principals included seven females and six males, with principal experience ranging from 2 years to 20 years. The teachers included in the study were more diverse as a population including males, females, Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Of approximately 440 teachers included in the study, teaching experience ranged from first-year teachers to veteran teachers with more than 30 years of experience. Table 2 presents the number of teachers by level and the range of experience within each level.

Table 2

Number of Teachers by Level Including Years of Experience

School level	Number of teachers	Range of teaching experience
Elementary	274	1 to 32 years
Middle	163	1 to 30 years

Formal permission to conduct the study was granted by the district superintendent (Appendix A). The principals granted their approval by signing an informational consent form (Appendix B). Teachers chose to participate or not by either completing the surveys or choosing not to. The number of participants responding to the survey was 198; however, only 173 completed the entire survey.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design for this study was a quantitative cross-sectional survey design in order to determine the relationship, if any, between the independent and dependent variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The survey instruments used included the TSES developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and the LPI developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002). The teacher survey for their building principal is called "The

Observer Survey." Each LPI consists of 30 items using a Likert scale. The surveys were

provided via email for participants due to the convenience and ease of data collection.

Formal permission to use the TSES came from the developer and is shown in Appendix

C. Formal permission to use the LPI came from the survey developers and is shown in

Appendix D.

Being able to derive data from these surveys allowed the researcher to determine

what relationship each of the five leadership practices has on each component of teacher

efficacy: efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy

in classroom management. Also, results were analyzed to determine if a difference exists

between the leadership practices in elementary school and leadership practices in middle

school. A survey design was chosen due to the beneficial aspects of a rapid turnaround

time for data collection and the economic advantages (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Figure 4 shows the sequence of research design, collection, analysis, and reporting.

Figure 4

Flow Chart Outlining the Sequence of Research Design, Collection, Analysis, and

Reporting

Permission granted by district superintendent for participation

Email sent to potentially participating principals asking for further permission within the school-principals will also complete the LPI Self

Teacher invitations sent via email for participation including approved letter detailing the study

For teachers choosing to participate, a link will be provided to complete the TSES then the LPI Observer

Data will be collected and analyzed regarding research questions

Results will be reported

Research Questions

In order to explore the impact of principal behaviors on teacher sense of efficacy and the ability to impact student achievement and any possible difference in the leadership practices between the elementary and middle school levels, the following research questions were explored:

1. To what extent is there a difference between elementary and middle school teacher efficacy?

2. To what extent is there a significant association between principal leadership

practices and teacher efficacy at the elementary and middle school levels?

Reliability

In order to ensure the LPI and TSES were measuring the intended constructs, it was important to gather evidence of reliability. In a study by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), reliability was measured for the Long Form on the TSES that was used in this research study. Cronbach's alpha should fall within the expected range determined by the instrument developers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Table 3 shows the reliabilities found.

Table 3

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Ratings for Long Form of TSES

	Mean	SD	alpha
TSES	7.1	.94	.94
Engagement	7.3	1.1	.87
Instruction	7.3	1.1	.91
Management	6.7	1.1	.90

The reliability information reported by Kouzes and Posner (2002) was derived from the Cronbach alpha coefficient. This measures the extent to which an instrument contains the possibility of measurement errors. The range for the LPI data is from .85 to .92. These data are considered to be strong in terms of reliability since any rating above .70 is considered reliable or good in most social science research (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The LPI consists of 30 questions/statements that address the five practices of exemplary leadership. Table 4 shows the Cronbach alpha coefficient ratings from the five subscales.

Table 4

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Ratings for Five Exemplary Practices from LPI

Exemplary practice	Cronbach alpha rating
Model the Way	.85
Inspire a Shared Vision	.92
Challenge the Process	.86
Enable Others to Act	.86
Encourage the Heart	.92

Table 4 shows all five ratings as strong, since they are all above .70. The strongest

reliability is shown for Inspiring a Shared Vision and Encouraging the Heart, with an

alpha rating of .92.

Validity

The basic definition of validity is provided as a simple statement and is reported

as a measure of the extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure

(Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, 2014). The TSES (Tschannen-

Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) has been examined by multiple correlations of the current

form and other measures of teacher efficacy. The results of the examinations indicate that

the TSES is valid and evidence is provided through the positive correlation with other

measures such as the Rand and Gibson and Dembo instruments (Tschannen-Moran &

Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Kouzes and Posner (2002) and other researchers for more than a decade have

consistently confirmed the validity of the LPI and the five practices of exemplary

leadership. "The research database for the LPI includes over 100,000 respondents"

(Helms, 2012, p. 62). Multitudes of interviews and carefully transcribed case studies from

various leaders concerning their leadership experiences have been conducted and

analyzed over years of research (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Measures

For this study, two measures were investigated: principal leadership and self-efficacy of teachers. Principal leadership was defined as a five-dimensional construct developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002) including Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Teacher self-efficacy was defined as a three-dimensional construct including efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management using the TSES developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001).

Principal Leadership Practices

The practice of Model the Way entails finding one's own voice and clarifying values while setting the example for members to follow. Team members must know the personal philosophy that motivates the leader to action. Having shared values that are articulated and revisited is an integral part of Model the Way (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

To Inspire a Shared Vision, the leader must be able to envision the future possibilities of the organization and enlist others within the organization to strive toward those possibilities. Defining and desiring the utmost success for the school and being able to create buy-in from group members are essential when inspiring a shared vision. Igniting the fire within team members for the purpose of reaching new heights for the organization will strengthen the possibilities of achieving great things (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Exemplary practice three, Challenge the Process, involves looking outside the regular confines of "business as usual" and seeks new and innovative ways to propel the

organization forward. Taking initiative and receiving ideas from many individuals or places are part of challenging the process. Taking risks and experimenting are encouraged from leaders who challenge the process, and every team member is emboldened to take initiative for the benefit of the organization while being supported by the leader (Hall & Hord, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Another exemplary practice measured by the LPI is Enable Others to Act. Enabling others involves building trust and relationships within an organization in order to strengthen self-determination and competence. Leaders who enable others to act demonstrate empathy and show interest in how people are doing. Exemplary leaders realize that work for the organization is not done in isolation but with a group that shares common ideals and vision (Glickman et al., 2018; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Finally, Encourage the Heart is the fifth dimension measured on the LPI. This practice is demonstrated by leaders who recognize the contributions from individuals and celebrate efforts made. Leaders who encourage the heart are able to inspire team members to reach for higher expectations and also sincerely believe that a higher level can be attained. By setting clear goals and parameters, exemplary leaders create a framework that allows success to be possible. Within that framework exists meaningful feedback and communication. A sense of community and family are components of encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, Marzano et al., 2005).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

One dimension measured on the TSES is efficacy in student engagement. Having the self-confidence that a teacher can keep students engaged involves the belief that one can make a difference in student engagement even under circumstances where other

factors could make achievement difficult. Scoring one's self higher in this dimension shows confidence in a teacher's own training and experiences that can impact motivation and achievement (Bandura, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Efficacy in instructional strategies, another dimension of the TSES, involves a teacher's self-confidence in the specific subject matter combined with the level of students included in the instruction, having the confidence in one's ability to teach when things do not go smoothly, and being able to ensure student learning in the face of obstacles within the classroom. Through planning and organization, high efficacious teachers are open to new instructional ideas and are willing to take risks (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Efficacy in classroom management includes a teacher's confidence in the ability to use positive strategies in order to increase desirable student behaviors within the classroom. These strategies include praise, encouragement, positive attention, and clear expectations. Teachers who score higher in the dimension of classroom management are less likely to be critical of students who make mistakes and are less likely to refer students to special education (Bandura, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The TSES Long Form is located in Appendix E.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in the study to measure principal practices was the LPI developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002). This scale consists of 30 statements based on a Likert scale of 1-10 points. The scoring on the scale ranges from 1, "almost never" participates in or exhibits the behavior, to 10, "almost always" participates in or exhibits the behavior. The complete frequency scale in which leaders exhibit a specific skill is:

1 = Almost Never

2 = Rarely

3 = Seldom

4 = Once in a While

5 = Occasionally

6 = Sometimes

7 = Fairly Often

8 = Usually

9 = Very Frequently

10 = Almost Always

The LPI is used to determine the extent to which principals use the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. These practices include Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The LPI provided data on each of the five components or practices, and each received an impact rating. The items on the LPI are located in Appendix F. Table 5 shows which items within the LPI are aligned with the five exemplary leadership practices.

Table 5

Alignment of Items with Leadership Practice

Leadership practice	Items aligned within LPI
Model the Way	1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26
Inspire a Shared Vision	2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27
Challenge the Process	3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28
Enable Others to Act	4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29
Encourage the Heart	5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30

To measure self-efficacy the TSES was created by Tschannen-Moran and

Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The Long Form, which consists of 24 questions, was used in this

study. Within the form, efficacy is divided into three subcategories: efficacy in student

engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management.

Each subsection includes eight questions measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1,

"None at all" to 9, "A great deal." Research suggests that with strong efficacy, teachers

are better planners, more resilient, and more supportive of students (Teacher Efficacy,

2018). The complete scale used to measure teacher sense of efficacy in each subsection

is:

1/2 = None at all

2/3/4 = Very Little

4/5/6 = Some Degree

6/7/8 = Quite A Bit

8/9 = A Great Deal

The TSES is used to measure a teacher's belief in their own capacity to make a

significant difference in student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The three subsections are aligned with specific items on the TSES Long Form. Table 6

shows the alignment of TSES items and the subsections of efficacy in student

engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management.

Table 6

Alignment of Items with TSES Subsections

TSES subsection	Items aligned within TSES
Efficacy in student engagement	1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
Efficacy in instructional strategies	7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
Efficacy in classroom management	3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

Since each of the surveys have subscales, each variable from each scale was

compared to each variable on the other scale. Table 7 shows how the variables were

compared.

Table 7

Comparison of Variables Between Scales/Surveys

Five exemplary practices	TSES subscale		
	A	B	C
Model the Way	Engagement	Instruction	Management
Inspire a Shared Vision	Engagement	Instruction	Management
Challenge the Process	Engagement	Instruction	Management
Enabling Others to Act	Engagement	Instruction	Management
Encourage the Heart	Engagement	Instruction	Management

Table 7 shows how the five independent variables (Model the Way, Inspire a

Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart;

Kouzes & Posner, 2002) were compared with the three dependent variables in columns

A, B, and C: efficacy in engagement, instruction, and classroom management.

Procedures for Recruitment and Participation

To recruit respondents for the surveys used in this study, the researcher used

email invitations, as approved by the district, to all certified staff members within the

participating middle and elementary schools. All elementary and middle schools were selected within the participating school district. A request was sent to each prospective participant with a link to each survey. Participation was encouraged, and the district superintendent approved the participation of principals and teachers within the district. The formal permission granted by the superintendent is located in Appendix A. A sample of the approval form of each principal from each school is located in Appendix B. Each principal was contacted by the researcher to inform them of the purpose of the study prior to any emails being sent to staff members. All 12 principals signed a consent form before teachers were asked to participate. Teachers and principals completed the surveys at a time that was convenient to them within the specified time frame for data collection. The survey window was open for 2 weeks. The online data collection was both cost and time effective in comparison to mailing surveys to participants at each school. Data were compiled electronically.

Data Collection

Data were collected, as mentioned, via an online email invitation to each potential participant. Two surveys were used, the TSES and the LPI, both of which use a Likert scale ranging from 1-9 and 1-10 respectfully. These surveys were consolidated into one platform to increase the ease of response effort from participants. Teachers who chose to participate responded to both surveys. Data collection via web-based platform was cost effective as well as convenient and timely (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Table 8 includes each research question along with the instrument used to measure responses from participants, the type of data collected, and the method that was used to analyze the data.

Table 8

Data Collection Plan Including Research Questions

Research question	Instrument	Data collected	Method of analysis
To what extent is there a difference between elementary and middle school teacher efficacy?	TSES Long Form	Likert responses from TSES ranging from 1-9	MANOVA
To what extent is there a significant association between principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy at the elementary and middle school levels?	LPI	Likert responses from LPI ranging from 1-10	Multivariate Multiple Regression

Table 8 shows each research question and how it is aligned with the instrument used to measure each construct for each question, how the data were collected, and the statistical method that was used to analyze the data.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan included a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and a multivariate multiple regression for the research questions respectively. For Research Question 1, a MANOVA was used to investigate if there are mean differences in TSES scores between elementary and middle school teachers. The independent variable in this model was the grouping variable (elementary or middle school) and the dependent variable was the mean score from the TSES. A *p* value of $< .05$ is considered to be statistically significant for the TSES.

For Research Question 2, two multivariate multiple regression analyses were used to test the predictive strength of LPI on TSES: one for elementary and one for middle school. The independent variables are the five LPI subsections (Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart;

Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The three dependent variables within the TSES are efficacy in engagement, instruction, and classroom management. SPSS version 26 was used for all statistical analyses. Additionally, all statistical assumptions required were conducted and reported. The r^2 values were then compared to see which model was more predictive. A p value of $< .05$ is considered to be statistically significant for the LPI.

Limitations

One limitation was the accuracy of the responses received from teachers (Observer) regarding their perceptions of principal effectiveness and whether the teachers would be honest when responding to the 30-question survey. If the teacher felt their identity would not be kept confidential, or that there could have been some way their responses would be shared, they might not have answered truthfully.

The second limitation was the researcher only gathered data from one district in the western region of North Carolina. This did not give a clear and complete picture of the alignment of perceptions between teachers and principals from across the state or nation.

A third limitation was the fact that the researcher would not include data from high schools in the research. Time and scope were factors that impeded the use of high school principals and teachers for this study. Therefore, results would not have been representative of any high school principals or teachers. Also, the scope of the study was focused on a single district due to time.

Delimitations

Delimitations for this quantitative study include the use of a single school district in western North Carolina. The choice of only middle school compared to elementary

school was due to the decrease in scores between the two levels that measured the same subjects using the End of Grade tests. High school was excluded because they do not administer the End of Grade tests.

Another delimitation is the choice to look at only leadership practices from principals as influencing factors. The results of this study could be generalizable to middle school principals or elementary principals. Also, the results could be generalizable to other counties within the surrounding region of western North Carolina.

Ethical Considerations

An informed consent page was included in the invitation email sent with a link to each survey explaining how the survey was voluntary and that participants could opt out at any time (see Appendix G). To maintain participant anonymity, the surveys did not include any identifying questions. Also, all data and findings were reported accurately and analyzed using statistical analyses. Language or words were unbiased in the reporting of data and findings. Results of the study were shared with the participating school district's superintendent and participating schools' principals.

Summary

Chapter 3 introduced the planned methodology for the study. The chosen method was a quantitative method using a survey design and was selected to answer the two research questions. The participants were identified as teachers and principals in a western county of North Carolina. Included in the sample were 12 principals and participating teachers from a pool of 140 middle school teachers and a pool of 301 elementary school teachers. Instrumentation included the teacher self-efficacy scale from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and the LPI Observer for teachers. These

instruments have been deemed reliable and valid. Data analysis was conducted using a

multivariate multiple regression. The multivariate multiple regression was used because

the survey instruments contain multiple independent variables as well as multiple

dependent variables. Limitations and delimitations of the study were reported.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of elementary and middle school principals and to determine how these practices relate to teacher self-efficacy in a western North Carolina school district. This research could be beneficial to principals and district personnel in determining what areas of professional development could be targeted to increase certain aspects of leadership in order to increase teacher efficacy. With differences in grade configuration from elementary school to middle school negatively impacting student achievement, it is important to determine the factors that could mitigate the barriers to increased student achievement (Dhuey, 2011; Lane et al., 2015).

Quantitative and demographic data were collected from teachers in the participating elementary and middle schools through an online survey sent via email. These data sought to measure teacher sense of self-efficacy and the perception each had about the leadership practices in each respective school.

Components measured by Part 1 of the survey included the three areas of teacher efficacy defined by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001): efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. Each area included eight questions on the TSES Long Form and used a Likert scale ranging from 1, "None at all" to 9, "A great deal." Research suggests that with strong efficacy, teachers are better planners, more resilient, and more supportive of students (Teacher Efficacy, 2018).

The components measured in Part 2 of the survey, identified as the Five Practices

of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2002), were Model the Way, Inspire a

Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Participants were asked to rank the frequency of the leadership for each of the 30

statements using a 10-point Likert scale. The Likert rating scale that was used for each

statement ranged from a score of 1, "Almost Never" to a score of 10, "Almost Always."

The higher ranking indicated more frequent use of the specific leadership behavior

exhibited by the principal. Chapter 4 provides results of the data collected through

statistical tests to explore the differing results from elementary schools and middle

schools.

Demographic Information of Respondents

In order to ensure the LPI and TSES were measuring the intended constructs, it

was important to gather evidence of reliability. Of the 198 respondents, 25 were excluded

due to the fact that they did not complete the entire survey. Cronbach's alpha fell within

the expected range determined by the instrument developers (Kouzes & Posner, 2002;

Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). Table 9 shows the reliabilities found.

Table 9

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Ratings for Long Form of TSES and LPI

	Respondents	N	a
TSES	173 (198)	24	.925
LPI	173 (198)	30	.971

Table 9 shows the Cronbach alpha coefficient ratings from the TSES and LPI.

This measured the extent to which an instrument contains the possibility of measurement

errors. These data are considered to be strong in terms of reliability since any rating

above .70 is considered reliable or good in most social science research (Kouzes &

Posner, 2002). The TSES consisted of 24 items that address the three tenants of teacher

self-efficacy. The LPI consisted of 30 questions/statements that address the five practices

of exemplary leadership.

Participants

      The research survey was sent to 440 teachers in elementary and middle schools in

the participating school district. Included in the survey were questions related to

demographic data in order to determine level of grades taught and years of teaching

experience. Table 10 shows the number of grade level respondents as well as the

percentage of each grade.

Table 10

Grade Level Respondents with Percentages

Grade level	Frequency	Percentage
Kindergarten	27	13.6%
First grade	20	10.1%
Second grade	25	12.6%
Third grade	22	11.1%
Fourth grade	19	9.6%
Fifth grade	26	13.1%
Sixth grade	17	8.6%
Seventh grade	17	8.6%
Eighth grade	25	12.6%
TOTAL	198	100%

      Table 10 shows the number of respondents for the survey sent via email.

Kindergarten had the most respondents with 27, and both sixth and seventh grades had

the fewest respondents with 17. The total number of elementary teachers responding was

139, while the total number of middle school teachers responding was 59.

      Another demographic question used to ensure that the range of teachers

responding was representative of the total population of prospective respondents was

years of teaching experience. Table 11 shows the ranges of teaching experience along with the number of teachers responding in each category as well as the percentage of each range.

Table 11

Years of Teaching Experience for Respondents with Percentages

Years of experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 years	19	9.6%
3-5 years	16	8.1%
6-10 years	30	15.2%
11-15 years	34	17.2%
16-20 years	44	22.2%
20+ years	55	27.8%
Total	198	100%

Table 11 shows the frequency and percentages of those teachers responding to the survey. The teachers who have taught for 3-5 years had the fewest number of respondents with 16 (8.1%), while the teachers who have been teaching for more than 20 years had the most respondents with 55 (27.8%).

Data Collection Procedures

The survey for this research study was sent via email to the participating schools consisting of nine elementary schools and three middle schools. The email contained the informed consent which explained the purpose of the study, explained the anonymity of each participant, and explained the option to not complete the survey if necessary. The email was sent to over 400 teachers, and 198 teachers responded at least partially to the survey. Of the 198 surveys started, there were 173 who completed the entire survey, which was a complete response rate of 39.3%. The survey window was open from May 31, 2020 to June 12, 2020. After the survey was completed, the data were exported into a

spreadsheet and entered into SPSS version 26 software for interpretation.

Research Questions

In order to explore the impact of principal behaviors on teacher sense of efficacy with the ability to impact student achievement and any possible difference in the leadership practices between the elementary and middle school levels, the following research questions were explored:

1. To what extent is there a difference between elementary and middle school teacher efficacy?

2. To what extent is there a significant association between principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy at the elementary and middle school levels?

Results

This study sought to determine if any relationship existed between the leadership practices of principals and the teacher self-efficacy ratings across elementary and middle schools in a rural area of North Carolina. Because there were multiple dependent as well as multiple independent variables, both a MANOVA and a multivariate multiple regression were used to answer the two research questions.

Research Question 1

For Research Question 1, a MANOVA was conducted to investigate if there were mean differences in TSES scores between elementary and middle school teachers. The independent variable in this model was the grouping variable (elementary or middle school), and the dependent variables were the mean scores from each category of the TSES: instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement.

The MANOVA results showed at least one univariate effect was significant,

$\Lambda = 0.954$, F(3, 169) = 2.732, p < .001; therefore, univariate tests were conducted. Table 12 shows descriptive statistics including the mean score for each category of the TSES, significance of each category between levels, the standard deviation from the mean, and the number of respondents.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for MANOVA – Elementary Versus Middle School

Category from TSES	Significance	Grade level	Mean score	Standard deviation	N
Efficacy in instructional strategies	.120	Elementary	58.26	6.8	121
		Middle	56.54	5.9	52
Efficacy in classroom management	.245	Elementary	57.66	6.5	121
		Middle	56.35	7.3	52
Efficacy in student engagement	.007	Elementary	54.63	6.7	121
		Middle	51.52	7.2	52

Table 12 shows mean scores similar in both elementary and middle schools with regard to each category of the TSES. However, the range of the mean scores in the category of efficacy in student engagement is broader that efficacy in instructional strategies and efficacy in classroom management. From the overall MANOVA, the results showed $\Lambda = .954$, (3, 169) = 2.732, $p < .045$; therefore, univariate tests were run. Univariate test results are based on each category of the TSES individually. Table 13 shows the results of the univariate tests including the category from the TSES, the mean difference, and the significance.

Table 13

Univariate Results of TSES Categories Comparing Elementary to Middle School

TSES category	Mean difference	Significance
Efficacy in instructional strategies	1.718	.120
Efficacy in classroom management	1.315	.245
Efficacy in student engagement	3.109	.007

Table 13 shows the results from the MANOVA conducted for the three categories of teacher efficacy to determine if there were mean differences. The multivariate test was found to be significant, $\Lambda = 0.954$, $F(3, 169) = 2.732$, $p < .045$. Overall, there was a significant mean difference in efficacy in student engagement between elementary teachers and middle school teachers, $F(1, 171) = 7.324$, $p = .007$. Conversely, there was no significant mean difference in efficacy in instructional strategies or efficacy in classroom management between elementary school teachers and middle school teachers.

Research Question 2

For Research Question 2, a multivariate multiple regression was used because there were multiple independent variables (leadership practices) and multiple dependent variables (teacher self-efficacy categories). The five leadership practices (Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart) were used as predictor variables. The multivariate multiple regression test did not show a significant relationship between the dependent variables of leadership practices and independent variables of teacher self-efficacy scores, $\Lambda = .623$, $F (3, 146) = 80.279$, $p > .05$. Table 14 shows the multivariate results from the SPSS version 26 software. There was no significant relationship between leadership practices and teacher self-efficacy.

Table 14

Multivariate Multiple Regression Results

LPI category	Λ	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Significance
Model the Way	.991	.454	3	146	.715
Inspire a Shared Vision	.987	.618	3	146	.604
Challenge the Process	.976	1.22	3	146	.305
Enable Others to Act	.970	1.50	3	146	.215
Encourage the Heart	.980	.998	3	146	.396

As shown in Table 14, there is no statistical significance in principal leadership behaviors predicting teacher sense of self-efficacy within the parameters of this study. The practice of Model the Way had a significance of $p = .715$, Inspire a Shared Vision had a significance of $p = .604$, Challenge the Process had a significance of $p = .305$, Enable Others to Act had a significance of $p = .215$, and Encourage the Heart had a significance of $p = .396$. All five variables had a $p > .05$.

Since there was no significant difference between the leadership practices and teacher self-efficacy, I decided to analyze the means of each leadership practice and how each compared to national norms to determine how the principals in the participating district were rated comparatively. Table 15 shows the mean scores for the five practices measured on the LPI for this study along with the mean from the LPI norming data (Posner, 2016).

Table 15

Mean LPI Score by Category and LPI Norm Mean

LPI category	Current study mean	Norm mean
Model the Way	48.31	47.12
Inspire a Shared Vision	47.78	44.21
Challenge the Process	47.66	45.17
Enable Others to Act	49.62	49.57
Encourage the Heart	47.91	46.31

According to the data in Table 15, teachers rated their principals relatively high for each category in the LPI. When compared to the normative data, the teachers in the participating district rated the principals higher than the norm in every category of leadership measured. The category with the highest mean score was Enable Others to Act. Enabling others to act includes relationship building and increasing competence among staff members (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Summary

For this study, there were two main findings. First, there was a significant statistical difference in teacher self-efficacy ratings for student engagement from elementary to middle school. Simply put, teachers in elementary school felt more confident in engaging students than their middle school counterparts, according to the TSES. Second, there was no statistical significance with regard to the five exemplary leadership practices predicting teacher self-efficacy ratings. In other words, teacher efficacy was not directly impacted by the reported practices of the school principal. Implications of findings and recommendations are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Summary

Overview

This research study was conducted for the purpose of examining leadership practices and their influence, if any, on teacher self-efficacy. The research was guided by two overarching research questions:

1. To what extent is there a difference between elementary and middle school teacher efficacy?

2. To what extent is there a significant association between principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy at the elementary and middle school levels?

This chapter offers a discussion of the results from the study. Implications for practice as well as recommendations for further research are presented.

Restatement of the Problem

Middle school students transitioning into a middle or junior high school have scored lower on standardized tests than elementary school students enrolled in K-5 or K-6 schools; and with differences in grade configuration negatively impacting student achievement, it is important to determine the factors that could mitigate the barriers to increased student achievement (Dhuey, 2011; Lane et al., 2015).

As students move to a middle school from the more supportive climate of elementary school, there is a myriad of student adjustments that coincide: a new environment, new goals, new expectations, more social stress with adolescence, and possibly multiple teachers (Alvord, 2019). With these changes taking place, the middle schoolers need educational experiences that are structured to meet the physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and moral needs of the students (Casky & Anfara,

2014). "For the last two decades, education researchers and developmental psychologists have been documenting changes in attitudes and motivation as children enter adolescence, changes that some hypothesize are exacerbated by middle-school curricula and practices" (Rockoff & Lockwood, 2010, p. 1).

According to Hirsch et al. (2007), research has consistently shown that teachers make a greater difference in student achievement than any other factor associated with schools. Similarly, Adams (2016) stated, "studies show that student achievement is directly related to the effectiveness of the classroom teacher" (para. 10). "There is a positive relationship between high levels of teacher efficacy and increased student achievement as well as a positive link between principal behavior and teacher efficacy" (Walker & Slear, 2011, para. 1). Montague-Davis (2017) reported that "school leaders play an important role in fostering the development of schools as learning organizations, since principal leadership practices determine the effectiveness of learning organizations as well as teacher perceptions of leader effectiveness" (p. 2). Likewise, having a strong instructional leader who models best practices will more likely see teachers enabling more active engagement in students, thus increasing student achievement (Quinn, 2002).

School leaders play a vital role in developing positive, learning organizations, and the practices they employ contribute to the overall effectiveness of the organization (Senge, 2006). "The dynamic school provides a positive learning climate for all students, and those positive learning climates possess a number of characteristics" (Glickman et al., 2018, p. 43). Characteristics that foster the best learning atmosphere, according to Glickman et al. (2018), include a safe environment, a deep moral tone, strong relationships, and a sense of empowerment. "Research over the last 35 years provides

strong guidance on specific leadership behaviors for school administrators and [those]

behaviors have well-documented effects on student achievement" (Marzano et al., 2005,

p. 7). Marzano et al. (2005) went on to say that academic achievement is dramatically

influenced by a highly effective school leader. Understanding that the morale of the

school is created and sustained by the administrator, that the morale is a barometer of

culture (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015), that culture influences teachers and their practice,

and finally that the teacher is the single most important factor in student achievement

(Walker & Slear, 2011), administrators must behave in ways that build the strongest

culture and climate possible. West and Schwerdt (2012) found, "suggestive evidence that

the overall climate for student learning is worse in middle schools than in schools that

serve students from elementary school through 8th grade" (pp. 5-6). The current study

sought to find the impact of leadership practices on teacher efficacy in elementary and

middle schools, and whether a difference of teacher efficacy existed between elementary

and middle.

Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative survey study was to examine the leadership

practices of elementary and middle school principals and to determine how these

practices relate to teacher efficacy in a western North Carolina school district. Data were

collected through a survey created in Qualtrics using two instruments: the LPI (Kouzes &

Posner, 2002) and the TSES Long Form (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The

results were analyzed and reported in Chapter 4 and will add to the body of research on

leadership practices and teacher efficacy. Figure 5 is a visual representation of the five

exemplary leadership practices and the impact they have on teacher self-efficacy.

Figure 5

Representation of the Impact of Leadership Practices on Teacher Efficacy
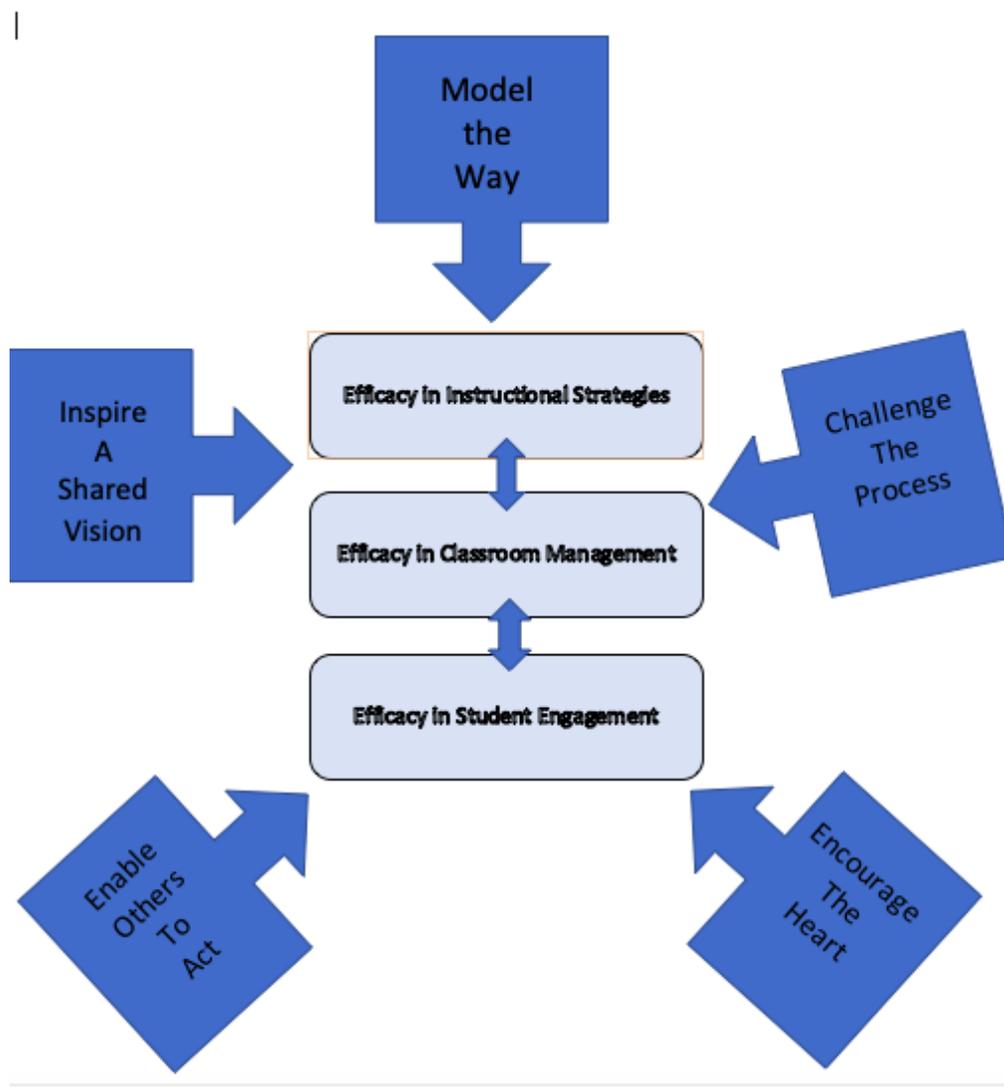
Discussion and Implications of Findings

Leadership is key when the goal is a productive, meaningful organization. Many studies have been conducted on the most effective leadership styles and even practices that are common among successful leaders. Sheninger (2015) reported that leadership is not about a position you hold, but rather actions one performs. Also, Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) stated that the climate of the school is a window into its culture and that

culture is created and maintained by the administrator. The current study sought to determine which leadership practices were the most beneficial with regard to teacher self-efficacy, or confidence, in what they do on a daily basis.

The researcher invited teachers from 12 schools to respond to a 2-part survey yielding a 37% (173) response rate from approximately 440 teachers. The survey included two demographic questions as well; grade level(s) taught and years of teaching experience. Part 1 of the survey measured teacher self-efficacy in three categories: instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. Part 2 of the survey measured five exemplary leadership practices defined by Kouzes and Posner (2002): Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Research Question 1

The first research question sought to answer, "To what extent is there a difference between elementary and middle school teacher efficacy?" Following the analysis of the MANOVA, it was determined that two of three categories of teacher efficacy showed no significant difference between middle school and elementary school teachers. Efficacy in instructional strategies showed similar mean scores for both teachers of elementary school and middle school. People who consider themselves highly efficacious are more likely to give more effort or try multiple strategies to achieve the desired outcome (Bandura, 1999). Efficacy in classroom management also showed similar mean scores for both elementary and middle school teachers. Research has shown historically that student achievement is higher when teachers report higher levels of efficacy (Zee & Kooman, 2016). In this study, efficacy in student engagement was the only category that was

significantly different on the TSES. The results showed $p = .007$. The implication of the

current study would be that student achievement in middle school would be similar to

achievement in elementary school since there was not a significant difference for two

thirds of the efficacy ratings. The literature states that teacher efficacy has an impact on

the student achievement in both reading and math in Grades 3-5 in elementary school and

Grades 6-8 in middle school (Bellibas & Liu, 2017; Freeman, 2008). Table 16 shows the

past 6 years of results from state testing for middle schools and elementary schools.

Table 16

Comparative Averages from Elementary Schools and Middle Schools

School year	Elementary school average	Middle school average	Difference
2019	73%	66%	-7%
2018	71%	63%	-8%
2017	72%	56%	-16%
2016	70%	57%	-13%
2015	69%	52%	-17%
2014	64%	56%	-8%

Table 16 shows the state testing results over the past 6 years from the

participating school district. Though middle schools have shown higher achievement over

time, the mean difference between elementary schools and middle schools remains to be

seven percentage points. Though previous researchers agreed that higher efficacy leads to

higher achievement (Anderson, 2015; Angelle & Teague, 2014; Curry, 2015; Guenzler,

2016; Kroner, 2017), the current study did not result in the same outcome. Middle school

teachers self-rated their efficacy as high as the elementary teachers rated themselves, but

the student achievement data from the district have not shown similar scores.

As mentioned, only the student engagement category showed a significant

difference which could account for discrepancies in achievement data. Research has been

done on student engagement and student achievement in middle school students and has shown that students who feel competence and autonomy and have positive relationships will be more engaged and achievement will be enhanced (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Wang and Holcombe (2010) went on to say that five characteristics of school "either foster or undermine the basic psychological needs of students, which in turn fuel their engagement in school" (p. 636). Those five characteristics are promoting performance goals, promoting mastery goals, support of autonomy, promoting discussion, and teacher social support. Wang and Holcombe found that "teachers can best promote students' positive identification with school and stimulate their willingness to participate in their tasks by offering positive and improvement-based praise and emphasizing effort while avoiding pressuring students for correct answers and high grades" (p. 652). Further investigation into this research could benefit the participating district by focusing professional development toward middle school environments that support these five facets.

Research Question 2

The second research question sought to answer, "To what extent is there a significant association between principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy at the elementary and middle school levels?" There was no statistical significance in principal leadership behaviors predicting teacher sense of self-efficacy within the parameters of this study. The results of the statistical test indicated that no significant relationship existed between the predictor variables of the five exemplary leadership practices and the categories of teacher self-efficacy. Principal mean ratings in this study were relatively similar to norm ratings from historical data related to the LPI, as seen in Chapter 4. With

teachers rating the principals average to high in each category as well as rating themselves high in efficacy, that could account for the reason that no significance was shown in the relationship between the TSES and the LPI. However, this is a strong message to district leadership regarding the high ratings for principals and the high self-efficacy ratings from teachers. Are the high efficacy ratings due to the practices from principals that support the efficacy of teachers? Research has shown that the climate and culture of the school environment impact teacher confidence and attitude toward their jobs (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). As Rath (2008) stated, relationship building is one of the four domains of leadership strength and is needed to maintain the team's cohesiveness. Litvinov et al. (2018) recognized the importance of the leader's sensitivity to pressure that accompanies today's schools and suggested providing a supportive, positive workplace in order for teacher efficacy to remain high. With the high ratings for principals in this study, data suggest that the district's school leaders are successful in offering the support teachers need to feel efficacious.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was to determine what leadership practices, if any, had an impact on the self-efficacy of teachers. The practices were defined by Kouzes and Posner (2002) as Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The researcher concluded that while there was no significant difference in teacher efficacy in instructional strategies or efficacy in classroom management from middle school to elementary school, there was a significant difference between the efficacy in student engagement between elementary teachers and middle school teachers. The elementary mean was significantly higher than that of the

middle school teachers. Those results suggest that elementary teachers feel more confident keeping students engaged in classroom activities than middle school teachers do. According to the literature, "personal emotions and cognitions are believed to inform and alter future teacher self-efficacy beliefs and accompanying behaviors, which, in turn, affect both the classroom environment and student performance" (Goddard et al., 2004, as cited by Zee & Kooman, 2016, p. 985). If middle grade teacher confidence is lower regarding student engagement, student performance could be lower as well. "There is a positive relationship between high levels of teacher efficacy and increased student achievement" (Walker & Slear, 2011, para. 1). So, with lower levels of efficacy ratings in student engagement for middle school teachers, an area for professional development has emerged. As mentioned by Alvord (2019), as students move to a middle school from the more supportive climate of elementary school, there is a myriad of student adjustments that coincide: a new environment, new goals, new expectations, more social stress with adolescence, and possibly multiple teachers. Casky and Anfara (2014) suggested that middle schoolers need experiences that are structured to meet the physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and moral needs of the students. It could be beneficial for middle school teachers to participate in staff development that would focus on the needs of students and the changes that take place during transition to middle school and what strategies or materials could be used to address those needs. By mitigating barriers such as emotional stress, the need to fit in, and physical and physiological changes, student engagement and achievement could be increased (Adams, 2016; Lane et al., 2015). The researcher would recommend professional development and training in this area for teachers of middle grades to feel more confident in student engagement (Anderson, 2015;

Angelle & Teague, 2014; Casky & Anfara, 2014; Curry, 2015; Guenzler, 2016; Kroner, 2017).

Also, it is important to note that teachers at both the elementary and middle school levels rated their principals relatively high on the LPI, which gives insight into how the climate and atmosphere are for each participating school (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Effective leadership definitions have evolved over time, and what is currently deemed effective is important to teacher efficacy (Hall & Hord, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Leithwood and Levin (2005) reported that the school principal impacts the efficacy of the teachers in the school and that student achievement is indirectly impacted as well. The participating school district in this study can conclude that leadership of the schools included is able to maintain an environment supporting teacher efficacy. Moreover, as stated by Steltz (2010), since being the boss does not automatically make you a leader, the district can say that the school leaders consistently exhibit the five exemplary practices that were measured, and these can be deemed effective since the teacher self-efficacy is rated high as well. The practices currently in place should be maintained and even strengthened through further professional development targeted toward the exemplary practices. As mentioned in the literature, the ability to facilitate collaboration by creating a common purpose and developing a shared vision or sense of direction are crucial elements to being an effective leader (Boudett & City, 2016; Fullan, 2001; Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Hall & Hord, 2015). Understanding the needs and concerns of the followers and using the expertise of the group also make for an effective leader (Drago-Severson, 2009; Fullan, 2001; Graham & Ferriter, 2010). Problem-solving and decision-making are cornerstone characteristics for an effective principal. Being able

to motivate the unmotivated (Collins, 2005), to provide leadership roles to members who are ready (Drago-Severson, 2009), to listen without commitment, and to provide guidance and direction are key components of being the school leader (Drago-Severson, 2009; Graham & Ferriter, 2010). These skills are reportedly in place as seen in the results of this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of these recommendations for additional research studies is to add to the body of information or knowledge of effective principal leadership practices and other variables that create and maintain high levels of teacher self-efficacy.

1. Studies similar to this study could be conducted on a larger scale, maybe statewide, in order to affirm the results gathered. Even though 440 potential teachers could have responded, thousands of responses from the state level could impact the results drastically. Do teachers rate themselves high on the efficacy scale in different regions of the state? Do principals have more of an impact on efficacy in different regions of the state?

2. Research to determine what other measurable factors influence teacher efficacy should be completed in order for districts to focus professional development in areas that would be more beneficial. Would social/emotional support for staff be a factor? What could be offered as far as psychological or intellectual needs of students? Would experience from other districts increase or decrease teacher sense of efficacy?

3. A research study comparing overall school success to principal leadership practices could be completed to determine the impact the leader has on student

achievement. Does the principal's role in the school directly impact the success of the students? What practices of leadership impact student achievement the most?

4. A similar study to this study could be completed and include high school teacher input. Time and scope were limiting to this study, so to broaden the respondent base could prove beneficial for information regarding leadership practices. Do high school teachers view their leaders differently than elementary or middle school teachers? Are the leadership practices exhibited in the same way at all three levels?

5. A study could be conducted to explore the five dimensions of school climate that make middle school students more likely to show academic achievement: promoting performance goals, promoting mastery goals, support of autonomy, promoting discussion, and teacher social support (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

Summary

This study sought to determine if the principal leadership practices of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart had an impact on teacher self-efficacy. A quantitative design was chosen in order to answer the research questions:

1. To what extent is there a difference between elementary and middle school teacher efficacy?

2. To what extent is there a significant association between principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy at the elementary and middle school levels?

While there were no significant findings between the five exemplary leadership

practices and the teacher self-efficacy ratings, there was a significant difference in the area of student engagement between elementary and middle school teachers. Middle school teachers rated themselves lower in their confidence of keeping students engaged. With research supporting the needs of students transitioning from elementary to middle school, which include physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and moral needs, there is a definite area for professional development for middle grade teachers. With the participating district reporting lower middle school scores over the past several years, even though supportive leaders are in place according to the current data as well as high levels of efficacy reported in classroom management and instructional strategies, the area to focus on is middle grade student engagement. The information gleaned from this study can help provide a more focused view of why the district might be seeing the lower results in state testing. Training on engagement in the middle school classroom could prove advantageous for the participating district. According to Gregory et al. (2013), "it is posited that improving teachers' developmentally appropriate interactions with their students has the potential to increase their behavioral engagement" (para. 5). Also, "when students feel their efforts and abilities are recognized and when they do not fear being embarrassed or compared to peers, they are more likely to use cognitive strategies that contribute to academic success" (Ryan & Patrick, 2001, p. 440). By targeting professional development toward the category that received the lowest efficacy ratings, that is to say student engagement, middle school achievement could increase as the level of confidence, or efficacy, of the teachers increase.

Chapter 5 presented a discussion of the findings for the two research questions. Implications for practice were shared followed by recommendations for further research

in the areas of leadership and efficacy as well as determining other factors impacting

student achievement from elementary to middle school.

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Appendix A

Superintendent Permission to Perform Research Study

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Dear Mr. Ezell:

Thank you for your interest in conducting your dissertation research, in whole or in part, within ████████ County Schools. I have reviewed your research proposal, as approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at your college or university, and find that your research goals and related protocols are consistent with the requirements of local board of education policy 5230, "Participation in Research Projects." You are approved to proceed with your research within the school system in accordance with the procedures outlined in your approved IRB request. Please contact me to discuss any substantive changes to those procedures in the event that they become necessary during the course of data collection.

I wish you continued success in your research. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can help you in any way.

Sincerely,

Appendix B

Principal Permission Form for Teacher Participation

Principal Permission for Research Study

Hello Fellow Principals,

      My name is Keith Ezell and I am a doctoral candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Gardner-Webb University. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements for my Doctoral degree, and I would like your permission for your teachers to be included in my study of principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy. The purpose of this anonymous, voluntary quantitative survey study will be to examine the principals' leadership practices and the impact on efficacy of the teachers they lead. The Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) will be the survey instrument used to measure practices from the principal, and the Teacher Scale of Self Efficacy will be used to measure teacher behaviors/beliefs.

      ████████ has given approval for this research study. Teachers will be asked to offer ratings on your leadership practices using an online 30-question survey based on their perception around The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart. Next, they will rate themselves on the 24 item Teacher Self Efficacy Scale in order to compare the data sets from both instruments. The responses will be totally anonymous and teachers have the right to stop at any time. The data collected will be totally anonymous, and only used to enable aggregation of data from your school, and will not be used for any other purpose. All aggregate data will be available only to the researcher and the dissertation committee. Participation in this study is voluntary; however, I am hopeful to have a 50% return rate of completed surveys from your school. Please remind teachers to not include any personal identifiers in their online responses.

      I hope the results from the survey can inform our practice and possibly professional development opportunities moving forward.

By signing this form, you give your permission for your teachers to respond to the survey questions.

_____   Date: _____
Principal Printed Name

_____   Date: _____
Principal Signature

Sincerely,
Keith Ezell

Appendix C

Permission to Use Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Long Form

William & Mary
School of Education

MEGAN TSCHANNEN-MORAN, PHD
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

September 2, 2019

Keith,

You have my permission to use the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (formerly called the Ohio State Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale), which I developed with Anita Woolfolk Hoy, in your research.

You can find a copy of the measure and scoring directions on my web site at http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch .

Please use the following as the proper citation:

> Tschannen-Moran, M & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 783-805.

I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for this measure as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran
William & Mary School of Education

Appendix D

Permission to Use Leadership Practices Inventory

WILEY

August 13th, 2019

Keith Ezell, Principal
Harris Elementary School
3330 US 221 South Hwy.
Forest City, NC 28043

Dear Keith Ezell:

Thank you for your request to use the LPI®: Leadership Practices Inventory® in your research. This letter grants you permission to use either the print or electronic LPI [Self/Observer/Self and Observer] instrument[s] in your research. You may *reproduce* the instrument in printed form at no charge beyond the discounted one-time cost of purchasing a single copy; however, you may not distribute any photocopies except for specific research purposes. If you prefer to use the electronic distribution of the LPI you will need to separately contact Joshua Carter (jocarter@wiley.com) directly for further details regarding product access and payment. Please be sure to review the product information resources before reaching out with pricing questions.

Permission to use either the written or electronic versions is contingent upon the following:

(1)   The LPI may be used only for research purposes and may not be sold or used in conjunction with any compensated activities;
(2)   Copyright in the LPI, and all derivative works based on the LPI, is retained by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. The following copyright statement must be included on all reproduced copies of the instrument(s); "Copyright © 2013 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with permission";
(3)   One (1) **electronic** copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data must be sent **promptly** to my attention at the address below; and,
(4)   We have the right to include the results of your research in publication, promotion, distribution and sale of the LPI and all related products.

Permission is limited to the rights granted in this letter and does not include the right to grant others permission to reproduce the instrument(s) except for versions made by nonprofit organizations for visually or physically handicapped persons. No additions or changes may be made without our prior written consent. You understand that your use of the LPI shall in no way place the LPI in the public domain or in any way compromise our copyright in the LPI. This license is nontransferable. We reserve the right to revoke this permission at any time, effective upon written notice to you, in the event we conclude, in our reasonable judgment, that your use of the LPI is compromising our proprietary rights in the LPI.

Best wishes for every success with your research project.
Cordially,

Mélanie Mortensen
Rights Coordinator
mmortensen@wiley.com

WILEY

Appendix E

Teacher Efficacy Scale Long Form

Teacher Beliefs - TSES

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers are confidential.

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (9) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

	None at all		Very Little		Some Degree		Quite A Bit		A Great Deal
1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
9. How much can you do to help your students value learning?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
19. How well can you keep a few problem students form ruining an entire lesson?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
21. How well can you respond to defiant students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨

Appendix F

LPI Items

LPI Observer

He/She...

1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others

2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done

3. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities

4. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with

5. Praises people for a job well done

6. Makes certain that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon

7. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like

8. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work

9. Actively listens to diverse points of view

10. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities

11. Follows through on promises and commitments he/she makes

12. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future

13. Actively searches for innovative ways to improve what we do

14. Treats others with dignity and respect

15. Makes sure that people are creatively recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects

16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance

17. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision

18. Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected

19. Involves people in the decisions that directly impact their job performance

20. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values

21. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization

22. Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish

23. Identifies measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward

24. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work

25. Tells stories of encouragement about the good work of others

26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership

27. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work

28. Takes initiative in anticipating and responding to change

29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves

30. Gets personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments

Appendix G

Teacher Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Teachers' Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Hello Fellow Educators,

My name is Keith Ezell and I am a doctoral candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Gardner-Webb University. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements for my Doctoral degree, and I would like to invite you to participate in my study of principal leadership practices and teacher efficacy. The purpose of this anonymous, voluntary quantitative survey study will be to examine the principals' leadership practices and the impact on efficacy of the teachers they lead. The Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) will be the survey instrument used to measure practices from the principal, and the Teacher Scale of Self Efficacy will be used to measure teacher behaviors/beliefs.

You are invited to participate in this study because the superintendent and your principal have agreed to participate in this research study. Please rate your principals' leadership practices using this online 30-question survey based on your perception around The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart. Also, rate yourself on the 24 item Teacher Self Efficacy Scale in order to compare the data sets from both instruments. Your responses will be totally anonymous and you have the right to stop at any time. The data collected will be totally anonymous, and only used to enable aggregation of data from your school, and will not be used for any other purpose. All aggregate data will be available only to the researcher and the dissertation committee. Participation in this study is voluntary; however, I am hopeful to have a 50% return rate of completed surveys from your school. Please do not include any personal identifiers in your online responses. By completing this survey, you give your consent to participate in this study.

I appreciate your help with my research and dissertation goals!!

Sincerely,
Keith Ezell