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PENNSYLVANIA PRINCIPALS' DESCRIBE THEIR WORK, EXAMINED THROUGH THE THEORY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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PENNSYLVANIA PRINCIPALS' DESCRIBE THEIR WORK, EXAMINED

THROUGH THE THEORY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

by

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PENNSYLVANIA PRINCIPALS' DESCRIBE THEIR WORK, EXAMINED
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Teachers discover that their love of children draws them to teaching, or that their own love of learning makes them passionate about teaching. Both my love for children and my own love of learning are two key factors that originally persuaded me to become an educator and researcher.

Being raised in a district composed of rural and suburban communities and later spending years teaching in urban and suburban school districts, I was able to define one key factor: successful students had one or more significant adult who provided them with meaningful guidance and support. For many, a classroom teacher and the experiences, mentorship, and compassion they provided happen to be that significant factor that changed the lives. I observed that as a classroom teacher, individuals are only responsible for designing instruction and activities, and regularly interacting with 20-30 students on a consistent basis. I felt that as an administrator, however, I would have the capability to impact instructional outcomes and general school experiences for a much greater set of students.

Despite countless responsibilities, administrators have more flexibility in their schedule; providing the occasion to visit multiple classrooms and interact with more students in the halls and cafeteria, and beyond the school building which enhances the

opportunity to foster relationships with many students, over many years. Due to these circumstances, motivated and distinguished administrators have a significant impact over the entire educational system.

Through Transformational Leadership, the goal for any educational leader should be to improve systems that promote academic and social-emotional growth, systems for helping teachers grow professionally, and systems for dealing with the countless problems that inevitably arise in a school building. In doing so, administrators can encourage a multitude of educators to do what is most important; provide all students with the guidance, support, knowledge, compassion, and the most effective educational system possible.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose Statement and Research Design

Transformational leadership helps school principals to frame their attitudes and assists in moving schools forward. Taking everything into consideration, according to Popper, Mayseless and Castelnovo (2000) all these characteristics largely fall into four circumscribed areas in education. These settings are categorized as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. It is hypothesized that principals who demonstrate these major characteristics of transformational leadership have positive effects on situations among teachers and students, and in turn, have overall increased performance at their schools.

The purpose of this study will be to illuminate the extent to which five principals, identified as outstanding leaders by the Pennsylvania Principals Association, describe their work in ways that align with the theory of transformational leadership.

This qualitative study was informed by ethnographic research designs, as Creswell (2002, p. 21) describes as, "qualitative research procedures for describing, analyzing, and interpreting culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behaviors, beliefs, and language that develop over time." As such, by using this research design and utilizing in-depth surveys, the study will explore "culture-sharing" behaviors, beliefs and language among administrators. Due to this fact, it is an ideal system to explore the published Pennsylvania Principal Association "Principal of the Year" recipients and how they have conducted their award winning work through the lens of transformational leadership.

The participants of this study include five principals from five different school districts during the 2019-2020 school year in Pennsylvania. The participants were chosen by using a purposive sampling method. This method, according to Bailey (2008) is seen as optimal for use with small numbers of individuals or groups. Bailey also notes that this method is sufficient for understanding human perceptions, problems, needs, behaviors and contexts, which are the main justifications for qualitative research.

Research Question

How do principals identified by the Pennsylvania Principal Association as being "distinguished" describe their work relative to the domains of the theory of transformational leadership?

Theoretical Framework

Transformational leadership, a popular leadership theory, has roots as early as 1978 when James McGregor Burns, considered the founder of modern leadership theory, defined a transformational leader as one who "looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower" (Burns, 2010, p. 10). In 1971, Burns received the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in History and Biography for his work on America's 32nd president, Theodore Roosevelt. Burns shifted the focus of leadership studies from the traits and actions of great men to the interaction of leaders and their constituencies as collaborators working toward mutual benefit. He was best known for his contributions to the transactional, transformational, aspirational, and visionary schools of leadership theory.

Burns related to the difficulty in differentiation between management and leadership and claimed that the differences are in characteristics and behaviors.

According to Burns (1978, p. 112), "the transforming approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations." Burns (1978, p. 119) also believed that it "redesigns perceptions and values, and changes expectations and aspirations of employees." Although this model of leadership was developed for political leaders and without empirical evidence, "it influenced other researchers to further conceptualize and make the model applicable to business and education" (Denmark, 2012, p. 4).

Another researcher, Bernard M. Bass (1985), expanded the work of Burns (1978) by describing the psychological mechanisms that underlie transforming and transactional leadership. Bass also used the term "transformational" instead of "transforming." Bass added to the existing concepts of Burns (1978) to assist in the explanation of how transformational leadership could be measured, as well as how it impacts follower motivation and performance. The extent to which a leader is transformational, is measured first, in terms of his influence on the followers. The followers of such a leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader and because of the qualities of the transformational leader are willing to work harder than originally expected.

While Bass and Avolio (1994) assert that transformational leaders focus on capacity building for the purpose of organizational change, Bennis and Nanus (1997) establish that they sharpen their subordinates' skills and enhance their knowledge from their own experiences. Hall, Johnson, Wysocki, and Kepner (2008) claim that this approach "can help school administrators become exceptional leaders." Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1994, p. 7), defined transformational leadership as leadership that "implies major changes in the form, nature, function and/or potential of some phenomenon; applied to leadership, it specifies general ends to be pursued although it is

largely mute with respect to means." Later, Bass (1998) continued to research this theory and determined that transformational leaders are judged by their impact on followers in the areas of trust, admiration, and respect.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) assert that transformational leadership in schools has seven dimensions. These are: (a) building school vision and establishing school goals; (b) providing intellectual stimulation; (c) providing individualized support; (d) modeling best practices and organizational values; (e) setting high academic standard expectations; (f) creating a productive school culture; and (g) fostering participation in decisions.

Taking everything into consideration, according to Popper and colleagues (2000), all of these characteristics largely fall into four circumscribed areas in educational settings. These four domains include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. In this context, idealized influence is defined as considering the needs of others before their own personal needs, avoiding the use of power for personal gain, demonstrating high moral standards, and setting challenging goals for their followers.

> These transformational leaders act as role models and display a charismatic personality that influences others to want to become more like the leader. Idealized influence can be most expressed through a transformational leader's willingness to take risks and follow a core set of values, convictions and ethical principles in the actions he takes. It is through this concept of idealized influence that the leader builds trust with his followers and the followers, in turn, develop confidence in their leader. (Schieltz, 2019, para. 3)

Inspirational motivation, which is to motivate and inspire those around them by displaying enthusiasm and optimism, involves the followers in envisioning attractive future states, communicating high expectations, and demonstrating a commitment to the goals. Inspirational motivation also refers to the leader's ability to inspire confidence,

motivation and a sense of purpose in his followers. This type of transformational leader

must articulate a clear vision for the future, communicate expectations of the group and

demonstrate a commitment to the goals that have been laid out. "This aspect of

transformational leadership requires superb communication skills as the leader must

convey his messages with precision, power and a sense of authority. Other important

behaviors of the leader include his continued optimism, enthusiasm and ability to point

out the positive" (Schieltz, 2019, para. 4).

Thirdly, "individualized consideration represents the leader's effort to treat

individuals as if they are special people and act as a coach or mentor to develop their

followers' potential. Each follower or group member has specific needs and desires. For

example, some are motivated by money while others by change and excitement"

(Schieltz, 2019, para 7). The individualized consideration element of transformational

leadership recognizes these needs. The leader must be able to recognize or determine,

through eavesdropping or observation, what motivates each individual. Through one-on-

one coaching and mentoring, the transformational leader provides opportunities for

customized training sessions for each team member. These activities allow team members

to grow and become fulfilled in their positions.

The last descriptor is intellectual stimulation which means the leader's effort to

stimulate followers to be innovative and creative. Transformational leadership values

"creativity and autonomy among the leader's followers. The leader supports his followers

by involving them in the decision-making process and stimulating their efforts to be as

creative and innovative as possible to identify solutions" (Schieltz, 2019, para 5). To this

end, the transformational leader challenges assumptions and solicits ideas from followers

without criticizing. In this position, the leader helps change the way followers think about and frame problems and obstacles. The vision the leader conveys helps followers see the big picture and succeed in their efforts.

All of these components create additive effect if managers combine these components to reach "performance that goes well beyond what is expected" (Northouse, 2001, p. 171). In order to make any organization a better performing entity, transformational leadership behaviors become more important, especially at schools, as principals are the agents of change for the society in which they operate.

Assumptions

As noted, this qualitative research project is informed by ethnographic and narrative techniques. Ethnographers study human cultures and societies by immersing themselves within the subject group in a process called participant-observation. In my role as a school leader, I am well familiar with the roles of school principals. In seeking to understand how participants in this study described their work, I have applied qualitative methods such as interviewing, taking detailed notes, clarifying responses, and developing an ongoing analysis from the notes and compiling a report about the findings.

Ethnographies are well suited to study complex cultural, societal interactions, unpredictable situations, and relationships. Ethnographers are able to extract the range of group experiences in ways that are sensitive to the uniqueness of the subject group In this case, the unique group consists of five award-winning principalsSince the researcher takes carefully structured and detailed notes in the participant observation,

interviews, and other data-collection processes, an ethnography is a powerful way to reveal, in context, the many elements of a group.

With regard to narrative techniques, Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002, p. 331) describe how the "inquirer emphasizes the importance of learning from participants in a setting. This learning occurs through individual stories told by individuals." Chase (2005, p. 656) explained that, "...in addition to describing what happened, narratives also express emotions, thoughts and interpretations."

In understanding the unique experiences, point of views and descriptions of their work, there are some important assumptions to consider:

1. The participants will answer the interview questions in an honest and candid manner.

2. The inclusion criteria of the sample are appropriate and therefore, assures that the participants have all experienced the same or similar phenomenon of the study.

3. Participants have a sincere interest in participating in the research and do not have any other motives, such as impressing their supervisor or employer because they agreed to participate in the study.

4. Participants are self-reflective and accurately share their actions, motivations and outcomes.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are utilized in this study:

Idealized influence is a leader's behavior and the follower's attributions about the leader.

Individualized consideration represents the leader's continuing effort to treat each individual as a special person and act as a mentor who attempts to develop their potential (Popper et al., 2000).

Inspirational motivation refers to the ways by which transformational leaders motivate and inspire those around them (Popper et al., 2000).

Intellectual stimulation is when the leader's efforts to stimulate followers to be innovative and creative to define problems and approach them in new ways (Popper et al., 2000).

Morale is a psychological concept that indicate the attitudes of individuals and groups in an organization towards their job, their superior, and their organizational environment (Francis, 2010).

Transformational Leader leadership is the ability to get people to want to change, improve, and be led. It involves assessing associates' motives, satisfying their needs, and valuing them. Furthermore, some research has claimed that transformational leadership is the leader's ability to increase organizational members' commitment, capacity, and engagement in meeting goals (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Chew & Chan, 2008; Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 1997; Geijsel, Sleegers, Stoel, & Krüger, 2009; Jung & Avolio, 2000; Kreitner & Kinicki, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003; Yammarino, Spangler, & Bass, 1993).

Delimitations

The study will focus on exploring transformational leadership at the principal

level, as described by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. The principals identified

as transformational leaders by the association will be the key informants of this research.

The research questions exclusively guide the discussion on the subject matter with the

exclusion of any related issue. Caution will be exercised to ensure that all data relates to

transformational leadership at the level of the school principals. The school principals

form the population of interest with a sample size of five principals from five different

school districts. Therefore, any other related population will be excluded from the study.

The model of transformational leadership constitutes the theoretical framework of

the study. The research will conceptualize the transformational leadership model by

examining its applicability in the sector of education. The study focuses on school

principals because they are employed as administrators of their respective schools.

Therefore, school principals are vital informants for the research and contribute to the

concept of transformational leadership in education. Besides, the objectives of the study

justify the application of the qualitative research method through interviews as the main

tool for data collection. Finally, it is plausible to note that the researcher is the primary

tool for data collection, and the analysis depends on the researcher's judgment.

Limitations

The sample of this study is one of volunteers. Therefore, these individuals are not

necessarily representative of all principals or teachers within the state, region or school

they represent. For this reason, the results are limited to this group of principals and

caution should be exercised when attempting to infer about any of the results with regard

to other populations. Furthermore, the researcher is the main instrument of data analysis.

The analyses and results will be a product of the researcher's interpretation of the data.

The interpretation is based on the researcher's knowledge in the area and her geographic

location. Prior to interviewing, ethical approval will be granted by giving participants

informed consent. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain anonymity of both

participants and institutions in this study

Significance of Research

> The job of a modern-day principal has transformed into something that would be almost unrecognizable to the principals of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The concept of the principal as a building manager has given way to a model of the principal as an aspirational leader, a team builder, a coach, and an agent of visionary change. (Alvoid & Black, 2014, p. 1)

In today's climate of heightened expectations, principals are under pressure to improve

teaching and learning. "They need to be educational visionaries, instructional and

curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public

relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, and

expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives" (Brock &

Grady, 2011, p. 124). Furthermore, they are expected to mediate the often-conflicting

interests of parents, teachers, students, district officials, unions, and state and federal

agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs. Although

the job description of a current day principal sounds overwhelming, it signals the overdue

recognition of the indispensable role and its extreme demand for transformational leaders.

With great effort, the focus of administrators' transformational leadership

behaviors becomes so significant because their actions impact change for the school and

ultimately the community in which they function. This research should build upon the

general knowledge of transformational leadership, principal leadership qualities and overall school affect.

This research, being conducted in Pennsylvania, will focus on a geographically unique school system and will also give a deeper study on public school principals in school buildings that contain Kindergarten through 12th grade. Parents and teachers know that children acquire new skills and knowledge rapidly during their elementary years. Research has also shown that average annual learning gains for children in grades K-2 are dramatically greater than those for subsequent years of school. Moreover, according to a report released in 2010 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (para. 1), "the outcomes of early elementary education, particularly whether or not a child can read proficiently by third grade, are a powerful predictor of later school and life outcomes." Since these years are so critical, it is imperative that transformational leaders are at the forefront of these elementary schools. Wallace (2016, para. 3) states that a study previously done has "shown that the jump from elementary to middle school can be a painful transition for adolescents, whose worries grow to include greater academic responsibility, burgeoning sexuality and complex social structures." If administrators have the adequate knowledge and skills to appropriately address these types of adolescents, they will have greater success in an overall transformation of a school.

In addition, and according to The Wallace Foundation report, "Improving University Principal Preparation Programs: Five Themes From The Field" (2016, p. 9), "effective principal preparation integrates coursework about school leadership with practical experience in schools so that aspiring leaders learn what's needed for the job, exercise those skills and apply the knowledge in a meaningful way; and receive feedback

from experienced practitioners." This research will reveal vital information to help assist in the design of teacher/administrative preparatory programs. Principal preparation is the pathway for aspiring principals to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be effective school leaders. "More than a decade of research finds, however, that university-based preparation programs can lack rigor and relevance" (The Wallace Foundation, 2016, p. 6).

Furthermore, this research will provide feedback to principals in general in the Pennsylvania school systems. As leaders try to keep up with the rapidly changing needs of today's students and classrooms, research should be performed with district and school goals in mind. This data will help to contribute to annual research agendas aligned to principal leadership evaluations and continuing education.

Summary

It is an ongoing matter of discussion whether principals demonstrate characteristics of a transformational leader, and how those characteristics affect the school, which is the primary objective of this study. Many researchers imply that transformational leadership behaviors, such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation are positively related to greater employee acceptance, better employee performance, better student academic performance and increased job satisfaction among staff and administrators at schools. Essentially, these traits are what determine a building's vision, determine the performance expectations, develop consensus about school goals and the overall intellectual and social-emotional stimulation. Therefore, obtaining transformational

leadership in a school district is very essential in order for schools to show overall growth and improvement.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Changes in the Nature of the Principalship

This chapter will review the relevant literature on the principalship, beginning with the exploration and determination of the significant need for such research, followed by defining a principal as a transformational leader. Once the definition is presented, we will review the impact of principals as transformational leaders and their impact on school culture and teachers; including teacher moral and teacher job satisfaction. Thirdly, we will review the principal as a transformational leader and the impact it has on student performance. In conclusion, we will specifically review transformational leadership by school principals in Pennsylvania.

The approach conceptualized by Burns (1978) as transformational leadership, aroused great interest among researchers and practitioners (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3). For Burns, "an effective leader should be capable of creating societal changes and defines the transformational leader as a person who takes care of his followers, mobilizes their forces to meet the needs and potential" (Burns, 2003, p. 230). Burns, considered the founder of the modern transformational leadership theory, initially defined a transformational leader and created a model of leadership for political leaders. This research and its finding intrigued others to use this lens to further conceptualize leadership in business and education.

There has been significant research over the past few decades that created a mind shift in principal responsibilities. This research has triggered dramatic changes in what public education now expects from principals in general. According to Alvoid and Black

(2014), principals have been historically portrayed as inclined to exercising power over

their subordinates and students in the school context. In addition to wielding of power,

one of the most noticeable roles of past principals, according to Alvoid and Black (2014),

was enforcing compliance in the general learning environment. The principals of the 20th

century could generally be argued to be authoritarian leaders as opposed to democratic

ones.

However, the role of a principal has been experiencing progressive change

towards different forms of leadership that have been found to be more effective in

reaching the targeted outcomes (Alvoid & Black, 2014; Mombourquette, 2017).

Principals can no longer function simply as building managers, tasked with adhering to

district rules and carrying out policies and regulations. Principals have to be leaders of

learning who can develop systematic approaches to tasks and develop a team that is able

to deliver the most effective instruction. Principals need to have the ability, competency,

and passion to transform the schools in which they work and the students whom they

lead. Concurring this argument, Mombourquette (2017) points out that generally,

principals, in the current environment need to be visionary leaders with the ability to

stimulate the development of their schools towards specific goals. Momboruquette argues

that visionary leadership involves communication, outreach, and recognition of good

performance, which are all some of the constituents of transformational leadership.

Valentine and Prater (2011) stated, "The principal's role has become increasingly

complex as the nature of society, political expectations, and schools as organizations have

changed. The predominant role played by the principal from the 1920s until the 1970s

was one of an administrative manager" (p. 5). The new generation of principals have

become far more involved with what happens in the classroom and are now expected to be leaders of this new data-driven, accountability era.

Importance of Transformational Leadership

As stated by The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2005, para. 8), "building and district level leadership has been the focus of intense scrutiny in recent years as researchers try to define not only the qualities of effective leadership but the impact of leadership on the operation of schools, and especially student achievement." A recently published literature review generated by The Wallace Foundation (2004) titled, "How Leadership Influences Student Learning" contributes to the growing body of knowledge.

The Wallace Foundation is a philanthropic organization based in New York City, working nationally to investigate questions and concerns that, if solved, would strengthen practices and policies. The aim of the foundation is to develop knowledge about how to overcome social problems, and promote widespread solutions based on the findings. The Wallace Foundation also communicates their results with practitioners, policy makers and leaders. This particular research examined the correlation between student achievement and educational leadership practices.

Authors Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) make two significant claims. First, "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 7); second, "leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most" (p. 7). Without an impactful leader, at-risk schools are unlikely to be turned around and established schools are less likely to show significant growth. The authors stress that

"many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst"

(p. 7).

Jacobson (2011), in a research study that focuses on the impact of leadership on

the outcomes of poorly performing schools in high poverty areas, finds that principals

who take roles in such schools with the desire to make a change by focusing on the needs

of students and teachers achieve significant performance improvements. Jacobson's

research study (2011) documented evidence, that despite the fact that the schools have

limited resources, changing the leadership approach had a measurable change in

performance. The findings corroborate the two claims by Leithwood et al. (2004) that

leadership is one of the main factors in the learning of students and that despite there

being many factors that lead to a turnaround in school outcomes, leadership plays the

primary role.

Traditionally, the role of an educational leader was similar to being the manager

and face of the school. The principal carried out daily tasks such as hiring teachers,

interpreting directives from the district and state, balanced the building budget, and

supervised teachers. Day to day, this also meant overseeing innumerable smaller tasks

such as handling the concerns of parents, disciplining unruly kids, negotiating food

service contracts, and determining the building schedule. In recent years the role of the

principal has expanded dramatically and there is a greater emphasis on shared decision-

making and professional learning communities (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

"Understanding the role of collaboration is essential in implementing change and

transformational principals who are knowledgeable and skilled in this area are best

equipped to address such change" (Marks & Nance, 2007, p. 524). As Valentine and

Prater (2011) stated, "The principal's role has become increasingly complex as the nature of society, political expectations, and schools as organizations have changed. The predominant role played by the principal from the 1920s until the 1970s was one of an administrative manager" (p. 5). The new generation of principals have become far more involved with what happens in the classroom and are now expected to be leaders of learning in this new data-driven, accountability era.

Leadership is a concept that has been widely studied and researched across a variety of domains including both the business and educational worlds. Cezmi, Savas, and Toprak (2014) stated, "Leadership is known as an effort that directs organizational activities to achieve a common goal" (p. 173). With the ever-changing educational landscape, principals must incorporate a wide range of leadership skills and styles in order to direct their school organization towards common goals and a well-directed vision. According to Fullan (2001, p. 9), "the more complex society gets, the more sophisticated leadership must become." Thus, Lewis, Goodman, and Fandt (1998) assert that school administrators are expected to cope with a rapidly changing world of work to be effective at their schools. For this reason, they require abilities such as being team-oriented, strong communicators, team players, problem solvers, change-makers and ultimately, transformational leaders.

Principals as Transformational Leaders

Many researchers have attempted to define a leader's roles in organizations. In this regard, transformational leadership has been frequently studied in the leadership fields (Bass, 1998; Heck & Hallinger, 1999). Initiated by Leithwood and his colleagues in the late 1980s and early 1990s, numerous studies have demonstrated positive

relationships between transformational leadership and various school and teacher

organizational conditions (Anderson, 2008). According to Northouse (2001), in the

simplest terms, transformational leadership is the ability to get people to want to change,

improve, and be led. It involves assessing associates' motives, satisfying their needs, and

valuing them. Furthermore, some research has claimed that transformational leadership is

the leader's ability to increase organizational members' commitment, capacity, and

engagement in meeting goals (Bayler, 2012). According to Castanheira and Costa (2011),

transformational leadership has three basic functions. First, it is believed that

transformational leaders sincerely serve the needs of others by empowering and inspiring

followers to achieve great success. Secondly, they charismatically lead, set a vision,

instill trust, confidence, and pride in their professional responsibilities. Finally, they offer

intellectual stimulation to followers who are of the same caliber as the leader

(Castanheira & Costa, 2011).

　　　　With the general definition of transformational leadership established, it is

important to analyze why this approach should be considered in the educational context.

A number of previous research studies provide evidence of the association between this

leadership style and positive organizational outcomes.

　　　　Looking at the application of transformational leadership in organizations, in

general, will give an idea of the outcomes that can be expected in the school context. In a

research study of the impact of different leadership approaches on organizational

outcomes, Erkutlu (2008) finds that transformational leadership has a positive influence

on leadership effectiveness and organizational effectiveness. The results suggest that

leadership factors such as the satisfaction of subordinates and effectiveness factors such

as employee performance beyond expectation are observed in organizations where leaders employ the transformational leadership approach. These findings are corroborated by findings presented by Jiang, Zhao, and Ni (2017), and Garcia-Moares, Llorens, and Verdu-Jover (2008).

The fact that the previously stated sources show consistency, despite research findings from different sectors in different economies, is an indication that the positive link between transformational leadership and positive organizational outcomes is independent of the kind of organization or the kind of culture practiced by the general population. For that reason, even without critically looking at sources addressing transformational leadership by principals in the school context, it can be argued that similar positive outcomes can be achieved in schools where this leadership style is applied. Anderson (2008), in his review of the literature, confirms this argument by showing consistency among sources, pointing to the positive effect of transformational leadership in the management and transformation of schools. For that reason, transformational leadership is presented as an impactful leadership approach for principals aiming to positively change the outcomes of their schools.

Spurred by new state laws that call for improved methods of teacher evaluation, many districts across the country are looking for transformational principals to serve as instructional leaders who will help teachers improve, rewarding those deemed "most effective" and mentor those who are not. Hallinger (2003) stated that transformational leadership models conceptualize leadership as an organizational entity rather than the task of a single individual. Kurland, Peretz, and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2010, p. 65) found that

high functioning schools were found to have transformational principals who shaped the school vision and established a collegial culture that fostered teacher empowerment. Shifting the emphasis from the supervisor being the sole decision maker to an increase in teacher involvement has promoted reflection and positive change among teachers.

It can thus be argued that adopting transformational leadership in schools substantially increases the likelihood of a change in the school's culture.

Principal Transformational Leadership and School Culture

The findings by Kurland et al. (2010) suggest a strong relationship between leadership style and organizational culture. Similarly, Xeniku and Simosi (2006) mention specific organizational cultures that emerge as a result of the leadership style adopted. Since leadership style is basically concerned with how managers or leaders relate with their subordinates, then a change in leadership style would be followed by a change in organizational culture. The unique features of transformational leadership include intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Dion, Rakha & Kang, 2004). These features suggest open communication between leaders and subordinates in terms of decision-making and motivation. Organizational cultures that would fit in this leadership approach would be characterized by innovation focus and a high level of team performance as pointed out by Dion et al. (2004). This, therefore, implies that the adoption of transformational leadership by principals within the school context leads to a change in the behavior of subordinates including teachers. Literature focusing specifically on the impact of transformational leadership on the behavior of teachers would be of importance in revealing the cause of positive association of this leadership style with outcomes in schools.

It is claimed in many research studies that transformational leadership behaviors have direct and indirect effects on followers' behavior, their psychological states and organizational performance. Moreover, transformational leadership has influences on teachers' commitment to change in vision building, high-performance expectations, developing consensus about group goals and intellectual stimulation, communication, supportive leadership, and personal recognition (Balyer, 2012). Balyer also indicated that "transformational leadership is positively associated with schools' innovative climate and it motivates followers to do more than they are expected in terms of extra effort and greater productivity, organizational commitment and extra effort for change" (p. 27)

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Teachers

As previously summarized, there are three basic functions of a transformational leaders determined by Castanheira and Costa (2011):

1. Transformational leaders sincerely serve the needs of others by empowering and inspiring followers to achieve great success.

2. Transformational leaders charismatically lead, set a vision, instill trust, confidence, and pride in their professional responsibilities.

3. Transformational leaders offer intellectual stimulation that is of the same caliber as the intellectual stimulation available for the leader.

Instead of empowering selected individuals, the school becomes empowered as a collective unit. Furthermore, McFarlin and Sweeney (1998) claim that the most successful managers in the future should be transformational leaders composed of strengths, weaknesses and also characteristic behaviors. If leadership is accepted as a process of interaction between leaders and subordinates, where a leader attempts to

influence the others' behaviors to accomplish organizational goals (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2005), then, leaders must foster strong community support for the change by creating a vision for the organization and stimulating them at school (Bass, 1985, 1997). While Bass and Avolio (1994) assert that transformational leaders focus on capacity building for the purpose of organizational change, Bennis and Nanus (1997) establish that they sharpen their subordinates' skills and enhance their knowledge from their own experiences. Hall et al. (2008) claim that this approach can help school administrators become exceptional leaders.

In the general context, there is a wide range of research studies that find a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee factors such as motivation, teamwork, and innovativeness. Amin,et al. (2013), in their research study on employee commitment, present the findings that higher levels of commitment are observed in employees working under transformational leaders. The positive association between transformational leadership and employee commitment is well elaborated in the description of the leadership style as presented by Amin et al. (2013). According to the authors, the transformational leadership approach is characterized by the leader deliberately building a relationship with the subordinates and encouraging them to deliver their mandate beyond their basic responsibilities.

In this description, the authors indirectly point to the deliberate creation of an enabling environment by transformational leaders that allows employees to be confident with their abilities and thus apply them more effectively in the realization of organizational goals. In their research study that includes psychological empowerment as a factor that mediates the success of transformational leadership in organizational

commitment, Amin et al. (2013) find a strong positive association between how well leaders are able to influence their subordinates psychologically and how committed they are to their organization. Findings by Amin et al. (2013) are significant in that they show that transformational leaders are in a better position to cause job satisfaction in their subordinates thus leading to low employee turnover. High levels of commitment to one's job is an indirect indicator of how satisfied a person is with their work, hence the lower the likelihood to look for other options.

In addition to contributing to employees feeling more satisfied with their jobs, the study by Jiang et al. (2017) present results showing a positive correlation between transformational leadership and the sustainable performance of employees. Considering these results with those presented by Amin et al. (2013) shows that in addition to merely leading to positive outcomes and preventing employees from seeking other jobs elsewhere, transformational leadership can be applied by leaders in the targeting of specific objectives. Sustainability is one of the major trends that are influencing the decisions of contemporary organizations. The finding that transformational leadership can be used to target sustainable outcomes indicates that this leadership paradigm could be important as far as making employees within organizations more adaptable to trends in the macro environment. In the school context, such findings are important in that they serve to show that in addition to ensuring positive performance and preventing a high turnover of teachers, principals can be better prepared to address the dynamic needs of external stakeholders through transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership and Teacher Morale

Teachers are the largest professional body in a school building and traditionally have the most contact with students throughout the day and influence the environment of the school greatly. When teachers feel positive about their position, feelings referred to as teacher morale, they have a tremendously positive influence on the students and the school (Leonard & Leonard, 2005).

The reverse is also true; when teachers have a negative feeling about the school, they may negatively influence the students and the school. Teachers have the power as a group and as individuals to greatly impact a school's environment. It is very important for educational leaders to be aware of factors that affect teacher morale and how they may affect student achievement. Principals have the power to influence teacher morale in their school by the actions or daily practices they exhibit (Hunter-Boykin & Evans, 1995; Lester, 1990; Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004).

According to John Hattie's presentation (2017) at the Collaborative Impact Conference, Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) is a top influencer related to student achievement. John Hattie developed a way of synthesizing various influences in different meta-analyses according to their effect size (Cohen's d). In his study titled "Visible Learning" he ranked over two hundred influences that are related to learning outcomes from very positive effects to negative effects. Hattie notes that CTE is not about making teachers feel good about themselves; it is more complex than just believing you can make a difference collectively. Rather, the concept of collective teacher efficacy itself is much older and was introduced in the 1990s by Albert Bandura and is rooted in his concept of self-efficacy. Hattie defines collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in the conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels

of attainment." Bandura (1997) found that the positive effects of CTE on student

academic performance more than outweigh the negative effects of other negative factors,

such as low socioeconomic status.

Morale, similarly related to CTE, can be defined as "the capacity of a group of

people to pull together persistently and consistently in pursuit of a common purpose"

(Leighton, as cited by Francis, 2010, para. 1). Morale can also be defined as "a way of

describing how people feel about their jobs, employers, and companies, and those

feelings are tied to the behaviors and attitudes that employees exhibit in the workplace,"

(Sheahan, 2020, para. 2). As (Willis & Varner, 2010) mentioned, it is very important for

educational leaders to be aware of factors that affect teacher morale and how they may

affect student achievement. There are some prevalent factors that are strongly believed to

affect a high or low level of teachers' work morale.

One of the most prevalent factors found through research on teacher morale

includes principals' transformational leadership. As discussed previously,

> transformational leadership, focuses more on change, and inspires followers to
> commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them
> to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers' leadership capacity
> via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support. (Bass &
> Riggo, 2006, as cited by Horn-Turpin, 2009, p. 16)

In his research study on factors that boost the morale of teachers, Randolph-

Robinson (2007) found that 60% of all the teachers interviewed had low morale. Further

investigation on the cause of this low morale revealed that while 80% had low morale as

a result of poor rapport between them and other teachers, 60% of the respondents also

cited poor leadership approach by the principal as the main cause of low morale. Further

investigation on the leadership approaches that the teachers generally preferred indicated

that free communication and collaboration between teachers and principals would lead to higher levels of morale. The findings by Randolph-Robinson (2007), in this case, can be argued to be significant in the transformational leadership context in two fronts.

First, leadership approaches that foster communication between principals and teachers would lead to higher levels of morale in the 60% of the teachers that indicated low morale. The literature presented in the previous sections presents a transformational leader as an individual who motivates by maintaining an open communication. Secondly, the poor rapport between teachers, which is the biggest factor leading to low morale would also be eliminated through transformational leadership as it has been established that this leadership approach encourages teamwork between individuals working towards a common goal. The principal, who is a transformational leader, would thus lead to higher morale in the teaching staff by evoking feelings of passion in the quest for better performance in the school.

Administrators can help sustain tether morale by treating teachers in ways that empower them, such as involving them in decisions about policies and acknowledging their expertise. Similarly, Littleford (2007 as cited by Werang, 2014, p. 692) stated, "High teacher morale occurs when the work environment is optimistic and teachers feel they have a purposeful job." These positive feelings are encouraged and promoted through the principal's leadership. Teachers become more productive, set higher standards, and perform better resulting in higher achievement for students when they feel enthusiastic about their purpose. Houchard (2005, pp. 30-31) recognized 13 essential factors of leadership that determined high morale. Those 13 essential factors are: (a) allow teachers to have input into decision making that directly affects curriculum,

instruction, and school climate; (b) recognize and appreciate teacher and student achievement; (c) promote a school climate that reflects a feeling of unity, pride, cooperation, acceptance of differences, and security; (d) maintain good communication; (e) promote opportunities for meaningful, professional growth; (f) encourage clear, shared goals; (g) endorse strong, supportive leadership; (h) provide quality time for collegial interaction, such as planning, educational dialogue, decision making, problem-solving; (i) provide a well maintained physical environment; (j) encourage good human relations, both within school and between school community; (k) encourage and reward risk-taking, innovation, and good teaching; (l) give attention to professional needs such as salary and benefits; and (m) give attention to personal needs such as stress management, good health, and social interaction.

Transformational Leadership and Teacher Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as "a positive emotional state that reflects an effective response to their job situation" (Locke, 1976). According to Mullins (2006), job satisfaction is an attitude or an internal state that could, for instance, be associated with a personal feeling of achievement, either qualitative or quantitative. Haorei (2012, p. 50) defined job satisfaction as "how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs." It is the extent to which people like "satisfaction" or dislike "dissatisfaction" their jobs. Besides, job satisfaction is also defined as "an effective emotional reaction to a job that results from the incumbent's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired" (Islam, Mohajan & Data, 2012)

Teachers' job satisfaction refers to the positive or negative aspects of teachers' attitude towards their jobs of teaching. Teachers' job satisfaction is "an evaluative

judgment about the degree of pleasure of a teacher derives from his or her job that consists of both affective and cognitive components" (Hulin & Judge, 2003 as cited by Edwards, Bell, Arthur & Decuir, 2008, p. 442). Teachers' job satisfaction provides a meaningful insight into the total return gained from the job of teaching since it indicates how teachers value the whole package of both pecuniary and non-pecuniary rewards according to their own expectations and personal preferences (Amador, Nicolas & Vila Lladosa, 2008, p. 3).

Agyei-Kyeremateng (2011, p. xii) concluded that "job satisfaction has a positive correlation with employee morale. Workers with high morale tend to perform better. Job satisfaction and morale are associated with absenteeism, lateness to work, complaints, less effort towards delivery and turnover." Islam et al. (2012), in their study, suggest that "job satisfaction can affect employee morale, turnover, absenteeism, and prosocial behavior which can be crucial for organizational success." Job satisfaction is important in any organization since it has a positive impact on work performance and overall organizational commitment (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2012). Agyei-Kyeremateng (2011), Islam et al. (2012), and (Hanaysha et al., 2012) agree on the positive performance expected when the people working in any organization are satisfied with their jobs. Hanaysha et al. (2012, p. 145) then evaluate the role of transformational leadership in the job satisfaction context by pointing out that "transformational leadership enables the creation of value system congruence between the leader and followers thus facilitating condition where the leader and followers motivate each other to achieve organizational goals." The previous research evaluated has shown that the close collaboration between leaders and their subordinates is what leads to employee motivation and it is the ability of

the leader to create a system that shows employees their level of progress towards specific goals that leads to job satisfaction according to Hanaysha et al. (2012).

In their research study investigating the impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction in the general context, Abouraia & Othman (2017), find that the adoption of the transformational leadership approach leads to a 42% higher level of job satisfaction in the organizations evaluated in the study. While these researchers evaluate the impact of the leadership approach as a whole, Hanaysha et al. (2012) offer a more detailed analysis in their study by breaking down transformational leadership into some of its constituent elements: charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Of these elements, the authors find a positive correlation between charisma and job satisfaction and intellectual stimulation and job satisfaction. However, individualized consideration shows a negative correlation indicating that employees have greater job satisfaction if leaders do not show them individual attention. A comparison of research studies by Abouraia & Othman (2017) and Hanaysha et al. (2012) reveals that although the overall positive correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, breaking down this transformational leadership and job satisfaction into their constituent elements would reveal more detail relating to how the observed job satisfaction occurs. It is thus important to evaluate the leadership approach by school principals in the light of these findings so as to make the most effective recommendations on how transformational leadership can be applied in schools.

According to Kouni, Koutsoukos, and Panta (2018), there are relatively few research studies that investigate the role of transformational leadership in the specific context of teachers and school principals. However, the few existing research findings

tend to concur with research findings that have been observed in other organizations with regards to transformational leadership. According to Yang (2013), the realization that transformational leadership leads to improvements in many different aspects of schools has resulted in principals focusing more on teacher motivation through emphasis on collective setting of goals and the establishment of trust among different teams in schools. In his research study, Yang (2013) reveals that transformational leadership by principals leads to, not only good performance in schools but also prompt development in the transformation of schools. Similarly, a study conducted by Ejimofor (2007), found that principals who create opportunities for meaningful teacher professional development are more likely to increase job satisfaction among teachers than principals who would not create such opportunities for their teachers (p. 89). Kouni et al. (2018) in their review of the literature present a study by Sayadi (2016) found that the relationship between teachers and their principals played a significant role in their level of job satisfaction when investigating the perceptions of over 380 teachers drawn from 42 schools in Iran. More specifically, the study finds teachers have a higher level of trust in their principals, which resulted from close interaction and genuine concern about the affairs of teachers including their career development. This led to teachers feeling more emotionally attached to the schools and the missions of the schools. In their research, Kouni et al. (2018) documented evidence that supports the finding that transformational leadership results in higher levels of job satisfaction. However, no research study was found to break down the leadership approach into its constituent elements as presented by Hanaysha et al. (2012) or finding the impact of each in the principal-teacher relationship. This, therefore, stands out as a detectable gap that should be explored in future research.

Transformational Leadership and Student Performance

While the motivation, morale, and job satisfaction of teachers are important indicators of the success of the principal leadership interventions, the ultimate measure that all the other school stakeholders are interested in is the performance of students. For that reason, it is important to present a critical analysis of how transformational leadership by principals in schools leads to improved performance for students. Since a wide range of literature has shown that transformational leadership is associated with positive teacher outcomes, it can be assumed that the morale and motivation of teachers are transferred to students and this can be seen from improved learning outcomes.

According to Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) while the academic progress of a school is an indication of the effectiveness of a school's instructional approaches. However, success is measured by a wide range of factors including the promotion of positive values, the creation of social and economic capabilities, in addition to academic performance of students. Nonetheless, academic performance is the main factor that can be measured directly within the school setting (Cruickshank, 2017).

Academic achievement as the direct measure of instructional effectiveness leads Day et al. (2016) to evaluate the role of leadership and its impact on sustained positive academic outcomes among students. Their research shows that the application of transformational leadership enables principals to lay out strategies in collaboration with teachers and students thus leading to the sharing of a common purpose and vision. This positive association between transformational leadership and student achievement is also seen in research studies by Cruickshank (2017). The consistency in the findings of these different research studies tends to suggest that the job satisfaction, morale, and

motivation of teachers under transformational leadership as seen in the literature evaluated leads to better instructional approaches that lead to a positive attitude towards learning in students.

According to El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal (2010), while there are many indicators of school performance, the one that is most important to parents is educational excellence among students. When provided the opportunity, parents in the United States select schools on the basis of their academic performance. Other factors such as co-curricular activities take a secondary role. In that regard, it is important that most leadership interventions in schools should focus mostly on achieving specific academic outcomes. Since it is teachers who deliver academic content to students, then the impact of transformational leadership on teachers still plays a role in the student performance context. In that regard, Koh, Steers, and Terborg (1995) document a study of 89 schools that evaluates the impact of transformational leadership on teacher satisfaction and commitment, then analyzes how these affect the performance of students. The findings indicate the level of student performance depends on the organizational commitment, and job satisfaction among teachers. Commitment is an indication of how teachers are likely to take on challenging situations and deal with them accordingly. This implies that a teacher with a high level of commitment will be more persistent with weak students thus improving their chances of succeeding in their academics.

The arguments and findings presented in the sources evaluated above indicate that transformational leadership in the school context acts on teachers first and then the positive outcomes in teachers lead to positive student performance. A valid question at this point would be; "Does the application of transformational leadership by principals

lead to any direct student achievement outcomes?" Answering this question would help

reveal whether the leadership approach applied by principals is entirely dependent on

how teachers perceive it. Finding that it is possible for principals to directly influence the

performance of students through transformational leadership will help in the

establishment of more focused leadership interventions for both teachers and students

thus leading to even better outcomes at the instructor and learner levels.

  In his review of the literature, Cruickshank (2017) finds that in motivating

students, principals who are transformational leaders focus on improving teaching.

Principals also put deliberate effort in improving learning. Learning is a student-focused

factor that involves the provision of facilities and a conducive environment that allows

students to work independently toward the collective goals of their school, supported by

effective teaching. In a research study that aims at establishing the relationship between

transformational leadership and school climate conducted by Allen, Grigsby, and Peters

(2015), it was found that principals who apply transformational leadership are able to

create a good teaching and learning climate for teachers and students respectively, and

this leads better performance by the students. The findings by Allen et al. (2015) and the

arguments presented by Cruickshank (2017) indicate that transformational leadership by

principals plays a direct role in the learning outcomes of students in learning institutions.

However, the vast majority of studies on transformational leadership that leads to

improved academic outcomes for students reveal that school principals who employ this

leadership approach are more dependent on teachers to achieve the targeted success. It

can be concluded that for principals applying transformational leadership to achieve

improved academic performance in students, they must rely on teachers and so factors such as teacher motivation, morale, and job satisfaction play a primary role.

Transformational Leadership by School Principals in Pennsylvania

There are many research studies addressing the impact of transformational leadership in schools; however, studies that focus on specific states such as Pennsylvania are few. This notwithstanding, the few sources that are available will provide invaluable information on the school leadership situation in the state.

Kieres and Gutmore (2014) investigated the level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction resulting from transformational leadership in their research study involving 156 high school teachers drawn from 5 schools in Pennsylvania. The findings show that idealized influence, one of the dimensions of transformational leadership, has no effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Charisma and individualized consideration, on the other hand, were found to positively impact the level of job satisfaction and job commitment. These findings are inconsistent with those presented by Hanaysha et al. (2012) who found individualized consideration as the factor that is negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

The inconsistency in findings between Hanaysha et al. (2012) and Kieres and Gutmore (2014) could be as a result of differences in study methodologies and data analysis procedures. However, this does not rule out the possibility that the difference in the causes of job satisfaction can be as a result of the differences in the populations studied. This would imply that teachers in Pennsylvania are more motivated by individualized consideration than idealized influence. However, it is difficult at this point

to determine the actual case due to the fact that research studies focusing specifically on Pennsylvania are scarce.

Pennsylvania Principals Association - Principal of the Year Award

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NASEP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) have a "National Principal of the Year" program that recognizes outstanding elementary, middle level and high school principals. The program annually honors school principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession. Each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools, and the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity selects one elementary, and one middle level or high school principal to represent their state.

The Pennsylvania Principals Association awards one prestigious principal from either a public or private institution per year for their accomplishments and dedication at the elementary and secondary level. The identified individual nominated must have evidence of outstanding leadership for his or her students, staff, community and peers.

In order to be considered a candidate for this award, the nominee must be a member of NASEP or NASSP and the PA Principals Association; and must have held the role of principal for three or more consecutive years. Previous state and national winners are eligible to win after a minimum period of five years. No members of the PA Principals Association Executive Committee are eligible. The identified award winner must possess strong evidence in the following four categories: (a) personal excellence, (b) collaborative leadership, (c) curriculum, instruction and assessment, and

(d) personalization. Evident of outstanding contributions to the well-being of the

educational community much include ways in which the principal's leadership has

benefited curriculum, staff morale, community support, student interest and the learning

environment; increasing or consistently high levels of student achievement as

demonstrated on the statewide assessment instrument; ways in which the principal

provides creative leadership to inspire teachers and others to achieve and contribute to the

school environment; examples of service or achievements above and beyond what is

expected in the usual school program; and ways in which others have acknowledged the

principal as a force for positive change.

Upon receipt of a nomination form, the nominee's membership will be verified

and if appropriate, an application packet will be immediately sent via email to the

nominee for completion. Any person is able to nominate an individual and the winner is

selected by a committee of previously identified award recipients. The award recipient is

selected based on the evidence they submitted in their application packet, interview

session and site visit ratings. The required evidence, interview and site visit are rated

using a scale. The researcher did not review the nominations or submitted application

packets that led to the recognitions.

Gaps in the Literature

This literature review has revealed a number of gaps that would offer valuable

insight if explored. For the purposes of this research study, only a few of those gaps are

relevant. First of all, while the definition of transformational leadership is quite clear in

the theoretical discussions provided, no research study has yet attempted to provide a

working definition that has been applied by principals at the school level. In that regard,

in order to provide an answer to the first research question which is related to how the Pennsylvania State Association defines outstanding leadership at the principal level, it is important to explore a working definition for the concept within the school leadership context.

Secondly, there are no sources describing the actual actions of a principal that is a transformational leader. For example, while the leadership approach has been found to positively influence the motivation, morale, and job satisfaction of teachers, no source actually describes the specific activities that principals applying this kind of leadership engage in to achieve the mentioned outcomes among the teachers they supervise. For that reason, this research will focus on answering the second research question by evaluating how principals who are identified as transformational leaders by the Pennsylvania Principal Association describe their work.

Focusing on these two gaps will lead to a clearer understanding of the definition of transformational leadership at the principal level. This understanding will, in turn, help in the comparison of the definition and the actual leadership interventions who are regarded as transformational leaders have put in place in different schools in Pennsylvania. As a result, any disconnect between the theoretical expectations of a principal who is a transformational leader and the actual activities carried out by these principals will be identified. It is the hope that the research conducted and findings from this study will provide evidence for focal points in designing educational administration training systems, professional developments and ultimately the principal selection process that will ensure the best possible outcomes for schools.

Summary

This chapter has provided an analysis of previous research studies that have been conducted in the context of transformational leadership in school principals. Notably, the responsibilities and roles of school principals have changed significantly over the last few decades. Alvoid and Black (2014) highlight why this transition is necessary. A vast majority of the research conducted on transformational leadership both in general and within the specific context of learning institutions presents the leadership style as one that leads to multiple positive outcomes, hence its popularity among school principals in the contemporary learning institutions.

Prior research has found that transformational leadership leads to a transformation of organizational culture (Dion et al., 2004; Kurland et al., 2010). As a result of the close communication between leaders and their subordinates, research indicates that adopting this leadership style encourages close coordination among employees and between employees and their students. This way, a teamwork culture is established in which all individuals work together towards achieving the objectives of their organization. A wide range of research studies is also presented supporting this adoption of collaborative cultures in schools with principals who are transformational leaders.

More specifically, most of the research studies evaluated look into the specific impact of transformational leadership on employees in general. Studies by Amin, Kamal & Sohail (2018), and Jiang (2017), identify higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction as the main positive effects of transformational leadership. Such observations are found to be made in the school environments where teachers working with principals who employ the transformational leadership approach have high levels of motivation, job

satisfaction, and morale. It is, however, appreciated that the ultimate outcome of any learning institution is the learning outcomes of the students. Researchers such as Day et al. (2016) and Cruickshank (2017) looked for links between the transformational leadership employed by principals and the student academic outcomes. They reveal the positive effects on teachers motivation, job satisfaction, and morale, which lead teachers to develop better teaching interventions thus leading to positive academic outcomes for students. In addition, sources showing direct impacts of transformational leadership on student performance were sought. However, most sources present transformational leadership as effective in student performance indirectly since the performance of students is dependent on the motivation and commitment of teachers above anything else.

Ultimately, it is appreciated that this research will be focused on evaluating transformational leadership among school principals in the state of Pennsylvania. However, research focusing on this area is scant and therefore does not provide any direct answers close to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The literature also fails to identify practical definitions for transformational leadership that are directly tied to school principals. In addition, no sources focus on describing the work of a school principal who is a transformational leader. This research will thus be among the first to provide these crucial answers in the context of schools in Pennsylvania. The subsequent sections of this research will thus provide the data collection methods, data analysis and discussion with the ultimate aim being to bridge the gaps identified in the literature.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter gives an outline of research methods that will be followed in the study. It provides the criteria for participant inclusion in the study, who the participants will be and how they will be selected. The researcher will describe the research design that is chosen for the purpose of this study and the reasons for this choice. The instrument that will be used for data collection is also described and the procedures that will be followed to carry out this study are included. The researcher will also discuss the methods used to analyze the data, including mention of ethical issues.

Research Question

How do principals identified by the Pennsylvania Principal Association as being "distinguished" describe their work relative to the theoretical domains of transformational leadership?

Rationale

Given increasing expectations of principals, understanding how those designated as distinguished describe their work can offer valuable insights. Using qualitative methods to gain an understanding of the perceptions of principals who have been identified by peers as among the best in the field, we can gain insight into how to more effectively prepare, support, and sustain others. This firsthand knowledge from award-winning principals can lead to insights for other practitioners, districts, and university programs that prepare building leaders.

Research Strategy

Qualitative methods were used to conduct interviews with Pennsylvania principals designated as distinguished by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. A qualitative approach offers a number of advantages. First, the purpose of the study was to illuminate the extent to which five principals, who have been identified as "Principal of the Year" by the Pennsylvania Principals Association, described their work in ways that align with the theory of transformational leadership. Further, "Interviewing is the most common format of data collection in qualitative research," states Jamshed (2014, p.87). Therefore, questions were designed to seek understanding of how these award-winning principals function in the schools where they lead and the extent to which their descriptions align with transformational leadership. As such, the requirements of the study justified qualitative research as the most appropriate method of this study.

The qualitative interview method is flexible and easily adaptable to fit the environment. "If useful insights are not being captured researchers can quickly adapt questions, change the setting or any other variable to improve responses" Jamshed (2014, p. 88). Since the study focused on five principals in different school districts, it required a versatile research method that takes unique contexts and settings into account. The environment for study varied between school districts in Pennsylvania. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education website (2020), "the commonwealth's K-12 education system serves more than 1.7 million students. Pennsylvania's 500 school districts range in size from approximately 200 students to more than 140,000 students." The research tool used was open-ended interview questions. The intent of this approach was to amplify the opportunity and ability for respondents to describe their work in their

own words so that it can be compared to the identified components of transformational leadership.

Cost efficiency was the third benefit of qualitative methods. It is essential to note that research cost is a paramount factor when undertaking a study that contributes to the quality and reliability of obtained information.

> Many qualitative research projects can be completed quickly and on a limited budget because they typically use smaller sample sizes than other research methods. This allows for faster results to be obtained so that projects can move forward with confidence. (Gaille, 2020, para. 13)

Context of Study

The researcher used purposive sampling to obtain participants in the study. Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about, or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, Klassen, Plano-Clark & Smith, 2011). In this case, potential participants were Pennsylvania school principals who have been designated by the Pennsylvania Principals Association as distinguished. Award recipients were identifiable from a publication on the association's website (Pennsylvania Principals Association, 2019).

As noted above, the context of P-12 education in Pennsylvania added to the unique nature of the project. There are numerous elementary, secondary, and higher institutions of learning in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which is home to 500 public school districts, thousands of private schools, many publicly funded colleges and

universities, and over 100 private institutions of higher education. The identified, award-winning participants serve in a variety of districts from all over the state of Pennsylvania.

Because recipients are publicly identified, it was anticipated that the opportunity to describe the way they practice school leadership may be appealing to potential participants. In addition to being honored as principals for their leadership, the National Association of School Principals (2019) share their success by showcasing their best practices in a document for other principals to utilize. To emphasize knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

The study focused on a specific subject matter that required specific responses from the relevant respondents. The research targeted principals in K-12 schools in Pennsylvania who have been awarded the PA "Principal of the Year" award. The sample size consisted of five principals from five different school districts in Pennsylvania.

According to the purposive sampling procedure, principals who had received the award were contacted via email using a list of recipients posted on the Pennsylvania Principals Association website. The five most recent identified principals were contacted via email, requesting their participation using the recruiting script (Appendix A). The researcher continued to contact people from the list of Pennsylvania "Principal of the Year" award recipients, one by one, until the researcher was able to identify five principals to consent to participate in the research.

Moreover, to minimize the likelihood of respondents changing plans about participating in the interviews, the researcher contacted each of the five principals to remind and confirm the interview appointments. Adjustments were made depending on the availability of the respondent. The school principals were encouraged to volunteer their time for in-depth interviews. The researcher reiterated the purpose of the study for voluntary participation and adherence to ethical standards of conducting the research.

Besides the effectiveness and economic benefits of the purposive sampling method, the technique was appropriate for the intuitive approach. The discovery of the meaning of transformational leadership at the principal level by including their words, their descriptions and their explanations, led to the selection of purposive sampling as an appropriate sampling procedure. The research questions guided the sampling technique.

Furthermore, the limited number of primary sources of data for this study occasions the appropriateness of the purposive sampling method. The five respondents who contributed to the study were identified according to the researcher's judgment. The researcher believed that they sufficiently provided credible information according to the research questions. Therefore, the limited number of sources of primary data validates the use of purposive sampling technique.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher had worked in education for eleven years and holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a minor in Special Education and a Master of Science in Educational Administration. The researcher has field experience in urban, suburban and rural school districts and has held positions in both instructional and

administrative roles in the Pennsylvania public school system. The desire to connect with students and develop meaningful relationships that foster lifelong learning is the motivation for the researchers investment in education and educational research. The researcher believes that, specifically, administrators have the capability to impact instructional outcomes and general school experiences for a large number of students. The researcher also believes that school administrators have the opportunity to create relationships with many students, over many years. These beliefs lead the researcher to the topic of transformational leadership in education.

No participant had a direct relationship with the researcher that represents a conflict of interest, such as a reporting relationship, contract, or any relationship with the researcher that may impact bias on the research study. The researcher has been trained in the skills necessary to carry out the designed study. The researcher has interviewed multiple people with intent to hire during her career. The researcher has specific training in qualitative research methods and qualitative approaches to educational research.

The researcher adhered to ethical principles in conducting the study. According to Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden (2000, p. 93), "ethics pertains to doing good and avoiding harm." The considerations will be prioritized to ensure that the research is within the guidelines of a dissertation. Ramos (1989, p.58) described "three types of problems that may affect qualitative studies: the researcher/participant relationship, the researcher's subjective interpretations of data, and the design itself." Before the formulation of interview questions, the researcher identified possible ethical research issues and the mitigations of the same. For example, the researcher avoided any form of language that can infringe on the rights and respect of the respondents, such as, the researcher speaking

in English and used full descriptions as opposed to acronyms when presenting interview

questions. Capron (1989) believed that any kind of research should be guided by the

principles of respect for people, beneficence, and justice. Ethical considerations shall

guide every interview session during this study. The privacy of the setting was

emphasized to ensure that confidentiality is maintained during the entire session.

Although the winners of the award were publicly identified, they were not identified in

the study and no identifiable characteristics were shared in the final report. The names of

the respondents were withheld to maintain anonymity, and instead, the researcher will use

pseudonyms for all persons, places, and school districts, and no identifying details about

their schools or communities will be shared. The purpose of the study was reiterated to

reinforce the purpose of the research.

The research presented ten open-ended questions that were designed to allow

respondents to highlight their work in regards to transformational leadership in education.

The researcher acknowledged the importance of anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy

during and after the interviews. The researcher withheld the names of the five principals

and instead used pseudonyms to refer to them. The ethnic and cultural background will

also remain undisclosed. The interviewees were assured of the privacy of the research

data and that any future disclosure of their data would be through their consent. The

interviews were conducted via telephone; therefore, the researcher adhered to strict

ethical requirements of anonymity and confidentiality of the principals.

The following open-ended were designed in accordance to the four identified

domains of transformational leadership, with the element of probing. The following

interview questions were used to explore the research questions of this study (see Table

1).

Table 1

Interview Questions

Domains of Transformational Leadership	Interview Questions and Probes
Idealized Influence	1. What is your mission and vision as a principal? (Probes: what is the school district's vision and mission? Who is at the forefront of the design?)
Idealized Influence	2. Do you have an identified set of leaders in your building who follow a core set of values? (Probe: would you consider these individuals to be inventive, risk takers?)
Inspiration Motivation	3. Each school year, have you established goals as a principal? Describe your process for developing the goals and h you shared those goals with your faculty, students and community members? (Probes: How does the principal pose a sense of purpose and motivation?)
Inspirational Motivation	4. Have you met the set goals and how do you measure your success? (Probes: what influence does the principal have on establishing goals?)
Intellectual Stimulation	5. In the previous year, have teachers suggested new ways of improving learning outcomes? If yes, what kind of innovations did they bring for consideration? How was this communicated? (Probe: does the principal provide intellectual stimulation?)
Intellectual Stimulation	6. Have you applied or considered applying the suggested innovations? If so, what did you do? (Probe: What indicates a productive school culture?)
Individualized Consideration	7. How frequently do you interact with the students and teachers to check on their welfare? (Probe: does the principal provide individualized support?)
Intellectual Stimulation	8. Do you hold forums where students and teachers participate in finding solutions to emerging issues? (Probe: what do you do to foster participation in decision-making?)
Inspirational Motivation	9. What values and practices are in place to guide the teachers and students in this school? (Probe: what are the existing models for best practices and organizational values?)
Individualized Consideration	10. Have you set academic and behavioral standards for the general population in the school? What mechanisms are used to promote the achievement of those standards? (Probe: what are the expectations in terms of academic standards in the school, how is inspirational motivation promoted?)

The research adhered to the advocacy and safety of the respondents. The interviewees consisted of five principals from five different school districts. The researcher ensured that the interactions during the interview considered the rights and safety of the respondents. In other terms, the researcher avoided infringement of the rights and safety of the interviewees by designing appropriate interview questions that had been strategically designed to align to the domains of transformation leadership in education. The risks related to the research, which were minimal, were explained in plain language without withholding any information. The respondents were also advised that they are free to discontinue participation at any point during the research and interview process.

The researcher also adhered to the concept of beneficence, which means "doing good." "In qualitative inquiry, researchers are to maximize the benefits to individuals who participate in research. At the same time, qualitative researchers are to ensure that participants, and possibly the community at large, gain something valuable from the findings" according to Hays and Singh (2012, p. 79). The researcher understood that the main aim of any study was to benefit the people and improve their welfare without any harm. Accordingly, the purpose of the study was presented to the five principals in the recruitment script (Appendix A), along with the potential benefits to other principals, school districts, universities, etc.. Participants were ensured that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they may choose to end their participation at any time without consequence.

No deception was used in the study. Participants were informed that the sole purpose of the study was to illuminate the extent to which five principals, identified as

outstanding leaders by the Pennsylvania Principals Association, describe their work in ways that align with the theory of transformational leadership.

The study also adhered to the ethical issue of avoiding any physical or psychological harm referred to as non-maleficence (Gelling, 2015). The researcher disclosed that there are no anticipated risks associated with the study. The purpose of the study was explained to prospective participants who will be free to answer from their own perspectives and experiences. The researcher did not force or coerce the interviewees to give information. The conversations were open and free to ensure that the data obtained is to the best of the respondent's knowledge.

The researcher exercised the principle of voluntary and informed response from the respondents. As the SAGE Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods (2008, p. 217) noted, "Voluntary participation refers to a human research subject's exercise of free will in deciding whether to participate in a research activity." This principle is among the most important ethical considerations in any research. The researcher focused on expressing confidence in the subject matter by explaining the aim and benefit of the study to the respondents. The purpose of disclosing all truth about the study was to enable a voluntary and informed approach in responding to the interview questions.

The researcher assured the principals of privacy and confidentiality of the information given during the interview by using only pseudonyms for individuals, schools, and school districts and using no identifying physical or other characteristics in the final reporting of results;

The researcher also informed the respondents that they are at liberty to participate in the interview or discontinue their participation at any point during the session, depending on their decision. Therefore, the information obtained about transformational leadership will be legitimate and of a high standard for the success of the study.

Data Collection Methods

Five award winning principals, as defined by the Pennsylvania Principals Association, from five school districts in Pennsylvania were identified and, specifically, those five principals will have been previously awarded for exemplary leadership in their respective schools.

The study took place via telephone interviews and the interviews were conducted in a closed-door room to promote the privacy of the conversations and data thereof. The participants selected their location to conduct the telephone interview. According to Elwood and Martin, (2000, p. 656),

> Participants who are given a choice about where they will be interviewing may feel more empowered in their interaction with the researcher, and the researcher has an opportunity to examine participants' choices for clues about the social geographies of the places where research is being carried out.

The phone interviews took place on a mutually agreed upon date and time , and the researcher conducted all five interviews from a private, in-home office. The interviewees had the freedom to select the location of where they chose to complete the phone interview, which entail, determined their desired level of privacy.

With consent, the interviews were audio recorded. The recordings of the five individuals were then transcribed by the researcher. According to Davidson (2009),

transcription of interviews helps the interviewer to ensure the accuracy of the content

when listening to the audio-tape while reading the transcript to avoid misinterpretation of

data. The recording and transcriptions were stored on the researcher's personal computer,

which has passcode access and is not accessible to any individuals aside from the

researcher. The recordings and the transcriptions were stored on the researchers personal

device for one year concluding the completion of the research. The transcribed interviews

were then coded.

Ethical considerations guided every interview session during the study. The

privacy of the setting was emphasized to ensure that confidentiality is maintained during

the entire session. The names of the respondents were withheld to maintain anonymity,

and instead, the researcher used pseudonyms for all persons, places, school districts, etc..

The purpose of the study was reiterated to reinforce the purpose of the research.

Ten open-ended questions that have been aligned with the domains of

transformational leadership were posed to each participant, in addition to further probing

questions intended to elicit more detail from the participants. Participating principals

were encouraged to express themselves freely in every question.

Interview Instrument and Protocol

First, the interview questions were structured as open-ended to enable in-depth

interviews with the five principals. Although the interview questions were open-ended,

the researcher restrained the interviewee to the topic if they digress. Therefore, the

exploratory interview format allowed the researcher more flexibility in covering all issues

related to the topic under investigation.

The interview questions were strategically designed to encompass the four domains of Transformation Leadership as per Popper, Mayseless and Castelnovo (2000). Questions 1 and 2 encompass idealized influence; questions 3, 4 and 9 encompass inspirational motivation; questions 5, 6 and 8 encompass intellectual stimulation and questions 7 and 10 encompass individualized concern. They are open-ended with the element of probing, as indicated in the enumerated questions above.

Each principal was interviewed one at a time, and the probes on each question guided the responses. Also, the researcher will be keen to ensure the exactness of the details provided by the interviewees. Clarification on internal differences were sought to promote the researcher's understanding of the participant's perspectives. The researcher sought clarification of words and terms used by the respondents while encouraging their opinions on the topic under discussion.

Data Analysis Strategy

This study used a qualitative research design, informed by ethnography and narrative techniques, to explore and compare the practice of five principals who have been named Pennsylvania "Principal of the Year" as awarded by the Pennsylvania Principals Association, and how their practice aligned to the definition of Transformational Leadership. Ethnography is the study of social interaction and culture groups, whether these groups are defined as societies, communities, organizations or teams. The central aim of ethnography is to provide rich, holistic insights into peoples' worldviews and actions, as well as the nature of the location they inhabit (Hughes 1992). As Hammersley (1985) stated, "the task of ethnographers is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices of the people in these settings. The aim is to 'get inside' the

way each group of people sees the world" (p. 152). In this research, I sought to get inside the ways in which these identified the principals describe their work.

Upon conclusion of all five interviews, the interviews were transcribed. Although Fasick (1977) originally doubted the usefulness of transcripts, they are now used extensively, with a wide range of possibilities as to how transcripts are produced, whether the transcript is naturalized and the writing reflects words being said, or denaturalized and the writing reflects ideas being said (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2000). In this particular research, the transcripts will be naturalized, but it is important to recognize that, according to Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998), the transcript should "only be a reference tool" (p.74).

As explained by Duranti (1997), the ability to stop the flow of discourse allows researchers to focus on details, such as hesitations, restarts, and cut-offs in participants' speech (see also Hamo, Blum-Kulka & Hacohen, 2004; Heritage, 1984; Silverman, 1993). Moreover, transcripts from a phone conversation help prevent infatuation with the field, which occurs when researchers become too close to participants and their world, by providing physical and emotional distance between the researcher and the field (Hamo et al., 2004). Transcripts are therefore "an essential corrective to the limitations of intuition and recollection" (Heritage, 1984, p. 238). In short, transcripts are more complete and more reliable than field notes (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999) and will be an essential part of the data analysis component. Kieren and Munro (1985) confirm that this method also increases the validity of data collection ranging from 13% to 34%.

After data collection through the in-depth interviews and transcription is complete, the information was analyzed through deductive reasoning. The data was triangulated, "which involves the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data" (Thurmond, 2001, p. 254). This method typically entails using professionals outside of a particular field of study and to bring together people from different disciplines; however, individuals within disciplines may be used as long as they are in different status positions. It is believed that individuals from different disciplines or positions bring different perspectives, therefore, Dr. Nick Pace, professor and chair of the Department of Educational Administration from the University of Nebraska will be included in the data analysis.

The researcher was the primary tool for data analysis to determine the comparison of feedback from the five principals who play the role of critical informants for the research. According to The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods (2017, p.337), "Primary data analysis is the original analysis of data collected for a research study. Analyzing primary data is the process of making sense of the collected data to answer research questions or support or reject research hypotheses that a study is originally designed to assess." The interview transcripts and notes taken during the sessions were screened to determine patterns and themes that explore the subject matter. The researcher applied exploratory interviews that provide for in-depth probing of the respondents. Therefore, the nature of the interviews guided the selection of a data analysis strategy.

The research adopted a constant comparative analysis strategy to process the information provided by the five respondents. Constant comparison, as defined by Beck,

Bryman and Liao (2004, p. 1006), "is the data-analytic process whereby each interpretation and finding is compared with existing findings as it emerges from the data analysis." The selection of this strategy was justified by the nature of research, such as the limited number of respondents. Since the interview questions were similar for all respondents, the primary task will be to analyze the responses of each interviewee based on the selected pattern and theme. The researcher will develop some background questions like: how are the responses related? Furthermore, why is one response different from the other? These guiding questions provided a basis for comparing the responses which contributed to the formulation of robust findings for discussion.

The constant comparative analysis strategy focused on the major themes discussed in the background of this study. The themes included the characteristics of transformational leadership, which are the idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation. The interview questions are designed in a manner that leads to a discussion of those themes. Every couple of questions focused on one element of transformational leadership applied by the selected principals. Each theme was compared across all accounts or interview sessions. The findings were classified together for comparison and identification of differences or similarities among the five respondents.

The coding process was used for the analysis of the responses, starting with initial coding. "Coding is the process of analyzing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way" (Creswell, 2015, p. 156). The process involves the search and examination of the similarities and differences in the data from the interview sessions. This examination was essential to

understand the theme direction and the possible theoretical framework of the findings. Each question analyzed based on the response across the five interviews. The researcher focused on first-hand information from respondents.

Pattern coding is referred to as the second level system of coding. Pattern coding helped identify and explore the major themes of the study. Coding is an almost universal process in qualitative research; it is a fundamental aspect of the analytical process and the ways in which researchers break down their data to make something new. Under the constant comparative analysis, it is crucial to explain the themes that arise from responses in interviews. Second level coding tends to focus on patterns. "Pattern codes pull together material into a smaller number of more meaningful units.... a pattern code is a more abstract concept that brings together less abstract, more descriptive codes." (Punch, 2014, p. 174). The patterns for the themes were also identified during the search for the causes of individual responses. Furthermore, the researcher was open-minded to any possible phenomenon. The researcher remained unbiased concerning any response from the respective schools. Pattern coding helped in identification of themes of transformational leadership in schools, which will contribute to the construction of the theoretical framework of the subject matter.

The constant comparative analysis strategy provided a platform for exploring the traits of transformational leadership among the five principals from different school districts. The data analysis strategy will link various themes and patterns with the subject matter. The interviews were reviewed with a more informed approach to link the responses to the expectations of the research. Therefore, the constant comparative

analysis strategy sufficiently influenced the outcome of the research more profoundly through an appropriate address to the research questions.

Summary

How principals, identified by the Pennsylvania Principal Association as being "Principal of the Year," describe their work relative to the domains of transformational leadership theory was the focus of this research study. Using qualitative methods to gain an understanding of the perspectives of principals who have been identified by peers as being among the best in the field, we gained awareness of how to more effectively prepare, support, and sustain others in similar positions. The theoretical framework of transformational leadership in education could only be accounted for through research. The outcomes justified the use of a qualitative research method, through interviews as the primary research tool. The ethnographic research method provided affluent and abundant insights into peoples' views and actions. Due to the limited number of respondents, the purposive sampling method was most appropriate and useful for the study. The research questions require an exploratory investigation of principals' practice of transformational leadership, which was addressed by a purposive sampling procedure. Ethical considerations guided the research design through strategic formulation of interview questions. Therefore, the applied methodology satisfied all ethical considerations as a prerequisite of the analysis of reliable data by a constant comparative analysis strategy.

Chapter 4

Analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined and described the methods used during the collection and analysis of data. This chapter focuses on the results from semi-structured interviews with five award-winning principals in Pennsylvania and how their descriptions of their work reflect the theory of Transformational Leadership.

The study used a qualitative research design to how the five identified "Principal of the Year" recipients' describe their work relative to the theoretical domains of Transformational Leadership. As indicated in Chapter 3, interviews were conducted via telephone predetermined dates and times. The call was conducted on speakerphone and a second device was used to record the conversation. Following interviews, the conversations were transcribed, allowing the researcher to capture original, nuanced responses in respondents' own words. Ten open-ended questions aligned with the domains of Transformational Leadership were posed, allowing the researcher to examine their work through the lens of Transformational Leadership. The following are the questions that were used for the interviewing process (see Table 1).

Following interviews and transcription, the documents were coded to identify common themes, as outlined in Chapter 3. The researcher began by browsing through the transcripts and making notes of first impressions. At this point, the researcher was searching for common themes. Next, the researcher read each transcript carefully. Evidence of themes became stronger, helping to hone in on important insights.

The researcher also sought to identify potential areas of bias during this step as well. Biases can appear in the data, among the interviewees, and even within the objectives and methodologies. According to SAGE Handbook for Qualitative Research (2017), researchers should acknowledge preconceived notions and actively work to neutralize them at this early step. In an effort to organize data for dissemination, the researcher made annotations. During this process, the researcher identified relevant words, phrases, sentences, or sections with codes. These codes helped identify important types and patterns. Labels referenced actions, activities, concepts, differences, opinions, or processes.

Next, the researcher conceptualized the data. This is the process of aligning data with critical themes that are later used in published content. The researcher then segmented the data. Segmentation is the process of positioning and connecting the themes. This allowed the researcher to establish the bulk of the data in a cohesive way. The researcher started by labeling categories, and then described the connections between them. Once the data was segmented on a spreadsheet, the researcher began to determine if there was a hierarchy among the themes. The researcher analyzes if one theme was more powerful or important than others in this practice.

To conceptualize the interviews, the researcher grouped the themes created during annotation. Some themes were eliminated while others were condensed, rather than using all the codes created. At this stage, the researcher kept only the codes deemed relevant to the analysis.

Population and Sample

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five principals who had received awards for "Principal of the Year'' presented by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. All five principals who participated in the study did so voluntarily. Three participants identified as male and two female. Respondents' ages ranged from 34 to 52 and each had between six and 15 years of teaching experience. Three of the five principals had earned master's degrees, while the other two had earned a credential beyond the master's. Enrollment in the principals' schools ranged from just over 400 to nearly 700 students. Table 2 (Participant Summary) presents an overview of the principals and their settings and backgrounds.

Themes

Analysis of interview data yielded five broad and interrelated themes, which describe the ways the award-winning principals described their work. The themes, which are tied together throughout, include School Culture, Staff Influence, Academic Emphasis, Student Achievement, and Student Engagement. Each theme is described in the section that follows. The chapter concludes with an examination of the themes through the lens of the theory of Transformational Leadership.

Theme 1: School Culture. The principals identified several variables that contribute to the performance of a school. These variables can be understood beneath the broad heading of School Culture, which the principals defined as the way teachers and other staff members work together, and the set of beliefs, values, and assumptions they share. The principals asserted that an effective school culture promotes students' ability to learn.

Table 2

Participant Summary

Principal	Age	Gender	School Enrollment	Community	Education Level	Years Experience as a Teacher	Years Experience as a Principal
Andrew	34	Male	423	Suburban	Doctoral	6	7
Ryan	44	Male	690	Urban	Masters	10	12
Bryan	52	Male	505	Suburban	Masters	11	14
Jennifer	47	Female	636	Rural	Doctoral	15	10
Amanda	52	Female	590	Urban	Masters	14	16

The principals described focused efforts and behaviors intended to ensure that an appropriate school culture is developed to boost student performance. The principals emphasized that this encompasses more than concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity. Beyond these basic components, they described efforts to develop and sustain a school culture that reflects both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices, and it is heavily shaped by a school's particular institutional history.

For example, Amanda described how she generates clear, open communication with parents of her students because it can help to avoid misunderstandings and remove feelings of mistrust or hostility. Ryan stated, "the school day and school year should be punctuated with time for fun. This helps students engage with each other in positive events and builds morale in school." Students, parents, teachers, staff members and specifically school administrators all contribute to their school's culture, as do other influences, such as the community in which the school is located, the policies that govern how it operates, or the principles upon which the school was founded.

The principals described a positive school culture as conducive to professional satisfaction, morale, and effectiveness, as well as to student learning, fulfillment, and well-being. They described a variety of characteristics that they view as essential components of a vibrant School Culture and the efforts and behaviors they employ to build and sustain this kind of environment.

First, the principals frequently described the importance of individual successes of teachers and students being recognized and celebrated. Jenny enthusiastically said that "celebrations are in fact a brilliant and joyful way to teach children what you believe in; what you want everyone to know is most important whether that be behaviorally, academically, truancy related, growth or all of those items combined." Three of the principals alluded to their belief that relationships and interactions are characterized by openness, trust, respect, and appreciation. Specifically, Amanda said "staff relationships are collegial, collaborative, and productive, and begin with all staff members being held to high professional standards." When students and staff members feel emotionally and physically safe, and the school's policies and facilities promote student safety, "the focus can be mainstreamed to the planning, preparation and delivery of high quality instructional practices," Andrew explained.

School leaders, teachers, and staff members model positive, healthy behaviors for students. Bryan shared his belief that "although in any school a range of leadership patterns exists, among principals, assistant principals, formal and informal teacher leaders, and parents, the principal remains the central source of leadership influence." Since the principal remains the central source of influence, Bryan also mentioned that "mistakes should not be punished as *failures*; instead they should be seen as opportunities to learn and grow for both students and educators." Failure can damage emotionally, embarrass socially and threaten self-image. "By using the opportunity to coach, you deepen trust and enhance collaboration," he explained.

Another important component of establishing a school culture described by the principals is ensuring that leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from

staff members, students, and parents. The principals emphasized the belief that all parents should have the same kind of opportunity to contribute to their children's education. "This type of involvement makes you understand what ownership really means," Jenny said. Creating relationships based on equality between parents and teachers can challenge assumptions and allow faculty members and parents to realize they share common goals for their children's education.

Furthermore, the principals explained that educational resources and learning opportunities should be equitably distributed, to all students, including minorities and students with disabilities. "We are obligated to provide a world-class education to help ensure that all children in this country with dreams and determination can reach their potential and succeed," Amanda described. They saw themselves at the forefront of improving outcomes for students through major education initiatives. "We must put forth our best efforts to ensure quality teaching in every classroom, raise standards for all students, build systems to improve instruction, and significantly focus on the low-performing," Andrew explained. In doing so, school communities' help all students develop the knowledge and skills they need to be engaged and become productive members of society.

Theme 2: Staff Influence. Second, the principals described staff influence, or the overall level of cooperation present in the school, as a second key focus of their work. They described their efforts to model cooperation to teachers, students, families, and community with the goal that others would embrace a cooperative spirit. They explained ongoing efforts to help staff develop appropriate relationships. It was mentioned by Andrew that, "Influence is power. No matter who you are, where you work, or what your

professional goals are, gaining influence on a team can help you work together more effectively." In general, many of the principals believed that gaining influence in a supervisory position makes a leader more respected and appreciated and leads to staff influence and cooperation.

Notably, each principal spoke at length about the importance of trust as a foundation of influence. Andrew shared a profound experience during his principal tenure and shared that

> I noticed my secretary placing sheets of paper on the counter in the main office. She must have seen my inquisitive look because she stopped and explained that they were time sheets for teachers. The previous principal was concerned about the tardiness of a few teachers, so he required time sheets for everyone. I quickly discussed my dismay about this practice with the superintendent and assistant principals and then asked my secretary to discard the time sheets. A few minutes later, in my initial address to the teachers, I told them what I had done. They applauded.

This simple act was a significant one.

The concept of rust was found throughout the principals' discussion of staff influence. They referenced it as the foundation for collaboration. Duhigg (2016) reported "collaboration leads to better productivity" in his article "What Google Learned from Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team." Likewise, the principals shared examples of teachers working together to develop the most effective learning experiences for students. "Whether teachers are working on instruction, developing curriculum, or discussing students, they value the feeling of trust and the opportunity to collaborate," Bryan shared. The principals described other actions they take in support of staff influence, including attention to daily interactions with teachers characterized by consistency, openness, respect, and appreciation.

Theme 3: Academic Emphasis. Academic emphasis represents the third theme that emerged from interviews. The principals described this as a shared belief and desire to contribute to a school's performance. Principals identified this as a key to helping learners understand the importance of education in their future lives. Principals described how they placed emphasis on ensuring that learners take their work seriously. In speaking about student performance, Ryan shared one of his favorite inspiring quotes that drives his work, "Education gives us a knowledge of the world around us and changes it into something better."

Notably, within the emphasis on academics, the principals felt that in order for the entire world to really become more equal, it needs to start with education. Each principal asserted the conviction that *everyone* must be provided with the same opportunities for education. They viewed equity as a way to reduce gaps between social classes leading to more equitable life opportunities for students.

All five principals described implementing a version of a character education program at their school in an effort to support the importance of receiving a high quality education. Jenny passionately emphasized that "education is something that's not only needed on a personal level, but also on a global level, as it's something that keeps our world safe and makes it a more peaceful place." The principals described an expansive view of academic emphasis, to include the belief that education ought to teach people more than just writing and arithmetic, but also key social aspects such as the difference between right and wrong.

While each principal implemented a different version or model of character education, they agreed that their schools' character education programs provided a

foundation for the academic emphasis in their schools. "Character education can greatly help students with their academic subjects, as well. Diligence and a sense of responsibility are some of the main core values taught in character education," Andrew explained. He later went on to elaborate by sharing that "these students will learn how to focus on their studies, and more importantly, they will have *the drive* that will make them want to do well in their academic subjects." Amanda further insisted, "Building character also helps them to interact properly with their teachers and fellow students, turning their classroom into a better learning environment."

Theme 4: Student Achievement. The principals identified a relentless focus on student achievement as a fourth component of the way they do their work. Ensuring appropriate and measurable student achievement was never far from the principals' minds or descriptions of the way they approach their work. In fact, ensuring that they demonstrated measurable student achievement represented an overarching driver of the principals' daily efforts.

All five principals mentioned academic standardized tests, which, in Pennsylvania, are used for the purposes of accountability. They described the tests as "high stakes," which means that important decisions about students, teachers, schools, or districts are based on student test scores. Generally, the test results follow with either consequences imposed by the state, such as sanctions, penalties, reduced funding, negative publicity, students not being allowed to graduate, or, alternately, receiving accolades such as awards, public celebration, positive publicity, bonuses, grade promotion, or specially designated diplomas resulting from test scores. Andrew felt that

although accountability is important, he is "glad to see the state has begun to shift to a growth model means of measurement."

In another interview, Andrew explained that the term student achievement implies a broader, more encompassing, and societal outcomes, including the impact that education has on individuals and society. For example, the principals often referenced specific community impacts like higher employment rates, lower incarceration rates, better health, reduced dependency on social services, and increased civic participation that was a result of student achievement. Ryan stated that high stakes testing takes more than one form and that "part of student achievement also included higher voting rates, volunteerism rates, or charitable giving, have all been correlated with better education."

Improving test scores is a goal at the top of all principals' lists. It's a task that requires focus and a multi-pronged approach. Amanda was quick to point out that "the increase in scores is the result of a district-wide focus." All of the principals mentioned that data analysis is key. Amanda further stated, "We are trying to move away from the *smile-and-file* mode of testing; the mode in which we get back test results, smile as we share the results with parents, then file away the results and never look at them again."

Bryan stated that he has coaches partner with teachers to identify and assist "bubble" students, explaining, "Bubble is the term we use for kids who appear to score right at the minimum level and only need one or two more correct bubbles to be filled in to be designated proficient." Every principal interviewed mentioned some form of a multi-tiered system of support intended to support student achievement. "School improvement is an evolving process that takes ongoing monitoring and constant input," Amanda insisted. Andrew mentioned that he led comprehensive staff development

tailored to his building and that "those discussions were an opportunity for teachers to learn from one another, to ask questions, and, generally speaking, to contribute to a professional dialogue."

Ryan implemented test practice at his school to support student achievement, believing that students need to be comfortable with the format of Pennsylvania's standardized testing program. "We all agree having the practice-testing materials helps put students more at ease with testing," Ryan stated. "If students learn how to answer questions and to think on different levels, then it doesn't matter what is on the test, those skills are transferable to all testing situations."

Theme 5: Student Engagement. Student engagement represented the fifth theme from interviews. The principals described student engagement as the key variable that contributes to the overall performance of the students. It is a variable that helps to increase the performance of the students in the classroom and refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. All of the principals suggested that, as Amanda said, "Student engagement helps to influence the students' performance," and the overall achievement. As Ryan explained, "the concept of student engagement is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise disengaged."

In describing student achievement, the principals described several concepts or components in which student engagement was mentioned. Specifically, the principals'

descriptions of student engagement are comprised of six essential and interrelated parts:
(a) intellectual engagement, (b) emotional engagement, (c) behavioral engagement,
(d) physical engagement, and (e) social engagement.

Intellectual Engagement. To increase student engagement in a course or subject,
Bryan explained, "Teachers may create lessons, assignments, or projects that appeal to
student interests or that stimulate their curiosity." Some examples that were shared
included teachers giving students more choice over the topics they are asked to write
about so that students can choose a topic that specifically interests them. Another
described encouraging teachers to let students choose the way they will investigate a
topic or demonstrate what they have learned, which would allow some students to write a
paper, while others may produce short video or audio documentary.

Emotional Engagement. The principals spoke of using a wide variety of
strategies to promote positive emotions in students to facilitate the learning process,
minimize negative behaviors, or keep students from dropping out. Classrooms in four out
of the five schools were redesigned to some extent to make them more conducive to
learning.

This means that teachers made it a point to monitor student moods and
implemented a school-wide system to assess how students are feeling. This was done via
school programs that provided counseling, peer mentoring, or other services that
generally seek to give students the support they need to succeed academically. One
principal emphasized, "It is important to feel positive, optimistic, or excited about school
and learning." Another principal mentioned, "Strategies such as school counselors or
advisories are intended to build stronger relationships between students and adults in a

school." The principals each felt strongly that students will be more likely to succeed if at least one adult in the school is connecting with a student regularly; inquiring about academic and non-academic issues, giving their advice, and taking an interest in the students out-of-school life, personal passions, future aspirations, and distinct learning challenges and needs, and they took steps to support student emotional engagement

Behavioral Engagement. Teachers may establish classroom routines, use consistent cues, or assign students roles that foster behaviors more conducive to learning. Behavioral engagement was a passionate topic for all five principals. For example, one elementary principal described a simple school-wide gesture teachers use to cue to refocus attention on a lesson if students became distracted or boisterous. Another described, "Clapping three times or raising a hand, which signals to students that it's time to stop talking, return to their seats, or begin a new activity." Principals in each school described working with teachers to establish consistent routines that help students stay on task and behaviorally engaged during a class.

Physical Engagement. The principals supported teachers' use of physical activities or routines to stimulate learning or interest. Kinesthetic learning refers to the use of physical motions and activities during the learning process. Each principal referenced kinesthetic learning in his or her building. What this means is that "instead of asking students to answer questions aloud, a teacher might ask students to walk up to the chalkboard and answer the question verbally while also writing the answer on the board," Bryan described. Amanda shared that "the belief is that students are more likely to remember information when they are using multiple parts of the brain at the same time." At the elementary level, Bryan mentioned, "in an effort to reduce antsy, fidgety, or

distracted behaviors, it is imperative that our school introduce short periods of physical activity or quick exercises daily."

Social Engagement. One principal explained how teachers "must use a variety of strategies to stimulate engagement through social interactions." For example, students may be paired or grouped to work collaboratively on projects, or teachers may create academic contests that students compete in. When asked, all five principals indicated that they promoted student engagement in academic and co-curricular activities such as STEM clubs, science fairs, and community-based learning or service learning, which is believed to "introduce civic and social issues into the learning process." The same principal stated that "learning about societal problems, or participating actively in social causes, can improve engagement."

Cultural Engagement. According to Jennifer, "it is our responsibility, the school's responsibility, to take active steps to make students from diverse cultural backgrounds feel welcomed, accepted, safe, and valued." Three of these principals had implemented a specifically designed program for administrators, teachers, and school staff to provide special orientation sessions for their new-American populations. Two of the five interviewees also offer translation services and informational materials translated into multiple languages. One principal provides students, families, and local cultural leaders from diverse backgrounds to speak about their experiences to students and school staff. Ryan shared that "teachers intentionally modify lessons to incorporate the history, literature, arts, and perspectives of the student ethnicities and nationalities represented in their classes." School activities at four out of five schools incorporate multicultural songs, dances, and performances, in addition to posters, flags, and other educational materials

featured throughout the school to reflect the cultural diversity of the students and school community. "The general goal of such strategies would be to reduce the feelings of confusion, alienation, disconnection, or exclusion that some students and families may experience, and thereby increase their engagement in academics and school activities," said one principal.

Themes Summary. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which five principals identified by the Pennsylvania Principal Association as being "distinguished" described their work relative to the domains of Transformational Leadership as described by Bass and Avolio (1997), who proposed transformational leadership management characterized by certain behaviors. The study prioritized the domains of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration as its lens for focus.

The findings revealed that not all of the principals extensively exhibited all components of Transformational Leadership and the four aforementioned domains in their descriptions of their work. However, the domains of idealized influence and individualized consideration emerged as notable components described by all five principals, represented mostly by the theme: Staff Influence. One principal commented that what was required was more "openness and obligation of the faculty members' views," and suggested that the development of their professional skills to provide "more significant opportunities to implement innovative, effective teaching methods; and to support them" were of the uppermost importance. The domains of inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation were present in the principals' descriptions, but

less powerfully so. In the following section, I explain how the domains of

Transformational Leadership appeared in the principals' descriptions of their work.

Analysis of Themes Related to Transformational Leadership

As noted in Chapter 2, I applied four circumscribed categories by Popper et al.

(2000) to analyze how principals identified by the Pennsylvania Principal Association as

being "distinguished" describe their work relative to the domains of the theory of

Transformational Leadership. Using the four defined domains, research questions were

designed to investigate idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual

stimulation and individual consideration. Using the principals' responses, common

themes were identified and paralleled to the identified domains of transformational

leadership. The following will further exhibit the extent to which the transformational

leadership domains were executed by the principals as presented in their respective work.

Idealized Influences. Principals who show idealized influence are role models

for their followers because they engaged in high standards of ethical behavior. In this

study, principals sought to have teachers and parents identify with principal leadership

and often described themselves as wanting to emulate the shared mission of the school.

The principals had very high standards of moral and ethical conduct and often described

their work in terms of "doing the right thing." They actively sought to gain the respect of

followers because they have developed a sense of trust and through that relationship,

provide teachers, students, staff and community stakeholders with a sense of a desirable

and achievable vision. In all of the schools, the principals also exerted indirect influence

on student achievement through teacher and school culture.

The principals primarily influenced student learning by fostering strong learning climates in their schools. They described district wide data showing that teacher leadership was a critical mechanism through which principals achieved this. Interviews revealed principals' efforts to have teachers feel they had real ownership over finding solutions and the belief that their work contributed to overall school goals. Principals supported teacher teams by maintaining a collective focus on school goals and coordinating across teams so that solutions could be applied throughout the school.

Individualized Consideration. Individualized consideration represents the leader's continuing effort to treat each individual as a special person and act as a mentor who attempts to develop their potential (Popper et al., 2000). Individualized consideration is the extent to which a leader attends to each follower's needs and is a mentor, coach or guide to the follower. Across the interviews, the principals spoke at length about considering and addressing the concerns and needs of teachers, students, and parents alike. Each principal described efforts to provide support and show empathy to the many individuals with whom they interacted. The principals were also aware of the unique talents that each teacher brought to the workplace and supported them in developing and demonstrating these key skills and behaviors through interventions such as strategic, building focused professional development. This effort resulted in intrinsic motivation when performing work.

While the individualized influence and individual consideration domains of Transformational Leadership, were paramount in the principals' descriptions of their work, the other two domains, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, were

also present but less dominant. The following section explains the presence of these domains in the principals' descriptions of their work.

   Inspirational Motivation. Inspirational motivation is the degree to which a leader articulates an appealing vision that inspires and motivates others to perform beyond expectations. Leaders who use inspirational motivation have high standards and expectations for their followers. All five of the principals shared energetic, optimistic views about their school buildings' ability to meet goals. Each provided meaning to their school community through showing the importance of all duties and responsibilities. In fact, they were highly successful in the ability to be able to motivate their staff and students to have a strong sense of purpose. Inspiration, through trust and communication, various recognitions, data analysis for growth and support through educating and motivating, to name a few, encouraged teachers, students and community members to invest more effort in their tasks and to be optimistic about the future and to invest in their own abilities.

   Through gestures, words, innovatively thinking, and appropriately timed rewards for jobs well done, these principals spoke of efforts to motivate others to achieve greatness, and oftentimes, extraordinary levels of performance. For example, each principal referenced that the best inspirational motivators in education and beyond are those leaders that lead by example. "They've been there; and, they've grown and learned from being in your shoes," Andrew described, with excitement. He further went on to say that "if you want to be a charismatic or inspiring motivator, it is possible because they are made, not necessarily born." By unlocking behaviors and hidden potentials to

performance and striving for accountability for actions and results, these principals empowered their staff, students and community.

Intellectual Stimulation. Intellectual stimulation occurs when the leader's efforts stimulate followers to be innovative and creative to define problems and approach them in new ways (Popper et al., 2000). In this study, intellectual stimulation is the extent to which principals challenge assumptions, take risks and solicit teachers' ideas. It would be fair to state that there was a degree to which the principals stimulated teachers and students through encouragement, creativity and innovation. The principals also described supporting and collaborating with staff as they tried new approaches and developed innovative ways of dealing with organizational issues, such as required standardized testing.

Intellectual stimulation means that you challenge yourself, and those around you. Andrew excitedly shared that he would ask his staff, "Why do we do things and how can we do them differently?" There existed a consistent expectation and modeling of collaboration among the principals, not only laterally but also vertically, in each of the school buildings. These principals worked with staff to develop unique systems to encourage advanced, forward thinking which is imperative in an ever-changing world.

Interestingly, one of the principals even extended their practice by encouraging staff to think things out on their own so that teachers and students could become autonomous. In doing so these principals believed that it "increased their level of trust when they were actively involved in intellectually stimulating others." Bryan, for example, developed focused committees at his school. Each staff member was asked to join one of nine committees where they were presented with a general title such as

"School Pride," "Community Outreach," "No Place for Hate," etc. and were asked to productively collaborate and report back to the staff about their novel efforts and plans for the school and it's community. "It was exhilarating to see such a heightened sense of commitment, pride and collaboration," Bryan reflected.

Summary

Interviews with the five award-winning principals revealed five interrelated themes that captured the ways in which the identified principals describe their work: School Culture, Staff Influence, Academic Emphasis, Student Achievement, and Student Engagement. The themes were found to contain clear connections to the four domains of transformational leadership: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation. While all domains of transformational leadership were present, the findings indicate that both idealized influence and individualized consideration emerged as the main transformational components shown by all five principals, represented mostly by the theme: Staff Influence. The domains of inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation were present in the principals' descriptions of their work, but less prominent. The next chapter presents implications from the study and areas of potential future research.

Chapter 5

Implications

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which five principals, identified as "distinguished" by the Pennsylvania Principals Association, described their work in ways that aligned with the theory of Transformational Leadership. Findings reveal that while all four domains of Transformational Leadership are present in the ways the principals describe their work, idealized influence and individualized consideration are at the forefront of their efforts. This chapter includes a discussion of the implications of these findings for individual principals, school districts and organizations that support principals, colleges and universities that prepare principals, and policy makers. The chapter concludes with recommendations for areas of future research.

The interviews indicated that the school principals play a vital role in many aspects, but critically impact school culture, staff influence, academic emphasis, student achievement and student engagement. These roles represent the themes that emerged from the study. Terms such as principal leadership, turnaround, and transformation are commonly used terms and formal measures of school success. The five award-winning principals describe their work in ways that align with the four dimensions of Transformational Leadership, particularly idealized influence and individualized consideration, thereby offering important implications for strengthening principals, the quality of the student experience, and thereby schools themselves.

There is a difference between leadership and management, which should be clearly understood. Management consists of controlling a group or a set of entities to

accomplish a goal. Leadership refers to an individual's ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward organizational success. Idealized influence and individual consideration are the two key factors that separate principal managers from principal leaders.

Promoting Idealized Influence in Principals

As indicated in the interviews by the principal participants, transformational leadership entails the transformation of individuals and organizations through the urge to adhere to the values and long-term goals. It is driven by the heart and mind of those involved. It was depicted from the interviews that transformational leaders encourage stakeholders to find ways in which they can grow and change. Through this form of leadership, educators can find solutions that help solve a variety of complex obstacles present in schools. It is leadership that fosters high standards, a clear vision, respect, trust and a conducive learning climate.

We can see transformational leadership in the ways principals emphasized the need for strong morals, authenticity, and transparent communication. The findings indicate that communication in the workplace contributes to broad success achieved in a school. All school principals need to ensure that they can develop an environment that fosters communication among the staff members. This factor will help boost the staff's influence on the achievement of the students. These principals used a variety of means to establish an environment where people felt comfortable sharing their views. This aspect helps to transform the operations of a school. Active participation when making school decisions was viewed as a routine effort to increase loyalty and encourage motivation. As school and school leaders are constantly working to ensure effective communication,

Pennsylvania school leaders could benefit from knowing how these principals have approached the challenge. Through the approaches used by these principals, others might improve their performance.

Additionally, these principals partnered in the extensive review of data and performance. Not only did they review data but they also helped to analyze and plan based off the information revealed. These key communication skills are deemed to foster student engagement and parent involvement in matters related to achievement. It is a move that helps to indicate how a school has a strong moral commitment to students and fulfills its commitment to serving them. All school principals should develop an environment that allows people to communicate with others and share their views. Transformational leadership provides for all these aspects and therefore allows for better performance in a school. Current principals and college and university programs that prepare principals would do well to highlight how these principals approach this task.

Transformational leadership is essential in fostering high levels of student engagement, as indicated in the interviews. Students themselves are perhaps the best source of information about whether they feel engaged by their teachers and classwork. Each distinguished principal had a pulse on his or her students, families and community in order to motivate and engage. Whenever there are high levels of commitment, it is likely that the performance level will improve. The most crucial component to this type of leadership is the ability to celebrate diversity and the unique elements that make people different and, therefore, increases their performance. Again, current practitioners and higher education programs that prepare school leaders could benefit from the

approaches the principals have taken. Superintendents and those who evaluate and support principals can also make this a priority.

The previous chapters revealed the ways in which transformational leadership is practiced by these principals. This type of leadership goes beyond traditional management and supports the development of an appropriate, strong school culture as a strategy to improve the outcomes, ensuring that high levels of achievement are reached. It is a solution that is considered to solve the problem of most failing institutions. This is because an effective school strategically plans to solve different problems.

The principals in this study were found to have an influential school culture that contributed highly to the school's performance. The principals' leadership aimed to inspire the rest of the staff to perform beyond expectations. Much emphasis is placed on academics ensuring the set target is reached. This is done by encouraging students to transcend their interests, which boosts their level of consciousness. It is a move that can be accomplished by using different tools, such as inspirational motivation.

As earlier described, transformational leadership is an approach based on the power that is consensual and facilitative and can be manifested *through* other people and not over others. In their interviews, the principals revealed the importance of transformational leadership as occurring when people are engaged to raise high levels of motivation. The five principals indicated that job satisfaction is a factor that majorly contributes to performance.

Promoting Individualized Consideration in Principals

The principals have a significant role in developing an appropriate working environment for the staff, also known as staff influence. Rapport should be essential in

this case. It is a type of relationship that characterizes the satisfaction of the whole group. This is an aspect that helps to determine the performance of the students in a school. The teachers have to motivate the learners, while the principal has to motivate the teachers, students and families alike.

Most transformational leaders can indeed develop a working environment where others' opinions are valued and considered a joint effort. This is a strategy that helps boost people's morale, ensuring that they can deliver their delegated duties. Focusing on the principals who had been awarded in Pennsylvania, most of the teachers in their schools had the freedom to express themselves without any fear of reprisal. As noted in the previous chapters, transformational leaders can encourage dissenting opinions and objective critique. This factor helps to ensure that a school can develop an environment that fosters achievement. Current and future principals would do well to learn the approaches used by the principals in the study. The Pennsylvania Principals Association should also develop professional development activities aimed at improving principals' skills in this area.

In such an environment, transformational leaders tend to understand the importance of authenticity and practice what they preach. This characteristic will help to transform most of the operations in the school. They demonstrated encouragement, listening and giving feedback, which changed the school's performance. These leaders also had intentional mentor programs that provided support and the ability to take risks and reflect on outcomes. Whether through monthly meetings with new teachers, collecting anonymous surveys, eliciting conversations with mentors or some other avenue, principals need to be aware of the challenges of beginning teachers. In this role,

it has been explained that oftentimes lending an empathetic ear and offering a kind and supportive word are key in emotional support to build trust and to accelerate teacher growth.

Professional development keeps teachers interested. While experience makes a great teacher, it often means individuals tend to continue practicing as they have in the past. Principals who offer meaningful and timely professional development opportunities open up all teachers to new possibilities, strategies, knowledge and skills. The intention of transformational leaders is to increase expertise, and as a result, build confidence. As a principal, providing and encouraging staff to seek out professional development that fit their specific grade level, content area, demographic, population, etc. allows staff members to excel in their area of concentration. In turn, this knowledge base and level of confidence translate into the buildings by creating leaders and motivators within their school entity.

Promoting Inspirational Motivation in Principals

The award-winning principals in this study were keenly aware of the management responsibilities that come with their jobs. They understood the managerial aspects of their jobs, but were driven to move beyond these duties. The principals desired to *lead* others. The principal as motivator must be skilled in using power, as well as sharing power, providing directives, leading by personal example, and employing incentives and reinforcement, but also trust and hold high expectations for others in the school.

The fundamental purposes of leadership include "providing direction" and "exercising influence" (Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). However, these qualities can seem deceivingly basic if they are not

contextualized within the complex nature of an organization such as a school. There are many facets of a school, including its interpersonal nature, which make the relationships between principal and teachers a vital component.

In recent decades, the field of educational psychology has undergone a significant change in its theoretical orientations regarding motivation as it moved from a more behavioral view of motivation to a more cognitive-information processing view of motivation and the principals demonstrated an understanding of this shift. In other words, as time has progressed, these principles began to explore internal motivational and its drives rather than focusing solely on environmental conditions. Principals must have a strong foundation of understanding the basic psychological needs including feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in order to elevate, inspire and empower their staff and the school climate.

Furthermore, to enhance motivation and inspiration, principals should provide consistent recognition for exemplary performance. This type of recognition will have a direct influence on key performance measures that are used to evaluate schools. By increasing productivity, increasing engagement and increasing attendance, principals will create an overall increase in satisfaction regarding relationships between teachers and students and their parents or guardians. Strictly, from a performance perspective, it is clear that if principals fail to recognize our best teachers, we are leaving our schools' potential on the table. Transformational leaders need to ensure that recognition consists of two components to be effective; it must be individualized and frequent. Ideally, administrators should create a recognition-rich environment with praise coming from all directions, and not just during Teacher Appreciation Week.

Promoting Intellectual Stimulation in Principals

Shared decision-making with the focus of student achievement is among the steps that principals should use to ensure that empowerment is fostered within the learning environment. All school principals need to give their teachers freedom, provided, it is for the good of the school and student learning. In this case, the teachers will be able to come with the best techniques to ensure that the students' performance is enhanced at all times. Images of a transformational leader in a school are indicated by democratic ideals that are frequently displayed within the school. Professional organizations, local districts, and those who support practicing and develop principals should ensure that these skills are developed.

Through this form of leadership, as observed from the findings, educators can adequately increase school culture which in turns impacts staff influence, students achievement and student engagement. All stakeholders should be involved in the decision-making process, which promotes lucid communication, a level of value and a sense of motivation within the school. It is a move that can be accomplished by using different tools, such as school culture. As described, transformational leadership is based on power that is consensual and facilitative and can be manifested through other people and not over others. Whenever there is democracy in a learning institution, all the members are involved in decision-making, which helps an institution find resolutions and generate innovative practices. As shared by the principals in this research, most of the best decisions and practices are based on the consensus reached through dialogue and not by dictation. This means that it is vital for leaders to ensure that they facilitate a strong

school culture that focuses on the benefits of staff influence. This factor helps to ensure that a school can develop an environment that fosters achievement.

In a field such as education, it is important to focus on innovations in areas beyond instruction methods, such as technology, child psychology, and learning theories. Technology and other changes in society demand innovation not only from our leaders but from all of our educators. While many schools face challenges such as underfunding, unengaged students, and outdated curriculums, innovation offers a path forward. In many ways, education stands to benefit the most from both utilizing and teaching innovation in the classroom. By demonstrating and supporting the exploration of new and better ways to educate students and also teaching the skills students need to become innovators themselves, today's educators can have a tremendous impact on the future of our world.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations to ensure that the principals are equipped to practice the leadership behaviors consistent with the five distinguished principals in this study, which are also reflective of the four domains of Transformational Leadership:

- Idealized influence should be emulated by the leader, ensuring that high-performance levels are achieved.

- Individualized consideration in order to ensure that the behaviors of others are attended to with an aim of addressing the needs all.

- Intellectual stimulation helps foster innovation and creativity while encouraging all stakeholders.

- Inspirational motivation helps through articulating and developing an appealing vision to the staff, which is a shared value through communication.

This study provides insight into the ways five distinguished principals describe their work through the lens of Transformational Leadership. Specific recommendations for legislators, school boards, superintendents, college and universities and the Pennsylvania Principals' Association could assist other principals in learning from the five distinguished participants in this study.

State legislators can lead efforts to establish a comprehensive framework to identify, prepare, evaluate and support principals. Lawmakers have a number of policy options to influence the quality of principal preparation and on-the job support. Through state policy, legislators can improve quality leadership standards; recruit, select and retain a talented pool of aspiring principals; redesign preparation programs and develop tougher program accreditation; strengthen licensure and certification requirements; evaluate candidate and program effectiveness; provide meaningful mentoring programs and quality ongoing professional development; and allocate funding to programs. Recognizing that effective school leadership is a virtual necessity for turning around schools, especially low-performing schools, state legislators should move forward with promising policies to cultivate a steady supply of principals who can dramatically increase achievement school-wide. Such tools could be not only based on standards, but also reflective of the actions of these principals and the domains of Transformational Leadership.

School Board members should receive continuing education into the complex realities of the principalship and how principals practice of Transformational Leadership can support teachers, student success, and district priorities. The Pennsylvania School Board Association (PSBA) should then evaluate and redesign standards that influence

and drive training and preparation programs by establishing performance expectations and by aiding and facilitating curriculum development, candidate assessment and accountability. Furthermore, PSBA should also make certain that preparation programs are guided by leadership standards that reflect the knowledge, skills and responsibilities necessary to lead today's complex school environment in Pennsylvania, including an emphasis on curriculum, instruction and student achievement, and hold leaders accountable for results.

Retaining effective leaders is equally important. With growing concern over principal turnover and its negative effect on student achievement, principals need more support. Principal training programs should focus on developing school leaders as human capital managers who can increase teacher capacity and cohesion, which is most related to student success or failure. The themes of this research reflect precisely those skills.

Principal preparation programs at colleges and universities should be more selective, more focused on improvement of instruction, more closely tied to the needs of districts, and provide internships that are more relevant or residency-based experiences. Through the examination of unique and individual leadership styles, and specifically Transformational Leadership, all of these focal points would be addressed. Principals becoming familiar with the behaviors of these and other distinguished principals and how those actions are consistent with the domains of Transformational Leadership could allow more principals to emulate the actions of award winning principals like those in this study.

Moreover, leader preparation should not end when new principals are hired, rather they should continue with high-quality mentoring and career-long growth opportunities.

Colleges and universities should also consider collaborating with districts to strengthen their recruitment and selection criteria, cultivate experienced teachers, and create alternative pathways to attract potential leaders from both within and outside the field of education if they are not doing so already. In an effort to be more selective in admitting potential leaders to preparation programs, state agencies should strengthen their entry criteria for these programs based on merit and a focus on candidates' leadership ability. This strategy can limit admission to truly aspiring principals. Conclusively, resources for improving preparation could be directed toward programs with proven results to entice colleges and universities to follow the outlined expectations and recommendations.

Superintendents and principal supervisors could be trained in the domains of Transformational Leadership and engage practicing principals in conversation around how their efforts reflect the domains of the theory and how relevant standards align with the theory. This type of conversation could ensure that school leaders understand why they are continuously assessed by performance-based measures. Evaluations, based on state leadership standards, can provide information about, and help improve, all aspects of a leader's career continuum. Superintendents and principal supervisors should also use their overall evidence, with a focal on the four domains, to provide continuous feedback to licensing institutions on graduates' performance to help improve their preparation programs; career development advancement, including meeting requirements for a professional license. It is also recommended that superintendents skillfully aid in the identification of professional development opportunities and support structures customized to the needs of individual leaders and schools.

Additional Organizational Foci for Principals

Several additional organizational matters need to be attended to by the school principals to improve the overall performance of a school. These areas of focus did not necessarily categorize themselves under the highlighted 4Is but had been mentioned during the interviews. The following should also be seriously considered:

- Staff support on matters associated with discipline.

- Foster an agreement concerning what the teachers are expected to do and the level of expectation.

- Facilitate a formal discussion about what is considered to be "distinguished" in regards to lesson and the theories of learning and teaching.

Future Research

This qualitative study explored how principals identified by the Pennsylvania Principal Association as being "distinguished" describe their work relative to the domains of the theory of transformational leadership. Future research could address a number of topics and areas, including the extent to which principals are taught specific theories of leadership, including Transformational Leadership. There is also a need for scholars to focus on the qualities associated with other leadership styles and theories. For example, to what extent are principals familiar with particular theories of leadership? Can they articulate the reasons for the leadership actions they take?

Because this study examined the ways distinguished principals described their work relative to the domains of the theory of Transformational Leadership, future research could examine the extent to which principals who have not been recognized as distinguished characterize their work. Because of the tension between management

responsibilities of principals and the desire for principals to serve as true leaders,

additional research could be conducted around specific obstacles that impede principals'

practice of Transformational Leadership.

Given that idealized influence and individualized consideration were the most

prominent domains of Transformational Leadership practiced by principals in this study,

it would be intriguing to investigate whether there are contextual differences in the

domains of Transformational Leadership practiced by principals in different types of

schools, in different locations, and with principals of different backgrounds, etc..

Further research could also focus on how the domains of Transformational

Leadership can be implemented in the education system as routine parts of principals'

work around school culture, staff influence, academic emphasis, student achievement and

student engagement. Quantitative research could examine the extent to which specific

leadership theories can be viewed in their practice. It would also be beneficial to expand

the study beyond the state of Pennsylvania and increase the number of participants.

Conclusion

It is established from the above discussion that transformational leadership is an

aspect that can be used to improve the performance of schools. It is a type of leadership

that majorly focuses on developing an environment that is fit for the community as a

whole. School principals need to develop a working relationship that fosters

communication among the staff members, its students and community.

Transformational leadership fosters a community that is committed to the goals of

the school and the success of all students. The secondary effect of this style of leadership

is educational change. This provides an environment that fosters the creation of new and

innovative instructional and motivational techniques. This transformational leadership style may come naturally to some educators. However, the surest path to successful educational leadership is through intention. In most all cases, transformational leaders in education are a result of years of training and study in combination with intentional practice.

To reflect through the lens of Transformational Leadership, there are definitive areas that all school principals should focus on. Ultimately, the five principals described their work in ways that align with the four dimensions of Transformational Leadership, particularly idealized influence and individualized consideration. They describe their work with the passion, energy, and commitment we would expect from professionals who have been recognized by their peers as being "distinguished." While it was evident that many of the common and dominant traits classified as idealized influence and individualized consideration, several characteristics of distinguished principals in Pennsylvania were viewed through the lens of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation as well.

As a researcher and educational leader, it became clear that the qualitative approach conducted during this study allowed me to further understand the essence of the lived experiences of distinguished Pennsylvania school principals, their definitions of effective leadership, and how it correlated to the domains of Transformational Leadership. The identified themes are not easily measured, very subjective in nature, yet we know they make a difference in the leadership of schools. Through their descriptions of their work, they provide a snapshot of their responsibilities and its impact that can

assist other school leaders and the organizations and individuals that develop, supervise, and support them in effectively serving students, teachers, and communities.

During my literature review, it was apparent that other researchers have approached the impact that a principal has directly in a school. Moreover, past researches have also identified traits and characteristics that the observer views as important for the success of a principal, yet little to none of this research was from the viewpoint of the practitioner themselves. This study allowed for the voice of the principal to contribute to the body of research that others have defined as their practice.

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Appendix A

Proposed Interviewees (pseudonyms)

Proposed Interviewees (pseudonyms)

Andrew, a Principal in Pennsylvania

Ryan, a Principal in Pennsylvania

Bryan, a Principal in Pennsylvania

Jennifer, a Principal in Pennsylvania

Amanda, a Principal in Pennsylvania

Appendix B

Proposed Research Interview Questions

Proposed Research Interview Questions

The following interview questions shall be used to explore the research questions of this study:

1. What is your mission and vision as a principal? (Probes: what is the school district's vision and mission? Who is at the forefront of the design?)

2. Do you have an identified set of leaders in your building who follow a core set of values? (Probe: would you consider these individuals to be inventive, risk takers?)

3. Each school year, have you established goals as a principal? How have you shared those goals with your faculty, students and community members? (Probes: How does the principal pose a sense of purpose and motivation?)

4. Have you met the set goals and how do you measure your success? (Probes: what influence does the principal have on establishing goals?)

5. In the previous year, have teachers suggested new ways of improving learning outcomes? If yes, what kind of innovations did they bring for consideration? How was this communicated? (Probe: does the principal provide intellectual stimulation?)

6. Have you applied or considered applying the suggested innovations? If so, what did you do? (Probe: What indicates a productive school culture?)

7. How frequently do you interact with the students and teachers to check on their welfare? (Probe: does the principal provide individualized support?)

8. Do you hold forums where students and teachers participate in finding solutions to emerging issues? (Probe: what are the ways used to foster participation in decision-making?)

9. What values and practices are in place to guide the teachers and students in this school? (Probe: what are the existing models for best practices and organizational values?)

10. Have you set academic and behavioral standards for the general population in the school? What mechanisms are in use to promote the achievement of those standards? (Probe: what are the expectations in terms of academic standards in the school, how is inspirational motivation promoted?)

Appendix C

Email to Prospective Participants

Email to Prospective Participants

Dear (prospective participant),

My name is Shannon O'Donnell and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Nebraska. I am conducting interviews as part of a research study to increase my understanding of transformational leadership in education. Transformational leadership helps school principals to frame their attitudes and assists in moving schools forward.

You have been selected as a potential participant because you have been recognized as a prestigious principal and an award recipient of the Pennsylvania Principals Association "Principal of the Year" award from either a public or private institution for your accomplishments and dedication.

The interview will take place via telephone and will be approximately 30 minutes in length and is very informal. I am simply trying to capture your thoughts and perspective. Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. Each interview will be assigned a number code to help ensure that personal identifiers are not revealed during the analysis and write up of findings. There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to my research and findings could lead to greater understanding of transformational leadership, and specifically, the principalship in Pennsylvania.

If you are willing to participate, please suggest a day and time for the interview that suits your schedule and I'll do my best to be available.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Respectfully,
Shannon O'Donnell, M.Ed.
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