DIFFERENCES IN PRIVATE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS BY STUDENT ENROLLMENT: A NATIONAL STUDY

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by

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DEDICATION

This body of work is dedicated to my loving, kind, and generous husband, Robert, and to my smart, beautiful, and capable children, Sara, Rachel, and Hanna. I thank them for making my dreams come true. I am most proud of my role in life as wife and mother.

ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which principals of private elementary schools differed in their emphasis for training teachers, on how they spend their work week, and the specific problem matters they encounter in their school based on school size. In the first journal article, the degree to which differences were present between private elementary school principals as a function of school enrollment size in their emphasis of training teachers were ascertained. In the second article, the extent to which private elementary school principals as a function of school enrollment size differed in the tasks in which they spend their work week were determined. In the third investigation, the extent to which private elementary school principals differed as a function of school enrollment size in specific problem matters which they encounter were addressed.

Method

A causal-comparative research design was used in this quantitative study. Principals' responses from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 principal survey, obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics, were analyzed for this study. The variables that were analyzed as a function of school enrollment size were: training and support for teachers, the way principals spent their work week, and the problem matters addressed on the campus.

Findings

Principals in Large-size private elementary schools provided statistically significantly more training and support to teachers in teaching effective reading strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data than principals in Small-size private elementary schools. Regarding how principals spend their time during the work week, principals of Large-size schools allocated more time each week working with teachers on instructional issues; on student discipline and attendance; on meeting with parents; and on meeting with students than was allocated by principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools addressed problem matters in children bringing in or using illegal drugs, vandalism of school property, student bullying, and class cutting statistically significantly more frequently than principals of Small-size schools. Implications for policy and recommendations for research were provided.

KEY WORDS: ECLS-K, Private schools, Student enrollment, Small-size schools, Large-size schools, Training areas, Principal Emphases, Time Management, Problem Matters.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of school superintendents, principals, and teachers is to provide a high-quality educational experience for students to achieve their potential in college, career, and in life. Researchers (e.g., Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2018) have identified that the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement is an inspiring and informed teacher. Teachers who teach well possess the skillset to accomplish the mission of serving the social, emotional, academic and developmental needs of students. Principals may serve a pivotal role in helping teachers accomplish their mission by providing the structure needed to support student success.

In this journal-ready dissertation, the extant research literature in three areas was reviewed. In the first review area, the empirical literature on the influence of principals on teacher training and support was discussed. In the second literature review section, specific activities that principals emphasize at their school campuses in how they spend their work week were addressed. In the third review area, the impact of school culture and the problem matters principals address was analyzed.

Review of the Literature Regarding School Size and Areas Principals Emphasize for Teacher Training

Teachers often face obstacles in their efforts to enhance student learning, however effective training may provide teachers with the knowledge, experience, and guidance for handling these obstacles (Combs, Edmonson, & Harris, 2013). Teachers confront issues which include differentiating instruction, handling behavioral challenges, delivering

content, and implementing new technology. Adequate training ensures teachers are supported and possess the skills necessary to teach effectively (Hall et al., 2018)).

Educators are expected to possess a myriad of skills to help close achievement gaps, meet progress goals, attend to students with special needs, and remain informed of best practices in education (Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Hall et al., 2018; Ravitch, 2014). According to Ravitch (2014), teachers administer formative and summative assessment and analyze data (a) to identify areas in need for improvement, (b) to set improvement priorities, and (c) to determine how programs and strategies affect student achievement. Therefore, professional development targeted at identifying student needs as indicated by data analysis is essential to empower teachers to cultivate student growth (Blase et al., 2010; Ravitch, 2014).

Researchers (e.g., Zepeda, 2015) have contended teacher training and professional development affect student achievement. Teacher participation in professional development is standard practice in public schools due to the demands for performance-based accountability mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). Effective public school administrators organize induction programs to train and support new teachers, as well as provide on-going training to ensure teachers follow best practices (Blase et al., 2010). Be that as it may, teacher training is not a standardized, required practice for private school teachers in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Numerous researchers (e.g., Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Grissom & Loeb, 2011) have established links between leadership and school success. According to Horng and Loeb (2010), instructional leaders perform classroom observations and direct

instruction to ensure effective teaching and learning occurs in their schools. Instructional improvement practices are also linked to organizational management (Grissom & Loeb, 2011) as these leaders also affect the quality of schools through their effect on school staff and school structures (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Leaders are responsible for hiring, assigning, and retaining quality teachers and also ensuring that teachers engage in relevant professional development. Furthermore, Horng and Loeb determined that student learning increases when principals focus on organizational management that provides teachers with access to support and the use of school resources for instructional improvement.

Investments made by principals to provide teacher training and support increases teacher effectiveness and improves the quality of schools. The contributions principals make in this effort represent that which Hargreaves & Fullan (2013) defined as human capital which are the skills and competencies an individual contributes to his profession. Therefore, principals' efforts to improve teachers' skills and competencies represent an investment in human capital. School district administrators and principals, encouraged by the results of research studies (Donaldson, 2013), increasingly have emphasized human capital management to affect school outcomes.

Donaldson (2013) examined the obstacles principals encountered when hiring, assigning, evaluating, and providing professional development opportunities and the effects these tasks had on student achievement. School principals, in Donaldson's study, used professional development to raise teacher effectiveness but identified several barriers to successful implementation. Approximately, one-half of the principals stated the lack of funding was a hurdle to overcome in providing professional development.

Additionally, principals cited diminished site-based decision making due to a lack of authority regarding input for choosing professional development at the school level. Finally, over 50% of the principals named time as an obstacle to providing professional development. Donaldson determined that many of the school principals used multiple techniques to align their human capital practices to overcome the barriers to accomplish their objectives. Principals relied on a multitude of skills, including leadership skills, ingenuity, initiative, and determination, in their effort to improve the quality of teaching in their schools. Principals who had participated in professional development on how to cultivate high-quality teaching were most effective in overcoming obstacles to improve the quality of instruction for their teaching staff (Donaldson, 2013).

In another study, Loeb, Kalogrides, and Béteille (2012) concluded principals in schools in which higher student achievement gains were generated emphasized different human capital management (e.g., methods in hiring, assigning, developing and retaining teachers) than principals in schools in which students did not gain as much in student achievement. Loeb et al. contended the quality of the teaching force was determined by "hiring high-quality teachers, retaining good teachers and removing poor teachers, and developing the teachers already at their school" (p. 271). Regarding teacher development, Loeb et al. declared professional development enhanced teaching and learning by improving the instructional skills of teaching staff especially in the first years of teaching.

Smith and Slate (2014) also examined the effect of private school leadership on student achievement. The particular study is relevant because their sample of school principals was also the focus of this article. Smith and Slate investigated the perceived

emphasis placed on teacher collaboration by private school principals of low- and of high-achieving schools and documented that private school principals focused on staff working well together in both low-achieving and high-achieving schools. As such, the emphasis private school principals placed on working well with others may not be a distinctive aspect of leadership. The ability for staff members to collaborate may enhance the quality of teaching within a school and consequently may result in higher student achievement (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009).

In a more recent study, Brown (2016) examined the leadership supports provided by one experienced elementary principal in a high-performing school. Replicating these leadership supports in other schools could have a positive influence on student achievement. The principal-provided supports included (a) a knowledge-centered curriculum aligned to standards; (b) a learner-centered environment led by efforts for data-driven instruction; (c) an assessment-centered instruction based on the development of school-specific objectives; and (d) a community focused organization for all stakeholders.

The principal in Brown's (2016) study was acknowledged frequently by the staff for facilitating a spirit of collaboration among the school's stakeholders that resulted in building positive school culture. Another positive benefit included a willingness for teachers to put forth extra effort to raise student achievement. Additionally, teachers collaborated to plan professional development on a regular and consistent basis using data to develop a site improvement plan in alignment with the school's goals.

The effort put forth by the principal to use data-driven instruction resulted in building community among teachers (Brown, 2016). The teachers reported using data to

answer questions about instruction (e.g., create reading and math instructional groupings) which led to enhanced student achievement. The emphasis on data collection, coupled with a structure for teachers to make data-driven decisions, was essential to the school's success in meeting student's needs. Similarly, Azaiez and Slate (2017) contended principals contribute to the success or failure of a campus by recruiting, training, and retaining highly effective teachers.

Teachers' behaviors and classroom performance may be influenced by school leaders who identify specific goals and objectives as essential for student achievement (DuFour et al., 2009). Hence, it would be beneficial for principals to know these leadership factors. Borg and Slate (2014) asserted that deciding which specific leadership factors will result in student success may be difficult to determine. Public school principals responded to a section in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 and indicated the extent to which they emphasized specific leadership goals and objectives with their teachers. Borg and Slate analyzed the responses of principals in low-performing schools and principals of high-performing schools. Statistically significant, albeit trivial, differences resulted between high- and low-performing schools possibly because principals self-reported the amount of emphasis placed on the goals and objectives. If the teachers were rating the emphasis principals put on specific leadership goals and objectives, then the results might be more reflective of actual practices performed by the principals.

In another study in which the dataset, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2011, was used, Azaiez (2017) analyzed how public elementary school principals spent their work week as a function of years of experience. The dataset

used in the Azaiez research was analyzed for this article. In his study, public school principals in Large-size elementary schools (i.e., student enrollments of 800 or more students) indicated a higher percentage of emphasis in all five of the training areas assessed than principals in Small-size (i.e., student enrollments of less than 400 students) and Moderate-size schools (i.e., student enrollment of 400 through 799 students). Specifically, principals in Large-size elementary schools spent a higher percentage of their time providing training and support to teachers in effective reading teaching strategies, effective mathematics teaching strategies, behavioral support, collecting and managing data, and interpreting and using data than principals in Small-size and Moderate-size schools. In other words, an increase in staff training was related with increased student enrollment on a campus. Azaiez asserted that principals in large-size schools have more staff which might account for the increase in time spent training teachers. Interestingly, all of the elementary school principals, regardless of student enrollment, identified the highest emphasis in training staff in teaching effective reading strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data.

Several other factors related to school size may affect the training and support provided to teachers in private schools. In education, economies of scale are a theory associated with reducing a school's administrative costs by creating larger schools. The principle of economies of scale may have an effect on opportunities for teacher training whereby principals of large-size private schools may have more funding available for professional development than principals of small-size private schools (Riha, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2013).

Small-size schools of 50 or fewer students constituted the enrollment of most private schools in the United States in 2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017a); therefore, considering the factors that may affect the quality of education imparted to students based on enrollment size has merit. According to the data compiled in the Digest of Education Statistics (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017b), the average salary for full-time teachers in private schools was $42,100 whereas the average salary for full-time teachers in public schools was $55,120. Lower salary offerings to private school teachers may fail to attract the most qualified and inspired teachers to fill vacant positions and administrators may consequently hire non-certified or less qualified teachers to fill vacancies (Slate & Jones, 2005). In these instances, student needs would be met most effectively with teacher support and training. Azaiez (2017) determined that in Large-size public schools, a higher percentage of principals provided training for teachers than principals in Moderate-size or Small-size public schools. Therefore, school enrollment size may be a factor that results in principals hiring teachers with lower qualifications because of low salary offerings (Slate & Jones, 2005) and principals having less funding available to provide training.

Slate and Jones (2005) reviewed the literature on the effect that school size based on student enrollment had on teacher quality. Researchers (e.g., Jackson, 1966; Pethel, 1978) in several of the evaluated studies documented better performance of larger schools regarding teacher qualifications and working conditions. Specifically, teachers in larger schools were more highly qualified than teachers in smaller schools in which fewer teachers have master's degrees or specialized training. Also, teachers in some smaller schools did not receive planning periods.

In another examination of the literature on schools with small-size student enrollments, Jimerson (2006) reviewed the positive effects of low student enrollment on student learning and well-being. Teachers in schools with small-size enrollments had a positive attitude toward teaching, less absenteeism, increased collaboration with peers, and took more responsibility for student learning. Furthermore, teachers perceived professional development as more valuable for reasons such as being (a) focused on the specific needs of the community, (b) ongoing, and (c) peer-led. Slate and Jones (2005) confirmed similar findings related to increased teacher and student morale in schools with small-size student enrollments.

Review of the Literature for How Principals Spend Their Work Week

Every student is entitled to receive a high-quality educational experience to obtain the skills to be successful in life (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Every school, whether public, charter, or private, should ensure practices are implemented to achieve this aim (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009; Ravitch, 2014). Local and federal policy demands have placed greater accountability on public schools to raise student achievement (No Child Left Behind, 2002) and in recent years, these demands have increased (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). As a result, teachers in the public sector may experience stress which in turn may negatively affect the educational experience of students (von der Embse, Sandilos, Pendergast, & Mankin, 2016). Accordingly, some parents have resolved to seek choices in education for their child(ren) that may include private schools and charter schools. Although charter schools are often required to adhere to some level of government accountability, accountability in private schools varies by state and certification to teach is not required in all states (U.S.

Department of Education, 2009). Consequently, the question may be asked whether these school choices provide a better alternative to public schools. How are parents ensured that their child(ren) receive(s) a high-quality educational experience?

Student achievement outcomes have been attributed to the work of the school leader. Leaders provide impetus for others to pursue the objectives of the organization, and the tasks that leaders perform are integral to guiding the organization's members in accomplishing goals (Northouse, 2013). Because an essential aim of an educational institution is to increase student achievement, principals are entrusted to ensure that the school's structure and the teachers, staff, and other school stakeholders are equipped to accomplish this purpose (DeVita et al., 2007).

In their attempt to bolster student success, elementary school principals execute a variety of functions. Job duties include performing administrative tasks such as interviewing teachers, filing reports, collecting data; serving as instructional leaders whereby encouraging teachers to try new and innovative teaching methods; meeting with students to coach or redirect behavior; conferencing with parents to discuss concerns; and teaching in the classroom. Over the last few decades, the principal's role has changed from operational manager to instructional leader (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Furthermore, researchers (e.g., Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) have asserted that principals influence student achievement through instructional leadership. Instructional leadership may be defined as activities leaders engage in which support classroom teaching and student learning (Murphy, 1988).

Blase et al. (2010) contended that high-performing principals systematically organize administrative and instructional tasks with structures to support school improvement. The systems-development approach requires principals to use their time wisely and productively to provide support for teachers. Principals in the Blase et al. study reported that delegating administrative functions to other staff allowed them to stay focused on instructional work with teachers.

The day-to-day life of a school principal is ever changing. Camburn, Spillane, and Sebastian (2010) examined principals' use of a daily log for measuring leadership practice. The daily log instrument was created to evaluate an executive leadership development program for principals; 48 principals in a midsized urban school district participated in the study. The log contained a list of the leadership actions that principals' practice to influence people, processes, and organizational structures including (a) building operations, (b) finances, (c) student affairs, (d) personnel issues, (e) instructional leadership, and (f) professional growth. Principals reported spending about 23% of their time on student affairs and 19% of their time on instructional leadership. Personnel issues consumed about 14% of their time. Principals devoted less than 10% of their time on each of the remaining three leadership domains: building operations, finances, and professional growth. Camburn et al. concluded that the principals in their study devoted the bulk of their time to student affairs and instructional leadership. Because student achievement is attributable to the principal's instructional leadership practices (Blase et al., 2010), this information may be useful to practitioners to reflect on the effectiveness of their daily practices.

In a study on the relationship between principal's time allocation and work effectiveness, Smith (2013) analyzed data from the High School Longitudinal Survey of 2009 (HLS: 09) and focused on the effect of geographic location on each principal's time allocation. The National Center for Education Statistics administered the HLS: 09 as a national survey intended to provide an overview of the experience of U.S. high school students. Smith concluded that changes in neighborhood and community circumstances influenced the work activities of principals. In these instances, flexibility in adjusting work activities maintained or increased overall school effectiveness.

According to Smith (2013), principal work patterns are often interrupted and fragmented. Unfamiliar situations due to changing demographics could further challenge the principal's work day. Smith examined the weekly time allocation principals reported in hours per week spent (a) on working with teachers on instructional issues, (b) on internal school management, (c) on external school management, (d) on monitoring hallways/campus/lunchroom, (e) on their own teaching assignments, (f) on talking and meeting with parents, and (g) on meeting with students. The time allocated to the principals' teaching assignments yielded the highest mean score with 10 hours per week dedicated to this activity. Internal school management accounted for the second highest weekly time of about seven hours per week. Principals indicated spending about 3 hours per week on the remaining activities.

The time allocation reported by principals were different based on the community setting in which the principal worked (Smith, 2013). For example, principals from city and town settings cited spending more time on working with teachers on instructional issues than did principals from suburban and rural setting. In contrast principals in rural

and city settings spent more time on internal school management than did principals in suburban and town settings. Smith concluded that practice is affected by context and place and the school setting can influence how principals spend their time during the work week.

In a recent study, Azaiez (2017) used the same dataset analyzed in this study, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (ECLS-K: 2011). He examined the number of hours principals reported spending each week on working with teachers on instructional issues, internal school management, student discipline/attendance, monitoring hallways, teaching, talking and meeting with parents, meeting with students, and required paperwork as a function of years of experience. Azaiez identified categories of administrative experience based on the years of experience indicated on the questionnaire by the principals. New principals reported having 1-3 years of administrative experience, Moderately Experienced principals had 4-6 years of experience, and Experienced principals were administrators with more than six years of experience.

Experienced principals in the Azaiez (2017) study reported spending more hours on working with teachers on instructional issues and on required paperwork, yet fewer hours working on school management, discipline and attendance, monitoring areas, meetings with parents, and meeting with students than the New principals and Moderately Experienced principals. Azaiez theorized that Experienced principals might have more refined routines and systems in place on their campuses than New principals or Moderately Experienced principals. As a result, Experienced principals could devote more time working with teachers.

In another study, analyzing the same dataset as used previously, Azaiez (2017) further examined the number of hours principals spent each week on specific activities as a function of school size determined by student enrollment. The specific activities again, included the number of hours spent each week on working with teachers on instructional issues, internal school management, student discipline/attendance, monitoring hallways, teaching, meeting and talking with parents, meeting with students, and required paperwork. School size based on school enrollment were: Small-size schools with less than 400 students, Moderate-size schools with 400-799 students, and Large-size schools with 799 or more students. Azaiez determined that principals in Large-size schools spent more time on working with teachers on instructional issues, on school management, on discipline and attendance, in talking and meeting with parents, in meeting with students, and on required paperwork than principals of Small-size schools and principals of Moderate-size schools. Furthermore, principals in schools with increasingly larger numbers of student enrollment spent more time on each of these tasks.

Because the time principals report working each week varied based on student enrollment, Azaiez (2017) converted the work hours into a percentage of the total week. As such, principals of Large-size schools devoted a higher percentage of their day on working with teachers on instructional issues and on required paperwork than principals in Small-size schools or Moderate-size schools. On the other hand, principals of Large-size schools spent a smaller percentage of the day working on discipline and attendance and monitoring school areas than principals of Small-size schools and Moderate-size schools. Though closely related to the current study, Azaiez focused on public school

principals. As such, the degree to which the results reported by Azaiez are generalizable to private school principals is not known.

Review of the Literature for Problem Matters Principals Address

The time and effort that teachers and principals spend in addressing problem matters within their classrooms and schools affect student outcomes. Researchers (Catalano, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011; Payton et al., 2008; Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2010) focused on public school communities confirm that safe and supportive schools provide opportunities for student outcomes such as reduced incidences in school violence (Lee et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2010) and engagement in risky behaviors (Catalano et al., 2004) along with increased academic achievement (Payton et al., 2008).

Because the number of students enrolled in private schools in the United States exceeds 5 million students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017a), investigating the effect that problem matters affect students in private schools is warranted. Important to realize, the research literature related to problem matters addressed in private schools based as a function of school size is limited. Although some researchers (Almulla, 2015; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009) have explored the effect of school size on school climate and discipline in public schools, few researchers have focused this attention on private schools.

In recent years, widely publicized instances of school violence (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018) have resulted in concern over whether school leaders are capable of educating students in environments free of social and physical aggression. Be that as it may, concern for student safety has been an ongoing issue for educators and the subject of

federal mandates for many years. For example, in 1989, one element of the National Education Goals was that U.S. citizens would have "safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools" in an "environment conducive to learning" (Executive Office of the President, 1990, p. 6). More recently, non-academic factors that influence student learning and contribute to student success including health and safety, climate and culture, and positive behavior intervention and support were identified in the Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). As a result of these mandates, school leaders are required to implement social competencies in addition to ensuring academic achievement.

Discipline problems in an educational setting require teachers and administrators to devote excessive amounts of time and energy toward their resolution, efforts that detract from classroom instruction (Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010). The manner in which problems are resolved may be dependent on several factors including: the culture and climate that permeates the school, the professional training provided to teachers to support classroom management practices, and the effectiveness of classroom management actions implemented by teachers to support student achievement (Blase et al., 2010).

The culture and climate of a school community affects the behavior of teachers and students (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015; DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009; Gershenson & Langbein, 2015; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) contended that school culture is comprised of the shared beliefs, attitudes, motivation, leadership, and communications that define the organization and establish standards within which all stakeholders function. School

climate characterizes the physical and psychological aspects of a school (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). Aspects of school climate are more responsive to change and contribute to the conditions required for effective teaching and learning to occur. Consequently, administrators and teachers who lead students in their academic development are also responsible for ensuring the school culture and climate is conducive to learning.

Stakeholders must cultivate the social, emotional, and academic aptitudes in which children learn to apply problem-solving skills, interact respectfully, and resolve conflict peacefully to accomplish the goal of ensuring a safe, supportive, favorable school climate is achieved. The National School Climate Center (2018) identified the quality and character of school life as crucial to the development of school climate. A favorable school climate occurs when norms, values, and expectations support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe; students and others are engaged and respected; educators' model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment (National School Climate Center, 2018).

School principals play a crucial role in ensuring the school environment is conducive to learning through the teachers they hire and the decisions they make that shape the school culture (Stewart, 2012). Researchers (Downer, Rimm-Kaufman, & Pianta, 2007; Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002) confirmed active classroom engagement predicts student success; on the other hand, disruptive behavior predicts failure (Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015). Disruptive student behavior is challenging for teachers and often affects the entire classroom due to the attention that is drawn from instruction to deal with the negative behavior.

The effects of principal leadership on student achievement and school climate have been extensively analyzed by numerous researchers (e.g., Green, 2012; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Specifically, researchers (Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004) have documented the direct influence that principals have on student achievement through their interactions with students, input on the arrangement of classroom-sizes, and student placements in classrooms (Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004). Furthermore, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) documented that principals indirectly affect student achievement through the influence they exert on the school's climate and culture through teacher professional development, increased collaboration, distributed leadership, and implementation of policies and procedures. Teacher preparation is enhanced by principals who use these techniques which in turn contributes to student success.

Unfortunately for some students, teachers enter the classroom with limited classroom management skills (Stewart, 2012). Gage, Scott, Hirn, and MacSuga-Gage (2018) confirmed that ineffectively handling student disruptions affects the entire classroom. Principals who provide teachers with support and training to identify and prevent disruptive classroom behaviors may serve to protect and preserve the social and instructional climate in the classroom.

Gage et al. (2018) examined the experiences of teachers as they implemented evidence-based classroom management in classrooms to determine their impact on student engagement. Effective classroom management decreases problem behavior and increases student achievement (Korpershoek et al., 2016; Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). Gage et al. (2018) asserted that specific practices likely to increase student

engagement include active teaching, increased opportunities for students to respond, and positive feedback to students.

During periods of teaching (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012), teachers engage in activities that include explaining, demonstrating or modeling a concept, principle or activity related to an academic topic while furthering the lesson/objective of the class; this active teaching increases the probability of student engagement (Pianta et al., 2012; Williford et al., 2013). Opportunities to respond are curriculum-related prompts provided by the teacher that may result in improved student outcomes (Kern & Clemens, 2007: MacSuga-Gage & Gage, 2015). Rates for the occurrence of opportunities to respond within three to five minutes have been documented to increase student engagement. Feedback to students through verbal and gestural positive performance feedback is another measure of teacher engagement that increases student achievement and social behavior. Hattie (2009) concluded that feedback ranked in the top 10 of all behaviors that teachers utilize to facilitate student success. According to Gage et al. (2018), teachers who actively engage students in classroom instruction experience increases in opportunities for student learning and reductions in student disruptions.

Another factor that may affect school climate and discipline is school size. Researchers (Gershenson & Langbein, 2015; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Johnston, 2009; Leung & Ferris, 2008) concluded that school size affects student behavior and academic achievement wherein higher rates of student discipline occur in larger schools. According to Coleman (1988), the size of a school affects the social capital within a school community. In larger schools, students interact less frequently with fellow students, teachers, and administrators (Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2011) than in smaller

schools. On the other hand, researchers (Akerlof & Kranton, 2002; Boccardo, Schwartz, Stiefel, & Wiswall, 2013) have contended that students in small schools have better connections with the school and other students than students in large schools.

Statement of the Problem

Ensuring students receive a high-quality educational experience to achieve their potential in college, career, and life is the primary goal of school superintendents, principals, and teachers. The most important school-related factor influencing student achievement is an inspiring and informed teacher according to researchers (e.g., Hall et al., 2018). Teachers who teach well exude highly developed skill sets to accomplish the mission of serving the social, emotional, academic and developmental needs of students and the school principal may be instrumental in helping teachers accomplish their mission by providing the structure needed to support student success.

Teachers are required to perform multiple tasks in their day to day activities in working with students (Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Hall et al., 2018). Training and support provided by principals enhance the activities teachers engage in to improve student learning. Principals are called upon to ensure structures exist to provide appropriate professional learning opportunities for teachers (Cosner, 2009).

Performance-based accountability measures required in public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2015) drive principals to keep teachers current in best practices (Cosner, 2009; Zepeda, 2015). In contrast, teacher requirements and participation in professional learning opportunities vary based on state regulations for private schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Consequently, questions may arise regarding the quality of instruction teachers deliver to students in

private schools due to the lack of training and support in best practices delivered by principals in Small-size schools and in Large-size schools.

Shifting attention to best practices of principals, an examination of how private school principals spend their work week may reveal differences in time allocation between principals in Small-size schools and Large-size schools. Researchers (e.g., Blase et al., 2010; Cosner, 2009) have confirmed the actions of the school leader serving as an instructional leader affect student achievement. Consequently, the daily activities that require the principals' shift in focus from activities that bolster student achievement may diminish the goals of the organization. Differences in time allocation in private schools between principals of Small-size schools and principals of Large-size schools may affect the quality of student success in private schools.

Finally, student outcomes may be affected when teachers' and principals' time and effort are diverted to addressing problem matters in the classroom. Safe and supportive schools provide opportunities for students to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically (Catalano, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004: Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011; Payton et al., 2008; Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2010). A reduction in the problem matters addressed in the school environment may enhance the cultivation of social, emotional and academic skills that support the application of problem-solving skills, respectful interaction and conflict resolution.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools differed in their emphasis for training and support for teachers, on how they spent their work week, and the specific problem matters they encountered in their school. In the first journal article, the degree to which differences were present between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in their emphasis of training teachers were ascertained. In the second article, the extent to which principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools differed in the tasks in which they spent their work week were determined. In the third investigation, the extent to which differences existed between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in specific problem matters they encountered were addressed. Data from a national dataset on principals were examined in each investigation. Through analyzing this national dataset, findings may be generalized to principals at private elementary schools in the United States.

Significance of the Study

Principals play a pivotal role in establishing the culture that permeates the school and affects the quality of each student's educational experience (Blase et al., 2010; Borg & Slate, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005). Essential factors to address in establishing a school culture focused on student' educational needs include the training and support teachers

receive, how principals spend their time during the work week, and the problem matters addressed in the school.

Private schools are not federally mandated to ensure the quality of a student's education prepares them for college, career, and life. Consequently, this research is significant because students served in private schools should be entitled to a high-quality educational experience that prepares them for their future. To date, researchers have focused their studies on how the processes embedded in the educational institution affect students in public schools, and very few have explored the effect of the quality of the educational institution on the student's experience in private schools. Therefore, findings may have practical implications for private school administrators concerned with examining ways to improve their school outcomes and improve student success.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined to assist the reader in understanding the context of this journal-ready dissertation.

Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten (ECLS-K)

The National Center for Education Statistics (2018a) described the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten as the following:

> The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (ECLS-K:2011) is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education. The ECLS-K: 2011 encompasses information from several sources to provide rich data on children's early school experiences beginning with kindergarten and following children through fifth grade. The ECLS-K: 2011

> provides descriptive information on children's status at entry to school, their transition into school, and their progression through the elementary grades. The longitudinal nature of the ECLS-K: 2011 data enables researchers to study how a wide range of individual, family, school, and community factors are associated with school performance over time. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018a, para 1)

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership, as defined by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004), are practices utilized by leaders to improve teachers' classroom practices as the direction of the school.

Large-size Private School

In this journal-ready dissertation, a large-size private school is a school with a student enrollment of 250 or more students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

National Center for Education Statistics

The National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences, is the primary federal unit for gathering and analyzing data associated with education in the U.S. and other nations. The National Center for Education Statistics is mandated by the U.S. Congress to gather, organize, evaluate, and report complete statistics on the status of American education. In addition, the National Center for Education Statistics is required to conduct and publish reports as well as assess and report on education activities abroad (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019, About us-para. 1).

Tasks and Duties

Principals recounted the number of hours spent on average per week on tasks and duties in response to a question in the Spring 2011 Kindergarten School Administrator Questionnaire, prepared by the U.S. Department of Education (2011). Specifically, the tasks and duties were: working with teachers on instructional issues; administering internal school management; handling student discipline/attendance; monitoring hallways, playground, lunchroom; teaching; talking and meeting with parents; meeting with students; and completing paperwork required by local, state, or federal authorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 33).

Private School Principal

In this journal-ready dissertation, a private school principal is a principal who works in a school that is not supported primarily by public funds, provides classroom instruction for one or more of grades K-12 or comparable ungraded levels, and has one or more teachers. Organizations or institutions that provide support for home schooling without offering classroom instruction for students are not included (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018b).

Problems Addressed

In response to a question in the Spring 2011 Kindergarten School Administrator Questionnaire, prepared by the U.S. Department of Education (2011), principals reported how often the specific types of problems occurred at their school. In this study problems addressed by private school principals will include: (a) theft; (b) physical conflicts among students; (c) children bringing in or using alcohol at school; (d) children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school; (e) vandalism of school property; (f) student bullying; (g)

widespread disorder in classrooms; and (h) class cutting (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 17).

Small-size Private School

In this journal-ready dissertation, a small-size private school is a school with a student enrollment of less than 250 students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

Training and Support

Training and support areas included in the Spring 2012 Kindergarten School Administrator Questionnaire, compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), were training and support to classroom teachers in: (a) reading teaching strategies; (b) mathematics teaching strategies; (c) behavioral supports for students; (d) collecting, organizing, and managing assessment data; and (e) the interpretation and use of assessment data to guide instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 32).

Literature Review Search Procedures

For this journal-ready dissertation, the literature regarding principal emphasis on training and supporting teachers, time spent on certain tasks, problem matters encountered, and school size was examined. Phrases used in the search for relevant literature were: private school principal, private school principal emphasis, training for teachers, problem matters addressed, and school size. Searches were conducted through the EBSCO Host database and only peer-reviewed articles from 2000-2018 were considered.

Key word searches for *principal training for teachers* yielded 104 articles published from 2000-2018. Adding *private school* yielded 2 results. Key word searches

for *principal time management* yielded 17 results. When the key word *private school* was added, the search query yielded no results. A key word *principal emphasis or time* was used, and 96,061 articles were displayed. When *private school* was added to the search, this number was condensed to 840 results. Further adding the key word *United States* condensed the results to 188 articles. Key word searches for *problem matters addressed by principals* was used to display 680 articles and adding *private school* did not yield any results. The key word *school enrollment size* was used and yielded 81 articles. This number was reduced to 2 articles when the key word *private school* was added.

Delimitations

In this investigation, only the self-reported behaviors of elementary principals in Small-size private elementary schools and in Large-size private elementary schools were addressed. Also, how principals self-reported their emphasis on training and supporting teachers, how they spent their time during the work week, and the problem matters they encountered in the 2010-2011 school year were analyzed. Restricting the analysis to a single year of data reduced the degree to which the results may be generalized. Another delimitation resulted from the collection of data from principals who voluntarily completed the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten survey for the 2011-2012 school year consequently limiting the number of participants. Additionally, the three studies in this journal-ready dissertation were restricted to elementary school principals in private schools. As such, the extent which the findings are generalizable to elementary school principals in public schools is not known.

Limitations

For this journal-ready dissertation, the relationship of private school size (i.e., Small and Large) with the emphasis principals placed on teacher training and support, with how principals spend their work week, and with the problem matters they encountered were addressed. As such, several limitations are present. The fact that the study data were collected from self-reports completed by the principals who participated in the study is a major limitation. It is possible the principals were biased in reporting data to this survey which resulted in results that were not accurate or honest.

The use of a 2011-2012 dataset presents another limitation. The topic of school choice has focused increased attention on private schools as an alternative to public schooling since the 2011-2012 school year. This attention may have caused private school principals to analyze how they train and support teachers, adjust how they spend their work week, and changed the problem matters they encounter. Consequently, any results that may be present could be due to variables other than school size.

Assumptions

For this journal-ready dissertation, the assumptions were made that school size, principal emphasis on training and support of teachers, time spent during the work week, and problem matters encountered were recorded accurately and consistently on the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten 2011 questionnaire. An assumption was also made that school size, principal emphasis on training and support of teachers, time spent during the work week, and problem matters encountered were recorded accurately and consistently by the National Center for Education Statistics. Any results obtained

from this journal-ready dissertation would be affected by any deviations from these assumptions.

Procedures

Upon procuring approval of the journal-ready dissertation from this researcher's doctoral dissertation committee, a request was submitted to the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board to conduct the study. On receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten 2011-2012 archival data were analyzed. The dataset was previously downloaded from the National Center for Education Statistics. The National Center for Education statistics publishes this dataset, along with other education datasets, on their website for easy public access.

Organization of the Study

In this journal-ready dissertation, three research investigations were conducted. In the first study, the research questions addressed were related to whether principals of Small-size private elementary schools differed from principals of Large-size private elementary schools in their areas of emphasis in training teachers. In the second study, the degree to which principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools differed in the tasks in which they spent their time during the work week were addressed. In the final study, the focus was on the extent to which problem matters encountered differed between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools.

This journal-ready dissertation consists of five chapters. Included in Chapter I are the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance

of the study, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and outline of the journal-ready dissertation. In Chapter II, the emphasis in training and support for teachers between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools were examined in the first journal-ready article. In Chapter III, the extent to which principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools differed in the tasks in which they spend their work week were presented in the second journal-ready article. In Chapter IV, the problem matters addressed in their schools between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools were the focus of the third journal-ready article. For each of these studies, a separate Method section was created. Finally, in Chapter V, an overview of the results interpreted in the three research articles was provided, including implications for future policy and practice, along with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

DIFFERENCES IN WHAT PRINCIPALS OF SMALL-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS OF LARGE-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS EMPHASIZE IN THEIR TEACHER TRAINING: A NATIONAL ANALYSIS

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

In this investigation, the degree to which differences were present between private elementary school principals at Small-size schools (i.e., less than 250 students) and private elementary school principals at Large-size schools (i.e., 250 or more students) in the training and support they reported providing for teachers in specific areas was addressed. Data were acquired from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 Principal Survey. Of the five areas examined, inferential statistical analyses revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in three of the ways private elementary school principals reported in training areas they emphasized. Private school principals of Large-size elementary schools emphasized more training and support for their teachers in effective reading strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data than was emphasized by private school principals of Small-size elementary schools. Suggestions for future research and implications for policy and practice were made.

Keywords: ECLS-K, Student enrollment, Small-size schools, Large-size schools, Training areas, Principal Emphases.

DIFFERENCES IN WHAT PRINCIPALS OF SMALL-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS OF LARGE-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS EMPHASIZE IN THEIR TEACHER TRAINING: A NATIONAL ANALYSIS

Teachers often face obstacles in their efforts to enhance student learning, however effective training often provide teachers with the knowledge, experience, and guidance for handling these obstacles (Combs, Edmonson, & Harris, 2013). Teachers confront issues which include differentiating instruction, handling behavioral challenges, delivering content, and implementing new technology. Adequate training ensures teachers are supported and possess the skills necessary to teach effectively (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2018).

Educators are expected to possess a myriad of skills to help close achievement gaps, meet progress goals, attend to students with special needs, and remain informed of best practices in education (Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Hall et al., 2018; Ravitch, 2014). According to Ravitch (2014), teachers administer formative and summative assessment and analyze data (a) to identify areas in need for improvement, (b) to set improvement priorities, and (c) to determine how programs and strategies affect student achievement. Therefore, professional development targeted at identifying student needs as indicated by data analysis is essential to empower teachers to cultivate student growth (Blase et al., 2010; Ravitch, 2014).

Researchers (e.g., Zepeda, 2015) have contended teacher training and professional development affect student achievement. Teacher participation in professional development is standard practice in public schools due to the demands for performance-

based accountability mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). Effective public school administrators organize induction programs to train and support new teachers, as well as provide on-going training to ensure teachers follow best practices (Blase et al., 2010). Be that as it may, teacher training is not a standardized, required practice for private school teachers in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Numerous researchers (e.g., Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Grissom & Loeb, 2011) have established links between leadership and school success. According to Horng and Loeb (2010), instructional leaders perform classroom observations and direct instruction to ensure effective teaching and learning occurs in their schools. Instructional improvement practices are also linked to organizational management (Grissom & Loeb, 2011) as these leaders also affect the quality of schools through their effect on school staff and school structures (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Leaders are responsible for hiring, assigning, and retaining quality teachers and also ensuring that teachers engage in relevant professional development. Furthermore, Horng and Loeb determined that student learning increases when principals focus on organizational management that provides teachers with access to support and the use of school resources for instructional improvement.

Investments made by principals to provide teacher training and support increases teacher effectiveness and improves the quality of schools. The contributions principals make in this effort represent that which Hargreaves & Fullan (2013) defined as human capital which are the skills and competencies an individual contributes to his profession. Therefore, principals' efforts to improve teachers' skills and competencies represent an

investment in human capital. School district administrators and principals, encouraged by the results of research studies (Donaldson, 2013), increasingly have emphasized human capital management to affect school outcomes.

Donaldson (2013) examined the obstacles principals encountered when hiring, assigning, evaluating, and providing professional development opportunities and the effects these tasks had on student achievement. School principals, in Donaldson's study, used professional development to raise teacher effectiveness but identified several barriers to successful implementation. Approximately, one half of the principals stated the lack of funding was a hurdle to overcome in providing professional development. Additionally, principals cited diminished site-based decision making due to a lack of authority regarding input for choosing professional development at the school level. Finally, over 50% of the principals named time as an obstacle to providing professional development. Donaldson determined that many of the school principals used multiple techniques to align their human capital practices to overcome the barriers to accomplish their objectives. Principals relied on a multitude of skills, including leadership skills, ingenuity, initiative, and determination, in their effort to improve the quality of teaching in their schools. Principals who had participated in professional development on how to cultivate high-quality teaching were most effective in overcoming obstacles to improve the quality of instruction for their teaching staff (Donaldson, 2013).

In another study, Loeb, Kalogrides, and Béteille (2012) concluded principals in schools in which higher student achievement gains were generated emphasized different human capital management (e.g., methods in hiring, assigning, developing and retaining teachers) than principals in schools in which students did not gain as much in student

achievement. Loeb et al. contended the quality of the teaching force was determined by "hiring high-quality teachers, retaining good teachers and removing poor teachers, and developing the teachers already at their school" (p. 271). Regarding teacher development, Loeb et al. declared professional development enhanced teaching and learning by improving the instructional skills of teaching staff especially in the first years of teaching.

Smith and Slate (2014) also examined the effect of private school leadership on student achievement. The particular study is relevant because their sample of school principals was also the focus of this article. Smith and Slate investigated the perceived emphasis placed on teacher collaboration by private school principals of low- and of high-achieving schools and documented that private school principals focused on staff working well together in both low- and high-achieving schools. As such, the emphasis private school principals placed on working well with others may not be a distinctive aspect of leadership. The ability for staff members to collaborate may enhance the quality of teaching within a school and consequently may result in higher student achievement (DuFour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2009).

In a more recent study, Brown (2016) examined the leadership supports provided by one experienced elementary principal in a high-performing school. Replicating these leadership supports in other schools could have a positive influence on student achievement. The principal-provided supports included (a) a knowledge-centered curriculum aligned to standards; (b) a learner-centered environment led by efforts for data-driven instruction; (c) an assessment-centered instruction based on the development

of school-specific objectives; and (d) a community focused organization for all stakeholders.

The principal in Brown's (2016) study was acknowledged frequently by the staff for facilitating a spirit of collaboration among the school's stakeholders that resulted in building positive school culture. Another positive benefit included a willingness for teachers to put forth extra effort to raise student achievement. Additionally, teachers collaborated to plan professional development on a regular and consistent basis using data to develop a site improvement plan in alignment with the school's goals.

The effort put forth by the principal to use data-driven instruction resulted in building community among teachers (Brown, 2016). The teachers reported using data to answer questions about instruction (e.g., create reading and math instructional groupings) which led to enhanced student achievement. The emphasis on data collection, coupled with a structure for teachers to make data-driven decisions, was essential to the school's success in meeting student's needs. Similarly, Azaiez and Slate (2017) contended principals contribute to the success or failure of a campus by recruiting, training, and retaining highly effective teachers.

Teachers' behaviors and classroom performance may be influenced by school leaders who identify specific goals and objectives as essential for student achievement (DuFour et al., 2009). Hence, it would be beneficial for principals to know these leadership factors. Borg and Slate (2014) asserted that deciding which specific leadership factors will result in student success may be difficult to determine. Public school principals responded to a section in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 and indicated the extent to which they emphasized

specific leadership goals and objectives with their teachers. Borg and Slate analyzed the responses of principals in low-performing schools and principals of high-performing schools. Statistically significant, albeit trivial, differences resulted between high- and low-performing schools possibly because principals self-reported the amount of emphasis placed on the goals and objectives. If the teachers were rating the emphasis principals put on specific leadership goals and objectives, then the results might be more reflective of actual practices performed by the principals.

In another study in which the dataset, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2011, was used, Azaiez (2017) analyzed how public elementary school principals spent their work week as a function of years of experience. The dataset used in the Azaiez research was analyzed for this article. In his study, public school principals in Large-size elementary schools (i.e., student enrollments of 800 or more students) indicated a higher percentage of emphasis in all five of the training areas assessed than principals in Small-size (i.e., student enrollments of less than 400 students) and Moderate-size schools (i.e., student enrollment of 400 through 799 students). Specifically, principals in Large-size elementary schools spent a higher percentage of their time providing training and support to teachers in effective reading teaching strategies, effective mathematics teaching strategies, behavioral support, collecting and managing data, and interpreting and using data than principals in Small-size and Moderate-size schools. In other words, an increase in staff training was related with increased student enrollment on a campus. Azaiez asserted that principals in large-size schools have more staff which might account for the increase in time spent training teachers. Interestingly, all of the elementary school principals, regardless of student

enrollment, identified the highest emphasis in training staff in teaching effective reading strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data.

Several other factors related to school size may affect the training and support provided to teachers in private schools. In education, economies of scale are a theory associated with reducing a school's administrative costs by creating larger schools. The principle of economies of scale may have an effect on opportunities for teacher training whereby principals of large-size private schools may have more funding available for professional development than principals of small-size private schools (Riha, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2013).

Small-size schools of 50 or fewer students constituted the enrollment of most private schools in the United States in 2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017a); therefore, considering the factors that may affect the quality of education imparted to students based on enrollment size has merit. According to the data compiled in the Digest of Education Statistics (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017b), the average salary for full-time teachers in private schools was $42,100 whereas the average salary for full-time teachers in public schools was $55,120. Lower salary offerings to private school teachers may fail to attract the most qualified and inspired teachers to fill vacant positions and administrators may consequently hire non-certified or less qualified teachers to fill vacancies (Slate & Jones, 2005). In these instances, student needs would be met most effectively with teacher support and training. Azaiez (2017) determined that in Large-size public schools, a higher percentage of principals provided training for teachers than principals in Moderate-size or Small-size public schools. Therefore, school enrollment size may be a factor that results in principals hiring teachers with lower

qualifications because of low salary offerings (Slate & Jones, 2005) and principals having less funding available to provide training.

Slate and Jones (2005) reviewed the literature on the effect that school size based on student enrollment had on teacher quality. Researchers (e.g., Jackson, 1966; Pethel, 1978) in several of the evaluated studies documented better performance of larger schools regarding teacher qualifications and working conditions. Specifically, teachers in larger schools were more highly qualified than teachers in smaller schools in which fewer teachers have master's degrees or specialized training. Also, teachers in some smaller schools did not receive planning periods.

In another examination of the literature on schools with small-size student enrollments, Jimerson (2006) reviewed the positive effects of low student enrollment on student learning and well-being. Teachers in schools with small-size enrollments had a positive attitude toward teaching, less absenteeism, increased collaboration with peers, and took more responsibility for student learning. Furthermore, teachers perceived professional development as more valuable for reasons such as being (a) focused on the specific needs of the community, (b) ongoing, and (c) peer-led. Slate and Jones (2005) confirmed similar findings related to increased teacher and student morale in schools with small-size student enrollments.

Statement of the Problem

Student enrollments in private schools have increased annually since 2011 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). In 2013-2014, over 5.4 million students were enrolled in private elementary and secondary schools. The number of private school enrollments increased in 2015-2016 to over 5.8 million students. A variety of

reasons may exist for these increases. Parents may want their child to attend a school with a religious orientation, prefer a specific method of education, or possess a myriad of other reasons for seeking an alternative to public schooling.

The actions of inspiring and informed teachers in the classroom affect student achievement (Blase et al., 2010). Researchers (e.g., Azaiez & Slate, 2017; Combs et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2018) have confirmed the importance of teacher training on student success. In the United States, certification to teach in private schools is not required in all states (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) and in some states, including Texas, a course in civics is the only curriculum requirement. Therefore, ensuring that private school teachers are trained is imperative to safeguard student success.

School enrollment size is another factor that may affect student achievement in private schools. In 2015, of the 34,576 private schools, 87%, had an enrollment of fewer than 300 students; most private schools had less than 50 students enrolled (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017a). Private schools typically rely on tuition dollars to fund the school program. Therefore, schools with small-size enrollments often have less funding available for teacher salaries and professional development.

Scholars (e.g., Borg & Slate, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2008, Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) have discussed the critical role of principals on student achievement and school success. Furthermore, the school principal leads the campus to fulfill the school's vision (Blase et al., 2010). Therefore, because of expectations for students to receive a high-quality educational experience in a private school given the relative absence of regulation of private schools, the time private school principals spend ensuring teachers are trained effectively and are provided adequate support is essential to student

achievement and campus success. Nevertheless, an absence of research is present into the role of private school principals and how they train and support their teachers as a function of school size. Additionally, a lack of research exists about private school size and its relationship to student achievement and school success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools differed in whether they reported training and supporting their teachers in specific areas. Focused on was the extent to which differences existed between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in providing training and support for their teachers in several areas. Specifically, the areas of effective reading teaching strategies, effective mathematics teaching strategies, behavioral support, collecting and managing data, and interpreting and using data were examined.

Significance of the Study

Researchers (e.g., Blase et al., 2010; Borg & Slate, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005) have analyzed the role of public school principals; yet, very few researchers have focused on private school principals. Therefore, a void is present in the literature in how private school principals train and support teachers. From the results of this empirical national investigation, information concerning the training and support provided to teachers in private elementary schools were revealed. Furthermore, private school principals and administrators of professional development programs for principals may acquire information to enhance their training instruction.

Administrators may use the results of these analyses to gain insight into leadership differences that may exist between principals of small-size private elementary schools and principals of large-size private elementary schools. Furthermore, principals and stakeholders may recognize the need within their schools to ensure teachers are provided adequate resources to train and support teachers. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning in private schools may be improved through more effective administrative support.

Research Questions

In this empirical investigation, the following research questions were addressed: (a) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in how they support and train their teachers in effective reading teaching strategies?; (b) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in how they support and train their teachers in effective mathematics teaching strategies?; (c) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in how they support and train their teachers in providing behavioral support for students?; (d) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in how they support and train their teachers in collecting and managing data?; and (e) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in how they support and train their teachers in interpreting and using data?

Method

Research Design

In this empirical investigation, a non-experimental, causal-comparative research design was employed (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). A national archival dataset was analyzed to determine the degree to which differences existed between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in how they trained and supported their teachers in specific areas. Both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred therefore, extraneous variables could not be controlled in this investigation (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

The independent variable in this investigation was private school principals categorized into two groups: (a) principals of Small-size private elementary schools and (b) principals of Large-size private elementary schools. School size groupings were based on student enrollment. Small-size private schools were schools with fewer than 250 students; Large-size schools were schools with 250 and more students. The dependent variables were five survey items in which principals were asked to respond to the training and support provided to teachers in (a) effective reading teaching strategies, (b) effective mathematics teaching strategies, (c) behavioral support for students, (d) collecting and managing data, and (e) interpreting and using data.

Participants and Instrumentation

The unit of analysis in this study was comprised of private school administrators from campuses within the United States. Principals, head of schools, and other administrators voluntarily responded to a questionnaire as part of the survey in the Early

Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class 2011 (ECLS-K: 2011). The ECLS-K: 2011 is an ongoing longitudinal study which follows a diverse group of students in both public and private schools. The ECLS-K: 2011 self-administered questionnaires were intended to collect information on a wide range of factors that affect children's school performance over time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017c). Therefore, information was collected from parents, teachers, caregivers, and schools to provide a comprehensive picture of the children's experiences and development (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017c).

The school administrator questionnaire was divided into eight sections. The first six sections contained questions related to factual information about the school and the programs offered. In the seventh section, questions were asked about staffing and teacher characteristics and in the eighth section, questions about administrator characteristics were asked. One important question in the seventh section was: Does your school currently have any staff members who do the following as their primary role or one of their primary roles? Administrators were to mark either Yes or No if teachers received training or support in (a) the delivery of effective reading teaching strategies; (b) the delivery of effective mathematics teaching strategies; (c) the delivery of effective behavioral supports for students; (d) collecting, organizing and managing assessment data; and (e) the interpretation and use of assessment data to guide instruction.

Archival data from the Spring 2012 School Administrators Questionnaire were obtained from the ECLS-K: 2011 database, and then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program. Administrator responses to the questions concerning providing support and training for their teachers were used for this study.

After the ECLS-K: 2011 data file was converted into a SPSS data file, labels were given to relevant variables used in this investigation. Because data were reported to the National Center for Education Statistics directly from participating schools, minimal errors in the data were assumed to be present. For technical information regarding score reliability and validity of the ECLS-K: 2011 testing instruments, readers are directed to the National Center for Education Statistics website.

Results

To ascertain whether differences were present in how private elementary school principals trained and supported their teachers in (a) the delivery of effective reading teaching strategies; (b) the delivery of effective mathematics teaching strategies; (c) the delivery of effective behavioral support for students; (d) collecting, organizing and managing assessment data; and (e) the interpretation and use of assessment data to guide instruction based on school-size status (i.e., Small-size schools, Large-size schools), Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. This statistical procedure was viewed as the optimal statistical procedure to use because frequency data were present for areas of training and support for teachers and for both private school principal groups (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). As such, chi-squares are the statistical procedure of choice when both variables are categorical (i.e., training and support for teachers, school-size status). In addition, with the large sample size, the available sample size per cell was more than five. Therefore, the assumptions for using a chi-square were met. Because the same statistical procedure was used five times in this study, the Bonferroni method of adjustment (Vogt, 2005) was used to correct for experiment-wise error. The conventional

level of statistical significance (i.e., .05) was divided by 5 to yield an adjusted level of .01 that had to be reached for a result to be viewed as being statistically significant.

With respect to the first research question, a statistically significant difference was revealed between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in their training and support for the delivery of effective reading teaching strategies, $\chi^2(1) = 13.50$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was .13, a below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.1, a statistically significantly higher percentage, 28.40%, of Large-size private elementary school principals reported that they provided training and support to teachers in effective reading teaching strategies than was reported by Small-size private elementary school principals, 17.30%. Of note to readers is that 82.70% of the Small-size private elementary school principals and 71.60% of the Large-size private elementary school principals indicated that they did not provide this training and support to their teachers.

Insert Table 2.1 about here

In regard to the second research question, a statistically significant difference was not yielded, $\chi^2(1) = 3.99$, $p = .046$, between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in their training and support for the delivery of effective mathematics teaching strategies. Though this difference was lower than the conventional level of .05, readers should note that the Bonferroni method of adjustment (Vogt, 2005) was used, resulting in an adjusted level of statistical significance of .01. As revealed in Table 2.2, similar percentages, approximately 20.00%, of Large-size and of Small-size private

school elementary principals reported that they provided training and support to teachers in effective mathematics strategies. Of importance to readers is that 77.90% of Large-size and 83.60% of Small-size private elementary school principals responded that they did not provide their teachers with this training and support.

Insert Table 2.2 about here

Concerning the third research question, a statistically significant difference was not present between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in their training and support in providing behavioral support strategies, $\chi^2(1) = 1.83$, $p = .18$. Revealed in Table 2.3 are similar percentages of Large-size and Small-size private elementary school principals who reported that they provided training and support to teachers in behavioral support strategies. Of note to readers is that a high percentage, 71.80% of Large-size and of 76.10% of Small-size private elementary school principals responded that they did not provide their teachers with this training and support.

Insert Table 2.3 about here

With respect to the fourth research question, a statistically significant difference was revealed between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in their training and support in collecting and managing data, $\chi^2(1) = 14.57$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was .14, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.4, a statistically significantly higher percentage, 37.10%, of Large-

size private elementary school principals reported that they provided training and support to teachers in collecting and managing data than was reported by Small-size private elementary school principals, 24.30%. Of importance for readers is that 75.70% of the Small-size private elementary school principals and 62.90% of the Large-size private elementary school principals indicated that they did not provide this training and support to their teachers.

Insert Table 2.4 about here

Regarding the fifth research question, a statistically significant difference was present between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in providing training and support in interpreting and using data, $\chi^2(1) = 25.50$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was .18, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The descriptive statistics for this research question are delineated in Table 2.5. More than 25.00% of the principals of Small-size private elementary schools and over 43.00% of the principals of Large-size private elementary schools indicated they provide training and support to teachers in interpreting and using data. Readers should note that three 73.70% of the Small-size private elementary school principals and 56.30% of the Large-size private elementary school principals indicated that they did not provide this training and support to their teachers.

Insert Table 2.5 about here

Discussion

In this empirical investigation, responses from private elementary school principals regarding whether or not they provided training and support for teachers on their campus in specific areas were examined as a function of school size based on student enrollment. Analyses were conducted on principals' responses obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics, a national dataset. Inferential statistical procedures revealed differences were present in how private elementary school principals reported training and supporting their teachers as a function of school size wherein principals of Large-size private elementary schools provided more training and support for teachers than principals of Small-size private elementary schools.

Statistically significant differences revealed in the findings were that principals of Large-size private elementary schools provided more training and support to teachers in three of five areas than did principals of Small-size private elementary schools. Principals in Large-size private elementary schools provided over 50.00% more training and support in effective reading teaching strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data for their teachers than principals in Small-size private elementary schools.

Connection with Existing Literature

Extensive literature can be located on leadership behaviors of principals in public schools and student achievement (Blase et al., 2010; Donaldson, 2013; Hall et al., 2018; Zepeda, 2015). Researchers (Azaiez & Slate, 2017; Brown, 2016; Loeb et al., 2012) have revealed that professional development enhances teaching and learning by improving instructional skills and principals have a great deal of influence in this regard through

their efforts as instructional leaders (Béteille et al., 2009; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Horng & Loeb, 2010). Be that as it may, an absence of studies is present related to training and support for teachers by private elementary school principals as a function of school size based on student enrollment on their campuses.

Revealed in this investigation were the areas of emphasis private elementary school principals trained and supported their teachers based on student enrollment size. Principals of Large-size private elementary schools reported providing more training and support to teachers than principals of Small-size private elementary schools. Statistically significant differences were revealed between principals of Large-size private elementary schools and principals of Small-size private elementary schools in the focus on training staff in effective reading teaching strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data. In this study approximately 75.00% of Small-size private elementary school principals reported they did not train or support their staff in all five areas. On the other hand, Large-size private elementary school principals reported providing training and support in all five areas.

Implications for Policy and for Practice

Based on the results of this study, several implications can be made for policy and practice. The lack of regulation in private schools may result in less than an optimal education for students, therefore implementing required policies to improve the skills and competencies of private school teachers may improve student outcomes in private schools. Concerning policy, the following three suggestions can be made. First, private schools should be required to adhere to minimum standards of quality through membership in an accreditation agency. Second, teachers in private schools should be

obliged to obtain training in best practices in education. Third, policymakers should enforce private school teachers attain certification to teach.

Regarding professional practice, the following implications can be made. First, private school principals should invest time and effort toward teacher training to improve teachers' skill and competence. Researchers (e.g., Blase et al., 2010; Hall et al., 2018) support practices initiated by the school principal which help guide teachers' instructional practices to serve student needs best. Second, private school principals should examine current practices and remove barriers that may impede providing training and support to teachers. Time constraints, limited funding, and relevancy of topics should be considered to improve training and support for teachers (Donaldson, 2013). Third, private school principals may enhance collaboration among teachers by providing training in data collection and affording opportunities for teachers to make data-driven decisions to improve student achievement. Professional development is crucial to ensure teachers are well-prepared to implement instructional strategies that support learning (Béteille et al., 2009).

Documented in this investigation was the presence of a statistically significant relationship between student enrollment size and the emphasis private elementary school principals placed on training and support in several areas. Consequently, several implications are present regarding school enrollment size and training and support for teachers. Principals of Large-size private elementary schools emphasized providing training and support to teachers more than principals of Small-size private elementary schools specifically in three of five areas including in effective reading teaching strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data. Therefore,

principals of Small-size private schools should ensure teachers receive training and support that will help them serve their community of learners more effectively. Furthermore, principals of Small-size private schools should seek information about the importance of instructional leadership and the value of developing programs to improve the quality of teacher effectiveness on student achievement.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research can be made based upon the results of this empirical analyses. First, analyzing several years of data, instead of only one year of data, could assist researchers in determining the extent to which trends might be present in areas of emphasis provided by private school principals for teacher training and support based on school size. Second, benefits may be obtained from including private middle school and private high school principals in the scope of these investigations. Analyzing the ways private school principals train and support teachers at the middle and high school level could provide recommendations for establishing standards to improve the quality of instruction executed in private schools. Third, an evaluation of providing training and support to private school teachers as a function of student achievement could provide relevant data concerning student performance. This information could be utilized to inform training and support strategies in private schools.

Conclusion

A national dataset was acquired from the National Center for Education Statistics for this empirical investigation. Specifically obtained were the areas of training and support for teachers and student enrollment number. Generated were two school categories: Large-size schools and Small-size schools. The reported training and support

provided to teachers in specific areas were analyzed by student enrollment number. Statistically significant differences were revealed in three areas. Specifically, principals in Large-size private elementary schools provided statistically significantly more training and support to teachers in effective reading teaching strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data than principals in Small-size private elementary schools. A higher percentage of principals in Large-size private elementary school emphasized training and support for teachers in all areas than did principals in Small-size private elementary school. Be that as it may, a high percentage of private elementary school principals in both Large-size and Small-size schools did not provide teachers with training and support in effective reading teaching strategies, in effective mathematics teaching strategies, in behavioral support for students, in collecting and managing data, or in interpreting and using data. Principals play a critical role in student achievement and school success (Borg & Slate, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2005). Therefore, private school principals should provide training and support to ensure teachers are qualified to safeguard student success.

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Table 2.1

Frequencies and Percentages of Training Provided in Effective Reading Strategies by School Size Status

School Size Status	Did Not Train Staff	Did Train Staff
Small-size	(*n* = 343) 82.70%	(*n* = 72) 17.30%
Large-size	(*n* = 260) 71.60%	(*n* = 103) 28.40%

Table 2.2

Frequencies and Percentages of Training Provided in Effective Mathematics Strategies by School Size Status

School Size Status	Did Not Train Staff	Did Train Staff
Small-size	(*n* = 346) 83.60%	(*n* = 68) 16.40%
Large-size	(*n* = 271) 77.90%	(*n* = 77) 22.10%

Table 2.3

Frequencies and Percentages of Training Provided in Behavioral Support Strategies by School Size Status

School Size Status	Did Not Train Staff	Did Train Staff
Small-size	(*n* = 316) 76.10%	(*n* = 99) 23.90%
Large-size	(*n* = 250) 71.80%	(*n* = 98) 28.20%

Table 2.4

Frequencies and Percentages of Training Provided in Collecting and Managing Data by School Size Status

School Size Status	Did Not Train Staff	Did Train Staff
Small-size	(*n* = 314) 75.70%	(*n* = 101) 24.30%
Large-size	(*n* = 219) 62.90%	(*n* = 129) 37.10%

Table 2.5

Frequencies and Percentages of Training Provided in Interpreting and Using Data by School Size Status

School Size Status	Did Not Train Staff	Did Train Staff
Small-size	(*n* = 306) 73.70%	(*n* = 109) 26.30%
Large-size	(*n* = 196) 56.30%	(*n* = 152) 43.70%

CHAPTER III

DIFFERENCES IN HOW PRINCIPALS OF SMALL-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS OF LARGE-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS SPEND THEIR WORK WEEK

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

In this investigation, the degree to which differences were present between private elementary school principals at Small-size schools (i.e., less than 250 students) and private elementary school principals at Large-size schools (i.e., 250 or more students) in how they spent their time during the work week, both for the total number of hours spent weekly in each activity and also with respect to the percentage of the total numbers of hours worked weekly, was addressed. Data were acquired from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 Principal Survey. Statistically significant differences were revealed in four of the ways private elementary school principals reported in how they spent their time during the work week. Principals of Large-size schools emphasized statistically significant more time in working with teachers on instructional issues and in meeting with parents than principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Small-size schools spent statistically significant more time in monitoring school areas and in teaching than principals of Large-size schools. Suggestions for future research and implications for policy and practice were made.

Keywords: ECLS-K, Student enrollment, Small-size schools, Large-size schools, Principal Emphases, Time Management.

DIFFERENCES IN HOW PRINCIPALS OF SMALL-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS OF LARGE-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS SPEND THEIR WORK WEEK

Every student is entitled to receive a high-quality educational experience to obtain the skills to be successful in life (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Every school, whether public, charter, or private, should ensure practices are implemented to achieve this aim (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009; Ravitch, 2014). Local and federal policy demands have placed greater accountability on public schools to raise student achievement (No Child Left Behind, 2002) and in recent years, these demands have increased (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). As a result, teachers in the public sector may experience stress which in turn may negatively affect the educational experience of students (von der Embse, Sandilos, Pendergast, & Mankin, 2016). Accordingly, some parents have resolved to seek choices in education for their child(ren) that may include private schools and charter schools. Although charter schools are often required to adhere to some level of government accountability, accountability in private schools varies by state and certification to teach is not required in all states (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Consequently, the question may be asked whether these school choices provide a better alternative to public schools. How are parents ensured that their child(ren) receive(s) a high-quality educational experience?

Student achievement outcomes have been attributed to the work of the school leader. Leaders provide impetus for others to pursue the objectives of the organization, and the tasks that leaders perform are integral to guiding the organization's members in accomplishing goals (Northouse, 2013). Because an essential aim of an educational

institution is to increase student achievement, principals are entrusted to ensure that the school's structure and the teachers, staff, and other school stakeholders are equipped to accomplish this purpose (DeVita et al., 2007).

In their attempt to bolster student success, elementary school principals execute a variety of functions. Job duties include performing administrative tasks such as interviewing teachers, filing reports, collecting data; serving as instructional leaders whereby encouraging teachers to try new and innovative teaching methods; meeting with students to coach or redirect behavior; conferencing with parents to discuss concerns; and teaching in the classroom. Over the last few decades, the principal's role has changed from operational manager to instructional leader (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Furthermore, researchers (e.g., Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) have asserted that principals influence student achievement through instructional leadership. Instructional leadership may be defined as activities leaders engage in which support classroom teaching and student learning (Murphy, 1988).

Blase et al. (2010) contended that high-performing principals systematically organize administrative and instructional tasks with structures to support school improvement. The systems-development approach requires principals to use their time wisely and productively to provide support for teachers. Principals in the Blase et al. study reported that delegating administrative functions to other staff allowed them to stay focused on instructional work with teachers.

The day-to-day life of a school principal is ever changing. Camburn, Spillane, and Sebastian (2010) examined principals' use of a daily log for measuring leadership

practice. The daily log instrument was created to evaluate an executive leadership development program for principals; 48 principals in a midsized urban school district participated in the study. The log contained a list of the leadership actions that principals' practice to influence people, processes, and organizational structures including (a) building operations, (b) finances, (c) student affairs, (d) personnel issues, (e) instructional leadership, and (f) professional growth. Principals reported spending about 23% of their time on student affairs and 19% of their time on instructional leadership. Personnel issues consumed about 14% of their time. Principals devoted less than 10% of their time on each of the remaining three leadership domains: building operations, finances, and professional growth. Camburn et al. concluded that the principals in their study devoted the bulk of their time to student affairs and instructional leadership. Because student achievement is attributable to the principal's instructional leadership practices (Blase et al., 2010), this information may be useful to practitioners to reflect on the effectiveness of their daily practices.

In a study on the relationship between principal's time allocation and work effectiveness, Smith (2013) analyzed data from the High School Longitudinal Survey of 2009 (HLS: 09) and focused on the effect of geographic location on each principal's time allocation. The National Center for Education Statistics administered the HLS: 09 as a national survey intended to provide an overview of the experience of U.S. high school students. Smith concluded that changes in neighborhood and community circumstances influenced the work activities of principals. In these instances, flexibility in adjusting work activities maintained or increased overall school effectiveness.

According to Smith (2013), principal work patterns are often interrupted and fragmented. Unfamiliar situations due to changing demographics could further challenge the principal's work day. Smith examined the weekly time allocation principals reported in hours per week spent (a) on working with teachers on instructional issues, (b) on internal school management, (c) on external school management, (d) on monitoring hallways/campus/lunchroom, (e) on their own teaching assignments, (f) on talking and meeting with parents, and (g) on meeting with students. The time allocated to the principals' teaching assignments yielded the highest mean score with 10 hours per week dedicated to this activity. Internal school management accounted for the second highest weekly time of about seven hours per week. Principals indicated spending about 3 hours per week on the remaining activities.

The time allocation reported by principals were different based on the community setting in which the principal worked (Smith, 2013). For example, principals from city and town settings cited spending more time on working with teachers on instructional issues than did principals from suburban and rural setting. In contrast principals in rural and city settings spent more time on internal school management than did principals in suburban and town settings. Smith concluded that practice is affected by context and place and the school setting can influence how principals spend their time during the work week.

In a recent study, Azaiez (2017) used the same dataset analyzed in this study, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (ECLS-K: 2011). He examined the number of hours principals reported spending each week on working with teachers on instructional issues, internal school management, student

discipline/attendance, monitoring hallways, teaching, talking and meeting with parents, meeting with students, and required paperwork as a function of years of experience. Azaiez identified categories of administrative experience based on the years of experience indicated on the questionnaire by the principals. New principals reported having 1-3 years of administrative experience, Moderately Experienced principals had 4-6 years of experience, and Experienced principals were administrators with more than six years of experience.

Experienced principals in the Azaiez (2017) study reported spending more hours on working with teachers on instructional issues and on required paperwork, yet fewer hours working on school management, discipline and attendance, monitoring areas, meetings with parents, and meeting with students than the New principals and Moderately Experienced principals. Azaiez theorized that Experienced principals might have more refined routines and systems in place on their campuses than New principals or Moderately Experienced principals. As a result, Experienced principals could devote more time working with teachers.

In another study, analyzing the same dataset as used previously, Azaiez (2017) further examined the number of hours principals spent each week on specific activities as a function of school size determined by student enrollment. The specific activities again, included the number of hours spent each week on working with teachers on instructional issues, internal school management, student discipline/attendance, monitoring hallways, teaching, meeting and talking with parents, meeting with students, and required paperwork. School size based on school enrollment were: Small-size schools with less than 400 students, Moderate-size schools with 400-799 students, and Large-size schools

with 799 or more students. Azaiez determined that principals in Large-size schools spent more time on working with teachers on instructional issues, on school management, on discipline and attendance, in talking and meeting with parents, in meeting with students, and on required paperwork than principals of Small-size schools and principals of Moderate-size schools. Furthermore, principals in schools with increasingly larger numbers of student enrollment spent more time on each of these tasks.

Because the time principals report working each week varied based on student enrollment, Azaiez (2017) converted the work hours into a percentage of the total week. As such, principals of Large-size schools devoted a higher percentage of their day on working with teachers on instructional issues and on required paperwork than principals in Small-size schools or Moderate-size schools. On the other hand, principals of Large-size schools spent a smaller percentage of the day working on discipline and attendance and monitoring school areas than principals of Small-size schools and Moderate-size schools. Though closely related to the current study, Azaiez focused on public school principals. As such, the degree to which the results reported by Azaiez are generalizable to private school principals is not known.

Statement of the Problem

Time management has a direct bearing on a principal's ability to influence student achievement (DeVita et al., 2007). According to DeVita et al. (2007) principals can act to become better instructional leaders through an awareness of how they spend their time and then handing over management tasks to trusted vital staff members. In recent studies (Azaiez, 2017; Camburn et al., 2013; Smith, 2013) on this topic, the focus has been on public school principals, and little is known of the extent to which leadership practices

affect student achievement in private schools. Because the impetus to expand school choice reform as a means to enhance student learning likely will increase student enrollment in private schools, researchers should embark on additional studies into the time management of principals in private schools. The results of this research investigation may help inform and improve the practices of private school principals and augment student success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the degree to which principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools differed in how they spent their time during the work week both for the total number of hours spent weekly in each activity and also with respect to the percentage of the total numbers of hours worked weekly that was spent in each specific activity. Particularly, the number of hours and the percentage of the work week principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools spent on average per week working with teachers on instructional issues, on internal school management, on student discipline and attendance, on monitoring school areas, teaching, in talking and meeting with parents, in talking and meeting with students, and on required paperwork based in Small-size and Large-size schools were addressed.

Significance of the Study

A considerable body of research (e.g., Blase et al., 2010; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Marzano et al., 2005) exists on the importance of effective school leadership. Evidence is also available regarding the magnitude of instructional leadership to improve student outcomes (Marzano et al., 2005). Few researchers, if any, have concentrated their

efforts exclusively on how private elementary school principals in Small-size and in Large-size schools spend their time each week on specific tasks. The information obtained from this research will fill a void in the existing research as well as offer insight into the differences that exists between private elementary school principals in Small-size schools and in Large-size schools in how they spend their time each week. This information may have practical application for private school administrators to improve student achievement and overall school effectiveness by identifying areas that elementary school principals, in Small-size schools and in Large-size private schools, might adjust in how they spend their time each week. Administrators and other stakeholders may achieve greater clarity in understanding the demands placed on private elementary school principals to accomplish multiple goals.

Research Questions

In this empirical investigation, the following research questions were addressed: (a) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week working with teachers on instructional issues?; (b) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week on school management?; (c) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week on discipline and attendance?; (d) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week monitoring school areas?; (e) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private

elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week teaching?; (f) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week in meeting with parents?; (g) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week in meeting with students?; and (h) What is the difference between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools in time spent each week on required paperwork? These research questions were addressed both for the total number of hours spent weekly in each activity but also with respect to the percentage of the total numbers of hours worked weekly that was spent in each specific activity.

Method

Research Design

A non-experimental, causal-comparative research design (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014) was used in this study. The national archival data analyzed were previously obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics. As such, both the independent variable and dependent variables had occurred previously, and neither could be manipulated (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The data included how principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools spent their time during the work week. Private elementary schools are learning institutions not supported primarily by public funds, that provide classroom instruction for one or more of grades K-12 or comparable ungraded levels and have one or more teachers. In this investigation, Small-size private elementary schools were

schools with fewer than 250 students and Large-size private elementary schools were schools with 250 or more students. The independent variable of private school principal consisted of two groups of principals: (a) principals of Small-size private elementary schools and (b) principals of Large-size private elementary schools. The dependent variable for this investigation was comprised of eight survey items in which principals were asked to respond to how they spent their time during the work week in (a) working with teachers on instructional issues, (b) internal school management, (c) student discipline and attendance, (d) monitoring school areas, (e) teaching, (f) talking and meeting with parents, (g) meeting with students and (h) required paperwork.

Participants and Instrumentation

A diverse group of students in both public and private elementary schools were followed through the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (ECLS-K: 2011). Parents, teachers, caregivers and school personnel voluntarily replied to the ECLS-K: 2011 self-administered questionnaires in which information on a wide range of factors that affect school performance over time were collected (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). This process was intended to provide a comprehensive picture of students' experiences and development (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Students who participated in the study attended both full-day and part-day programs upon entry into the Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

The school administrator questionnaire was comprised of eight sections. Information about the school and the programs offered were included in the first six sections. Principals responded to questions about staffing and teacher characteristics in

the seventh section. In the eighth section, principals answered questions about school administrator characteristics. The item in the eighth section specifically related to this study was: Please estimate how many hours you spend on average per week in the following activities. Administrators wrote in the number of hours spent each week in: (a) working with teachers on instructional issues; (b) internal school management (weekly calendars, vendors, office, memos, etc.); (c) student discipline/attendance; (d) monitoring hallways, playground, lunchroom; (e) teaching; (f) talking and meeting with parents; (g) meeting with students; and (h) paperwork required by local, state, or federal authorities.

Results

To ascertain whether differences were present in how private elementary school principals spent their time during the work week in (a) working with teachers on instructional issues; (b) internal school management (weekly calendars, vendors, office, memos, etc.); (c) student discipline/attendance; (d) monitoring hallways, playground, lunchroom; (e) teaching; (f) talking and meeting with parents; (g) meeting with students; and (h) paperwork required by local, state, or federal authorities based on school-size status (i.e., Small-size schools, Large-size schools), a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) statistical analysis was conducted. However, prior to conducting this statistical procedure its underlying assumptions were checked. Although the majority of these assumptions were not met, the robustness of a MANOVA procedure made it appropriate to use the data in this study (Field, 2013).

The MANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, Wilks' $\Lambda = .85$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .15$, in the number of hours spent per week by private elementary school principals on different activities as a function of school size (i.e., Small-size, Large-size).

Using Cohen's (1988) criteria, the effect size was large. Univariate follow-up analysis of variance procedures revealed statistically significant differences between private elementary school principals in Large-size schools and in Small-size schools in six of eight areas. Specifically, differences were revealed in the number of hours spent per week working with teachers on instructional issues, $F(1, 743) = 29.17$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .038$, a small effect size; in the number of hours spent per week on working on school discipline and attendance, $F(1, 743) = 6.78$, $p = .009$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$, a below small effect size; in the number of hours spent per week on monitoring hallways, playgrounds and lunchrooms, $F(1, 743) = 3.84$, $p = .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, a below small effect size; in the number of hours spent per week on teaching, $F(1, 743) = 54.62$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .068$, a moderate effect size; in the number of hours spent per week talking and meeting with parents, $F(1, 743) = 34.32$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .044$, a small effect size; and in the number of hours spent per week on meeting with students, $F(1, 743) = 7.21$, $p = .007$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$, a below small effect size. Statistically significant differences were not yielded between private elementary school principals in Large-size and in Small-size schools in the time spent each week on two areas of activities: in the number of hours spent per week working on internal school management, $F(1, 743) = 1.07$, $p = .30$; and in the number of hours spent each week on paperwork required by local, state, or federal authorities, $F(1, 743) = .911$, $p = .34$. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 contain the descriptive statistics for the number of hours private elementary school principals spent per week on different activities by school-size status.

Insert Tables 3.1 and 3.2 about here

With respect to working with teachers on instructional issues, private elementary school principals of Large-size schools spent statistically significantly more time on this activity than private elementary school principals in Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools reported spending an average of 8.42 hours per week on this task compared to an average of 6.58 hours per week spent on this task by principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools spent an average of 1.84 more hours per week on this activity than did principals of Small-size schools.

In regard to working on discipline and attendance, private elementary school principals of Large-size schools spent statistically significantly more time on this activity than principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools reported spending an average of 3.92 hours per week on this task compared to an average of 3.34 hours per week spent on this task by principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools spent an average of 0.58 more hours per week on this activity than was spent by principals of Small-size schools.

Concerning monitoring school areas, private elementary school principals of Small-size schools spent statistically significantly more time on this activity than principals of Large-size schools. Principals of Small-size schools reported spending an average of 4.50 hours per week on this task compared to an average of 3.87 hours per week spent on this task by principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Small-size

schools spent an average of 0.63 more hours per week on this activity than did principals of Large-size schools.

With respect to working on hours spent teaching, private elementary school principals of Small-size schools spent statistically significantly more time on this activity than principals of Large-size schools. Principals of Small-size schools reported spending an average of 5.91 hours per week on this task compared to an average of 2.20 hours per week spent on this task by principals of Large-size schools. Principals of Small-size schools spent an average of 3.71 more hours per week on this activity than was spent by principals of Large-size schools.

In regard to meeting with parents, private elementary school principals of Large-size schools spent statistically significantly more time on this activity than principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools reported spending an average of 7.49 hours per week on this task compared to an average of 5.44 hours per week spent on this task by principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools spent, on average, 2.05 more hours per week on this activity than did principals of Small-size schools.

Concerning meeting with students, private elementary school principals of Large-size schools spent statistically significantly more time on this activity than principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools reported spending an average of 4.39 hours per week on this task compared to an average of 3.34 hours per week spent on this task by principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools spent, on average, 1.05 more hours per week on this activity than was spent by principals of Small-size schools.

Statistically significant differences were not yielded in this investigation in the number of hours per week spent on school management or in the number of hours per week spent on required paperwork. Principals in Large-size schools and in Small-size schools spent an average of 12.89 hours per week on school management. These principals spent an average of 5.06 hours per week on required paperwork.

Following the analyses of the number of hours principals reported working, the numbers were then converted to a percentage of the total work week. Principals could have worked a different number of hours in each school grouping. Therefore, a percentage of the work week was deemed to be a better way of determining whether differences were present in how principals spent their work week.

The MANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, Wilks' $\Lambda = .821$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .179$, in the percentage of time spent per week by principals on different activities as a function of school size (i.e., Small-size, Large-size). Using Cohen's (1988) criteria, the effect size was large. Univariate follow-up analysis of variance procedures revealed statistically significant differences between principals in Large-size schools in Small-size schools in the percentage of time spent per week working with teachers on instructional issues $F(1,589) = 41.80$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .066$, a moderate effect size; in the percentage of time spent per week monitoring hallways, playgrounds, and lunchrooms, $F(1,589) = 36.47$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .058$, a small effect size; in the percentage of time spent per week teaching, $F(1,589) = 25.32$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .041$, a small effect size; in the percentage of time spent per week talking and meeting with parents, $F(1,589) = 16.83$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .028$, a small effect size; and in the percentage of time spent meeting with students, $F(1,589) = 7.35$, p

= .007, partial η^2. = .012, small effect size. Statistically significant differences were not yielded between private elementary school principals in Large-size and in Small-size schools in the percentage of time spent per week in the remaining three areas of activities including working on internal school management, $F(1, 589) = 1.23$, $p = .267$; working on school discipline and attendance, $F(1,589) = 2.51$, $p = .113$; and working on paperwork required by local, state, or federal authorities, $F(1,589) = 2.16$, $p = .143$. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 contain the descriptive statistics for the percentage of hours private elementary school principals spent per week on different activities by school-size status.

Insert Tables 3.3 and 3.4 about here

With respect to working with teachers on instructional issues, private elementary school principals of Large-size schools spent a statistically significantly higher percentage of their week on this activity than private elementary school principals in Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools reported 17.53% of their time spent each week on this activity. In comparison, principals of Small-size schools spent 13.87% of their week spent on this activity almost four percentage points less than principals of Large-size schools.

Concerning the percentage of time spent per week monitoring hallways, playgrounds, and lunchrooms, private elementary school principals of Small-size schools spent statistically significantly more time than principals of Large-size schools on this task. The percentage of time spent by principals of Small-size schools weekly on this activity was 9.42%. Principals of Large-size schools spent 5.88% of their work week

monitoring school areas, roughly four percentage points less that principals of Small-size schools.

A statistically significant difference in the percentage of time spent teaching between private elementary school principals was revealed in this investigation. Private elementary school principals of Small-size schools spent over five percentage points more of their time than principals of Large-size schools on this activity. Specifically, principals of Small-size schools spent 9.60% of their time teaching each week wherein, principals of Large-size schools devoted 4.30% to teaching.

In regard to the percentage of time spent meeting with parents weekly, a statistically significant difference was yielded between private elementary school principals of Large-size schools and Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools spent a higher percentage, over one percentage point, of their work week on this activity than principals of Small-size school. Principals of Large-size schools spent 13.32% of their time meeting with parents each week compared to 11.90% of the time principals of Small-size schools spent meeting with parents.

Concerning the percentage of time spent meeting with students each week, private elementary school principals in Large-size schools spent a statistically significantly higher percentage on this activity than principals of Small-size schools. Principals of Large-size schools spent 8.90% of their time on this activity. Principals of Small-size schools spent 7.69% of their work week on this activity, over one percentage point less time than principals of Large-size schools spent.

Statistically significant differences were not yielded in this investigation between private elementary school principals of Large-size and Small-size schools in three areas. Specifically, similar percentages of time were spent by principals working on school management, working on discipline and attendance, and working on paperwork required by local, state, or federal authorities. Principals of Small-size and of Large-size school spent about 30.00% of their time on school management, almost 8.00% of their time on discipline and attendance, and over 10.00% of their time on required paperwork.

Discussion

In this study, the amount of time private elementary school principals spent on specific activities during the work week was examined as a function of school size. Analyses were conducted on principals' responses obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics, a national dataset. Inferential statistical procedures revealed differences were present in how private elementary school principals reported spending their time on specific activities as a function of school-size based on student enrollment. Principals of Large-size private elementary schools spent more hours per week working with teachers on instructional issues, on student discipline and attendance, on meeting with parents, and on meeting with students than principals of Small-size private elementary schools. In contrast, principals of Small-size private elementary schools spent more hours per week monitoring school areas and teaching than principals of Large-size private elementary schools. The amount of time in hours per week spent on school management and on required paperwork did not yield statistically significant results.

Readers should note that principals in Small-size private elementary schools reported spending slightly less than 48 hours per week on the specific activities listed on the survey, wherein principals of Large-size private elementary schools reported spending slightly more than 48 hours on the same activities. Therefore, a potential confounding interpretation may exist because the hours reported by the principals may represent different percentages of the total work week. As a result, the ways principals spent their time during the work week were also analyzed by the percentage of time allocated for each activity.

Results from the statistical analyses on the percentage of time spent during the week on specific activities were that principals of Large-size private elementary schools spent a statistically significantly greater percentage of their work week on working with teachers on instructional issues, on talking and meeting with parents, and on meeting with students. Principals of Small-size schools spent more time monitoring school areas and teaching. The percentage of time spent on school management, student discipline and attendance, and on required paperwork did not yield statistically significant results.

Connections with Existing Literature

The role of principals and their impact on student achievement has been extensively investigated (Azaiez, 2017; Smith, 2013). Researchers (Camburn et al., 2010) have contended that awareness of time spent on specific activities may result in a shift in the focus of time use. Through the use of a daily log, public school principals reported spending about 23.00% of their time on student affairs and 19.00% of their time on instructional leadership. These percentages are higher than the percentages reported by private school principals in this investigation.

The findings in this investigation are in alignment with the results of Azaiez (2017) in which he documented that principals in Large-size public schools spent more time working with teachers on instructional issues than principals of Small-size public schools. Revealed in this investigation was the time spent on specific activities by private elementary school principals as a function of school-size. Specifically, private elementary school principals in Large-size schools spent more time working with teachers on instructional issues than private elementary school principals in Small-size schools.

Furthermore, as in Smith's (2013) study, leadership practice in private elementary schools appears to be affected by context. According to Smith, the time principals allocate to specific tasks varies based on the community of students the principal served. Principals in cities and towns allocated time differently than principals in rural communities. Similarly, in this investigation, principals in Small-size schools spent their time during the work week on different activities than did principals of Large-size schools.

Implications for Policy and Practice

School principals are entrusted to ensure school structures are implemented to meet the goal to increase student achievement. Several researchers (Blase et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005) have examined the role of the public school principal and their influence on the success or failure of student achievement. As such, principals execute a variety of functions which include performing administrative tasks such as interviewing teachers, filing reports, collecting data; serving as instructional leaders whereby encouraging teachers to try new and innovative teaching methods; meeting with students

to coach or redirect behavior; conferencing with parents to discuss concerns; and teaching in the classroom. Consequently, principals must be mindful of their role to prioritize the tasks that provide the most benefits to the organization and their students.

High-performing principals delegate administrative duties and use their time to focus on instructional leadership (Blase et al., 2010). The results of this study were that private elementary school principals in Large-size schools spent statistically significant more time working with teachers on instructional issues than private elementary school principals in Small-size schools. They also spent numerically less time on school management, monitoring school areas, and teaching. Thus, private school principals and administrators should focus their attention on how they spend their time during the week and make adjustments as needed in their weekly schedule. Hiring additional administrative and clerical staff to relieve some of the burdens of the managerial tasks of running a school would be a benefit for private school principals. These measures would provide private school principals with more time for classroom visits, coaching teachers, and giving feedback to teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research can be made based on the results of this empirical investigation. First, in this investigation, only one year of data was analyzed, consequently, examining additional years of data and replication of this study is recommended. Second, in this study, school-size was defined based on student enrollment. As such, researchers are encouraged to restructure the definition of school-size in a manner that reflects actual student enrollments in private schools. Third, a research investigation into the differences that may exist in how principals in private

schools spend their time at work by school size could provide relevant data with regard to the effectiveness of their time use. Finally, researchers are recommended to examine whether differences might be present in the way private school principals spend their time at work at the middle and high school level.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine the extent to which differences were present in how private elementary school principals spent their time during the work week based on school size. A national dataset was obtained from the National Center for Education statistics. Specifically acquired were the hours spent at work by private elementary school principals on specific activities and student enrollment number. Two school categories were generated based on student enrollment: Large-size schools and Small-size schools. The times spent on specific activities were analyzed by student enrollment number. Statistically significant differences were revealed in the time spent between private elementary school principals in Large-size schools and in Small-size schools on working with teachers on instructional issues; on student discipline and attendance; on monitoring student areas; teaching; on talking and meeting with parents; and on meeting with students. Principals of Large-schools allocated more time each week working with teachers on instructional issues; on student discipline and attendance; on meeting with parents; and on meeting with students than was allocated by principals of Small-size schools. Elementary school principals of Small-size schools spent more time monitoring school areas and teaching than principals of Large-size schools. The results of this research highlight the importance of an awareness of best practices employed by principals to result in desired outcomes for students.

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Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Hours Spent per Week for Small-size Private Elementary School Principals

Area of Emphasis	*M*	*SD*
Working with Teachers	6.58	4.73
School Management	13.20	7.76
Discipline and Attendance	3.34	2.40
Monitoring School Areas	4.50	4.53
Teaching	5.91	9.05
Meeting with Parents	5.44	3.92
Meeting with Students	3.76	3.12
Working on Required Paperwork	4.86	5.31

Note. The number of principals in this analysis was 364.

Table 3.2

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Hours Spent per Week for Large-size Private Elementary School Principals

Area of Emphasis	*M*	*SD*
Working with Teachers	8.42	4.57
School Management	12.59	8.44
Discipline and Attendance	3.92	3.48
Monitoring School Areas	3.87	4.26
Teaching	2.20	3.66
Meeting with Parents	7.49	5.47
Meeting with Students	4.39	3.37
Working on Required Paperwork	5.25	5.80

Note. The number of principals in this analysis was 381.

Table 3.3

Descriptive Statistics for the Percentage of Hours Spent per Week for Small-size Private Elementary School Principals

Area of Emphasis	*M%*	*SD%*
Working with Teachers	13.87	7.88
School Management	29.35	14.81
Discipline and Attendance	7.12	5.40
Monitoring School Areas	9.42	8.49
Teaching	9.60	16.70
Meeting with Parents	11.90	9.09
Meeting with Students	7.69	4.55
Working on Required Paperwork	11.05	12.10

Note. The number of principals in this analysis was 309.

Table 3.4

Descriptive Statistics for the Percentage of Hours Spent per Week for Large-size Private Elementary School Principals

Area of Emphasis	*M%*	*SD%*
Working with Teachers	17.53	5.55
School Management	30.98	20.62
Discipline and Attendance	7.90	6.46
Monitoring School Areas	5.88	5.20
Teaching	4.26	6.49
Meeting with Parents	14.88	9.09
Meeting with Students	8.95	6.58
Working on Required Paperwork	9.63	11.35

Note. The number of principals in this analysis was 282.

CHAPTER IV

DIFFERENCES IN THE PROBLEM MATTERS ADDRESSED BETWEEN PRINCIPALS OF SMALL-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS OF LARGE-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

In this investigation, the degree to which differences were present between private elementary school principals at Small-size schools (i.e., less than 250 students) and private elementary school principals at Large-size schools (i.e., 250 or more students) in problem matters that occurred on their school campus was addressed. Data were acquired from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 Principal Survey. Statistically significant differences were revealed in four of the eight areas private elementary school principals rated in frequency as a problem matter that occurred on their school campus. Principals of Large-size schools emphasized statistically significant more problem matters in children bringing in or using illegal drugs, vandalism of school property, student bullying, and class cutting than principals of Small-size schools. Suggestions for future research and implications for policy and practice were made.

Keywords: ECLS-K, Student enrollment, Small-size schools, Large-size schools, Problem matters.

DIFFERENCES IN THE PROBLEM MATTERS ADDRESSED BETWEEN PRINCIPALS OF SMALL-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS OF LARGE-SIZE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The time and effort that teachers and principals spend in addressing problem matters within their classrooms and schools affect student outcomes. Researchers (Catalano, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011; Payton et al., 2008; Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2010) focused on public school communities confirm that safe and supportive schools provide opportunities for student outcomes such as reduced incidences in school violence (Lee et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2010) and engagement in risky behaviors (Catalano et al., 2004) along with increased academic achievement (Payton et al., 2008).

Because the number of students enrolled in private schools in the United States exceeds 5 million students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017a), investigating the effect that problem matters affect students in private schools is warranted. Important to realize, the research literature related to problem matters addressed in private schools based as a function of school size is limited. Although some researchers (Almulla, 2015; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009) have explored the effect of school size on school climate and discipline in public schools, few researchers have focused this attention on private schools.

In recent years, widely publicized instances of school violence (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018) have resulted in concern over whether school leaders are capable of educating students in environments free of social and physical aggression. Be that as it may, concern for student safety has been an ongoing issue for educators and the subject of

federal mandates for many years. For example, in 1989, one element of the National Education Goals was that U.S. citizens would have "safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools" in an "environment conducive to learning" (Executive Office of the President, 1990, p. 6). More recently, non-academic factors that influence student learning and contribute to student success including health and safety, climate and culture, and positive behavior intervention and support were identified in the Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). As a result of these mandates, school leaders are required to implement social competencies in addition to ensuring academic achievement.

Discipline problems in an educational setting require teachers and administrators to devote excessive amounts of time and energy toward their resolution, efforts that detract from classroom instruction (Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010). The manner in which problems are resolved may be dependent on several factors including: the culture and climate that permeates the school, the professional training provided to teachers to support classroom management practices, and the effectiveness of classroom management actions implemented by teachers to support student achievement (Blase et al., 2010).

The culture and climate of a school community affects the behavior of teachers and students (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015; DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009; Gershenson & Langbein, 2015; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) contended that school culture is comprised of the shared beliefs, attitudes, motivation, leadership, and communications that define the organization and establish standards within which all stakeholders function. School

climate characterizes the physical and psychological aspects of a school (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). Aspects of school climate are more responsive to change and contribute to the conditions required for effective teaching and learning to occur. Consequently, administrators and teachers who lead students in their academic development are also responsible for ensuring the school culture and climate is conducive to learning.

Stakeholders must cultivate the social, emotional, and academic aptitudes in which children learn to apply problem-solving skills, interact respectfully, and resolve conflict peacefully to accomplish the goal of ensuring a safe, supportive, favorable school climate is achieved. The National School Climate Center (2018) identified the quality and character of school life as crucial to the development of school climate. A favorable school climate occurs when norms, values, and expectations support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe; students and others are engaged and respected; educators' model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment (National School Climate Center, 2018).

School principals play a crucial role in ensuring the school environment is conducive to learning through the teachers they hire and the decisions they make that shape the school culture (Stewart, 2012). Researchers (Downer, Rimm-Kaufman, & Pianta, 2007; Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002) confirmed active classroom engagement predicts student success; on the other hand, disruptive behavior predicts failure (Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015). Disruptive student behavior is challenging for teachers and often affects the entire classroom due to the attention that is drawn from instruction to deal with the negative behavior.

The effects of principal leadership on student achievement and school climate have been extensively analyzed by numerous researchers (e.g., Green, 2012; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Specifically, researchers (Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004) have documented the direct influence that principals have on student achievement through their interactions with students, input on the arrangement of classroom-sizes, and student placements in classrooms (Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004). Furthermore, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) documented that principals indirectly affect student achievement through the influence they exert on the school's climate and culture through teacher professional development, increased collaboration, distributed leadership, and implementation of policies and procedures. Teacher preparation is enhanced by principals who use these techniques which in turn contributes to student success.

Unfortunately for some students, teachers enter the classroom with limited classroom management skills (Stewart, 2012). Gage, Scott, Hirn, and MacSuga-Gage (2018) confirmed that ineffectively handling student disruptions affects the entire classroom. Principals who provide teachers with support and training to identify and prevent disruptive classroom behaviors may serve to protect and preserve the social and instructional climate in the classroom.

Gage et al. (2018) examined the experiences of teachers as they implemented evidence-based classroom management in classrooms to determine their impact on student engagement. Effective classroom management decreases problem behavior and increases student achievement (Korpershoek et al., 2016; Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). Gage et al. (2018) asserted that specific practices likely to increase student

engagement include active teaching, increased opportunities for students to respond, and positive feedback to students.

During periods of teaching (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012), teachers engage in activities that include explaining, demonstrating or modeling a concept, principle or activity related to an academic topic while furthering the lesson/objective of the class; this active teaching increases the probability of student engagement (Pianta et al., 2012; Williford et al., 2013). Opportunities to respond are curriculum-related prompts provided by the teacher that may result in improved student outcomes (Kern & Clemens, 2007: MacSuga-Gage & Gage, 2015). Rates for the occurrence of opportunities to respond within three to five minutes have been documented to increase student engagement. Feedback to students through verbal and gestural positive performance feedback is another measure of teacher engagement that increases student achievement and social behavior. Hattie (2009) concluded that feedback ranked in the top 10 of all behaviors that teachers utilize to facilitate student success. According to Gage et al. (2018), teachers who actively engage students in classroom instruction experience increases in opportunities for student learning and reductions in student disruptions.

Another factor that may affect school climate and discipline is school size. Researchers (Gershenson & Langbein, 2015; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Johnston, 2009; Leung & Ferris, 2008) concluded that school size affects student behavior and academic achievement wherein higher rates of student discipline occur in larger schools. According to Coleman (1988), the size of a school affects the social capital within a school community. In larger schools, students interact less frequently with fellow students, teachers, and administrators (Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2011) than in smaller

schools. On the other hand, researchers (Akerlof & Kranton, 2002; Boccardo, Schwartz, Stiefel, & Wiswall, 2013) have contended that students in small schools have better connections with the school and other students than students in large schools.

Statement of the Problem

Discipline and behavior problems have the potential to create chaotic environments in classrooms, and the adverse effects of disruptive and distracting student behaviors affect teaching and learning for all students (Johnston, 2009; Leung & Ferris, 2008). Addressing the issues that result in the negative behavior is essential for the students exhibiting the problem behaviors and for their classroom peers. To maintain classroom order, teachers may utilize fundamental techniques including engaging instruction, strategic classroom management, and establishing positive relationships with students (Gage et al., 2018). In reality, at times, students present with persistent problems including oppositional defiant, disruptive, or defiant behavior that may require the use of resources from outside of the classroom (Oliver et al., 2011). Other teachers, behavior specialists, and school administrators may provide valuable resources to classroom teachers for reducing behavior problems.

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping children's behaviors (Bandura, 1977) and the social climate of the classroom and the school have an impact on the interactions between students and school staff. Consequently, teachers must be cognizant of ways to guide and manage classroom behavior to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers may be more successful in creating a positive classroom environment with the support of school leadership in providing strategies and programs for behavior intervention when warranted.

Private schools typically serve a specific community of learners. Therefore, the nature of the school (e.g., religious school) may define the expectations for student behavior and have an effect on the extent to which teacher support in addressing problem matters is required. Although researchers on this topic have focused on public schools, understanding the extent to which problem matters affects learning in private schools is worthy of investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the extent to which differences were present in the problem matters addressed at their schools between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools. Specifically addressed were the problems encountered by principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools regarding theft, physical conflicts among students, children bringing in or using alcohol at school, children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school, vandalism of school property, student bullying, widespread disorder in classrooms, and class cutting. The results from these investigations might reveal differences in school culture that exist between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools.

Significance of the Study

Researchers (e.g., Gage et al., 2018; Korpershoek et al., 2016; Oliver et al., 2011) have contributed to the understanding of the effect school discipline has on student learning in the public sector. Very few, if any, researchers have examined the consequences of school discipline for private school students. As such, the results of this

study may be used by educational leaders to fill a void in the literature on the problem matters addressed by private elementary school principals. Consequently, insight may be obtained by stakeholders that will lead to understanding the differences that exist in the problem matters addressed between private school principals in Small-size schools and in Large-size schools. Results obtained herein may offer insight to educational leaders into the unique problem matters addressed in private schools and highlight the differences between their influence on student learning and achievement. Private school administrators may use this information to identify specific problem matters on their campus and proactively anticipate solutions to improve student achievement and overall school effectiveness.

Research Questions

In this empirical investigation, the following research questions were addressed: (a) What is the difference in problems encountered with theft between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?; (b) What is the difference in problems encountered with physical conflicts among students between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?; (c) What is the difference in problems encountered with children bringing in or using alcohol at school between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?; (d) What is the difference in problems encountered with children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?; (e) What is the difference in problems encountered with vandalism of school property between

principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?; (f) What is the difference in problems encountered with student bullying between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?; (g) What is the difference in problems encountered with widespread disorder in classrooms between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?; and (h) What is the difference in problems encountered with class cutting between principals of Small-size private elementary schools and principals of Large-size private elementary schools?

Method

Research Design

Because the data reflect events that have already occurred, a non-experimental, ex post facto research design was present (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). As such, neither the independent variables nor the dependent variables were capable of manipulation, nor could extraneous variables be controlled. In this empirical investigation, previously obtained archival data from the National Center for Education Statistics were analyzed.

In this study, the independent variable was private school principals categorized into two groups of principals: (a) principals of Small-size private elementary schools, and (b) principals of Large-size private elementary schools. Small-size private schools were defined as schools with fewer than 250 students; Large-size schools were defined as schools with 250 or more students. The dependent variables were comprised of eight items on the survey in which principals were queried to respond to the problem matters

addressed at their schools in (a) theft; (b) physical conflicts among students; (c) children bringing in or using alcohol at school; (d) children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school; (e) vandalism of school property; (f) student bullying; (g) widespread disorder in classrooms; and (h) class cutting.

Participants and Instrumentation

Principals in public and private schools nationwide participated in this study by responding to a survey administered by The National Center for Education Statistics (2017b), an agency within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (ECLS-K:2011) was utilized to compile information from multiple sources to identify rich data on a diverse group of students in both public and private elementary schools. Parents, teachers, caregivers and school personnel voluntarily provided descriptive information on children's progress from their entry to school through their progression through elementary school.

The ECLS-K: 2011 self-administered questionnaires are analyzed by researchers and provide information about a wide range of factors that affect children's school performance over time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017b). Consequently, a comprehensive picture of the children's experiences and development may be obtained by researchers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017b). Students who participated in the study attended both full-day and part-day programs upon entry into the Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017b).

The school administrator questionnaire is comprised of the following eight sections: (a) School characteristics; (b) School facilities and resources; (c) School-

community-family connections; (d) School policies and practices; (e) School programs for particular populations; (f) Federal Programs: Title 1, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and Title III (if applicable); (g) Staffing and teacher characteristics; and (h) School administrator characteristics. The item in section (c), School-community-family connections, specifically related to this study was: To the best of your knowledge how often do the following types of problems occur at your school? Administrators responded to a Likert-type scale by marking how frequently specific problems occur, ranging from Happens daily to Never happens. The specific problem matters about which they were asked were: (a) theft; (b) physical conflicts among students; (c) children bringing in or using alcohol at school; (d) children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school; (e) vandalism of school property; (f) student bullying; (g) widespread disorder in classrooms; and (h) class cutting.

Archival data from the Spring 2012 School Administrators Questionnaire were obtained from the ECLS-K: 2011 database, and then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program. Administrator responses to the questions concerning problem matters addressed in their schools were used for this study. Labels were given to variables used in this investigation after the ECLS-K: 2011 data file was converted into a SPSS data file. Minimal errors in the data are assumed to be present because data were reported to the National Center for Education Statistics directly from participating schools. For technical information regarding score reliability and validity of the ECLS-K: 2011 testing instruments, readers are directed to the National Center for Education Statistics website.

Results

To ascertain whether differences were present in the problem matters addressed between private elementary school principals on their school campus in (a) theft; (b) physical conflicts among students; (c) children bringing in or using alcohol at school; (d) children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school; (e) vandalism of school property; (f) student bullying; (g) widespread disorder in classrooms; and (h) class cutting based on school-size status (i.e., Small-size schools, Large-size schools), Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. This statistical procedure was viewed as the optimal statistical procedure to use because frequency data were present for problem matters addressed in schools and for both private school principal groups (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). As such, chi-squares are the statistical procedure of choice when both variables are categorical (i.e., problem matters addressed in schools, school-size status). In addition, with the large sample size, the available sample size per cell was more than five. Therefore, the assumptions for utilizing a chi-square were met. Because the same statistical procedure was used eight times in this study, the Bonferroni method of adjustment (Vogt, 2005) was used to correct for experiment-wise error. The conventional level of statistical significance (i.e., .05) was divided by 8 to yield an adjusted level of .006 that had to be reached for a result to be viewed as being statistically significant.

With respect to the first research question, a statistically significant difference was not yielded, $\chi^2(1) = 3.26$, $p = .07$, between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in how often theft was reported as a problem on their campus. As revealed in Table 4.1, similar percentages, approximately 65.00%, of Large-size and of Small-size private elementary principals reported that theft was a problem on occasion.

Of importance to readers is that 29.50% of the Large-size and 35.40% of the Small-size private elementary school principals responded that theft never happened on their school campus.

Insert Table 4.1 about here

Concerning the second research question, a statistically significant difference was present between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in how often physical conflicts among students was reported as a problem on their campus, $\chi^2(1) = 13.72$, $p = .003$. As delineated in Table 4.2, principals reported the frequency of the incidence of physical conflicts to occur at least once a week, at least once a month, on occasion and never happens. Principals in Small-size schools reported that physical conflicts happened on the campus at a rate of 0.50% weekly and at a rate of 1.90% monthly. In comparison, principals of Large-size schools reported that bullying did not happen weekly or monthly on campus. Of note to readers is 19.00% of Large-size and 14.30% of Small-size private elementary school principals responded that problems with physical conflict among students never happened on their school campus.

Insert Table 4.2 about here

With respect to the third research question, a statistically significant difference was revealed between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in how often children bringing in or using alcohol at school was reported as a problem on

their campus, $\chi^2(1) = 9.88$, $p = .002$. As revealed in Table 4.3, a higher percentage, 3.00%, of Large-size private elementary school principals reported that children bringing in or using alcohol at school occurred on occasion than was reported by Small-size private elementary school principals, 0.02%. A high percentage, 97% of Large-size and 99.80% of Small-size private elementary school principals, reported that children bringing in or using alcohol at school never happened on their campus.

Insert Table 4.3 about here

In regard to the fourth research question, a statistically significant difference was present, $\chi^2(1) = 21.93$, $p < .001$, between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals in how often children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school was reported as a problem on their school campus. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.4, a higher percentage, 7.00%, of Large-size private elementary school principals reported that children bringing in or using illegal drugs on their campus than was reported by Small-size school principals, 0.70%. Readers should note the high percentage of principals, 93.00%, of Large-size and 99.30% of Small-size private elementary school principals, who reported that children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school never happened on their school campus.

Insert Table 4.4 about here

Concerning the fifth research question, how often vandalism of school property was reported as a problem on their campus, a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2(1) = 59.65$, $p < .001$, was revealed between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was .27, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.5, Principals of Large-size elementary schools reported a higher percentage, 69.80%, of vandalism of school property on their campus than was reported by principals of Small-size elementary schools, 42.90%. Of importance to readers is 57.10% of Small-size private elementary schools principals reported that vandalism of school property never happens on their campus. In comparison, 30.30% of Large-size private elementary school principals reported that vandalism of school property never happens on their campus.

Insert Table 4.5 about here

A statistically significant difference, $\chi^2(1) = 48.85$, $p < .001$, was present between Small-size and Large-size private elementary school principals with respect to the sixth research question, how often student bullying was reported as a problem on their campus. Cramer's V, for this finding, was .23, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.6, Principals of Large-size elementary schools reported the problem of student bullying happened on occasion at a higher percentage, 83.0%, than did principals of Small-size elementary schools, 73.0%. Principals reported the frequency of the incidence of student bullying to occur at least once a week, at least once a month, on occasion and never happens. Principals in Small-size schools reported that bullying happened weekly

on the campus at a rate of 4.30% weekly and at a rate of 10.40% monthly. In comparison, principals of Large-size schools reported that bullying happened weekly on the campus at a rate of 0.00% and at a monthly rate of 14.50%. Readers should note the higher percentage, 12.30%, reported by Small-size private elementary school principals that student bullying never happens on their campus than the percentage, 2.50%, reported by Large-size private elementary school principals.

Insert Table 4.6 about here

In regard to the seventh research question, how often widespread disorder in the classroom occurred on their campus, a statistically significant finding was not present between Large-size and Small-size private elementary school principals, $\chi^2(1) = 0.69$, $p = .41$. Revealed in Table 4.7 are similar percentages, 20.50% of Large-size and 22.90% of Small-size private elementary school principals who reported that problems in widespread disorder in the classroom happened on occasion on their school campus. Interestingly, 79.50% of Large-size and 77.10% of Small-size private elementary school principals reported that problems with widespread disorder in the classroom never happened on their school campus.

Insert Table 4.7 about here

Concerning the eighth research question, a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2(1) = 154.38$, $p < .001$, was revealed between Small-size and Large-size private

elementary school principals in how often class cutting was a problem on their campus. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was .44, a moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). A higher percentage, 36.30%, of principals of Large-size private elementary school principals reported that class cutting happened on occasion on their campus than reported by principals of Small-size private elementary schools, 2.20%. As revealed in Table 4.8, readers should note the high percentage, 97.80%, reported by principals of Small-size private schools that class cutting never happened on their campus. In comparison, 63.80% of principals of Large-size private schools reported that class cutting never happened on their campus.

Insert Table 4.8 about here

Discussion

In this study, the extent to which differences were present in the problem matters addressed by private elementary school principals as a function of school size based on student enrollment was examined. Analyses were conducted of principals' responses obtained from a national dataset. Results were that private elementary school principals of Large-size schools reported that they had statistically significantly greater problem matters in children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school, vandalism of school property, student bullying, and class cutting than was reported by private elementary school principals of Small-size schools. Principals differed most in the problem matter of class cutting followed by student bullying, vandalism of school property, and children bringing in or using illegal drugs at school. In contrast, principals of Large-size schools

and Small-size schools had similar experiences with problem matters of theft, physical conflicts among students, children bringing in our using alcohol at school, and in widespread disorder in classrooms.

Connection with Existing Literature

The culture and climate of a school have an effect on the quality of school life and the characteristics of behaviors displayed by the students (National School Climate Center, 2018). Supportive school communities typically result in positive outcomes for children wherein disruptive behavior predicts failure (Lee et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2010). The findings of this study are aligned with the findings of researchers (Gershenson & Langbein, 2015; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Leung & Ferris, 2008) who asserted that higher rates of discipline occur in larger schools. Revealed in this investigation were the problem matters addressed by private elementary school principals as a function of school-size. Specifically, private elementary school principals in Large-size schools addressed problem matters of children bringing in or using illegal drugs, vandalism of school property, student bullying, and class cutting more frequently than principals of Small-size schools.

Relationships between discipline and school size were revealed in this study. As such, the results for this study are congruent with the results of other researchers (Gershenson & Langbein, 2015; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Johnston, 2009; Leung & Ferris, 2008) who emphasized that higher rates of discipline occur in larger schools. Of the problem matters addressed for which private elementary school principals rated the frequency of occurrence on their school campus, seven out of eight of the problem matters addressed were reported as occurring more frequently in Large-size schools than

in Small-size schools. Widespread disorder was the only problem matter that was reported as occurring more frequently in Small-size schools.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In this investigation, private elementary school principals of Large-size schools addressed more problem matters on their school campus than private elementary school principals of Small-size schools. As such, an implication is that private elementary school principals of Large-size schools should examine the processes and structures in place on their campus to address problem matters adequately. In turn, this insight may be used to determine best practices to create a more supportive school environment.

Interestingly, problem matters of theft, physical conflicts among students, and student bullying were reported as occurring at a high rate by principals of both Large-size and of Small-size private elementary schools. Accordingly, private elementary school stakeholders should examine their school culture. This examination may provide feedback to support the development of aptitudes that could positively enhance students' social, emotional, and physical development.

Recommendations for Future Research

A number of recommendations for future research can be made based on the results of this empirical investigation. First, only one year of data was analyzed in this investigation. Examining additional years of data and replication of this study may provide insight into trends in problem matters addressed in schools. Second, in this study, school-size was defined based on student enrollment by dividing the database into two categories. Because student enrollment for the majority of private schools in the United States is comprised of 50 or few students (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2017a) researchers are encouraged to restructure the definition of school-size in a manner that reflects actual student enrollments in private schools. Third, a research investigation into the differences that may exist in the problem matters addressed by private school principals by school size could provide relevant data concerning how they address these problems. Finally, researchers are encouraged to examine whether differences might be present in the problem matters private school principals address at the middle and high school level.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine the extent to which differences were present in the problem matters addressed by private elementary school principals based on school size. A dataset obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics was downloaded and two school categories, Large-size and Small-size, were generated in which the frequency of problem matters addressed by student enrollment size was analyzed. Statistically significant differences were revealed in the problem matters addressed between private elementary school principals of Large-size schools and of Small-size schools in children bringing in or using illegal drugs; of vandalism of school property; in student bullying; and in class cutting. Principals of Large-size schools addressed problem matters in each area statistically significantly more frequently than principals of Small-size schools. Private elementary school principals in both categories reported similar percentages of frequencies addressing problem matters in several categories including theft; with physical conflicts among students; in children bringing in our using alcohol; and of widespread disorder

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Table 4.1

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems in Theft Between Private Elementary School Principals by School Size Status

School Size Status	Happens on Occasion	Never Happens
Small-size	(*n* = 268) 64.60%	(*n* = 147) 35.40%
Large-size	(*n* = 282) 70.50%	(*n* = 118) 29.50%

Table 4.2

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems in Physical Conflicts Between Private Elementary School Principals by School Size Status

School Size Status	Small-size	Large-size
Happens at Least *Once* a Week	(*n* = 2) 0.50%	(*n* = 0) 0.00%
Happens at Least *Once* a Month	(*n* = 8) 1.90%	*(n* = 0) 0.00%
Happens on Occasion	(*n* = 326) 78.60%	(*n* = 343) 85.80%
Never Happens	(*n* = 79) 19.00%	(*n* = 57) 14.30%

Table 4.3

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems with Alcohol Use Between Private Elementary School Principals by School Size Status

School Size Status	Happens on Occasion	Never Happens
Small-size	(*n* = 1) 0.20%	(*n* = 414) 99.80%
Large-size	(*n* = 12) 3.00%	(*n* = 388) 97.00%

Table 4.4

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems with Illegal Drug Use Between Private Elementary School Principals by School-size Status

School Size Status	Happens on Occasion	Never Happens
Small-size	(*n* = 3) 0.70%	(*n* = 412) 99.30%
Large-size	(*n* = 28) 7.00%	(*n* = 372) 93.00%

Table 4.5

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems in Vandalism Between Private Elementary School Principals by School-size Status

School Size Status	Happens on Occasion	Never Happens
Small-size	(*n* = 178) 42.90%	(*n* = 237) 57.10%
Large-size	(*n* = 279) 69.80%	(*n* = 121) 30.30%

Table 4.6

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems in Bullying Between Private Elementary School Principals by School-size Status

School Size Status	Small-size	Large-size
Happens at Least Once a Week	(*n* = 18) 4.30%	(*n* = 0) 0.00%
Happens at Least Once a Month	(*n* = 43) 10.40%	(*n* = 58) 14.50%
Happens on Occasion	(*n* = 303) 73.00%	(*n* = 332) 83.00%
Never Happens	(*n* = 51) 12.30%	(*n* = 10) 02.50%

Table 4.7

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems in Classroom Disorder Between Private Elementary School Principals by School-size Status

School Size Status	Happens on Occasion	Never Happens
Small-size	(*n* = 95) 22.90%	(*n* = 320) 77.10%
Large-size	(*n* = 82) 20.50%	(*n* = 318) 79.50%

Table 4.8

Frequencies and Percentages of Problems in Class Cutting Between Private Elementary School Principals by School-size Status

School Size Status	Happens on Occasion	Never Happens
Small-size	(*n* = 9) 2.20%	(*n* = 406) 97.80%
Large-size	(*n* = 145) 36.30%	(*n* = 255) 63.80%

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Enrollment in private schools in the United States exceeds 5 million students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017a) and accountability in these institutions varies by state (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Establishing a private elementary school is often as simple as filing the state forms for incorporation and opening the office for admissions. Private school leaders should be held accountable for ensuring that students enrolled in private schools receive a high quality educational experience.

In this chapter, results across three empirical investigations in this journal-ready dissertation are synthesized. In the first research study, differences between private elementary school principals in the training and support provided to teachers based on school size was revealed. In the second investigation, the extent to which school-size was related to the tasks in which principals engaged in during the work week was analyzed. Finally, in the third research article, the extent to which principals addressed various problem matters on their campus as a function of school was examined.

Summary of Study One Results

In the first research article, training and support provided to teachers by private elementary school principals were analyzed as a function of school-size based on student enrollment. Revealed in Table 5.1 are the results of the statistical analysis. Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the training and support provided to teachers by private elementary school principals as a function of school-size. Clearly, private elementary school principals in Large-size

schools placed greater emphasis on providing training and support to teachers than principals in Small-size schools.

Table 5.1

Summary of Statistical Analysis of Principal Areas of Training as a Function of School Size

Training Areas	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	School Size Group with Highest Emphasis
Reading Strategies	Yes	Small	Large
Mathematics Strategies	No	Below Small	Large
Behavior Support	No	Below Small	Large
Collecting and Managing Data	Yes	Small	Large
Interpreting and Using Data	Yes	Small	Large

Summary of Study Two Results

In the second empirical investigation, the ways principals spent their time during the work week were examined as a function of school size. Statistically significant differences were yielded in the ways principals spent their time at work, both in terms of hours as well as percent of their workweek. A summary of the statistical results is present in Table 5.2. Private elementary school principals in Large-size schools and in Small-size schools spent similar amounts of time per week, about 48 hours, working on different activities. Principals in Large-size private elementary schools spent statistically significantly more time than principals in Small-size private elementary schools on

working with teachers on instructional issues, on school discipline and attendance, on talking and meeting with parents, and on meeting with students. Principals in Small-size private elementary schools spent statistically significantly more time per week than principals of Large-size private elementary schools on monitoring school areas and on teaching.

Table 5.2

Summary of Statistical Analysis of Principal Areas of Emphasis as a Function of School Size

Principal Areas of Emphasis	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	School Size Group with Highest Emphasis
Working with Teachers	Yes	Small	Large-size
School Management	No	Below Small	Small-size
Discipline and Attendance	Yes	Below Small	Large-size
Monitoring School Areas	Yes	Below Small	Small-size
Teaching	Yes	Moderate	Small-size
Meeting with Parent	Yes	Small	Large-size
Meeting with Students	Yes	Below Small	Large-size
Working on Paperwork	No	Below Small	Large-size

Summary of Study Three Results

In the third study of this journal-ready dissertation, the frequencies of problem matters addressed by principals on their campus were examined by school size. Statistically significant differences were present in the problem matters principals addressed by school size. A summary of the statistical result is presented in Table 5.3. Private elementary school principals in Large-size schools addressed problem matters in children bringing in or using illegal drugs; vandalism of school property; student bullying; and in class cutting statistically significantly more frequently than did principals in Small-size schools.

Table 5.3

Summary of Statistical Analysis of Principal Problem Matters Addressed as a Function of School Size

Problem Matters Addressed	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	School Size with Highest Emphasis
Theft	No	Below Small	Large-size
Physical Conflict	No	Below Small	Large-size
Children Bringing in or Using Alcohol	No	Below Small	Large-size
Children Bringing in or Using Illegal Drugs	Yes	Small	Large-size
Vandalism of School Property	Yes	Small	Large-size
Student Bullying	Yes	Small	Large-size
Widespread Disorder	No	Below Small	Small-size
Class Cutting	Yes	Small	Large-size

Connection with Existing Literature

A lack of empirical research exists concerning the leadership behaviors of private elementary school principals as a function of school size; although leadership behaviors of public school principals have been well documented (Blase et al., 2010; Donaldson, 2013; Fullan et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2018). Researchers (Azaiez & Slate, 2017; Brown, 2016) have contended that professional development improves instructional skills which enhances student achievement. Furthermore, principals influence teaching and learning in their schools through their efforts as instructional leaders (Béteille et al., 2009; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Horng & Loeb, 2010).

Effective principals use a variety of techniques to provide support for teachers including classroom observations and direct instruction. These strategies improve the quality of instruction of staff (Donaldson, 2013). Investments made by principals to provide teacher training and support increases teacher effectiveness and improves the quality of schools. Commensurate with this study, Azaiez (2017) reported that principals in Large-size schools provided more training and support in all areas than did principals in Small-size schools.

With respect to the way private elementary school principals spent their time during the work week as a function of school size, a lack of research studies was present in the literature. However, several researchers (Azaiez, 2017; Azaiez & Slate, 2017, Smith, 2013) have investigated the role of public school principals on student achievement. Furthermore, the activities in which principals engage in during the work week has been researched (Camburn et al., 2010). Camburn et al. (2010) concluded that a shift can be made in the focus of time use by establishing an awareness of the time

spent on specific activities. Again, the findings in this study are in alignment with the results of Azaiez (2017) who documented that principals in Large-size public schools spent more time working with teachers on instructional issues than principals of Small-size public schools.

Similarly, a lack of research was present in the literature with respect to the problem matters addressed by private elementary school principals. School culture and school climate affect the quality of school life and influence the characteristics of behaviors displayed by the students (National School Climate Center, 2018). Disruptive behavior negatively affects student achievement; on the other hand, positive outcomes have been attributed to supportive school communities (Lee et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2010). The findings of this study are commensurate with the findings of researchers (Gershenson & Langbein, 2015; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Leung & Ferris, 2008) who have documented that higher rates of discipline occur in schools with increased student enrollment. Specifically, private elementary school principals in Large-size schools addressed problem matters of children bringing in or using illegal drugs, vandalism of school property, student bullying, and class cutting more frequently than principals of Small-size schools.

Implications for Policy and for Practice

Requirements for private schools in the United States vary by state (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Consequently, the quality of the educational experience for students enrolled in unregulated schools may not be the same degree of quality as for students enrolled in regulated schools. Stakeholders should devise minimum standards of practice for private schools to adhere to for ensuring the educational experience in private

schools meets the social, emotional, physical, and academic needs of the students enrolled,

Concerning policy, the following suggestions can be made regarding providing training and support to teachers. Private schools should be required to adhere to minimum standards of practice through affiliation with an accreditation agency. In addition, private school teachers should participate in training in best practices in education. Finally, policymakers should enforce private school teachers to attain certification to teach.

The following implications can be made concerning professional practice to ensure private school teachers receive training and support. First, private school principals should invest time and effort toward teacher training to improve teacher skill and competence. Second, private school principals should remove barriers that may interfere with providing training and support to teachers. Time constraints, limited funding, and relevancy of topics should be considered to improve training and support for teachers (Donaldson, 2013). Third, private school principals should train teachers in methods for data collection and afford opportunities for teachers to make data-driven decisions to improve student achievement. Professional development ensures teachers are well-prepared to implement instructional strategies that support learning (Béteille et al., 2009).

School principals are entrusted to ensure school structures meet the goal to serve student needs. As such, principals spend their time during the work week on a variety of functions which include performing administrative tasks; serving as instructional leaders; meeting with students; conferencing with parents; and teaching in the classroom.

Consequently, principals must be mindful of how they spend their time during the week and prioritize the tasks that provide the most benefits to the organization and their students.

Researchers (Blase et al., 2010; Hall et al., 2018;) have confirmed that principals who focus on instructional leadership behaviors have a positive effect on student achievement. The results of this study were that private elementary school principals in Large-size schools spent statistically significant more time working with teachers on instructional issues than private elementary school principals in Small-size schools. In addition, principals in Large-size schools spent less time on school management, monitoring school areas, and teaching than principals in Small-size schools. Thus, private school principals and administrators may benefit by shifting their attention to activities that focus on instructional leadership activities. Hiring additional administrative and clerical staff to allow more time for classroom visits, coaching teachers, and giving feedback to teachers would also be a benefit for private school principals.

In this investigation, private elementary school principals of Large-size schools addressed more problem matters on their school campus than private elementary school principals of Small-size schools. As such, an implication is that private elementary school principals of Large-size schools should examine the processes and structures in place on their campus to address problem matters adequately. In turn, this insight may be used to determine best practices to create a more supportive school environment.

Interestingly, problem matters of theft, physical conflicts among students, and student bullying were reported as occurring at a high rate by principals of both Large-size

and of Small-size private elementary schools. Accordingly, private elementary school stakeholders should examine their school culture. This examination may provide feedback to support the development of aptitudes that will positively enhance students social, emotional, and physical development.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research can be made based on the results of this journal-ready dissertation. Because only one year of data was analyzed, future researchers should examine additional years of data wherein the existence of national trends could be determined regarding leadership behaviors of private elementary school principals. In addition, school-size was defined by creating two categories, Large-size (i.e., 250 or more students) and Small-size (i.e., 249 or less students). In the United States in 2015, small-size schools of 50 or fewer students constituted the enrollment of most private schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017a). Therefore, researchers are encouraged to restructure the definition of school-size in a manner that reflects actual student enrollments in private schools. Furthermore, researchers are recommended to examine whether differences might be present in the leadership behaviors of private school principals at the middle and high school level.

Specifically, a research investigation into the differences that may exist in how principals in private schools spend their time at work by school size could provide relevant data with regard to the effectiveness of their time use. Researchers are also recommended to examine the ways in which private school principals train and support teachers. An examination of training and support to private school teachers as a function of student achievement could provide relevant data concerning student performance.

Researchers are encouraged to use the insight gained from future research to inform private school administrators of best practices in leadership behaviors.

Conclusion

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the relationship of school enrollment size (i.e., Small-size and Large-size) on leadership behaviors (i.e., training and support for teachers, how principals spent their time during the work week and with the problem matters addressed on the school campus) between private elementary school principals. After obtaining and analyzing the national dataset from the National Center for Education Statistics, statistically significant results were revealed in all three studies.

Specifically, principals in Large-size private elementary schools provided statistically significantly more training and support to teachers in teaching effective reading strategies, in collecting and managing data, and in interpreting and using data than principals in Small-size private elementary schools. In fact, a higher percentage of principals in Large-size private elementary school emphasized training and support for teachers in all areas than did principals in Small-size private elementary schools. Regarding how principals spent their time during the work week, principals of Large-size schools allocated more time each week working with teachers on instructional issues; on student discipline and attendance; on talking and meeting with parents; and on meeting with students than was allocated by principals of Small-size schools. Elementary school principals of Small-size schools spent more time monitoring school areas and teaching than principals of Large-size schools. Furthermore, principals of Large-size schools addressed problem matters in children bringing in or using illegal drugs, vandalism of

school property, student bullying, and class cutting statistically significantly more frequently than principals of Small-size schools. Private elementary school principals in both categories reported similar percentages of frequencies addressing problem matters in several categories including theft; with physical conflicts among students; in children bringing in our using alcohol; and of widespread disorder. High-quality learning experiences may open doors to the joy of learning and inspire children to fulfill their highest potential. Principals play a pivotal role in ensuring structures are in place to support student growth. Given the fact that parents choose private school enrollment as an alternative to public school enrollment for their children, private school principals and administrators should seek to ensure that the quality of education offered at their schools meets and, under the best circumstances, exceeds the quality of alternative educational choices.

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Appendix

From: orsp@irb.shsu.edu <orsp@irb.shsu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, January 24, 2019 8:16 PM
To: Slate, John; Ushnoff-Brumbelow, Rosemary
Subject: IRB-2018-174 - Initial: Exempt from IRB Review

Sam Houston STATE UNIVERSITY
A Member of The Texas State University System

Date: Jan 24, 2019 8:16 PM CST

TO: Rosemary Brumbelow
John Slate
FROM: SHSU IRB
PROJECT TITLE: DIFFERENCES IN PRIVATE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS BY STUDENT ENROLLMENT: A NATIONAL STUDY
PROTOCOL #: IRB-2018-174
SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial
ACTION: Exempt
DECISION DATE: January 24, 2019
EXEMPT REVIEW CATEGORY: Category 4. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Greetings,

Thank you for your submission of Initial Review materials for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

*** What should investigators do when considering changes to an exempt study that could make it nonexempt?**

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research.

In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Sharla Miles
IRB Analyst
Protection of Human Subjects Committee (PHSC-IRB)

VITA

Rosemary Ustinoff-Brumbelow

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Doctorate of Education–Educational Leadership, May 2019
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Montessori Secondary Certified I and II (Houston Montessori Center)
IB MYP Certified Coordinator/Head of School
Level 1 IB MYP Certified in Technology
Dyslexia Reading Specialist Level 1 (Neuhaus Education Center)

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Ustinoff-Brumbelow, R., Lazar, K. L., Merchán, R. A., & Michaels-Johnson, R. R.(2018, February). *Exploring the Impact of 1:1 Technology Initiatives: A Case Study.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA), New Orleans, LA.

Professional Experience
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