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The Impact of Principal Leadership Styles on School Accountability

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The impact of principal leadership styles on school accountability

By

Kimberly Nicole Bryant

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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The impact of principal leadership styles on school accountability

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This study examined the impact of principals' leadership styles on the academic achievement of students as measured by the Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2). The 2013-2014 school year MCT2 mathematics and language arts scores were used as measures of student achievement and high-stakes testing. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5x) was distributed to 420 principals. However, because of incomplete information given by the principals on the questionnaire, and the fact that the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) did not report MCT2 scores for particular schools, some of the principals' information was not useful; thus leaving the researcher with a sample size of $n = 110$ participants.

This study was guided by 2 research questions. Relationships were analyzed using the Multivariate test for Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) in which the variable of socioeconomic status was used as a covariate because it was found to result statistically different scores across group means. The research questions sought to determine what type of principal leadership style resulted in higher student achievement in mathematics and language arts. The findings of this study indicated that there were no statistically

significant differences among the transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles.

It is imperative that principals draw from all leadership approaches (i.e. transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant approach) in their practice instead of focusing on just one type of leadership style. This is true especially in schools that serve a large percentage of students that come from families with low socioeconomic status since this study found that socioeconomic status had a statistical significant effect on student achievement. Only through the utilization of research-based practices will schools be able to raise the bar of student achievement by revamping the leadership style of the school's ultimate instructional leader, the principal.

DEDICATION

I would be nowhere in this program if it was not for God. There were often times where I was frustrated and felt like giving up, but YOU always gave me a sign through your word and your people to keep persevering. Thank you LORD for pushing and pressing me, even when I could not see myself finishing (Philippians 3:13-14 NKJV). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy One in understanding" (Proverbs 9:10 NKJV). Therefore, I dedicate this dissertation to my LORD for blessing me with both the wisdom and knowledge I needed to finish.

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A major undertaking such as this is never accomplished without the guidance and encouragement of ardent supporters and mentors. As such, I would like to express my appreciation for those special individuals who were there for me throughout the process. To my family, particularly to both of my parents, Lee and Linda, for their encouragement and support in this educational journey, THANK YOU! I definitely would like to thank my sister, Dr. Kathy Bryant. She set a high bar of academic excellence for me to jump behind her. She will never know how much her life has impacted and paved the way for me. She has played a very integral role in my journey as an educator as well as a scholar.

I would like to extend gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Linda Coats, for agreeing to be my dissertation director and providing me with encouragement and support throughout this endeavor. She always shared her wisdom and knowledge regardless of her full schedule. She never wavered in her commitment during challenging times. She has been such a great role model and advisor to me as a researcher and scholar. I have taken many of her suggestions and ideas to heart, and I am continually striving to improve. I would also like to thank my committee members: Dr. Debra Prince, Dr. Kay Brocato, and Dr. Jianzhong Xu. They have all provided me with encouragement, support, and great advice throughout my educational journey. I am very grateful to them for this. Thank you all.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In light of recent reforms, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the

expectations placed upon in-school leaders for enhanced attention to (and accountability

for) leadership for learning has been felt by principals throughout the world (Philips,

Renihan, & Raham, 2003). NCLB includes accountability systems such as Adequate

Yearly Progress (AYP), and other programs that allow the federal government to track

how the law is working across the United States and how to improve education (Hess &

Finn, 2004). The main parts of NCLB rely heavily on testing students annually in Grades

3 through 8 in reading and math to determine whether every state measurement shows

improvement on AYP. According to NCLB, states must test students in science once in

Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 10-12. Schools must make AYP toward this goal, whereby

proficiency rates increase in the years leading up to NCLB's goal date which was at the

end of the 2013-2014 school year. Individual schools, school districts and states must

publicly report test results in the aggregate and for specific student subgroups, including

low-income students and students with disabilities, English language learners, and major

ethnic groups. AYP mandates that schools show gains in overall student growth, as well

as student subgroups in every grade level (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Student

subgroups include grade level, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English

proficiency, and special needs (Hess & Finn, 2004).

According to NCLB (2002) strengthened Title I's mandates which required states to implement accountability systems throughout all public schools. The law also makes provisions for states that reach their AYP or close the achievement gap. Schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years are identified for "school improvement," and must draft a school improvement plan, and devote at least 10% of federal funds provided under Title I of NCLB to teacher professional development. Schools that fail to make AYP for a third year are identified for corrective actions, and must institute specified interventions designed to improve school performance. If schools fail to make AYP for a fifth year, they must implement a restructuring plan that includes reconstituting school staff and/or leadership, changing the school's governance arrangement, converting the school to a charter school, turning it over to a private management company, or some other major change (NCLB, 2002).

In March 2010, the Obama administration issued its blueprint for the reauthorization of ESEA as opposed to NCLB. The reauthorization would retain assessment and accountability, however some of the differences between the two acts relate to teacher qualifications, and the assessment of students, standards, and outcomes. First, the *highly qualified teacher* will be replaced with the *highly effective teacher*. The *highly effective teacher* will be based on student outcomes rather than subject matter proficiency and meeting state certification requirements. This is seen in schools today through new teacher evaluation models based on student achievement test scores. Secondly, states will need to adopt college and career readiness standards that are based on national initiatives instead of setting their own academic standards. This is seen today through the *Common Core Test* initiatives. Thirdly, student performance would be

measured as a growth model approach, which looks at individual student progress from year to year rather than status models which compares different cohorts of students. Fourthly, states may choose to assess students in subjects other than in reading and math and make those tests a part of their accountability system. Lastly, schools that meet their targets will be rewarded with money and flexibility. Schools that do not meet their targets and are persistently low-achieving would have very specific intervention options, but would not have to offer public school choice or tutoring (United States Department of Education, 2010).

The History of Leadership Studies in the United States

Interest in the study of principals in school effectiveness that grew in the beginning of the 1980s was fueled by the urgent tone of *A Nation At Risk* in 1983. The summer 1982 issue of *Educational Administration Quarterly* that examined the research on principal leadership in two landmark reviews "Research on the School Administrator: The State of Art, 1967- 1980" (Bridges, 1982) and "The Instructional Management Role of the Principal: Review and Preliminary Conceptualization" (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982). These reviews came to two different conclusions. Bridges (1982) noted the need for theory building in principal effects. The other perspective was that of Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003), summarizing Bossert et al. (1982), who were more optimistic and supported the conclusion that principals had some indirect effect on the achievement of students.

Hallinger and Heck (1996) challenged the theoretical and methodological benchmarks of principal effect studies in their landmark review of 40 empirical studies conducted between 1980 and 1995. They concluded that many studies contained

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methodologies, small sample sizes, and a wide range of unrelated measures. Hallinger and Heck (1996) analyzed each of the 40 empirical studies to determine a theoretical model, the Pitner model (Pitner, 1988). The Pitner model classified studies into two overarching theoretical models: direct-effects model, and mediated-effects model.

Hallinger and Heck (1996) wrote that direct-effects studies explored the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement and did not account for environmental differences of the school organization. Hallinger and Heck (1996) concluded that mediated-effects studies assumed that some or all of the impact attained by school administrators on desired outcomes can be attributed to different features of the school organization such as school size, principal's gender, teaching experiences, and leadership philosophy. Mediated-effects also contained a variety of definitions for student achievement. Student achievement measures ranged anywhere from standardized achievement test scores to teacher-conceived outcomes.

The consensus of effective schools research pre-NCLB (Gullat & Lofton, 1996; Sammons, Hillman, & Mortimore, 1995) concluded that a principal's leadership had a significant, yet indirect effect on the success of individual students when the principal provided instructional leadership. Another key mediated-effects factor was teacher perception of principal leadership. In Andrews and Soder's (1987) study, teachers rated their principals, and based on these ratings, principals were characterized as strong, average, or weak. Findings showed that typical equivalence gain scores of students in the strong leaders' schools were significantly higher than those of students in the average or weak leader schools. In essence, teacher's perceptions of their principal as an

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instructional leader was highly correlated with the reading achievement gains of students, particularly low-achieving students.

In Hallinger's (2005) second review of empirical studies of instructional leadership, he found that principals contributed to school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly through their influence on school and classroom conditions. The greatest principal effect on student achievement occurred when the principal acted as instructional leaders, focusing on defining a school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate.

Like Hallinger's (2005) American study, Witziers et al. (2003) tested numerous well-researched principal effects using a meta-analysis of studies conducted in European school systems. They found that school leadership has a positive and significant effect on student achievement. However, according to Silva, White, and Yoshida (2011), Hallinger (2005) and Witziers et al. (2003) two key questions were left unanswered. The first question was would the effect be significantly larger if the principal interacted directly with individual students? The second question was could any modest indirect effects created by shaping the school's mission be of enough practical value for principals facing the well-publicized requirement of having 100% of their students achieve proficiency on state tests by the 2014 deadline.

Statement of Problem

The ultimate goal of any school across America is to increase students' academic achievement. Studies (e.g. Bodovski & Youn, 2011; Vitaliy, Thurlow, & Liu, 2008) have discussed strategies, methods, and behaviors that teachers can employ to increase student

achievement. Also, principals can draw on their previous experiences as a teacher to aid them with working with their teachers to improve student achievement.

The problem of this study is that with the new and emerging era of principals as instructional leaders, there is no doubt that principals will continue to be under more pressure by being analyzed for their impact on test scores. The principals' role over the years has become increasingly demanding in comparison to their earlier perceived role of maintaining order and discipline in the school. Now, the principals' role and behavior are viewed alongside teachers' role and behavior in promoting high academic achievement through high-stakes test scores.

More research needs to be conducted to investigate the role of the principals' leadership style on student achievement as measured by high-stakes test scores. With the growing demands of NCLB, principals are expected to have an impact on student achievement, either directly or indirectly. Moreover, principals are expected to use their leadership styles to increase student achievement via test scores. Therefore, it is imperative that principals are aware of which leadership style(s) to use in their efforts to increase student achievement through test scores. As a result, this study will investigate which leadership styles principals should use to help increase student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of principal leadership styles on student achievement, as measured by high-stakes testing (test scores). Because other studies (Anderson, 2008; Griffith, 2004; Silva et al., 2011; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010) have addressed the direct and indirect effects of principals, but not in relation to their leadership styles, the purpose of this study is to analyze principal leadership

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styles to determine their impact on student achievement as measured by high-stakes test scores. In order for principals to be effective in increasing student achievement through high-stakes testing, they must know what type of leader they must become in order to be effective. It is simply not enough to say that principals have an effect on student achievement; rather, principals need to know specifically what type of leader they should become in order to establish significant academic gains in their students' achievement.

Although there are many facets of accountability as it relates to student achievement, this study sheds light on the leadership styles that encourage principals to produce high student achievement on high-stakes tests. As the instructional leader, principals must also (alongside teachers) use research-based practices that promote high academic achievement among students. Principals and other school leaders must come to terms with the real issue behind low test scores. Once these issues are revealed, principals must formulate attitudes, perceptions, traditions, strategies, and behaviors to increase student achievement. Nettles and Herrington (2007); Silva et al. (2011); and Sebastian and Allensworth (2012), have conducted studies linking principals to student achievement whether directly or indirectly. However, this study sought to add to the existing literature by identifying which type of principal leadership style is linked to high student achievement as measured by high-stakes test scores. This study investigated schools' math scores, and schools' language arts scores to see if relationships exist between these variables and the type of leadership style that the principal possesses.

Research Questions

The research questions that this study addresses are:

1. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in mathematics?

2. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in language arts?

Definition of Key Terms

1. *Laissez Faire Leadership*- describes leaders who are reluctant to influence subordinates or give direction. They generally refrain from participating in group or individual decision making and to a large extent, abdicate their leadership role. Subordinates are given considerable freedom of action (Deluga, 1990). For purpose of this research, the terms laissez-faire and passive avoidant was used synonymously throughout this study.

2. *Leadership Style*- For the purpose of this study, leadership styles will be described as one of the three categorical traits that the MLQ5x instrument classifies principals (transformational, transactional, or passive/avoidant).

3. *Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2-)* consists of customized criterion-referenced language arts and mathematics assessments that are fully aligned with the 2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised (MDE, 2006) and the 2007 Mississippi Mathematics Framework-Revised (MDE, 2007).

4. *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)* measures a broad range of leadership types. The instrument has four assessment scales of leadership:

transformational, transactional, passive/avoidant, and outcomes of leadership
(Avolio & Bass, 2013).

5. *Student Achievement*- For the purpose of this study, a student's performance on a standardized test such as the MCT2.

6. *Transactional Leadership*- leaders and subordinates are viewed as bargaining agents where relative power regulates an exchange process as benefits are issued and received (Deluga, 1990).

7. *Transformational Leadership*- the leader-subordinate relationship is viewed as one of intense emotion where subordinates place a great deal of trust and confidence in the leader (Bass, Waldman, Avolio & Bebb, 1987; Burns, 1978). Charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation is cited as four characteristics comprising transformational leadership.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Stewart (2006) asserts that leadership has been and will continue to be a major focus in the era of school accountability and school restructuring. Transformational leadership and instructional leadership have emerged as two of the most frequently studied models of school leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). The scholars most closely associated with transformational leadership theory are Burns (1978), Bass and Avolio (1990), and Leithwood (2012). Transformational leadership theory was initially conceptualized by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985) for use in a wide array of organizational contexts. According to Hallinger (2003), transformational leadership theory found a receptive audience in the education community in the 1990s. The transformational leadership model does not assume that the principal alone will

provide the leadership. Rather, leadership may come from the teachers as well as from the principal. Transformational leaders create the conditions under which others are committed and self-motivated to work towards the improvement of the school without specific directions from above.

Leithwood and Sun (2012) argue that unlike traditional models of leadership that are transactional in nature, in transformational leadership theory, organizational members become highly engaged and motivated by goals that are inspirational because those goals are associated with values in which they strongly believe or are persuaded to strongly believe. "Transformational leadership theory identifies which internal states of organizational members are critical to their performances and specifies a set of practices that are most likely to have a positive influence on those set of practices" (Leithwood & Sun, 2012, p.3).

In an educational policy environment with a laser-like focus on improving student achievement, transformational leadership theoretically only offers a partial solution to the leadership problem. Moreover, teacher practices must often change if student achievement is to improve. Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1994) define transformational leader as follows:

> The term 'transform' implies major changes in the form, nature, function and/or potential of such phenomenon; applied to leadership, it specifies general ends to be pursued although it is largely mute with respect to means. From this beginning, we consider the central purpose of transformational leadership to be the enhancement of the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of

organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of

goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement. (p. 7)

According to Stewart (2006), what distinguishes the transformational leadership

model from others is the focus on how administrators and teachers improve teaching and

learning. Transformational leaders focus on restructuring the school by improving school

conditions. According to Hampton (2010), historically, educational administrators

managed school organizations through exchanges or transactions. Therefore,

transformational leaders move beyond transactional relationships in an effort to transform

others. Rather than focusing on control and direct coordination, the transformational

leader seeks to support the development of changes to practices of teaching and learning.

In the era of accountability, it is important for principals to become that of the

instructional leader. The leadership style or behavior that most closely associated with an

instructional leader is that of the transformational leader. Also, according to Griffith

(2004), studies have shown that transformational leadership is associated with effective

leadership. Transformational leadership theory states that in order for leaders to be

effective, they must possess charisma or inspiration. First and foremost, this is the

leader's ability to provide a clear sense of mission in which members develop a sense of

loyalty and community. Next, leaders should consider that they treat each member as a

unique individual. Lastly, intellectual stimulation should be the leader's provision for

group members (Griffith, 2004).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Drawing on the different trends of research on principal leadership, this conceptual framework describes how principal leadership styles influence instruction and student learning. The conceptual framework for this study is depicted in Figure 1
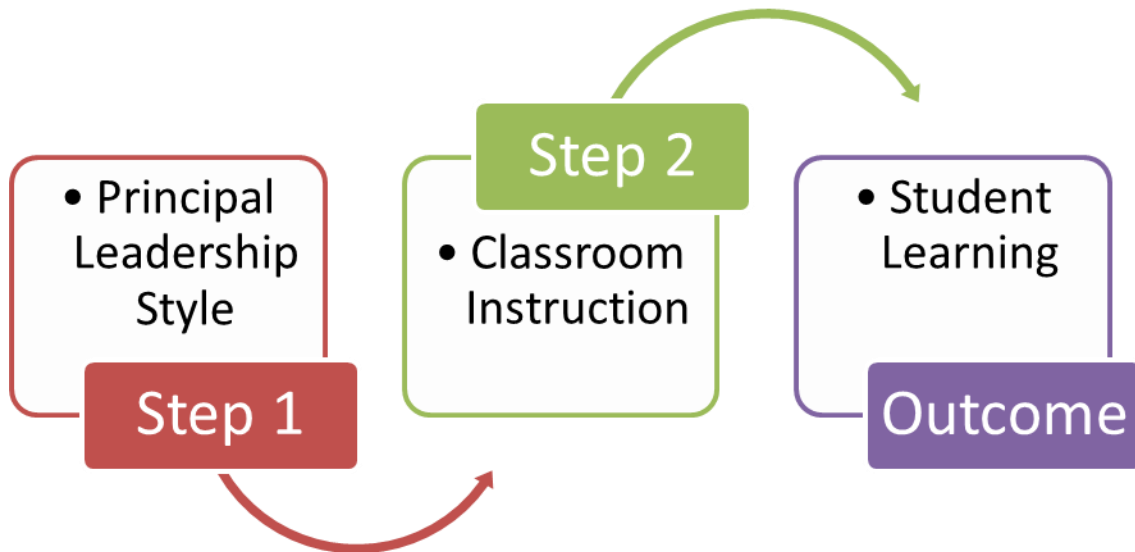
Figure 1.   First Conceptual Framework.

According to Supovitz et al. (2010), educational leadership influences instructional practices, which changes student performance. These researchers claim that principal leadership is significantly related to student learning through change in instruction. With this view, essentially principals indirectly impact student achievement through the use of the classroom unit (teachers). Furthermore Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) analyzed both quantitative and qualitative research on school leadership and concluded that leadership is only second to classroom instruction in influencing student learning.

However, there is another view that principals can directly impact student achievement. According to Silva et al. (2011), principals can have a direct effect on student achievement levels through the discussions and interactions they have with students. Furthermore, Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) explored the effects of principal and teacher leadership in reference to student engagement. They collected their evidence through an online survey given to 1,445 teachers that measured leadership practices throughout 199 schools. More importantly, the survey measured the mediating effects (indirect effects) of leader's effect on students. They found that the results demonstrated greater effects of principal as compared to teacher sources of leadership on student engagement.

Figure 2 is the second conceptual framework for this study. Nettles and Herrington (2007) found that regardless of the teacher unit, the principal can have a direct effect on student learning. When principals become instructional leaders or transformative leaders, this perspective would channel through the principals' actions which can have an impact on student learning regardless of the teacher unit. In essence, principals' leadership style is one that challenges students, and shows students that the rincipal believes in them. In turn, student achievement increases.
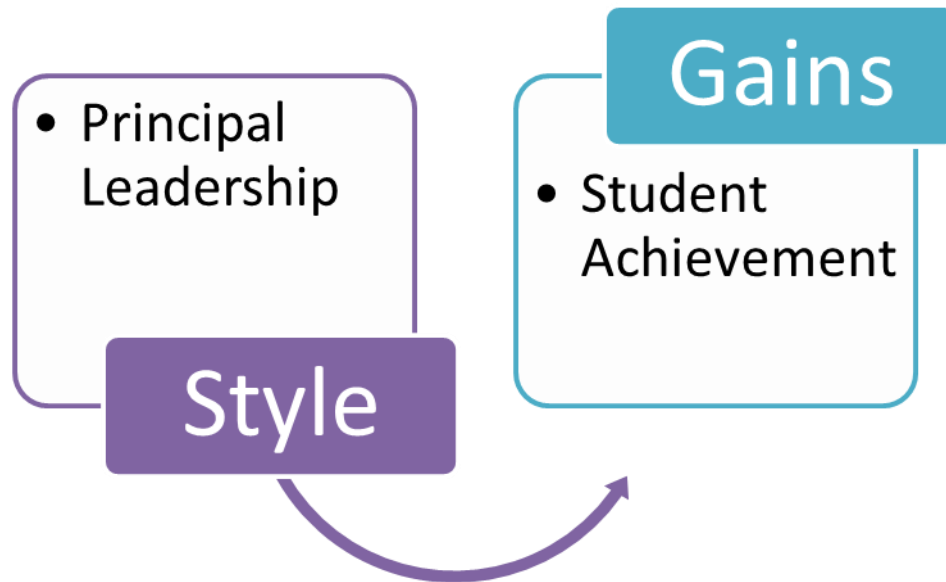
Figure 2.   Second Conceptual Framework.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was conducted with the following delimitations.

1. All of the principals in the study are from Mississippi Public School Districts.

2. Participants in the study are Elementary and Middle School principals who reside over schools that only serve Grades 3-8.

3. Mathematics and Language Arts are the only subject areas addressed in the study because those are the only subjects tested every year in Grades 3-8 in Mississippi.

Significance of the Study

According to Verona and Young (2001), empirical evidence is scant, regarding the effects of transformational leadership of principals on student achievement. The problem that arose out of their study is the limited amount of empirical data of how leadership styles of principals affect students. According to Renihan and Noonan (2012),

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the role of the principal is one aspect of the assessment reform movement that has not been well researched. Renihan and Noonan (2012) further mentions that one concept that has been used but fairly examined in educational research is that of assessment leadership where the role and expectations of school leaders are defined by enhancing assessment literacy. Assessment literacy is when teachers and students are aware of terminology, context, content, scoring, and etc. of assessments (high-stakes tests). The present study explored assessment leadership in efforts to add a significant contribution to educational research. Additionally, it will explore the direct and indirect effects of the principal's role and student achievement as measured by high-stakes testing. Since Renihan and Noonan (2012) advocate the need for the role of the principal, the present study sought to add to the existing literature by focusing heavily on the principal's perspective of their role. Neumski (2013) assert that we know almost nothing about how instructional leadership varies within different instructional systems throughout the United States.

Also, a review of the current literature has revealed research that has only focused on rural settings, or only on urban settings. Research has revealed that the climate of the school matters. Hoy and Miskel's (2001) comprehensive review of organizational climate studies have linked the elements of leadership, motivation, and job satisfaction with climate. Rural administrators perceive themselves to be more negatively affected in attracting and retaining high- quality teachers than suburban or urban administrators.

In rural communities, the leadership positions are often built on social interaction, mutual trust, and relationships that promote agency trust within the community for the common good. This close relationship allows the rural administrator to adapt testing and accountability policies to their rural expectations. Many rural residents strongly identify

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with their place of residence and are reluctant to leave it to pursue higher education or careers (DeYoung, 1995; Howley & Howley, 1995; Seal & Harmon, 1995; Theobald, 1997).

Rural administrators reported spending a similar amount of time each day on instructional leadership as suburban and urban elementary administrators (Egley & Jones, 2004). According to Whitaker (1997), principals get caught up in the day-to-day operations of the school dealing with matters that are not directly related to instruction, but are important to the efficient operations of the school.

Rural elementary administrator's use of data to improve teacher effectiveness is an example of leadership behaviors that are valuable for school improvement (Egley & Jones, 2004). This finding is consistent with a study in which two out of three North Carolina administrators reported that the testing programs increased their ability to make teachers more effective (Ladd & Zelli, 2002). This supports Schein's (1992) assumptions that the process of supervision can facilitate the improvement of instruction. Hoy and Hoy (2003) contended that teachers' performance in schools is often determined by the climate of the school in which they work. Instructional leaders who improve school climate are working on a very enduring quality of the school that is experienced by teachers and can positively influence their behaviors and may lead to improved student learning (Egley & Jones, 2004).

Education leaders have the difficult job of dealing with accountability pressures while keeping their schools focused on testing to improve student learning. Parents can be partners in this task if educators make the effort to keep them informed about tests and test scores (Protheroe, 2001).

The present research sought to add to the existing body of knowledge by looking at different instructional systems across Mississippi to see how, or if they vary. The purpose for analyzing different instructional systems was to see if elementary principals differ from middle school principals, or whether urban school principals differ from rural school principals. In essence, instead of examining the effects of principal leadership styles on student achievement in a vague, conglomerate fashion; rather, this present study analyzed the effects of principal leadership styles in various contexts (i.e. schools with low to high socioeconomic status) to determine effectiveness.

According to Diamond and Spillane (2002) previous studies that have focused on leadership practice have typically been small and ethnographic in nature. They mention that studies that will allow us to study larger samples will be crucial.

Since student achievement via high-stakes testing is a large area of interest in schools today, it is imperative the educational administrators be able to increase student achievement through research-based knowledge, and ethical decisions. The present study sheds the light on some of the ethical frameworks and leadership principles that can help principals increase student achievement without the cost of sacrificing academic integrity.

In contrast to the large literature on teacher quality (Buddin & Zamarro 2009; Harris & Sass 2006; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger 2008; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004), Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009) mention that there are few studies that have addressed whether principals impact school performance and, if they do, which principal characteristics determine principal effectiveness. Clark et al. (2009) report that the literature on principals is sparse in part because of the difficulties faced in defining

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and measuring principal effectiveness and in part because of the paucity of high-quality data upon which convincing empirical strategies can be based. There are few studies of whether principals influence school performance and few convincing studies of the impact of specific principal characteristics such as education and experience (Clark et al., 2009). According to Knapp and Feldman (2012), relatively little research has investigated the matter empirically five or more years into the NCLB era, in other words, at a point in time where an intensified multi-level external accountability system has been in place for enough years to alter the way school staffs configure and pursue their work.

Egley and Jones (2004) report that studies that provide richer, more in-depth understandings that address the perceptions of educational leaders and the impact of high-stakes testing are greatly needed since there is a limited number of studies and the limited nature of data available. Egley and Jones (2004) also state that few researchers have examined administrators' perceptions of high-stakes testing. They go on to say that more information is needed about how and what administrators are doing as instructional leaders in our schools.

Because previous research in the area has been classified as weak, Hallinger and Heck (1996) suggest that future research designs will be strengthened if they include sufficient sample sizes, reliable data collection instruments, and sophisticated data analysis tools. Because of the methodological weaknesses in previous studies, this present study sought to strengthen the existing body of literature on principal's leadership styles by examining leadership styles and student achievement in a way that addresses previous gaps in literature, and by ensuring that this study was methodologically sound.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to provide information on research conducted relative to the effects of principals' leadership styles on student achievement. The first section focuses on the rationale for the accountability system imposed on principals: NCLB. The second section will focus on the research of various studies and their findings of the influence of principal leadership on student achievement. The third section will focus on three different principal leadership styles that will be explored in this proposed study: laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational. Lastly, the fourth section will be devoted to two areas of interest that today's principals must be concerned with in order to be effective: instructional leader, and teacher effectiveness.

Review of Related Literature

In current policy discourse across national contexts, the term accountability is likely to conjure up images of system-wide arrangements for ensuring the proper expenditure of public funds and for encouraging or even compelling educators to improve the performance to acceptable levels (Knapp & Feldman, 2012). More than a decade into an era of intensified, system-wide accountability pressures under NCLB, Renihan and Noonan (2012) claim that now is an important time to consider the interaction of internal and external accountability systems in schools. These researchers contend we use this

argument by proclaiming that because of NCLB, assessment, analysis and alternative uses of related data have become one of the major roles of the school principal.

The logic behind external accountabilities lies in the notion that professional work is or needs to be, extrinsically motivated, guided by a larger set of interests residing in the community served by public education, and compelled or enforced by system-level leaders (located outside individual schools) who serve these interests (Knapp & Feldman, 2012). With that being said, there is nothing to prevent a school's internal accountability system from being largely management-driven or political, as an autocratic principal tries to make things happen to satisfy constituencies (Knapp & Feldman, 2012).

Yukl (2006) reminds us that being a leader is not just having a title but that leadership is a process. Yukl (2006) defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (p. 8). However, a central concern of school leadership is to orchestrate the ongoing instructional practices generated in the contentious zone between external and internal interests (Leithwood, 2005). The expectations of leadership can be very demanding as principals battle to find common ground from the external interests of people such as politics and internal interests of people such as parents. While testing is not new to school leadership, testing individual students for the purpose of measuring the success of the whole school and particularly the success of the principal is a new aspect of school leadership (Elmore, 2000; Leithwood et al., 1999; O'Day, 2002). In these early years of standards and assessment expectations, leaders had few tools to use for internalizing these expectations of high student achievement for all students (Knapp & Feldman,

2012). Once standards and the associated assessments tools were established, they were used to evaluate the school leaders' success and to reposition instructional practice in their schools to meet or exceed external (public) expectations. Apparently, some school leaders were able to align the work inside their school to meet the expectations of the outside audiences while other schools leaders were not (Diamond & Spillane, 2002). Unfortunately, some school leaders who had been leading public schools that were viewed as popular, suddenly found themselves leading failing schools in which teachers who had thought of themselves as successful suddenly found themselves with a new identity defined by public expectations (Knapp & Feldman, 2012). In addition to the challenge for school principals to ensure that quality teaching and learning is taking place and manage the facilities, principals find themselves with new responsibilities due to internal and outside accountability requirements.

Leadership Studies

Numerous leadership studies have shown that principals can have a direct or indirect impact on student achievement (Nettles & Petscher, 2006; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Silva et al., 2011). Silva et al. (2011) investigated the direct effect of principal leadership in students' reading achievement. They conducted an experimental study with 66 eighth grade participants in a single suburban middle school. In their study, principals participated in direct, one-on-one discussions with students that focused on their reading. Students in the experimental condition held discussions with a principal prior to the state reading test, showed reading gains significantly larger than students in the control group who had their discussions after the state reading test. They found that

the principal had a significant direct effect on the students' subsequent reading achievement gains on the state reading test.

Similarly, Nettles and Petscher (2006) studied the direct effects of school principals on achievement in Florida schools receiving federal Reading First grants. Data used in this study were 388 Reading First principal responses to the Principal Implementation Questionnaire (PIQ), and the student reading achievement of more than 34,000 first-grade students as measured by the four quarterly Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessments for the 2004-2005 school year. The authors used a three-level hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) growth curve model was used to determine the amount of student-level variance that can be explained by the five dimensions measured by the PIQ. The authors found that increased principal implementation of effective reading intervention practices resulted in the overall population of students gaining five additional words per minute on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills ORF subtest.

Another study involving the influence of principal leadership on student achievement is that of Sebastian and Allensworth (2012). They examined the influence of high school principal leadership on classroom instruction and student achievement. Multilevel structural equation modeling was used to examine the relationships among principal leadership, school organizational structures, classroom instruction, and student grades and test gains on ACT's Education Planning and Assessment System. Measures of principal leadership and school organizational structures were collected from teacher surveys administered to all high school teachers in Chicago Public Schools in the 2006–

2007 school years. They found that differences in instruction, and ultimately student achievement, resulted from principal leadership via the learning climate.

Likewise, Griffith (2004) examined the direct effect of principal transformational leadership to staff turnover and school performance. Survey data were obtained from elementary school staff and students, and school-aggregated student achievement test scores were obtained from school archives. Results showed that staff reports of principal behaviors could be described in terms of the three components of transformational leadership: inspiration or charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Principal transformational leadership showed an indirect effect through job satisfaction on school staff turnover, and on school aggregated student achievement progress.

However, because of the demanding workload, principals state that they find it hard to make significant direct or indirect impact on student achievement. According to Philips et al. (2003), there can be significant barriers to principals' efficacy which must be overcome in order for schools to create a culture that supports quality school leadership. One of those barriers is that most of principals' time is spent attending to parent issues, community-related tasks, discipline, and facilities management, allowing for very little time to be devoted to instructional leadership, teaching, and learning. Lack of time and excessive managerial demands are the two greatest obstacles for the expectations of today's principals which requires them to be an instructional and/or transformational leader.

Although several studies (Anderson, 2008; Finnigan, 2012; Kythreotis, Pashiardis, & Kyriakides, 2010; Valentine & Prater, 2011) have mentioned that the

principal can impact student achievement, there is a gap in the research that specifically
identifies which leadership style of principals are most effective in impacting their
students academically. Anderson (2008) examined the effectiveness of school principals
in enhancing student achievement. He conducted a quantitative study in which he
gathered data on 2,048 fourth grade students in four Latin American cities. Anderson
(2008) developed his own instrument which included questionnaires given to teachers,
parents, and principals. Results indicated that the instructional role for principals were
associated with increased student achievement. They found that principals who allocate
more time to student evaluation appear to obtain significantly higher achievement.
Additionally, the principal's role in fostering community relationships, especially with
parents, and the relationships with and among teachers had the largest effect on student
achievement in math and language arts. Anderson's (2008) research also supported the
importance of instructional leadership to student achievement.

  Finnigan (2012) conducted a qualitative study to analyze principals'
transformational leadership behaviors' indirect impact on student achievement via
teacher motivation. He interviewed 52 teachers via focus groups and used principals as a
secondary data source. He concluded that principal leadership was critical to turning
around low performing schools. However, since the data were from teacher perspective,
and qualitative, I felt as if my research could contribute to the field of educational
leadership through offering the quantitative aspect of the principal's perspective.

  According to Nettles and Herrington (2007), there is still much to be known
regarding the impact of principals' leadership style on student achievement. They assert
that this is because much of research on school leadership focuses on peripheral results of

the principal's practice rather than actual student outcomes. Peripheral results of principal's practice can range from anything such as adhering to mission statements, decrease in the amount of discipline referrals, following accreditation standards, and other types of tasks. Despite the large body of literature, the causal relationship between principal leadership style and student achievement remains unclear (Hallinger et al., 1996; Witziers et al., 2003). Some studies in educational leadership investigated the relationship between school-level variables and student achievement; yet fail to bring specific principal behaviors into the model. Examples of these type of studies include those focused on school mission (Bossert, 1988), school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1999), school size (Lee & Loeb, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1995), and placement of highly qualified teachers in the classrooms (Ingersoll, 1996). A second type of study investigates the principal's role in shaping the educational environment, but does not use student achievement as the dependent variable (e.g. Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Because previous research in the area can be classified as weak, Hallinger and Heck (1996) suggest that future research designs might be strengthened if they include sufficient sample sizes, reliable data collection instruments, and sophisticated data analysis tools.

Kythreotis et al. (2010) investigated the direct and indirect models of leadership on student achievement. Their study consisted of 22 primary grade schools. They found that principal's leadership style does play a small, but significant effect on primary students' academic achievement. Because the researchers in this study developed their own instrument, which Hallinger forewarns, and only used 22 primary grade schools, I feel that my research adds significant contributions to the field by using a reliable and valid instrument (MLQ5X) to conduct my study.

Valentine and Prater (2011) examined the relationship between principal's managerial, instructional, and transformational leadership style and student achievement in statewide public high schools. The sample size consisted of 131 schools in which principals and teachers both agreed to participate. The researchers used two instruments to measure the principals' behavior: The Audit of Principal Effectiveness and the Principal Leadership Questionnaire. Valentine and Prater (2011) used a variety of statistical methods to analyze their data. They conducted a Pearson correlation test to detect relationships among principal demographic variables and principal leadership factors such as managerial leadership, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership. They also conducted an analysis of variation to detect significant differences among principal leadership factors. They found that principal leadership behaviors that promoted curriculum and instruction were linked to student achievement. Also, principal's ability to identify a vision and provide an appropriate model had the greatest relationship to student achievement in the transformational leadership realm.

Laissez-Faire Leader

According to Deluga (1990), laissez-faire leadership describes passive leaders who are reluctant to influence subordinates or give directions. They generally refrain from participating in group or individual decision making (Bass, 1981; Bradford & Lippitt, 1945) and to a large extent, neglect their leadership role (Stoner, 1982). Schreisheim, Hinkin, and Tetrault (1991) claimed that even though laissez-faire leadership may have strong negative relationships with various leadership criteria, the absence of leadership (laissez-faire leadership) may be just as important as the presence of other types of leadership.

Transactional Leader

Many approaches to the study of leadership exists; but according to Judge and Piccolo (2004) "transformational- transactional leadership theory dominates current thinking about leadership research" (p. 762). Burns (1978) delineates two basic types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Bass (1985) defines transactional leadership as an exchange of rewards with subordinates for services rendered. According to Ingram (1997), transactional leadership motivates followers through extrinsic rewards. Bass and Avolio (1990) conclude that although transactional leadership can be effective, transformational leadership is more effective.

Transformational Leader

In this era of high-stakes testing, the principal is viewed as the key element in improving student achievement. According to Burns' (1978) theory of transformational leadership, it occurs only when leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Transformational leadership ultimately becomes moral because "it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus has a transforming effect on both" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Yukl (2006) defined transformational leadership as "the process of building commitment to the organization's objectives and empowering followers to accomplish these objectives" (p. 324). According to Hoy and Miskel (2001), transformational leadership is what people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader.

Leithwood's (2005) model on transformational leadership centers on the following eight dimensions grouped in three categories: (a) Setting directions, building school visions, establishing school goals, demonstrating high performance expectations;

(b) Developing people, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modeling best practices and important organizational values; (c) Redesigning the organization: creating a productive school culture, developing school structures to foster participation in school decisions. Below are the eight dimensions described in more detail by each category:

1. Leithwood (2005) found that principals are confident in their judgments and that they provide an overall sense of purpose to staff members. The principals expressed confidence in their abilities to prepare students for high-stakes testing by regularly giving teachers positive reinforcement, and having faith and trust in their decisions and expertise as professionals. Most importantly, they are proud when low-achieving students do well on high-stakes tests.

2. The principals in the study support the teachers by personally encouraging and caring for them and by providing instructional resources for their classrooms. Overall, the principals are instrumental in helping teachers examine professional issues in a variety of ways, in particular, the issues concerning classroom instruction and teaching styles. They also help teachers examine student achievement and assessment issues that occur in the classroom by introducing new educational philosophies. These principals are community minded, and actively participate in community events and educational organizations. They model a high level of enthusiasm and a willingness to be involved in school activities and special events. They are very supportive of teachers in engagement in high-stakes testing (Leithwood, 2005).

3. The principals create a school culture that is grounded in parent and teacher involvement and focuses on an overall pride in student achievement. They continually reshape the school to cultivate student self-esteem. Their behavior strengthens the school culture so that is consistent with the fundamental values and beliefs of the school. Principals delegate responsibilities to teachers and other staff members by encouraging them to be active in the decision-making process. When formulating policies, they gather input from a variety of stakeholders such as parents, students, teachers, and community members. Overall, the principals share decision-making power with their staff members by being good listeners, open to suggestions, and having faith trust in teacher's decisions and expertise (Leithwood, 2005).

Leithwood (2005) asserts that the transformational leadership practices contribute to building a school vision, establishing school goals, and demonstrating high performance expectations in their schools. Regarding student achievement, principals are confident in their judgments and they provide an overall sense of purpose to the staff members. Student success is an overall goal of the principals. Transformational practices of principals help teachers examine student achievement and assessment issues that occur in the classroom by introducing new educational philosophies to the school. Transformational principals create a culture in the school that is grounded in parent and teacher involvement, and focuses on an overall pride in student achievement.

Leithwood et al. (1999) created this model after synthesizing 34 published and unpublished empirical and formal case studies conducted in elementary and secondary schools. Twenty-one of those 34 studies relate to transformational leadership in schools.

Six of the studies were qualitative and the other 15 where quantitative. Evidence about the effects of leadership was provided by 20 of the 34 studies and include: effects on students, effects on the perceptions of leaders, and effects on the behaviors of followers.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) concluded in their research that greater degrees of transformational leadership are needed in various schools to achieve higher passing rates on tests. In the area of high stakes testing in the name of accountability, most educators view the principal as a key element in improving student achievement. Principal transformational leadership and its effect on passing rates can have an impact on school districts in several ways: result in better, more informed hiring decisions, professional development or the retraining of veteran principals, facts related to the benefits of transformational leadership styles to student achievement will be useful to principals when they develop their personal improvement plans.

Instructional Leader

According to Marzano et al. (2005), instructional leadership is linked to transformational leadership. Printy, Marks, and Bowers (2009) noted that the two models of principal leadership, instructional and transformational, have dominated the research in current reform era (NCLB). Instructional leadership model emerged in the early 1980s and focused on the manner in which leadership improved educational outcomes (Stewart, 2006).

Elmore (2000) states that not only must school administrators perform the ritualistic task of organizing, budgeting, managing, and dealing with disruptions inside and outside the system, today's instructional leader must be able to coach, teach, and develop teachers in their schools. As instructional leaders, principals are responsible for

ensuring that each student has the opportunity to receive a quality education. To do so, administrators and teachers need to work together as colleagues in an effort to help support teaching and learning in schools (Hoy & Hoy, 2003). Instructional leadership involves frequent monitoring of the teaching process to assess the instructional capacity of the educational organization.

According to Knapp and Feldman (2012), there are many ways to understand what school leadership is all about. However, over the last decade leadership has been directly connected to learning, and learning improvement because they are the greatest concern among principals, as well as all staff members of the school. Hence, the term learning-focused leadership, is a view that relates school leaders' work to student, professional, and system learning (Knapp & Copland, 2006; Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, 2003). This view of leadership further presumes that all three arenas of learning operate simultaneously and interdependently, and that to maximize the performance of the school means to maximize the learning of all three. With roots in theory and empirical findings concerning distributed leadership, instructional leadership, and organizational learning, learning-focused leadership puts a great deal of emphasis on the collective leadership work of the school, among which are steps leaders take to move the school beyond an atomistic accountability culture (Knapp and Feldman, 2012). Because this approach to school leadership assumes an active distribution of effort to guide and support practice aimed at the improvement of teaching and learning, it is only natural that the responsibility for improving learning (and failures to do so) resides within the collective and that schools will develop practices that make this the result. Rice (2010) states that existing effective schools research states that effective principals influence a variety of

school outcomes, including student achievement, through their recruitment and motivation of quality teachers, their ability to identify and articulate school vision and goals, their effective allocation of resources, and their development of organizational structures to support instruction and learning.

In order to develop a comprehensive approach to successfully meet the challenges of high-stakes testing, these key elements are needed: instructional leadership, high levels of teacher knowledge about student needs and instruction, and willingness for all staff to collaborate (Protheroe, 2001).

Administrators that function as instructional leaders are using a variety of procedures to obtain information about teachers' effectiveness and student performance (Linn & Gronlound, 2000). There are emerging efforts to test an alternative school administration model entitled School Administration Manager (SAM) that consists in elementary school principals delegating managerial functions. The SAM strategy is designed to change the role of the principal from the managerial to the instructional leader, resulting in an increase in time spent on improving teaching and learning. It may be important to develop a recruitment strategy invested in finding strong instructional leaders, especially Aps, to continue this progress towards meeting state goals as well as the achievement goals of the NCLB legislation enacted at the federal level (Munoz & Barber, 2011).

Teacher Effectiveness

Of the five domains of working conditions identified by Rice (2010) – leadership, facilities, empowerment, professional development, and time policies- leadership emerges as the most salient dimension affecting teachers' plans to stay in or leave their

schools. It is increasingly recognized that the role of the principal is to support teachers in learning, and developing cultures of assessment literacy using concepts such as assessment for learning and assessment as learning as vehicles to enhance classroom and school planning and decision-making.

In the United States, the policy rhetoric of the federally-mandated NCLB has contributed to the definition of teacher effectiveness with an emphasis placed on measuring student achievement through high-stakes testing (Liston, Whitcomb, & Borko, 2007). McNeil (2000) found that as schools increased their attention on test preparation and teaching to the test, test scores increased while a decline in the quality of teaching became evident. Both Eberts and Stone (1988) and Ballou and Podgursky (1993) found a positive association between years of teaching experience and school performance.

According to McColskey and McMunn (2000), ultimately, it is up to school leaders to encourage teachers to discuss the pros and cons of specific test preparation strategies and to develop a reasonable set of educationally defensible strategies with a positive impact on students. However, Everson asserts that teaching to the test is exactly the right thing to do as long as the test is measuring what you are supposed to learn.

According to Protheroe (2001), the role that the principal plays in supporting teachers in the high-stakes environment is key to a school's success. In essence, Kaplan and Owings (2001) explain that in schools in which instructional best practices existed, teachers were encouraged to teach to each student's learning needs. Therefore, according to Kaplan and Owings (2001), teachers are essentially the catalysts essential to any accountability program's success.

As instructional leaders, principals who regularly emphasize, articulate, and reinforce teaching behaviors that research identified as instructional best practices can increase their teachers' confidence in high-stakes testing. Principals and assistant principals who regularly observe teachers, confer with them about instructional practices and student learning, and encourage teachers to teach to each student's learning needs can increase learning in every classroom. Similarly, principals and assistant principals who provide ongoing professional development in varied formats to assist novice and marginal teachers learn and practice these effective pedagogical strategies can also increase the prevalence of these behaviors in their schools. Therefore, teacher's confidence in their own professional abilities will allow them to expect their students to learn well and to successfully meet higher assessed standards.

According to Supovitz et al. (2010) in their study of principal's leadership effect on teacher's instructional practice on teaching and learning, they found that principal leadership showed a significantly positive prediction of teacher's change in instruction for both English and language arts and math. They used student achievement data from large mid-sized urban southeastern school district in the United States. Furthermore, they found strong and indirect relationships to educational leadership and student learning.

Summary

Because of NCLB, principals are faced with a more critical role than ever before in history, not only manage school facilities, but to ensure that quality teaching and learning is taking place and to be ultimately accountable for student achievement. There has been numerous leadership studies that has shown the direct and indirect impact of principals on student achievement (Nettles & Petscher, 2006; Sebastian & Allensworth,

2012; Silva et al., 2011). Although several studies have mentioned that the principal can impact student achievement, there is a gap in the research that specifically identifies which leadership style of principals are most effective in impacting their students academically. Of the research that has been conducted, the research has been qualitative (Finnigan, 2012), and peripheral results of principal practice as opposed to actual student outcomes (Nettles & Herrington 2007).

The research is quite limited in nature on laissez faire, and transactional leadership styles, while the transformational leader seems to dominate most of the literature on principal leadership styles. The presented study investigated these areas of principal leadership styles in attempts to determine if a trend exists between transactional and laissez faire leader and student achievement.

CHAPTER III

THE DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals' perception of their leadership style has an impact on student achievement as measured by the MCT2 test scores in mathematics and language arts. Data were collected on principals' leadership style, degrees received, age, sex, demographic details about their school (i.e. socioeconomic status). This study expanded the limited literature on school accountability and principals' leadership styles. The current literature reflects that few empirical studies have been conducted in Mississippi relative to relative to principal's leadership style effect on student achievement. This chapter includes (a) the research design, (b) the participants, (c) the instrument, (d) the procedures, and (e) the data analysis.

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative analysis of the perceptions of principals' leadership styles on student achievement. The causal comparative design was used for this study. The goal of the study was to determine if the means (school test scores) of the groups (leadership styles) were statistically different from each other. This analysis is appropriate whenever you want to compare the means of more than one group. According to Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2006), causal comparative research attempts to determine

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reasons, or causes for existing conditions. Such research is referred to as *ex post facto* because both the effect and the alleged cause have already occurred and must be studied in retrospect. This study included (a) the principals' perception of their leadership style instrument, (b) schools' scaled scores in math, and language arts and (c) demographic information about the school such as level (e.g. middle or elementary school), socio-economic status, and etc.

The study was designed to investigate the following research questions:

1. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in mathematics?

2. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in language arts?

Selection and Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of participating principals from schools across Mississippi. Only the "head" principal was asked to complete the questionnaire. Head principals are considered to be principals who are not considered assistant principals, but the principal who is ultimately responsible for the school. "Head" principals were chosen because although assistant principals should take some responsibility in regards to school accountability, it is essentially the "head" principal's responsibility, as an instructional leader, to make sure there is an increase student achievement. According to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), during the administration of the MCT2 test administered in the Spring of 2013, there were 420 sites in which school-level data were given by the MDE Office of Research and Statistics. Therefore, the population for this study was 420 principals.

Procedures for Data Collection

Following approval of the school district and Mississippi State University's

Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study (please refer to Appendix B), the

researcher obtained principals' email addresses from MDE's Office of Research and

Statistics. Next, principals were asked to complete an online questionnaire about their

leadership behavior. The survey was distributed to principals via email.

Accompanying the email to the link for principals to complete the MLQ5x was an

approved IRB letter of consent (Appendix A and C) outlining the purpose of the

investigator, and the reason for the study. The letter also stated the voluntary and

confidential nature of the study. Before completing the questionnaires, participants were

given the choice to opt-out of participating.

Existing data (e.g. individual school mathematics and language arts scaled scores

of the participating principals) were retrieved from MDE. The researcher recorded data

into a SPSS data file in order to run statistical analysis. Principals' leadership style

category, age range, and educational attainment was analyzed along with their

corresponding school level data on MCT2, and school socioeconomic background to see

if there were any significant differences among groups (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson,

2010). None of the principal's names or identifiable information was recorded into SPSS.

Schools' mean test scores will be analyzed to explain the difference between groups.

The statistical procedure that was conducted for this study is the multivariate

analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) because this study has more than one dependent

variable (Language Arts MCT2 scaled scores, and Mathematics MCT2 scaled scores) and

more than one independent variable or grouping variable (principal leadership styles e.g.

transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant). Also, in order to control for various levels of schools' socio-economic status (SES); schools' SES were examined as a covariate in the data analysis procedure. All data were computed at the .05 alpha level of significance.

<p align="center">**Instruments and Materials Used**</p>

To fulfill the purpose of this study and to answer the research question, archived achievement data results were utilized. The archived achievement data were the MCT2 scores from the 2013-2014 school year. The MCT2, which is a performance-based assessment aligned with the state curriculum, is administered annually to Mississippi students in grades 3-8. According to MDE, the MCT2 determines the learning that is taking place in the classroom of schools across the state of Mississippi (MDE, 2011). The Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks define what students are expected to know and be able to do, and are the accountability measures that guide teacher instruction. MDE provides information regarding how well students have demonstrated mastery of the objectives, content, and skills outlined in the Frameworks. According to MDE (2011), several measures were taken to establish and ensure the validity and the reliability of the MCT2.

The MLQ5x was used for this study. The MLQ5x measures a broad range of leadership types. These types can range from passive leaders to leaders who can transform into becoming leaders themselves (Avolio & Bass, 2013). The MLQ5x identifies the characteristics of a transformational leader and helps individuals discover how they measure up in their own eyes. The instrument has three assessment scales of leadership: transformational, transactional, passive/avoidant. The questionnaire was

distributed to principals via email with the use of Survey Monkey. Participants will be asked to respond to 45 items on the MLQ5x form. The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to complete. The most recent year of individual school mathematics and language arts scaled scores of the participating principals was retrieved from MDE.

Reliability

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), reliability is the consistency of the results obtained from a measurement and the extent to which the results remain consistent over a period of time and among test items. As for the MCT2, "the focus of reliability is to ascertain the relationships among scores derived from individual items" (MDE, 2010b, p.64).

According to the information in the *Technical Manual for 2012-2013 Test Administration,* the Cronbach's alpha ranges of 0.87 and 0.91 are used to estimate the measures of the MCT2. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) indicated that the Cronbach's alpha is utilized to measure the reliability of psychometric test scores. Correlation coefficients of at least .70 or higher are satisfactory for research purposes.

Reliability and validity of the MLQ5x instrument were established by the authors. The reliabilities for each of the six leadership factor scales ranged from .63 to .92 in the initial sample set, and .64 to .92 in the replication set (Avolio & Bass, 2013).

Validity

According to the information in the Mississippi Curriculum Testing Program *Technical Manual for 2012-2013 Test Administration* (MDE, 2013), validity is the process of collecting evidence to support inferences from assessment results. In other

words, does the test measure what it intends to measure, does it demonstrate test fairness, and is it a valid interpretation of test scores? There are various kinds of measures used to establish validity for the MCT2. One of such is content validity. Content validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended content area (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Content validity is presumed for the MCT2 because all test items were developed to measure students' knowledge of and skills level in general mathematics and language arts based on the Mississippi Curriculum Framework (MDE, 2010).

Bass and Avolio (2000) have documented the construct validation process associated with the MLQ5x. An early version was evaluated by an expert panel, and their recommendations were included in the final instrument development. Since that time, 14 samples have been used to validate and cross-validate the MLQ5x.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were in the form of frequencies, means, modes, and standard deviations. Each principal's scores on the questionnaire classified that principal into transformational, transactional, or passive/avoidant. The researcher used SPSS to conduct inferential statistics via MANCOVA to analyze the categorical leadership rating of the principal and his/her corresponding mathematics and language arts scaled scores. Also, other measurements such as the principals' educational attainment, principals' age range, and school socio-economic status (as measured by the percentage of students who receive free or reduced-price lunch) possible relationships exist in the data set. All data were computed at the .05 alpha level of significance. The researcher sought to answer to the following research questions through the use of MANCOVA:

1. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in mathematics?

2. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in language arts?

The assumptions underlying the MANCOVA are: (a) multivariate normality, and (b) homogeneity of variance, and (c) equality of error variances. Prior to data analysis, assumptions (a), (b), and (c) were tested using Mardia test for skewness and kurtosis, Box's test of equality of variance, and Levene's test of equality of error variances.

Internal Validity

According to Gay et al. (2006), internal validity is the degree to which observed differences on the dependent variable (student achievement via test scores) are a direct result of manipulation of the independent variable, not some other variable. There are eight threats to internal validity: history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, differential selection of participants, mortality, and selection-maturation interaction. Since the proposed study only looked at one school year, and nothing significant happened during the 2012-2013 school year to affect the dependent variable, the internal validity threat of history was not a threat. The same applies to the maturation threat; since the data will be during the course of one school year, this should not be a threat.

The next threat is testing, also called pretest sensitization. Again, since there is only one test (no pretest), I do not view this as a threat for the presented study. Instrumentation is the next threat. It refers to unreliability, and the lack of consistency in measuring instruments. I have addressed this threat by because I am only using one test,

and there are no observations to be made according to the examples given by Gay et al. (2006). Also, since I am not doing a pretest, posttest, I also do not have to control for statistical regression.

The next threat is that of the threat of mortality, this was another concern that I had because some principals may be "too busy" or for whatever reason, not complete the questionnaire for the proposed study. I addressed this threat by making sure I established good rapport with the principals in my sample. Lastly, I did not foresee any problems with the selection-maturation interaction threat to internal validity because the presented study occurred during one school year.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Across the nation, high stakes yearly assessments are used as accountability instruments to measure students' academic progress toward meeting curriculum standards and proficiency levels. The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of principal leadership styles on student achievement, as measured by high-stakes testing (test scores). In this chapter, the findings of the data analysis are presented. Specifically, this study sought to determine which principal leadership style resulted in higher student achievement on the MCT2 in schools that serve Grades 3 through 8. This chapter presents a descriptive summary of the scores on the measure (MCT2 language arts and mathematics) that provided the data for this study and the results of the data analysis used to answer to following questions:

1. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in mathematics?

2. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in language arts?

Following the section on the descriptive measure, the remaining sections are organized by research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings of the study.

Demographics and Descriptive Data

Data used in this study represent the language arts and mathematics MCT2 scores of the 110 elementary, and middle school principals that consented to participate in this study with complete data. Scores on the language arts and mathematics assessments were based on scaled scores. In addition to the MLQ5x, the principals were asked demographic data such as their gender, age, and education (highest degree received as of the time the principals completed the survey). Principals were asked to give their age range as a part of the questionnaire, i.e. 25-74 all the way to 65-74. The 35-44 age range had the highest frequency of ages that the principals self-reported. Table 1 displays the age ranges of all the principals that participated in the study. The sample group was comprised of 53(48.2%) male principals, and 56 (50.9%) female principals.

Table 1

Principals' Ages

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
25-34	9	8.40
35-44	46	43.00
45-54	34	31.80
55-64	17	15.90
65-74	1	.90
Total	110	100

Of the 110 principals' data that were used for this study, most of them reported a master's degree as the highest level of education completed at the time of the study. The principals' level of education was reported as 57 (51.8%) master's degrees, 34 (30.9%) specialist's degrees, and 18 (16.4%) doctorate degrees. Table 2 displays the frequency and percentage of the principals that reported that have attained each degree level.

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Table 2

Principals' Educational Attainment

Degree Attained	Frequency	Percentage
Master's	57	52.30
Specialist's	34	31.2
Doctorate	18	16.5
Total	110	100

Research Questions

This section of Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis that were used to answer the two research questions that guided this study. The research questions were answered by analyzing archived language arts and mathematics MCT2 data collected from MDE of all the elementary, middle, and high schools of the principals that consented to participate in this study. The following section is organized by research questions.

Research Question 1: What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in mathematics?

Checks of the scores for homogeneity of variance via the Box's test of equality of variance yielded no evidence of problems with the assumption ($p = .902$), $p > .05$. The results of the MANCOVA at the .05 alpha level indicated that there were no statistical significant differences of principal leadership styles in their schools' mathematical performance, $F(4, 194) = 1.845$, $p = .122$. Thus, Wilks's Lambda was used as the test statistic for the multivariate tests. Therefore, it appears that there are no differences

among principals' leadership styles in mathematics. To answer research question one, there are no statistical significant differences among principal leadership styles in reference to student achievement in mathematics, as measured by MCT2. Thus, principal leadership style appeared unrelated to student achievement in mathematics. Table 3 displays the descriptive results of this set of analyses.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Research Questions

Variable	Transformational ($n = 63$)	Transactional ($n = 27$)	Passive/Avoidant ($n = 15$)	Total ($n = 105$)
Math SS	152.93 (3.71)*	149.89 (4.13)*	152.06 (3.20)*	152.02 (3.94)*
Language Arts SS	150.47 (3.54)*	148.37 (3.69)*	149.88 (3.65)*	149.84(3.65)*

*Standard Deviation in parenthesis.

Research Question 2: What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in language arts?

For this test, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met; therefore the statistics reported are of equal variances. Checks of the scores for homogeneity of variance via the Box's test of equality of variance yielded no evidence of problems with the assumption ($p = .902$), $p > .05$.

The results of the MANCOVA at the .05 alpha level indicated that there were statistically significant differences by principal leadership styles in their schools' mathematical performance, $F(4, 194) = 1.845$, $p = .122$. Thus, Wilks's Lambda was used as the test statistic for the multivariate tests (see Table 3). Therefore, to answer research question two, there were no statistical significant differences among principal leadership

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styles in reference to student achievement in language arts as measured by the MCT2. Thus, principal leadership styles appeared unrelated to student achievement scores in language arts.

Also, there was a statistical significant difference found in the social economic status of the principals' schools among the principal leadership types, $p < .01$. Therefore, this variable was controlled by using it as a variable of covariance for the purposes of this study. There were no other statistical significant differences.

Table 4

MANCOVA Analysis

Effect	Test	F	Hypothesis F	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	4027.11	2.00	97.00	.000	.988
	Wilks Lambda	4027.12	2.00	97.00	.000	.988
	Hotelling's Trace	4027.11	2.00	97.00	.000	.988
	Roy's Largest Root	4027.11	2.00	97.00	.000	.988
SES	Pillai's Trace	29.89	2.00	97.00	.000	.381
	Wilks Lambda	29.89	2.00	97.00	.000	.381
	Hotelling's Trace	29.89	2.00	97.00	.000	.381
	Roy's Largest Root	29.89	2.00	97.00	.000	.381
Gender	Pillai's Trace	0.60	2.00	97.00	.942	.001
	Wilks Lambda	0.60	2.00	97.00	.942	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.60	2.00	97.00	.942	.001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.60	2.00	97.00	.942	.001

Table 4 (continued)

Age	Pillai's Trace	.01	2.00	97.00	.988	.000
	Wilks Lambda	.01	2.00	97.00	.988	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.01	2.00	97.00	.988	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.01	2.00	97.00	.988	.000
Education	Pillai's Trace	.33	2.00	97.00	.721	.007
	Wilks Lambda	.33	2.00	97.00	.721	.007
	Hotelling's Trace	.33	2.00	97.00	.721	.007
	Roy's Largest Root	.33	2.00	97.00	.721	.007
MLQ	Pillai's Trace	1.383	4.00	196.00	.124	.036
	Wilks Lambda	1.85	4.00	194.00	.122	.037
	Hotelling's Trace	1.86	4.00	192.00	.119	.037
	Roy's Largest Root	3.74	2.00	98.00	.027	.071

Summary

In this this chapter, two research questions were tested to determine relationships between principal scores on the MLQ5x and students' MCT2 scores in mathematics and language arts. Statistical analysis was also conducted to examine how principals' leadership styles in this sample compared against each other. The findings of this study demonstrate that there are no distinct characteristics of the transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant (laissez-faire) leadership styles that significantly raise student achievement scores. Chapter five will summarize the study, draw conclusions from the statistical results, and make recommendations for future studies in this area.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of principal leadership styles on student achievement, as measured by high-stakes testing (test scores). This chapter provides a summary of the study, a discussion of the results, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research. This chapter will look at the data presented in Chapter Four and attempt to draw conclusions from the statistical analysis of the data. The research for this study focused on the following questions:

1. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in mathematics?

2. What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in language arts?

This study employed the MANCOVA research design. This design was employed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between each principal leadership style on his or her students' mathematics and language arts achievement measures on the MCT2. A total of 110 principals' MLQ-5x scores, and their schools' MCT2 mathematics and language arts scores from the 2013-2014 school year was analyzed for this study.

Summary of the Study

The MLQ-5X was utilized to rate leadership traits of principals. Student achievement scores from the 2014 MCT2 were analyzed to determine principal leadership style's effect on student achievement. Socioeconomic status was found to have a significant effect on student achievement scores, and was therefore controlled for in data analyses.

Discussion of Results

Research Question 1: What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in mathematics?

The results of the analysis for the first research question indicated that the schools of principals with various leadership styles did not perform differently on measures student achievement in mathematics. The results of this study showed no statistical significance of the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership style with mathematical student achievement.

This study is ground-breaking in that according to Judge and Piccolo (2004) "transformational- transactional leadership theory dominates current thinking about leadership research" (p. 762). There is very little research (basically non-existent) that classifies the passive/avoidant leader as having high student achievement scores in any subject area. This study extends previous research in that it determines that the passive/avoidant leadership style is just as effective (i.e. no statistical differences) as the transformational, and transactional leadership styles. This study supports Schreisheim et al. (1991) claim that even though laissez-faire leadership may have strong negative

relationships with various leadership criteria, the absence of leadership (laissez-faire leadership) may be just as important as the presence of other types of leadership.

Research Question 2: What type of leadership style is more effective in higher student achievement in language arts?

The results of the analysis for the second research question indicated that the schools of principals with various leadership styles did not perform differently on measures of student achievement in language arts. This study's findings were consistent with Silva et al. (2011), and Nettles and Petscher (2006) in the notion that principals can have a direct impact on student achievement in language arts. Regardless of what type of leadership style that a principal decides to employ, he or she can make a difference on student achievement scores. Consequently, there were no difference in the language arts achievement of schools in which transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire (passive avoidant) principals resided. Perhaps one rationale for no statistical significant differences across the leadership styles could be that the researcher utilized self-reported data. In other words, a principal could have completed the questionnaire in such a way that the instrument may categorized him or her as transformational when in actuality, he or she could have been more transactional or passive avoidant in practice.

<center>**Implications and Conclusions**</center>

This section presents implications and conclusions of perceived effective principal leadership styles and student achievement. This study extended previous studies of principal leadership styles and student achievement in that it (a) utilized quantitative as opposed to qualitative data, (b) determined that all leadership styles are equally effective

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in raising student achievement, (c) methodologically addressed gaps from previous research, and (d) utilized student achievement as a dependent variable.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative

Of the research that has been conducted, the research has been qualitative (Finnigan, 2012). Also, previous research has utilized peripheral results of principal practice as opposed to actual student outcomes (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). Finnigan (2012) conducted a qualitative study to analyze principals' transformational leadership behaviors' indirect impact on student achievement via teacher motivation. He interviewed 52 teachers via focus groups and used principals as a secondary data source. He concluded that principal leadership was critical to turning around low performing schools. However, since the data were from teachers' perspectives, and qualitative, the findings from the current study contribute to the field of educational leadership by offering the quantitative aspect of the principal's perspective.

The results of this study presented quantitative research of the direct impact of principal leadership styles on student achievement. The researcher used a causal-comparative design that elicited a quantitative data analysis. The findings in research questions one and two yielded that there were no differences among the transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant (laissez-faire) principal leadership styles. Therefore, there may not be just one leadership approach to raising student achievement. Rather, principals must be able to utilize all approaches and determine which approach to utilize for each situation they may encounter.

Is There a "Best" Leadership Style?

The review of the literature in Chapter Two outlined that while there have been numerous leadership studies that have shown the direct and indirect impact of principals on student achievement (Nettles & Petscher, 2006; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Silva et al., 2011), gaps still remain in the literature that specifically identifies which leadership style of principals are most effective in impacting their students academically. Marzano, et al. (2005) concluded in their research that greater degrees of transformational leadership are needed in various schools to achieve higher passing rates on tests. The research is quite limited in nature on laissez faire, and transactional leadership styles, while the transformational leader seems to dominate most of the literature on principal leadership styles. The results of this study investigated these areas of principal leadership styles in attempts to determine if a trend exists between transactional and laissez faire leader and student achievement. The findings in research questions one and two yielded that there were no differences among the transformational, transactional, and laissez faire approach to leadership styles.

Bass and Avolio (1990) conclude that although transactional leadership can be effective, transformational leadership is more effective. This study challenges previous research in that it determined that the transformational leadership approach was not more effective in raising student achievement on tests. Moreover, this research also determined that the other approaches to leadership (transactional and laissez-faire) can be just as effective as the transformational approach to increasing student achievement.

This study was based on the notion that student achievement can be influenced by effective leadership styles demonstrated by the principal. Most of the related literature

has esteemed the transformational approach to instructional leadership very highly (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Leithwood, 2005; and Marzano et al., 2005). Next to that approach, literature has regarded the nature of the transactional instructional leader very highly, hence the term transformational-transactional leader (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Burns, 1978; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). However, according to the findings in research questions one and two, there were no statistical significant differences among leadership styles in raising student achievements in mathematics and language arts. Therefore, the laissez-faire leadership style is just as effective as the transactional leadership style. In turn, both of these styles are just as effective as the transformational leadership style. This is phenomenal in that research is scant, negative, or non- existent in regards to the passive avoidant (laissez-faire) leadership style. This could mean that principals can impact student achievement regardless of their leadership style.

Rationale for Methods

According to Diamond and Spillane (2002) previous studies that have focused on leadership practice have typically been small and ethnographic in nature. They mention the need for studies designed with larger samples. This study attempted to address these authors' concerns and gaps in literature by incorporating a large population, $N = 420$. All of the elementary and middle school principals in the state of Mississippi that resided at schools that served Grades 3-8 were asked to participate in this study in efforts to address this issue in previous research.

Egley and Jones (2004) report that studies that provide richer, more in-depth understandings that address the perceptions of educational leaders and the impact of high-stakes testing are greatly needed since there is a limited number of studies and the limited

nature of data available. Egley and Jones also state that few researchers have examined

administrators' perceptions of high-stakes testing. Because previous research in the area

has been classified as weak, Hallinger and Heck (1996) suggest that future research

designs will be strengthened if they include sufficient sample sizes, reliable data

collection instruments, and sophisticated data analysis tools. Because of the

methodological weaknesses in previous studies, this present study sought to strengthen

the existing body of literature on principal's leadership styles by examining leadership

styles and student achievement in a way that addresses previous gaps in literature, and by

ensuring that this study was methodologically sound such as using a data collection

instrument that was reliable (MLQ5x), using sophisticated data analysis tools (SPSS),

and seeking a large sample size.

Student Achievement as the DV

Although several studies (Anderson, 2008; Finnigan, 2012; Kythreotis et al.,

2010; Valentine & Prater, 2011) have mentioned that the principal can impact student

achievement, there is a gap in the research that specifically identifies which leadership

style of principals are most effective in impacting their students academically. Despite

the large body of literature, the causal relationship between principal leadership style and

student achievement remains unclear (Hallinger et al., 1996; Witziers et al., 2003). Some

studies in educational leadership investigated the relationship between school-level

variables and student achievement; yet fail to bring specific principal behaviors into the

model. Examples of these type of studies include those focused on school mission

(Bossert, 1988), school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1999), school size (Lee & Loeb, 2000;

Lee & Smith, 1995), and placement of highly qualified teachers in the classrooms

(Ingersoll, 1996). Another type of study investigated the principal's role in shaping the educational environment, but did not use student achievement as the dependent variable (Sanders & Harvey, 2002).

Implications

One implication of this study is that in the areas of high stakes testing and accountability, most educators view the principal as a key element in improving student achievement. Regardless of a principal's chosen leadership style, he or she can have a positive effect on student achievement. In turn, this information can have an impact on schools and school districts in several ways: results in better, more informed hiring decisions; professional development or the retraining of veteran principals; and etc. Research related to the benefits of each leadership styles could be useful to principals when they develop their personal improvement plans, school improvement plans, and etc. In turn, this will help guide principals, or other instructional leaders, as they make data-based decision and utilize research-based practices.

Another implication is that based on this study, colleges and universities can incorporate all three leadership styles and behaviors (as opposed to just one leadership style) into the curriculum of courses offered in their principal preparation programs. One example of how colleges and universities could utilize this research would be to give prospective principals the opportunity to analyze scenarios in which each leadership style might be more appropriate or effective. Lastly, principals could be given the opportunity to study and analyze all styles in efforts of principals adding them to their repertoire of leadership skills for incorporation in their leadership philosophy.

Lastly, another implication is that principals who are placed in schools with low socioeconomic status and low student achievement should receive professional development on the transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles. The results from this study showed that socioeconomic status had a statistically significant effect on student achievement scores in mathematics and language arts. Superintendents can encourage principals to join or develop professional learning communities with other principals in efforts to help principals who serve schools with a large percentage of students from families with low socioeconomic statuses in efforts to raise student achievement in their schools.

Limitations

The limitations of a study are those elements in which the researcher cannot control. The first limitation of this study is that it relied on self-reported data of principal leadership style. In this case, principals can perceive themselves as having a different leadership style than what their actions portray in their schools. Another limitation of the study is that the researcher had limited time span (approximately one month) to collect the independent variable data (MLQ5x scores) before the dependent variable was administered (mathematics and language arts MCT2). The reason for the short time span of data collection was that the researcher had approximately one month from IRB approval of the study to the 2014 Spring Administration of the MCT2. Therefore, some of the findings of this study were limited by self-reported data, and a smaller sample size, which may have affected the results.

Recommendations for Future Study

This section presents recommendations for future study. This study investigated a narrow portion of educational leadership and can be expanded in many ways. The recommendations that follow are based upon insights that are gained from this study, as well as related studies, and may provide additional insight on the relationships between principal leadership styles and student achievement.

1. It would helpful to look at the leadership styles of first generational college students who are current principals. Principals who are first generation college students may differ in their perspectives of leadership styles from principals who are not first generation college students.

2. Even though there have been many leadership studies that analyzed the principal as the instructional leader, there has been limited research to analyze the superintendent which is also considered an instructional leader. Therefore, another study in which the superintendent's leadership styles in regards to his or her relationship to student achievement should be explored.

3. This study did not take into account the years of experience the principal had at the school in which he or she resides. This might have a significant effect on student achievement.

4. For the sake of time, the researcher did not have enough time to thoroughly recruit principals to participate in the study, before the dependent variable data were collected (student achievement scores on the MCT2). In future studies, it may be more beneficial to utilize more time to recruit more principals to get a larger sample size.

5. This study was based on the principals' perception of their leadership style. Perhaps a more beneficial study would be to compare the principals' perceptions of their leadership style against the teachers' perceptions of their leadership style (the principals'), and also possible parental perceptions. Next, the researcher could compare these perceptions against student achievement scores.

6. Even though the variable socioeconomic status was controlled for, a similar study that matches both high performing and low performing schools by size, grade level, and socioeconomic status before data analysis may also be helpful since socioeconomic status was found to have a statistical significant differences on student achievement.

7. This study investigated the results of principals' leadership styles on student achievement as measured by MCT2 which is only administered to students in Grades 3-8; it is recommended that a future study investigate the impact of principal leadership styles on the Subject Area Testing Program. The Subject Area Testing Program is a high-stakes testing program for high school students.

Summary

Principals must make every necessary effort in order to be the change agent that sparks student achievement in every subject area, but especially in the areas of mathematics and language arts. No one variable or trait that a principal possesses can drastically change student achievement. However, principals must recognize the findings that have proven to be significant, and work tirelessly at utilizing those characteristics of instructional leadership.

The findings of this study demonstrated that there are no specific characteristics of the transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles that significantly impact student achievement. It is imperative that principals draw from all three leadership styles in their practice, especially in schools with a high concentration of students from families with low socioeconomic status since those schools are affected the most in terms of low student achievement (statistical significance). Only with research-based practices will schools be able to raise the bar of student achievement through revamping the leadership styles of the school's instructional leader, the principal.

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APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL INFORMED CONSENT PAGE APPROVED BY IRB

My name is Kimberly Bryant and I am a student in the Department of Leadership and Foundations at Mississippi State University. I am currently conducting research on principal leadership styles for my dissertation. The title of my study is The Impact of Principal Leadership on School Accountability. I am requesting your help in investigating the effect of principal leadership styles on student achievement as measured by high stakes test. However, your participation in this study is voluntary.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire about your perception of your principal leadership style. The questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Once you complete the questionnaire, your responses will be linked to high-stakes test score results for your school. After your questionnaire responses are linked to your school's test results, all direct identifiers will be removed. Your responses will remain confidential and no identifiable information will be kept or published in this study. Also, it is important that you know that these records will be held by a state entity and therefore are subject to disclosure if required by law.

If you choose to participate, you will be contributing to research to aid principals, superintendents, and other educational leaders with pertinent information that may assist them in their research-based decisions regarding instructional leadership. There are no other incentives related to your participation. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts that might affect you if you decide to participate. However, if you at any

time are uncomfortable with completing the questionnaire, you may stop. No identifiable information will be kept or published in this study.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Kimberly Bryant at knb2@msstate.edu or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Linda Coats at LCoats@Colled.msstate.edu. For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or to discuss problems, express concerns or complaints, request information, or offer input, please feel free to contact the MSU Regulatory Compliance Office by phone at 662-325-3994, by email at irb@research.msstate.edu or on the web at http://orc.msstate.edu/humansubjects/participant/.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

This research will be conducted online via Survey Monkey. Please follow the link in your email to complete the survey if you wish to participate. Also, if you wish, you may print this consent page for your records.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate, your completion of the online survey indicates your consent. Please keep this form for your records.

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

April 3, 2014

Kimberly Bryant
Leadership and Foundations
Mail Stop 9698

RE: HRPP Study #14-096: The Impact of Principal Leadership Styles on School Accountability

Dear Ms. Bryant:

This email serves as official documentation that the above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 4/3/2014 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, in accordance with SOP 01-03 Administrative Review of Applications, a new application must be submitted if the study is ongoing after 5 years from the date of approval. Additionally, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the HRPP prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The HRPP reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this proje! ct.

Please note that the MSU HRPP accreditation for our human subjects protection program requires an approval stamp for consent forms. The approval stamp will assist in ensuring the HRPP approved version of the consent form is used in the actual conduct of research. Your stamped consent form will be attached in a separate email. **You must use the stamped consent form for obtaining consent from participants.**

Please refer to your HRPP number (#14-096) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at nmorse@orc.msstate.edu or call 662-325-5220.

Finally, we would greatly appreciate your feedback on the HRPP approval process. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YZC7QQD.

Sincerely,

Nicole Morse, CIP
IRB Complian! ce Administrator

cc: Linda Coats (Advisor)

Reply Reply to all Forward

Nicole Morse <nmorse@orc.msstate.edu> Apr 3

to me, ltc1

Kimberly,
As mentioned in your approval, please find your stamped consent form attached.
Best of luck with your research!
Nicole

Nicole Morse, CIP

Compliance Administrator - HRPP/IRB
Office of Research Compliance
P.O. Box 6223
Mississippi State, MS 39762
Mailstop 9563
New Phone Number: 662-325-5220
nmorse@orc.msstate.edu

APPENDIX C

EMAIL TO PRINCIPALS

Dear Principal,

My name is Kimberly Bryant and I am a student in the Department of Leadership and Foundations at Mississippi State University. I am currently conducting research on principal leadership styles for my dissertation. The title of my study is The Impact of Principal Leadership on School Accountability. I am requesting your help in investigating the effects of principal leadership styles on student achievement as measured by high stakes test. However, your participation in this study is voluntary.

If you agree to participate in this study, I am asking you to complete an online questionnaire about your perception of your principal leadership style (PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW). The questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and no identifiable information will be kept or published in this study. If you choose to participate, you will be contributing to research to aid principals, superintendents and other educational leaders with pertinent information that may aid them in their research-based decisions regarding instructional leadership.

Please read the attached informed consent form before you begin the questionnaire. Feel free to reply to this email if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. I humbly thank you in advance for taking your precious time to aid me in my research. Have a great day!

APPENDIX D

MLQ(5X) PERMISSION AND RIGHTS TO REPRODUCE INSTRUMENT

Sample Item Letter

www.mindgarden.com

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for the above named person to use the following copyright material for his/her thesis or dissertation research;

Instrument: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Form 5x Short)

Authors: Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio

Copyright: 1995

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material.