TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

AND MORALE: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

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by
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ABSTRACT

There are several reasons why teachers are reported to have low morale. Many teachers who are choosing to leave the profession altogether cite stress related to increased demands on time, low pay, student discipline issues, lack of parental support, and lack of support or concern on the part of building principals as issues that teachers face. This descriptive case study was conducted in a Midwestern suburban school district. Utilizing the theoretical tradition of case study, teacher perceptions were explored regarding principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale. The central questions were: (1) Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors? (2) How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors as they relate to the climate of the school? The findings supported the reviewed literature in that a principal's daily behavior plays a vital role in the environment of the school and the morale of teachers. Implications for practice and recommendations for further research are included.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of the School of

Education, have examined a dissertation titled "Teacher Perceptions of Principal Leadership

Behaviors and Morale: A Descriptive Case Study," presented by Mandy Sue Welch,

candidate for the Doctor of Education degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of

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Over the past three years I have received support and encouragement from a number of individuals. First and foremost, I would like to thank God for seeing me through this arduous journey. For his eternal strength and blessings of health for me and my family, I am forever blessed.

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PREFACE

My personal and professional experiences, readings, and research have helped to define my beliefs about principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale. My passion for education began at an early age. I always knew growing up that I wanted to be a teacher. I lined up my dolls and subjected my little brother to hours of playing school with our little black chalkboard and accompanying magnetic letters. It was not until I became an educator that I found my true calling as an administrator.

Early in my teaching years, I met an individual who had a tremendous influence on my career. I was fresh out of college when Mrs. Deb Orr took a chance on me. Because she was the first principal to hire me, she will always hold a special place in my heart. Almost 13 years and seven principals later, I can now look back and realize what a huge difference she made to our school, Sterling Elementary, and specifically, to my future.

Mrs. Orr was full of passion for life, never passing up an opportunity for learning or laughter. She delivered the morning announcements, ate in the lunchroom with students, played four square at recess, and still had time to visit my classroom regularly, providing me with effective feedback and encouragement. She introduced me to a plethora of research-based best practices including cooperative learning, brain research, the workshop model, and more. Faculty meetings are rarely referred to as enjoyable, but today I look back and realize how much fun we had sharing, collaborating, and lifting one another up. Mrs. Orr led the staff at Sterling Elementary in meaningful teamwork to analyze performance data, identify improvement areas, and implement the actions necessary for change. Even though I was a

first year teacher, she ensured that my professional learning needs were identified and in alignment with school improvement priorities.

Mrs. Orr broadened my views of education. She recognized my leadership skills long before I did, inspiring me to accept more leadership roles in my grade level and eventually within the building. She supported my decision to work on my master's in administration, finding ways to support that learning through real world experiences. She cared about me as an individual and always worked to find ways to support me as a career woman, student, mother and wife; she reminded me of my priorities and encouraged me to find a balance in life. I never heard her complain about her own workload: the disgruntled parent, the misbehaving student, or the problematic staff members.

In contrast to my positive experiences with Mrs. Orr, I have also worked with principals who were discouraged and frustrated by the demands of the job. Many of the principals I have observed operated as managers rather than as leaders. Not Mrs. Orr; she was always eager to share the news of rising test scores and empower teachers, and she constantly worked to revitalize the professional learning communities in the building. She instinctively knew that in order to be considered effective, she needed to get results, and she inspired me to do just that with my students. I sought to give her nothing less than my best. I believe that her leadership behaviors positively impacted the overall climate of the school, specifically contributing to positive teacher morale. This was not completely evident to me until she resigned and her successor failed to exhibit the same leadership behaviors, resulting in what I perceived as a decline in teacher morale and an overall poor school climate.

Understanding that, I hope to use the findings from this study to impact principal leadership behaviors as they relate to teacher morale.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the last several decades, expectations for increased accountability has shifted the focus of the school principal to the performance of their school's teachers, examining issues teachers confront on a day-to-day basis, and assisting teachers in maintaining their focus on students and instruction (Fullan, 2002; Kinsey, 2006). With increased accountability, principals can no longer serve as managers only; they are being held accountable for a multitude of priorities. Among the most important of these is student achievement (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006; Stronge, 1993; Thomas, 1997; Wallace Foundation, 2013). Student achievement can be directly associated with the effectiveness of a teacher as well as the impact of the leadership of a principal in motivating and encouraging classroom teachers (Leithwood et al., 2006). Building principals must be able to consider and gauge teacher perceptions regarding their leadership style and understand the probable connections between teacher morale and student achievement. Leadership has been recognized as an essential element in educational reform, forcing administrators to examine the way they lead their schools (Dinham, 2007). The principal is largely responsible for establishing the school environment, which makes a difference to teacher morale. This environment then has the potential to impact the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers (Kinsey, 2006).

As a school principal, one must strive to both manage and lead. Creating teacher schedules and establishing budgets, procedures for how to handle money, and protocols for selecting field trips are required tasks for all school principals, and should be done so that

individuals have clear expectations to follow. As a principal, I believe that is it important to establish procedures and protocols so that administration approaches situations throughout the year with clarity and consistency. However, these procedures and protocols should not be the emphasis in our school settings; rather, they should allow us to focus on what's really important: student growth and success.

The mechanisms of the bureaucratic approach, as described in Owens and Valesky's (2011) texts, now exist in every school environment to some extent with the creation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2008). As a principal, I believe that what gets measured gets done. That being said, it is important to understand how a principal needs to support and encourage teachers to meet the varied needs of all students. Communicating a clear vision is critical to the success of a school, and involving all stakeholders in the process to determine how to get there is crucial to meeting the needs of students. It is important that organizations take the time to align district and building goals to the overarching mission of the school district. It is important for all individuals to closely examine the mission and vision of a district to determine if their own philosophies are aligned to those of the district that employs them. Views, opinions, and strengths of teachers should vary, but ultimately it is important for the stakeholders to work together toward common goals.

Principals must work to develop a shared leadership model in which all stakeholders feel valued and see themselves as critical to the success of all students. Teachers can also serve as lead learners or even as catalysts for change. Principals must identify the strengths in all teachers and offer opportunities for them to serve as leaders. This may occur through the

sharing of resources, co-teaching, mentoring, and serving as a curriculum/instruction specialist or facilitator.

As a school principal, I believe that developing a positive school climate is a key element for motivating and energizing teachers to dig in and do the difficult work of educating and finding success for all students. I have always been a firm believer that my leadership behaviors influence those around me and as the school leader I have the potential to make a substantial impact on the level of satisfaction in the workplace. Additionally, I have recently been requested to make a purposeful move within my district to a building where, among other issues, teacher morale is low. This move has further encouraged my desire to expand my knowledge about effective leadership theory and those principal leadership behaviors necessary to improve overall teacher morale.

The Problem

The term "morale" is used in varied circumstances, generally to describe the disposition or mood of a group of people. But morale goes beyond a general feeling in a group; it also refers to a sense of purpose and effectiveness. Morale is defined by Bruce (2003) as "the way an individual feels about their work and the organization they work for" (p. 2). The author further explains that when an employee's morale is low, they will participate less, to the point of doing only what is required or the bare minimum. The opposite is true when morale is high; employees with high morale will be more passionate about their work and are more likely to contribute with a sense of commitment.

Teachers play a pivotal role in the success of students. They are at the center of the debate on education quality and students' learning outcomes (NCLB, 2008; New Teacher

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Project, 2013). Yet many of them are leaving their schools and the profession every year, particularly in poorer, lower-performing schools. According to a survey recently completed by MetLife, teacher job satisfaction has dropped 15 points since 2009, from 59% who were very satisfied to 44% who are very satisfied; this is the lowest level in more than 20 years (Markow & Pieters, 2012). Furthermore, roughly one in three said they were likely to leave the profession in the next five years, citing concerns over job security, as well as the effects of increased class size and budget cuts; this was compared to the rate three years ago, which was one in four. While the study identified a drop, it did not examine teacher perceptions of the leadership practices that led to decreased morale.

Low morale among teachers is a problem that must be addressed in order to increase the longevity of quality teachers. In order to work toward a solution, the first step is to identify those factors that have the greatest impact on morale levels, both negative and positive. Knowing that teachers are leaving the field of education prior to reaching tenure status leaves one wondering what can be done to keep strong teachers in the field of education. As a principal, one must ponder, "What is the relationship between my leadership behaviors and teacher morale?"

Leadership behavior has been a well-researched topic among industry, business, military, and the government. Overall, the research indicates that social factors such as morale, group interaction, and supportive relationships have a strong relationship to productivity and success. Fullan (2007) found that successful leaders engage in three sets of core practices: setting direction; developing people; and designing the organization. Setting direction involves developing a shared vision and group goals while maintaining high

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performance expectations. The practice of developing people involves providing individualized support, modeling effective practices, and giving intellectual and emotional stimulation. Finally, designing the organization requires creating collaborative cultures and structures and building productive relations.

Data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (2004) indicated that a teacher's dissatisfaction with administration and the lack of opportunity for professional growth were two key reasons for leaving the profession. In a survey of both private and public school teachers in the U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics), participants identified administrative support and leadership, good student behavior, a positive school atmosphere, and teacher autonomy as working conditions associated with higher teacher satisfaction. The research indicates that schools need leaders who focus on and motivate teachers, who in turn have a direct impact on student achievement. But what specific behaviors of the principal render higher levels of teacher morale? It is imperative to develop a deeper understanding and description of how leadership behaviors motivate, encourage, and support teachers to reach their fullest potential.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding principal leadership behaviors associated with the morale of teachers in a suburban elementary public school situated in the Midwest. Case study is a broad term used to identify research that includes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies. It is a methodology utilized when the researcher wants to fully understand a

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particular bounded unit (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995) that must be explained, described, illustrated, or explored (Yin, 2009).

This study fit the elements of a descriptive case study with the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding principal leadership behaviors associated with the morale of teachers within a bounded system comprised of a limited number of participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). This allowed me as the researcher to focus on the problem and gain insight and meaning for those involved. The descriptive case study was utilized in this study for two main reasons. First, one of the goals of all case study research is to develop an understanding of the bounded system (Merriam; Yin). The main purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of teachers' perspectives regarding principal leadership behavior and teacher morale. Second, descriptive case studies answer theory-based questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin). The descriptions of principal leadership behaviors developed throughout the research process helped to describe teacher understanding of morale as well as their perceptions of how principals may or may not contribute to a positive morale in the school setting.

Principal behaviors are an important factor when facilitating positive teacher morale. The literature suggested that teachers need to feel valued by their principals through recognition of their contributions to the overall effectiveness of the school (New Teacher Project, 2013; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995; Whitaker, Whitaker & Lumpa, 2000). Teachers have expressed the desire to feel supported by their principal and desire a leader who is approachable, willing to listen, and able to collaborate with other stakeholders in order to solve problems (Barth, 1988; 2006; Sergiovanni, 2007).

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In order to keep highly-qualified teachers engaged in the profession, it is important to understand the factors that have an impact on teacher morale, both negative and positive (Fullan, 2007; Margolis & Nagel, 2006). This study specifically sought to understand and describe teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors as they related to teacher morale in the elementary school setting. Because teachers spend a significant amount of time with students and have the greatest capacity to positively impact student achievement, school leaders must seek to understand the relationship between their behavior and morale (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Research Questions

Using the described conceptual framework, the study explored the following primary research questions, which specifically sought to understand and describe the teacher perceptions of principal leadership behaviors and the morale of teachers in the identified elementary public school. The overarching questions were:

1. Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors?

Sub-questions:

- Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers describe as being most important?

- What perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as being prevalent in schools with high teacher morale?

- Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as needed in schools with low teacher morale?

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2. How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors as they relate to the climate of the school?

Sub-questions:

- What are teachers' perceptions about teacher morale and school climate?

- What are teachers' perceptions about leadership behavior and school climate?

Theoretical Framework

This study was designed to understand and describe the principal leadership behaviors that teachers perceive as significant to teacher morale. The conceptual or theoretical framework of this study drove the goals and purpose of the research. The term conceptual framework, according to Maxwell (2013), is comprised of the ideas and approaches to viewing and gathering knowledge, which provide the basic ways of addressing a topic. Merriam (2009) and Yin (2009) use the terms theoretical and conceptual framework interchangeably and note that many writers do as well. They both similarly define theoretical framework as the foundation and structure, or scaffolding of a study. Merriam goes on to explain that the framework affects all aspects of the study: generating the problem and guiding the research questions, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings.

My life experiences, readings and research have helped to define my beliefs about principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale. As a teacher and administrator, many of the principals I have worked with or observed, functioned with a manager's mentality, simply trying to keep parents and teachers happy. During my educational career, I can recall only one example of a principal who led with passion. I believe that her leadership behaviors positively impacted the overall climate of our school, specifically contributing to positive

teacher morale. This was not entirely apparent to me until she resigned and her successor failed to exhibit the same leadership behaviors, resulting in what I perceived as a decline in teacher morale and overall poor school climate.

What kind of principal is able to get results with scarce resources; raise student achievement and maintain it while building a supportive and caring climate; nurture and mentor novice teachers; energize experienced staff members; and simultaneously leap tall buildings in a single bound? This question motivated me to examine the principalship for myself—this time, with the goal of understanding the relationship between teacher-perceived leadership behaviors and morale.

My assumptions or beliefs about the role of the principal include the need for them to be competent in both their managerial and leadership skills in order to be effective. Most organizations do not have the resources to allow positions to be purely leadership in nature. This is certainly the case in public schools, which require some combination of management and leadership responsibilities in their principals such as: capable of implementing a strategic vision; linking the organizational mission and objectives to building and individual goals; delegating tasks; and handling day-to-day operations.

The first two conceptual framework strands addressed in this study were the school principal and the evolution of leadership theory. It is important to review leadership from a historical perspective as it has evolved and transformed the principal's role from that of manager to leader. The third conceptual strand examined was teacher morale and the factors that may influence how teachers feel about the work they do and their overall satisfaction. Finally, an examination of principal leadership behaviors and their relationship to teacher

morale was presented. Principals have the power to influence many elements of a school. One of the most important and influential is the effect the principal has on the teachers of the school. Many good teachers will be successful in spite of a bad principal. These good teachers know how to handle the pressures of the profession and ignore the incompetence of the principal. These teachers are interested primarily in what is good for the students in the classroom. However, the principal plays a vital role in the morale of others—teachers who need some support, a little guidance, or just the occasional pat on the back. The discussion of the conceptual strands will communicate a sense of the interconnectedness between the principal, the leadership style, and their impact on teacher morale.

The School Principal

The first conceptual strand of the theoretical framework addressed is the role of the school principal and how it has evolved over time. It is important to understand this perspective in order to understand the principal's role as manager of the building or a leader of the school (Fullan, 2002). Traditionally, the principal served as a manager—an overseer of the day-to-day operations (Rousmaniere, 2007). Today, in a rapidly changing era of standards-based reform and accountability, a different idea has emerged: a model that suggests leadership must focus on what is essential and how to get it done (Bennis, 2009; Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). This shift brings with it dramatic changes in what public education needs from principals. They can no longer function simply as building managers, tasked with adhering to district policies and carrying out rules and regulations. They have to be leaders of learning who can

develop a team of teachers capable of delivering effective instruction (Bennis, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Kinsey, 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

As American education has transitioned into a new era of accountability, the role of the principal has necessitated the inclusion of leadership. Usdan, McCloud and Podmostko (2000) further develop this role of the principal: "principals today must serve as leaders for student learning" (p. 2). They list the subsequent items as requirements for fulfilling this role:

- Instructional leadership which focuses on teaching and learning, professional development, data driven decision making and accountability;
- Community leadership manifested in big-picture awareness of school's role in society;
- Visionary leadership that demonstrates energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, values and conviction that all students can learn at high levels. (Usdan et al., 2000, p. 4)

Principals are expected to be knowledgeable and involved in many different aspects of the educational process. In *The New Meaning of Educational Change,* Fullan (2007) suggested that the principal's involvement with change, as well as their support for teachers as the change is implemented, is one of the best indicators of success. Principals must understand that they do not need to be an expert in every curricular area or related initiative in the district. However, they do need to be aware of the changes taking place, instructional strategies being used, and curriculum being implemented to develop first-hand knowledge of the obstacles or challenges teachers face (Fullan, 2007). This in turn allows the principal to arrange for the necessary resources and support as teachers implement lasting changes in their classrooms (Fullan 2002; 2007; Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005). It has been my experience that a principal's willingness to roll up their sleeves and do the hard work alongside teachers sends a message to teachers that they are not alone. Teachers are more

likely to follow their principal's lead when they work with them to create solutions to common problems or issues faced in their schools.

Fullan (2007, p. 104) stated that "in the absence of passion and commitment," ideas will not go very far. In addition to leading change with passion and commitment, principals must work to create an environment in which teachers are involved in constant conversation about effective practices. This process leads to shared responsibility and a commitment to continue to reflect upon their collective practices and foster growth through the change process. Principals must recognize the complexity of change and the work associated with initiating and sustaining change (Bennis, 2009; Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005).

Knapp et al. (2003) have also determined, through a comprehensive analysis of leadership, the principal can advance powerful and equitable student learning by establishing a focus on learning, building professional communities that value learning, engaging external environments that matter for learning, acting strategically and sharing leadership, and creating coherence.

Certainly, this is not an all-inclusive list, because principals find themselves wearing many hats on a daily basis as they work to complete a wide range of tasks in an efficient manner. Among the many characteristics and behaviors that may assist in the development of an effective leader, is being an effective manager. Because many of the activities that a leader and a manager implement are similar, there may be some difficulty in distinguishing the difference between the two. It is often thought that one can be a great leader, a great

manager, or both, but each necessitates the mastery of slightly different skills and competencies (Collins, 2001; Northouse, 2007).

Evolution of School Leadership Theory

The second conceptual strand of the theoretical framework addressed is the origin and evolution of leadership. A comprehensive review of leadership theory and its evolution can be tracked over the past 70 years from the "great man" notion of heroic leaders, through trait theories, behaviorist theories, situational leadership, contingency theory, and transformational leadership theory (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dennison, 2003; Hallinger, 1992; Stewart, 2006). Each of these leadership theories offer some insights into the qualities of successful leaders, but there has been a shift in focus from the generic characteristics and behaviors of the individual to the acknowledgment of the importance of responding to different situations and contexts and the leaders' role in relation to their followers (Bolden et al., 2003).

More recent research spanning the past two decades leaves scholars of leadership theory attempting to define numerous types of leadership which include, but are not limited to: (a) instructional leadership; (b) servant leadership; (c) transformational leadership; and (d) sustainable leadership (Bass, 1990; Blase & Blase, 2000; DuFour & Eaker, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005; Stewart, 2006). These competing leadership theories all place high demands on principals. The current body of research clearly indicates that effective leadership is critical to the overall success of students (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). Leaders can draw upon a wide range of leadership styles, determining which one is right for their staff and school at any given moment.

There is wide recognition in the research that school leaders have the potential to influence the quality of the teacher, which indirectly impacts student learning. In a review of literature, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) concluded that school leadership has a significant effect on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers' instruction. Case studies of exceptional schools indicate that school leaders influence learning primarily by spurring teachers into action through ambitious goals and by creating an environment that supports them. Likewise, these researchers reported that large-scale quantitative studies conclude that the effects of leadership on student learning are small but educationally significant. Although leadership explains only three to five percent of the discrepancy in student learning across schools, this effect is nearly one-quarter of the total effect of all school factors. While the effects of leadership appear to be mostly indirect, leaders influence student learning by helping to promote a vision and goals and by ensuring that resources and processes are in place to allow teachers to teach well, meeting the varied needs of their students (Leithwood & Riehl).

Blase and Blase (2000) conducted a study that included more than 800 American teachers and directly examined teachers' perspectives of principals' everyday instructional leadership characteristics and the impacts of those characteristics on teachers. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire in which teachers identified and described characteristics of principals that enhanced their classroom instruction and the impacts those characteristics had on them. The data revealed two themes of effective instructional leadership: talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth.

Teacher Morale

The third conceptual strand in the theoretical framework describes the need to understand the factors that impact teacher morale. In order to understand the factors, one must first examine the historical development of teacher satisfaction as it relates to behavior management theory. The behavioral management theory is often called the human relations movement, because it addresses the human dimension of work. Behavioral theorists believed that a better understanding of human behavior at work (such as motivation, conflict, expectations, and group dynamics) improved productivity. Contributing theorists like Maslow (1943) and McGregor (1960) viewed workers as a human resource or asset that could be developed.

Maslow (1943), a practicing psychologist, developed one of the most widely recognized theories of motivation, which he based upon a consideration of human needs. This hierarchy of needs theory, which helped managers visualize employee motivation, was based upon the following three assumptions:

- Human needs are never completely satisfied.

- Human behavior is purposeful and is motivated by the need for satisfaction.

- Needs can be classified according to a hierarchical structure of importance, from the lowest to highest.

Douglas McGregor (1960) believed that two basic kinds of managers exist. One type, the Theory X manager, has a negative view of employees and assumes that they are lazy, untrustworthy, and incapable of assuming responsibility. On the other hand, the Theory Y manager assumes that employees are not only trustworthy and capable of assuming

responsibility, but also have high levels of motivation. McGregor believed that managers who hold either of these assumptions construct self-fulfilling prophecies, producing situations in which the employee will behave in such a manner, essentially confirming the manager's original beliefs. Both Maslow and McGregor revealed the notion that people worked for intrinsic satisfaction as opposed to materialistic rewards, which made it important for the manager to examine the role of individuals in an organization's performance.

The role of the teacher in the school setting, as it relates to the given topic, requires one to understand the multitude of internal and external factors that impact teacher morale. Demands on time, lesson planning, paperwork, and the transfer of family and societal problems to the school, along with higher accountability, adds to teacher pressures. Those increases in demands can negatively impact teacher morale, leaving teachers feeling unacknowledged, overworked, and mistreated (Fullan, 2007). Perie and Baker (1997) analyzed data from a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics and found that administrative support and leadership, student behavior, school atmosphere, and teacher autonomy are working conditions associated with teacher satisfaction; the more favorable the working conditions were, the higher the satisfaction scores were.

Principal Leadership Behaviors and Teacher Morale

The final conceptual strand in the theoretical framework examines principal leadership behavior as it relates to teacher morale. In a previously mentioned study by Perie and Baker (1997), teachers noted that they were more likely to feel satisfied when they (a) were recognized for a job well done, (b) believed that their principal was supportive and caring, (c) received frequent feedback from principals specifically discussing instructional

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practices, (d) were included in making important school decisions, and (e) noted a cooperative effort among the staff. In this same study, the researchers analyzed data from teacher surveys, seeking to understand why they left the teaching profession. Those who left the profession indicated inadequate support and lack of recognition from school leaders as two factors that significantly influenced their decision (Perie & Baker).

Fullan (2007) shares dismal statistics regarding the mass exodus of teachers from the profession within the first five years of teaching. Fullan advises that in order to change these alarming statistics, administrators must specifically focus on effective hiring practices followed by mentoring programs that ease teachers into the profession and invest in their professional development and growth over the course of the first two years.

An important study conducted to track teacher turnover in the East Asian Region Consortium of Schools (EARCOS) sought to create a model to explain teacher turnover. They received responses from 32 school heads and 744 teachers in EARCOS schools. They discovered that the average turnover rate was 32% from 2009 to 2010. The most important connections related to turnover made by this research were satisfaction with salary and the perception of a supportive principal. Characteristics that defined teachers' perceptions of supportive leadership were consistent with definitions of transformational and distributed leadership (Roberts, Mancuso & Yoshida, 2010).

Several research studies show that teacher morale impacts student achievement, and principal leadership influences teacher morale; therefore, there appears to be a vital need for an examination of the leadership traits of effective principals (Dinham, 2007; Margolis & Nagel, 2006). Blase and Blase (1994) indicate that praise by the principal provides teachers

with greater motivation, self-esteem, and increased efficacy. Equally important, there is a positive association between leaders who show concern about the feelings of subordinates by treating them with respect and dignity, and the motivation and acceptance on the part of the subordinates. In fact, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that "relational trust," consisting of four components: (a) respect, (b) competence, (c) personal regard, and (d) integrity, reduces insecurity and vulnerability to the increased pressures and demands of the workplace.

In *Becoming a Trustworthy Leader*, Tschannen-Moran (2007) further examines leadership as it relates specifically to building trust. The author outlines the five facets of trust as benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence. She states that without trust, collaborative structures in the school setting will have difficulty successfully diagnosing and solving the complex problems they face. Teachers are continually being asked to change and grow as professionals. In order to meet the demands of accountability, they must capitalize on the wealth of knowledge and skills shared in professional learning communities. Trust is an essential key in developing and establishing the teamwork needed to meet these demands. One must examine how the behaviors of the principal can encourage dialogue among educators as they search for better ways to address the learning needs of all students. The next section provides an overview of the methodology, including the theoretical traditions and sampling techniques used when identifying the research site and participants.

Design and Methods Overview

This descriptive case study sought to understand and describe the relationship of teacher-perceived principal leadership behaviors to teacher morale through the utilization of

direct and indirect observations of principal and teacher interactions, internal documents, and semi-structured interviews with teacher participants.

Researchers approach a topic with a particular methodology, not because they necessarily prefer the methodology, but because the methodology is the best one for that instance. For this study, the case study methodology emerged as the appropriate tool. The qualitative case study is an approach to research that enables exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather through a variety of lenses, which allows for multiple sides of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Creswell, 2013). Creswell submitted that the case study approach enabled the researcher to answer "how" and "why" type questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated. Yin (2009) went further to say that the technical definition consists of two parts, the first being the scope of the study. He indicated that a researcher would utilize this method in order to "understand a real-life phenomenon in depth" within the given context (Yin, p. 18). Another defining characteristic of a case study is the use of multiple sources of evidence, converged through triangulation of data, investigators, theory, or methods (Patton, 2002).

Two key approaches guide case study methodology: one proposed by Stake (1995) and the second by Yin (2009). Both seek to ensure that the topic of interest is well explored and that the phenomenon is revealed, but the approaches utilize different methods. Stake (1995) used the term intrinsic and suggested that researchers who have a genuine interest in the case should employ this approach when the intent is to better understand the case. Stenhouse (1988) stated that this is an appropriate measure to employ when the researcher is

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working "to enrich the thinking and discourse of educators either by the development of educational theory or by the refinement of prudence through the systematic and reflective documentation of experience" (p. 50). Lincoln and Guba (1985) further described the characteristics of the case study method as a thick description which is grounded, holistic, and lifelike through a conversation-style format that seeks to illuminate meaning and build on tacit knowledge. This particular case study was an excellent opportunity to gain insight into teacher morale and its relationship to teacher perceived principal leadership behaviors.

Case study research is known for its use of numerous data sources, a strategy which also enhances data credibility (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Data are produced largely from six sources: documentation, archival records, interviews, physical artifacts, direct observations, and participant observation. Case study research allows investigators to collect and integrate quantitative survey data, which helps them to fully understand the phenomenon being studied. In a case study, data from these multiple sources are then compared or mapped out in the analysis process. Each data source is one piece of the puzzle, with each piece contributing to the researcher's understanding of the whole phenomenon. This combination enhances the findings as the various strands of data are merged together to allow a greater understanding of the case. The tradition of case study is further explored in Chapter 3, Methodology.

The site for the study was a suburban, elementary public school situated in the Midwest. Purposeful sampling through the use of established criteria was utilized to select the site, principal, and six teacher participants. Criterion sampling involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criteria of importance (Patton, 2002). This type of purposeful sampling can be useful for identifying and understanding cases that are information rich,

providing quality assurance. It can also be instrumental in identifying cases that might be useful for follow-up. The participants for this study consisted of six elementary teachers from one elementary school in the district where the study was conducted. Each of the teachers selected for this study served as a single case in this holistic multiple-case study.

The proposed research design purposefully selected teachers who met the initial criteria of five or more years of experience. Additionally, teachers held a master's or specialist degree, currently held or recently held a leadership role within their building, and taught in the general education setting. The principal of the school also met specific criterion, having at least three years of experience and a specialist or doctorate degree. Furthermore, the school studied had been identified as high-performing as measured by state standards and had been awarded "distinction in performance" by the state of Missouri.

The process of data collection utilized two main methods: observations of teacher and principal interactions and semi-structured interviews with teacher participants. One-on-one interviews with teachers helped to define teacher morale and effective leadership practice and provided an opportunity to acquire teachers' perceptions of effective principal leadership behaviors. In addition to interviews, the researcher reviewed and extracted meaning from various internal and external documents in an effort to gain additional insight into the varied leadership behaviors of the selected principal. Designated documents consisted of a student/parent handbook as well as a building level leadership meeting agenda. The final source of data was direct observations of principal and teacher interactions, which were analyzed in an attempt to support and expand upon the meaning of the interviews and

document data. The observations of interactions between the principal and teachers took place during a faculty meeting and a building level leadership team meeting.

In qualitative studies, the data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. The type of analysis used depends on the type of case study. Yin (2009) describes the following techniques for analysis: pattern matching, linking data to propositions, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis. In contrast, Stake (1995) describes categorical aggregation and direct interpretation as types of analyses. Through the application of qualitative data analysis, the data are allowed to "speak for themselves" through the emergence of descriptive themes. These themes are intended to provide a framework of interconnected ideas that allow me to make sense of the developing patterns, both expected and unexpected, converging and further illuminating the case to answer the research questions. Further description of the design of the study, including limitations, validity, and reliability is addressed in Chapter 3.

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Significance of the Study

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NCLB received overwhelming support when it was signed into law by President Bush in 2002. The law required that schools test all students every year in grades three through eight and report the scores of students in a variety of subgroups. NCLB (2008) mandated that 100% of students would reach proficiency in reading and math by 2014, as measured by tests given in each state. Initially many agreed that testing was necessary to measure student academic performance, challenging educators to raise the bar for learning and ensure that all students were meeting rigorous standards. Unfortunately, what occurred was the opposite of that. The test became the curriculum. Educators felt an increasing amount of pressure to meet

the established targets, which led many to "teach to the test," bringing issues such as validity and reliability into question (Ravitch, 2010).

Those with the most power at the federal and state level determine what knowledge is most critical to the success of all students by dictating what must be mastered on standardized assessments. While I believe that what gets measured gets done, this era of accountability has essentially created a punitive environment in our public schools. The teacher's role of power over the students is reinforced when they are pressured to cover an expected curriculum at a pace that will prepare students for standardized assessments. This pressure limits the power of the students and marginalizes their voices as learners (Jardine, 2005). The domination is not restricted to the teacher/student relationship but can be expanded to include the teacher/principal relationship.

Ronald Barth (2007) argues that in our current age of standardized testing, the price of short-term success by achieving proficient levels on required assessments is failure in the long run. Additionally, Barth (2007) suggests that standardized testing is used to measure almost everything in our schools except the most important thing, which is a student's "enduring intellectual passion" (p. 167). He believes that the culture of a school has a significant impact on a student's desire to become a lifelong learner. Leadership should be focused on the culture of a school, which can greatly influence the lifelong learning of the students and staff. Culture is a complex topic that shapes what people think and how they behave. "The way we do things around here" represents the resistance to change by staff members in schools with a negative culture (p. 160). However, leaders can make a difference in the lives of students when they examine the following components: building community;

developing leadership; encouraging risk-taking; and inspiring a lifelong love of learning (Barth).

Fullan (2007) provides a discussion of large-scale school reform in today's era. He proposes that individual teachers must be concerned beyond their classroom, principals concerned beyond their building, districts concerned with the success of neighboring districts, and states concerned with the success of other states and the country. The development and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is an attempt to facilitate large scale reform in education (Ravitch, 2010). Interestingly enough, it has been advertised as driven by the states, and not the federal government, but a further examination of its origins and financial funding would suggest otherwise (Ravitch). Fullan's comments regarding the relationship between the public education system and societal development are thought-provoking. While education can drive the need for ongoing knowledge and use, I am not confident that our country has experienced a "widening moral purpose and commitment" to education (Fullan, 2007, p. 302), specifically focused on how to reach our most challenged youth.

This study is essential given our current policy context, which is focused on accountability for teachers and principals alike. The era of accountability has essentially created a punitive environment in our public schools. Consequently, the current system, which seeks to punish or reward based on test scores, has triggered educators to improve yearly not because of their desire to help students gain knowledge related to basic reading and math skills, but out of fear (Ravitch, 2010). The demands of NCLB and increased accountability through standardized assessments in conjunction with teacher performance

pay have the potential to create an environment in which competition will dampen teachers'

willingness to have collaborative conversations within a community of learners. Likewise,

current initiatives such as Race to the Top and Missouri's Top 10 in 20 further demonstrate

federal and state officials' unrealistic goals, contributing to the further erosion of teacher

morale. Without a richer understanding and description of teacher perspectives regarding

leadership behaviors and morale, policy makers will continue to have limited impact in

bringing about changes to schools and student outcomes as intended by such policies.

The results of this descriptive case study complement the current literature and body

of research regarding effective principal leadership behaviors. Additionally, this study has

important implications for principal practice. It is important to provide teachers with the

necessary tools and support as they seek to inspire and motivate students to achieve their

personal learning goals as well as to meet the expectations and standards set at the district,

state, and national levels. The task of hiring and retaining quality educators has become

increasingly difficult because of the alarming rates of teacher turnover. The results of this

study may help principals understand how teachers perceive their leadership behaviors.

Additionally, professional development opportunities at the university and district level may

be influenced and refined in order to build capacity among school leaders with the desire to

improve teacher morale, and as a result, positively impact student achievement.

Summary

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction to the study,

providing an overview of the case study, which included the perceptions of six elementary

classroom teachers regarding principal leadership behaviors and how those behaviors relate

to teacher morale. The current problems facing public school teachers were discussed, including the NCLB initiative and the accountability pressures associated with student achievement. The theoretical framework for this study was provided as well as an overview of the literature review to be further explored in Chapter 2. The remainder of this chapter provided an overview of the methodology.

Chapter 2 consists of a thorough overview of the professional literature that provided a structural foundation for this study. Included in the literature review is a discussion of the principal's ever-changing role with a focus on leadership as it pertains to teacher morale and school climate. Examining the literature about leadership behavior, this review specifically examines the various types of leadership theory and their connections to teacher morale.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology for this study in depth. Included in this chapter are the rationale for qualitative research, an exploration of case study, a description of the study setting, data production procedures, the data collection process, and the steps followed for data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data collected through documents, observations, and interviews as they relate to the research questions. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the trustworthiness of the findings. Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation with a presentation and discussion of the discoveries, implications, conclusions, and recommendations for educators and researchers for continuing research about the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose and function of public education has seen significant changes over the past 30 years. Prior to the Reagan administration, public schools faced challenges related to desegregation and the need for equality in education (Ravitch, 2010). However, in 1983, with the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, education was thrust into an era of distinction; distinction as measured by student achievement on a growing number of standardized assessments (Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983). Policy makers began to examine the role public education played in an increasingly global and competitive society—an examination that gave birth to ideas such as choice, privatization, and free market competition (Fullan, 2007; Ravitch, 2010). Under pressure, school leaders have been challenged to find innovative ways to move schools into compliance. Likewise, ever-changing demographics have reshaped education and created inequitable experiences for students.

The NCLB Act received overwhelming support when it was signed into law by President Bush in 2002. The law required that schools test all students every year in grades three through eight and report the scores of students in a variety of subgroups. NCLB mandated that 100% of students would reach proficiency in reading and math by 2014, as measured by tests given in each state (Ravitch, 2010). With increased accountability, principals can no longer serve as just a manager of a school; they are being held accountable for a multitude of priorities—most importantly, student achievement (Fullan, 2002, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Student achievement can be directly correlated with the

effectiveness of a teacher and the impact of the principal's leadership in motivating and encouraging classroom teachers to be effective. While the transition of the principal's role from manager to leader is still a relative new one, leadership behavior has long been of interest in the areas of industry, business, military and government; on the whole, research shows that focusing on social factors such as morale, group interaction, and supportive relationships has a strong effect on productivity and success (Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005).

The era of accountability has essentially created a punitive environment in our public schools. Firing teachers and closing schools will not solve the deeply rooted problems within our current system. In fact, high stakes testing in conjunction with teacher performance pay have the potential for creating an environment in which competition will dampen teachers' willingness to hold collaborative conversations. Teachers feel the pressure to cover an expected curriculum at a pace that will prepare students for state assessments, which reinforces traditional practices of having students memorize content in order to regurgitate facts rather than giving students the opportunity to explore the curriculum through inquiry-based learning and dialogue with one another. Realistically, public education faces many challenges, and while in theory NCLB sounds promising, it will take more than a catchy title to bring about real change. In the meantime, principals must continue to look for ways to support teachers through effective leadership practice and behaviors that will impact overall teacher morale, leading to a positive school climate where student achievement can excel. This review of literature will focus on the role of the principal, leadership theory, teacher

morale, school climate, and the rationale for studying the relationship between the principal's perceived leadership behaviors and teacher morale.

The School Principal

The role of the principal in American schools has been in a perpetual state of change since it began. The question regarding the principal's role as manager of the building or a leader of the school has been re-examined as various leadership theories and styles have evolved over time (Bolden et al., 2003). The principal's responsibilities include budget, curriculum, instruction, student discipline, teacher recruitment and evaluation, as well as many others. Being an effective principal requires a grueling amount of work that necessitates an inordinate amount of commitment and time. A good principal must work diligently to find a balance among their varied roles and strive to guarantee that that they are doing what they feel is best for all constituents involved.

The role of school principal began to emerge in the mid-nineteenth century and was originally created to support day-to-day operations (Rousmaniere, 2007). By the end of the nineteenth century, most urban high schools had a principal as well as schools in districts with growing elementary classrooms. The role was diverse in that some systems used the principal primarily as a teacher with minor operational duties while others used the principal simply as a clerk with record keeping duties (Rousmaniere). During this time it was not uncommon for the principal to return to the classroom as a teacher if there was a need for someone to fill that role.

Around the beginning of the twentieth century, schools grew beyond the one-room schoolhouse setting into more complex systems with multiple grades and classrooms. This

development of the school system prompted the need for a manager. Initially teachers fulfilled this management role while continuing to teach. However, continued growth dictated the need for a full-time administrator. Teachers with administrative duties eventually had to curtail their teaching responsibilities due to time constraints, naturally transitioning into the principal role. Initially, the principal's management responsibilities included attending to administrative tasks such as ringing the school bell, keeping attendance, or providing student discipline. Typically the role was filled by a teacher who wanted the extra responsibility, was well liked, or had taught the longest. The role was not typically filled based on a specific skill set or desire to lead (Rousmaniere, 2007).

Further into the twentieth century, two specific steps separated the principal from the classroom (Rousmaniere, 2007). The first was the development of an actual space—an office for the principal. The second major distinction came with the development of additional requirements of principals. For much of the twentieth century, the role of the principal was that of manager; the principal was expected to uphold district mandates, manage personnel, manage the budget, and handle other operational issues (Usdan et al., 2000). As managers, principals were responsible for developing sound fiscal management, maintaining the building and grounds, creating a master schedule for students and teachers, hiring personnel, building and maintaining positive communication with the public, developing school policy regarding discipline, coordinating the instructional program, and other general school matters. There was little mention of principals leading or guiding teachers with curricular decisions.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the principal's responsibilities grew to include the management of federally funded programs that specifically addressed minority student populations. The management role included some curriculum and instruction supervision, but overall, school management was the primary role principals fulfilled until the early 1980s (Fullan, 1998, 2002; Hallinger, 1992). In 1983, the Commission for Excellence in Education released a report entitled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.* The report cited several sources of data suggesting that the United States' educational system was failing to meet the national need for a competitive workforce. Among other things, the report required the commission to assess the quality of teaching at all levels of education within the public and private sectors and to compare those results to other nations considered academically advanced (Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983).

As the accountability movement gained momentum, the role of the principal changed from school manager to school instructional leader and then to the school reform leader. The 1980s led to a fully developed definition of instructional leadership and its functions. The role of an instructional leader was established and clarified as an individual responsible for the development of the school's educational program; the instructional leader was viewed as a lead teacher of teachers. Despite this shift in the primary role of the principal, the management role was also retained. Principals were being described as catalysts for change in effective schools and were regarded as essential to the change process. These expectations demanded a new focus and set of work activities from the principal. As the term instructional leader became commonplace among school principals, further changes developed.

In 1986, the Carnegie Foundation released a report entitled *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century.* This report argued that if the United States was to have a lively democracy, prevent the growth of poverty, and have a high-wage economy, schools must produce graduates with high achievement levels. At this time, there were increasing demands for teachers and a diminishing supply of well-educated candidates. The report outlined an integrated plan for restructuring the schools and redefining teaching as a career that included the following central components: (a) raising teaching standards; (b) strengthening preparation programs; (c) revamping teacher salaries and career opportunities in order to be competitive with other professions; (d) creating a professional environment for teaching that permitted teachers to decide how best to meet state and local goals for children while holding them accountable for student progress; and (e) mobilizing the nation's resources to prepare minority youngsters for teaching careers (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1986).

With this report came the recognition that the educational system was not adequately preparing students to compete in a global society. Reformers concluded that the education system should be restructured in order to address noted deficiencies. Up until then, the principal's role as coordinator and controller of the curriculum and instruction focused on instructional leadership. However, school restructuring required the principal's role to change once again to that of transformational leader. Leithwood and his colleagues (1992) described the distinction between the two approaches: instructional leaders are those who are "leading from the front or the middle of the band" and transformational leaders are "leading from the back of the band" (p. 6). The principal's role had once again shifted, now focusing on the

staff and the students' instructional goals, working with the end result in mind (Leithwood, 1992).

The role of the principal continued to evolve, requiring individuals to be multi-faceted and juggling the roles of school manager, instructional leader, and the leader of school reform. In order to meet this demanding role, principals needed a consistent set of standards by which their performance could be measured. Around the late 1980s and early 1990s, as pressure increased to make schools accountable for student achievement, discussion regarding principal qualifications began. At this time, most states began to require that principals meet a set of initial criteria in order to fulfill this role. While the requirements varied among the states, generally they included experience as a teacher, certification through a college preparation program, and a passing score on a nationally validated licensure exam (StateUniversity.com, n.d.).

The effort to determine the appropriate qualifications for principals was heavily influenced by The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) as they sought to create an assessment process. The goal was to identify skills that would most significantly impact a principal's ability to effectively lead a school, including leadership, sensitivity, organizational ability, judgment, problem analysis, range of interest, motivation, decisiveness, educational values, oral and written communication, and stress tolerance. Later the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) created an assessment process that assessed similar skills (Ubben, Hughes & Norris, 2011).

In the mid-1990s the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) reviewed principal qualifications. The NPBEA included most of the major national

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organizations that represented education administrators, from state superintendents to principals. One of the members, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), took on the major role of developing a set of standards for school leaders. Working with the member associations and representatives from 37 states, the CCSSO led the effort to identify a new set of standards for principals. This group was known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC).

The development of *The Education Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008* aimed to help current and future school administrators meet the changing demands of society and schooling (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). They were designed to influence the preparation of principals, guide states in the development of their own state principal standards, and serve as a tool for licensure or evaluation. The ISLLC standards are comprised of six standards or function areas that define strong leadership (CCSSO, 2008, p. 6):

1. Setting a widely shared vision of learning;
2. Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
3. Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
4. Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts.

The authors of the standards believe their implementation is necessary to promote the success of every student (Council of Chief State School Officers).

Shortly after the development of the ISSLC standards, the Institute for Educational Leadership's (IEL) task force on the principalship began work to identify the top priorities of the principalship. They produced a report entitled *Leadership for Student Learning:*

Reinventing the Principalship, which outlined three key roles that the principals of the 21st century should fulfill (IEL, 2000):

- Instructional leadership focused on improving teaching and learning, professional development, and making decisions based on data;

- Community leadership with a focus on the big-picture which includes all stakeholders in the process; and

- Visionary leadership demonstrating that all children will learn at high levels, as well as inspiring others with this vision both inside and outside the school building.

This set of standards indicates that everything principals do— "establishing a vision, setting goals, managing staff, rallying the community, creating effective learning environments, building support systems for students, guiding instruction and so on, must be in service of student learning" (IEL, 2000, p. 4).

The development of a core set of standards prompted researchers to develop a tool aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of principals based on a set of research-based practices. Researchers at Vanderbilt University developed an instrument known as VAL-ED, which is aligned to the ISLLC standards and uses feedback from teachers, principals, and supervisors to provide an assessment of learning-centered leadership behaviors related to improved student achievement. Researchers identified the following six key steps for principals to follow in carrying out their central responsibilities: planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring (Porter et al., 2008).

Additional research by The Wallace Foundation, a national philanthropy that seeks to improve education, sought to find out what effective principals should demonstrate. Based on work published since 2000, Wallace details the following five key responsibilities of an effective principal (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 6):

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards;
- Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail;
- Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision;
- Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost;
- Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

Each of these five tasks must take place together in order for success to occur. For example, if the school climate is characterized by student disengagement, or teachers do not know what instructional methods work best for their students, then it is difficult to shape a vision of high standards through which all students achieve academic success. However, when all five tasks are addressed well, then leadership is said to be evident (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Seyfarth (2008) provides a more updated school operation list for which principals are responsible. He outlines seven essential functions that leadership must provide for the instructional program of a school:

1. Provide planning, development, supervision, and evaluation of the instructional program
2. Select, assign, and evaluate staff and provide professional development opportunities for growth
3. Maintain reciprocal communication with all stakeholders
4. Enforce school rules and codes of conduct
5. Use due process procedures with students and staff
6. Maintain a safe, supportive environment
7. Keep accurate records related to enrollment, attendance, discipline and budget. (p. 58)

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While the principal is held accountable for the operation of the school building, they must be able to delegate to others. Seyfarth suggested that the principal cannot do all of these things alone and therefore depends upon the performance of those around them.

Jim Collins (2001), in his book *Good to Great,* set out to complete a mixed-methods study to answer two research questions: (a) can a good company become a great company, and (b) if so, how? He based his criteria on a five-year study that he and a group of 22 research associates conducted with nearly 1,500 Fortune 500 companies. He concluded that only 11 companies met the criteria of a great company. Those great companies were found to have a leader who possessed a set of specific characteristics which the author coined "Level 5 Leadership" (Collins, p. 17). Level 5 leaders are more than just managers; they have unique characteristics such as humility and professional will towards excellence. This type of leader is known for taking credit for bad performance while giving credit to others when things go well. While the text does not specifically refer to principals, the lessons learned can be applied to anyone who finds themselves in the role of leader.

Collins (2001) submitted that leaders must begin with "who," then "what." He asserted that getting the right people involved is the most important task. Only then can the team determine their path for greatness. He also recommended that leaders analyze someone's character, work ethic, intelligence, and dedication to their values before deeply analyzing credentials and practical skills. Next, Collins suggested that great leaders must confront the brutal facts. He recommended the following four ways to build a culture where the truth is always heard:

1. Lead with questions, not answers;
2. Engage in dialogue and debate, not coercion;

3. Conduct autopsies without blame; and
4. Build "red flag" mechanisms "for turning information into information that cannot be ignored. (p. 79)

Collins (2001) also recommended that great leaders stay focused on their one big thing. This is referred to as the hedgehog concept, because similar to the way a hedgehog consistently rolls into a ball in response to the fox, the leader or organization remains consistent or focused upon one thing, allowing them to do it well. This brings out passion and endurance to meet one's goals. Next, develop a culture of discipline in which a leader manages systems, not people. Collins asserts that this is done through disciplined people and their actions. Therefore, one does not need to create a hierarchy of power or control. Finally, Collins describes the flywheel concept, in which good to great companies or organizations do not happen overnight. They are the result of years of persistence. Collins' work has been applied to industry and education leaders alike. His work can be applied to the modern role of the school principal, specifically as it relates to the sustainable leadership theory, which is further discussed in the next section.

The traditional role of principals in schools continues to change and undoubtedly will be reshaped, redefined, and renegotiated as school restructuring continues. The evolving role of school principals now includes principals as life-long learners, principals as facilitators, principals as transformational leaders, principals as instructional leaders, principals as resource providers, principals as communicators, and principals as a visible presence in the school and in the community (Fullan, 2007; Knapp et al., 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Usdan et al., 2000). Principals are to be the servants of collective vision, cheerleaders, problem solvers, and resource finders by valuing their teachers, promoting their professional

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growth, and promoting collaboration. Principals today need to serve as facilitators and developers rather than as bosses (Fullan; Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). They need to be involved in helping to create a common vision of the school, to model behaviors consistent with that vision, and to allocate resources and distribute information that helps the total school community move toward that vision (Fullan; Leithwood & Riehl; Marzano et al., 2005).

In a recent survey conducted by MetLife, major findings confirmed that the job of principal has become increasingly complex and stressful, with 75% of principals feeling it is too complex (Markow & Pieters, 2012). Additionally, 69% of principals state that the job responsibilities have significantly changed over the last five years (Markow & Pieters). Principals must be able to provide sound leadership, clear expectations, and organizational management that will move their staff in a new direction. Sound management is important in a school setting; however, the interpersonal aspects bring about a deeper dimension which transcend into various leadership styles (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). More recent research contributes to the notion that a principal must move beyond the manager role.

Fayol (as cited in Owens & Valesky, 2011) defined five functions: planning, organizing, commanding (interpreted as leading), coordinating, and controlling (interpreted as evaluating) as essential in the educational setting as principals work to identify research-based best practices that have the greatest impact on student learning. Beyond the concepts presented in Fayol's work are those that arose from the organizational theory movement. Authors Owens and Valesky (2011), referred to as having a people approach, sought to

"involve people more fully in making decisions that affect them, attend to their motivational needs more adequately, and increase collegiality and collaboration through teamwork" (p. 78).

This description most accurately describes what principals must now accomplish in order to address the needs of each individual teacher along with the group as whole. When people feel valued, respected, and a part of something greater than themselves, they will respond in a positive manner. Principals must be able to address both the organizational needs through clear management of day-to-day tasks as well as speak to the relational needs of the varied staff members. A principal must clearly identify the strengths of each individual, working to establish positive relationships, in order to develop shared leadership and encourage collaboration among all team members (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). Only then can true solutions be created to address education's unique problems, allowing all students to benefit and grow.

Leadership

Attempting to define and assess leadership can be problematic. Over the years, volumes of literature have been written on the topic of leadership. In fact, in his book *Leadership,* Burns (1978) wrote that leadership "is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (p. 2). In his search for the perfect definition, Burns cited hundreds of sources on the topic, most of which attempted to describe the qualities of the ideal leader. An internet search in the spring of 2013 on the "definition of leadership" revealed over 80,600,000 results. Currently there is no widely accepted definition of leadership or a consensus on how to best develop leaders (Bolden et al., 2003). Nevertheless,

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there are many traits and behaviors that may create effective leaders (Bennis, 2009; Bolden et al.; Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2007; Stewart, 2006).

Originally, school principals had minimal responsibility for the academic programs in their schools. The primary responsibility of the principal was to effectively manage school operations by attending to facility issues such as scheduling and building maintenance (Hallinger, 1992). This role was expanded when responsibility for the academic program was added to the principal's list of duties (DuFour & Eaker, 2006). Principals were then viewed as instructional leaders in their buildings. Today, principals perform a balancing act in order to respond effectively to the numerous demands of multiple constituencies (Fullan, 2007). As a result, new perspectives have emerged regarding what it means to be a school principal in charge of leading a school. Management-focused theories of school leadership no longer have a place in the realm of education, and leadership-driven theories have emerged to take their place (Collins; 2001; Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Regardless of the leadership theory selected, leaders have a multitude of roles to fill and many responsibilities to carry out on a daily basis (Fullan; Hallinger; Marzano et al., 2005; Northouse, 2007).

Early theories of leadership, which focused on the relationship between the leader and the follower, asserted that the principal held power over those in the organization (Bolden et al., 2003; Stewart, 2006). These types of leaders were given a position of privilege as they were considered to be superior to their followers (Jardine, 2005). Despite the prevalence of theories centered on positional power, in *The Essence of Leadership*, Locke (1999) foreshadowed contemporary theories of leadership when he proposed that "an effective leader does not see power as a static quantity that has to be competed for. Rather…as

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something that can be created and distributed to followers without detracting from the leader's own power" (p. 22).

The following sections outline and discuss the role of the principal as it relates to the leadership theories commonly described in today's school setting: (a) instructional leadership; (b) moral or servant leadership; (c) transformational leadership; and (d) sustainable leadership. These more current leadership theories represent a growing interest in the decentralization of power and responsibility within the school. Leaders should focus on the sharing of power as principals seek to empower teachers and elicit their voices as important stakeholders in the educational process (Bennis, 2009; Bolden et al., 2003; Fullan, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2007; Stewart, 2006). Each of the theories has viability and merit and can be used to strengthen leadership philosophies. However, it is important to note that one is not necessarily better than the other.

Instructional Leadership

When the concept of instructional leadership first emerged in the 1980s, it was viewed as top-down supervision focused on the evaluation of teachers, curriculum, and school programs (Hallinger, 1992). This theory gained a widespread following at the time, and principals concentrated on becoming skilled managers of their schools' academic missions by setting goals, examining curricula, evaluating teachers, and assessing results (Bolden et al., 2003). However, this initial definition minimizes the depth and breadth of these actions and the current understanding of how they are linked with effective school leadership. Contemporary views of instructional leadership require leaders to work collaboratively with teachers to accomplish their academic mission (Ubben et al., 2011).

Instructional leaders must keep a focus on the ongoing alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and standards, because any disconnect between these elements will have a negative impact on student achievement (Cotton, 2003). With a focus on student achievement, leaders must engage in the analysis of data from multiple sources, which provides evidence of learning and identifies the professional development needed to promote a culture of continuous learning (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). While other duties cannot be neglected, teaching and learning should consume the majority of the leader's time (NAESP, 2001). Instructional leaders are grounded in research and knowledgeable of best practices in order to assist in the selection and implementation of instructional materials and to monitor implementation. The emphasis on accountability brought about by the passing of No Child Left Behind insists that leaders not only implement effective programs but also provide evidence of their success and justification for changes (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Principals who embody instructional leadership focus on improving student achievement by keeping a strong focus on academics and emphasizing to the varied stakeholders the importance of achieving their shared vision, mission, and goals (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Sergiovanni (1992) embodied the thoughts of many researchers regarding instructional leadership when he stated, "the substance of leadership is teaching and learning" (p. 305). Principals who are committed to improving student achievement remain focused on the quality of instruction and the interactions between teachers and students. Instructional leaders establish high expectations for teachers and student learning but provide support through continued professional learning

with an emphasis on best practices designed to improve teaching (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood

et al., 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Additionally, instructional leaders are responsible for

sharing decision-making and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders (Barth, 1988,

1990; Sergiovanni, 2007). The trend towards the decentralization of power has helped to

facilitate the process of collaboration by allowing principals to build a community of leaders

(Barth, 1990).

Moral and Servant Leadership

Moral leadership and servant leadership are synonymous terms in which the principal

models requirements such as integrity, character, and strong values for those within their

learning communities (Sergiovanni, 1992, 1994). According to Barth (1988), moral

leadership describes how leaders make decisions according to beliefs about right and wrong

and according to their interpretation of organizational values. A system of morals or beliefs is

inherently very personal to leaders. In some instances, leaders might elect to follow their

personal morals rather than organizational values. Eugene B. Habecker (1987), author of *The*

Other Side of Leadership, wrote:

> The true leader serves. Serves people. Serves their best interests, and in so doing will
> not always be popular, may not always impress. But because true leaders are
> motivated by loving concern rather than a desire for personal glory, they are willing
> to pay the price. (p. 217)

This quote encompasses the ideas of servant leadership as outlined in Sergiovanni's

(2007) article *Leadership as Stewardship: "Who's Serving Who?"* He explains a type of

leadership where the group as a whole reaches a moral level of operation (Sergiovanni). The

people trust their leader to influence others to promote success within an organization.

Through the empowerment of others, people within the organization develop an attitude of

service to one another. Sergiovanni specifically addressed the role of the principal as lead

learner who models what is expected of staff and students and celebrates when it is achieved.

In the same way, Barth (2007) indicated that a school "exists to promote learning of all their

inhabitants" and that everyone must work together "in times of need as well as times of

celebration" (p. 163). The principal must recognize how their role as lead learner impacts

teachers as well as students to become lifelong learners. The building leader also plays an

important role in creating a healthy culture which promotes collegiality and trust among all

constituents (Barth; Sergiovanni). Through building relationships and trust, staff members

will be able to have open and honest conversations, allowing them to make decisions based

on what is best for all learners.

Bennis (2009) suggests that leaders influence those around them and spend a great

deal of time building trust through constancy, congruity, reliability, and integrity. He

identifies the five core elements of trust as competence, constancy, caring, candor, and

congruity, and identifies candor as the most important: "when we are truthful about our

shortcomings, or acknowledge that we do not have all the answers, we earn the

understanding and respect of others" (Bennis, p. 22). However, he cautions leaders: "we can

provide meaning, build trust, and foster hope, but all of that counts for little unless an

organization produces results" (Bennis, p. 22).

According to Sergiovanni (2007), principals who practice servant leadership start by

clarifying the group's purpose and establishing consensus and commitment to it. While this

task can be difficult to accomplish, it is important to note that the idea of servant leadership

takes time to build to its full strength. However, once the shared values of the school

community are in place, it is everyone's job to do what makes sense according to the values of the organization so long as it supports the purpose. A leader is to respond when empowerment is abused and when purposes are ignored. Sergiovanni refers to this response as "leadership by outrage" (2007, p. 83). Sergiovanni's ideas of servant leadership rest heavily upon building a sense of morality within an organization through trust and empowerment. However, the development of trusting teams takes time and effort which requires "courage, persistence, and forgiveness" (Tschannen-Moran, 2007, p. 110).

Principals seeking to employ servant leadership would describe themselves as being in relationship with others, seeking to involve others in decision making, and ultimately finding success when they serve those that they lead. The power of the relationship is revealed when partnerships, characterized by a mutual trust, respect, and obligation to one another and the success of the organization, are developed between the leader and constituents (Barth, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2007).

Transformational Leadership

The idea that principals must share the school's common vision to empower stakeholders has been suggested and explored by a long list of respected writers (Barth, 1988; Bennis; 2009; Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2005, 2007; Sergiovanni, 1994, 2007). Transformational leadership is essentially concerned with getting everyone involved in the decision-making process. These leaders are focused on the performance of group members and want each person to fulfill his or her own potential (Barth). Most descriptions of transformational leadership begin with distinguishing it from transactional leadership (Bass, 1990; Burns). In transactional leadership, the leader is concerned with the basic needs of the

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person and uses a reward system in exchange for favorable group or organizational outcomes (Bass). Transformational leadership also seeks to meet the needs of the followers. However, transformational leaders offer a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses on higher order intrinsic needs (Bass; Bolden et al., 2003; Stewart, 2006). Burns described it not as a set of specific behaviors but as an ongoing process by which "a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (as cited in Northouse, 2007, p. 176).

Bass (1990) and his colleagues used the components of transformational leadership to develop the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Over 100 statements were classified by trained judges as they related to transformational leadership. U.S. Army officers utilized the MLQ to rate their superior officers on a scale ranging from behavior not observed to behavior observed frequently. Based on the results, Bass developed the following four ways in which leaders transform followers (Bass):

- Charisma: Provide vision and a sense of mission, instill pride, gain respect and trust.
- Inspiration: Communicate high expectations, use symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple ways.
- Intellectual Stimulation: Promote intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving.
- Individual consideration: Give personal attention, treat each employee individually, coaches, advises. (p. 22)

Bass' (1990) model of leadership also included three dimensions of transactional leadership, known to be the opposite of transformational leadership: contingent reward, management by exception, and laissez-faire. Contingent reward can be traced back to work done by Burns (1978), in which the leader rewards the follower for completing an assigned task. Management by exception consists of the leaders following or tracking the follower's

behavior and correcting them if and when necessary (Burns, 1978). Laissez-faire leadership happens when the organizational behaviors are ignored and the individuals are provided with minimal supervision (Bass).

Finally, Kouzes and Posner (2008) uncovered five specific practices consistent with Bass' transformational leadership factors. They list and describe the following five key practices of leaders that result in getting extraordinary things done in organizations:

1. Model the Way by leading by example;

2. Inspire a Shared Vision by creating a desire to strive for the organization's goals by showing others that the leader has the best interest of the staff in mind and understands their collective needs;

3. Challenge the Process by looking for and choosing innovative ways to improve the organization;

4. Enable Others to Act by creating teamwork and trust and by empowering followers to work toward the organization's goals; and

5. Encourage the Heart by motivating and encouraging the stakeholders despite the feelings of frustration that often occur with change (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

An analysis of transformational leadership reveals that leaders seek to inspire hope and courage in their followers, especially in the face of difficulties, by developing a level of awareness for the consequences of their choices. Their staying power is supplied by a love for leading, a love for the organization, and a love for the people (Bass, 2009). Through an emphasis on intrinsic motivation and positive development of teachers, school leaders seek to

empower others and encourage high performance to meet the challenging, complex needs within the school setting (Bass, 1990; Bennis, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

Sustainable Leadership

Sustainable leadership, a term first coined by the field of environmental science, can be applied to both business and education (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005). The challenge for educational leadership is to learn from the business world, looking to apply the principles and practices of the most successful and sustainable companies (Bennis, 2009; Collins, 2001). Hargreaves and Fink discuss the idea of sustainable leadership in the midst of the current standards-based movement in which good intentions require school leaders and teachers to improve all students' achievement. They believe that the government's reaction to tighten control based on the failure to meet these standards has created an environment in which sustainability is difficult to achieve. England's highly prescriptive and all pervasive National Literacy and Numeracy strategy is cited as a prime example of how rapid improvements made under pressure plateau without sustainability (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005).

The Spencer Foundation funded a study regarding the perceptions and experiences of teachers and administrators regarding educational change over time. The study includes extensive archival data, supplementary observations, and more than 200 interviews among teachers and administrators in eight high schools in the United States and Canada employed during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2004). The results of this study revealed that some of the key forces influencing change or continuity in the long term are leadership, leadership sustainability, and leadership succession. This study also indicated that

many of the leadership processes or practices in place created temporary change but failed to create widespread lasting change (Hargreaves & Goodson).

In their book entitled *Sustainable Leadership*, Hargreaves and Fink (2005) identify the seven principles of sustainability in educational change and leadership as depth, length, breadth, justice, diversity, resourcefulness, and conservation. The first principle, depth, refers to the notion that leaders create and promote sustained learning as well as care for and among others. They suggest that leaders must "preserve, protect, and promote in education what is itself sustaining as an enrichment of life" (Hargreaves & Fink, p. 39). The second principle, length, suggests that sustainable leadership lasts over time, from one leader to another. The authors suggest that this can be achieved by preparing successors to continue important reforms and by keeping successful leaders in schools for extended periods of time (Hargreaves & Fink). The third principle, breadth, describes the concept of distributed leadership and suggests that sustainable leadership not only spreads to others but depends upon the leadership of others. Principals cannot be solely responsible for carrying out a vision within a school. This vision must be shared with others so that they can carry on the torch after the principal is gone (Hargreaves & Fink).

The idea that sustainable leadership is socially just and not self-centered comes from the fourth principle, justice (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005). This idea suggests that one cannot only be concerned with the success of the students in the school. Equally important is the fifth principle, in which diversity is promoted and fostered within an environment that utilizes cohesion and networking as a way to learn from varied perspectives (Hargreaves & Fink). The sixth principle, resourcefulness, requires leaders to recognize leadership talent

within the organization, seeking to develop it but taking care to do so without depleting material or human resources (Hargreaves & Fink). Sustainable leadership systems provide intrinsic rewards and extrinsic incentives that attract and retain the best and brightest of the leadership pool. Such systems provide time and opportunity for leaders to network with one another, learn from one another, and support one another as well as coach and mentor leadership successors. The final principle, conservation, necessitates that leaders look to the past for lessons learned in order to create a more satisfying future (Hargreaves & Fink).

In education, Fullan (2005) describes educational sustainability as the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose. He believes that the principal as the instructional leader solely responsible for change is too narrow a solution and that sustainable leadership is the key to large scale educational reform. He outlines eight elements of sustainability: (a) public service with a moral purpose; (b) commitment to changing context at all levels; (c) lateral capacity building through all networks; (d) intelligent accountability and vertical relationships; (e) deep learning; (f) dual commitment to short-term and long-term results; (g) cyclical energizing; and (h) the long lever of leadership (Fullan et al., 2005).

In conclusion, sustainability depends on many leaders, and, thus, the qualities of leadership must be attainable by many, not just a few. The commitment necessary for sustainable improvement must be cultivated by leaders at varied levels within the organization (Fullan, 2007; Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2005).

Leadership in an Urban Context

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that the shifting racial and ethnic distribution of public school students is one aspect of the changing composition of school enrollment. Buckley, the Commissioner for NCES, stated that "between 1989 and 2009, the percentage of public school students who were White decreased from 68 to 55 percent, and the percentage of those who were Hispanic doubled from 11 to 22 percent" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011, p. 28). Additionally, greater percentages of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students attended high-poverty elementary and secondary public schools than did White or Asian/Pacific Islander students (NCES). As a result of this trend, children of color overwhelmingly outnumber white students in large cities or urban schools. Likewise, demographic representation among schools are rapidly changing to include students of color, students with low-socio economic status, students with disabilities, and those who speak English as a second language (NCES). Despite these changes, the administrative and teaching staff of these schools has remained predominately white, middle class, and English speaking (NCES).

Historical barriers to equal access to education can be examined in the events leading up to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. These barriers linger as educators continue to fail to educate many of our most marginalized students (Fruchter, 2007; Noguera, 2003). Therefore, teacher education programs are presented with the challenge to educate and prepare teachers for the complex challenges found in the urban core. The purpose of our educational system is to make bold possibilities happen for these students. In fact, it is our duty as public educators to end the oppression of marginalized students (Freire, 1990).

Moving forward, school leaders and teachers must advocate for practices that seek to positively influence issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other marginalized factors (Freire; hooks, 2010).

As schools continue to experience demographic changes, physical growth provides an opportunity for professional growth. Leaders must collaborate with teachers, students, and parents to reexamine everything they have been doing in order to meet the needs of students in highly diverse environments. The first priority for building leaders is to develop trust among the professional staff, establishing a need for greater awareness of all racial and cultural groups. Principals must work to provide professional development opportunities focused on developing new competencies and pedagogies to successfully engage diverse populations. School leaders should model discussion, reflection, and engagement strategies that teachers can use to establish positive learning communities in their classrooms. Principals must engage teachers in dialogue, confronting the current and historical inequities about race, class, gender, sexual orientation, immigration, and other dimensions of diversity and social dominance (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Beyond the principal's leadership style, pedagogy and subject matter can be a barrier to democratic education. Teaching for social justice contributes to student growth and challenges the status quo on issues related to bias, prejudice, and privilege (Giroux & McLauren, 1986). In *Teaching Critical Thinking*, bell hooks' (2010) writing revolves around the complex concepts of inquiry, discourse, equity, and authenticity. Her discussion of engaged pedagogy encompasses a variety of successful practices in the classroom: critical thinking, engagement, building relationships, establishing trust, using humor and personal

stories. Other complex themes related to race, sex, and classes emerge from her thoughts regarding engaged pedagogy, a theory which challenges status quo in an effort to improve ways of teaching to expand possibilities to people of color, ethnic minorities, working-class students, women, and others, that they might find success within our traditional educational system and beyond.

Related to the obstacles within pedagogy, classroom curriculum can be a barrier to student learning in the urban setting. Our nation defines itself by the democratic ideals of equality, justice, and freedom; however, those ideals are most notably absent from our public schools' curriculum. School leaders must work with teachers to identify places where equity and diversity can be included in the regular curriculum. Many students are not exposed to this type of curriculum until they reach high school and are allowed to take elective courses, which further perpetuates injustice. However, democratic intentions of educational equity and social justice can be realized in a culturally responsive classroom with a curriculum that can be described as culturally relevant (Delpit, 1992; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2000).

In her book titled *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teaching for African American Students,* Ladson-Billings (1994) explains culturally relevant teaching as "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 17-18). Culturally relevant teaching utilizes a student's background, prior knowledge, and experiences to inform the teacher's lessons and methodology (Delpit, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000). In order for culturally relevant teaching to be successful, Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests that pedagogy be

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"specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment" (p. 160). She specifies three criteria for this type of pedagogy: "(a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (1995, p. 160).

The first of her criteria proposes that students must be provided with the tools to achieve academic proficiency despite any social inequities present. Ladson-Billings (1995) maintains that culturally relevant teaching requires teachers to "attend to students' academic needs, not merely make them feel good," thereby encouraging students to "choose academic excellence" (p. 160). The second criteria, cultural competence, encourages non-white students to feel comfortable being themselves, as teachers provide students with a curriculum that builds upon their cultural experiences and prior knowledge. Culturally relevant teachers "utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). Finally, culturally relevant classrooms challenge inequities prolonged by society through specific learning opportunities which require students to develop critical viewpoints of such oppressive structures (Delpit, 1992; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000).

Culturally relevant pedagogy requires principals to encourage dialogue among educators as they search for improved ways to address the learning needs of all students. Specifically, building principals must be able to consider the unique cultural experiences of students from varied backgrounds, working to provide professional development opportunities which will assist teachers as they work to meet the needs of all students (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2000). Culturally relevant curriculum builds upon meaningful

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interactions between the school and community. Lessons are specifically developed in an effort to connect new material to students' existing experiences and empower students to value all cultures, not just their own.

Ladson-Billings (2006) contends that educators must shift their focus from closing the achievement gap to understanding how the American society must pay back an educational debt; a debt which she believes encompasses historical, moral, sociopolitical, and economic factors that have negatively affected African-American and other non-white students in the educational setting (Ladson-Billings). It is imperative that this passion and commitment be seen as the principal's work to create a collaborative environment in which teachers have the opportunity to share culturally responsive practices.

Culturally responsive teaching uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students. Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement, but also the maintaining of cultural identity and heritage (Delpit, 1992; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2000). As an instructional leader, I must encourage teachers as they seek to teach to the whole child and can encourage them as they use a cultural frame of reference to structure learning for students.

School leaders must address the misconceptions that create obstacles in culturally responsive teaching. Teachers must move beyond the idea of teaching a certain way for students of diverse backgrounds and embrace the idea of providing equitable learning opportunities for all children. Students come from diverse backgrounds and educators need to

ask why they engage differently and how they engage differently (Delpit, 1992; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2000). The answers to these questions will help to better educate the whole child. As educators we must look to build bridges to help students move successfully from one cultural system to another and teach students to negotiate culturally different systems. Equally important, educators need to stop using themselves as an example and seek relevance by using a wide variety of experiences and examples embedded in the learning (Gay).

There are several principles that guide culturally responsive teaching. Teachers need to have adequate preparation for critically responsive teaching, requiring a more thorough knowledge of the specific cultures of different ethnic groups, how they affect learning behaviors, and how classroom interactions and instruction can be changed to embrace these differences. Culture shapes communication, interaction with others, and interpretation of the world (Gay, 2000). A student's cultural understanding and perspective should not be separated from subsequent learning once they enter school. Culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the instructional process, and therefore educators should be looking at it as a part of the solution for closing the achievement gap (Gay; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

In *Teaching Critical Thinking*, bell hooks (2010) describes engaged pedagogy through a variety of successful practices in the classroom: critical thinking; engagement; building relationships; and establishing trust. This theory challenges the status quo in an effort to improve ways of teaching to expand possibilities for racial and ethnic groups,

working-class students, women, and others, that they might find success within the traditional educational system and beyond.

The title of hooks' book alludes to her underlying message regarding her beliefs about how our current educational system relies on the practice of teaching students what to think rather than how to think. hooks (2010) argues that in order to create critical thinkers who are able to form their own beliefs and ideas regarding topics such as class, gender, and race, educators must move away from traditional ways of teaching. Young children are naturally curious and therefore question those around them as a means to gather new information. Educators must seek to channel that natural curiosity and encourage students to explore their learning through engaged pedagogy, specifically utilizing conversation as a tool in which students and teachers alike learn from one another (Freire, 1990; hooks, 2010).

hooks (2010) describes a successful teacher as one who can not only create and promote an atmosphere of learning but is able to inspire students to chase their own learning. She contends that in order to develop critical thinkers one must first build relational trust with students in which the culture and climate of the classroom lends itself to learning conversations; conversations where students can remain open-minded to the thoughts of others and will ultimately deepen their understanding of the issue or idea being discussed.

Principals should seek to apply hooks' ideas when working with adults. As schools have moved toward establishing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), a building leader must quickly recognize the importance of developing relational trust in order for teachers to truly be collaborative (Bennis, 2009; Dufour & Eaker, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2007). True collaboration gives birth to conflict, and instructional leaders

have to be able to identify indicators of negative conflict in order to keep staff focused on what is best for students. hooks stated, "Negative conflict based discussion almost always invites the mind to close while conversations as a mode of interaction call us to open our minds" (2010, p. 45). Through these conversations, educators should be able to develop a deeper understanding of the issues and the possible solutions by engaging diverse members of our local, state, and national communities.

Our current reality is extremely diverse and interconnected. Working collectively seems to the best strategy for accomplishing our goals, considering our diversity and interconnected problems. Principals need to understand the need for cultural competence in order to promote social equity (Klotz, 2006). Engaging a community of diverse members provides a rich resource of alternative ideas about how to approach complex problems. Solutions resulting from those ideas benefit all members and increase respect and mutual understanding among those involved. Creativity, trust and cooperation are responsible for the promotion of inclusion and equity when participation and involvement of all groups are adhered to (Delpit, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

As a building leader, recognizing the power and influence that culture has on our students is critical (Gay, 2000). Our backgrounds, beliefs, and practices affect our responses to those around us. Leaders must encourage educators to seek to understand how our past experiences impact our present interactions and relationships with one another and build upon those experiences to create a community of learners (Delpit, 1992; Gay, 2000, Klotz, 2006). As a school principal, there is a need to be engaged with what is currently taking place within the political arena, especially as it relates to public education, federal and state

mandates, policy reform, and the role our current and past elected leaders play in public school education. The United States is considered a world power and a military leader on the world stage. This level of authority has also placed public education in a false sense of power and privilege and offers a logical explanation to our slow-moving educational reform efforts to address global competencies. Education must be a priority, a cornerstone of our nation, and an essential part of social equity (Giroux & McLaren, 1986).

The large achievement gap between students from low and high socio-economic status families and between white and non-white students are major challenges facing public education (NCES, 2011). Despite the wide range of differences among individual students, there is no reason to accept disparities in educational outcomes between members of social, racial, or ethnic groups based on their varied social circumstances. Principals and school leaders must be committed to achieving social equity in our schools by seeking creative solutions to our complex problems; focused on repaying the "educational debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Education reform with the context of globalization must be a priority if the United States desires to maintain this status of power for future generations.

Conclusion

This comprehensive review of leadership theory and its evolution provides some insights into the qualities of a successful leader. The varied theories suggest that leaders should respond to different situations and contexts in relation to their role and their followers. Regardless of the theory chosen, all place high demands on the principal, who is critical to the overall success of students. Likewise, principals should seek to develop a deeper understanding of power and influence as it relates to the distinction between leaders and

followers. This essentially involves the principal realizing that power does not belong to only one person but understanding how power and influence shape their role as leader. Other prominent theories that have influenced leadership theory can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Leadership Theories in the United States

Period of Time	Leadership Theory	Leadership Focus
1920s & 1930s	Great Man Theory	Having certain inherent traits
1940s & 1950s	Style Approach	Task completion and developing relationships
1960s	Situational Approach	Needs of the subordinates
Early 1970s	Contingency and Path-Goal Theories	Both style and situation
1980s	Transformational	Raising consciousness and empowering followers
1990s	Team Leadership	Team performance and development
2000s	Self-Actualized Leadership	Introspection and concern for meaningfulness

An analysis of the reviewed leadership theories reveals that, regardless of the theory, principals are to be the architect of a collective vision, to model behaviors consistent with that vision, and to allocate resources and distribute information that helps the total school community move toward that vision. Principals today must serve as facilitators and developers rather than as managers. They must be proficient with curriculum and

assessments, allowing them to recognize, understand, evaluate, and ensure that effective

teaching practices are occurring, encouraging collaboration and promoting teachers'

professional growth. Equally important to the overall success of a leader is trust. Without

trust, collaborative teams in the school setting will find it difficult to successfully diagnose

and solve the complex problems they face. In order to meet the demands of accountability,

school leaders must capitalize on the wealth of knowledge and skills shared within

professional learning communities. Trust is an essential key in developing and establishing

the teamwork needed to meet these demands.

Principals must distinguish the differences between the varied leadership styles and

value what each can bring to their experience and success, recognizing that leadership is a

developmental process of growing one's skills. Consequently, one must examine various

leadership theories as they apply to the behaviors of the principal in the pursuit of equitable

learning opportunities that meet the learning needs of all students.

Principal Leadership Behaviors and Teacher Morale

Teachers have an increasingly difficult task at hand. At one time teachers were asked

to teach specific content to students, ensuring their mastery of the content. However, today's

classrooms require teachers to be able to differentiate learning in order to meet the various

needs of their diverse students (Kinsey, 2006). Additionally, they must deal with an

increasing number of social and behavioral problems, less parental support, and lower

salaries than most highly educated personnel in our nation (Markow & Pieters, 2012;

Markow & Scheer, 2003). With those obstacles, it is no surprise that more and more teachers

are leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching. What can a principal do to

create an environment where morale is high—one in which teachers feel productive, supported, and appreciated?

Morale has been thought of as a feeling, a state of mind, a mental attitude, and an emotional attitude (Mendel, 1987). Bentley and Rempel (1980) further define teacher morale as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (p. 2). Their work determined that there is a connection between an individual's needs and the organization's goals and that high morale occurs when those two things are aligned. Others have further connected job satisfaction with morale as "a state of mind encompassing all of the feelings determined by the individual's anticipations of the extent of satisfaction of those needs which he perceives as significantly affecting his total work situation" (Evans, 1998, p. 30). Teacher morale is more likely to improve in a healthy school environment, leaving teachers feeling good about each other and feeling a sense of accomplishment from their jobs (Hoy & Miskel, 2012).

Teacher morale is often thought to be fueled by intrinsic rewards, such as pupil achievement, teacher achievement, changing pupil attitudes and behaviors in a positive way, recognition from others, continued personal and professional growth, and positive relationships. One could assume that teachers who enjoy going to work each day, are actively involved in various functions and committees within the school, and in general are supportive of the school will have a higher level of job satisfaction (Ellenburg, 1972). Schools with high staff morale have very distinctive features. School members who feel good about the school and what is happening are more willing to perform assigned tasks and tend to be more confident, cheerful, and self-disciplined (Whitaker et al., 2000). Positive relationships and

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school pride among employees are fostered within schools with a well-developed sense of community. Ellenburg encompassed the importance of morale by affirming that:

> Morale affects more than just productivity or student achievement. It assists in establishing the character of a school. It is one of the factors which may determine whether a school functions at its best, demanding and receiving the utmost from its students, or whether the school plods along happy just to see the passing of another day. (1972, p. 37)

It stands to reason that if teacher morale is connected to the development of a school's healthy environment, then one could also predict a positive relationship between teacher morale and student achievement. Thus, low levels of morale could adversely affect student achievement. If principals have a direct impact on the morale of teachers, this could indirectly impact student achievement. It is with this knowledge that principals must then search to identify the key factors related to teacher morale and work to encourage, reinforce, and sustain teachers.

Many research studies have examined teacher morale and the effects of certain factors on teacher morale. Cook (1979) suggested that much like teachers do with students, administrators should look for cues, diagnose, and then work to support teachers within the school environment. Cook provides a framework with five critical components which he believed affected teacher morale. The first component, administrative leadership, suggests that teachers will have higher morale when they believe that they are being led by a capable administrator. Cook also submitted that teachers may become defiant in the absence of a competent principal. The second area, administrative concern, simply notes the human need to feel supported and appreciated. His third component, personal interaction, is the need for individual teachers to feel supported by their colleagues and principal. Seyfarth suggested

that supportive principals are "friendly, open, and guided by norms of equality" (2008, p. 188). Teachers often feel isolated and need to be provided with opportunities to communicate and interact with others. Fourth, opportunity for input highlights teachers' need to provide vital input and to be recognized and valued as an important part of the decision making process. Finally, continued professional growth ensures that teachers are not becoming stagnant. The principal plays a key role in the development of teachers by providing support and opportunities for job-embedded professional growth (Cook).

Low staff morale results from professional lives that have little meaning; from frustration and the inability to change what is happening; and from muddled goals and demands exceeding scarce resources (Bruce, 2003; Cook, 1979; Evans, 1998; Whitaker et al., 2000). Wentworth (1990) identified several essential factors that determine teacher morale. These essential factors can assist school leaders as they reflect upon structures within the school and how they may be contributing to staff morale:

1. Input into decision-making that directly affects curriculum, instruction and school climate;

2. Recognition and appreciation of teacher and student achievement;

3. A school climate that reflects a feeling of unity, pride, cooperation, acceptance of differences, and security;

4. Good communication;

5. Opportunities for meaningful professional growth;

6. Clear, shared goals;

7. Strong, supportive leadership;

8. Quality time for collegial interaction: planning, educational dialog, decision-making, problem solving;

9. Well-maintained physical environment;

10. Good human relations, both within school and between school and community;

11. Encouragement and reward for risk taking, innovation, and good teaching;

12. Attention to professional needs;

13. Attention to personal needs such as stress management, good health, and social interaction.

Andrew, Parks, and Nelson (1985) performed a study to determine the factors that determine morale. In schools with high morale levels, principals displayed the following traits or behaviors: outgoing, friendly, organized, enthusiastic, available, fair, and a good listener. In schools with poor morale, the traits or behaviors were as follows: disciplinarian, inconsistent, unsupportive, formal, and impatient. Similar to Wentworth's study previously mentioned, the authors developed a list of administrative practices that maintain positive teacher morale. While the study itself is not recent, many of the practices listed are still relevant to the role of the principal today:

- Be open and have good morale yourself.
- Communicate at many levels.
- Involve others in setting objectives, planning, and decision-making.
- Set planning priorities.
- Your job is to get things done, not to do them yourself.
- Know the values and needs of your community, your students, and your staff.

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- Hold high expectations for staff, but recognize your responsibility to help them meet your expectations.

- Give recognition to those who are helping to advance the objectives of the school.

- Have written policy developed for procedures and regulations.

- Exercise your authority.

- Provide resources needed to achieve the school's objectives.

- Do your best to obtain competitive salary levels so you can obtain the very best staff.

Beyond the principals' practices, Seyfarth (2008) cites psychological success, qualities of the work environment, and teacher stress as factors that impact a productive work environment. Among the qualities of a productive work environment, Seyfarth (p. 186) noted the following as important:

- Clear mission
- Stimulating professional development opportunities
- Supportive administrative leadership
- Professional culture
- Opportunity to use one's talents and skills
- Comfortable, attractive and well-equipped physical space
- Adequate time to perform required duties
- Adequate materials and supplies. (p. 186)

Job satisfaction and morale are inextricably linked. The more satisfied you are in your professional capacity, the more likely that your morale will be high and your productivity levels will be elevated. Consequently, if you are unhappy in your role and are not performing up to your full ability, you are setting the stage for a bad work attitude and low morale. In a recent study done by MetLife (Markow & Pieters, 2012), results indicate that teaching satisfaction has declined 24 points since 2008; from 63% to 39% very satisfied, the lowest

level in 25 years. Half of teachers reported a high stress level on several days a week, which is an increase of 15% since 1985. Those teachers who reported being less satisfied were more likely to be in a school where the budget has decline in the last 12 months. Also, less satisfied teachers were more likely to be located in schools where professional development (21% vs. 14%) and collaboration time (29 vs. 16%) had declined in the last 12 months.

Teacher attrition continues to be a major challenge facing education today. Because of the requirements of NCLB, districts have made an effort to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, but turnover in the profession is significantly higher than in others. Perrachione, Rosser and Petersen (2008) set out to identify variables that influence teacher job satisfaction and retention and which of those variables influence a teacher's intent to stay in the profession. The study included survey responses from more than 200 randomly selected K-5 public teachers in the state of Missouri with five or more years of teaching experience. Multiple linear regression was used to indicate intent to remain in the profession as explained by independent variables such as satisfaction, age, and marital status. Results of the study found that teachers who were satisfied with the profession were more likely to stay in the profession. Specifically, intrinsic factors such as personal teaching efficacy, working with students, and job satisfaction were found to have a significant influence on satisfaction and retention. Interestingly enough, low salary and role overload, two extrinsic factors, did not have any effect (Perrachione et al., 2008).

The results of the latest teacher attrition study conducted by the New Teacher Project (NTP) referred to highly effective teachers as "irreplaceables." Their work focused on the notion that principals should turn their attention from retaining enough teachers to retaining

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the right teachers. These "irreplaceables" are described as being so effective they are difficult

to replace. The executive summary of the report contends that "teachers of this caliber

provide more engaging learning experiences for students and help them achieve five to six

more months of learning each year than students of low-performing teachers—academic

results that can be life-changing" (NTP, 2013, p. 1). The case study included more than

90,000 teachers across four geographically diverse urban school districts covering 2,100

schools and including 1.4 million students. The findings revealed the following three main

causes of negligent retention issues: (a) principals make too little effort to retain irreplaceable

teachers or remove low-performing teachers; (b) poor school cultures and working conditions

drive away great teachers; and (c) policies give principals and district leaders few incentives

to change their ways (NTP, 2013).

Additionally, the study presents a list of five things principals can do to keep

irreplaceable teachers. The author proposed that principals start the year with high

expectations. Great teachers want clarity regarding the vision for learning among the students

and teachers. The second suggestion is to recognize excellence publicly and formally. Great

teachers deserve thoughtful recognition for meeting the identified learning goals and are

encouraged and motivated when they receive specific praise. Next, principals should work to

create an environment that irreplaceables do not want to leave. They should build

professional relationships with them by spending time in their classroom and by providing

feedback and support, as well as professional development and leadership opportunities.

Fourth, they should be proactive early in the year by having conversations with those

irreplaceable teachers. Find out their professional goals if they are thinking of leaving; find

out what will make them stay. Finally, the authors suggest that principals hold the line on good teaching by providing feedback to weaker teachers, giving them a timeline for improvement. Principals who tolerate "poor performance keep ineffective teachers in the classroom indefinitely, demoralize outstanding teachers, and allow the entire teaching profession to be defined by mediocrity rather than excellence" (NTP, 2013, p. 6).

Ultimately, great teachers will walk away from a school where the leadership does not respect or trust them or seek to empower them. Conversely, great teachers will follow a principal to the most challenging school if that principal has demonstrated trust and respect as well as a willingness to allow great teachers the freedom to select and implement the best instructional methods for their students. Teachers thrive in a culture of high expectations, creativity, collaboration, and collegiality. Principals have the most impact on creating that environment.

The issue of teacher quality is considered central to growing efforts to understand and reduce the disparity in academic performance between groups of students (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1986). Students in urban school settings with high concentrations of low-income, culturally diverse students are more likely to have inexperienced or unqualified teachers, less rigorous course offerings, more remedial courses, and higher teacher turnover (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Aside from the school building itself, teachers are perhaps the most visible school resource. Extensive research has demonstrated that teachers have a significant impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond; Dufour & Eaker, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2006; NCES, 2004), with a key indicator of teacher experience being related to student performance. Teachers become more effective the longer

they teach. Experienced teachers, however, are not equally distributed across low- and high-poverty schools (NTP, 2013). Teachers are drawn to schools with low concentrations of poverty, low minority populations, and high levels of student achievement, thus framing the problem of teacher quality as one related to professional mobility. High teacher turnover rates makes it harder for low-performing schools to build an experienced teaching core, thus creating an unequal distribution of experienced teachers. To address the needs of struggling learners, urban school districts need to consider their teachers as valuable and strategic resources and systemically assign academically underperforming students to effective teachers (Darling-Hammond; NTP).

Leithwood et al. (2006) synthesized the results of 91 original empirical studies and 26 systematic reviews of relevant published evidence. The results suggest that teachers' working conditions matter because they have a direct effect on teachers' thoughts and feeling, their sense of individual professional efficacy, of collective professional efficacy, of job satisfaction; their organizational commitment, levels of stress and burnout, morale, engagement in the school or profession and their pedagogical content knowledge. These internal states are an important factor in what teachers do and have a direct effect on what happens in the classroom, how well students achieve, and their experience of school.

Knowing that the school environment and associated working conditions impact teacher morale, the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (2013) set out to survey all school-based, licensed educators. Since 2002, the data from this biennial survey has helped to guide decisions at the school, district, and state level to ensure that every North Carolina

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classroom has the supportive environment necessary to help students achieve at the highest

levels.

Several states have embraced the New Teacher Center's survey titled the Teaching,

Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) survey (New Teacher Center, 2013). This

survey specifically gathers information on time, facilities and resources, community support

and involvement, management of student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership,

professional development, instructional practices and support, and new teacher support.

Survey results have shown that the better the working conditions, the better the student

achievement. Several states have had success in using the Working Conditions Survey results

to create and assess positive cultures in their schools, which has translated into improved

staff morale. A positive school culture makes a positive difference to staff and, consequently,

to students; therefore principals must not ignore staff morale in the push for increased test

scores. The principal must be the leader of the effort to boost morale and must do so in

collaboration with staff. Staff members who are excited to attend work each day based on the

working conditions will certainly better serve the students who await them.

In addition to the research on teacher morale and the factors that influence it, there is

a body of research that looks for the relationship between a principal's leadership behaviors

and teacher morale. Principals may not be able to increase teacher salaries or reduce class

sizes, but certainly they can work to create a healthy environment in which teachers feel

supported and appreciated and which, in turn, should increase their productivity. The

MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: An Examination of School Leadership (Markow &

Scheer, 2003) found a relationship between teacher job satisfaction and principals'

performance. Teachers who were satisfied with their jobs were more likely than others to be satisfied with their relationship with their principal, to have more frequent contact with the principal, and to rate their principal more highly for such characteristics as respect, being a good listener, and providing opportunities for professional development.

Thomas (1997) performed a meta-analysis probing into leadership, leadership theory, leadership style, the effect of principal leadership, and its relationship with teacher morale. The findings supported that the principal's leadership style had an effect on teacher morale. Teachers felt uplifted by principals who effectively defined the school mission, managed the instructional program, and promoted a positive school learning climate. In addition, the study identified collaborative leadership style as having the greatest impact on teacher morale.

Davis and Wilson (2000) conducted a research study to determine whether or not there is a significant relationship between Principal Empowering Behaviors (PEB) and teacher satisfaction, motivation, and stress. They utilized Vogt and Murrell's Model of Empowerment and the Thomas and Velthouse's Cognitive Model of Empowerment in their study with 660 teachers and 44 principals from eastern Washington. The designed questionnaire measured four variables: principal empowering behavior, motivation, job satisfaction, and job stress. The study revealed a significant relationship between PEB and teacher motivation. Additionally, the higher the PEB scores, the higher the teacher motivation scores. They also found that teacher motivation had a relatively strong relationship to job satisfaction and perceived job stress. However, the PEB was not found to relate to satisfaction or teacher job stress (Davis & Wilson).

In a more recent but similar study, Houchard (2005) examined the relationship between principal leadership, teacher morale, and student achievement. This quantitative study was conducted using a survey-design method and utilized the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire to measure factors contributing to teacher morale. The Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) was used to measure leadership practices, and the North Carolina state assessments were used to measure student achievement. Overall results for the participating schools showed that there was a moderately high level of teacher morale among those surveyed. Satisfaction with teaching ranked highest in contributing to higher morale, whereas teacher salary contributed to lower morale. Leaders in the school proved to inspire a common vision as well as encourage teaching from the heart. Teachers from two of the seven schools rated their principals higher in leadership practices than the principals rated themselves. Overall, the study determined that there are many significant relationships between perceived leadership practices and teacher morale factors.

The final study included in this review explored the relationship of leadership style and teacher motivation. It also examined the need by administrators to give teachers opportunities to perform professionally so they can perceive their roles as important and value their own improvement. Gallmeier (1992) reported that effective schools research confirms that good principal managerial and leadership skills are important to motivating teachers. A survey of graduate students at Chicago State University (Illinois) used a "Teacher Morale Survey" developed by the American Federation of Teachers to test the effect of principal leadership style on staff motivation. Gallmeier concluded from this study that the leadership style and its effect on teacher motivations suggest the traits of a leader are

important to group effectiveness; however, this is only one factor among many. His findings revealed that teachers preferred a leader who communicated clear expectations and expressed sentiments that made teachers feel professional.

In conclusion, principals must ask themselves some difficult questions concerning leadership and communication deficiencies; taking identified needs seriously and working to address them will boost morale. Principals are responsible for responding to daily human concerns, for understanding scheduling demands, and for fostering recognition programs, staff meetings, shared leadership, good communication, and professional development.

School Climate

Teacher morale is often thought of as a dimension of school climate. Characteristics of schools, such as the physical structure, interactions between teachers and students, and relationships between teachers, parents and community, are often used to help define the broad concept of school climate. In times when significant change is being implemented within a school, the climate of the organization needs to be evaluated. Gaining insight into the dynamics of school processes helps develop clarity for principals and teachers who are implementing and dealing with a school's organizational change. School climate is consistently related to teacher job satisfaction, which in turn is related to teacher retention (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995). Since recruitment and retention are important to the overall success of the school, principals may find it necessary to focus on improving school climate as a way to improve teacher morale and retention.

School climate is a broad concept that is complex and extensive in scope. There are inconsistencies within the education community in defining the term (National School

Climate Council, 2007). However, common themes in the research when determining climate include the character, atmosphere, tone, ideology, feel, or environment of a school (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002). National School Climate Council (NSCC) defines school climate as "the quality and character of school life" which is based on "patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1). The NSCC has further synthesized the research on climate to determine that a sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes:

- Norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe
- People are engaged and respected
- Students, families and educators work together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision
- Educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfactions gained from learning
- Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment. (NSCC, 2013, p. 1)

School climate has been widely researched and is believed to have significant implications for student learning and academic achievement. Beyond the research on student achievement, studies have also shown that a positive and sustained school climate is associated with and may be predictive of positive youth development, effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009; Freiberg, 1998; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1997).

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As a result of that research, several factors have been identified as influencing school climate. The NAESP outlines the physical, social, and academic dimensions of the school setting as important when developing a definition of a school climate. The physical dimension includes:

- Building and classroom appearance

- Class sizes and teacher-student ratios

- Organization of the school

- Resources available to teachers and students

- Safety

The social dimension includes:

- Quality of interpersonal relationships between and among students, teachers, and staff

- Equitable and fair treatment of students by teachers and staff

- Degree of competition and social comparison between students

- Degree to which students, teachers, and staff contribute to decision-making at the school

The academic dimension includes:

- Quality of instruction

- Teacher expectations for student achievement

- Monitoring student progress and promptly reporting results to students and parents (Loukas, 2007).

The review of the literature reveals a growing body of empirical research which indicates that positive school climate is associated with and predictive of academic achievement, school success, effective violence prevention, students' healthy development, and teacher retention (Cohen et al., 2009). Freiberg (1998) stated, "school climate can be a positive influence on the health of the learning environment or a significant barrier to learning" (p. 22). School climate has been found to have a profound impact on teachers' job satisfaction. A teacher's feeling of safety and connectedness to the school, and their relationships with students and adults impact how they feel about teaching in a given school. Certainly, one could assume that the way teachers feel about being in school has a big impact on their relationships with students and their teaching style (Cohen et al.).

Developing a positive school climate is a key element for motivating and energizing teachers to dig in and do the difficult work of educating and finding success for all students. The principal has the responsibility to advance powerful and equitable student learning by establishing a focus on learning, building professional communities that value learning, engaging external environments that matter for learning, acting strategically and sharing leadership, and creating coherence (Dufour & Eaker, 2006).

In connection with school climate, school leaders must also examine culture on a deeper level; specifically, principals need to ask themselves how much they are prepared to risk. Leaders must assess their willingness to move beyond what is familiar and safe in an effort to encourage teachers and students in the quest for a better education. Barth (2007) suggests that certain conditions are necessary to promote learning among educators. He explicitly encourages teachers to observe, share, converse, and reflect on their own practices

as well as those of their peers. By way of sharing their knowledge, teachers and principals can lead one another to new learning, as well as promote a school community where risk and lifelong learning are decidedly related.

Payzant (2011) spent some time communicating data which shows how our student population is experiencing change related to race and poverty. However, he ultimately focused his attention on the idea of helping teachers acquire the knowledge and skills needed to effectively educate these populations of underserved students. Leaders must move forward with courage and ask tough questions related to students and what is best for the children of our nation. As educators seek to close the "achievement gap," principals must help to build a collective sense among teachers, allowing them to set aside their personal feelings in order to learn from and with each other. Through the development of collaborative teams, leaders can foster a positive school climate in which educators choose to focus their time and energy on developing solutions to the various inequalities related to gender, race, or socio-economic status that students are facing today.

Many researchers have sought to develop a tool for the purpose of measuring the climate of the school. The difficulty in measuring school climate is that each individual within the school setting may have a different perception of climate. Cohen et al. (2009) assert that school climate is best evaluated with surveys that have been developed in a scientifically sound manner and are comprehensive in two ways: (a) recognizing student, parent, and school personnel voice; and (b) assessing all the major dimensions of school climate: safety, relationships, teaching, learning, and the institutional environment. Ultimately, climate is a quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants,

affects their behavior, and is based on their collective and individual perceptions. In essence, school climate is dependent on the perceptions of the individual working at or attending the school site. How individual members feel about their relationships with administration, colleagues, and students is an integral component of school climate (Van Houtte, 2005). Therefore, such assessments should strive to consider multiple factors and individuals within the school. For example, the Charles F. Kettering Ltd. (CFK) School Climate Profile is widely used to measure school climate as perceived by teachers, administrators, and students and is comprised of eight subscales: respect, trust, high morale, the opportunity for input, continuous academic and social growth, cohesiveness, school renewal and caring (Johnson, Johnson & Zimmerman, 1996).

Tableman (2004) indicated that school climate should be assessed on four aspects of the school environment: a physical environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning, a social environment that promotes communication and interaction, an affective environment that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem, and an academic environment that promotes learning and self-fulfillment. For the purposes of this discussion, the social and affective environments revealed a significant overlap with the research on morale. A social environment that supports learning is characterized by the following:

- Interaction is encouraged among stakeholders.
- Active communication between stakeholders.
- Teachers are collegial.
- Parents and teachers work together to educate all students.
- There is a shared decision making process.

- Conflict resolution training is provided to help teachers and students be proactive (Tableman, 2004).

An affective environment that promotes student learning is characterized by:

- Caring, responsive, supportive, and respectful interactions among all stakeholders

- Mutual trust and respect among the varied stakeholders

- High morale among teachers and staff

- Friendly interactions among students and staff

- All stakeholders feel as though they are making valuable contributions to the schools success

- A sense of community

- A perception of a warm and welcoming school environment (Tableman, 2004).

Contrary to a healthy, open, positive school climate is the opposite: an unhealthy, closed, or toxic climate. Schools with an unhealthy climate have a physical environment that lacks cleanliness, order, and ownership by the school community. The social environment of an unhealthy school exhibits limited or hostile staff interactions. In this case, teachers are isolated or pitted against each other due to a lack of trust within the school setting. Teachers do not celebrate their successes together, and blame abounds within the school (Tableman). In a toxic affective climate, teachers and staff feel unappreciated and unvalued. In addition, the leadership of the school makes decisions behind closed doors, further validating the lack of value they place on the members of the school (Hoy et al., 2002). In schools where there is an unhealthy culture, one may see an academic environment that is lacking in clear goals

(Tableman). In this case, expectations for student and teacher achievement are low. All in all, unhealthy, toxic climates can be improved. However, these changes take time and persistence on the part of the leadership.

Clearly, school climate is a broad and deep topic with the potential to impact a multitude of stakeholders within the school system. Regarding the roles of teachers and administrators, Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) found that a positive school climate is associated with increased job satisfaction for school personnel. Classroom climate is important in teacher motivation. If a teacher experiences the classroom as a safe, healthy, happy place with supportive resources and facilities for teaching and optimal learning, he or she tends to participate effectively and efficiently in the process of management, administration, and the overall improvement of the school.

In a study conducted by Johnson and Stevens (2006), surveys of teacher perceptions of school climate in 59 elementary schools in the southwest portion of the U.S. were collected that resulted in a sample of over 1,100 completed surveys from participants. Teachers were assessed using a modified version of the School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ). The researchers analyzed the data using a structural equation model (SEM) to examine the relationship between school climate, community and school context, and student achievement. The first model tested used school climate as a predictor of student achievement and used five indicators as compared to the school mean on the Terra Nova subject assessment results. Johnson and Stevens (2006) found a positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of school climate and student achievement. They concluded that

> school climate is a factor worth considering in understanding school achievement. Schools in which teachers perceived a positive school climate, with a high degree of

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affiliation among teachers, an atmosphere of innovation, high involvement of teachers in the decision-making process, cooperative, friendly student and adequate resources and facilities, had better average student achievement. (Johnson & Stevens, 2006, p. 118)

The second model tested used community and school context as a predictor of student achievement. The relationship between the two factors was found to be moderate and statistically significant in schools with a higher socioeconomic status (SES) as compared to schools in a lower SES community (Johnson & Stevens, 2006). It was cautioned that this relationship could be impacted by lower levels of funding and higher levels of under-qualified teachers; however, these factors were not included in the models. The authors also cautioned the reader to consider the time of year in which the data was collected, as the outcome could be influenced by major events occurring in the school.

In a similar study of elementary teachers' perceptions of school climate and student achievement, authors MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) sought to determine whether or not schools identified as "Exemplary," "Recognized," or "Acceptable" differed in their school climates. These three categories or status were compared to their school climate as measured by the ten dimensions of the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). The study involved 29 schools, none of which were considered low performing, and were compared using a multivariate analysis of variance. The results found that Exemplary, Recognized or Acceptable schools varied with regard to organization health. Exemplary schools were found to have healthier school climates than Acceptable schools. Two dimensions as measured by the OHI, goal focus and adaptation, were found to have the greatest variance between schools rated as Recognized and Acceptable on student achievement. The researchers suggested that when the principal

supports clear goals for the school that are accepted and supported by the staff, then OHI scores will be higher, reflecting his leadership on the climate. Likewise, when the principal develops and supports structures within the school that allow the organization to tolerate stress and maintain stability while at the same time effectively coping with the demands of the environment, he has effectively improved the school's ability to adapt. (MacNeil et al., 2009, p. 82)

The physical environment or the condition of the school building is another factor related to the overall school climate. Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) conducted an exploratory study to examine the interdependent relationships between the physical environment and the social environment of schools, as well as the relationship of each to student achievement. The study included teachers from 80 Virginia middle schools who were surveyed using the School Climate Index, which contains and measures seven dimensions of school facilities scale, as well as three resource support items. Data on student SES and achievement were also gathered. The relationships between the quality of facilities, resource support, school climate, student SES, and student achievement were explored. Multiple regression was used to test school climate as a variable between the quality of facilities and student achievement. The findings of the study confirmed a connection between the quality of school facilities and student achievement in both English and math. In addition, quality facilities were found to be significantly related to three school climate variables. Moreover, the results confirmed that school climate plays a mediating role in the relationship between facility quality and student achievement. The study contributes to the idea that schools should receive equitable funding across the state. These funds could allow school leaders to invest in replacing or renovating inadequate facilities, thus attracting and retaining high quality teachers (Uline & Tschannen-Moran).

Beyond the relationship of school climate and student achievement, the behaviors of building level principals are linked to the climate of school buildings. The climate of a school can be shaped by the actions and behaviors of the building principal (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006). The principal's instructional leadership behaviors affect the instructional climate and characteristics of school organization, both of which are linked to student achievement. Leadership is no longer proposed as having a direct influence on learning outcomes but as having an indirect influence through its impact on school organization and culture (Fullan, 2007). Principals' behaviors, such as effective communication, teacher advocacy, equitable evaluation procedures, and participatory decision-making, are related to school climate.

Mendel, Watson and MacGregor (2002) conducted a study of elementary principal leadership behaviors in comparison to school climate. Their study of leadership styles was based on the responses of elementary-school principals in a southwest Missouri school district. The purpose of their study was to examine the principals' leadership styles to determine the percentages of directive, nondirective, and collaborative styles and how each of those styles were related to a positive school climate. Additionally, the study examined teachers' perceptions of the leadership behavior of their principals as compared with the teachers' perceptions of the school climate. Findings from the study show that the majority of principals practiced a collaborative leadership style, based on the teachers' perceptions. Principals who displayed the collaborative leadership style also obtained higher scores on the positive school climate portion of the survey. This study has important implications for principals in regard to the complexities of power between principals and teachers.

Collaborative leaders routinely seek input from teachers and promote discussions about effective teaching and learning. Teachers work together to plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials. Research indicates that teachers are personally invested in their work when they have a voice and feel as though they are contributing to the overall purpose or mission of the school. Principals with a directive leadership style view their position as one of authority, assuming they know best and elevating their ideas above others (Mendel et al., 2002). This type of leadership limits the power of the teacher and marginalizes their voice in the educational process. Current leadership theories focus on the decentralization of power and responsibility within the school and emphasize the need to share power (Jardine, 2005).

School climate has a substantial impact on the way teachers perceive their school environment and their overall job satisfaction. Consequently, school leaders must understand the critical role that school climate plays in promoting collaborative learning communities, as well as the implications for teacher education and retention.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Since the early 1990s, public schools have been subject to scrutiny by their varied stakeholders, who have been demanding school improvement that has required school principals to lead such efforts within their organizations (Fullan, 2002). Practicing school principals interact with a variety of stakeholders within the organizational structure and must work to balance the competing requests of each. How a principal manages each of the competing needs indirectly influences the stakeholders' perceptions regarding their overall effectiveness (Stronge, 1993; Wallace Foundation, 2013). Consequently, the manner in

which the principal responds may be as a manager, facilitator, disciplinarian, or instructional leader. Cascadden (1998) spoke about a sense of conflict as the principal strives to fulfill his or her leadership role while being presented with a multitude of management responsibilities. Overwhelmed with multiple theories of leadership and management, it is likely that the school principal will continue to face a unsettling amount of role conflict and burden as he or she works to fulfill the perceptions of what they are expected to accomplish and how (Stronge). Consequently, leadership continues to be researched and written about into the twenty-first century.

The review of the related literature included several studies showing a relationship between the leadership of a principal and the morale of teachers. However, much of the research available focuses on the significant relationship between teacher morale and student achievement. The literature also pointed to the positive leadership traits or behaviors that are associated with positive teacher morale. Therefore the review of the related literature implies there is a significant relationship between teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors. Finally, while making positive changes in school climate motivates staff and students to improve, the district-level school culture must also change if school reforms are to be sustained for long-term improvement. Both school climate and morale require significant attention when a principal is new or when major changes are being implemented in the school system.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methods of this study are fully explained in this chapter. The chapter places emphasis on the research design used and the rationale for its use, as well as the assumptions behind the methodology and my role as a researcher. Data collection and analysis procedures, along with the limitations and ethical considerations, are also detailed in this chapter.

This project examined teacher perceptions of principal leadership behaviors and their relationship to teacher morale. Teachers face a myriad of challenges on a daily basis related to the education of students (Liston, Whitcomb & Borko, 2006). Those challenges, coupled with increased federal and state mandates, have created an environment which often leaves teachers feeling overwhelmed and underappreciated (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Evans, 1998; Kinsey, 2006). At the same time, the principal's role has seen significant changes over the past several decades, requiring a certain skill set in order to meet growing teacher and student needs (Fullan, 2002, 2007; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood et al., 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The purpose of this descriptive case study was to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding principal leadership behaviors associated with the morale of teachers in a suburban elementary public school situated in the Midwest. The overarching questions to be answered were:

1. Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors?

Sub-questions:

- Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers describe as being most important?

- What perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as prevalent in schools with high teacher morale?

- Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as needed in schools with low teacher morale?

2. How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors as they relate to the climate of the school?

Sub-questions:

- What are teachers' perceptions about teacher morale and school climate?

- What are teachers' perceptions about leadership behavior and school climate?

My goal was to identify and describe the principals' leadership behaviors that teachers perceive as significant to teacher morale. This knowledge could potentially influence preparation programs for universities responsible for equipping future principals with knowledge and skills needed for school administration as well as change the practices of principals currently in the field.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, broadly defined, refers to research that produces findings without the use of statistical procedures or other quantifiable measures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Where quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers instead look for illumination and

understanding. Qualitative analysis results in a different type of knowledge than does quantitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). Maxwell (2004) submitted that qualitative research recognizes the reality and the importance of its meaning as well as the interpretive nature of one's understanding of that reality. Qualitative research emphasizes the interaction of human participants and consequently is more of a humanistic method when dealing with data and its conclusions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, qualitative research is more precise when reflecting on human perspectives and attitudes (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative researchers argue that meaning is situated within a particular perspective or context. Within the qualitative research design, the researcher acts as a human instrument of data collection, describing and interpreting the events as they occur in their natural setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). According to Yin (2009), when a researcher seeks to understand group and individual experiences, qualitative research can be extremely useful, especially in the field of education.

Teacher morale, which impacts teacher retention, is a critical issue facing education today (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Davis & Wilson, 2000; Evans, 1998). Morale is a term frequently used by teachers but rarely fully understood in connection to motivation, job satisfaction, and overall school climate (NCES, 2004; Perie & Baker, 1997). Likewise, the perceptions of principals' leadership behaviors vary among teachers depending upon factors such as previous experiences, years of experience, level of self-efficacy, and internal drive (Gallmeier, 1992). Therefore, an in-depth examination is required of leadership behaviors perceived by teachers to affect morale.

Case study methodology was the major technique for this qualitative study. Qualitative research in a case study design explores an occurrence using a variety of data in an attempt to reveal and understand the phenomenon in question (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). This approach should be considered when a clearly identifiable case is present along with specified boundaries that allow the researcher the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the case (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Creswell (2009) suggested that case studies are prevalent throughout the field of education, and researchers typically use case studies as the research design when the objective is to explore a program or a process in more depth. This is due to case studies largely being defined by an interest in a specific phenomenon in its real-life context. As the researcher of this study, I chose to utilize the qualitative case study approach to examine school teachers' perceptions of principal leadership behaviors regarding teacher morale.

The qualitative case study is an approach to research that enables exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2013). This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple sides of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Merriam, 2009). There are two key approaches that guide case study methodology; one proposed by Stake (1995) and the second by Yin (2009). Both seek to ensure that the topic of interest is well explored, and that the phenomenon is revealed; however, different methods are used. According to Yin (2009), a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) the researcher wants to cover

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contextual conditions because they are believed to be relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and the context.

While considering the research question, the researcher must also consider what the case is. Determining what the unit of analysis is can be a challenge. The case is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a constrained context" (p. 25). The case is "in effect, your unit of analysis" (p. 25). Creswell (2013) encourages the researcher to answer why the study is being done; what evidence is being sought; what variations can be anticipated and what would constitute supportive or conflicting evidence in the study. Once the researcher has determined that the research question is best answered using a qualitative case study and the case and its boundaries have been determined, then consideration must be given to what type of case study will be conducted (Merriam, 2009). The specific type of case study design is chosen after reflecting upon the overall purpose of the study.

Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) describe a variety of case studies using different terms. Stake identifies case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. Yin differentiates between single, holistic, embedded, and multiple-case studies. Yin (2009) argues that the system can be studied with one of three types of case studies, depending on the purpose: exploratory case studies, explanatory case studies, and descriptive case studies. Exploratory case studies are often used to define the framework of a future study. Fieldwork and data collection are conducted prior to the final designation of study questions and hypotheses within this type of case study (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). Explanatory case studies, on the other hand, seek to define how and or why an experience took place. Their

purpose is to suggest explanations for an experience or to provide generalizations (Yin, 2003). Because these studies sometimes suggest causality, they run the risk of being challenged. Finally, the descriptive case study is used to develop a document that fully illuminates the particulars of an experience (Stake, 1995). These are often used to present answers to a series of questions based on theoretical constructs (Yin, 2003). A prerequisite for researchers who seek to use this approach is the ability to ask good questions, be a good listener, be adaptive, have a strong understanding of the topic being studied, and be objective to the evidence collected (Yin, 2009). If the researcher can accomplish this task, then the intended outcome to create a rich dialogue around the phenomenon may be achieved (Merriam; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

The study fits the elements of a descriptive case study with the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding principal leadership behaviors associated with the morale of teachers within a bounded system comprised of a limited number of participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). This allowed me as the researcher to focus on the problem and gain insight and meaning for those involved. The descriptive case study was chosen for this study for two reasons. First, one of the goals of all case study research is to develop an understanding of the bounded system (Merriam; Yin). The main purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of teachers' perspectives regarding principal leadership behavior and teacher morale. Second, descriptive case studies answer theory-based questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin). The descriptions of principal leadership behaviors developed throughout the research process helped to describe

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teacher understanding of morale as well as their perceptions of how principals may or may not contribute to a positive or negative morale in the school setting.

Reporting a case study can be a difficult task for any researcher due to the complex nature of this approach. It is difficult to report the findings in a concise manner, and yet it is the researcher's role to put a complex phenomenon into a format that is easily understood by the reader and bring about a vivid description of the people and places being reported upon (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The goal of the report is to describe the study so the reader feels as though they have been an active participant in the research and can decide whether or not the study findings could be applied to their own situation (Yin, 2009). It is important that the researcher describe the context within which the phenomenon is occurring as well as the phenomenon itself (Patton).

A central component of the analysis process used in this case study research was within-case analysis. The aim of within-case analysis is to develop an in-depth understanding of the contextual variables which might have bearing on the case (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Within-case analysis allows the researcher the opportunity to be thoroughly immersed in the data within a single case. This process fosters the emergence of meaning through patterns noted in the data. The description of the data leads to interpreted themes which provide a holistic understanding of the case (Creswell). This study focused on the experiences of the six teacher participants. Each participant constituted a single case in this descriptive multiple case study. Each of the single case studies was then engaged in a cross-case analysis. Cross-case analysis enabled me as the researcher to "build abstractions across cases" (Creswell, p. 204).

The results of the study may be used by the principal of the school to gain a better sense of morale from a teacher's point of view. They may then use this insight to address teachers' immediate and long-term needs. The administrator may choose to reflect upon the study and the feedback provided regarding their leadership behaviors and change their current practices. Other administrators may use the results to better understand morale and how their leadership behaviors may potentially affect it.

This study was bounded by data that consisted of in-depth data collection from multiple sources such as observations of participants' behavior, a review of documents, and interviews of participants using semi-structured, open-ended questions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The main approach utilized to gather data in this qualitative case study was semi-structured interviews conducted one-on-one with participants to describe teacher perceptions of principals' leadership behaviors and morale (Patton). Participant interviews were conducted with a total of six teachers. The participants were engaged in a series of open-ended questions to stimulate meaningful dialogue about the topic. Through the triangulation of data, this descriptive case study was an opportunity to gain insight into the phenomenon (Patton). The following section outlines the design of the study, including a description of the site, sampling strategies, data sources, and the data analysis plan.

<center>**Design of the Study**</center>

The selected site was a suburban, elementary public school situated in the Midwest. The school had been identified as high-performing as measured by state standards and has been awarded with "Distinction in Performance" by meeting at least 13 out of 14 Missouri performance standards, including all six MAP standards. The identities of the school and

individuals were eliminated and pseudonyms assigned to ensure anonymity. All participants had experience in their positions and the building; however, age was not a criterion for selection. The sampling techniques described in the next section enabled me to select the participants for this study who provided the most useful information, resulting in thick description.

For this study, I utilized purposeful sampling through the use of criterion sampling (Creswell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling through the use of established criteria was used to select the site and participants. Creswell discussed the importance of selecting the appropriate candidates for any given study. He claimed that the researcher should utilize one of the various types of sampling strategies in order to obtain qualified candidates who will provide the most credible information. Creswell also stressed the importance of acquiring participants who will be willing to share information. The principal of the school met specific criterion, having at least three years of administrative experience and a specialist or doctorate degree. As the researcher, using criterion sampling, I purposefully selected teachers who met the criteria of five or more years of teaching experience, had a master's or specialist degree, currently held or had recently held a leadership role within their building, and taught in the general education setting. Additionally, purposeful sampling strategies were utilized to alleviate concerns regarding small sample size. By selecting a minimum of six participants, the researcher was able to reasonably cover the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002).

The designated study followed the protocol of the Social Sciences Institutional Board (SSIRB). The purpose of the protocol was to provide protection to research participants. I

mailed a letter to the superintendent of a Midwestern suburban school district requesting

permission to conduct research in his school (see Appendix A). Once I received permission

from the superintendent, I contacted the approved building principal and sought to gain

consent (see Appendix B). Upon obtaining principal permission, I requested that he identify

all staff who met the following criteria: (a) five or more years of teaching experience; (b)

have a master's or specialist degree; (c) currently hold or have recently held a leadership role

within their building; and (d) teach in the general education setting. This list was utilized to

recruit potential participants for the proposed study.

All teachers who met the specified criteria were provided with a participant

information letter (see Appendix C), and a Consent for Participation in a Research Study

form (see Appendix D). The participant information letter explained who I was as the

primary investigator and the purpose of the research. After the passing of one week, I placed

a follow-up phone call to all potential participants and developed a list of those who showed

interest in participating in the study. Of the nine participants who met the criteria, six

expressed interest in participating.

Data Collection: Documents, Interviews, and Observations

A trademark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy

which also enhances data credibility (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Potential data sources may

include, but are not limited to: documentation, archival records, interviews, physical artifacts,

direct observations, and participant observation. Unique in comparison to other qualitative

approaches, in case study research, investigators can collect and incorporate quantitative

survey data, which helps to fully illuminate the phenomenon being studied (Patton). In a case

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study, data from these multiple sources are then united in the analysis process. Each data source represents one piece of the puzzle that ultimately contributes to the researcher's understanding of the whole phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton). The connections between the data add strength to the findings as the numerous strands of data are merged together to promote a greater understanding of the case. This process is described as triangulation and can be done through the convergence of data sources, evaluators, perspectives, or methods (Patton). The process of triangulation allows the case study findings or conclusions to be more accurate and convincing when based on multiple sources of data (Patton; Yin). It is through this process that I described teachers' perspectives of leadership behaviors and teacher morale. The following section briefly summarizes the data sources used: documents, interviews, and observations.

Documents. Existing records often provide insights into a setting or group of people. Patton (2002) stated that documents or records can "provide the evaluator with information about many things that cannot be observed…they can reveal goals or decisions that might otherwise be unknown to the evaluator" (p. 293). Guba and Lincoln (1992) define a document as any written or recorded material not prepared for the purposes of the evaluation or at the request of the inquirer. They suggested that documents can be divided into two major categories: public records and personal documents.

There are many different types of documents. Beyond written materials a researcher might utilize pictures, diagrams, photographs, videos, television programs, interactive websites, and software (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Patton, 2002). Documentary techniques are used "to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources,

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most commonly written documents, whether in the private or public domain" (Payne &

Payne, 2004, p. 60). Personal documents can include individuals' letters, diaries, notes,

drafts, files, and books. Private documents include those that are produced by private

organizations for internal purposes such as minutes of meetings, personnel records, budgets

and memos (Bogdan & Biklen). Public documents include those that are produced for public

consumption, such as annual reports, media statements or articles in newspapers (Payne &

Payne).

Documents are a valuable source of information and provide visible facts that save

the researcher from unfounded conclusions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Author John Scott

(1990) identified four criteria to solve the methodological problems associated with the use

of documentary data. First, he recommended that the researcher look for authenticity, seeking

evidence that the document is genuine and of unquestionable origin. Next he encourages the

researcher to examine the documents for credibility to ensure the evidence is free from error

and distortion. Additionally, he recommended that the researcher determine if the

documental data is typical or representative of the norm. Finally, the researcher should look

for meaning when seeking to establish that the evidence is clear and comprehensible.

For the purposes of this study, I coded several documents categorized as official,

internal documents. The documents selected were provided to me by the principal of the

study site. Documents were examined utilizing Scott's (1990) framework in an attempt to

determine authenticity, credibility, and clarity.

Interviews. Qualitative researchers seek to describe the meanings of central themes

within a studied topic (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Interviews are of interest for

researchers in the overall qualitative research design. Interviews provide in-depth

information pertaining to the participants' experiences and viewpoints on a particular topic

(Creswell, 2013). Patton says that "qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that

the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 341).

Interviews satisfy the researcher's need to obtain factual information in order to understand

the meaning of what participants are saying (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Interviews can be

coupled with other information to provide the researcher with a well-rounded collection of

data for analysis (Patton).

Maxwell (2013) stated, "interviews can provide additional information missed during

observations and can be used to check the accuracy of the observation" (p. 94). Accordingly,

interviews provide a source for data triangulation and add validity to one's research

(Maxwell; Patton, 2002). Interviewing is an efficient and valid way to capture and

understand a participant's unique perspective; it allows the researcher to delve deep into the

studied phenomena. Patton (2002) posits,

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly
> observe…We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions…We cannot observe
> how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in
> the world. (pp. 340-341)

According to Lofland and Lofland (1995), an in-depth interview does not follow a

rigid form. This allows participants to offer open responses; it also is designed to bring about

rich, detailed information for analysis. The goal of most qualitative studies is to gather an

accurate understanding of experiences, and open-ended interview questions seem to produce

the best results toward this goal. Patton (2002) contends that the purpose of asking open-

ended interview questions is to gather and understand the perspectives of other people

without influencing their responses through pre-selected questions. The value of the open-ended question to the researcher is the distinct and unique response of each participant (Lofland & Lofland; Maxwell; Patton).

The interview process utilized in this study was a semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interview method, which permitted the interviewees and the researcher the opportunity to expand and clarify information shared (Creswell, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008; Patton, 2002). An interview guide was created to ensure that the same general areas of information were collected from each interviewee. The interview guide provided more focus than the conversational approach but still allowed for some degree of freedom and adaptability in obtaining information from the interviewee (Merriam, 2009; Patton). As Patton recommended, the prepared interview guide listed questions to be explored and suggested probes for follow-up when responses invited further examination. Using an interview guide helped to keep interviews focused and somewhat structured.

Prior to the scheduled interviews, a letter was mailed to the participants outlining the purpose of the study, risks, benefits, information to be collected, and how the data would be used (see Appendix E) (Patton, 2002). It explained that their participation was voluntary and that confidentiality would be ensured. Information was also provided regarding the process of the interviews, and any questions from the interviewees about the process were addressed prior to beginning each interview. Each participant was offered the opportunity to meet at a convenient location on school grounds of their choosing. Interviews were held during the school day, and all six interviews were conducted over a two-week period. Interviews lasted approximately thirty to forty minutes each. Each interviewee participated in a minimum of

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one interview. Interviews were digitally recorded using the Quick Voice Pro iPad app, and each of these were transcribed verbatim by listening to a phrase and then typing that phrase into a Word document, making note of every filler word, restart, and completed thought. Participants were then provided transcripts of their interviews for review and revision if needed to clarify their positions. The semi-structured, one-on-one questions helped to acquire a teacher's perception of morale and effective principal leadership behaviors in comparison to that of other teachers. The interview guide contained ten initial questions regarding leadership behaviors and morale. The full interview guide for teacher participants is included in Appendix E. The following section highlights how observations were conducted during the study.

Observations. Observation, collecting data by watching attentively, is a fundamental practice in qualitative research. Patton (2002) outlines the purpose of observational data as the need to describe the setting, activities, participants, and the perceived meaning from the participants. As the observer, the researcher clearly defines the options regarding their involvement and how that may be perceived by the participants of the study.

Angrosino (2005) separated qualitative observation into three basic types. Participant observation involves a researcher interacting with and often establishing significant rapport with research participants, joining them in their everyday lives. Reactive observation takes place in controlled settings, such as experiments, with participants being aware of being observed but interacting only minimally with the observer. Unobtrusive or nonreactive observation is conducted without the awareness of those being observed. According to Brayboy and Deyhle (2000), the researcher must be cognizant of how their presence impacts

the data collected, stressing the need to be aware of how "those we study view us as well as how we view them" (p. 163). The postion of the researcher is discussed as either "insider" or "outsider" as it relates to their relationship with the participants.

For the purposes of this study, I assumed the role of an onlooker observer with an outsider perspective (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2002). The purpose of my observations was to understand teacher perceptions of principal leadership behaviors and to triangulate my emerging findings. The observations occurred in the participants' natural setting and included teachers and the principal interacting during regularly scheduled meetings. Decisions regarding what to observe were determined by the conceptual framework and the research questions of particular interest to this research topic: (a) the description of the setting/physical environment, (b) description of the school climate/environment, (c) description of principal leadership behaviors, (d) observation of informal interactions among teachers and the principal, (e) observation of nonverbal communication, and (f) comments regarding what did not happen (Patton, 2002).

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) proposed that after each observation the researcher find a quiet place where they can chronologically and methodically record their observations, with the key being their attention to detail. Similarly, Patton (2002) emphasizes the importance of writing the conversations contained in observations in a prompt manner. These preliminary notes generally form an outline for when the researcher sits down at the end of the day to type out complete notes. Bogdan and Biklen suggested that the researcher record, "ideas, strategies, reflections, and hunches, as well as note patterns that emerge" within a given set of field notes (p. 118). During the observation, I attempted to record how the teachers reacted

to and interacted with the principal during work sessions, specifically noting leadership behaviors found in the literature that support and encourage teachers in the workplace. These leadership behaviors and other factors that affect morale were the focus of my observations and were used to develop an observation guide for the study. The full observation protocol can be found in Appendix F.

Once the initial data were collected, I followed preliminary techniques for analysis as suggested by Grbich (2013). Based on her suggestions, I kept a journal to conduct free write, a technique used to avoid assumptions and generate topics based on the chunks of data collected. Due to the nature of my topic, perceived principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale, I compared the interviews with my own experiences before critiquing the data to seek new perspectives.

Documents, interviews, and observations have been described as the three primary data sources for this study. The following section summarizes the data analysis procedures.

Data Analysis Procedures

The major technique used in this research was case study. As in any other qualitative study, the data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. Yin (2009) described the following techniques for analysis: pattern matching, linking data to propositions, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis. In contrast, Stake (1995) described categorical aggregation and direct interpretation as types of analysis.

Patton (2002) identified the major challenge of qualitative analysis as making sense of the all the data collected. One must be able to sift through an enormous amount of information, reducing it to important codes, looking for patterns to identify as themes in the

data. According to Schlechty and Noblit (1982), researchers can use interpretation to do one of the following: "make the obvious obvious, make the obvious dubious, make the hidden obvious" (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 480). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the interpretation of data as lessons learned. The interpretation of data can be based on the researcher's insight, intuition, or a combination of their personal views in contrast with a social science idea (Creswell, 2013).

This qualitative study used an enumerative and thematic coding process in order to pinpoint, examine, and record patterns or themes within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question. The researcher seeks to answer the research questions by describing the case and representing and interpreting the larger meaning of the data (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Creswell (2013) proposed that qualitative researchers must categorize that data into broad units by combining multiple codes together to form a common idea or theme.

Miles and Huberman (1994) posit that the process of coding is analysis. They describe codes as "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning" and discuss these codes as descriptive and interpretive, each providing a deeper understanding of the data (Miles & Huberman, p. 56). As the researcher, I began the process by defining simple descriptive codes, which were then developed into interpretative codes and refined as those connections with the data revealed a relationship between perceived principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale. A code book was developed with defined themes based on the conceptual framework and research questions. The interview data were coded by marking phrases or

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quotes that represent similar information with the same abbreviated codes. This coding process was utilized to analyze the documents, interview transcripts, and observations of participants. Through the exploration and triangulation of these various data sources, predominant themes were developed.

The development of a code book for each of the three sources of data helped to develop themes. I utilized within-case analysis to identify the presence of key elements in each case and then drew comparisons across each of the cases. An in-depth understanding of each single case allowed me to provide a detailed description of each case and the patterns and themes that emerged from each one (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Beyond the understanding of each individual participant and their experiences, I employed the cross-case analysis process which allowed me to search for patterns and themes consistent among each of the cases. Finally, I used this thick concrete descriptions to understand the phenomenon studied and drew interpretations about meaning and significance of the emerged themes (Patton, 2002). This data analysis process allowed me to ground my research in my personal experiences and feelings around the topic of the study. The following section describes the limitations and ethical considerations of this study.

<div align="center">

Limitations including Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations

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For the purpose of this study, I identified my role as a building principal and my beliefs regarding teacher morale as possible biases. Prior to my current role as an administrator, I worked with a variety of principals whom I viewed as either effective or ineffective. I observed behaviors from both types of leaders which I believe to have affected staff morale, although because of my own internal drive for student success and personal

satisfaction in the workplace, I was not personally affected. Individuals who possessed certain leadership qualities, such as supportive, approachable, transparent and organized, seemingly led our building to make data-driven decisions through collaborative conversations; whereas others were notably absent from the classroom, choosing to ignore dysfunctional staff members or failing to understand and respond to critical issues that teachers were facing in the classroom and for which they needed support.

Mindful of my own bias, I endeavored to diminish any body language or responses to contributors that might have been considered reactionary (Patton, 2002). Reflexivity is an ethical issue in regard to participants and an accountability issue in terms of quality. I increased my level of sensitivity to informants' concerns or comments through reflexive journaling and discussion with my professional colleagues regarding my thoughts and beliefs about effective leadership behaviors and teacher morale (Grbich, 2013). Additionally, I utilized open-ended questions to avoid prompting or leading of participant answers. Participants were also given the opportunity to review their transcriptions to review for accuracy of their thoughts (Patton).

A triangulation of different data sources was utilized in an effort to increase the validity of my study and allow me to overcome any intrinsic bias I might have brought to the study. Based on Patton's (2002) work, I utilized the following while triangulating data sources: (a) comparing observations with interviews; (b) looking for repetitive responses regarding a given topic; (c) comparing the varied perspectives of participants; and (d) comparing analyzed documents with interviews and observations.

Quantitative and qualitative researchers differ in the following four areas:

(a) assumptions about the world; (b) purpose (quantitative researchers seek to explain the causes of change and their reasons through data unlike qualitative researchers, who are more concerned with understanding what is happening as viewed by the participants); (c) approach, with or without variables and control; and (d) the researcher's role as either detached or immersed (Patton, 2002). Maxwell (2013) claimed:

> Qualitative research is not primarily concerned with eliminating variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study (which may be either positive or negative) and avoiding the negative consequences. Explaining your possible biases and how you will deal with these is a key task of your research proposal. (p. 108)

Within qualitative research, one seeks to better understand the phenomena through the utilization of an emergent design and is not concerned with generalizability. On the contrary, quantitative research seeks to bind participant responses through rigid predetermined categories, eliminating bias and encouraging replication (Patton, 2002). As a novice researcher seeking to better understand the area of study, I tried to eliminate any bias through careful examination of my personal perceptions of the topic through systematic data collections procedures and triangulation of multiple data sources. This was done in an effort to produce trustworthy, authentic, and balanced qualitative data.

Validity and Reliability

There are several basic key elements to the case study design that can be integrated to enhance overall study quality or trustworthiness. Researchers using this method need to ensure that enough detail is provided so that readers can assess credibility of the work. As a basic foundation to achieve this, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that researchers have a

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responsibility to ensure that: (a) the case study research question is clearly written, including a written proposal; (b) case study design is appropriate for the research question; (c) purposeful sampling strategies appropriate for case study have been applied; (d) data are collected and managed systematically; and (e) the data are analyzed correctly.

Equally important is the researcher's ability to establish validity and reliability in their study. This can be accomplished through the use of rich, descriptive data which comes through long-term intensive involvement on the researcher's part (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). Due to the nature of this research project, beginning with a review of documents followed by observations and interviews, my involvement took place during the course of one month during the school year. Creswell (2013) recommended that once the data are collected, the researcher should solicit feedback from the participants regarding the conclusions of the study. This process is also referred to as member-checking and assisted me as I sought to validate the results of the study.

Validity, as described above, refers to whether the findings truthfully reflect the situation and are supported by the evidence. Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by examining a research question from multiple perspectives. A common misconception is that the goal of triangulation is to arrive at consistency across data sources or approaches, when in fact, inconsistencies may occur and should be tested for by utilizing varied approaches to data collection (Patton, 2002). Any inconsistencies discovered should not be seen as weakening the evidence, but should be perceived as a chance to reveal deeper meaning in the data.

Ethical Considerations

The Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) was published in the United States to provide a concise account of the mandate for review of research involving human research participants. Regulations and guidelines concerning the use of human research participants in the U.S. are based on the following fundamental components: respect for persons, benefice, and justice. The first idea, respect for persons, alludes to the notion that all participants must understand and voluntarily agree to participate once the research goals have been clearly articulated. Benefice refers to the researcher's responsibility to consider all risks associated with participation and seek to minimize any harm while maximizing any benefits that may occur as a result of participation. Finally, justice suggests that the researcher should determine participants based on a set of fair procedures and outcomes rather than convenience (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research)

In addition to the Belmont report, UMKC's Institutional Board of Review and concepts reviewed and assessed within the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) exam guided my actions related to my research study. Obtaining written consent from participants signified that not only were they willing to participate in the study but they were aware of the research purpose, procedures, goals, risks, and possible benefits as outlined in the written summary. Additionally, their participation was voluntary and should they have chosen to no longer participate, they were welcome to do so free of judgment. The ethical consideration of participants and their involvement sought to ensure privacy and confidentiality, and ultimately to develop positive relationships that would allow me as the

researcher to foster trust and confidence as it related to my intended research. All letters of consent, notes, or communication of any kind were stored on a university computer or campus central location to ensure proper data security and confidentiality measures were taken. This data will be saved for seven years after the completion of the research. Participants were assigned pseudonyms from the beginning, and actual names were not used in any part of the research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of principal leadership behaviors and to describe how those behaviors related to the level of teacher morale. The single unit of analysis for this study made the study a holistic multiple case study. The unit of analysis for this study was the principal leadership behaviors which impact morale as described by teachers in a suburban Midwestern public elementary school. Each participant served as a single case in this holistic multiple case study. The unit of analysis combined with the research questions provided the structure for the analysis of the research findings.

A qualitative descriptive case study approach is recommended for studies where the researcher attempts to describe the perception of participants (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). Therefore, the researcher used a qualitative case study design to address the problem of low teacher morale. Specifically, I sought to understand the principal leadership behaviors perceived by teachers to influence morale. The qualitative study was guided by the following two primary questions:

- Question 1. Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors?

- Question 2. How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors as they relate to the climate of the school?

I approached my study with an interest in how teachers perceive morale related to their principal's leadership behavior. As a practicing principal who was recently asked to

make a purposeful move to a building with low morale, I believe that teacher perceptions of leadership behaviors and morale are of great importance to my daily work. I began this study because as a building leader I have my own perceptions of how I influence morale. However, this study would allow me to draw some conclusions based on teacher perceptions. Merriam (2009) states that a qualitative case study "searches for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and the end product being richly descriptive" (p. 39). Qualitative research allows for a focus on the wholeness of experience, a search of essences of experiences, and viewing of experience and behavior as an integrated and inseparable relationship (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Utilization of this research design allowed me the opportunity to use teacher descriptions to form a universal understanding of how principal leadership behaviors influence morale. This insight can be used to address teachers' immediate and long term needs related to job satisfaction.

Setting and Participants

Purposeful sampling was utilized to conduct this study. Purposeful sampling, according to Patton (2002), is the selection of information-rich cases for in-depth study. The site selected was a suburban, public elementary school situated in the Midwest. The school studied was identified as high-performing as measured by state standards and had been awarded by the state the "distinction in performance" title. According to data retrieved from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website, the demographic data of the studied site is comprised primarily of white students with the students of color population comprising 36.6% of the total student enrollment. The percentage of students

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qualifying for free and reduced lunch during the 2013-2014 school year was 34.5%. Additionally, students who qualify for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services was reported to be 15% of the total student population (DESE, 2013).

While it wasn't a requirement for selection, the building selected was newly constructed and opened at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. Teachers within the district applied and interviewed before being selected to transfer to the new school. The teaching staff is comprised of faculty who came from four other school sites located within the district. During the interview process the teacher participants frequently cited their excitement to be a part of this new school.

Sampling through the use of established criteria was utilized to select the site and participants. Creswell (2013) discussed the importance of selecting the appropriate candidates for interviews. He claimed that the researcher should utilize one of the various types of sampling strategies in order to obtain qualified candidates who will provide the most credible information to the study. Creswell also suggested the importance of acquiring participants who would be willing to share information. The sample for this study involved six regular education classroom teachers. The teachers were selected from the same site and were selected using specific criterion established prior to the start of the study. The research design purposefully selected six teachers who met the criteria of five or more years of experience, had a master's degree, and either had held or currently held a leadership role within the building. Initially nine teachers met the criteria; however, only six responded and chose to participate. All six teacher participants were white females and taught students in a traditional elementary school setting; grades kindergarten, first, second, third and fourth were

represented. Furthermore, the white, male principal of the school met specific criterion, having at least three years of administrative experience and an advanced degree. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005) the credibility of findings is enhanced when interviewing individuals who reflect a variety of perspectives and have firsthand knowledge of the research problem.

Data Sources

Documents, observations, and participant interviews were used to collect data. Using multiple sources of evidence increased the breadth and depth of data collection, which assisted in bringing richness to the data in an apex of understanding. The triangulation of multiple data sources contributed to the validity of this research (Yin, 2009). In addition to multiple data sources, note taking and member checking were also used to give credibility to the study. Grbich (2013) suggests that the experiences and perceptions of the researcher be considered to avoid bias and assumptions. A reflective journal was utilized that provided an opportunity for critical thinking and allowed me to document experiences, questions, thoughts, ideas and conclusions. The reflective journal also allowed me as the researcher to compare my thoughts to what was revealed in the data.

I spent three months conducting and analyzing field work from February through April of 2014. During this time I was able to develop a thick, rich description which led to the development and explanation of the themes that emerged during data analysis (Merriam, 2009).

Documents

For the purposes of this study I chose to code several documents categorized as official documents. While documents can be overwhelming they can provide the researcher with insight into that which they are studying. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described internal documents as communications shared among a group which might provide "clues about leadership style and potential insights about what organizational members value" (p. 137). After describing my research purpose to the principal, I suggested several types of documents that might be helpful to my study. The principal provided me with one document, while the second one was obtained from the school website. Both documents were used as part of the study. I introduced and reviewed the documents as they presented themselves in chronological order. The first document was a student handbook provided to teachers and parents at the beginning of the school year. The final item was an agenda used to guide discussion during a building leadership meeting.

The theme of the principal's role was evident throughout the coding of the student handbook. For this study a principal is described as an individual who is multi-faceted, juggling the role of school manager, instructional leader, and the leader of school reform (Bolden et al., 2003; Fullan, 2007; Usdan et al., 2000). The interpretive code of principal behaviors emerged during the coding of the student handbook, and descriptors such as communication and student safety/discipline contributed to the idea of the principal.

Throughout the discussion of the literature the role of the principal has evolved over time to include leadership behaviors as well as management style (Bolden et al., 2003; Usdan et all, 2000). Principals are responsible for building and maintaining positive communication

with the public. While coding the student handbook communication was evident. In fact the

introduction of the document stated:

> The Elementary Parent/Student Handbook is an important tool for both you and your
> child. It is important that you take the time to sit down with our elementary-school
> child and review the contents of this handbook, so both you and your child
> understand the expectations and the philosophy of the school. If you or your child has
> a question regarding the content of the handbook, feel free to contact the school.

The school's vision and mission assisted in providing communication to students and parents

and were prominently displayed:

> Mission: Through the expertise of a motivated staff, our school provides a meaningful
> education to prepare each student for success in life.
> Vision: Building Successful Futures- Each Student- Every Day

Subsequent section headings included topics related to student development, general

information and practices, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), district assessments, as

well as special programs.

Details captured in my reflective journal supported the notion that the principal's role

includes that of communication:

> Each morning the building principal greeted the staff and student body during his
> morning announcements. He has taken the time to welcome all substitutes in the
> building by calling them by name and thanking them for supporting student learning
> that day. Likewise, he recognized staff and student birthdays by reading a list of those
> who were celebrating that day. Finally, he reminded students of the behavioral
> expectations when reciting the school pledge.

Student discipline and safety resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of

the principal's role collected in the documents. A large part of any school principal's job is

to handle student discipline. It is important to make sure that students and parents know what

the principal is expecting when it comes to student behavior. Once they understand how the

principal will handle misbehavior, then the principal's job becomes easier. The majority of

student discipline issues come directly from teacher referrals. A good principal will listen to all sides of an issue without jumping to conclusions, collecting as much evidence as possible. An effective principal documents discipline issues, makes fair decisions, and informs parents when necessary (Bolden et al., 2003). The coded student handbook specifically outlined the conduct and disciplinary procedures by stating:

> It is necessary for students to be well-behaved in school and comply with all policies, rules and regulations. Students are to respect and obey all persons in authority and be ready to accept the consequences of their own actions. Self-discipline of all students is our goal. Parents have a key role in the area of student discipline.

The second document coded was an agenda for a building leadership committee meeting. Through the activity of coding the building leadership meeting agenda two major themes were developed. Teacher morale and the role of the principal were revealed as the documents were explored. The first theme of teacher morale can be defined by Bentley and Rempel (1980) as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (p. 2). Teacher morale can have the opportunity to excel within a healthy school environment, leaving teachers to feel good about each other and to feel a sense of accomplishment from their jobs (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). The building leadership meeting agenda contributed to teacher morale through an emphasis on administrative leadership, the interpretive code used to describe factors that contribute to the theme of teacher morale. Descriptors such as providing input, shared leadership and decision making and collaboration were highlighted in the data found in the collected document.

The principal specifically utilized the FACES format which created five task groups who were charged with developing a building school improvement plan which includes a

goal specific to F- facilities, A-academics, C-climate, E-employees, and S-safety. The

principal identified the purpose of FACES as involvement of all staff members in one of the

five capacities, therefore when these groups come together, synergy occurs, leading to an

optimal environment for students, staff, and community. Details from my reflective journal

provided insight into the interpreted theme:

> The FACES format specifically addressed teacher workload by involving all staff
> members, and required that the task force groups collaborate and communicate with
> one another in order to achieve their identified goals.

The role of the principal emerged as the second theme within the agenda document.

The building leadership meeting agenda contributed to the role of the principal through an

emphasis on principal behaviors, the interpretive code used to describe behaviors that

contribute to the theme of principal role. Descriptors such as leader as a problem solver,

empowerment, decision-making, and input were highlighted in the data found in the collected

document.

Many principals find it difficult to share the decision-making process with others.

However, there is so much that has to be done within the school setting, that it is critical for

the school principal to delegate some duties as necessary (Usdan et al., 2000). An effective

school principal simply does not have the time or skills to do everything that needs done.

They must rely on other people to assist them with getting things done and trust that they are

going to do the job well (Fullan, 2007). Principals must seek to develop specific structures

which allows staff to provide input as well as make decisions related to school operations.

The agenda for the leadership team meeting revealed that the principal structured the meeting

in such a way that he could empower staff to be a part of the solution regarding building

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needs. Staff members were assigned to one of the five FACES areas. Agenda topics were structured in such a way that staff members could collaborate and problem solve in those five areas. The mission of the school district was noted on each of the documents. Empowering others and getting everyone involved was documented through the use of the FACES model and team problem solving time.

As a building principal, I too have created handbooks and agendas similar to those coded. I had to deliberately focus on the written words and their intended meaning without imposing my own thinking and purpose for creating such documents. For example, when looking at the student handbook created, I found it be heavily coded as communication with a minimal emphasis on setting a vision. However, without discussing the intent of the handbook and without fully understanding its purpose or intended use, it was difficult to assign codes regarding the emphasis of the content on each page. Beyond the content provided, I suspect that it is equally as important for principals to consider how they use these documents once they have been created.

Observations

In the overall qualitative research design, observations are of interest to researchers. Patton (2002) suggested that the purpose of observational data is to describe the setting, activities, participants and the perceived meaning from the participants. He examined the role of the researcher as the observer and clearly defined the varied options regarding their involvement and how that may be perceived by the participants of the study.

For the purposes of this study, I assumed the role of an onlooker observer with an outsider perspective. The purpose of my observations was to understand teacher perceptions

of principal leadership behaviors and to triangulate my emerging findings. Since I was examining the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale, I provided participants with full disclosure regarding my presence and purpose in their school. These observations occurred in the participants' natural setting, which included teachers and the principal interacting during two regularly scheduled 45-minute sessions.

I requested to observe a meeting in which the principal was interacting with teachers. The principal was not aware of the six teacher participants, therefore one observation was a smaller portion of the certified (degreed) staff, while the second observation included all certified staff. Both observations were arranged by the principal. During the observations, I sought to record how the teachers reacted to and interacted with the principal and other teachers; specifically noting leadership behaviors found in the literature that support and encourage teachers in the workplace. These leadership behaviors and other factors that impact morale were the focus of my observations and were used to develop an observation guide for the study. The observation protocol is shown in Appendix F.

During the first observation, I observed a building leadership meeting in which the principal facilitated discussion regarding several agenda items. The meeting included 15 staff members. The observation occurred over the course of a 45-minute period and was conducted in the school's conference room. The second observation took place in the school library and was considered a weekly faculty meeting. However, the structure of the meeting allowed staff members to work in small groups. The meeting included all certified staff Through the activity of coding the observations I found two predominant themes. The two major themes developed throughout the observations were teacher morale and leadership.

Teacher Morale. The theme of teacher morale was evident throughout my observations. For this study morale was defined as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (Bentley & Rempel, 1980, p. 2). Teacher satisfaction was the interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered during observations and tied to the theme of teacher morale. Teacher satisfaction contained descriptive codes found in several themes across multiple data sources. Descriptors such as recognition, relationships, collegiality, and atmosphere contributed to the idea of teacher satisfaction and emerged during the observations.

Recognition is an important factor to the overall satisfaction of teachers in the workplace. The literature suggested that teachers need to feel valued by their principals through recognition of their contributions to the overall effectiveness of the school (New Teacher Project, 2013; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995). Recognition for teachers builds off of some of the well-known extrinsic and intrinsic motivational theories (Maslow, 1943; McGregor, 1960). Providing recognition not only highlights teachers who are working to improve student-learning outcomes, but also fosters pride and support among the staff and students (Whitaker, Whitaker & Lumpa, 2000).

During my observations recognition was given to several staff members. During the leadership meeting the principal highlighted the skill of the secretary when referring to the school budget. He suggested that her ability to create and maintain the school budget led to acknowledgement by the school superintendent. The secretary's budget documents and procedures served as an example to other building principals and secretaries in the district. Additionally, the principal praised the efforts of the assistant principal when reviewing the

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student survey results on safety and school climate. He suggested that the student survey questions related to school safety and their high response rate was directly correlated to the assistant principal's efforts in this area. He described how she had taken on this task and coordinated monthly drills in which students practiced what to do in the event of an emergency.

Relationships was a second descriptor which led to the development of the teacher's satisfaction within the theme of teacher morale. Positive relationships among employees was fostered within the school and appeared to contribute to a well-developed sense of community (Ellenburg, 1972). The faculty meeting began with the principal giving the staff a "hard time" about losing to students in a school wide competition, in which he was forced to wear a rival team jersey. The following observation field notes illuminates the importance of relationships in the satisfaction of teachers:

> Staff members had snuck into his office the evening prior and redecorated using rival regalia. He jokingly told the staff that someone was going to pay and he should have been more suspicious when the secretary was asking him about his departure time last night. He continued by telling them he was going to get a big trash bag and clean it all out at the end of the day. Nearly all staff members were wearing some type of clothing which supported his rival team. Only one staff member was wearing the principal's team of choice and he joked that she was his favorite staff member. He laughed, saying every time he turned around he was finding some new decoration that added to the collection.

Evidence gathered during the observations would indicate that factors known to impact teacher morale positively are in place. However, considering that only two observations were done it's hard to determine if the evidence gathered sufficiently summarizes behaviors typical of a leadership or faculty meeting. Likewise, the evidence gathered could potentially support data collected during the interview process which

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suggested that morale is high. All interactions were focused and collegial but exuded a sense of family atmosphere. Additionally, questions of a personal nature were asked by the principal during the observations. He seemed to have a genuine concern and interests in the lives of the teachers.

Leadership. The second and final theme identified examined leadership and the various leadership styles observed. For the purposes of this study, leadership is defined as a person who guides or leads the group. Sustainable leadership was the interpretive code that resonated in the data gathered that I collected from the observations. Empowerment, collaboration, and shared decision-making were descriptors that contributed to the idea of sustainable leadership.

A principal who displays sustainable leadership can be described as one who empowers other people in the organization (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Sustainable leadership behaviors were demonstrated by the principal as he offered to model or teach staff how to navigate their building scorecard during a leadership meeting. The building scorecard was comprised of multiple data points related to school effectiveness and a score which measured their current status toward meeting those points. Details captured in my reflective journal highlight this type of sustainable leadership:

> The principal briefly described each of areas as staff were already familiar with the scorecard itself. He facilitated the conversation and equipped staff members to take the data back to their grade level teams for explanation and discussion. The group would then gather input from their team and bring it back to the principal during a follow-up leadership meeting.

While the principal did not directly state his purpose, I believe he sought to support and develop teacher leadership skills in order to empower them as teacher leaders. Through

this process the principal sought to provide information and gather input from staff members. Teachers displayed positive body language when reviewing student the data on the scorecard. I suspect that my observation of teacher body language would support the notion that the teachers were not threatened by areas in which lower scores were present and discussed. The data collected during the observations seemed to support the idea that teachers' morale was impacted by the principal leadership behaviors (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Body language and interactions between the principal and teachers seemed to suggest that the principal had established positive relationships with the staff as well as valued the staff's input on important topics.

The review of literature revealed that teachers often feel isolated and need to be provided with opportunities to communicate and interact with others (Cook, 1979). Teachers' need to provide vital input and to be recognized and valued as an important part of the decision making process (Seyfarth, 2008). During the building leadership meeting teachers were not required to raise their hand, but spoke freely in conversation style. Specifically, teachers seemed to make eye contact, nod in agreement, and openly discuss topics when appropriate. However, only eight of the fifteen members chose to speak or provide input. Without knowing the role that each team member played, I wondered about why the other half did not speak. The agenda was full, and the principal was speaking quickly about each topic. This left me to wonder if it would have been more efficient to gather feedback from the staff in another format. Additionally, principals can model effective instructional strategies during meetings. This would have been an excellent opportunity to

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use a round-robin strategy, which would have allowed the participants around the table to all share their thoughts on the school-wide event by taking turns in order.

Collaboration and shared decision-making were two descriptors that were tightly connected with the observation data collected during a FACES faculty meeting. Staff members were each assigned to one of five groups and spent the majority of a 45-minute work session discussing their team's goals and action steps. For example, the group focused on climate reviewed survey data collected and identified areas of need based on staff feedback. They discussed several options, there budgetary implications and space or other resources needed to complete that task. The group engaged in deep conversation and had moments during which they did not agree with one another. They challenged one another's thinking and worked to find agreement about the direction the group should take. While most people at the table were sharing their thoughts, this was another opportunity where having a specific structure in place to develop consensus would have been helpful. Two individuals seemed to have the "loudest voice" at the table. While there was an established leader of the group, she did not dominate the conversation but she also didn't ensure that everyone had an opportunity to share.

Details from my observation field notes provided insight into the interpreted theme:

> The principal reminded staff to record their goals and action steps in the shared google doc. He explained that this would be log of all ideas, used to communicate with other team members who were present. He shared with me that the purpose of the FACES team was helping to "build continuous improvement." Group norms were not posted in the meeting space. However, during the observations it should be noted that staff were 1) prompt, polite, prepared, and professional; 2) focused on the task; and 3) shared the workload.

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The principal engaged teachers in a shared decision-making process where he worked to support their needs and solicit input. Likewise, the principal utilized a format that required everyone to contribute to the discussions and be held accountable for their professional growth. This was done by structuring the faculty meeting in such a way that all staff were part of a small team focused on an area related to building level improvement. The energy of the room intensified when teachers were given the opportunity to collaborate in small groups. Teachers tone and body language seemed to radiate positive feelings regarding this activity.

Interviews

A final source of data was utilized as I conducted in-depth interviews with each of the six identified teachers. These interviews provided an opportunity to learn about the experiences of teachers in relation to principal leadership behaviors as well as their perceptions of morale. I created an interview guide to ensure that the same general areas of information were collected from each interviewee. This provided more focus than the conversational approach but still allowed for some degree of freedom and adaptability in obtaining the information from the interviewee (Patton, 2002). The data collected from each individual interview constituted a single case.

Prior to the scheduled interviews, an informational letter was provided to the participants outlining the purpose of the study, risks, benefits, information to be collected, and how the data would be used. It was explained that their participation was voluntary and that confidentiality would be ensured. Information was also provided regarding the process of the interviews, and any questions from the interviewees about the process were addressed prior to beginning each interview. Each participant was offered the opportunity to meet at a

convenient site of their choosing for the interview, and each participant elected to conduct their interview on site either in classroom space or in the conference room located in the main office. Interviews were conducted one-on-one with the participants over the course of two weeks, and each one lasted approximately 25 to 40 minutes. Interviews were digitally recorded using the QuickVoice Pro iPad app and were each transcribed verbatim by listening to a phrase and then typing that phrase into a Word document making note of every filler, restart, as well as completed thought. Each recorded interview was transcribed and provided to the interviewee to be reviewed for accuracy and revision if necessary. After accuracy was checked, the completed transcripts were coded. The semi-structured, one-on-one questions helped to acquire a teacher's perception of morale and effective principal leadership behaviors. The interview guide contained ten initial questions regarding leadership behaviors and morale based on the perceptions of each participant. The full interview guide for each participant is included in Appendix E.

Quotes from individual participants were used as narrative within the data analysis. The quotes provided clarification and real-life examples of the answers to the interview questions. The quotes also provided rich detail that aided in describing teacher perceptions. Finally, the quotes assisted in providing credibility to the research by giving specific supporting examples of the participants' perceptions. All six participants were given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts to confirm that the information was reflective of their experiences and feelings regarding leadership behaviors and morale. Conducting member checks during the interview process increased the credibility and validity of the study.

The interviews themselves were informative, and the data revealed concurred with what I had heard about the school's principal. While I did not personally know any of the participants, I was aware of the positive reputation the principal has within his district. Although this study was not about the principal at the selected school, many of the teachers chose to respond using examples from their experiences with him as a leader. Throughout the study I learned that this principal has a very high satisfaction rating with teachers on an end-of-year survey. Due to his well-liked status and the uniqueness of their recent opening, I perceive the teachers in this building to have high morale. Possibly as a result of their high morale, they appeared to be eager to help me with this study. In order to develop a strong rapport with them, I spent time interacting with the staff when I visited for a scheduled observation or interview. Staff members were welcoming, spoke openly with me, and appeared relaxed as we discussed the topic of morale and leadership behavior. In fact, each time I returned to the building I was warmly welcomed by these staff members, and they often checked in on me to see how I was progressing with my research.

Data Analysis

The first step in the data analysis process was to organize the data to establish a distinctive connection between the data and each research question. Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss descriptive and interpretive codes, each providing a deeper understanding of the data. Simple descriptive codes were developed into interpretive codes and refined as I became more familiar with the data revealed in the study. A code book was developed with defined themes based on the conceptual framework and research questions. The data sources were coded by marking phrases or quotes that represented similar information with the same

abbreviated codes. These common categories eventually became themes used to make meaning of the data. This coding process was utilized to analyze the documents, interview transcripts, and observations of participants. Through the exploration and triangulation of these various data sources, dominant themes were developed and used to answer the research questions.

Within-case Analysis

I approached this research to better understand the role of the principal and the leadership behaviors necessary to impact teacher morale positively. I incorporated spoken narrative to support my conclusions. To formulate my observations I utilized the within-case analysis approach to logically portray the outcomes of my research. Through my research I have attempted to portray a holistic perspective of the phenomena that I observed. Four themes emerged from the data collected from the documents, observations, and six participants' interviews. These themes were: teacher morale, role of the principal, school climate, and principal leadership behaviors. The findings in the within-case analysis were delineated by participant and provide a narrative description for the reader as it related to each theme. Descriptive case study technique provides the potential for new knowledge through the reader's individual interpretation of the rich, descriptive depiction. This within-case analysis provides numerous opportunities for readers to learn from experienced principals and quite possibly replicate their actions to enable their own practice.

The six participants of this study are described in detail throughout the within-case analysis, followed by the three themes within each case, and then across the data sources. Three of the four themes discussed were found in all six cases to varying degrees. These

themes were teacher morale, school climate, and leadership. Although depending upon the

number of descriptive codes found related to the identified interpretive codes, some themes

present a more rich description. Definitions of the themes are fully described and grounded in

Case 1, whereas a modified definition is referenced in Cases 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The fourth

theme, role of the principal, was found in the documents. A definition of this theme was fully

described in document section. Table 2 demonstrates the varied presence of the interpretive

codes that led to the three themes found among all six cases.

Table 2

With-in Case Analysis

S=Strong presence
M= Moderate presence
N=Nominal presence

Interviews/ Documents/ Observations	Cherine	Sage	Casey	Anna	Jennifer	Catrina
Theme: Morale Interpretive Codes						
Admin. Support	S	M	M	M	M	M
Admin Leadership	S	M	M	S	S	M
Professional Growth	N	N	N	M	N	N
Interaction	S	M	M	S	S	M
Theme: Climate Interpretive Codes						
Physical	N	M	N	N	N	M
Social	S	M	M	M	S	M
Academic	N		N	M	N	N
Theme: Leadership Interpretive Codes						
Instructional	M	N	M	M	M	M
Transformational	M	N	M	M	M	M
Servant	S	M	N	S	S	M
Sustainable	S	M	M	M	S	M

Case 1: Cherine

Cherine was a white female teacher who was currently teaching third grade. She was an extremely animated teacher with a fun-loving and vibrant attitude. She was the first to respond to my request for participants and her willingness to help seemed to be exhibited in her description of her current principal. Cherine had recently been nominated for teacher of the year by her peers and glowed when her principal made mention of this prior to our interview.

Teacher morale. The theme of teacher morale was evident throughout my interactions with Cherine. For this study morale was defined as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (Bentley & Rempel, 1980, p. 2). Teacher morale is often thought of as a dimension of school climate. Teacher morale can flourish within a healthy school environment, leaving teachers feeling good about each other and feeling a sense of accomplishment from their jobs (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). The research on teacher morale would indicate that a principal's leadership behaviors contribute to teacher satisfaction. Research conducted by Cook (1979) suggests that much like teachers do with students, administrators should look for cues, diagnose, and then work to support teachers within the school environment. Cook highlighted the following components which he believed affect teacher morale: administrative concern, administrative leadership, personal interaction, and professional growth.

The data gathered during the interview process underscore the importance of Cook's work in that individual teachers need to feel supported by their colleagues and principal.

These four areas were described during the interviews and included similar factors noted during the observations, leading to the interpretive codes of administrative support, administrative leadership, administrator interactions, and professional growth.

Administrative support was an interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of teacher morale that I collected from Cherine. Administrative support contained descriptive codes found in several themes across multiple data sources; descriptors such as support, teacher value/worth, teacher workload, and recognition contributed to the idea of administrative support.

Cherine began our interview by using the concept of administrative support to define morale. She described morale as:

> Enjoying coming to work. The feeling you get from being supported at your job. I think it is the overall feel of the building, just maybe teachers supporting one another. Administrators supporting teachers and just the overall feeling of liking to be where you are.

Cherine provided an abundance of examples regarding how she receives support from her current principal. In fact, she described his leadership style as supportive. During her interview she shared how this support impacted teachers' feelings in regard to teacher workload:

> As teachers there is always a level of exhaustion. There is always, "I can't do anymore." We still talk about the workload here, but it's not in a negative way but in more of a supportive way. In my former life, even the look on people's faces. I mean there were people who wouldn't even make eye contact with you. Not because they didn't like you but because they were just so stress and so overwhelmed all the time. There were teachers crying and people would come out of meeting saying, "how can we do one more thing?" So even though we have the same amount of work here it's just handled so differently I do accredit a lot of that to my principal. He has created that environment for us where we feel safe. We feel cared about. Here at least I know that even though we all have the same work load we have the support of one another.

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Within the interpretive code of administrative support, Cherine's interview revealed that their principals, both current and past, have done many things to show that they care about them on a personal level and are concerned for them as individuals. She shared that her current principal supports them by writing notes and providing personal recognition. During her interview Cherine stated:

> My current principal makes choices to recognize people. One of the first months I was here he wrote me a personal letter and told me how thankful he was that I was a part of the team and that he really valued me. It was very specific to me. I thought wow! I don't think I've ever gotten a personal note like that before. Verbally he will tell us at a meeting, he'll recognize someone, or in his daily email, he will include a family picture with a fun little caption underneath. Just at every school event we have, he takes pictures and he will put those in there. He is always looking to capture little moments where he can recognize us.

Cherine went further to recall her first principal and how focused she was on showing support through care and concern.

> She would write little notes and put them in our box and after she retired she would still do things. Like my parents had a 40th wedding anniversary, and she cut the picture out from the paper and mailed it to me. I felt like she really cared about teachers and their families.

While I didn't conduct an observation specifically focused on how Cherine and her principal interacted, I did note in my reflective journal behaviors described by Cherine. During my first visit to the building I was scheduled to observe a meeting. Immediately following, I had a scheduled interview with Cherine. During the interim, Cherine and her principal interacted. He inquired about her weekend and a recent conference she had attended. She shared personal experiences with him, and he eagerly asked for pictures to share with the staff. As Cherine and I sat down to begin our interview, the principal popped his head back into the room where we were meeting and made a reference to her being

"Teacher of the Year." I didn't catch the reference, but Cherine later went on to elaborate in her comments.

> He does support us. Even like when he stuck his head in here and said she's the teacher of the year. He likes to give people a hard time about that. He told my old principal, "As soon as she came over here, she's teacher of the year." He is so fun loving, not that he has to be that way.

It was clear to me that Cherine felt administrative support was important to her overall level of morale.

Administrative leadership was another interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contribute to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as providing input, collaboration, shared leadership, and decision making were described in the data collected from Cherine. Cherine described her current principal's leadership as open to others' opinions and ideas. She shared that he "involves teaches, gives them voice, and creates a culture" that teachers are excited to be a part of. Cherine stated:

> Our principal is very open to our opinions and ideas. He wants to hear our point of view. In my former life I would just pretty much sit quietly and it wasn't really about gathering information. It was about here is the information. Our current principal is not trying to prove he is in charge. Most of us have a Master's or an Ed Specialist, we have a lot of education in our building. A lot of experience and we should be treated with more trust that we can do what we are supposed to do. My current principal is very open to our opinions and our ideas. I truly mean he values our opinions and ideas.

While she realized that he valued her opinion she seemed to understand that it didn't ensure that he would always do things as she suggested. During the interview Cherine stated:

> You know when he says, "I value your opinion but this is the choice I'm going to make," that in the end he valued that I gave it to him. It may not end up the way I wanted or suggested but that's okay. It's not top down. He get us into groups, has us working on specific things and then bring it back.

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In contrast, Cherine also chose to compare her current principal's leadership style with that of a previous experience. She described how different the environment was in her previous school, noting it was "my way or the highway." She shared that she didn't feel that she could openly share her opinions and struggled to make the transition to this building as her previous principal's leadership style left her with a feeling of what she referred to as "whipped puppy syndrome." She qualified her statement by adding that she "didn't have any problems with the principal but it was a different style." She went on to describe the first day the principal came to their building to meet the staff. She was surprised when there wasn't a typical meet and greet. Rather she described it as a poster that said, "you will not do this, you will do this. We will have this. We will not have this." When asked how she felt about the differences in the two administrative leadership styles, she described the latter as being "treated like a child."

The following excerpt from my observation field notes illuminate Cherine's description of how input, collaboration, and shared decision-making contribute to administrative leadership styles:

> The principal engaged teachers in a process where he worked to support their needs, model for and develop teachers to understand and utilize data. Likewise, the principal utilized a format that required everyone to contribute to the discussions and be held accountable for their professional growth. This was done by structuring the faculty meeting in such a way that all staff were part of a small team focused on an area related to building level improvement. The principal reminded staff of their purpose and encouraged them to record all of their thoughts and ideas in a shared document for future reference.

Administrative interaction was the final interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as building positive relationships, being focused on people, and developing a sense of community were described

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in the data collected from Cherine. She described her current principal as focused on those around him. She said, "He is more about relationships and the climate, and it shows." She indicated that building positive relationships with others was important and something he did well. She stated:

> If I'm sick and say I'm going to miss this meeting, then he would say "take care of yourself." He is always taking care of us. I think that is a special quality. He wants you to be happy. He has us fill out a sheet each month about how we are having a balanced life. Happy humans come to school and are happy teachers. I think that having a balanced life is very important to him. I'm not balanced. I work too hard, never turn it off. Last year he said, "What's something you want to work on for next year?" I told him I need to be more balanced and I still need to be better.

Even though Cherine recognized her principal's focus on balance and the need to take care of herself, she seemed to be more concerned for her team members who were young mothers. She explained that in the early years of her career she felt that things should be even to be considered fair or equal. However, in her current school community, she recognized that she could support her co-workers by putting in extra hours for the sake of the team. She stated, "It's changed my mindset."

I found it noteworthy that Cherine clarified that while she valued her principal's ability to develop a positive relationship with her, she also recognized that there should be appropriate boundaries within that relationship. She shared that her principal "puts himself out there and values relationships. I hear of other principals who go to happy hour with their staff and he doesn't ever cross the line in that way."

Professional growth was the final interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. Leadership behaviors such as learning, developing, and evaluating were described in the data collected from Cherine. Evaluations

are an area that can cause teachers a great deal of stress. However, when conducted correctly, they provide the principal with an opportunity to highlight the strengths of their staff and also provide feedback related to professional growth. Cherine was asked to describe leadership behaviors that could impact morale, and she chose to emphasize the way her current principal completes observations. She said:

> He comes in and scribes almost everything you do. When I meet with him about my follow-up from my observation, he will talk to you. I mean really talk to you in depth. It's not just shallow or a score. He gives you in-depth feedback. He comes to our rooms all the time, I never feel uncomfortable. I never feel like I'm being watched or judged.

In order for principals to provide teachers with effective feedback, the literature maintains that they must be current in regard to effective instructional strategies. Cherine describe her principal as a learner as evidenced by the professional reading he does. She felt this allowed him to talk with teachers about professional development. She shared that his daily email included some type of professional development article. She went on to compare his knowledge level as compared to that of a previous principal:

> Some people may not read those but I try to most days. They have tips about things, positive tips, or positive quotes, things like that. I feel like he keeps very current on things. In my former life I knew she [the principal] was smart and qualified to do the job but sometimes I felt as though she pretended to know something and she didn't. Teachers can see through that. We knew when she didn't know what she was talking about.

In order to encourage and promote professional growth among teachers, principals must show evidence that they too are learners and are knowledgeable about effective teaching practices.

Climate. The theme of teacher morale was evident throughout my interactions with Cherine. For this study, climate was defined and described as "the quality and character of

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school life" and was based on "patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1). The interpretive codes that led to the development of this theme were related to indicators of a positive school atmosphere and included the physical, social, and academic dimensions of the school setting.

Physical dimensions was an interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate that I collected from Cherine. Student behavior/safety and atmosphere were descriptors that contributed to the idea of physical dimensions. Cherine began by discussing the idea that her principal has to wear a lot of hats. She understood that one of these was to be the disciplinarian and to set some guidelines for behavior. The literature underscores the importance of principals being a visible presence within the school building, communicating a level of safety (Loukas, 2007; NSCC, 2013).

Social dimensions was an interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate that I collected from Cherine. Relationships, people focused, and a sense of community were descriptors that contributed to the idea of social dimensions. Cherine indicated that she thought morale and climate were very much the same. However, she made the distinction by adding that "climate includes very intentional acts. Creating an environment of support. Your morale is the feeling you get from being supported. The things you do create that climate on purpose."

Cherine spoke highly of her current principal and his leadership behaviors. She also recognized that as a new school still in its infancy, they may be in a "honeymoon" phase.

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However, she shared that her principal has verbalized his role in creating a positive school climate. Cherine stated:

> Our principal has said, "I'm the keeper of the climate. It's what I'm creating. If there are troubled relationships, I need to handle that. I need to make it a better place." I think that's top priority for him.

Cherine went on to discuss the role of the principal and the impact his presence has in the classroom. She described his relationship with students:

> His manner with the students is important. In my former life the kids knew who she was but they didn't have a relationship with her. They didn't see her, she wasn't visible. She didn't come in [the classroom] unless she had to. Even though that was the district expectation, it just didn't happen. But my principal now, he just comes in to see what the kids are doing, asks them questions. I just keep teaching, sometimes I even incorporate him into the lesson. Our kids, they know him, they have fun with him, and they respect him. He's created that climate with them.

Academic dimensions was the final interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate that I collected from Cherine. Setting high expectations and being a leader focused on learning or developing people were descriptors that contributed to the idea of academic dimensions. Principals must establish high expectations for teachers and student learning but also provide support through continued professional learning with an emphasis on best practices designed to improve teaching (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Cherine described her principal as one who sets high expectations for the staff and students but also allows them to have input as they have expertise to contribute. She compared this approach to her last principal, whom she described as being organized and having high standards as well: "I don't see our principal now as loosey-goosey or unorganized. I just see him as really valuing teacher input. Although we know he has high expectations for us, it's done in a more

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supported role." She referenced the fact that the district had previously provided a significant amount of professional development concerning the concept of Professional Learning Communities and that her principal models this concept through their Financial, Academic, Climate, Employee, and Student Safety (FACES) groups. The FACES group referred to by Cherine was described by the principal as their approach to continuous building improvement. Cherine stated that "teachers have a big say and he recognizes their work." School leaders must capitalize on the wealth of knowledge and skills shared within professional learning communities and use this knowledge to cultivate an environment focused on high quality learning for students and staff.

  Leadership. The third and final theme identified examined leadership and the various leadership styles described throughout the interviews. Attempting to define and assess leadership can be difficult. Various definitions have been outlined by theorists over the past century. For the purposes of this study, leadership is defined as a person who guides or leads the group. The interpretive codes that led to the development of the leadership theme were: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, shared leadership, and sustainable leadership. Many of the descriptive codes were used to develop the four varied leadership styles. For this theme I have chosen to focus on servant leadership, about which Cherine provided the richest description.

  Servant leadership was the interpretive code that resonated in the data gathered and tied to the theme of leadership that I collected from Cherine. Relationships and being focused on people were descriptors that contributed to the idea of servant leadership. A principal who displays servant leadership can be described as one who empowers other people in the

organization. People trust their leader to influence others to promote success as well as an attitude of service to one another (Barth 1990, Sergiovanni, 2007). Cherine spoke highly of her principal's ability to develop positive relationships. This evidence was described previously within the theme of teacher morale. One further example that she shared included the way the principal identified and developed new teams when their school began. Cherine mentioned that she was surprised to find the teaching assignments of some of her colleagues, knowing that they had previously taught another grade in their sending school. Once she came to know her team, she stated that the principal had a "method to his madness" and describe the outcome as a success. Cherine stated:

> Once we met, once I could see our personalities match, he did that in every grade level. It was a lot about personalities, and he knew who was going to work well together and who wouldn't. I think he recognized that. My team is really close. We've got each other's back. Everyone seems happy to me. I don't know exactly how he came up with it, but I think he is just really intuitive about that.

In addition to those descriptions, a servant leader has a heart for others and works to meet their needs (Sergiovanni, 2007). Cherine describe this type of leadership when she shared:

> When I applied for this job I didn't know he was going to be the principal, but when I found out it was him I though wow this is going to be really different. We had several meetings when we started this school. We spent time creating the mission and vision for the school. What I liked about him is he's lighthearted, he jokes, he's sarcastic and um I don't know it wasn't so serious all the time. He asks about our families and he wants to know. One thing he did for me when I'd only been working here for three months. My mother-in-law died, and he came to the funeral. I don't know that my other principal would have done that, since it's such a private moment and he didn't really know me that well yet. Another thing he does for those who have kids, if someone has a party or school event, he will say we will cover your class. I want you to go, your family is important. Or if you have a doctor appointment, he'll take care of that. Or if you want to go observe another teacher, he'll make it happen. He is always taking care of us.

Equally important, principals who display servant leadership play a critical role in creating a healthy culture which promotes collegiality and trust among everyone (Barth, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2007). Through building relationships and trust, staff members will be able to have open and honest conversations, allowing them to make decisions based on what is best for all learners. Cherine described the relationship between the teachers in their school as strong. She mentioned that despite those strong relationships, they aren't afraid to disagree if needed. She implied that this open dialogue has been created as a result of the trust and collegiality among their team. She shared that this has been encouraged by their principal stating, "He has said to us if there's not disagreements among your grade level, then there's probably not very deep conversations going on."

Case 2: Sage

Sage was a white female teacher who was currently teaching kindergarten. I met Sage in her classroom as she prepared to escort a line of very excited kindergarten students down the hall to practice for a musical. She was a thoughtful and reflective teacher who provided a sense of calm.

Teacher morale. The theme of teacher morale was present throughout the data collected from Sage. The theme of morale encompasses the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in their workplace. The interpretive code of administrative support emerged during my interview with Sage, and descriptors such as supportive and recognition contributed to the idea of administrative support.

Sage began our interview by describing the level of morale in the building. She tied

the definition to her principal's ability to recognize the expertise of his staff, contributing to

her value or worth as a teacher. She described the level of morale:

> We are just so excited to be here. Just feel very blessed. I feel as though he takes our opinion into consideration. He will tell us we are the experts. To me that's right. We did go to school for early childhood, and I love that he believes in the people he hired. He hired us because he thought we were the best. I feel like he really respects that wherever you are at, these are the people he trust.

Evidence gathered during one of my observations indicated that the principal demonstrated

support to his staff by recognizing and praising the contributions of various staff members.

During a building leadership team meeting, the principal highlighted the skill of the secretary

when referring to the school budget and praised the efforts of the assistant principal when

reviewing the student survey results on safety and school climate. This type of verbal

recognition and praise contributes to an individual's sense of value (NTP, 2013).

Sage continued to illustrate ways in which her principal provided support by

describing his efforts to reinforce appropriate student behavior. Students in their school

participate in Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). Students earn tickets when they are

demonstrating a school expectation. These tickets can then be redeemed for prizes. She

explained that students look forward to saving up their tickets for the opportunity to cut their

principal's tie. She stated, "This is a big deal!" I recognized this example as I had noticed a

bulletin board in the front hallway, littered with pictures of students with the principal

holding their half of the tie. The remaining half of the tie was pinned to the bulletin board

next to the corresponding photograph of a smiling student and principal. Sage shared that

beyond PBS, "He's been a youth friend. When a kiddo needs to be pulled, he gives support to

them. Same thing with teachers. He feels very approachable. From a parent perspective, you have to be approachable."

Sage noted that from a parent perspective, when she enters her own children's school she doesn't always have that same feeling. When speaking to others in the community, she talks about her school and feels that her principal's reputation precedes him. She shared that parents are complimentary of him whether or not they've had the pleasure of meeting him. Sage communicated that her principal extends his support to the greater school community by showing parents that he cares and is concerned for their student.

Within the interpretive code of administrative support, Sage's interview revealed that her current principal supports them by writing notes and providing personal recognition. Her example is specifically focused on how her principal demonstrated support through care and concern. During her interview, Sage stated:

> He sends out a Christmas card. He takes a photo of you and writes a specific letter about you to your parents. I remember the first year, this has been going on for a while. The first year I remember when my parents got that. It was such a neat thing. Nothing had happened like that before. I feel he knows each individual person and you know he cares about you. He goes out of his way.

Administrative leadership was another interpretive code used to describe factors that contribute to the theme of teacher morale, such as providing input, shared leadership and decision making, which were described in the data collected from Sage. Sage described her current principal's leadership as "collaborative, even though he is the leader of the school. It's not a dictatorship." She shared that he considers everyone's opinion when making decisions. Sage described this type of shared leadership through a decision making structure employed in their school:

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He is truly collaborative through leadership team and other groups, FACES, so we have a voice in the building. I'm on one. It's Financial, Academic, Climate, Employee, and Student Safety. We are broke up into those different groups. We have an agenda and a leader and what we need to accomplish as a staff. We share out to the staff or we go back to the staff and gather feedback. Sometimes we are in charge of something, but then we ask teachers to take a survey or something so it's just not one group making decisions.

The process she described corresponded to a document provided by her principal for my review. The following descriptive codes of decision-making and input were also found in the leadership agenda and further illuminate Sage's description of how input, shared leadership, and decision-making contribute to the interpretive code of administrative leadership:

The agenda for the leadership team meeting revealed that the principal structured the meeting in such a way that he could empower staff to be a part of the solution regarding building needs. Staff members were assigned to one of the five FACES areas. Agenda topics were structured in such a way that staff members could collaborate and problem solve in those five areas.

Administrative interaction was the third interpretive code used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as building positive relationships, and being focused on people were described in the data collected from Sage. She described her current principal as family oriented. During our interview she said:

He understands people as a whole. He is family oriented. He understands that teaching is important to us too. He is willing to accept that family is important too. If my kid had a party at school and it was on a different day than ours, he is very willing to let me sign out early so I can attend. As teachers we miss out on lots of those things. Those are moments you are never going to get back. I have worked for other people who weren't as family friendly.

Professional growth was the final interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. The leadership behavior of evaluating was described in the data collected from Sage. As mentioned previously, the evaluation process can provide the principal with an opportunity to highlight the strengths of their staff and also

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provide feedback related to professional growth. Sage described observations as an opportunity for principals to recognize teacher contributions and to cultivate positive teacher morale. She said:

> I think if you sit down with your principal, if it's one-on-one for an evaluation or after observing a lesson, they can give you positive feedback or constructive criticism. I think that principals can do that in a positive way. I feel like it can be private. It doesn't have to be bells and whistles, but he will take the time to tell you.

Sage described the need to be provided with feedback from her principal. She clearly articulated during our interview that she felt appreciated for the work she does, saying her principal recognizes her "expertise" and uses those accordingly. McKay (2013) discusses a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset among individuals that impacts the way an individual will receive feedback. As a leader, one must work with individuals to develop a growth mindset, creating an environment in which teachers feel valued and appreciated for the work they do. This can be done in an environment where trust and rapport have been established.

Climate. The theme of climate was evident throughout my interactions with Sage. For this study climate was defined and described as "the quality and character of school life" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1). The interpretive codes that led to the development of this theme were related to indicators of a positive school atmosphere and included only the physical and social dimensions of the school setting. The academic dimension did not present itself in the data shared by Sage.

Physical dimensions was an interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate. Building/classroom appearance and atmosphere were descriptors that contributed to the idea of physical dimensions. Sage began by discussing the

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level of morale in her building. She recognized that being in a new building had its advantages. She shared:

> We are in a brand new building. This was very exciting to open a brand new school. So obviously I feel if you are here the teacher morale is good. We are in a brand new building. We chose to come here. We interviewed. Everyone was excited to be here. Kind of like a brand new start, a blank slate.

Tableman (2004) would describe a healthy, open, positive school climate as being clean, orderly, and preserved by the school community. Sage was clearly excited to be in a new school and believed that her physical surroundings had a tremendous impact on her morale. Even so, she expressed that her previous building was not new, but she described it as "cozy." She felt that people could be comfortable there as well. This comfortable feeling described the atmosphere of both schools.

The building itself is considered to be a green school design, friendly for students and the planet, and incorporates a two-story or two-level design with grade levels assigned to "pods." Grades K-1 are together in the lower level, and as a result, those teachers and students rarely interact with grades outside their pod. Sage described it as being "contained to down here." This layout undoubtedly has its benefits in regard to the age of the students. However, it seemed that structure limited the amount of interaction she was able to have with her colleagues in other areas of the building. Despite the limited interaction with teachers outside of her grade level, Sage held her grade level team members in high esteem, and these relationships were important to her. She stated:

> When it's a new building we don't really have those relationships that an established building does. We had a lot of getting to know you things. I probably have a better relationship with teachers that I've worked with in this building for two years than I did in my previous life. Everyone gets along really well. We are friends and we

respect each other, on a professional level as well as a personal level. There are things outside of school that staff do together to build friendships.

Sage gave her principal credit for making the transition to this new building so smooth. She was firm and direct in her response, stating, "No district would choose you to open a brand new building unless you were an effective leader. Bottom line." She recognized that aside from the excitement of a new, clean, beautifully designed building, this was a challenging task because it isn't easy "meshing" staff members together. Additionally, many parents were not pleased when new boundary lines were drawn and they were forced to leave their home school for a new one. She stated that her principal did it "with grace."

Social dimensions was the final interpretive code illuminated within the theme of climate collected in data from Sage. Relationships and a sense of community were descriptors that contributed to the idea of social dimensions. Sage indicated that she thought climate was found in the feeling of a school's atmosphere but could be visibly seen in the interactions of the various stakeholders. She spoke to this point from a parent's perspective before moving on to a staff perspective:

> Like when I walk into my kid's school, I get a feel, that's climate. How are the teachers talking to the kids? How are students acting? Climate is more about how do we project ourselves to the community, the parents, the students and other people.

Sage spoke of the diverse student population at their school. She stressed that in order to create a sense of community, the staff needed to "make themselves accessible to a variety of families." She took pride in the number of families, particularly those who spoke a second language, who recently attended a student showcase event at their school. She reported that 20 of 21 families participated in the evening event, highlighting the idea that families "feel

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comfortable, welcomed, like we want them here." She believed this feeling is conveyed by the teachers in the building.

As Sage discussed the diverse families in her school, I recognized that this was not the norm for this particular suburban school. In speaking with the lead secretary during one of my visits, she shared that their school's ELL population had seen significant growth, requiring them to hiring another teacher to provide supportive services. During several of my visits, I would wait in the office until teachers were available. During this time I observed interactions to be pleasant and welcoming among a diverse group of parents and students. The development of this new school provided the district with an opportunity to reorganize their school boundary lines. As a result this school happened to have a higher ELL population and appeared to be growing at a steady rate. I suspect as the school becomes more diverse the teachers will need to consider how culture and language impact student learning. This may be an opportunity for the staff to consider how a culturally responsive classroom and teaching can utilize a student's background, prior knowledge, and experiences to inform the teacher's lessons and methodology (Delpit, 1992; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2000).

Class size and student-teacher ratios have impact upon the physical and social dimensions of climate. Class size is among the number of reasons that teachers cite leaving the profession altogether. While this particular school is new, it boasts the largest elementary school enrollment as compared to the other elementary buildings in the district. Sage shared that during the middle of their first year in the building, a new kindergarten teacher was needed due to large enrollment numbers. She described this scenario as "hard and difficult

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for everyone." However, she shared that the transition was "smooth," thanks to the work of her principal, who personally called every parent of the students who would be moved into the additional classroom. She also shared that the principal hosted an open house for the parents and students to meet their new teacher, giving them an opportunity to build a positive relationship.

Leadership. The third and final theme identified examined leadership and the various leadership styles described throughout the interviews. The interpretive codes that led to the development of the leadership theme were: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, shared leadership, and sustainable leadership.

Servant leadership was the interpretive code that emerged in the data gathered from Sage. Relationships and being focused on people were descriptors that contributed to the idea of servant leadership. A principal who displays servant leadership can be described as one who has a heart for others and works to meet their needs (Sergiovanni, 2007). This evidence was described previously within the theme of teacher morale. However, Sage shared an example of the way her principal responded to personal situations that might require her immediate attention. During the interview, Sage stated:

> I feel like a principal needs to understand we have other things. When other people hear about what goes on here, they are like, "Wow! How nice." To understand that you have a sick kid and you need to go right then. Or I have heard of other situations where you're told that you can't go. I think that our principal has kids and he understands. In twelve years I've never been told that I can't, if possible, do those things. I appreciate that more than anything else I can think of.

Sage also defined this type of leadership when she described her principal as willing to listen to others and to be perceived as approachable by the staff (Barth, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2007). She talked about how the principal is the leader ("It's his job") but that he is a thoughtful

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listener as well, seeking to hear from all teams. Sage seemed to accept that at times this structure of input and gathering feedback was not always appropriate by sharing that "there are times when he has to talk to us and that's just the format of what it has to be." However, she recognized that when teams were placed in cooperative groups or were given the opportunity to provide feedback he is just "listening, observing, and taking notes."

Case 3: Casey

Casey was a white female teacher who was currently teaching fourth grade. She was a quiet and reserved teacher who provided succinct responses to my questions. She seemed to have an understanding of what leadership behaviors were important to her but struggled to elaborate upon why those behaviors or characteristics were important.

Teacher morale. The theme of teacher morale was present throughout the data collected from Casey. Three interpretive codes were present in the data that tied to the theme of morale. The theme of morale was defined as the "professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in their workplace" (Bentley & Rempel, 1980, p. 2). Casey provided a similar definition of morale, stating, "It's the feeling teachers and staff have while in the building." The clusters of meaning that aligned to the theme of morale during my interview with Casey were administrative support and administrative interactions.

Casey communicated a message that the level of administrative support is directly connected to the level of teacher morale. She described her current principal as a family man, and indicated that his example as a family man is encouraging to her and her own satisfaction in the workplace. During the interview she stated:

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If something here at work comes up, or I ask it's my son's preschool party can I sneak away for that? He will say "Yeah, just fill out a non-emergency form and go." He's been in those situations as a family man and he know that we are going to put in the time and beyond our forty hours here. If we need to or want to take part in something like that he is very willing.

Recognizing teachers is a critical part of a principal's job. Teachers can sometimes feel unappreciated for the job they do, day in and day out. Casey agreed that recognition was important and she felt that this was a strength of her principal, especially considering how busy his day might be. During our interview, Casey shared a variety of ways that she feel supported by her principal through recognition and praise:

Encouragement, letting them know that they are appreciated. I think those things impact morale a lot. Our principal writes little notes to us. I'm busy and I know he is so busy. But the fact that he takes the time to write a heartfelt note means a lot. Or like at Christmas time, he sends a card to our parents and says thank you or kind words about us. I know my parents treasure that, and I treasure that.

Casey also mentioned that showing care and concern goes beyond the school walls. She suggested that it's "asking about their children. Caring about them as an individual not just a teacher." Recognition was something that she noticed her previous principal was cognizant of and purposeful about including in her weekly communications. She explained her actions:

In her newsletter each week she gave a Grammy to a teacher, and they would win a little trophy and an extra jeans pass. It was just extra recognition to the staff. Recognition for everyone. Just through that conversation she was letting someone know they've done a good job.

Administrative interaction was another interpretive code used to describe factors that contribute to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as trust were described in the data collected from Casey. She described her current principal's leadership as "trusting." Casey was a more soft-spoken individual with less to say about the topics presented. I felt she might be one of those teachers who really wants to do a good job but isn't going to be outspoken in

regard to what she is doing in her classroom. She was very complimentary of her current

principal and shared that she had always felt that her principals, both current and past, were

competent in doing their job. She qualified this statement by sharing that when a school is

running smoothly it's a good indicator of competency. While she had had positive

experiences with administrators in her career, she recognized that not all of her colleagues

would have had the same perception. She shared that earlier in her career she worked with a

principal who "came in for one year and the next they were gone." Casey identified lack of

trust as a reason for the principal's failure. She described the principal as an individual who

did not have the classroom experience required for teachers to "trust her or feel comfortable

with her."

Climate. The theme of climate was somewhat evident throughout my interactions

with Casey. For this study, climate was defined and described as "the quality and character of

school life" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1). While the theme of climate was present, it was weakly

defined. This may have been due largely to the fact that Casey seemed to struggle when

defining climate or making any distinctions between morale and climate. Ultimately, she

described both as a feeling that you have when at work. She did provide some distinction

between the two when she placed a descriptor on the term climate:

> Our climate is supportive and friendly. I think you could have high morale as a
> teacher but have a climate which is more gossipy or talking behind each other's back.
> People want to help each other, know about one another's life.

While this description does communicate the important role atmosphere has in

shaping school climate, the interpretive codes that led to the development of the theme were

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related only to the social dimensions of school setting. The physical and academic dimensions were not present in the data shared by Casey.

Descriptions of the social dimensions were an interpretive code that emerged with the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate. A sense of community and atmosphere were descriptors that contributed to the idea of social dimensions. During our interview, Casey talked about the workload that teachers have and the stress that this can bring to the work environment. Teachers are currently making substantial changes to their curriculum and assessments in order to make the federal and state mandated transition to the new common core state standards. This level of work and stress certainly has the potential to dampen the spirit of teachers, having a negative impact on both the atmosphere of the school as well as on the collaboration among teachers. Despite this pressure, Casey described her team as focused on making the transition together, stating, "We all know that we are in the same situation, so we support each other and throw each other ideas." This sense of collaboration was later described in the relationships between the teachers in the school. Casey reminded me that her school was unique in that they were only in their second year. Despite their short time together, she described the teachers' relationships as positive and supportive, saying, "We have each other's back."

Leadership. The third and final theme identified examined leadership and the various leadership styles described throughout the interviews. Leadership was defined as a person who guides or leads the group. The interpretive codes that led to the development of the leadership theme were: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, shared

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leadership, and sustainable leadership. The clusters of meaning that aligned with the theme

during my interview with Casey were collaboration and high expectations.

During Casey's interview she referred to the idea that a principal should have high

expectations. She indicated that this was important in the school setting in order for teachers

and students to be successful. She never fully articulated what the expectations were,

although she did say that the staff "know where we need to achieve at and what we need to

do to get there." She recognized the importance of trust in their relationship and indicated

that this was one reason why she worked so hard. During her interview, she shared her

thoughts about high expectations:

> My current principal puts a lot of trust in us. He very much trusts us. Although he sets the parameters and expectations of what is expected. He feels that what he's set forth, he has a staff that wants to do well. He does trust us. He sets high expectations. I feel like he and my last principal, I wanted to work very hard for them. Because of the leadership example they have set, I want to work very hard for them. I want them to be proud of me. Just that high expectation, but he also has a high leadership example.

Casey also stated that setting high expectations was important if a principal wanted to

be an effective leader. Once a leader sets the expectations, a principal should, "step back and

let the teacher feel those expectations." She went on to describe an example of an effective

principal whom she viewed as caring and compassionate, and who led by example. Bass

(1990) discussed the concept of inspiration related to leadership. His research about

transactional leadership focused on the need for leaders to communicate high expectations,

use symbols to focus efforts, and express important purposes in simple ways. Casey

communicated that it was through the development of high expectations and the leadership

model that she was "inspired" to do whatever was necessary to see students succeed.

Collaboration was the second concept emphasized within the theme of leadership. Casey appreciated the way her principal visited her classroom in order to "take part in and care about the learning that was going on." She also described his leadership style as collaborative when staff were working together. When asked what it would look like if I were to observe an effective principal working with staff, Casey said:

> Laughing. I feel like when we sit down our principal has an agenda, but it feels like a conversation, not just "Here's what we are doing." It's discussion. Not just one person talking and one person listening.

Casey's statement could be misinterpreted that the principal had an agenda, meaning a hidden purpose. She quite literally was referring to a paper agenda or schedule of things to discuss during a meeting. When asked if the principal would need to use a strategy for gathering everyone's input, she didn't feel that was necessary, stating, "I think everyone should just feel comfortable to share." However, as noted previously through my observation field notes, when given the opportunity to provide feedback on several issues, only 8 of 15 staff members contributed to the conversation. That could have been because they didn't have anything to add to the conversation, or it may have been a result of some other issue.

Owens and Valesky (2011) referred to the leadership style as described by Casey as having a people approach. Leaders seek to "involve people more fully in making decisions that affect them, attend to their motivational needs more adequately, and increase collegiality and collaboration through teamwork" (p. 78). Commitment, passion, and collaborative environments are concepts embedded within the topic of leadership which I believe can impact teacher morale. Complacency seems to be the biggest roadblock and due to the lack of trust in many schools, educators are still struggling to have open and honest conversations

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regarding the needs of the student body and how they can move all students forward. I believe that every organization has educators who are conducting meaningful work. However, until entire systems reach a collective sense of urgency and passion to reach all students, regardless of their starting point, I fear that we will continue to fail our young people. Casey's emphasis on leaders who set high expectations is a starting point for leaders as they seek to inspire their organization to do great work.

Case 4: Anna

Anna was a white female teacher who was currently teaching second grade. She was a lively and energetic teacher who had a lot to say about leadership. She holds a Doctorate of Education and because of her knowledge appeared to be able to provide thicker responses. In fact, at the end of our interview when asked if she had anything else to share in regard to leadership, she suggested that she could talk all day about it.

Teacher morale. Morale was a theme that was present throughout the data collected from Anna. For this study, morale was defined as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (Bentley & Rempel, 1980, p. 2). This theme was formed through the following categories of meaning: administrative support. administrative leadership, administrator interactions, and professional growth.

Administrative support emerged as an interpretive code within the data gathered from Anna. Administrative support contained descriptive codes found in several themes across multiple data sources; descriptors such as support, teacher workload, and recognition contributed to the idea of administrative support.

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Anna began our interview by using the concept of administrative support to define morale. She described morale as:

> The ability to feel good about what you are doing. As a teacher, as a person. My principal is awesome about asking, what do we need to feel good about what we are doing in our classrooms.

She went on to describe that morale extends beyond the schoolhouse walls, it incorporates "home, school, whatever else is going on in your life." She described how her principal made teachers intentionally think about how they could balance all of those things, seeming to understand that this was the secret to a satisfied teacher. She shared that being visible as a parent and as a leader in their district made her principal unique in that she could clearly see how much he values family and that she knew he meant it when he said, "Go home, you're here too late."

Anna gave the impression that she was her principal's number one fan. She provided a number of examples illustrating she receives support from her current principal. During her interview, she shared how this support impacted teachers' feelings regarding overall satisfaction:

> Every year on the principal survey, 100%, 98% on the question, my principal cares for me. He does things. I'm sure it's his personality, but he mentored under someone who had the same approach. He gives us candy every Friday. It is tiny things, like a jeans pass. It keeps us happy and he's so complimentary. He is so good at it. It's just so genuine and honest.

She went on to talk about how her principal recognizes the work that teachers do as important and that he emphasizes the importance of their role in the classroom by protecting their preparation time. Anna stated:

> He recognizes what we are doing, that we have a lot going on, with common core coming down. He will say, "I know you have a lot going on so won't have a meeting

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this week so you can get caught up." He makes adjustments in his expectations that would be out of the norm so we can get caught up and do well for the kids in our classroom.

Within the interpretive code of administrative support, Anna's interview revealed that she appreciated the way her principal recognized others, understanding that it was a gift of his. She explained that he is extremely complimentary of others, noting that it was one of his "best assets." Her impression was that he looked for the good in everyone, and once he determined what your strengths were, he capitalized upon opportunities to provide public praise. Anna said that she had worked with other principals who had awards and different ways of recognizing people, but within those systems she felt as though "people got left out." She believed her current principal's approach to recognition, noting individual contributions regarding tasks that people were doing each and every day, was his natural inclination. She described a recent meeting in their school at which this type of daily recognition occurred:

> We had a meeting on Thursday about diabetes and some possible changes we will have to make due to health care. We have one student in the building who has diabetes and so he went and called them out by name: the nurse; the teacher. Recognized them as to how they've made that such a positive situation for that student. It's so natural that way he recognizes people.

Anna went further to explain that recognition isn't always verbal. She shared that her current principal sends out a daily email to the staff and highlights nice things about others or shares a compliment that he overheard someone giving about another staff member. His recognition seemed to build a sense of pride among the staff.

While I didn't conduct an observation specifically focused on how Anna and her principal interacted, I did note in my reflective journal that when Anna emailed me to confirm a detail of our interaction, she made mention that she and several other teachers were

at a conference to support their principal. He had recently been nominated to win an award

and they (the staff and principal) were eagerly awaiting the announcement. When I returned

the following week, I found remnants of congratulatory cupcake crumbs in the conference

room. It was clear to me that this principal understood what it meant to support others and in

return, they supported him.

Administrative leadership was the second interpretive code that I used to describe

factors that contribute to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as providing shared

leadership and input were described in the data collected from Anna. She felt her principal

led by "pumping people up." She shared that he "looks for people who have expertise and

then leads by having everyone else lead." She indicated that she had worked with many types

of leaders and in some cases leaders may "feel threatened" by the expertise of the group,

suggesting that the principal is in charge or has some type of power over their constituents.

Anna believed that individuals with this approach to leadership work to "tear others down"

instead of working to "build them up," causing them to question if they are "doing things

right."

Anna shared one specific example that clearly illustrates the need for principals to

provide opportunities for input and shared leadership. She said:

> This is a new building so it's unique and we've established together what we want to
> make it. We set the tone together. No one is going to come in and change what we've
> developed. I've worked in a building where the principal changed three times in eight
> years. That's the biggest issue I've seen of coming in and not talking to the staff. Talk
> to staff, find out what's going right, the can dos and the have to dos. It's finding out
> those things in advance.

Anna suggested that her current principal's leadership style lends itself to a shared leadership

style by encouraging discussion and open dialogue. She felt that her principal had an opinion

about things and was willing to share his input as well but commented that it was "rare" for him to dictate the outcome of any decision made in the building. She clarified that the only time she saw this happen is when something was "mandated." Anna's comments during our interview illuminated the description of how input and shared decision-making contribute to administrative leadership styles:

> You would see lots of open dialogue, positive conversation. He uses such an open, honest approach to building people up. He is not rigid or closed off to open dialogue. He is compromising. He doesn't lose what he wants but he is willing to listen. He has a vision but he's gotten people on board. He's taken them to be experts on it. He's guided them to create a vision.

Anna provided a specific example of how her principal has allowed others to provide input about important building topics. She expressed that her principal has a passion or vision for project-based learning and would like to see staff embrace this type of instruction in the school. However, Anna explained that rather than forcing or mandating that teachers use this approach, he solicited feedback from the "A" or academic group of FACES regarding this topic. She suggested that the group also believes in this approach, but they were hesitant to move in that direction just yet:

> We want to do more project-based learning but we've told him we don't think people understand the philosophy yet and he understands that buy-in is important. We need to get teachers there. He doesn't make the mistake of let's do it right now. He says, what are the steps we need to take to get there.

Administrative interaction was the third interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as building positive relationships, being focused on people and developing trust were described in the data collected from Anna. She described the overall level of teacher morale in the building as high and attributed that to her principal's leadership style. She stated:

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> The atmosphere of the building is amazing. Everyone feels trusted to do their job; supported and cared about because of the way he compliments people. Everybody. Whatever the situation. A lot of people are like, "That's your job, why say it?" But you want to come to work every day because you know he trusts you to do your job.

While Anna clearly felt valued based upon the way her principal interacted with staff in such a positive and complimentary way, she also shared examples where a principal's interaction could negatively impact staff morale. She emphasized communication as a required skill if principals were to positively interact with their staff: "being able to make people feel like they were important enough to talk to." She described this as "social skills" and the ability to encourage open dialogue. Anna provided the example of facial expressions and how a principal needs to outwardly display positive energy; otherwise their interactions could be "distracting." Anna shared thoughts that led me to believe that she felt similar to Cherine, who expressed principals should maintain appropriate boundaries by not going out to happy hour with their staff. Anna provided the following example:

> I've worked with others where it's cliquish. A principal will get in with a certain group and others feel ostracized. You need to balance school life with outside life. If you ostracize part of the group, the climate is going to be negative.

Professional growth was the final interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. Leadership behaviors such as learning, developing, and reflecting were described in the data collected from Anna. As previously noted, evaluations are an area that can cause teachers a great deal of stress. However, when conducted correctly, they provide the principal with an opportunity to highlight the strengths of their staff and also provide feedback related to professional growth. When describing the level of morale in her building, Anna emphasized the way her current principal completes observations. She said:

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He will come and watch you in the classroom and say, "I like the way" or "Have you thought about this." Even the way he approaches you with something you might consider trying. It's not seen as negative, it's not you've done something wrong. It's so casual.

In order for principals to provide teachers with effective feedback, the literature maintains they must be current in regard to effective instructional strategies. Anna described her principal as a learner as evidenced by the professional reading he does. She felt this allowed him to talk with teachers about professional development. She shared that having a degree in an area did not translate to competency; rather, being knowledgeable and able to discuss a topic with staff was critical. She seemed to respect her principal's desire to learn and commitment to professional reading. However, I thought it was equally important that she recognized his humble attitude: "He's not afraid to say, I've read a little bit on this but if you're like me and want to know more then you might read this. I think it's nice to feel that don't have to know it all." In order to encourage and promote professional growth among teachers, principals must show evidence that they too are committed to life-long learning and are knowledgeable regarding effective teaching practices.

Climate. The theme of teacher morale was evident throughout my interactions with Anna. For this study, climate was defined and described as "the quality and character of school life" based on "patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1). The theme was formed through several categories of meaning related to indicators of a positive school atmosphere and included the physical, social, and academic dimensions of the school setting.

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Physical dimensions was an interpretive code that did not emerge within the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate that I collected from Anna. Descriptors such as the appearance of the building, resources available, and student behavior/safety did not surface during our conversations. I believe this could be directly correlated to the fact that Anna is working in a state of the art facility with new resources and equipment.

Social dimensions was an interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate that I collected from Anna. Relationships, people focused, and a sense of community were descriptors that contributed to the idea of social dimensions. Anna indicated that she thought morale and climate were similar. However, she made a distinction by adding that "morale was more of a personal thing" but that climate extended a little further to include "the overall building level of how well things are going, an interconnectedness."   Anna spoke to the idea that climate included more than the principal and their efforts. She stated, "The principal sets the tone but teachers take it from there. Climate has to do with what the teachers put into it." Anna's description led me to believe that she sees the principal as an integral part in maintaining a positive school climate. She said that she has witnessed the impact it can have when teachers are upset with the principal, stating, "If someone is upset, then colleagues talk to others and they get upset for them." She said that because of her principal's complimentary approach, the social dimensions of their school remained positive because "problems don't spiral out of control."

Academic dimensions was the final interpretive code that emerged. Setting high expectations and being a leader focused on learning or developing people were descriptors that contributed to the idea of academic dimensions. Principals must establish high

expectations for teachers and student learning but also provide support through continued

professional learning with an emphasis on best practices designed to improve teaching

(Cotton, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Anna described her

principal as one who "does what he expects of us." She shared that her principal desires to

see students be risk-takers, to ask questions, and be critical thinkers. Because of this desire he

models this behavior for his staff by "putting himself out there." She described the opposite

where principals would say one set expectations and then model something entirely different.

She perceived this to have a negative impact on staff morale, sharing this example:

> If I want you to be proficient with technology but I'm not going to use my Outlook
> calendar, there's quite a difference. If my principal wants us to be tech savvy, he's
> going to take a risk and do it himself. He will lead book studies and learn and lead by
> example. He puts himself out there and does what he expects us to.

Leadership. The third and final theme identified examined leadership and the various

leadership styles described throughout the interviews. Leadership can be defined as a person

who guides or leads the group. The interpretation of the theme was described by the

following leadership styles: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, shared

leadership, and sustainable leadership.

Sustainable leadership was the interpretive code that resonated in the data gathered

and tied to the theme of leadership that I collected from Anna. Input, leader as a developer,

and empowerment were descriptors that contributed to the idea of sustainable leadership.

Sustainable leadership and improvement is developed by a deep learning for all that intends

to create positive benefits for others presently and in the future (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005).

Anna spoke highly of her principal's ability to gather input from all stakeholders, allowing

them to have an expressive voice in shared decision making. This evidence was described

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previously within the theme of teacher morale. In addition to those descriptions, sustainable

leadership seeks to build capacity among the constituents, working to empower all

individuals to work collectively toward a common goal. As a principal, I believe that one

must be aware of teacher perceptions and cautious about how this leadership style might

impact teacher morale.

As I reflected upon Anna's comments, I recalled my own experiences. I have

witnessed leaders who delegated nearly everything and staff perceived that as passing things

off. I've also experienced principals who tried to control everything, which was perceived as

a dictatorship. I believe sustainable leadership as described by Anna requires a principal to

conscientiously strive for balance between the two.

Anna's interview comments that were interpreted as sustainable leadership were

supported by the observation data collected. She cited the specific example of how the

principal has implemented FACES, a structure designed to involve all staff members in

establishing building goals. The FACES format is used to involve all staff members in one of

the five capacities and seeks to specifically address capacity by involving all staff members;

requiring that each group collaborate and communicate with one another in order to achieve

their identified goals. The goal appeared to be dependent upon building others up so if

someone leaves, the institutional knowledge does not leave as well.

This idea of sustainable leadership was further supported during my interview with

Anna when she discussed the following:

> I've worked for many principals. Even those I appreciated and respected made the
> mistake of putting the same people on district and building committees. Personally I
> think that lends itself to not building up everyone on their staff. It says, that person is
> better than I am. It doesn't say, I believe in you. It's not good if those same people are

gone all the time or they are the only one competent to go to district office. I think that's important to keep in mind. If you want to be an effective leader then spread the wealth.

Sustainable leadership recognizes and rewards the organization's leadership talent. Anna described this during her interview by sharing examples of how her principal takes care of the teachers by encouraging them to take care of themselves. The purpose of this care is to renew people's energy (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005). Sustainable leaders strive to be resourceful, building upon the expertise of others. Anna confirmed this when she described her principal's leadership style by saying, "He recognizes people expertise and he leads by having everyone else lead." Anna described the antithesis of this type of leadership by mentioning times in her career when teachers and principals were on different levels. She described the relationship as "formal" and "unequal." She expressed how different her relationship was with her current principal: "You always feel equal." She explained:

> If you are just having a conversation to be a friend not a supervisor, then don't sit behind your desk. If you want a formal meeting and you need it to be that way, then I get it. But if it's more about how do I build up my teachers and how do I let them know I appreciate what they are doing and inspire them to do a little more, then sitting behind a desk isn't the right approach.

Anna gave a specific example of how her principal has contributed to her and her team's professional development this year. She emphasized his ability to ask questions, promote independent thinking, and value what teachers are thinking. She stated:

> If I have an issue that I take to him he'll say, "What are you thinking?" Then he'll say, "I like that but have you thought about…What do you think about that?" He wants you to be a problem solver. He doesn't want to do it for you. I appreciate that. I like that he makes you feel good about what you said but he also adds to it. Our PDP's [professional development plans] are an example. Our team wanted to focus on math due to a new curriculum we have. He got with us and said "I like this as a focus," but then he asked us some guiding questions. He made us think by asking us other questions like "What if" or "Did you ever think"

Sustainable leadership stresses the need to question and challenge the status quo, seeking to deepen learning for all by sharing the collective knowledge of the group.

Case 5: Jennifer

Jennifer was a white female teacher who was currently teaching first grade. She had a high-spirited and engaging personality with a straightforward approach to answering questions. I immediately connected with Jennifer and found an ease about her.

Teacher morale. The theme of morale was defined as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (Bentley & Rempel, 1980, p. 2). Four interpretive codes were revealed in Jennifer's data through the enumerative content analysis process. These codes were administrative support, administrative leadership, administrator interactions, and professional growth.

The first interpretive code of administrative support emerged throughout my interactions with Jennifer. Descriptors such as support and teacher workload contributed to the idea of administrative support. Jennifer expressed her appreciation for having a principal who supported her no matter how big or small the issue, stating she could "call him on the weekend and it's not going to be like I'm bothering him. I know he is going to be supportive. He will help in any way he can." In our conversation she mentioned the idea that her principal has helped to create a supportive team atmosphere by explaining that staff members were more than willing to offer help to others when needed. She modeled this at the end of our interview by asking who my next interview was. She suggested that since she had a student teacher, she would be more than willing to cover that teacher's classroom so she

could complete her interview with me at that time rather than having me drive back to the site later that day.

As a building principal, I understand the commitment to developing your teaching staff. Extending that support to individuals working to complete their undergraduate studies in your building is important, but certainly adds to an already full plate. I was impressed as Jennifer described how her principal has supported substitutes and student teachers in the building. She said:

> Right now I have a student teacher and things haven't been perfect along the way. He has been very supportive helping me to help her. He has also offered mock interviews and advice. We have a very young staff so we've had a lot of people have babies so we've had a lot of long term subs. He's made it a point to check in with them, get to know them. They show up in our daily email if something great is going on in that classroom. We always welcome them on the loud speaker during morning announcements. He tries to do a good job when new teachers come in; pairing them with a similar personality to mentor them.

While I didn't conduct an observation specifically focused on how Jennifer and her principal interacted, I did note in my reflective journal that when I met with Jennifer, many of the things described happened while I was there. Upon several occasions I met with teachers at the beginning of the day, and the morning announcements would be done during our interview. Each time the principal recognized the substitutes in the building for the day, welcoming them to the building and thanking them for helping to support the learning. During one of my observations, the principal purposely pulled in extra chairs to the conference room as he had considered that two committee members would bring their student teachers with them. While these student teachers didn't actively participate in the discussion, they were welcomed to the table alongside the regular certified staff.

Administrative leadership was the second interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contribute to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as providing communication and problem solving were described in the data collected from Jennifer. She commented that she appreciated the way her principal communicated with staff: "He is honest with us, he doesn't sugar coat it. He tell us like it is." She indicated that the principal would join groups as they were discussing various topics to provide his opinion but did so in a manner that did not come across as "condescending" to the staff. As a result, she felt that one could visibly see staff member responding to what was being communicated. Jennifer explained that this type of leadership and communication contributed to the development of what she referred to as a "great community of teachers who aren't afraid to talk about what's going on. Talk about problems, talk about strengths, weaknesses."

Administrative interaction was the third interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as developing trust and being approachable were described in the data collected from Jennifer. She described the overall level of teacher morale in the building as high and attributed that to her principal's leadership style. She stated:

> People were excited to come here. I've heard people say, "I can't believe our principal lets us do stuff like this." My principal's leadership style is one of complete trust. He lets us be who we are within the parameters of what the district asked us to do. There's not that micromanagement.

Because of the emphasis on developing trusting relationships, Jennifer felt she could approach her principal about anything. She didn't feel threatened by his role, indicating that he takes a "team approach" rather than "I'm the one in charge" attitude. She clarified her statement: "Obviously the principal gets the final decisions" but she appreciates when she

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has been allowed to "talk it out." Jennifer highlighted this team approach, indicating that the

leadership valued teachers and as a result it impacted how they felt each day when arriving to

work. She stated:

> Morale has a lot to do with who is working above you and who is working with you. You know you just don't have that pit in your stomach to approach bosses. Being approachable. Open door policy, being there even if it's the silliest thing.

Climate. The theme of teacher morale was evident throughout my interactions with

Jennifer. For this study, climate was defined and described as "the quality and character of

school life" and is based on "patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's

experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships,

teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1). The

theme was formed through several categories of meaning related to indicators of a positive

school atmosphere and included the physical, social and academic dimensions of the school

setting. When describing the distinctions between morale and climate, Jennifer indicated that

she thought they "went hand in hand." She described their relationship:

> If the teachers in the building are feeling really good about what is going on and what is happening then the school climate feels better because we as teachers are more collaborative. We are more willing to voice our opinion. We will say no when we don't agree or yes when we totally agree. Then when morale is down, for whatever reason—leadership, the expectations, the stress of whatever is going on—we start to shut down as a collaborative team. Then we become isolated classrooms as opposed to a team.

While this description communicates the important role atmosphere has in shaping school

climate, the interpretive codes that led to the development of this theme were related only to

the social dimensions of school setting. The physical and academic dimensions were not

present in the data shared by Jennifer.

Social dimensions was an interpretive code that emerged in the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate that I collected from Jennifer. Relationships and being focused on people were descriptors that contributed to the idea of social dimensions. Relationships are critical when developing a positive school atmosphere. The team dynamics can impact the social dimension of the climate. Jennifer was enthusiastic when she shared how her principal encouraged and cultivated positive teacher morale in their building. She described the annual Christmas card that the principal sent her mother and shared that the first time her mom received it, she cried. She explained that the letter "explains why we are such a valued member of our school. That is huge! It means so much to me and to my family." She also shared the following examples:

> We have a daily email that goes out to the staff with pictures of fun things that have happened. We have had announcements made, like at the faculty meeting, we sing happy birthday. We have had silly pass-around awards like the caring heart, things like that. Little things like the spirit cart.

In her comments she referenced the faculty meeting that I had observed. In fact, as Jennifer and I were beginning our interview, she stopped, opened the conference room door, and suggested to the secretaries that they begin the announcements for the day by chanting the rival team name over the intercom. The purpose of the competition was to encourage students to bring in Box Tops for Education, a program focused on raising funds for school. Students were allowed to vote for their favorite team by dropping their box tops in a designated container. It is a known fact among the students and staff that the principal doesn't like this particular team, and they enjoyed teasing him. Therefore, one could assume that students as well as staff have positive relationships with their principal.

Leadership. The theme of leadership was defined as a person who guides or leads the group. Four interpretive codes were revealed in Jennifer's data throughout the enumerative analysis process. These codes were related to various leadership styles: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, shared leadership, and sustainable leadership. Sustainable leadership was the interpretive code that resonated in the data gathered and tied to the theme of leadership that I collected from Jennifer. Input and collaboration were descriptors that contributed to the idea of sustainable leadership.

Jennifer provided a number of examples in which her principal allowed staff to provide input and control over decisions being made. Jennifer illustrated this type of leadership when she described how her principal allowed her to be creative in meeting the district expectations. She shared her appreciation for this creative freedom by stating that she did not feel that she worked in "a cookie cutter world where you have to do the same things at the same time." She described his leadership style as one through which teachers are allowed to "drive the ship." She provided the following example:

> When we came to this building, we were doing PBIS stuff again. But he brought everyone, a rep from each building. So he didn't bring what he did in his former life but he let us work through, taking bits and pieces of what we all had done to make it work for this building. We felt, I felt as a staff member that was a great way to build that team. He allowed us to be in control of that situation. He gave his two cents about what happened in his former life, sharing what he thought may or may not work here. This affected our morale because we thought, look he values what we are saying.

Jennifer described a previous building in which she worked where the principal clearly articulated a level of control by exerting her position of power over teachers. Jennifer explained:

In my former life, my principal would pull that. We didn't buy in. She would say this is how it's going to be and this is because I said. Sometimes we would be like, wait, we have a much better idea. It just kind of made us feel like we weren't invested in it.

As mentioned previously, sustainable leaders recognize and reward the talents of others (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005). They strive to be resourceful, building upon the expertise of others. Jennifer shared that every principal has a different leadership style but she felt her principal valued what she had to say by being an "active listener." She articulated that his competency as a leader was evident in the way he allowed others to lead alongside him. She believes this type of leadership is one you can "sense the minute you walk in the door." She added, "The fact that you have a principal who has been nominated for awards. It speaks volumes to the fact that your principal has it going on!"

Case 6: Catrina

Catrina was a white female teacher who was currently teaching first grade. She had a warm and nurturing presence. Despite her personal obstacles—her scheduled surgery and then a sick child—Catrina was committed to spending time with me. She spoke with so much maturity and wisdom on the topic of leadership, I asked her whether she might pursue the principalship. She asserted she had no interest in that role.

Teacher morale. The theme of teacher morale was present throughout the data collected from Catrina. The theme of morale encompasses the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in their workplace. Descriptors, such as leaders as supportive and recognition contributed to interpretive code of administrative support.

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Catrina began our interview by describing the level of morale in the building. She tied

the definition to support and indicated that it extends beyond the principal's actions:

> Morale is good if teachers feel supported. If the community around them is helping to better their education or to become a better teacher. If you have negative people around you, the morale can go down really fast. That can be toxic, and you don't want that.

Catrina described ways in which her principal provided support by mentioning his

efforts to reinforce appropriate student behavior. She emphasized that student morale can

also be impacted by the programs and supports put in place. She used the example of Positive

Behavior Supports (PBS) to describe this impact:

> We've done things where the language is the same for the whole school. Where the kids who go from kindergarten to here can say, "Oh I've heard those words before, responsibility, problem-solver." I like administrators who are supportive with behavior. If there is a kid who just can't function in your classroom, then it's nice to have an administrator who says, "Okay, we are going to help you [the student] fix this problem so we can get back to class."

Within the interpretive code of administrative support, Catrina's interview revealed

that she appreciates when principals have allowed the staff to participate in fun activities. She

shared a few examples from her current building, stating, "We have had chili cook-offs or

dessert bake-offs. It puts you in a good mood for the day and then things go better with your

kids." Additionally, Catrina mentioned that she recently had a medical emergency and her

principal had texted her to check on her status. When she mentioned this to her mother, her

mother commented on the Christmas card he sends each year. Catrina noted the following

feeling in regard to the administrative support she receives:

> The letter talks about what a great teacher you are or it's been a great year. My mom just loves that. Even when you are old like me, your mom still wants to hear that their daughter is doing well. So I think it is fun that he reaches out to our parents.

Administrative leadership was another interpretive code used to describe factors that contribute to the theme of teacher morale. The descriptors of shared leadership and decision making emerged in the data collected from Catrina. She described her current principal's leadership as effective. She discussed the many changes currently taking place in education. On a federal and state level she mentioned common core, and from a local standpoint, she discussed a new reporting system for grade cards. Regardless of the change required, she believes that her principal allows staff to discuss the implementation in their building and more specifically, in their grade level. She reiterated the importance of the grade level reporting option, as 4th and 5th grade expectations are different than those of other grade levels. Catrina stated that she preferred it when a leader would say, "Let's all work together to move in the right direction but let's work to make sure it's going to work for all kids." Catrina described this type of shared decision making as supportive. She believed this approach communicated that "administrators want us to advocate for all children."

As mentioned previously, this is a new building, and staff from four different buildings in the district were allowed to apply and interview for a position at the new school. This type of position would require substantial work on the part of all staff, perhaps requiring a time commitment beyond the norm. Catrina's attitude regarding this workload was positive, similar to those of other participants interviewed. She joked, saying, "Even when we could have been at the pool we really wanted to see this school off to a good start and come together." She discussed the dynamics of four different buildings coming together and how that could have presented challenges, considering the possibility for individual teachers to "want to do it their old way." However, she described the challenge as rewarding and fun,

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stating, "We've had a bunch of new ideas. We've been piecing this together. We are very supportive of each other. We are in this together."

The interpretive code of administrative interaction illuminated factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. Behaviors such as building positive relationships and being focused on people were described in the data collected from Catrina. She described characteristics of the current principal which could be interpreted as personable and family oriented. She said:

> The best kind of principal is one who understands that you have family. Sometimes you need to be home and be mom. So I think that they understand you are a person and sometimes your real life affects who you are in the classroom. I think it goes a long way. I think you are more willing to work for them on all the other days.

I felt that Catrina was speaking from experience, which was illustrated by the stresses of the previous week. We were originally scheduled to meet on a Friday afternoon and one of her children became sick, which required her to be away from the school. The following Monday she underwent an outpatient procedure which caused her to need an extended period of time off. She had just returned when she contacted me to re-schedule. I was surprised to see her suggest that we meet on her first day back to work. Her positive demeanor was infectious, and I considered this when she described her willingness to be a hard worker based on the way her principal interacted with her. She described her recent interactions with him:

> My principal sent me a text on Monday after my surgery. I didn't even know if he remembered that I was having it. But he sent me a text saying, "Hey how are you doing? How are you feeling? Is there anything we can do for you?" I mean, thanks! You're just being a real person, friend to friend. I really appreciate that. It made a big impact on me for him to think about something going on in my life; for him to reach out to me like that.

Professional growth was the final interpretive code that I used to describe factors that contributed to the theme of teacher morale. The leadership behavior of leader as a learner was used to describe this interpretive code. While Catrina did not have a lot of comments that would contribute to this area, she did discuss her current principal's education and his willingness, despite his intelligence, to recognize the expertise of his staff. She said:

> He's never taught first grade, so he'll say "What are you guys thinking about this? How can we make this work here?" I like that he looks at the district side, the research side, and then says "Okay, what's good for our school? What's good for first grade?" He really does a good job keeping everyone in the loop. Sometimes as an administrator you have more insight from district office or a professional development conference that you've attended that we didn't. So sharing information back and forth. You are a bridge.

Climate. The theme of climate was defined and described as "the quality and character of school life" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1). The interpretive codes that led to the development of this theme were related to indicators of a positive school atmosphere and included the physical, social, and academic dimensions of the school setting.

Building/classroom appearance contributed to the element of physical dimensions. Catrina made several comments when discussing the definition of teacher morale that highlighted the green design of their new building. She described being in a clean, new building as "great," specifically citing the natural sunlight in the rooms. She stated that staff were "lucky" to be a part of the new locale and suggested that making a move like this during your career "keeps you fresh," not allowing you to become "sluggish or comfortable." Her comments as well as those of her colleagues caused me to think about what commonalities the participants must have had. While a new building would certainly seem attractive to many, the thought of change causes discomfort for others. So despite the

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lure of shiny new things, I believe these teachers were attracted to this site for reasons beyond the physical dimensions.

One of those attractions may have been related to descriptors found within the social dimension of the climate. Relationships and a sense of community were descriptors that contributed to the theme of climate. Catrina may or may not have been aware of her principal's leadership style when she applied to join this new school. But she certainly recognized it as something important to their current social dimension. During our interview, she shared the following when discussing a principal competency level:

> I think it shows in how a school is functioning. Sometimes at the end of the year, five or six people want to transfer out…I think you just hear that and you know. Or if you are at a district meeting and one principal walks in and some teachers don't engage with their principal, whereas others are like, "Hey come over here," and they are sitting together. I think you just see it.

Catrina's examples stressed that in order to create a positive social dimension within the climate, the building principal has to be able to develop healthy supportive relationships with all staff members.

Catrina also described a feeling teachers get when being supported in an academic setting. She believed this went beyond the way teachers felt about their principal but rather the academic climate included the feeling that parents and students have about their education. She described it as the ability to come together or "connect" to make sure the school environment is the "best, safest environment for kids." She felt it was important to ensure that all stakeholders were working collectively to meet the common goal of "ensuring our kids are ready for the next step in their future."

Leadership. The third and final theme identified examined leadership and the various leadership styles described throughout the interviews. The interpretive codes that led to the development of the leadership theme were: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, shared leadership, and sustainable leadership. The clusters of meaning that aligned to the theme during my interview with Catrina were shared leadership, collaboration, and trust. These descriptors illuminated the sustainable leadership style, which was most prevalent in Catrina's interview data.

Catrina provided an example of an effective principal working with staff:

I would say that you would observe someone who does not think they are above anyone else or have more power than anyone else. He very much relies on what we can bring to the table. We play off each other. We use him to help us get what we need to meet our goals, and he uses us to meet the needs of the students. He is always commenting on how lucky he is to have us, and so I think it's a very even playing field here.

Again, the idea of power was discussed in Catrina's example, which clearly emphasizes the need to build upon the expertise of the group, sharing leadership roles among the staff. This shared leadership can be seen in Catrina's description of her grade level members, who are still trying to figure out their roles. She suggested that coming together as a new staff has given them the opportunity to work together to determine the expectations of the building. She contrasted this to her last experience, where she was required to "conform to what they were doing." She expressed that this was an acceptable practice and that the staff there taught her their way of doing things. However, she stated that this present experience was unique and challenging in that the group was making those decisions collectively now.

As I reflected upon Catrina's comments, I wondered how this might be implemented in my current setting, considering we were an already well-established school. Reflecting in my journal, I noted the following about their FACES structure and compared that to a similar structure that we use in our building. My notes highlighted this process:

> Typically we work together in small groups around building-wide topics or issues where teachers first have an opportunity to think independently, reflecting and responding on their own to a stimulus. Once they have had an opportunity to document their thoughts they will engage in table talk with a small group. Each small group would then have the opportunity to share out with the whole group and follow-up discussions may take place during PLC time or additional faculty meetings if needed. Team leaders are established at each table to ensure that the group norms are followed and that everyone has an opportunity to share and be heard. We have utilized several Keagan strategies during our faculty meetings to allow for large group and small group discussions; inside-outside concentric circles, four corners, carousel, world café, etc. The bottom line is as a leader you need to provide a structure that encourages engagement from everyone; otherwise you will only hear the loudest voices. We develop consensus in a variety of ways as well. Sometimes we chart ideas and vote using stickers or we use the fist to five approach to gain a quick visual for consensus. If the topic is more challenging or uncomfortable, staff are provided a voice through anonymous online surveys.

Conclusions: Cross-case Analysis

The central questions for this study were:

1. Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors?

2. How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors as they relate to the climate of the school?

The cross case analysis of this study served as means to illuminate the findings in relation to the research questions. Themes within the notes were reexamined, challenged, and amended throughout the process of coding documents, interviews and observations. Analysis of the documents in conjunction with interview and observation data helped to develop a holistic

understanding regarding perceptions of the participants. Analysis of the documents in conjunction with interview and observation data helped to develop a holistic understanding regarding perceptions of the participants. Through the activity of coding I found four themes, each with multiple interpretive and descriptive codes. The four major themes developed throughout the exploration of the data sources were teacher morale, role of the principal, school climate and leadership. Review of the documents identified two themes. Analysis of the observations resulted in two common themes while the interviews contributed meaning to three themes of the phenomenon. However, only two of these four dominant themes, teacher morale and leadership, were illuminated through cross-case analysis. Table 3 outlines where each of these four themes were identified.

Table 3

Cross Case Themes

Data Source	Teacher Morale	Role of Principal	School Climate	Leadership
Documents	X	X		
Observations	X			X
Interviews	X		X	X

Teacher Morale

During this study I defined the theme of teacher morale using Bentley and Rempel's (1980) definition which refers to the "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (p. 2). As noted in the review of the literature, teacher morale can often be thought of as a

dimension of school climate and was generally described as a "feeling" by teachers. Teacher morale was either mentioned or observed 269 times throughout the three data sources and six participants.

The research on teacher morale indicates that a principal's leadership behaviors contribute to teacher satisfaction. Administrative support, administrative leadership, personal interaction, and professional growth were all noted as descriptors used to discuss factors which affect teacher morale. The analysis of this theme provided a response to the first central question: Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors? As well as the sub-questions: Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers describe as being most important? and Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as needed in schools with low teacher morale?

A commonality across this theme and all participants was the manner in which the principal showed administrative support for teachers. They all mentioned the importance of being recognized and praised by their principal. This recognition was shown in a variety of ways, but teachers seemed to appreciate those responses from their principal that appeared to be genuine and authentic. Recognition was described as both verbal and non-verbal and could also be shown through random acts of kindness. Many of the teachers talked about awards and celebrations that became traditions among the staff. Personal notes and letters were emphasized and seemed to carry a lot of meaning for the teachers, as this act required the principal to know each of them as an individual, again recognizing their individual strengths and areas of expertise. The acts of recognition seemed to communicate a sense of worth to the teachers, contributing to their feeling of being valued.

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A principal who valued teachers as individuals found ways to help them balance their professional and personal life. Perhaps this concept was more prominent because the teachers themselves had participated in a year-long focus on balance with their principal. However, I believe that the concept of balance reflects the teachers' need to feel supported by their principal as they seek to find ways to minimize their workload. Teachers put in a considerable amount of time and effort working to meet the needs of all students and in return receive little compensation in terms of pay. The review of the literature maintains that teachers cite salary as one of the many reasons they leave the profession. However, during this process not one teacher mentioned salary. This could largely be because the principal really has no control over teacher salary but I believe it is more likely because these teacher participants felt so supported by their principal in other ways. It is commonly said by educators that they do not enter the profession for money, and I believe this research contributes to that view.

The teachers also mentioned the importance of a principal's leadership behaviors as they related to morale. They mentioned concepts such as input, collaboration, and shared leadership and decision-making as important leadership behaviors. During both observations, teachers were seen engaging in such behaviors with their colleagues. The teachers frequently mentioned that it was important to be heard. They appreciated being engaged in open dialogue in which they could express their opinions about topics related to the building. Nearly all of the participants recognized that providing input was not about getting their way but rather about being a participant in the decision making process. One teacher even said, "even if nothing happens I simply appreciate the opportunity to be heard." While teachers

were observed in leadership roles and discussing topics openly, it was noted that no form of consensus was used to establish agreement.

Administrative interaction was an additional area in which clusters of meaning formed within the theme of morale. Teachers emphasized the importance of establishing and fostering positive relationships with both their principal and their teaching colleagues. These relationships were built upon trust, which seemed to be a critical factor in their effectiveness as a collaborative team. Several of the participants discussed the notion that a leader must be approachable, having an open door policy, if teachers were going to feel comfortable in sharing the leadership role. Teachers also described many behaviors of their principal which they considered to be people-focused. These behaviors were often referred to as family oriented and included teachers being allowed to take time away from the professional setting to attend to personal matters without being made to feel guilty.

The final concept which the participants discussed related to teacher morale was the need to be provided with professional growth and to see their principal as a lead learner. All but one teacher talked about the principal's role as an evaluator, citing examples of how they appreciated positive feedback when being observed. Teachers also shared examples of how the principal set the tone by leading by example, being well read and knowledgeable in the field, and as a result shared those resources and information with teachers. This area directly contributed to the idea that the principal is considered a lead teacher.

Role of the Principal

During this study I defined the theme of principal role as leader for student learning also responsible for the operation of the school consistent with district policy, goals, and

objectives. The role of the principal was either mentioned or documented 116 times throughout the data collection process.

The research on the principal role indicates that the position began as head teacher, later evolving into a leader (Rousmaniere, 2007). Currently the principal's role requires some combination of management and leadership responsibilities such as: capable of implementing a strategic vision; linking the organizational mission and objectives to building and individual goals; delegating tasks; and handling day-to-day operations (Usdan et al., 2000). Communication, student safety/discipline, empowerment, decision-making, and input contributed to the idea of the principal's role and were all noted as descriptors used to discuss principal behaviors. The analysis of this theme provided a response to the first central question: Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors? As well as the sub-questions: Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers describe as being most important? and Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as needed in schools with low teacher morale?

This particular theme emerged primarily within the documents and highlighted the importance of communication. Principals set the tone, model the commitment, set standards, and hold staff accountable to those standards (Bolden et al., 2003). They are responsible for providing resources to help improve communication among parents, staff, and students. Principals are to model a culture of communication in their schools by providing resources, training, and accountability for good communication between school, home, and the community. All six of the participants in this study highlighted the manner in which their current principal communicates with staff. The student handbook, daily

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email, newsletters, hand written notes, and meeting agendas were a few of the examples provided during the collection of data. Much of this communication was directly connected to the way the principal communicated. He allowed for staff input, empowering them to be active members of the decision making process in their school.

Climate

Throughout this study I defined the theme of climate as the quality and character of school life. The theme was formed through several categories of meaning related to indicators of a positive school atmosphere and included the physical, social, and academic dimensions of the school setting, which were cited 122 times throughout the data. The analysis of this theme provided a response to the second central question of this study: How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors as they relate to the climate of the school? It also provided responses to the sub-questions: What are teachers' perceptions about teacher morale and school climate? and What are teachers' perceptions about leadership behavior and school climate?

A commonality across this theme was that the physical appearance of the building or classroom space does have an impact on the school atmosphere as well as the feeling teachers have when coming to work. In this particular setting, teachers were thrilled to be in a new space, and all six participants made one or more comments that contributed to this description. The building itself was constructed using materials which contributed to its environmentally friendly design. Teachers seemed to be excited to have an opportunity to start a new school despite the extra workload. The benefits of having a physically inviting space appeared to renew their spirits as well. The majority of the participants referred to the

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physical dimension only when discussing their new location. However, one teacher emphasized that she had worked in an older building and despite the less clean or flashy aesthetics, the building was cozy. Her comments suggested the physical space does not need to be new to contribute to an overall positive school climate.

The second area that contributed the climate was referred to as the social dimension. This dimension included several of the same areas noted in the theme of teacher morale, such as relationships, people focused, teacher value, and shared leadership. However, one additional descriptor suggested that a sense of community plays a strong part in the development of a positive school climate. Teachers looked beyond their own needs to include students, parents, and community members as important when developing positive feelings about school. Teachers referred to this as the atmosphere. Do individual feel welcome when they enter the building? Do they feel like they are a part of the educational process and the decisions about their education or their child's education? This sense of community was primarily discussed as teachers recognized the diverse needs of their student population. More often than not, they referred to the role teachers played in creating a positive school climate rather than the principal. However, several of the teachers shared that they believed that morale and climate were connected.

Finally, the academic dimension of school culture was described as important to the overall development of climate. The learning environment itself was rarely described by teachers, but many of them did refer to the establishment of high expectations as important to this area. Participants mentioned the role the principal played in setting the expectations but highlighted the idea that in their specific setting as a new school, it was important that they

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all had an opportunity to determine those together as a team. More importantly, teachers recognized that they had little control in regard to mandates on the federal or state level but appreciated when they were given the opportunity to provide input as it related to their particular grade level. The teachers addressed the idea that they were the experts in their area and should be given the creative freedom to meet the standard or expectations in their own way. The participants never used the term autonomy, but essentially that is what they were describing as it related to the academic dimension of developing a positive school climate. Teachers appreciated the level of trust their building principal placed in them.

Leadership

Throughout this study I defined the theme of leadership as a person who guides or leads the group. The theme of leadership was mentioned or observed 304 times throughout the three data sources, including the six participants. This was the strongest theme across the data for this study. Each of the six participants focused the majority of their comments and examples on this theme. The analysis of this theme provided response to the first central question of: Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors? as well as the sub-questions: Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers describe as being most important? and Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as needed in schools with low teacher morale?

During the interviews, teachers fully described experiences with various principals who operated differently and how morale was either positively or negatively impacted. Teacher participants during this interview process expressed that their principal values them as a person and teacher, recognizes their individual contributions, gathers their input, trusts

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them, and supports them both personally and professionally. The current principal was described as open, supportive, transparent, trusting, and a family man. His leadership style as outlined in the literature could be described as servant or sustainable.

Teachers with negative experiences described principals as top down, authoritative, and generally less personable. While those same teachers clearly identified differences in principal behavior, they were quick to clarify that they got along fine with principals, regardless of their leadership style. Even though teachers may not have personal problems with the principal, responses seemed to indicate that when leadership behaviors created a rigid environment, morale could become strained. Teachers implied that negative leadership behaviors brought about unnecessary tension that seemed to intensify their workload, regardless of the number of hours worked.

Evidence gathered during the interviews with all six participants indicate that teacher morale is extremely high in the selected building, and this is directly connected to the leadership behaviors of their principal. The participants recognized the uniqueness of their situation in that this is a new school. Because of this, everything about the school needed to be established. Teacher participants mentioned that this was difficult and challenging work and unlike anything they had ever experienced before. Many of them suggested that it was a very rewarding feeling. All six teacher participants commented on the level of staff input, indicating that they appreciated their principals' trust in them. They felt that he truly valued their opinion and worked to solicit their input in building decisions. The school is in its second year, and staff have had the opportunity to unite and create the climate together. While they appreciate the shared decision making and their principal's leadership style,

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there were a few comments that indicated they also sought more direction and responsiveness from their principal.

A commonality across this theme was the manner in which the principal chose to organize this new school and establish relationships. Teachers reflected upon the amount of time they spent developing positive relationships over the summer prior to their opening year. They mentioned that team building activities contributed to their level of trust, which later facilitated their ability to collaborate openly with one another on a variety of topics. This type of collaboration allowed teachers to engage in ongoing building improvement focused on the five areas of FACES (Financial, Academic, Climate, Employee, and Student safety) which was heavily coded in both the collected documents and observation data points.

Summary

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to develop a thick, rich description of the principal leadership behaviors which the six teachers in this study described as important to teacher morale. I found it interesting that despite the open-ended approach to the questioning, they all chose to emphasize experiences they have had with their shared current principal. As a result, the three themes that emerged throughout the data were identical. This illuminated for me the leadership behaviors which teachers perceive to positively and negatively impact teacher morale. These teachers reminded me of how important my own behaviors are as I seek to encourage and support my teachers to dig in and complete the difficult work associated with meeting the individual needs of all students.

The style of an organization's leadership is reflected in both the nature of that organization and its relationships with the community. In many ways, the style of its leader defines the organization. I've heard it said that a building will take on the personality of the principal. Therefore, a leader who seems themselves as the authority in a democratic organization can create chaos. A leader who is concerned with the bottom line in an organization built on the importance of relationships may weaken the overarching mission or vision of the organization. For that reason, principals must remain conscious of both their personal leadership style and the values of the organization itself.

This has been an extremely rewarding opportunity for me on a personal and professional level as I have felt affirmed in many of my own practices as principal while also being inspired to do better. As an administrator in a school where teacher morale has been considered low, the principal at the selected site has indirectly shared a plethora of ideas for recognizing teachers. Furthermore, I feel confident that he would be more than willing to collaborate with me as I look to find ways to show support for teachers on a day-to-day basis.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore in depth the following primary research questions, which specifically sought to understand and describe the teacher perceptions of principal leadership behaviors and the morale of teachers in the identified elementary public school. The experiences and descriptions provided by the teachers in this study were used to answer the research questions of this study, which were: Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors?; and How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors as they relate to the climate of the school?

This research enabled me as a novice researcher to develop my skills through direct application of the descriptive case study technique in a qualitative study. The purpose of my research was to deepen my understanding of principal leadership behaviors associated with morale as described by teachers. Patton suggested that qualitative researchers rarely come to a final conclusion, as "perfectionism breeds imperfections" (2002, p. 437). Therefore, rather than provide a conclusion, I have attempted to provide a succinct review of my analysis of the data. This descriptive case study should provide the reader with the potential for new knowledge as they interpret the descriptions provided (Merriam, 2009). The descriptions provide sufficient detail and indicate that the teacher participants in this study perceive leadership behavior to influence teacher morale.

Teacher Morale

Throughout the three data sources in this study, the theme of morale was present. The theme of teacher morale was described for the purposes of this study as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation" (Bentley & Rempel, 1980, p. 2). The data gathered during the interview process with all six participants underscored the need of individual teachers to feel supported by their colleagues and principal. Four areas were described during the interviews (administrative support, administrative leadership, administrator interactions, and professional growth), which included similar factors apprehended during the observations, leading to the interpretive codes (Cook, 1979).

Administrative support was found in several categories across multiple data sources; descriptors such as relationships, teacher value/worth, people-focused, and recognition contributed to the idea of administrative support. Providing opportunities for teachers to offer their opinions and input as part of the shared decision making process was important to all participants. The teachers voiced the importance of trust and having a principal who was approachable. This contributed to the area of administrative leadership. Subsequently, the way an administrator interacted with those around them contributed to the theme of morale. Teachers' descriptions of their principal's ability to focus on meeting the needs of teachers both personally and professionally were well-defined. Finally, professional growth was labeled as their principal's ability to evaluate and develop teachers. Teachers also suggested that it was important for their principal to be a reflective individual who continued to further their own development and learning.

The observations and documents revealed the theme of teacher morale as well. The documents and observed meetings contributed to the following descriptors: communication, relationships, trust, collaboration, input, recognition and people-focused.

Role of the Principal

Throughout the data sources in this study, the theme of the principal's role was present and was defined as an individual who serves as a leader for student learning and is also responsible for the operation of the school consistent with district policy, goals, and objectives. For the purposes of this discussion, many of the descriptors related to the role of the principal were also found in the leadership theme. The data gathered during the interview process with all six participants supported the notion that the principal's role requires some combination of management and leadership responsibilities in their principals such as: capable of implementing a strategic vision; linking the organizational mission and objectives to building and individual goals; delegating tasks; and handling day-to-day operations (Usdan et al., 2000). For this study, communication, student safety/discipline, leader as a problem solver, empowerment, decision-making, and input contributed to the idea of the principal's role and were all noted as descriptors used to discuss principal behaviors.

The documents were heavily coded as communication and provided clarity regarding the expectations for student behavior as well as disciplinary action. During my observations and interviews it was noted that the school utilized a positive approach to student behavior and looked for ways to encourage students to meet the posted behavior expectations. Disruptive behaviors can create barriers to learning as they disrupt the learning community. In order to remove those barriers the principal at the selected site had placed an emphasis on

a school wide system of support that included proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors. A system of positive behavior support and intervention lends itself to the social dimension of school climate which is addressed in the following section.

Climate

Tableman (2004) indicated that school climate should be assessed on varied aspects of the school environment: a physical environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning; a social environment that promotes communication and interaction; an affective environment that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem; and an academic environment that promotes learning and self-fulfillment. For the purposes of this discussion, the social and affective environments revealed a significant overlap with the research on morale. The social environment that supports learning is characterized by the collegial interactions among stakeholders, including active communication and shared decision making (Tableman).

Climate was a theme that was presented in the data collection by all six participant interviews. For this study, climate was defined and described as "the quality and character of school life" and is based on "patterns of students', parents', and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (NSCC, 2013, p. 1).

For this study, the indicators of a positive school climate included the physical, social, and academic dimensions of the school setting. Teachers frequently commented on the overall appearance of the building or their classroom space. The physical space was noted

and reflected upon in my observation journal. However, from the teacher's perspective, their comments mainly focused on the aesthetics when describing factors that contributed to the physical dimension of school climate. The topic of safety did not emerge during the interviews with the six participants. While this does not indicate a lack of importance, it could reflect a lack of concern for safety in this particular suburban school. The analysis of the student handbook as a document supported this idea. The document clearly communicated rules about physical violence, verbal abuse, harassment, and teasing. Likewise, clear and consistent norms for adult intervention were established. While the purpose of my observations was not to evaluate these rules, there did appear to be a sense that students and adults felt safe from physical harm.

The social dimensions of the school climate were most frequently cited during the data collection process. Each of the six teacher participants emphasized the importance of relationships, shared leadership, as well as developing a sense of community. Teachers emphasized the role they played in developing the positive feelings experienced by students, parents, and community members when they enter their building. The teacher participants suggested that their morale was strongly connected to the behaviors of a principal, and while morale and climate were interconnected, it was more commonly accepted that the teachers themselves played an important role in developing the school climate. Teachers cited their interactions with students as well as with their colleagues as behaviors that contributed to the social dimension of climate.

Academic dimensions was the final interpretive code that resonated with the data gathered and tied to the theme of climate. Within the academic dimension of climate, the

participants expressed the idea that leaders establish high expectations for teachers and student learning but provide support through continued professional learning with an emphasis on best practices designed to improve teaching (Cotton 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006). Additionally, the principal should be responsible for developing an environment in which sharing decision-making and collaboration can take place among all stakeholders (Sergiovanni, 2007). The trend towards the decentralization of power has helped to facilitate the process of collaboration by allowing principals to build a community of leaders.

Leadership

A broad research base spanning the last 30 years reinforces and reiterates the critical role that principals play in the life of schools (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2004). With the development of the ISLLC standards, there has been a shift from a focus on individual leaders and their behaviors to a focus on shared leadership and the need to guide and improve schools. The new leadership agenda seeks to diagnose complex contemporary challenges and focus the attention of the school and its community on rigorous and equitable learning opportunities. The theme of leadership was the most prevalent one throughout the three data sources, including all six cases. Leadership was defined as a person who guides or leads the group. Each of the six cases provided descriptions that were used to develop the four varied leadership styles: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and sustainable leadership.

Two leadership styles were consistently described by each of the six teacher participants. Both servant leadership and sustainable leadership were described as styles which they believed to have a positive influence on the morale of teachers. Data collected

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during the interviews suggest that leaders should have good people skills, show care and concern for others, recognize the contributions of all members, be a good communicator and listener, and work to distribute the teacher workload. Additionally, beliefs that emerged among the teacher participants were that administrators should be approachable, trusting, and have high expectations. Concepts such as problem-solving, empowerment, and risk taking were less prevalent in the interview data; however, the observations revealed a stronger connection to such behaviors (Fullan, 2002; 2007; Leithwood et al., 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; NTP, 2013).

The principal of the school where I conducted my research was asked to open this new school. He was tasked with interviewing applicants from four already established schools within the district. Several of the teacher participants in this study worked with the principal before transferring. Those who already had a working relationship with him indicated that they applied and sought transfer because of his leadership. Jennifer replayed her reaction, jumping up and down, waving her arms, saying "take me, take me." This validates the notion that quality teachers will walk away from a school where the leadership does not respect or trust them or seek to empower them. Conversely, teachers will follow a principal to the most challenging school if that principal has demonstrated trust and respect as well as a willingness to allow teachers the freedom to select and implement the best instructional methods for their students. Teachers thrive in a culture of high expectations, creativity, collaboration, and collegiality. Principals have the most impact on creating that environment (NTP, 2013).

Policies and practices that foster distrust are based upon individual circumstances and could be impacted by the size of the school, its historical and current reputation regarding teacher and administrator relationships, and other factors. In order to develop trust with teachers and change core teaching practices, a foundation of teacher-principal trust must exist. I believe that this foundation is developed by a principal's demonstration of personal integrity, commitment, follow-through, and honesty in their interactions. Equally important showing concern about the feelings of teachers and treating people with respect and dignity (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). All six teacher participants commented on the level of staff input, indicating that they appreciated their principal's trust in them. They felt that he truly valued their opinion and worked to solicit their input in building decisions. While they appreciated the shared decision making and their principal's leadership style, there were a few comments that indicated they also sought more direction and responsiveness from their principal.

Communication of expectations should be included in continuous discussions regarding progress toward any given goal. This can be done through faculty meetings, in-service sessions, ongoing weekly PLC times, weekly newsletters to the staff, and so forth. Ultimately, what gets measured gets done, and the principal and teacher leaders can be responsible for keeping their teams focused on what is most important. This also requires that the principal minimize other distractions and limit the number of initiatives or goals that the staff collectively work on at one time.

Moving beyond the researcher's role, as a principal I could see the value in what the leader was trying to accomplish by providing structures to allow for staff input and shared

decision making. However, further implications for principal leadership behavior may be to

provide more information or guidance as teachers work in small groups. Likewise, one could

infer the need to provide soft deadlines when making decisions in order to keep from

overextending the conversation. Additionally, principals who seek to gather input from

teachers might choose to implement a strategy for determining consensus. A principal could

ask staff to show consensus on their hand, by raising a finger to represent the level of

agreement or disagreement. Fist to five is another effective strategy for developing

consensus.

The review of the literature on leadership theory and its evolution provide insight into

the qualities of a successful leader. The varied theories suggested that leaders should

respond to different situations and contexts in relation to their role and their constituents

(Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2007; Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). While an individual may assert

power and not be a leader it is impossible for a individual who is a leader to not have power.

An assessment of this situation requires principals as leaders to develop an understanding of

their role as it relates to power and influence. While these two concepts, power and

leadership, are connected, a principal must realize that power does not belong to only one

person but understand how power and influence shape their role as leader (Jardine, 2005).

This particular study was not about the principal of the selected school but rather

teacher perceptions of the leadership behaviors. However, all six teacher participants clearly

described behaviors of their current male principal. While the principal of the school

unmistakably exhibited collaborative leadership behaviors there were still subtle power

issues which emerged during the teacher interviews. Teachers respected their principal's

collaborative leadership style; many of them noted that as the leader he was in charge and ultimately had the final say. I suspect that this principal did not misuse his power or influence but rather leveraged it to empower the teachers to take an active role in the decision making of their school. Beyond the role of power, expectations regarding gender may have contributed to the teachers' perceptions of their current principal and the various aspects of his leadership style. This left me wondering under what conditions would gender have an impact. Would teachers have responded differently to a female leader with a similar leadership style? Would the power dynamics change? How does gender impact the principal's role, perceived leadership behaviors and overall level of teacher morale? These questions may be important to this topic for future researchers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study I offer several recommendations to district and building leaders who are seeking to foster high teacher morale as well as develop a positive school climate. The recommendations involve the topics of professional development and social networking for principals, which if followed, could foster the development of leadership behaviors known to positively impact teacher morale.

Professional Development

As the role of the principal continues to evolve, leaders must continue to grow and develop themselves. The literature review made possible my interpretation of the observed phenomena during this study. Reading the literature brought to life the various leadership styles that could potentially support a principal as they understand their role and the potential impact of their behavior on those around them. Professional development opportunities at the

district level may be influenced and refined in order to build capacity among school leaders with the desire to improve teacher morale and as a result, positively impact student achievement.

As a beginning principal, my role was to support and develop the lead principal of my school. As a result, the role of an assistant principal varied greatly from that of the role of the principal. However, I did not fully understand that until I became the lead principal of a school. I share that background in order to support the following point. The professional development that I received as a beginning principal occurred as an assistant principal. Until then, my knowledge was limited to my graduate studies and included very little practical experience. While I appreciated the opportunities my school district allowed me to participate in, programs such as Missouri's Leadership Academy and the HELP-IS mentoring program, I received little to no support or professional development when I made the transition to lead principal five years later. While every administrator has a different career path, I recommend that districts be committed to providing ongoing professional development necessary in order to ensure the success of principals as they step into the lead principal role.

Principals are constantly focusing on developing their teachers and other staff members. Just like teachers, principals' professional development must be planned, long-term, embedded in their jobs, focused on student achievement, and supportive of reflective practice. Principals should ask themselves, "What can I do to access professional development opportunities for myself?" In the same way, district level administrators should

ask what they can do to provide principals with quality professional development opportunities.

In each of the varied settings in which I've been employed, the primary means of providing professional development for leaders was conducted through group book studies. However, simply participating in a book study as a whole group does not speak to the individual needs of principals. Principals should be engaged in a reflective inquiry process in which they are required to reflect upon their leadership behaviors. The focus should be to create principals who are able to make informed, reflective, and critical judgments about their own professional practices. Principals need to be active participants in their own learning. The source of knowledge is in self-reflection and engagement. The goal is to encourage principals to reflect upon their own values and beliefs as the school leader. This process would encourage risk-taking and the exploration of new skills and concepts that principals can then apply to their school setting. Based upon the principals' reflections and areas of exploration desired, district leaders should then seek to find professional development opportunities to meet their varied needs.

Reading and journaling are fundamental practices to professional development. However, in today's ever expanding world, technology and access to online resources could provide a whole new approach to professional development for principals. Online professional development can be found in interactive chat rooms, discussions initiated in blogs, as well as in online courses and webinars. As a principal and instructional leader, I must make time to engage with other principals about the pressing topics and complex problems found within our schools. I know that I learn best by engaging in conversation with

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others; therefore, it only makes sense that I would benefit from listening to others and reflecting upon my own practices as a result of these rich conversations. These conversations should encourage and shape one's actions plans for future professional development.

Networking

The final recommendations are related to the notion of how networking and relationships positively impact principals and their ability to problem-solve, reflect, and change as a leader. Social Networking Analysis was a concept new to me as a principal. It was not until I embarked upon this journey that I encountered the term in a required course. I found its connection to the topic of leadership to be a natural fit and to emphasize the importance and value of relationships in the school setting. Specifically, I was reminded of the importance of my own professional growth and finding creative ways to encourage networking with other colleagues. Principals cannot be expected to be experts in every subject and must rely upon the collective knowledge of those within their organization as well as though outside the organization. In fact, the role of the principal can be a lonely one, often working in isolation from others. One purpose then of professional networking is to allow principals to expand their circle of colleagues or critical friends to diminish the feeling of isolation (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010).

Regardless of the type of networking principals employ, they should seek to examine their own professional relationships with others as a way to increase their leadership skills. Should principals select the social network analysis theory, they could utilize the peer leadership network to assist in cultivating their vision statement for instructional climate, instruction, and leadership within their building. In my experience as a school principal, the

peer leadership network is a good way for principals to connect with others who share similar identities, circumstances, and contexts to provide trusted and relevant information, advice, and support (Moody, 2004). Likewise, this network provides opportunities to ask questions and problem-solve with others without worrying about adverse consequences. Through conversation with others, leaders can self-reflect, clarify their own values, and grow both professional and personally.

Social networking emphasizes collaboration, connections, and relationships. Intensive, ongoing, and collaborative professional development is exactly what research shows to be most effective for improving both teachers' practice and student learning. I think the same could be applied to the improvement of principal practice. Yet for most principals, this is a sporadic experience. As a principal and instructional leader, I must make time to engage in deep conversations about leadership. Networking could directly impact student achievement by accomplishing organization goals through the sharing of knowledge, instructional materials, and professional advice. Likewise, it could indirectly impact student achievement by encouraging personal networking through the development of friendships and support related to non-school matters. These relationships are critical for principals as they seek the professional and personal development and encouragement needed to be a successful 21st century school leader.

Social Networking Analysis confirmed for me the importance of developing a collective vision. Wheatley (2006) affirmed this notion by suggesting that leaders give up the belief that it is their task to develop the vision for an organization. Through the data collection process and my readings, I have a deeper understanding of the various leadership

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styles. Regardless of the style chosen, principals are to be the architect of a collective vision, to model behaviors consistent with that vision, and to allocate resources and distribute information that helps the total school community move toward that vision. Furthermore, they must be proficient with curriculum and assessments, allowing them to recognize, understand, evaluate, and ensure that effective teaching practices are occurring, encouraging collaboration, and promoting teacher professional growth.

In order to meet the demands of accountability, school leaders must capitalize on the wealth of knowledge and skills shared within professional learning communities and social networks. A 21st century leader must understand that sustainability depends on many leaders. Personally, through this study, I feel that I have found another principal who shares leadership behaviors similar to my own. I believe that continuing to network with him will benefit us both as we continue to strive to meet the needs of our respective teaching staff.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study examined the perceptions of six white, female teachers in the urban setting as they related to principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale. Other researchers may want to consider implementing the case study technique as a viable approach to leadership behavior research. I suggest research which would include multiple cases across various school buildings and/or districts in an urban or rural setting where poverty rates would be higher than the suburban setting selected for this study. For the purposes of my research, I selected six participants from one suburban setting. As a result, many of the examples provided were redundant as they chose to reflect upon their current principal and his leadership behaviors. Selecting participants from multiple locations could potentially allow

the researcher the opportunity to compare and contrast several characteristics of the exhibited leadership behaviors. The potential for making generalizations in regard to the research findings could add value to this and future studies. Likewise, the selected site provided a homogenous group of participants with six white females. Future researchers may want to consider how a diverse group of teacher participants might affect the perceptions of teacher morale, leadership, and climate? Perhaps the researcher would generate different meanings among the data collected.

Additionally, future researchers may want to consider a mixed case study, combining the qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Much of the research done on this topic has been strictly quantitative. Therefore, there are a number of quantitative tools that one could use to collect data. This quantifiable data, combined with the qualitative description, could provide a useful and full description of the phenomena.

This study focused on the perspectives of elementary teachers, grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Teachers and principals who serve students in the secondary setting could potentially be another area for examination. A study of this nature could provide perspective on how principal leadership behaviors impact teachers at the secondary level.

Finally, an additional suggestion for future research is to conduct a similar study of principal perceptions of leadership behaviors believed to impact teacher morale and compare the findings to the perceptions of teachers in the district. This could potentially pinpoint the differences between the two stakeholders and generate conversation among district leaders about how to address the discrepancies between the values of the two groups.

Final Thoughts

Teacher retention continues to be a high priority for leaders in the United States, where accountability measures such as No Child Left Behind Act, Race to the Top, and Missouri's Top 10 in 20 continue to place increased pressure on teachers. Along with state and federal assessment initiatives, principals should assess their teachers to determine what is needed as it relates to their overall satisfaction in the workplace, contributing to higher levels of morale, teacher retention, and student achievement. Additionally, this research should provide insight to principals, through a description of the leadership behaviors discussed. While reflecting upon these behaviors and leadership styles described, principals or aspiring principals can learn from and quite possibly emulate many of the actions described to improve their own practice.

CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL ACCESS (SUPERINTENDENT)

I, _____, Superintendent of
(Name)

_____
(Name of School)

School, hereby give permission to Mandy Welch to be on the campus and inside of the
school facility for the purpose of conducting research for her doctoral dissertation. I also
grant permission for Mandy Welch to interact with specific teachers that have been chosen to
participate in her study.

Mandy has agreed to maintain the confidentiality of the school, and each informant.

Signature_____
            (Superintendent)

Date _____

Signature_____
            (Researcher)

Date _____

APPENDIX B

PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is being conducted at the school in which you are employed. The researcher in charge of this study is Dr. Dianne Smith.

The researcher is asking you to take part in this research study because you have met the following criteria: (1) three or more years of administrative experience, (2) have specialist or doctorate degree. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher will go over this consent form with you. Ask her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains what to expect, the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

Background

Principal behaviors are an important factor when facilitating positive teacher morale. The literature suggests that teachers need to feel valued by their principals through recognition of their contributions to the overall effectiveness of the school (National Teaching Project, 2013; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995; Whitaker, Whitaker & Lumpe, 2000). Teachers have expressed the desire to feel supported by their principal and desire a leader who is approachable, willing to listen, and able to collaborate with other stakeholders in order to solve problems (Barth, 1988, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2007).

In order to keep highly qualified teachers engaged in the profession, it is important to understand the factors that have an impact on teacher morale, both negative and positive (Fullan, 2007; Margolis & Nagel 2006). This study will strive specifically to understand and describe teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors as they relate to teacher morale in the elementary school setting. Because teachers spend a significant amount of time with students and have the greatest capacity to positively impact student achievement, school leaders must seek to understand the relationship between their behavior and morale (Darling Hammond, 2003).

The researcher is interested in acquiring teacher participants who will be willing to share information. Teacher participants must meet the criteria of five or more years of teaching experience, have a master's or specialist degree, currently hold or have recently held a leadership role within their building, and teach in the general education setting. You will be one of 6 subjects in the study at your school. Additionally, the principal of the school has met specific criterion, having at least three years of administrative experience and a specialist or doctorate degree.

As principal you will be asked to provide a list of teachers who meet this initial criteria. The researcher will then follow up with possible candidates regarding their participation

Purpose

In order to keep highly-qualified teachers engaged in the profession, it is important to understand the factors that have an impact on teacher morale, both negative and positive. This study will strive specifically to understand and describe teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors as they relate to teacher morale in the elementary school setting. Because teachers spend a significant amount of time with students and have the greatest capacity to positively impact student achievement, school leaders must seek to understand the relationship between their behavior and morale.

Procedures

Your involvement will take place during the second semester of the 2013-2014 school year and will be completed by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Your involvement will likely be completed over a 1-2 month time period. The process of data collection will utilize two main methods: observations of teacher and principal interactions and semi-structured interviews with 6 teacher participants.

In addition to the teacher interviews, the researcher will review and extract meaning from various internal and external documents in an effort to gain additional insight into the varied leadership behaviors of the selected principal. Designated documents may consist of handbooks, staff newsletters, emails to the staff, and other miscellaneous documents found on the building website and intranet.

The final source of data will be direct observations of principal and teacher interactions, which will be analyzed in an attempt to support and expand meaning of the interview and document data. The proposed observations of interactions between the principal and teachers may take place during faculty meetings, professional learning communities meetings, various committees, and other unstructured interaction times.

All letters of consent, notes, or communication of any kind will be stored on a university computer or campus central location to ensure proper data security and confidentiality measures are taken. Electronic files will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office. Additionally, paper documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in locked office. This data will be saved for seven years after the completion of the research. Data will be used for the proposed study only and will not be saved or used for future research. If you withdraw from the study, previously collected data will be kept and used. After 7 years all electronic files will be permanently deleted and written materials will be destroyed using a shredder.

Example:
Visit 1/Week 1
Meet with the principal to collect documents for review. These may include staff handbook, emails to staff, professional development meeting agendas, PLC meeting agendas, etc.

Visit 2/Week 2
Teacher Interviews (Does not include the principal) Initial 30 minute interview, establish a relationship, purpose of the study, and collect initial data regarding perceptions of principal leadership behavior and teacher morale.

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<u>Visit 3/Week 3</u>
Observation of principal and teacher interaction during a regularly scheduled meeting.

<u>Visit 4/ Week 4</u>
Follow up interview (30 minutes) for teacher participant to review transcripts from previous interview and to clarify any answers or gaps in the research study. Principal may assist in finding a central secure location for interviews on school grounds.

<u>Visit 5/Week 5</u>
Observation of principal and teacher interaction during a regularly scheduled meeting.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for approximately 1-2 months and be asked to provide documents as well as allow me to observe you interacting with staff during a regularly scheduled meeting.

Participation in this study is voluntary and should you choose to no longer participate, you are welcome to do so free of judgment. When you are done taking part in this study, you will still have access to the research study and its results.

Risks and Inconveniences
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risk of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. However, teacher participants may feel uncomfortable talking about principal leadership behaviors even though the leadership behaviors described do not need to be about the principal they currently work with. Additionally, as the principal you may feel uncomfortable knowing that 6 of your teachers may be sharing their perceptions of your leadership behavior. The ethical consideration of participants and their involvement will seek to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and ultimately to develop positive relationships that will allow the researcher to foster trust and confidence as it relates to the intended research. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study.

If a participant is uncomfortable in answering a question, they simply need to express their feelings. Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If a participant chooses to be in the study, they are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If they choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, their decision will not affect any care or benefits they are entitled to. While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

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Benefits

This study will seek to complement the current literature and body of research regarding effective principal leadership behaviors. Additionally, this study will potentially have important implications for principal practice. This study will not directly benefit the teacher participants. However, other people may benefit in the future as it intends to help principals understand how teachers perceive their leadership behaviors in relationship to teacher morale. Additionally, professional development opportunities at the university and district level may be influenced and refined in order to build capacity among school leaders with the desire to improve teacher morale and as a result positively impact student achievement.

Fees and Expenses

This study will require no monetary costs to the participant.

Compensation

Participants will not receive any type of compensation for participating in this proposed research study.

Alternatives to Study Participation

The alternative is not to take part in the study.

Confidentiality

While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

All letters of consent, notes, or communication of any kind will be stored on a university computer or campus central location to ensure proper data security and confidentiality measures are taken. Electronic files will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office. Additionally, paper documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in locked office. This data will be saved for seven years after completion of the research. Participants will also be assigned pseudonyms from the beginning, and actual names will not be used in any part of the research. Data will be used for the proposed study only and will not be saved or used for future research. If the subject withdraws from the study, previously collected data will be kept and used. After 7 years all electronic files will be permanently deleted and written materials will be destroyed using a shredder.

Contacts for Questions about the Study

You should contact the Office of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may call the researcher, Mandy Welch, at 816-585-1348 or Dr. Dianne Smith at 816-235-2458 if you have any questions about this study. You may also call her if any problems come up.

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Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, your decision will not affect any care or benefits you are entitled to.

You have read this Consent Form or it has been read to you. You have been told why this research is being done and what will happen if you take part in the study, including the risks and benefits. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time in the future by calling Dr. Dianne Smith at 816-235-2458 or Mandy Welch at 816-585-1348. By signing this consent form, you volunteer and consent to take part in this research study. Study staff will give you a copy of this consent form.

_____   _____

Signature (Volunteer Subject)   **Date**

_____

Printed Name (Volunteer Subject)

_____   _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   **Date**

_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

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Approved
from: 02/24/2014 to:02/23/2015

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is being conducted at the school in which you are employed. The researcher in charge of this study is Dr. Dianne Smith.

The researcher is asking you to take part in this research study because you have met the following criteria: (1) five or more years of teaching experience; (2) have a master's or specialist degree; (3) currently hold or have recently held a leadership role within the building; and (4) teach in the general education setting. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher will go over this consent form with you. Ask her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains what to expect: the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

Background
Principal behaviors are an important factor when facilitating positive teacher morale. The literature suggests that teachers need to feel valued by their principals through recognition of their contributions to the overall effectiveness of the school (National Teaching Project, 2013; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995; Whitaker, Whitaker & Lumpa, 2000). Teachers have expressed the desire to feel supported by their principal and desire a leader who is approachable, willing to listen, and able to collaborate with other stakeholders in order to solve problems (Barth, 1988; 2006; Sergiovanni, 2007).

In order to keep highly-qualified teachers engaged in the profession, it is important to understand the factors that have an impact on teacher morale, both negative and positive (Fullan, 2007; Margolis & Nagel, 2006). This study will strive specifically to understand and describe teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors as they relate to teacher morale in the elementary school setting. Because teachers spend a significant amount of time with students and have the greatest capacity to positively impact student achievement, school leaders must seek to understand the relationship between their behavior and morale (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

The researcher is interested in acquiring teacher participants who will be willing to share information. Teacher participants must meet the criteria of five or more years of teaching experience, have a master's or specialist degree, currently hold or have recently held a leadership role within their building, and teach in the general education setting. You will be one of 6 subjects in the study at your school. Additionally, the principal of the school has

meet specific criterion, having at least three years of administrative experience and a specialist or doctorate degree.

Purpose
In order to keep highly-qualified teachers engaged in the profession, it is important to understand the factors that have an impact on teacher morale, both negative and positive. This study will strive specifically to understand and describe teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors as they relate to teacher morale in the elementary school setting. Because teachers spend a significant amount of time with students and have the greatest capacity to positively impact student achievement, school leaders must seek to understand the relationship between their behavior and morale.

Procedures
Your involvement will take place during the second semester of the 2013-2014 school year and will be completed by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Your involvement will likely be completed over a 1-2 month time period. The process of data collection will utilize two main methods: observations of teacher and principal interactions and semi-structured interviews with 6 teacher participants. One-on-one interviews with the 6 teachers will help to define teacher morale and effective leadership practice and will provide an opportunity to acquire teachers' perceptions of effective principal leadership behaviors.

This letter will outline the purpose of the study, risks, benefits, information to be collected, and how the data would be used. Your participation is voluntary and confidentiality will be ensured. Prior to the interview, you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the process. You will be offered the opportunity to meet at a convenient location on school grounds of your choosing. Interviews will be held during the school day, and all six interviews will be conducted on the same day. Anticipated interviews will last approximately thirty to forty minutes each. You will participate in a minimum of one interview with a follow-up interview as needed to clarify information or address gaps in the collected data.

Interviews will be digitally recorded using the Quick Voice Pro iPad app, and each of these will be transcribed verbatim. You will then be provided transcripts of your interview for review and revision if needed to clarify your position. Transcriptions will not use actual participant names but pseudonyms to protect the identity of all participants, school building, and the school district. The recordings will be deleted once they have been transcribed. All letters of consent, notes, or communication of any kind will be stored on a university computer or campus central location to ensure proper data security and confidentiality measures are taken. Electronic files will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office. Additionally, paper documents will be stored in a locked filling cabinet in locked office. This data will be saved for seven years after the completion of the research. Data will be used for the proposed study only and will not be saved or used for future research. If you withdraw from the study, previously collected data will be kept and used. After 7 years all electronic files will be permanently deleted and written materials will be destroyed using a shredder.

In addition to interviews, the researcher will review and extract meaning from various internal and external documents in an effort to gain additional insight into the varied leadership behaviors of the selected principal. Designated documents may consist of handbooks, staff newsletters, emails to the staff, and other documents found on the building website and intranet.

The final source of data will be direct observations of principal and teacher interactions, which will be analyzed in an attempt to support and expand meaning of the interview and document data. The proposed observations of interactions between the principal and teachers may take place during faculty meetings, professional learning communities meetings, various committees, and other unstructured interaction times.

Example:
Visit 1/Week 1
Meet with the principal to collect documents for review. These may include staff handbook, emails to staff, professional development meeting agendas, PLC meeting agendas, etc.

Visit 2/Week 2
Initial 30 minute teacher interview, establish a relationship, purpose of the study, and collect initial data regarding perceptions of principal leadership behavior and teacher morale.

Visit 3/Week 3
Observation of principal and teacher interaction during a regularly scheduled meeting.

Visit 4/ Week 4
Follow up interview (30 minutes) for participant to review transcripts from previous interview and to clarify any answers or gaps in the research study.

Visit 5/Week 5
Observation of principal and teacher interaction during a regularly scheduled meeting.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for approximately 1-2 months and be asked to participate in a minimum of one 30 to 40 minute interview with one follow up interview to review transcripts and clarify any answers or gaps in the research study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and should you choose to no longer participate, you are welcome to do so free of judgment. When you are done taking part in this study, you will still have access to the research study and its results.

Risks and Inconveniences

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risk of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. However, you

may feel uncomfortable talking about principal leadership behaviors even though the leadership behaviors described do not need to be about the principal you currently work with. The researchers seek to ensure your privacy, confidentiality, and ultimately to develop positive relationships that will allow the researcher to foster trust and confidence as it relates to the intended research. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study.

If you are uncomfortable in answering a question, you simply need to express your feelings. Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, your decision will not affect any care or benefits you are entitled to. While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

Benefits
This study will seek to complement the current literature and body of research regarding effective principal leadership behaviors. Additionally, this study will potentially have important implications for principal practice. This study will not directly benefit the teacher participants. However, other people may benefit in the future as it intends to help principals understand how teachers perceive their leadership behaviors in relationship to teacher morale. Additionally, professional development opportunities at the university and district level may be influenced and refined in order to build capacity among school leaders with the desire to improve teacher morale and as a result positively impact student achievement.

Fees and Expenses
This study will require no monetary costs to the participant.

Compensation
Participants will not receive any type of compensation for participating in this proposed research study.

Alternatives to Study Participation
The alternative is not to take part in the study.

Confidentiality
While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this

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Voluntary Participation
Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, your decision will not affect any care or benefits you are entitled to. The researchers, doctors or sponsors may stop the study or take you out of the study at any time if they decide that it is in your best interest to do so. They may do this for medical or administrative reasons or if you no longer meet the study criteria. You will be told of any important findings developed during the course of this research.

In case of Injury
There are no foreseen reasons to put safeguards in place to protect the physical health of the participants.

I hope you will see the importance of this proposed research study and agree to participate. If you are interested in participating please contact me. My contact information:

<div align="center">

Mandy Sue Welch
Doctoral Student
17819 Greyhawke Ridge
Smithville, Missouri 64089
816-585-1348
mswr3d@mail.umkc.edu

</div>

APPENDIX D

TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

SSIRB # 13-1001

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is being conducted at the school in which you are employed. The researcher in charge of this study is Dr. Dianne Smith.

The researcher is asking you to take part in this research study because you have met the following criteria: (1) five or more years of teaching experience; (2) have a master's or specialist degree; (3) currently hold or have recently held a leadership role within the building; and (4) teach in the general education setting. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher will go over this consent form with you. Ask her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

Background

Principal behaviors are an important factor when facilitating positive teacher morale. The literature suggests that teachers need to feel valued by their principals through recognition of their contributions to the overall effectiveness of the school (National Teaching Project, 2013; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995; Whitaker, Whitaker & Lumpe, 2000). Teachers have expressed the desire to feel supported by their principal and desire a leader who is approachable, willing to listen, and able to collaborate with other stakeholders in order to solve problems (Barth, 1988, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2007).

In order to keep highly-qualified teachers engaged in the profession, it is important to understand the factors that have an impact on teacher morale, both negative and positive (Fullan, 2007; Margolis & Nagel, 2006). This study will strive specifically to understand and describe teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors as they relate to teacher morale in the elementary school setting. Because teachers spend a significant amount of time with students and have the greatest capacity to positively impact student achievement, school leaders must seek to understand the relationship between their behavior and morale (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

The researcher is interested in acquiring teacher participant who will be willing to share information. Teacher participants must meet the criteria of five or more years of teaching experience, have a master's or specialist degree, currently hold or have recently held a leadership role within their building and teach in the general education setting. You will be one of 6 subjects in the study at your school. Additionally, the principal of the school has meet specific criterion, having at least three years of administrative experience and a specialist or doctorate degree.

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Version dated: 02/10/2014

Purpose

In order to keep highly-qualified teachers engaged in the profession, it is important to understand the factors that have an impact on teacher morale, both negative and positive. This study will strive specifically to understand and describe teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors as they relate to teacher morale in the elementary school setting. Because teachers spend a significant amount of time with students and have the greatest capacity to positively impact student achievement, school leaders must seek to understand the relationship between their behavior and morale.

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Your involvement will take place during the second semester of the 2013-2014 school year and will be completed by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Your involvement will likely be completed over a 1-2 month time period. The process of data collection will utilize two main methods: observations of teacher and principal interactions and semi-structured interviews with 6 teacher participants. One-on-one interviews with the 6 teachers will help to define teacher morale and effective leadership practice and will provide an opportunity to acquire teachers' perceptions of effective principal leadership behaviors.

This letter will outline the purpose of the study, risks, benefits, information to be collected, and how the data would be used. Your participation is voluntary and confidentiality will be ensured. Prior to the interview, you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the process. You will be offered the opportunity to meet at a convenient location on school grounds of your choosing. Interviews will be held during the school day, and all six interviews will be conducted on the same day. Anticipated interviews will last approximately thirty to forty minutes each. You will participate in a minimum of one interview with a follow-up interview as needed to clarify information or address gaps in the collected data.

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In addition to interviews, the researcher will review and extract meaning from various internal and external documents in an effort to gain additional insight into the varied leadership behaviors of the selected principal. Designated documents may consist of handbooks, staff newsletters, emails to the staff, and other documents found on the building website and intranet.

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Version dated: 02/19/2014

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| from: 02/24/2014 to:02/23/2015 |

The final source of data will be direct observations of principal and teacher interactions, which will be analyzed in an attempt to support and expand meaning of the interview and document data. The proposed observations of interactions between the principal and teachers may take place during faculty meetings, professional learning communities meetings, various committees, and other unstructured interaction times.

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If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for approximately 1-2 months and be asked to participate in a minimum of one 30 to 40 minute interview with one follow up interview to review transcripts and clarify any answers or gaps in the research study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and should you choose to no longer participate, you are welcome to do so free of judgment. When you are done taking part in this study, you will still have access to the research study and its results.

Risks and Inconveniences
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risk of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. However, you may feel uncomfortable talking about principal leadership behaviors even though the leadership behaviors described do not need to be about the principal you currently work with. The researchers seek to ensure your privacy, confidentiality, and ultimately to develop positive relationships that will allow the researcher to foster trust and confidence as it relates to the intended research. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study.

If you are uncomfortable in answering a question, you simply need to express your feelings. Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, your decision will not affect any care or benefits you are entitled to. While we

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will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

Benefits

This study will seek to complement the current literature and body of research regarding effective principal leadership behaviors. Additionally, this study will potentially have important implications for principal practice. This study will not directly benefit the teacher participants. However, other people may benefit in the future as it intends to help principals understand how teachers perceive their leadership behaviors in relationship to teacher morale. Additionally, professional development opportunities at the university and district level may be influenced and refined in order to build capacity among school leaders with the desire to improve teacher morale and as a result positively impact student achievement.

Fees and Expenses

This study will require no monetary costs to the participant.

Compensation

Participants will not receive any type of compensation for participating in this proposed research study.

Alternatives to Study Participation

The alternative is not to take part in the study.

Confidentiality

While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

All letters of consent, notes, or communication of any kind will be stored on a university computer or campus central location to ensure proper data security and confidentiality measures are taken. Electronic files will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office. Additionally, paper documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in locked office. This data will be saved for seven years after completion of the research. Participants will also be assigned pseudonyms from the beginning, and actual names will not be used in any part of the research. Data will be used for the proposed study only and will not be saved or used for future research. If the subject withdraws from the study, previously collected data will be kept and used. After 7 years all electronic files will be permanently deleted and written materials will be destroyed using a shredder.

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Contacts for Questions about the Study
You should contact the Office of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may call the researcher, Mandy Welch, at 816-585-1348 or Dr. Dianne Smith at 816-235-2458 if you have any questions about this study. You may also call her if any problems come up.

Voluntary Participation
Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, your decision will not affect any care or benefits you are entitled to.

You have read this Consent Form or it has been read to you. You have been told why this research is being done and what will happen if you take part in the study, including the risks and benefits. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time in the future by calling Dr. Dianne Smith at 816-235-2458 or Mandy Welch at 816-585-1348. By signing this consent form, you volunteer and consent to take part in this research study. Study staff will give you a copy of this consent form.

_____   _____
Signature (Volunteer Subject)   **Date**

_____
Printed Name (Volunteer Subject)

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   **Date**

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

UMKC Social Sciences IRB
Approved
from: 02/24/2014 to:02/23/2015

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTCOL

Opening Introduction & Description of Project: My name is Mandy Welch and I am in the process of completing my doctoral studies through UMKC in the area of Educational Leadership. I have been given the task to interview individuals important to my particular focus, teacher perceptions of principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale, and present an analysis of my findings. I know your time is valuable so I would like to thank you in advance for sharing your thoughts and experiences. Likewise, I realize that the given topic may create discomfort but appreciate your willingness to visit with me. All responses shared today will remain confidential and will only be used for the purposes of my dissertation topic. Your identity will not be revealed in my findings. For the purposes of this assignment I will be recording our conversation so that I may later go back and transcribe the conversation. Likewise, I may be jotting down notes while we talk. I would anticipate that the interview will last about thirty to forty minutes. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to give me a call.

Teacher:
1. Tell me about your principal's leadership style. How does he/she lead?
2. How would you define teacher morale? School climate?
3. Think about a time when you worked with an effective principal.
    a. Which leadership behaviors did they exhibit that made them successful?
    b. Which leadership behaviors did they exhibit that impacted teacher morale, positive or negative?
4. Describe the overall level of teacher morale in the building.
    a. Describe the relationship between the morale of your building and the overall school climate.
5. What behaviors does your principal demonstrate to encourage and cultivate positive teacher morale?
    a. What does your principal do to recognize and praise the contributions of teachers in your school?
    b. Overall, how would you describe the relationships between teachers at this school?
    c. How does your principal show teachers that he/she cares about them as individuals?
6. What would I observe when watching your principal work with staff?
7. Describe ways in which your principal contributes to or facilitates collegial support.
8. How can you tell that a principal is competent in doing his/her job?
    a. In what ways do you see your principal as an effective leader?
9. Which leadership behaviors do you perceive your principal is in need of developing?
10. What else can you tell me about the leadership behaviors of your principal?

Closing Statement: I would like to thank you for your time. This interview has been informative, and I appreciate your insight as it relates to leadership and teacher morale.

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Research Question: Are there any differences in teacher morale associated with principal leadership behaviors? Sub Questions: • Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers describe as being most important? • What perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as prevalent in schools with high teacher morale? • Which perceived leadership behaviors do teachers identify as needed in schools with low teacher morale?	Observation Protocol: Evidence of effective leadership practices in interactions with teachers: ☐ Modeling the way ☐ Inspiring a shared vision ☐ Challenging the process ☐ Enabling others to act ☐ Encouraging the heart ☐ Openness ☐ Honesty ☐ Reliability ☐ Sound knowledge base ☐ Instructional leadership skills ☐ Interpersonal skills ☐ Makes wise decisions ☐ Handles difficult situations well
Research Question: How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors in relationship to the climate of the school? Sub Questions: • What are teachers' perceptions about teacher morale and school climate?	Observation Protocol: Evidence of factors known to impact morale and school climate: ☐ Teacher collaboration ☐ Quality interpersonal relationships between and among students, teachers, and staff ☐ Workload ☐ Student Behavior/Discipline ☐ Administrative support and leadership ☐ School atmosphere ☐ Praise/Recognition ☐ Ceremonies/rituals/celebrations ☐ Building and classroom appearance ☐ Class sizes and teacher-student ratios ☐ Organization of the school ☐ Resources available to teachers and students ☐ Safety
Research Question: How do teachers perceive teacher morale and principal leadership behaviors in relationship to the climate of the school? Sub Questions: • What are teachers' perceptions about leadership behavior and school climate?	Observation Protocol: Evidence of factors known to impact school climate ☐ Principals encourage risk taking ☐ Principals provide support with student behavior ☐ Principals provide support for teacher development ☐ Principal shows personal interest in teachers' well-being ☐ Norms, values and expectations support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. ☐ Shared decision making by all stakeholders. ☐ Equitable and fair treatment of students and staff.

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VITA

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Mrs. Welch began her professional career as a classroom teacher in the Warrensburg R-VI Public School System in 2000, earning the Missouri Outstanding Beginning Teacher of the Year Award from the Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. She returned to UCM and earned her Master's in Educational Administration in 2004. Later that same year, Mandy began her first position in the principalship.

Mrs. Welch continued her role as a building level administrator in the Smithville R-II School District in 2007, where she remains. While there she was nominated for the Northland Chamber of Commerce Support to Education Award. Mandy earned her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2014.

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