

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND
TEACHER RETENTION IN THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

by

Deana Michelle Jones

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Teacher retention has been at the forefront of educational concerns for many years and continues to be a legitimate issue for public and private education alike. Most available research, however, addresses public education with very limited research in this regard addressing Christian education. Evidence from public education research has highlighted the principal's important role in teacher retention. Therefore, the principal's role is a legitimate focus for research in the field of teacher retention in Christian education. The purpose of this correlational study is to determine if there is a relationship between the principal's consideration or initiating structure leadership behaviors and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools (AACS). The independent variables were the leader's behaviors, and the dependent variable was teacher retention rates of those leaders' schools. A random sample of 100 teachers from the American Association of Christian Schools participated in the study. Pearson correlations were conducted to test the null hypotheses and to determine if there were any statistically significant relationships between the principals' behaviors and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools. The results of analysis yielded a non-significant correlation of leader's consideration behaviors and teacher retention and a significant negative correlation of a leader's initiating structure behaviors and teacher retention. Although causation cannot be assigned, initiating structure behaviors had a negative relationship to teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools. Thus, a subsequent experimental research, which would address the gap in the literature, would be to determine if there is a causal relationship between initiating structure leader behaviors and teacher retention.

Keywords: consideration behaviors, initiating structure behaviors, leadership behaviors, teacher retention.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to Oakwood Christian Academy... the reason why I became interested in learning more about Christian education; the reason why I was inspired to continue my college career; and the reason why I felt compelled to learn more about how to improve Christian education as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Christ must be first in all things, and therefore first I thank Him for strengthening and accompanying me through this process (Philippians 4:13).

My best friend and wonderful husband, Robert Lee Jones, was prayerful and patient with me throughout this process. He supported me, and he was my personal chauffeur to every class on campus.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS)

American Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ)

Leader Member Exchange (LMX)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

It is commonly accepted that no school can be any better than the quality of its teachers (Stronge & Tucker, 2003, p.3). That being the case, it is imperative that schools make every effort to retain their best teachers. This is true for both public and private schools. Teacher attrition, or turnover, has become a concern nationwide. “Teacher turnover refers to the fact that teachers either quit teaching or transfer to other schools” (Mecklenburg, 2004, p. 47). Both public and private schools are searching for the factors involved in retaining their quality educators. Thus, much research has developed to address this concern. Although most research available today surrounds public education, Christian education statistically has the greater need for valuable retention information. The National Center for Education Statistics noted that private schools have almost double the teacher turnover rates of public schools (Ingersoll & Rossi, 1995). To address teacher retention in Christian education, this research is dedicated to determining if there is a correlation between teacher retention and the principal’s/leader’s consideration and initiating structure behaviors.

Clifton (2010) stated the obvious when he said, “principals must do everything possible to retain highly qualified teachers within their buildings” (p.1). Indeed, the principal has been proven to be a tremendous influence when it comes to teacher retention. Follow-up research by Boyd et al. (2009) confirmed that “working conditions, and especially administrative support, account for large differences in attrition rates” (p.11). One leadership factor, which has been researched fairly well for the secular school, is leadership style. The implications of the study by Clifton (2010) suggested that a school leader must develop a thorough understanding of contemporary, effective leadership practices and choose that style that best fits his/her

personality, teaching faculty, and needs of the school. Leadership styles do impact the perceptions of educators in a positive or negative manner. Choosing one particular leadership style does not, however, guarantee high teacher retention rates (p.96). According to a report by Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004), principals' leadership styles are the main factor in retention. Eddins' (2012) research results concur that "principal leadership styles and qualities that attribute to care, cooperation, collaboration, buy-in, vision and many other aspects that involve security and belongingness are essential for motivation and growth for teachers" (p.119). All of these studies, however, are based on secular education. The research to determine if it applies equally to Christian education is a worthy endeavor.

The research regarding retention of teachers contains a gap in literature when switching focus to private schools. This gap is understandable since most research on the relationship between teacher retention and school characteristics has focused primarily on measures of the school's student composition. Schools with large concentrations of low-income, non-white, and low-achieving students are the most likely to experience high teacher turnover (Boyd et al., 2005, p.166). For this reason, private schools have not been a focus of the research, even though all schools must address retention of teachers especially because excessive teacher attrition can be detrimental to schools' instructional cohesion (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003, p.13).

The purpose of this study is to discover if there is a correlation, if any, between the Christian school's principal's consideration or initiating structure behaviors and teacher retention.

Problem Statement

Research in teacher retention has been a popular topic of secular education for many

years due to its high cost to both students and school systems. The Alliance for Excellent Education (Greenlee & Brown, 2009) reported that the estimated nationwide cost for recruiting, hiring, and retraining replacement educators was near \$7.34 billion dollars (p.97). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003) added that excessive teacher attrition can be detrimental to schools' instructional cohesion (p.13).

Much research can be found regarding teacher retention in secular education because most research on the relationship between teacher retention, in general, has surrounded school composition connections. For example, Boyd et al. (2005) pointed out that schools with "large concentrations of low-income, non-white, and low-achieving students are most likely to experience high teacher turnover" (p.166). The National Center for Education Statistics, however, noted that private schools have almost twice the teacher turnover rates of public schools (Ingersoll & Rossi, 1995).

Research has pinpointed leadership behavior as one factor affecting followers (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). More specifically, in education, principals' behaviors have been undeniably connected to teacher retention (Morrison, 2012; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Gilmer, 2006). For this reason, it is reasonable to focus on the principals' behaviors when studying teacher retention.

This study addresses the impact of a principal's consideration and initiating structure behaviors on teacher attrition within Christian schools. Morrison (2012) revealed the critical nature of the impact of the principal on teacher retention, and Williamson (2011) concurred with the value of the principal by stating that, "Every major report recommending the reform of public education recognizes the important role of effective leadership" (para.1). Cross (2011) specifically attributed the principal's effect on retention to their leadership style. According to the Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004), principals' leadership styles are a major factor in

teacher retention.

Although there is plenty of literature regarding principal leadership style and teacher retention, literature is lacking regarding the impact of principal's consideration and initiating structure behaviors on teacher retention. Also, this same information is lacking for Christian education. These two factors make this study important.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this correlational study is to discover if there is a relationship between the leader's consideration or initiating structure behaviors and the retention of teachers in Christian education. Theoretically, the improved understanding of how a leader's consideration and initiating structure behaviors impact teacher retention can assist school administration in developing school policies and procedures. Further, this information could impact staff hiring and staff development decisions and practices designed to enhance continuous school improvement.

This study will seek to determine the relationship between the independent variables of principal's consideration or initiating structure behaviors and the dependent variable of teacher retention within the American Association of Christian Schools. Consideration behaviors are defined as regarding the comfort, well-being, status, and contributions of followers (Stodgill, 1969), and initiating structure behaviors are those behaviors used by the leader to establish clear, effective communication between the leader and follower while also establishing clear tasks, goals, and procedures. These behaviors were measured using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). The dependent variable, teacher retention, is widely defined as teachers who remain in their school. Retention rates were determined using retention data collected from site-based administration.

Significance of the Study

This study illuminated the degree to which there was a relationship between a principal's consideration or initiating structure behaviors and the retention rate of teachers in Christian education. The value of this study is derived mainly from the improved understanding of specific factors that affect teacher retention. Previous studies regarding teacher retention have indicated that private education has a higher attrition rate than its public counterparts (Ingersoll & Rossi, 1995). Christian education, as part of private education, should then be very concerned about teacher retention. Christian education research in this area is extremely limited.

The principal plays a vital role in the retention of teachers. According to Hughes, "helping administrators understand their level of influence and guiding them toward building a positive working relationship with teachers and empowering teachers would enhance teacher retention" (*Journal of Educational Research*, p.247). The results of this study may help to equip administration in Christian education better in making decisions regarding principal leadership in the Christian school. The administration may further be compelled to offer possible staff development for leaders based on the results. Also, it could serve as a springboard for the consideration of other specific factors related to teacher retention in Christian education.

The significance of this study is mainly the need to acquire more information regarding the correlation between teacher attrition in Christian education and a principal's leadership behaviors. While this study focused on a single Christian organization, American Association of Christian Schools, the results may be generalized to other Christian school organizations as well.

Research Questions

R₁: Is there a relationship between "consideration" behaviors of a principal and teacher retention rates in the American Association of Christian Schools?

R2: Is there a relationship between “initiating structure” behaviors of a principal and teacher retention rates in the American Association of Christian Schools?

Null Hypotheses

H01: There is no statistically significant correlation between “consideration” behaviors of American Association of Christian Schools principals and teacher retention rates of those principals’ schools as shown by the LBDQ (Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire).

H02: There is no statistically significant correlation between “initiating structure” behaviors of American Association of Christian Schools principals and teacher retention rates of those principals’ schools as shown by the LBDQ (Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire).

Definitions

1. *American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS)* – “An association of state associations to provide legislative oversight, to promote high-quality Christian education programs, to encourage the goal of producing Christ-like young people, and to provide related institutional and personnel services to our constituents” (AACCS, 2015).
2. *Consideration Behaviors* – “behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in the relationship between the leader and members of the group” (Halpin, 1957, p.1).
3. *Initiating Structure Behaviors* – “behavior delineating the relationship between himself and the members of his group, and in endeavoring to establish well-defined patterns of organization, channels of communication, and ways of getting the job done” (Halpin, 1957, p.1).
4. *Teacher Retention* – when teachers remain at the same school as the year before, and they remain in the same teaching role (Billingsley, 2003).

5. *Teacher Attrition* – when an educator voluntarily quits, retires, or transfers to another school (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two presents a theoretical framework and a review of the literature. The focus of both addresses the role of the Christian education leader's behavior, whether it's consideration or initiating structure, and its effect on teacher retention.

Teacher retention has been a popular topic for research for many years due to the impending problem of teacher shortages in America. According to Zhang & Zeller (2016), "Few issues in education threaten the nation as seriously as the present and growing shortage of teachers" (p.73). The 2010 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act demonstrated the continued grappling of a nation with quality teacher retention. There is much research to confirm that effective teachers are the most critical element in student achievement. The reauthorization identifies five priorities: (a) Students prepared for college and career; (b) Excellent teachers and leaders in every school; (c) Equity of opportunity; (d) Raised standards for promotion of excellence; and (e) Promotion of innovative and continuous improvements (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The ultimate goal is to "support ambitious efforts to recruit, place, reward, retain, and promote effective teachers and principals and enhance the profession of teaching" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p.6).

There is a great cost associated with teacher attrition. Greenlee and Brown (2009, p.97), with the Alliance for Excellent Education, estimated the great cost of recruiting, hiring, and retraining teacher replacements nationwide to be approximately \$7.34 billion dollars! This cost, however, is more than monetary. The cost also includes negative impacts on school stability and teaching quality (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011, p.47).

The research surrounding this phenomenon of teacher retention has centered on public

education. The Education Commission of the States (ECS), a commission created in 1965 by states to analyze research, track policies, provide unbiased information, and create awareness among state policymakers regarding current educational trends and issues, recently reported that teacher turnover is greater in private schools than in public arenas. Thus, there is a need for private schools to address further and research teacher retention. There is an additional need for Christian education to synthesize the information because reports do not differentiate Christian schools from private schools.

Deneca reported in her 2009 study that “a relationship does, in fact, exist between teacher’s perceptions of their principals’ race and gender, attitudes, and their job satisfaction” (Abstract, p.1). In this study, a relationship was found to exist between principal’s attitudes and teacher job satisfaction. However, this research focused on public education. More research should be performed in this regard for Christian education.

The leadership style of the principal has also been a factor for consideration in the past decade. Studies, such as Portner (2005), indicated that teachers who received support from administrators were more likely to remain in their schools. Thus, principal leadership behaviors are a factor for consideration when discussing teacher retention. According to Pugh and Hickson (2007), “Leaders must always adapt their behaviors to take account of the persons they lead” (p.137). This leadership behavior is correlated well with the Christian worldview in that the Bible, in Philippians 2:3, instructs every Christian to consider others ahead of oneself.

The literature regarding leadership behaviors and teacher retention in Christian education is once again lacking and needed.

Value of Teachers

Teachers are central to the education process. Entire national organizations, such as the

National Commission on Excellence in Education, and federal policies, such as No Child Left Behind, have been developed solely with the focus of support and improvement of teachers in America. There are magazines, newsletters, blogs, journals, websites, etc. with a single focus on educators. Because teaching our nation's youth is such a vital calling, it has been the focus of many recruitment initiatives such as Teach America (Kopp, 2001) and Troops to Teachers. Alternative licensing and certification programs have been developed to assist non-traditional students in completing requirements to become quality educators.

As Herbert Hoover once stated, "Children are our most valuable natural resource." This fact is the main reason why quality teachers are priceless. They train the minds and nurture the hearts of each next generation. According to Jimerson & Haddock (2015), "Teacher quality has a vital influence on student success or failure" (para. 1).

Another thought, assessed by Eric Hanushek (2011) through Generation Next, is that teachers directly affect the entire country's wellbeing and global economy. "Lower achievement equates to slower growth in the economy" (p.40). Hanushek (2011) goes further to assert the following:

From studying the historical relationship, we can estimate that closing just half of the performance gap with Finland, one of the top international performers regarding student achievement, could add more than \$50 trillion to our gross domestic product between 2010 and 2090. The quality of the teachers in our schools is paramount: no other measured aspect of schools is nearly as important in determining student achievement. The initiatives we have emphasized in policy discussions—class-size reduction, curriculum revamping, reorganization of school schedule, investment in technology—all fall far short of the impact that good teachers can have in the classroom. (p.40)

Indeed, a teacher affects the success of the student in school and beyond. Further, a teacher affects the economy of the nation. However, particularly in Christian education, as Henry Adams once quoted, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops”. These are reasons to respect and honor teachers. They serve as reminders that teacher retention is a topic worthy of our time and efforts.

Teacher Attrition Background

While the focus of this research is the positive desire to retain teachers, the underlying root is the undeniable need to understand better and offset teacher attrition in Christian schools. There is a need, therefore, to explain this phenomenon of attrition to see the purpose of researching to understand its antithesis, retention better. The teacher attrition scare in our country is not due to having too few education major college graduates. According to Ingersoll, “. . . The demand for new teachers and subsequent staffing difficulties is not primarily due to student enrollment increases, nor to teacher retirement increases, but to pre-retirement teacher turnover” (2003, p. 11). Merrow (1999) pointedly diagnosed the problem this way: “The pool keeps losing water because no one is paying attention to the leak . . . We’re misdiagnosing the problem as recruitment when it’s really retention (p.666).”

The 2003-2004 Teacher Follow-Up Survey, published by the National Center for Education Statistics, provided relevant information about teacher attrition for K-12 teachers across the nation. This study determined that the turnover rate for public school teachers was 16% (considering both “movers”, or those who moved to other education positions, and “leavers”, or those who left the profession), while the private schools were rated higher at a 20% attrition rate. Of those who left the profession, 25% of public and 30% of private school teachers named disillusionment with the profession as their main reason for leaving. An updated 2012-

2013 follow-up report by the National Center for Education Statistics yielded the same percentage numbers. Although these numbers remained consistent in the follow-up report, there is concern that attrition rates have grown and will continue to increase. Ingersoll and Merrill (2012) reported that teacher turnover in public schools had increased substantially over the past three decades. This information was supported further by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2014) in stating that the annual attrition rate for first-year teachers has increased by over 40% in the past two decades" (p.1).

Ingersoll (2001), reported that small private schools enrolling fewer than 300 students were particularly at risk for teacher attrition concerns because those schools reported the highest turnover rates. In fact, Ingersoll's (2001) research confirmed that each year small private schools lose almost one-quarter of their faculty. The fact that small private school teachers are more likely to leave teaching was also supported by Provasnik and Dorfman (2005).

The president of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, Tom Carroll, pinpointed the problem of our current teacher shortage as not being that too few enter the profession, but rather that there are too many leaving the profession (Dillon, 2009). In a 2013 interview, professor and researcher, Ingersoll, stated that between 40% and 50% of teachers would leave the classroom during their first five years (Riggs, 2013).

Teacher Attrition Concerns

There are many other reasons why attrition is a threat to all schools, public and private alike. Of course, as already mentioned, the financial cost to schools and school systems is great. The monetary cost of retraining and recruiting is burdensome. However, most importantly, attrition carries a hefty price tag when it comes to student achievement. For example, when a teacher leaves a school, any mentoring relationships are no longer possible. This situation can

develop a negative effect on students for the needed consistent and stable relationship. Thus, student achievement, attendance, and perception of teachers can be damaged irreparably.

Hanselman et al. (2011) pointed out that teacher and principal turnover has a negative effect on the school environment, including the general community, staff collegiality, and trust necessary to further the “development and social resources” (p.27) within the school.

Ronfeldt et al. (2014) reminded that there are many reasons why teacher attrition concerns educators. Besides the cost and leadership’s time to retrain, “When teachers leave schools, previously held relationships and relational patterns are altered. To the degree that turnover disrupts the formation and maintenance of staff cohesion and community, it may also affect student achievement” (p.7).

This disruption increases when explaining that stayers are greatly affected by the turnover rate as they hold the main responsibility to mentor and train new teachers (Guin, 2004). In addition to adding to the stayers’ ongoing additional responsibility to continually train new teachers, they also are most likely losing valuable opportunities to continue their own personal and professional development. This situation is due to the waning school budgets and the need for more of the staff development budget to remain dedicated to the new teachers, sacrificing the rightful portion of the budget for ongoing development for the veterans (Shields et al., 2001).

Decreasing teacher attrition rates can decrease many organizational concerns, such as “discontinuity in professional development, shortages in key subjects, and loss of teacher leadership” (Allensworth et al., 2009, p. 1). Further, according to Grissom (2011), the funding that must be diverted from the classroom to offset teacher attrition costs further exacerbates the concerns surrounding the gap between low-income and wealthier schools.

In summary, the true cost of teacher attrition in schools is not only monetary, social, and

psychological. Also, considering the negative effects on the school community, and the constant changing of teachers in the classroom, the principals have a daunting task of continuing implementation of new policies and procedures. They must do this while trying to accomplish damage control from attrition. This implementation starts with new teacher acclimation and continues by balancing movement forward for the school and remaining staff. The very act of attrition creates a vicious reciprocal cycle of attrition developing an atmosphere ripe for even more attrition.

Teacher Attrition Causes

There are many reasons for teachers leaving the profession, and much research addresses the goal of learning more about these causes. Some of the general topics include salaries/benefits, working conditions, and support from peers, administration, and community. Degrees of effects, along with varying disaggregated purposes, exist in research.

The National Education Policy Center (Bauries, 2012) moved a step further by addressing the research to develop and recommend new educational policies which would forthrightly confront the issues surrounding attrition. The objective of the full policy report surrounded the following needs:

Incentives are needed to: (i) Encourage more highly qualified, effective teachers to teach in high-need schools; (ii) Recruit more highly qualified, effective teachers to work in the state's public school system; and (iii) Retain the highly qualified, effective teachers currently teaching in public schools within the state. (p.1)

Coupled with the obvious monetary incentives, the following "Working Conditions" recommendations for policy change were also reported:

Section 301: Working Conditions. a. Except where otherwise specified, this Subsection

applies to all schools and all teachers in the state public school system. b. To foster the positive working conditions that research has shown to be important to teachers and impactful on student achievement, the following requirements shall apply to all state-funded schools: 1. Schools and school districts, in organizing and allocating teaching responsibilities among their teachers, shall strive to protect the planning and collaboration time that teachers need to be effective, and shall protect the needs of student learners by ensuring the presence of a highly qualified teacher in each classroom. Accordingly, absent a waiver of these requirements obtained from the State Commissioner of Education, state public schools and districts shall establish the following working conditions: (i) No secondary school teacher shall be required to teach more than three distinct preparations during any one semester of the school year. (ii) No teacher shall be employed or otherwise required to teach a subject or level of schooling which the teacher is not professionally certified to teach. (iii) Every full-time teacher serving under a status other than continuing contract status shall be entitled to at least two non-instructional periods of at least 40 minutes each during the school day, in addition to the time allocated for lunch. One of these non-teaching periods may be used for general lesson planning and other tasks, while the other (the “collaboration period”) must be reserved for collaboration with other teachers in the school and/or the district, including the periodic observation of effective, experienced teachers in the classroom. Each school shall provide a dedicated physical space and/or video conferencing equipment to enable such collaboration to occur during the collaboration period. At the beginning of each school year, the school or district may require each such teacher to create a professional development plan addressing the use of the collaboration period during that school year.

In states without continuing contracts, alternative wording could be, “All teachers serving during the first three years of a teaching career . . .” provided below, once a teacher has been awarded continuing contract status, the teacher may be required to teach class during the collaboration period, but she or he shall retain the other non-teaching period.

(A) Every full-time teacher in a high-need school shall be entitled to both a traditional planning period and a collaboration period, as outlined above; provided, however, that no such teacher shall lose such entitlement by having been awarded continuing contract status. (iv) No school shall require any of its teachers to use a “scripted” curriculum.

Each teacher in the state school system is entitled to reasonable pedagogical freedom of choice within the state-approved curriculum; provided, however, that nothing in this Subsection shall be construed to confer upon a classroom teacher the right to be insubordinate, to ignore administrative directives, or to work against the curricular goals of the state or local school system. 2. A school or district may request in writing a waiver of one or more of the above requirements from the Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner shall duly consider each such request, and shall grant a request only where a substantial necessity has been shown for the waiver. 3. No waiver obtained under this Subsection shall be valid for more than one school year. (p.7)

Within the working environment focus, several research papers confirm that teacher attrition is greatly affected by a lack of support from administration (Houtte, M., 2006; Talmour et al., 2005; Colgan, C., 2004), highlighting the role and responsibility of the principal in fighting teacher attrition. There is a problem, however, with finding a cure for attrition at this time. According to the 2009 Literature Review on Teacher Retention and Attrition (Anna & Associates LLC, 2009), Borman and Dowling (2008) pinpoint the problem by concluding that

four significant limitations to the current data sources on teacher attrition and retention exist:

- Few data sources have provided long-term longitudinal data on teachers;
- The literature on teacher attrition and retention have developed through a relatively uncoordinated array of data collection and analytical efforts that have focused on many elements of the problem and has, as such, not produced a very compelling body of cumulative evidence;
- The information on national attrition rates is sporadic and has been subject to some inconsistencies over time because of differences in data collection and sampling methods; and
- Despite some recognition of the problem of teacher attrition, there is little evidence in the way of rigorous experimental studies of programs or policies to guide potential initiatives to help ameliorate it.

International Concern

Teacher attrition is not only a concern for America. The concern is also international (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005). A 2015 research by Howe and Goodman-Delahunty highlighted current research in Australia regarding teacher attrition and retention. Indeed, this research confirmed the same concerns regarding the leader's role in teacher retention. This qualitative research found that teachers who were both considering making a career change revealed similar themes for their decisions. One of those themes, confirmed by 63% of the participants, included "Issues with teaching." Within this realm of concern, the following was reported:

Issues with teaching also included poor leadership and dissatisfaction with the administration in the form of a perceived lack of support (e.g., "there is a lack of support

from management”; “school culture depends so much on the competency of the senior executive”; “expectations of teachers have reached absurdity”). This finding is largely consistent with past research which reported key issues in teaching as a lack of support, excessive workloads, and disruptive student behaviour (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Buchanan, 2009). (Howe & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015)

Although the “working conditions” are not specified, the following teacher attrition concern was reported for Vietnam:

Reports conducted in Lam Dong in 2010 revealed that teacher attrition was due to the fact that early childhood teachers were paid salaries that did not sufficiently recognise their professional training and values; they received inappropriate recognition resulting in low status and had poor working conditions (Lam Dong Bureau of ECEC 2010). (Thao & Boyd, 2014, p.193)

A researcher in South Africa noted the value of the principal’s role in student achievement and teacher commitment for retention. The researchers stated:

The researcher observed that the manner in which the school is led and managed resulted in teacher motivation and satisfaction. These led to teacher commitment and resulted in high performance. Scholars on the theories of motivation and job satisfaction argue that motivated and satisfied employees tend to be more committed. (Khumalo, 2015, p.42)

Leadership

Stewart (2006) articulated an inherent problem with identifying a single definition of leadership when he stated, “The all-encompassing topic of ‘leadership’ has subsumed such a diversity of perspectives and topics, which hardly anyone can determine what leadership is, nor

how it should be defined” (p.3). In fact, Bennis and Nanus (as cited in Blackaby and Blackaby, 2001, p.16) discovered more than 850 different definitions of leadership! Razik and Swanson (2010) added that “definitions of leadership endure for about 20 years. When research uncovers deficiencies in the theories, new perspectives for studying leadership are identified” (p.80). Munro (2008) concurred that “a lot of leaders are attempting to define leadership these days. Place any high-profile leaders at a roundtable and you’ll probably hear five different metaphors woven into the discussion” (p.1).

Indeed, there are numerous current definitions for leadership by experts in the field. The definition from Sergiovanni (1986) is that leadership is a balance between achieving objectives effectively and efficiently and obtaining support for policies and practices and developing long-range plans. Hackman and Johnson (2009) supported this definition of leadership as “a fundamental element of the human condition” (p.5) and continued by adding that “any definition of leadership must account for its universal nature” (p.5). While Sergiovanni approached leadership from an objective viewpoint, and Hackman and Johnson approach it from an internal viewpoint, Kouzes and Posner (2007) combine the thoughts and insist that leadership is “a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others” (p.xii). Behavioral theory supports this philosophy.

The behavioral theory assumes that leaders do not have to be naturally inclined to leadership. Rather, a leader can develop. Definable leadership behaviors qualify one as a leader. Aronson (2001) attempted to identify four main styles of leadership:

1. Directive leadership- leaders are ultimately in charge of decisions, and subordinates are expected to abide by the leader’s directions or orders
2. Participative leadership- leaders encourage and allow the participation of followers in

the decision-making process

3. People-oriented leadership- leaders forthrightly acknowledge the followers' value through their interest and concern for the followers
4. Task-oriented leadership- leaders prioritize the accomplishment of goals over relationships with followers

The fact that there is no one accepted universal definition for leadership does not change the fact that the idea of leadership is still highly regarded as a position that is vital to making a difference. Thus, leadership is a viable topic for inclusion in educational research.

Leadership in Christian Education

While an abundance of leadership literature exists today addressing secular education, leadership is just as vital a calling in Christian education. The Bible confirms the worth by stating, "To aspire to leadership is an honorable ambition" (1 Timothy 3:1). Another distinctively Christian author, Maxwell (2007), pointed out that everything rises and falls on leadership, which illuminates the value of the leader and the continued research surrounding leaders in Christian education.

Although Christian education is distinctively different from secular education, leadership does call upon some basic points of professionals which apply to every leadership role. For example, dealing with the social and professional aspects of leadership involves addressing the human nature of teachers and leaders in the schools.

Christian schools do operate within a political, legal, and social context. The wise leader will make it a point to become knowledgeable of that context and the impact that context may have upon the Christian school. Christian schools in all states are governed to some extent by legislation. They are impacted by local customs and

culture. The wise leader will become aware of the local mores, the customs, and the general culture and weigh those factors in light of the Word of God. (Suiter, n.d.)

Teacher and leader interaction in Christian schools, although typically from a different worldview perspective, can still be classified in similar ways. For example, it is appropriate to weigh the amount and value of leader behaviors as we also assume that these behaviors can have an effect on Christian school teacher attrition rates.

The Christian education movement must begin to develop leadership that is able to take the movement beyond present levels. That demands continued attention to the spiritual dimension of leadership, but it also demands increased attention to the professional dimension of leadership as the pool of available leaders is expanded. (Suiter, n.d.)

A thorough search for information, articles, research, or data regarding training for Christian education leaders quickly reveals that the difference seems to come from a worldview perspective. For example, Liberty University includes required reading from both secular and Christian authors. Their course of study requirements for Christian school leaders involves both the spiritual aspects and the professional aspects learned by other secular programs.

Churches do it. Christian colleges do it. Many private secondary schools do it, too, as does every seminary and Bible school. Each of these institutions is dedicated, at least in part, to discipling Christians to become faithful, effective leaders in whatever role God places them. Whether that role is in business, a church, a school, the military, the government, a community group, a family, or anywhere else, God calls Christians to positions of influence of leadership and He entrusts His institutions to develop people accordingly. These institutions

have responded with a plethora of approaches, some that get good results, others that amount to mere lip service, and still others that may in fact be counterproductive. (Zigarelli, 2006)

A cursory review of many job recruitment announcements reveals that the “minimum requirements” for Christian school leaders is, unfortunately, set low with no actual leadership degree required. This fact gives credence to the need for continued efforts to provide valuable and usable research into the Christian education school leadership community.

Value of the Principal

The value of teachers is immeasurable. Correspondingly, the role of the principal is one of great value. Laura W. Bush, speaking at a 2010 leadership conference hosted by the Alliance to Reform Education Leadership, reiterated the value of the principal by stating, “Strong leaders create a cascading effect of success. . . . To succeed, we need exceptional leaders in every school district as the rule, not the exception” (Aarons, 2010, p. 1). Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, forthrightly acknowledged the high value of the principal by stating the following:

And if at the end of the day, our 95,000 schools each had a great principal, this thing would take care of itself. Great principals attract great talent. They nurture that great talent and they develop that great talent. Bad principals are the reverse: bad principals don’t attract good talent, they run off good talent. They don’t find ways to improve those that are trying to get better. They don’t engage the community. (Duncan, 2009, para. 15-16)

According to Davis et. al. (2005), the principal’s role in education is remarkably complex. More and more expertise is required to accomplish the many responsibilities associated with the career.

More than ever in today's climate of heightened expectations, principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning. They need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations and communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to serve the often-conflicting needs and interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs. (p. 5)

The effect of the principal on student success is also undisputed, and is evidenced through such federal mandates as the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001, wherein the prescription for consistently failing schools is first to replace the principal. Further, for schools requiring federal intervention due to their failing record the replacement of the school principal is not an option.

Like the *No Child Left Behind Act*, this study forthrightly identifies the principal as the main stakeholder responsible for the retention of quality teachers. This burden is carried on the shoulders of the principal and is affected by the principal's leadership behaviors.

Highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount. These impacts are somewhat smaller than those associated with having a highly effective teacher. But teachers have a direct impact on only those students in their classroom; differences in principal quality affect all students in a given school. (Hanushek, 2011, p.63)

Jeff Williams (2008) shared key competencies necessary for effectiveness in principals evaluated by a study conducted by the Ontario Principal's Council in 2005.

Two main leadership dimensions were found. A task-oriented leadership dimension involved coming well prepared for meetings. A relationship-oriented leadership dimension sought consensus among staff members. These two dimensions ultimately result in several specific abilities that the study highly recommends promoting in professional development programs for effective leaders. (p. 17)

Role of the Principal in Teacher Retention

Morrison (2012) pointed out that principals play a critical role in teacher retention. In support of other authorities studying teacher retention, Brill and McCartney (2008) concurred that administrators play a vital role in offsetting rising teacher attrition rates. Their research revealed that the third most common reason given by teachers leaving the profession was related to administration support and behaviors (p.757). In fact, teachers have repeatedly named dissatisfaction with the principal as one of the main reasons why teachers leave schools (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Simon and Johnson (2013), in their report on a combination of research on retention, noted the following information:

Further, most of these researchers attempt to identify and disentangle the components of working conditions that affect turnover most profoundly. Repeatedly, they found that teachers' perceptions of their principal are among the most important in teachers' career decisions. In studies that included collegial relationships and aspects of school culture as predictors in their models of turnover, these factors proved to be especially important as well. (p.14)

Hughes (2012) presented a focus on the power of the administrator in influencing teacher retention. While many studies cite school-based factors, ultimately leadership must be held accountable. Leaders, especially those respected, hold more power than they typically realize. Therefore, as a first step to improving teacher retention, Hughes (2012) recommended that helping administrators to understand their level of influence and then subsequently guiding them toward building a positive working relationship with teachers was vital to aid in teacher retention (p.247). New teachers, in a study by Johnson and Birkeland (2003), verified that the principal's respect and support were key to their satisfaction. This information is a poignant reminder that the principal must be cognizant about retention beginning on the first day of the teacher's employment.

The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2003) further supported the influence of the principal by stating, "Job satisfaction is often related to experiences with the leaders of the organization. In the school, this leader is typically the principal" (p.64). Despite the fact that research proves the importance of teachers' job satisfaction and teacher retention, the problem continues to decline instead of improving. The 2012 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher report disclosed a shocking update that teacher satisfaction "has declined to its lowest point in 25 years" (p.45). This data revealed a drop of five percentage points in one year alone. Teacher satisfaction had therefore sunk 23 points from 2008 to 2012. Christian schools have just as much of a need to dedicate time and effort to further research in this area.

Principal behaviors, such as vision building, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration were proven to influence the teachers' motivation. This motivation, in turn, affected students' achievements and learning (Leithwood and Janzi, 2005). These behaviors build a positive school culture. Teachers appreciate and desire a principal who affects the culture

of the school positively, and the positive school culture is then a catalyst for excellent teacher work conditions (Greenlee and Brown, 2009). Excellent working conditions are necessary for the retention of quality teachers. In fact, three out of four teachers from Angelle's (2007) study disclosed that their decision to remain in their school was based mainly on the supportive climate of the school. Guarino et al. (2006, p. 198) recounted three studies that demonstrated the positive effect of the school climate on the attrition rate. Also, Gilmer (2006) revealed, through a Duke University study, that beginning teachers are more likely to remain in their educational roles if they are pleased with the school climate and the principal's leadership.

No one would argue that principal support is important in retaining teachers. But, just as with the definition of leadership, the individual definitions of what is acceptable principal support vary- even within a single study (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p.679). Brown and Wynn (2007) reported that the consensus regarding leadership support was that "supportive and shared leadership involves balancing a combination of flexibility and support (Gumby philosophy) with direction and guidance (post-heroic leaders). The principals described it as collegial, facilitative leadership, whereas the new teachers described it as visionary, participative leadership" (p. 682).

While all of these reputable studies obviously point to the role of the principal in teacher retention, they are all based on secular education. The research to support whether or not the principal's role affects attrition rates in Christian education is absent. Therefore, additional research, to fill this gap in the literature for Christian education, is a worthy endeavor.

ISLLCS Standards

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders (ISLLCS), created by the Council of Chief State Officers (CCSSO) originally in 1996, are standards for school leaders. These standards were developed because of the acknowledgment of

the value of the school principal. These standards, updated during 2008, were developed because of the leaders' role in student achievement and because "strong education leaders also attract, retain, and get the most out of talented teachers" (Educational leadership policy, p.9).

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration adopted the ISLLCS standards which now include fewer, but broader, standards for school leaders. They are as follows:

1. Setting a widely shared vision for 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.

Implicit in these standards is the understanding that the principal greatly affects the entire community of the school. This affect includes the growth and development of the students and staff alike. Standard three would require initiating structure behaviors while standard four certainly requires a leader to use consideration behaviors.

Principal Leadership Style and Teacher Retention

Razik and Swanson (2010) define leadership style as "the pattern of behaviors of a person who assumes or is designated to a position of influence in an organization" (p.85). Specifically, many studies identify the leader's behavior as being a key factor in schools. The leadership style

is the rudder that directs the principal's actions. Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) reported that principals' leadership styles are the main factor in retention.

Transformational Leadership- Besides the vast differences in the definition of leadership, there are many identified models of leadership. Transformational leadership has received the most gold stars in its evaluation and inclusion in research. That is because its criteria are inclusive in nature, empowering all stakeholders to join the leadership of the school. This type of leadership insists on valuing new or different perspectives. It seeks positive growth and development of others within the school community (Yukl, 2006). The backbone to this type of leadership is that transformational leadership should, like the organization of the school, serve and meet the community needs (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Leaders who employ this multidimensional leadership style include inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration ("Management study guide", 2013). Thus, the leader influences not through rewards and punishments, but through the relationship between the leader and followers. This style certainly affords the team of leader and followers the benefits of warmth in a relationship involving mutual trust and respect.

Transformational leadership is foundationally similar to McGregor's (1985) theory Y, with trust and positive beliefs regarding the employee. Transactional leadership is more closely related to theory X, which views the employee as untrustworthy, lazy, and in need of controlling (Razik & Swanson, 2010)

Transactional Leadership - Another well-known leadership style, and highly utilized in the business realm, is transactional leadership. This style, first described by sociologist Max Weber in the 1947 and then reintroduced by Bernard Bass in the 1980s ("Management study

guide”, 2013, para.1), is managed through the use of “command, coordination, and control” (Morgan, 2006, p.18). Efficient and productive business is the focus of this task-oriented model. This style of leadership relies on the power of the leader over the followers. It is a model wherein success means moving the followers into the will of the leader through such strategies as incentives through reward and also consequences through punitive responses. This leadership style has the focus of management at its core, with the simple goal of maintaining status quo until there are problems to resolve (Bacal et al., 2014). When followed exclusively, this type of leadership style results in the creation of an environment permeated by position, power, perks, and politics (*Management study guide*, 2013, para. 9). The relationship basis for this style can be characterized as professional only, with no focus on warmth or friendship. Due to the nature of this style, the underlying belief is that the leader must carefully watch the followers in the event that they do not perform as expected. Where a connection involving mutual trust and respect is not impossible between the leader and follower, it is not as likely.

Generative leadership is explained by Klimek et al. (2008) as a leadership theory that bolstered positive outcomes in organizations. This theory of leadership relies on similar themes as transformational leadership shared by Mezirow (2000), including communication and collaboration, creativity, and continued learning. Although this style of leadership is dependent upon the organization matching the group dynamics and environment, it relies on bringing together leaders and followers in a dynamic group which focus on developing new ideas and knowledge. The relationship between the leader and followers accomplishes this goal. Thus, trust and respect must be accomplished to ensure success, with the threat being the fact that the leader must manipulate the environment and group composition to develop the most effective team for the task at hand. This practice could compromise warm relationships (Hazy & Surie,

2006).

Servant leadership is a viable model, particularly for Christian leaders. According to Patterson and Stone (2004), other leadership models, such as transformational, do not address the most altruistic nature of the position of leadership. Servant leadership is more focused on the people who make the organization rather than the organization itself. Ethical concerns for the leader are vital for servant leadership to take place.

Jesus Himself taught that "...The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Jesus is the first and best example of spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership contains similar goals to servant leadership, such as humbly placing others' needs before one's personal needs while ensuring integrity. Spiritual leadership is not relegated to religious leaders. Blackaby and Blackaby (2001), identify this type of leadership as simply a title designated for leaders who lead according to God's agenda in their life while encouraging and inspiring others to also move onto God's agenda for their lives as well. Unlike transformational leadership, this type of leadership does not focus on the needs or desires of the followers. While the opinions of the followers are respected and invited, the will of The Lord is the final priority.

Spiritual Leadership - Just as there are many definitions of transformational leadership, there are several opinions about what constitutes spiritual leadership. Robert Greenleaf is given credit for introducing this leadership style term during the 1970s.

Blackaby and Blackaby (2001) presented a picture of spiritual leadership that expounded on the leader's role to prioritize alignment with God's will over their will. The main goal of spiritual leadership, according to Blackaby and Blackaby (2001), is to help followers also to align with God's will. In fact, there is no success without the attainment of this goal.

According to the International Institute for Spiritual Leadership (2015), this leadership style is an important part of positively exacting loyalty, performance, and even transformation of the followers. The Institute explains spiritual leadership in this way:

Spiritual leadership involves intrinsically motivating and inspiring workers through hope/faith in a vision of service to key stakeholders and a corporate culture based on the values of altruistic love to produce a highly motivated, committed and productive workforce. The purpose of spiritual leadership is to tap into the fundamental needs of both leaders and followers for spiritual well-being through calling (life has meaning and makes a difference) and membership (belonging); to create vision and value congruence across the individual, empowered team, and organization levels; and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of employee well-being, organizational commitment, financial performance, and social responsibility – the Triple Bottom Line. (para.1)

Although exact behaviors are unclear, there is no question that this style is about caring for others more than self. Thus, it would be acceptable to infer that spiritual leadership fosters warm, trusting, respectful relationships with followers.

A Mixture of Leadership Styles - There can be many styles, and a mixture of styles, for leadership. Nedelcu (2013) agreed that leadership styles have many of the same qualities. She stated:

The review of some of these constructs indicates an obvious conclusion: no matter the label attributed to different models, they do share significant similarities. All these leadership models have improvement-oriented targets, they all aim to build leadership capacity among all school members in order

to foster progress. As an example, according to one comparison between instructional and transformational school leadership construction, showed that both focus on:

- * Creating a shared sense of purpose in the school.
- * Focus on developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture focused on the improvement of teaching and learning.
- * Shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the goals set for staff and students.
- * Organize and provide a wide range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and development for staff.
- * Being a visible presence in the school, modeling the values that are being fostered in the school (Hallinger, 2010).

Leithwood and Sun (2012) shared the following conclusion:

Several of the most widely advocated models of effective educational leadership include many of the same practices. More attention by researchers, practitioners, and researchers needs to be devoted to the impact of specific leadership practices and less to leadership models. (p.387)

Table 1

Overlap of Consideration Behaviors with Various Leadership Styles

Consideration Behaviors	Transformational	Transactional	Generative	Servant	Spiritual
Friendship				I	E
Mutual trust	I		I	I	E
Respect	I	I	I	E	E

Warmth in relationship I E E

Note. I= Implicitly understood. E= Explicitly understood.

Table 2

Overlap of Initiating Structure Behaviors with Various Leadership Styles

Initiating Behaviors	Transformational	Transactional	Generative	Servant	Spiritual
Direct communication		E	I		
Focus on specific tasks	I	E	I	I	I
Clear performance expectations		E			
Attention to rules and regulations		E			

Note. I= Implicitly understood. E= Explicitly understood.

Specific Leadership Behaviors Instead of Specific Style - This study does not focus specifically on particular models or methods of leadership. Rather, this study focuses on specific practices of the leader included in several of the formal styles explained previously. Specifically, this study considers specific behaviors of the leader in the overall assessment of the effect of the leadership style on retention of teachers. No matter what named, or unnamed, style is used by the leader; administrators should make it their priority to adopt styles of leadership which enhance the school climate and encourage teachers to remain in their positions (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

Behaviors identified by Wang and Bird (2011) as important for leaders in schools included actions that support authenticity, trust, and engagement. Authenticity behaviors involved strong self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and moral

integrity. Trust was developed through strong relational transparency patterns of behavior which resulted in “deep, open, and meaningful relationships with their staff members” (Wang and Bird, 2011, para. 29). Engagement behaviors included decisions reflecting strong moral aptitude and discernment which prioritized the care of the students and activities that emphasized teamwork.

Results from a study conducted by Brown and Wynn (2009) included attention on how leadership style of the principals affected teacher turnover. The study focused on the leadership styles of principals at schools with low teacher attrition rates. Like Leithwood and Sun (2012), this study did not focus on the different models of leadership styles, but rather the overall behaviors of the principals. The principals with the lowest attrition rates were found to use informal leadership strategies focused on keeping teachers informed, renewed, and inspired (p. 58). These principals shared commonalities in that they: provided necessary resources and support for educators, modeled high expectations, employed an open-door policy, exercised shared decision-making, and nurtured educators to maintain high teacher morale.

Angelle’s (2006) work gives additional credence to these types of principal behaviors. In her study of four principals, implementing a new state-mandated induction program, Angelle noted a difference in the leadership of the principals. Some were task-oriented, focusing on deadlines and paperwork. These principals did not attend to the new teachers but left them alone causing the teachers to feel isolated and abandoned. New teachers identified these actions of the principal as adding to their intentions to leave the school (p.331).

Kouzes and Posner (2010) recorded additional data regarding the impact of a leader’s behaviors. They analyzed data collected from a worldwide sample of more than a million research participants. The data revealed no surprises when it showed that a leader’s behaviors had more of an influence on follower’s level of engagement and positive mindset than any other

particular characteristic of the organization.

All of these results surrounded on public education. The literature is lacking in Christian education.

Consideration Behaviors

According to the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) Manual (Halpin, 1957), “Consideration refers to behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in the relationship between the leader and members of the group (p.1).” There is little evidence to suggest specifically that the leaders’ friendship and warmth with their groups play an important role in teacher retention. According to Liu (2007), however, there is an expectation of a decrease in teacher attrition from 19% to 4% connected to an increase of teacher influence in the school. While teacher influence in the school is not directly linked to the consideration behaviors of mutual trust and respect, one can infer that for a leader to allow a teacher’s influence in the school; there must first be some acknowledged level of trust and respect. Brown and Wynn indicated their agreement with this conclusion by stating that, “we train teachers poorly and then treat them badly – and so they leave in droves” (2009, p.40). Teacher treatment affects teacher retention rates. Extrom (2009) pointed out that insufficient preparation time, workloads, and administration’s failure to seek input from teachers are some of the main reasons teachers leave their job (as cited in Cross, 2011, p. 23).

Regardless of the fact that leadership behaviors have been researched for more than fifty years, the experts still cannot agree upon behaviors that constitute effective leadership (Glynn & Raffaelli, 2010). However, several behaviors, identified as consideration behaviors, have remained a focus in the recent past. For example, the concept of collaboration, requiring trust and respect, between leaders and followers has become one such focus.

Gajda and Koliba (2008) stated that,

Teacher collaboration is an essential element of substantive school change for which principals have responsibility for cultivating. As such, it is becoming increasingly important for school leaders to employ models of supervision that focus on the performance and improvement of collective teacher behavior. (P.133)

Their professional leadership opinion is based on several educational organizations, such as the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003), American Federation of Teachers (2003), and the National Staff Development Council (2005). All of these organizations support teacher and leader collaboration as an effective model for offering the most effective learning environment. Current research indicates that these organizations continue to support and advocate for collaborative models of leadership. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future confirmed their continued support of collaboration as evidenced by their stating,

Since its founding, NCTAF has identified collaboration as critical to schools organized for success and to the ability of teachers to be successful. When there is a truly collaborative effort, teachers see and understand the limitless possibilities to rethink the learning experience for students and themselves. (George, 2014, para.2)

The American Federation of Teachers organization likewise has not abandoned this concept of collaboration and trust as vital to school improvement. Greg Anrig, representing the American Federation of Teachers, confirmed that "In recent years, rigorous studies have shown that effective public schools are built on strong collaborative relationships between administrators and teachers" (2014, para. 1). Also, the National Staff Development Council also continues to support and further the professional activity of collaboration in a recent journal

article.

Collaboration is not something that just happens. Collaboration is worth striving for. It is built out of the experience of humankind in our day-to-day push for honest, authentic interactions and a commitment to be responsible collaborators. When groups find this space, they experience dignity, power, and renewal. (Garmston & Zimmerman, 2013, p.10)

The consideration behaviors of friendship and warmth, in relationships between administration and teachers, are also spotlighted in educational literature. For example, Baron (2011) noted the value of friendship is stating,

Once a school community is clear about its vision, mission, and moral purpose, it is not only possible but also highly likely that the community will find itself on critical friendship. Creating a culture of critical friendship and leading from the inside out intentionally connect principal and teacher practice to the core beliefs and moral purpose of the school community. Critical friendship is at the heart of a professional learning community in which members are committed to learning together and from one another. (p.56)

Yukl (2012) reiterated that effective leadership behavior includes consideration-type behaviors. Yukl's most recent research denotes four categories of effective behavior. Those categories include task-oriented, relation-oriented, change-oriented, and external. Those specific activities noted in the relation-oriented category most closely align with consideration behaviors. Included in this category are the actions of supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering.

Supporting involves the consideration behaviors of cooperative relationships hinged on

mutual trust and warmth as developed through continuous positive regard. According to Yukl (2012, p.71), a significant relationship between supporting and leadership effectiveness was found in survey studies (e.g., Kim & Yukl, 1995 and Yukl et al., 1990).

Developing, recognizing and empowering all involve actions which are derived from consideration behaviors as well. Developing a follower is a leadership behavior that is purposeful regarding assisting a follower in their pursuit of improvement. Inference leads one to understand that this activity requires a mutual trust for a leader to guide a follower forward. A positive correlation was found between developing activities and effective leadership in studies by Yukl (Kim & Yukl, 1995 and Yukl, et al., 1990) as well as in comparative case studies (Edmondson, 2003).

Recognizing is a tangible and evident way for a leader to demonstrate warmth and respect. It is also a purposeful activity that effective leaders utilize to gain momentum in assisting leaders in growth and effectiveness. Research by Yukl (Kim & Yukl, 1995) and descriptive case studies by Kouzes and Posner (1987) presented evidence for the effectiveness of this leadership activity.

Empowering requires a significant amount of trust and respect. Through the use of the leadership behavior of entrusting autonomy and decision-making to followers, empowering has also received some specific praise in research arenas. Case studies by Yukl (1990), Kim and Yukl (1995), and Kouzes and Posner (2003) presented evidence of the effectiveness of specific empowerment from the leader to the follower.

Helms (2012) provided the following reasoning for the consideration behavior of developing relationships:

When the NAESP (2008) contacted over 100 elementary school principals who had been

recognized by education circles as outstanding leaders and inquired as to what they perceived as best practices, leadership was considered a best practice. The surveyed principals stressed the importance of shared leadership and leadership with a purpose, along with forming and sustaining meaningful relationships. (p.16)

Consideration behaviors are important identifiers of successful leadership. These behaviors are worthy of research focus in education today. In fact, in this time in history, consideration behaviors may well be more important than ever. With mounting requirements and accountabilities for teachers in public and private education, consideration behaviors could be the thread necessary to weave together all the obligations, ideas, and constantly changing goals.

Initiating Structure (Task- Oriented) Behaviors

According to the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) Manual (Halpin, 1957), “task oriented” or “initiating structure” behaviors are those behaviors used by the leader to accomplish well-defined organization and communication as well as efficient ways to accomplish the necessary work. Specific activities serve as exemplars of this behavior. Some of those activities include criticizing poor work, speaking in a manner not to be questioned, assigning specific tasks to team members, scheduling needed work, emphasizing meeting deadlines, letting group members know expectations, and asking group members to follow standard rules and regulations.

“Initiating structure directly defines expectations but also indirectly communicates the value of compliance with or deviation from expectations. Initiating structure is transactional in emphasizing expectations and consequences” (Neubert et al., p. 1221).

Initiating structure behavior in leadership provides a clearly understood pathway for the

activities of the leaders and followers. Thus, it is understandable that a principal who utilizes these behaviors would be able to articulate a specific direction. Also, the followers would be able to feel confident in their work and the effectiveness of the results. This attribute is a strength for task-oriented behavior in leadership.

Grissom and Loeb (2009) emphasized the value of managerial and organizational management skills in the principal. They noted, as a concern, that most principals were previously classroom educators. Thus they have had very little managerial experience for organizations. “As a result, it may be these skills, on average, that principals’ lack” (p.24). These managerial skills would contain initiating structure behaviors for the leader. Grissom and Loeb (2009) added that these managerial skills are necessary for the school to run efficiently, a necessary precursor for teachers to focus on student success.

The idea of initiating structure behaviors involving clearly articulating expectations and goals was supported by Schlechty (2005). He encouraged leaders to ensure they were specific and clear in their expectations so that followers knew what they were expected to do to achieve state goals.

“The weaknesses of the task-oriented style include a fear of breaking the rules among employees, which may lead to a lack of creativity, low morale, and high turnover” (Basu, n.d., para 4).

Consideration and Initiating Structure Behaviors

An important finding of the Ohio State studies was that these two dimensions are independent. This finding means that *consideration for workers* and *initiating structure* exist simultaneously and in different amounts. Ohio State created a matrix that showed the various combinations and quantities of the elements (n.d., para.4).

Table 3

Matrix of Consideration and Initiating Structure Behaviors by Ohio State

High Consideration	HIGH CONSIDERATION AND LOW STRUCTURE	HIGH STRUCTURE AND HIGH CONSIDERATION
Low Consideration	LOW STRUCTURE AND LOW CONSIDERATION	HIGH STRUCTURE AND LOW CONSIDERATION
	Low Initiating Structure	High Initiating Structure

A leader could be high on both dimensions, low in both dimensions, or high on one and low on the other. Since both factors were considered important dimensions of leadership, the early studies assumed that the most effective leaders were high in both dimensions. Subsequent research failed to support the initial expectations. After extensive research, the conclusion is that the most effective leaders are not always high on both initiating structure and consideration. Although most studies show that leadership effectiveness is associated with high scores on both dimensions occasionally other combinations have produced the highest levels of satisfaction and performance, such as being high on one scale and low on the other or being at moderate levels on both dimensions. (Bast, n.d.)

Theoretical Framework

This study will incorporate a dual theory conceptual framework consisting of Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX theory) and Christian worldview.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory focuses on a two-way relationship between a leader and follower. The theory assumes that the relationship purposefully developed between the leader and the follower influences the actions, attitudes and performance. Increasing the successfulness of the organization is gained through the improved relationships of the leader and

followers.

Graen, who also first developed the managerial leadership theory in the 1970s, developed this theory of leadership. This revised theoretical framework for leadership is explained by Graen (2013) as a collaboration by proactively fostering unique strategic alliances between the leader and each team member and between each team member.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory proposes three stages of development in relationships between leaders and followers. These include role-taking, role-making, and routinization. The first stage is a time of assessment by the leader to determine the follower's professional skills. Role-making occurs when the leader determines that a follower is either in the "In-group" or "Out-group" based on the follower's exhibited level of loyalty, trustworthiness, and abilities. Routinization is a stage for the leader and follower to establish routines between them, including time shared, work allotted, and support behaviors (Mind Tools Ltd, 2015, p.1).

According to the Journal of Management and Public Policy (2013),

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationship based on social exchange, reciprocity and role have evolved as a crucial factor in fostering competitiveness of organizations all over the world. Outcomes related to LMX such as performance improvement, overall satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, commitment, innovation, creativity, team spirit and engagement not only generate positive employment experiences but also augment organizational effectiveness. (Shweta & Srirang, P.42)

The LMX Theory reveals a dedication to the reciprocal relationship between the leader and followers. This theory overlaps with consideration behaviors on many levels and receives underpinning from the belief that the relational activities between the leader and follower affect the work environment and the effectiveness of both parties within that environment. Limitation

of behaviors does not extend beyond the workplace.

One strength of this framework is that it is a dynamic theory that fosters relationships between leaders and followers. A 2011 study by Barbuto contributed research, sponsored by the Center for Leadership Studies, which showed a new correlation for relationship building through this leadership theory. Barbuto's research was a correlational research designed to determine any possible relationships between the LMX theory and Servant Leadership. In the past, this correlation was not possible due to difficulties measuring servant leadership dimensions; however, Barbuto and Wheeler developed an instrument (the Servant Leadership Questionnaire) which could identify and confirm the five dimensions of servant leadership. There were statistically significant correlations found between LMX and the five dimensions of servant leadership including altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. All five of the dimensions of servant leadership rely heavily on the underlying aspect of the relationship between leaders and followers.

This theory involves a couple of noted weaknesses. First, a weakness of this theory is that it does not justify the fact that values account for personal relationship dynamics.

The second weakness, pinpointed by van Gils, et al. (2010) is that the followers engage in not only different relationships with different followers but also that each person in the relationship would evaluate that relationship differently based on the perceived contributions of the other party. Thus, perceptions are affected by each person's internal value system. This point is where the Christian worldview framework can not only complement the strength of this theoretical framework, but it can fill the crevices of weakness in the LMX theory.

A Christian worldview is more than a belief system. "In fact, the Christian worldview is a complete and integrated framework through which to see the entire world" (All About

Worldview, 2002). This theoretical framework for life involves observing, through the lens of the Bible, every aspect of life including philosophy, theology, ethics, psychology, sociology, and economics.

The Christian worldview, then, would obviously affect the way a leader views their relational leadership behaviors in connection to those God placed under their leadership. Also, assuming that both the leader and the follower are both Christians, this worldview would also fill the gap of the LMX Theory in that the relationship perceptions from each party should be more closely aligned.

The Christian worldview acknowledges, through word and deed, that God created man. Further, God created man in His Own image. Also, God models relationship through being a triune God and through His Son, Jesus Christ. Further, God gives specific directives associated with relationships throughout the Word. According to Valk (2012),

Through individual and communal activity, humans are called *to be* and *to do*: to enjoy life and living on the earth that is their habitation; to provide for themselves and others by increasing the common good and enhancing relationships. (p.164)

Following biblical guidelines for relationships would be the most important factor in this worldview perspective. The Bible clearly delineates relationship requirements from many perspectives. Leaders can gain great insights from the Word regarding their leadership role. For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:11 instructs Christians to “encourage one another and build one another up...” which reminds leaders that they should be using the consideration behavior of respect. Further, the ultimate example of leadership, Jesus, demonstrated all the consideration behaviors of relationship, warmth, mutual trust, and respect. Jesus demonstrated these behaviors

on a regular basis with His disciples through a reciprocal format. He chose a small intimate group to nurture and train personally, constantly exhibiting love and warmth. He demonstrated His trust by commanding them to be disciples who make disciples. He charged them with the greatest charge of any other assignments on earth... “go and make disciples.”

Summary

Teacher attrition is a real concern for all schools, including private schools. Because of the large role of leaders, in regards to attrition, the leaders’ behaviors must be considered when addressing teacher retention. Dierendonck (2010) points out that leadership studies are beginning to move the spotlight from a given leadership style, such as transformational leadership, to shed light on more relational perspectives where interactions between the leaders and followers are the focus. This study will do likewise and focus, through the lens of the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) and Christian worldview, on specific relational leadership behaviors and their effect on teacher retention in the Christian school. These behaviors, known as consideration and initiating structure behaviors, will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The objective of this study was the determination of the possible relationship between a leader's use of consideration or initiating leadership behaviors and teacher retention. The population for this study was the American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS), and the sample population was 100 American Association of Christian Schools teachers randomly selected to represent this population. By using a random sample of teachers, there is an equal opportunity to include schools from various states with varied populations. The expectation was that this random assignment of participants would increase the ability to generalize within the field of Christian education.

Research Design

This research study incorporated a correlational design, which is used extensively to discover relationships between variables (Gall, et al., 2007, p.332). The goal of this study is to test for possible relationships between "consideration" or "initiating structure" behaviors of a leader and teacher retention rates for American Association of Christian Schools. A survey instrument was used to determine principals' leadership style behaviors. A three-year average retention rate was collected from each school to determine the relationship between leadership behaviors and teacher retention rates. A final numerical correlational value was then established between "retention rate" and "consideration behaviors" or "retention rate" and "initiating behaviors."

Rigorous research method, design, and survey recommendations, as well as writing guidelines on style, mechanics, and language, are influenced by Fink (2006) and Creswell (2003). One recommendation is to collect information directly from people. This fact is why surveys are a widely accepted and frequently used research tool. Also, there is a large population

of Christian educators nationwide, and thus a sample survey was deemed as appropriate to allow the readers to generalize the data from this study to their Christian school.

Gall et al. (2003) delineated that quantitative research is valuable because its purpose is to “describe and explain features of this reality by collecting numerical data on observable behaviors of samples and by subjecting data to statistical analysis” (p.634). Because this research involves collecting survey data, including factors measured on a continuous scale, a correlational design is most appropriate (Ritchey, 2008). This study is ultimately designed to serve as a valuable springboard for future Christian education research.

Research Questions

R1: Is there a relationship between “consideration” behaviors of a principal and teacher retention rates in the American Association of Christian Schools?

R2: Is there a relationship between “initiating structure” behaviors of a principal and teacher retention rates in the American Association of Christian Schools?

Null Hypotheses

H01: There is no statistically significant correlation between “consideration” behaviors of American Association of Christian Schools principals and teacher retention rates of those principals’ schools as shown by the LBDQ (Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire).

H02: There is no statistically significant correlation between “initiating structure” behaviors of American Association of Christian Schools principals and teacher retention rates of those principals’ schools as shown by the LBDQ (Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire).

Participants and Setting

The participants from this study were selected using a random sample of 100 teachers ($n=100$) from the American Association of Christian Schools (AACS). The AACS association

was used to select participants because the research goals require that the results be indicative specifically of Christian school principals. According to Merriam (1998), “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p.61).

The sample consisted of classroom teachers who have been at their school for at least three years and have had the same principal for at least three consecutive years. All teachers are from within the same national association during the 2015-2016 school year. By using the same association, all participants would have a similar foundational belief system, as the association requires all members to sign the same Statement of Faith.

Instrumentation

This research utilized a principal’s leadership style survey instrument developed by Ohio State University, simply referred to as the LBDQ (Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire).

The instrument was chosen due to a review of related literature revealing the instrument’s notable use in other related studies, its impressive reliability and validity data, and its longevity in the field of research. The LBDQ contains 40 items measuring three main components of leadership behaviors. Those include Consideration (behaviors embedding respect, mutual trust, and relationships between leaders and followers); Initiating Structure (behaviors delineating the relationship between the leader and followers that establishes communication and procedural methods); and Performance Emphasis (behaviors related to placing emphasis on results).

The LBDQ information, in the testing manual and online at Ohio State University, indicated a reliability of .92 for the consideration subscale score. Further, a reliability rating of .83 was touted for the initiating structure subscale score. This rating provides proof that the instrument subscales measure the behavior patterns it was developed to measure.

The test's validity was verified by Stodgill (1969) through conducting experiments, and again by Schriesheim and Bird (1979) when confirming that leadership research shifted from traits analysis to behavioral analysis.

The LBDQ relies on data from the followers but is designed to demonstrate true results only if followers had past experiences with the leader. Thus, this study requires that followers have held a position, under the same leadership, for at least three years.

Research by Judge et al. (2004) revealed a reinforcement of this measure in stating, The results of the present quantitative review revealed that both Consideration and Initiating Structure have important main effects on numerous criteria that most would argue are fundamental indicators of effective leadership. It is striking how the validities for each behavior generalized—across criteria, across measures, and even over time and across sources. Of course, these behaviors are not all there is to solving the mysteries of leadership effectiveness. However, just as surely, the results do suggest that these behaviors—Consideration and Initiating Structure—are important pieces in the leadership puzzle (p.44).

Procedures

Upon receiving approval from Liberty University's IRB, permission was sought and granted by the President of the AACCS to contact the heads of each randomly selected school within the AACCS. Schools were randomly selected, through a computer generated a list of numbers associated with each member school. Finally, permission was sought and granted by each Head Master/Administrator of the schools randomly selected within the AACCS population. Also, for those schools agreeing to participate, three years of teacher attrition rates from their schools were requested by the heads of school.

Once permission was received to proceed to a given school, an email was forwarded containing instructions on completing the anonymous survey, information about the use of the collected information, and a link to access the survey site used for this study. Heads of school were asked to forward to only those teachers who had been under the direct leadership of the current school principal/administrator for at least three years. Researcher data from the survey site used only a designation code for the school within the AACCS. Those teachers participating were provided timeline expectations for survey completion.

The instrument used for this study was the LBDQ, which did not require permission from Ohio State University. The purpose in allowing such gracious use of the instrument was to ensure assistance was provided to researchers who endeavored to conduct educational research.

Data Analysis

The version of the LBDQ employed for this study is from Purdue University Calumet Center for Educational Leadership. This LBDQ instrument contained two factors: Consideration and Initiating Structure behaviors.

Frequency options for the LBDQ include “always”, “often”, “occasionally”, “seldom”, and “never”. All data acquired from LBDQ were coded using a five-point ordinal level system. This system allowed answers with “always” to be assigned a value of “5”; answers containing “often” to be assigned a value of “4”; answers containing “occasionally” to be assigned a value of “3”; answers of “seldom” to be assigned a value of “2”; and answers containing “never” to be assigned a value of “1”. Negatively phrased questions were reverse coded so as to ensure that there was a consistent alignment with positive answers. This rating produced a raw score for the factor of focus. Then a mean and standard deviation were calculated to use the results of research for the sample and population. For individuals, the raw score was used to indicate the degree to

which that individual perceived the leader as following consideration and initiating structure behaviors.

All data were entered into the statistical software program known as IBM SPSS Statistics. Data were coded, scored, and analyzed using this statistical software program. Tables were generated to reveal findings from the analysis. Due to the continuous nature of some of the variable data, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was performed with a significance level set at a 95% confidence level $p \leq .05$. This procedure was used to determine the correlation between all variables.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Chapter Four includes the presentation of data analysis associated with this study and a review of the research questions and hypotheses. The purpose of this study was to determine if there were any statistically significant relationships between two specific leadership behaviors and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools.

Research Question

R1: Is there a relationship between “consideration” behaviors of a principal and teacher retention rates in the American Association of Christian Schools?

R2: Is there a relationship between “initiating structure” behaviors of a principal and teacher retention rates in the American Association of Christian Schools?

Null Hypotheses

H01: There is no statistically significant correlation between “consideration” behaviors of American Association of Christian Schools principals and teacher retention rates of those principals’ schools.

H02: There is no statistically significant correlation between “initiating structure” behaviors of American Association of Christian Schools principals and teacher retention rates of those principals’ schools?

Descriptive Statistics

Schools invited to participate were randomly selected. Every state, with two exceptions, was included in the random drawing. All schools randomly selected were invited to participate. Out of those invited, only ten school systems, a total of eight schools, agreed to participate. Out of those schools participating, all were situated in southern states except for Ohio and New York. From the participating schools, 100 teachers responded to the survey.

Means and standard deviations for the dependent variable (retention rate), both independent variables (“consideration behavior” and “initiating structure behavior”), and the total scale score are included in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for All Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	S.D.
Consideration Behavior	100	42.66	9.38
Initiating Structure Behavior	100	40.36	7.83
Retention Rate	100	88.11	4.87
Total Scale Score	100	83.06	14.21

Results

All of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire data used to address both research questions were coded such that a response of “always” received a value of one, “often” received a value of two, “occasionally” received a value of three, “seldom” received a value of four, and “never” received a value of five. Negatively phrased questions were reverse-coded so as to ensure higher ratings consistently aligned with positive perceptions.

A Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to test each null hypothesis.

Table 5

Pearson Correlation

	Retention Rate
Consideration Behavior	.009
Initiating Structure Behavior	-.212

n=100

Assumption Testing

Figures 1 and 3 revealed the assumption of normality due to the data relationship between each behavior and the retention rate following a symmetrical bell-shaped curve

(Szapkiw, p.21). Figure 4 also revealed a data relationship, between initiating structure behavior and retention rate, which follows a generally straight line.

Figure 1: Consideration Behavior Histogram

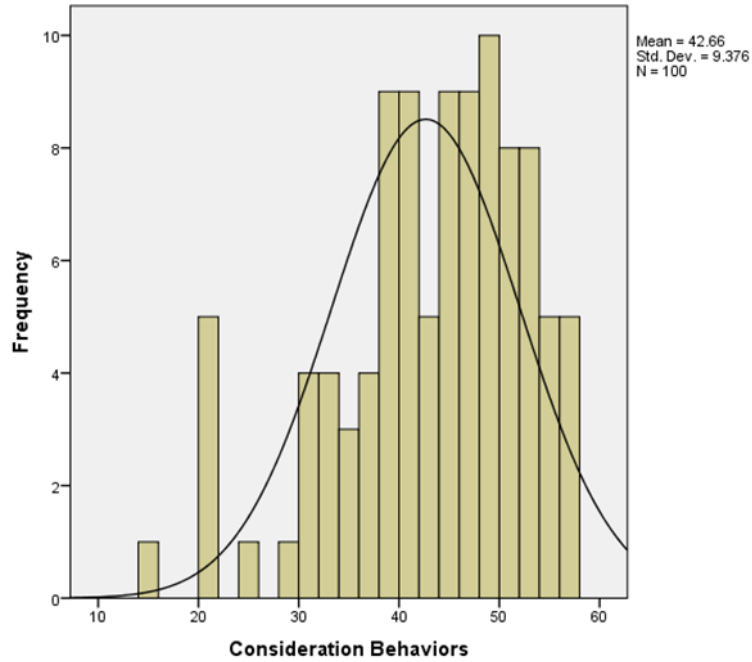


Figure 2. Consideration Behavior Scatterplot

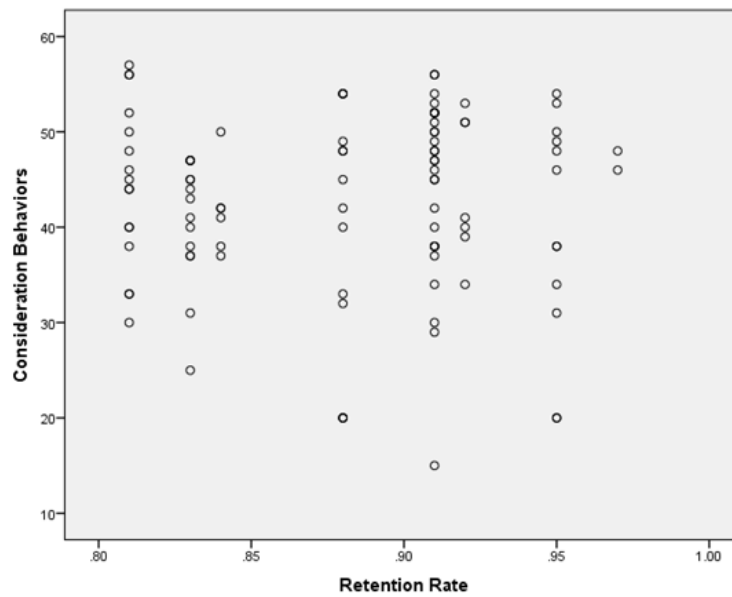


Figure 3. Initiating Structure Histogram

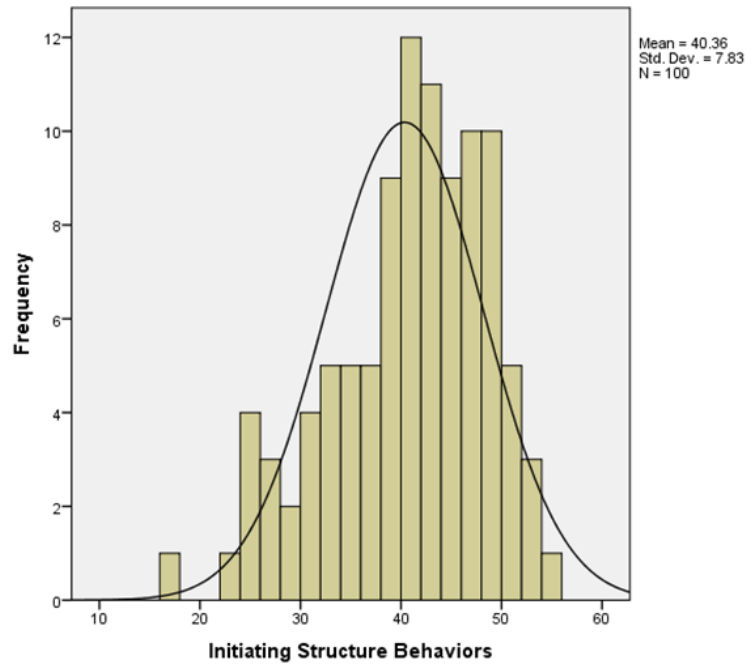
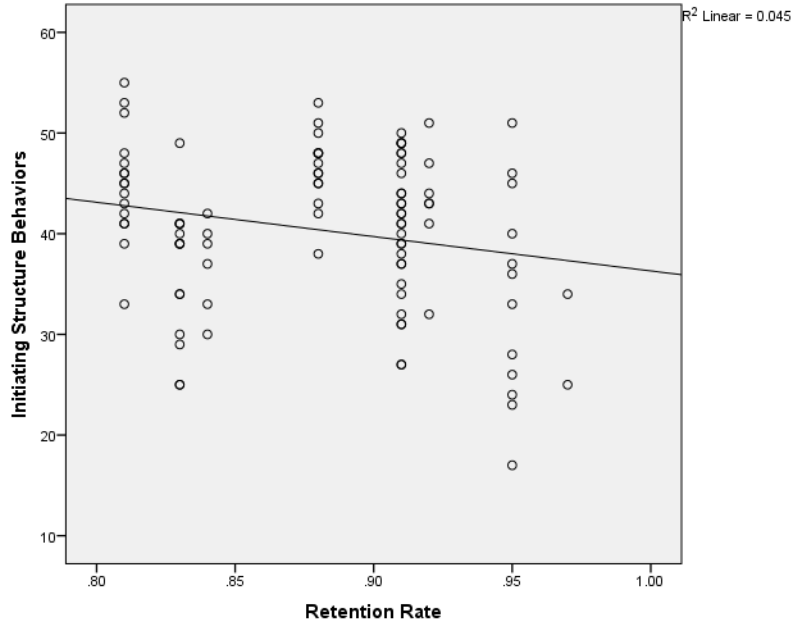


Figure 4. Initiating Structure Scatterplot



Conclusion and Summary

Null Hypothesis One

Null Hypothesis One stated that there would be no statistically significant relationship between consideration behaviors and the retention of teachers in the American Association of Christian Schools. Figure 2 indicated no relationship existed. The Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was calculated between consideration behaviors ($M= 42.66$, $SD= 9.38$) and teacher retention rates ($M= 88.11$, $SD= 4.87$) also revealing a lack of correlation, $r(100) = .009$, $p = .01$. In conclusion, there was no significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The use of consideration behaviors by the principal was not correlated to the retention rate of teachers.

Null Hypothesis Two

Null Hypothesis Two stated that there would be no statistically significant relationship between initiating structure behaviors and the retention of teachers in the American Association of Christian Schools. Figure 4 indicated a small negative relationship existed. The Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was calculated to confirm any relationship between the initiating structure behaviors of the principal ($M= 40.36$, $SD= 7.83$) and teacher retention rates ($M= 88.11$, $SD= 4.87$). The test revealed that there was a small negative correlation between the two variables, $r(100) = .212$, $p = .01$. In conclusion, there was significant enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The use of initiating structure behaviors by the principal were negatively correlated to the retention rate of teachers. Further regression analysis revealed that initiating structure behaviors explained 3.5% of the teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Five provides a comprehensive summary of the research data presented in Chapter Four. Also, the data and literature review information are synthesized to bring new meaning to the research. Finally, discussion shares conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research consideration.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine if there were any significant correlational relationships between two leadership behaviors, consideration and initiating structure, and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools.

Teacher retention is a real and growing concern for both public and private education. Research supports the reality of this problem through spotlighting the many deficit conditions grounded in the teacher retention dilemma, including monetary, student success, and morale concerns. According to Greenlee and Brown (2009), with the Alliance for Excellent Education, the estimated annual nationwide cost of teacher turnover is approximately \$7.34 billion dollars. Ronfeldt et al. (2014) addressed the concern surrounding student success by pointing out that turnover causes vital disruptions in previously held relationships and relational patterns thus affecting student success. Finally, Hanselman et al. (2011) confirmed the concerns surrounding the overall morale of the full school environment by identifying specific injuries to staff collegiality and trust caused by teacher turnover.

The Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) concluded, through a meta-analysis, that the principal played a key role in teacher retention. Clifton (2010) supported the value of the principal's behaviors by confirming that the principal's leadership style had a high impact on retention through teachers' perceptions. Thus, the principal, and his or her behavior is an

excellent target for research. This research specifically addresses two leadership behaviors of the principal, consideration, and initiating structure behaviors.

Research completed by Thibodeaux et al. (2015), and shared in the Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, revealed the importance of the principal's leadership behaviors. The results showed the following information:

Research Question 1 asked whether there was a relationship between principal leadership styles and behaviors and teachers' intent to remain in the teaching profession. The Pearson Correlation used to test Hypothesis 1 indicated that there was a significant difference in principal leadership styles and behaviors based on teachers' intent to remain in the teaching profession. This finding indicated that principal leadership plays a critical role in the retention of teachers, and it suggests that administrators should be aware of how their leadership style and behaviors impact the teachers that they lead. (p.245)

The null hypotheses stated that there would be no statistically significant relationships between either one of the leadership behaviors, consideration or initiating structure, and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools. This researcher chose this school organization because about 90% of its membership includes small Christian schools with 300 or fewer students. This enrollment number is significant because of the research results, such as those by Ingersoll and Rossi (1995), which suggest that private schools have a higher teacher turnover rate than that of their public school peers. In fact, Ingersoll (2001) specifically pinpointed small private schools enrolling fewer than 300 as reporting the highest turnover rates. The work of Provasnik and Dorfman (2005) also supported this claim that smaller private schools were more likely to experience teacher turnover. Because Christian education is part of private education, it was important then to determine if this private school research applied

specifically to Christian education. The data collected from participating Christian schools did not support this research, which pertains to private education as a whole, with no participating school reporting less than 81% retention rates over a three-year average.

The first null hypothesis, which stated that there would be no statistically significant relationship between consideration behaviors and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools, failed to be rejected. Thus, the underlying theory of Leader-Member Exchange also does not receive indirect support through this research. Also, consideration behaviors, which align best with a Christian worldview framing, were not implied, in this research, as an independent and valuable underpinning in Christian education.

This finding is in contrast to research, such as that of Hughes et al. (2015), which found that “all of the areas of support were considered important. However, the areas of emotional and environmental support were rated the highest” (p.132). This research indicated that teacher retention was greatly affected by the leader’s behaviors, particularly those classified as consideration behaviors. Liu (2007) further supported this indication when he found that more administrative support behaviors can have a positive effect by increasing teacher retention by up to 19% (p.13).

The second null hypothesis stated that there would be no statistically significant relationship between initiating structure behaviors and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools. This null hypothesis was rejected due to a small negative relationship established between the behaviors and teacher retention indicating that as one factor (either initiating structure behaviors or retention) increases the other factor decreases. The present implication is that initiating structure behaviors may play a role, albeit small, in affecting teacher retention in the AACCS. This result aligns with the Leader-Member Exchange Theory in

that the LMX theory relies heavily on relational connections (more towards consideration behaviors) between the leaders and followers, particularly those members who are in the current “in-group”. Also, this small, negative relationship is supported by a Christian worldview, particularly when considered in isolation, in that one might posit that teachers in Christian education could be negatively affected by a principal whose behaviors lean heavily towards initiating structure behaviors over a mixture of behaviors which include more relational actions and processes.

Hughes (2012) supported the use of initiating structure behaviors in positively affecting teacher retention by saying that “teachers want to work in schools where they have greater autonomy, higher levels of administrative support, and clearly communicated expectations” (p.247). Clearly communicated expectations are a necessary foundation for initiating structure behaviors.

A bivariate correlation was selected to analyze the data because the researcher was seeking to magnify the strength of any relationships between continuous variables instead of predicting or explaining results in terms of values. Further, the variables received no manipulation by the researcher.

Conclusions

Teacher retention is a hub around which past research revolved, present research revolves, and future research must revolve. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2014) reiterated this truth by noting that the teacher attrition rate has increased by 40% over the past two decades, in spite of the ongoing research focus.

Retention necessitates such cause for concern due to the many educational complications it yields, including a great cost to the education community (Greenlee & Brown, 2009) and

society (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003) in general. Retention has particularly been associated with smaller private schools (Ingersoll, 2001). Thus, smaller Christian schools, such as those accredited by the American Association of Christian Schools, are an obvious area of interest.

Teacher retention has unequivocally been linked to the principal's behaviors through research (Morrison, 2012; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Gilmer, 2006). In 2003, The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher confirmed the value of the leader on teacher retention by stating that the principal greatly affects the teacher's job satisfaction, which then affects teacher retention. The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher follow-up survey results of 2012 revealed a marked decline in teachers' job satisfaction. In fact, the survey quoted a 25-year low in satisfaction ratings of teachers. Thus, it is imperative that principals take note of research which pinpoints behaviors associated with teacher retention. This finding makes a principal's leadership behaviors an excellent fulcrum for continued research.

The research has supported the role of the principal, but the research does not agree on the exact reason between the principal's leadership style (Clifton, 2010) and general leadership behaviors (Leithwood & Sun, 2012) as the accelerating agent. This researcher chose the pathway of specific leadership behaviors in lieu of a given identified leadership style. A study conducted by the Ontario Principal's Council, reported by Williams (2008), specifically identified two leadership behaviors which begged for additional attention. Those behaviors were task-oriented behaviors and relationship-oriented behaviors. Thus, this research continued to address these two types of leadership behaviors in hopes of adding to the information confirming their possible value for even more research. This research provided additional insight into the disaggregated world of private education by focusing solely on the Christian education

dimension. The expectation was to add to the currently thin layer of specifically Christian education research currently in existence. In the process, the researcher also hoped to add to the insights surrounding the research for small private schools, which reveals the turnover rate as being double that of public education. Moving forward another step, the researcher desired additional information regarding if there was any relationship that may exist between the two leadership behaviors of consideration or initiating structure behaviors and teacher retention in Christian schools.

This research data did not reflect the turnover rates reported by private schools. Instead, the participating school with the lowest three-year average for teacher retention was 81%. None of the schools, therefore, aligned with the research of Ingersoll (2001) which stated that small private schools have a turnover rate of almost one-quarter of their faculty per year.

Regarding the relationships between the two leadership behaviors and teacher retention in the AACCS, this study did not reveal a relationship between consideration behaviors and teacher retention. This study did, however, reveal a statistically significant relationship between initiating structure behavior and teacher retention. The relationship was a small, negative correlation demonstrating that when one variable (either the initiating structure behavior or teacher retention) increases the other decreases. Thus, this relationship is one to consider for future research.

Implications

Research has confirmed the great cost of teacher turnover to public education (Greenlee & Brown, 2009), and research has confirmed double the cost in private education overall (Ingersoll, 2001). Still, however, there is a great absence of information regarding disaggregated views of public and private education. For this reason, information as to how this research

applies to Christian education, as a part of private education, is relatively unknown. This research revealed data that did not support a doubled turnover rate for small Christian schools in the American Association of Christian Schools. This finding may mean that the doubled turnover rate for private schools (Ingersoll, 2001) would be even higher if it weren't for the small Christian schools with very low turnover rates affecting the private school data.

Leadership behaviors have been the focus of research for many decades, yet there is still no conclusion as to which specific behaviors have the greatest effect on teacher retention (Glynn & Raffaelli, 2010). Therefore, research surrounding specific leadership behaviors is still considered timely and necessary. This research sought to contribute to the need for such discovery. Indeed, this research identified a statistically significant negative correlation between initiating structure behaviors and teacher retention. This finding may mean that initiating structure behaviors could negatively affect the retention of teachers in the American Association of Christian Schools. Alternately, the data did not reveal a positive or negative statistically significant correlation between consideration behaviors and teacher retention in the American Association of Christian Schools. This finding may mean that consideration behaviors alone do not account for retention rates. Since the retention rates of all the participating schools were higher, however, this would be a more difficult implication to consider. Another explanation could be that the very low teacher attrition rates reported by the schools revealed a general contentedness. Thus, positive factors influencing retention would be more difficult to discern.

There was no specific category of behaviors identified as having a positive statistically significant effect on teacher retention. There may, therefore, be more to the research by Brown and Wynn (2007), which reported that "supportive and shared leadership involves balancing a combination of flexibility and support (Gumby philosophy) with direction and guidance (post-

heroic leaders). Thus, an implication of this study may be that there is more of an effect on teacher retention in conjunction with the combination and balance of behaviors instead of a certain single category of behavior. A research study by Hancock and Scherff (2010) supported such an idea. The research, focused on English teachers specifically, found the following:

Administrative support was also a statistically significant predictor of the likelihood of being classified as a high attrition risk. Four survey questions were investigated to address this variable: administration's behavior toward staff, the principal's clarity of communication, his or her enforcement of school rules, and how appreciated teachers feel. Specifically, this finding suggests that the more support provided by administrators in these areas, the less likely English teachers were to be considered a high risk for attrition. (para.43)

The elements included in the variable of “administrative support” included both consideration and initiating structure behaviors combined. Consideration behaviors would be necessary for the “administration’s behavior toward staff” and “how appreciated teachers feel” criteria. The components of “principal’s clarity of communication” and “his or her enforcement of school rules” falls squarely within initiating structure behavior.

For the reasons and examples mentioned, this research may create a call for principals in Christian education to adjust their roles from a leader who functions solely from initiating structure behaviors to one that seeks to master the art of balancing administrative behaviors between consideration and initiating structure behaviors.

A possible implication may be that the actual behaviors are not the main focus, but rather the way behaviors are accomplished. Angela Lumpkin, in a 2008 edition of Delta Kappa Pi, suggested that the actual process or procedure of the leadership acts of the principal are more

reliable indicators than the actual behaviors. Using Stephen Covey's 2004 work, Lumpkin noted that "Teachers want principals who ensure that integrity serves as the guiding principle upon which decisions and actions are based" (p.23). Her theory was that those principals who incorporate integrity makes decisions, through any leadership behavior, which are more respected. Thus, integrity was the main key, regardless of the specific leadership behaviors.

Marzano's work (2005) also affirms Lumpkin's theory in that this work identified 21 responsibilities of the school leader based on their direct effect on student achievement. Each of the 21 school leader competencies was directly affiliated with values, team building, or individuals. Thus, perhaps a focus on how a principal accomplishes his or her work is more of an indicator of success in retaining teachers over the specific leadership behaviors.

Other implications for Christian schools include possibly altering leadership training and hiring procedures. Christian schools should deliberately incorporate hiring procedures which acknowledge leadership behaviors. Supplementary to this practice, school boards should insist on leadership training which involves purposeful instruction in leadership behaviors, ensuring that principals understand administrative behaviors so that they can avoid solely utilizing initiating structure behaviors.

Christian education should seek to ensure that principals are fully aware of teachers' perceptions regarding their leadership behaviors. Many times, principals and teachers have a different perception, without understanding the differences. Rooney (2008), former Co-Director of the Midwest Principals' Center, published an article confirming the fact that principals and teachers do not always share the same perceptions. She added that this confusion regarding perceptions sometimes adds to problems in that the principals' behaviors have unintentional effects on the teachers. End of year surveys, therefore, could provide valuable insights for the

principal. These insights could further their efforts to increase teacher retention.

Limitations

This study was limited to randomly- selected Christian schools in the American Association of Christian Schools. Schools from all states, except Hawaii and Idaho, were randomly selected and subsequently invited to participate. Only ten school systems responded representing eight total states. All of those states were regionally similar as southern states with only two exceptions, Oregon and New York. Thus, results from this research may not be used to make generalizations about Christian schools in all regions.

Responses were gleaned from teachers through a self-report survey. Although the researcher reassured teachers of the confidentiality, by way of their anonymity and through the survey process, there could have been some fear associated with answering questions directly associated to their supervisor. Thus, some answers may have been affected by this fear.

Also, the survey process may have hindered the willingness to participate in the survey. The process involved first requesting permission from the Head of Schools/ Administrators. The purpose of this procedure was to help teachers to know that the Head of School was fine with them sharing information about their immediate supervisor, the principal, while simultaneously ensuring that those leaders who were the focus of the study did not have to make a decision about the teachers providing supervisory opinions to others. The problem, however, was that some schools did not have a formal position for “principal”. In those schools, the Head of School/Administrator served dual roles. Thus, the roles of those supervising teachers varied and the goal of having permission from a leader outside of the focus was also moot in those cases.

Another concern, regarding the process, is that the second step, after the Head of School approving the participation of the teachers, was for the Head of School to forward the survey link

to the teachers. The unexpected problem was that some Head of Schools failed to forward the survey, some forwarded it with no explanation, and some forwarded it with their explanations. While there was detailed research information for teachers once they clicked on the link forwarded to them, this delivery process could have had some effect on their willingness to participate. A necessary change in procedure would be to deliver personally, or at least personally email, the teachers.

Also, regarding the Leadership Behavior Questionnaire, the instrument was developed through a state university with reliability and validity information based on public education. Therefore, there could be some difference surrounding the credibility of the instrument for Christian education.

A final limitation may have been the number of years that a principal has served in leadership and the number of years that teachers served under their current supervisor. To address this concern, the researcher asked administrators to only forward surveys to teachers who had served under the same principal for three or more years.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this research may allow one to imply that initiating structure behaviors negatively affect the retention rate in Christian schools. More research, however, is needed to determine if this effect is due to the behavior, highlighted as a single category, or if these task-oriented behaviors perhaps have a different effect on teacher retention when balanced with other behaviors. Thus, research surrounding balanced leadership behaviors is needed to fill additional research gaps in literature for teacher retention in Christian education.

Additional research may be even more beneficial from a more rigorous test of a causal relationship. According to Gall et al. (2007), a quantitative experimental research design would

allow for such a determination. Therefore, research so designed could better determine if indeed initiating structure behaviors cause a lapse in teacher retention in Christian education.

Given the modest amount of Christian education research in general, extending and refining this correlational research would also be beneficial. For example, correlational research on a larger accreditation membership, such as Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), may yield a very different result than these results within a smaller organization composed of mainly smaller Christian schools composed of 300 or fewer in enrollment. Also, by using a larger organization, this research could be extended by ensuring more diversity of regions of the United States. Larger Christian schools may have more staff and therefore the ability to better participate. Additionally, it would be beneficial to specify the definition of “principal” so that those in leadership focus are all serving in the same capacity within their schools. The effect of dual roles for the leaders may be an unexpected factor contributing to varying results.

Due to the desire to encourage participation, to create ease of collaboration, and to ensure the participants total anonymity, there was very limited demographic data. It would be a point of research interest to include additional demographic data in this same research. This requirement could add to the information base surrounding the opinions of the participants and whether they are males or females, how long they have been in education, and even if their backgrounds in education are from Christian or public education.

Although not the main focus of this research, the finding that smaller private schools have higher turnover rates constitutes a need for additional research as well. Including smaller schools from the AACCS, as well as locating and inviting smaller schools involved in larger organizations, such as the ACSI, could yield a better view of the accuracy of such a finding in

particular regards to Christian education.

There is a need for additional research surrounding Christian education today. This researcher recommends the noted research explained in the preceding paragraphs. In addition, due to the grave absence of Christian education research in general, any research surrounding the field of Christian education is encouraged.

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Zhang, G. & Zeller, N. (2016). A Longitudinal Investigation of the Relationship between Teacher Preparation and Teacher Retention. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 43(2), 73-92.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

Dear Deana,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Your IRB-approved, stamped consent form is also attached. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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APPENDIX B: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AACCS PERMISSION EMAIL (SAMPLE)

October 27, 2015

Deana Jones
Oakwood Christian Academy
Chickamauga, GA

Dear Mrs. Jones:

This letter is to inform you that permission has been granted for you to contact AACCS member schools in order to request their voluntary participation in your research survey. We are happy to support efforts to conduct research that benefits Christian education.

Sincerely,

Jeff Walton

Executive Director

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL CONSENT (SAMPLE)

Hello,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the completion of Doctor of Education degree. The title of my research project is The Relationship between Two Leadership Behaviors and Teacher Retention in the American Association of Christian Schools and the purpose of my research is to study the effects of certain principals' leadership behaviors on teacher retention in Christian education.

I am writing to request your permission to invite your teachers' participation in my research survey. Participants will be asked to complete the attached short survey. The data will be used to determine if there is a correlation between specific leadership behaviors and retention rates of teachers in Christian education. Participants will be presented with consent information prior to participating, and taking part in this study is completely voluntary.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission please respond with your permission by email to www.dmjones14@liberty.edu including your school's three-year retention percentage average. Also, please forward the attached information, with survey link, to teachers within your school who have served under the same principal/supervisor for at least three years.

Thank you!

Deana Jones
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

APPENDIX D: LETTER TO ELIGIBLE TEACHERS
CONSENT FORM: TEACHER

*THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND TEACHER RETENTION IN
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS*

Deana Jones

Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of leadership characteristics of Christian school principals and their effect on teacher retention. You were selected as a possible participant because your school is a Christian school within the American Association of Christian Schools and your principal has approved your anonymous participation if you consent. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Deana Jones, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this research is to study the relationship between leadership behaviors of Christian school principals and teacher retention. The Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire is a survey tool that measures a level of leadership behaviors. This study will measure possible relationships between specific leadership behaviors and teacher retention.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following: Within a two-week period, click on the link for the short anonymous survey to answer the multiple choice questions. The survey should only take about five minutes to complete. Data collected from teachers will be anonymous, and data from specific schools will be lumped confidentially so that the name of the school will not be reported or known to anyone besides the researcher.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

This study poses no known risks to participants. Participants will not receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participation in this research.

Confidentiality:

The data collected from this study will be kept confidential in a number of ways. The records of this study will be kept private. The survey results are received in an anonymous format. Any sort of report that may be published as a result of this study will not include any names or identifying information, including names of schools. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. Computer files used to store data will be password protected accessible by this researcher alone.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS). If you agree to participate, please click on the link at the bottom of the page to complete the brief survey.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Deana Jones. You may ask any questions you have now by contacting Mrs. Jones at 423-605-8266. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at the same number or 706-375-7247. You may also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Scott Watson, Liberty University at swatson@liberty.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Click on this link to participate in a very brief survey. Thank you!

APPENDIX E: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire

Each item below describes a specific leadership behavior. You are not being asked to judge the value of the behavior, to give your opinion of that behavior, or to indicate any questions of leadership ability. Simply score each item as accurately as you can connecting the behavior listed to behaviors you have witnessed from your principal on a consistent basis over the past three years.

Directions: Read each item carefully. Think about how frequently the leader engages in the behavior described by the item. Decide whether s/he always, often, occasionally, seldom or never acts as described by the item. Select one of the five letters following the item to show the answer you have selected.

A = Always B = Often C = Occasionally D = Seldom E = Never

- =====
- _____ 1. S/he does personal favors for group members.
 - _____ 2. S/he makes her/his attitudes clear to the group.
 - _____ 3. S/he does little things to make it pleasant to be a member of the group.
 - _____ 4. S/he tries out his new ideas with the group.
 - _____ 5. S/he acts as the real leader of the group.
 - _____ 6. S/he is easy to understand.
 - _____ 7. S/he rules with an iron hand.
 - _____ 8. S/he finds time to listen to group members.
 - _____ 9. S/he criticizes poor work.
 - _____ 10. S/he gives advance notice of changes.
 - _____ 11. S/he speaks in a manner not to be questioned.
 - _____ 12. S/he keeps to her/himself.
 - _____ 13. S/he looks out for the personal welfare of individual group members.
 - _____ 14. S/he assigns group members to particular tasks.
 - _____ 15. S/he is the spokesman of the group.
 - _____ 16. S/he schedules the work to be done.
 - _____ 17. S/he maintains definite standards of performance.
 - _____ 18. S/he refuses to explain her/his actions.
 - _____ 19. S/he keeps the group informed.
 - _____ 20. S/he acts without consulting the group.
 - _____ 21. S/he backs up the members in their actions.
 - _____ 22. S/he emphasizes the meeting of deadlines.
 - _____ 23. S/he treats all group members as her/his equals
 - _____ 24. S/he encourages the use of uniform procedures.
 - _____ 25. S/he gets what s/he asks for from his/her superiors.
 - _____ 26. S/he is willing to make changes.
 - _____ 27. S/he makes sure that her/his part in the organization is understood by the group.
 - _____ 28. S/he is friendly and approachable.
 - _____ 29. S/he asks that group members follow standard rules and regulations.
 - _____ 30. S/he fails to take necessary action.
 - _____ 31. S/he makes group members feel at ease when talking with them.
 - _____ 32. S/he lets group members know what is expected of them.
 - _____ 33. S/he speaks as the representative of the group.
 - _____ 34. S/he puts suggestions made by the group into action.
 - _____ 35. S/he sees to it that group members are working up to capacity.

- _____ 36. S/he lets other people take away her/his leadership role.
- _____ 37. S/he gets her/his superiors to act for the welfare of the group.
- _____ 38. S/he gets group approval in important matters before going ahead.
- _____ 39. S/he sees to it that the work of the group members is coordinated.
- _____ 40. S/he keeps the group working together as a team.

LBDQ was created by Ohio State University.