

Teacher And Principal Perceptions Of Deliberate Principal Behaviors Related To School Climate

By
Christopher Brown

A Dissertation
Submitted to
Columbus State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education
Specialization in Leadership

Columbus State University
Columbus, GA

March 30, 2018

©Copyright 2018 by Christopher L Brown

All rights reserved

Dedication

I dedicate this research study to my beautiful wife, Christina and children Aubrey, Bailey and Caleb. I am grateful for their unwavering support, understanding and encouragement. This milestone would not have been achieved without you all in my corner cheering for me. I love you all!

Acknowledgement

Several people have helped me personally and professional along this journey. The support, guidance, wisdom, and encouragement you all provided have made this dream a reality. Thank you to the following: My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me a purpose on earth and the ability to complete this monumental task. Dr. Michael Richardson, my dissertation chair, Dr. Pamela Lemoine and Dr. Tom Hackett, committee members. You all were always willing to assist and guide me on the journey. Your wisdom and insight were vital in the completion of my dissertation. Without your encouragement, guidance, and deep understanding of educational research I would not have completed this amazing task. Dr. Janet Pulleyn for granting permission to use your research study as a model and guide for my study. Leadership and authors of the Leadership Practices Inventory and Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire-RS for permission to use your instruments as a key component in my research study. My wonderful parents, Jack and Carolyn Brown, for instilling in me the work ethic and drive to accomplish anything I put my mind to doing. The many members of my immediate family, thank you all for understanding the past several years and giving me grace when it was needed. My mentor and friend, Dr. Lionel Brown, for opening my eyes to the impact and influence of effective school leadership. Dr. Mark Scott, Dr. Greg Peavy, Dr. Doug Rizer, Mr. Del Martin, and Mr. Chris McCook for granting permission for me to conduct research in Houston County and each of your schools. Last but certainly not least, Christina, Aubrey, Bailey and Caleb. The past several years have been a journey. You all stood beside me and supported me along this journey. Thank you for all you have done for me. I love each of you with everything me!

Curriculum Vita

Christopher L. Brown
Kathleen GA, 30147
Chrislbrown1981@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Columbus State University, Columbus, GA Doctorate in Education, Curriculum and Leadership, Specialization in Leadership Dissertation: Teachers' perception of deliberate principals' behaviors related to school climate	2018
Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, GA Specialist in Education	2008
Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, GA Masters of Education	2007
Georgia Southwester State University, Americus, GA Bachelor of Science in Education	2004

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal, Veterans High School, Kathleen GA	Present
Assistant Principal, Veterans High School, Kathleen, GA	2010-2015
Teacher, Tucker Elementary School, Perry, GA	2004-2010
Athletic Coach, Perry High School, Perry, GA	2004-2010

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Veterans High School 2017 CCRPI 94.6	
Veterans High School 2017 Graduation Rate 92.3	
Veterans High School 2017 School Climate Rating 4 Stars	
Dr. Richard W. Litwhiler Award	2004
Houston County Leadership Develop Program graduate	2014

MEMBERSHIPS

Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL)
Professional Association for Georgia Educators (PAGE)

Abstract

The passage of various federal legislative acts brought about different demands on public school principals, most notable accountability. The purpose of the mixed methods study was to answer questions regarding what specific principal leadership behaviors promoted a healthy school climate in high schools. The research used two different survey instruments to obtain perception data from high school teachers in one school district. The Leadership Practices Inventory and Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire-RS was electronically sent to high school teachers. A total of 66 participants completed both survey instruments. The research utilized a Pearson Correlation to measure to what extent relationships existed between teacher perceptions of leadership behaviors and school climate. The qualitative component of this study was the use of a focus group. The principals of the teachers surveyed were the participants of the focus group. Data from the focus group was transcribed and themes were identified. The overall finding of this study was that principal behaviors did influence teacher perceptions of school climate.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	xi
List of Figure.....	xii
List of Charts.....	xiii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the study.....	3
Statement of Problem.....	4
Research questions.....	5
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework	5
Significance of the study.....	6
Research Design.....	8
Procedures.....	8
Limitations	9
Delimitation	10
Definitions.....	10
Summary	12
CHAPTER 2	13
REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED LITERATURE.....	13
Introduction.....	13
Historical Overview	13
Is the role of the principal important?.....	17
What are the principal behaviors that effect schools?	19
The field of neuroscience’s explanations of effective leadership.....	21
The traits of a resilient school leader	22
The role of school leadership in the change process.....	23
Transformational Leadership/Transactional Leadership	24
Transformational leadership and innovative climate	26
Transformational/Instructional Leadership.....	27
International studies	30
Gender differences	32
Pilot Study.....	32
School Climate.....	33
School climate and the national school climate standards.....	36
School climate measurement and analysis	37
School climate and youth development.....	38
School climate and shared leadership	39
School climate and moral and social development	40
School climate and inclusion.....	41
School climate and equity	42
School climate and dropout prevention.....	42
School climate and bully prevention	43
School climate and adult learning	44

School Climate Star Ratings	45
Table of Contents (continued)	
Research instruments	47
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire- RS	47
Supportive Principal Behaviors.....	49
Directive Principal Behaviors	49
Engaged Teacher Behaviors.....	49
Frustrated Teacher Behaviors.....	49
Intimate Teacher Behaviors	49
Studies using OCDQ-RS.....	50
Leadership Practices Inventory	51
Model the Way.....	51
Inspire a Shared Vision	52
Challenge the Process.....	52
Enable Others to Act	53
Development and Validation of Leadership Practices Inventory	54
Theoretical Framework.....	55
Summary	57
CHAPTER 3	62
METHODOLOGY	62
Research Questions.....	62
Research Design.....	63
Population	64
Participants.....	66
Instrumentation	66
Leadership Practices Inventory	67
Leadership Practices Inventory Reliability and Validity.....	68
Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire- RS.....	69
OCDQ-RS Reliability and Validity.....	69
Focus Group.....	70
Data Collection	71
Data Analysis	72
Reporting the Data	73
Summary.....	74
CHAPTER 4	76
REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS	76
Introduction.....	76
Respondents	78
Findings.....	78
Findings.....	79
Discussion	80
Finding	85
Discussion	86
Chart 1. Summary of LPI mean dimension scores and OCDQ-RS general openness climate score .	92
Finding	92

Discussion	93
Table of Contents (continued)	
Summary	98
CHAPTER 5	100
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	100
Summary	100
Analysis of Research Findings.....	101
Discussion of Research Findings	102
Conclusions.....	107
Implications.....	109
Recommendations.....	110
Dissemination	111
Concluding Thoughts.....	112
REFERENCES	114
APPENDICIES	121
Appendix A.....	122
Houston County School District Approval.....	122
Appendix B	123
Columbus State University IRB Approval	123
Appendix C	124
Principal Approval Letter	124
Appendix D.....	125
PRE-NOTICE LETTER	125
Appendix E	126
Cover Letter	126
Appendix F.....	128
Web-based Informed Consent.....	128
Appendix G.....	130
Cover Letter to Principals	130
Appendix H.....	132
Follow-up Call to Principals	132
Appendix I	133
Focus Group Informed Consent.....	133
Appendix J	135
Leadership Practices Inventory Approval.....	135
Appendix K.....	136
Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire-RS Approval	136
Appendix L	138
Dr. Janet Pulley's Approval	138
Appendix M	139
Leadership Practices Inventory.....	139
Appendix N.....	140
Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire-RS	140

List of Tables

Table 1. School Demographics.....	66
Table 2. LPI Alpha Coefficients.....	69
Table 3. OCDQ-RS Alpha Coefficients.....	70
Table 4. Summary of LPI dimensions and corresponding questions.....	79
Table 5. Summary of Pearson Correlations for Live Oak High School.....	80
Table 6. Summary of Pearson Correlation for Post Oak High School.....	81
Table 7. Summary of Pearson Correlation for Red Oak High School.....	82
Table 8. Summary of Pearson Correlation for White Oak High School.....	83
Table 9. Summary of Pearson Correlation for all high schools.....	84
Table 10. Live Oak High School Standardized School Climate Scores.....	86
Table 11. Post Oak High School Standardized School Climate Scores.....	86
Table 12. Red Oak High School Standardized School Climate Scores.....	87
Table 13. White Oak High School Standardized School Climate Scores.....	87
Table 14. Summary of OCDQ-RS dimension and corresponding questions.....	87
Table 15. Summary of Pearson Correlation of OCDQ-RS Dimensions.....	89
Table 16. Summary of Pearson Correlation of LPI and OCDQ-RS.....	91

List of Figure

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.....	5
-------------------------------------	---

List of Charts

Chart 1. Summary of LPI mean dimension scores and OCDQ-RS general openness climate.....	92
Chart 2. Focus Group Data on understanding of climate.....	93
Chart 3. Focus Group data on showing appreciate and reinforcing behaviors.....	94
Chart 4. Focus Group data on Encouraging teachers to take risks.....	95
Chart 5. Focus group data on giving teachers a voice in decision making.....	96
Chart 6. Comparison of Principal and Teacher Identified Behaviors.....	97

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in any organization was vital for success. Schools were not exempt from this observation resulting in the role of the school principal being important to school success. With recent changes in law and policy, behaviors successful school leaders displayed to promote school success needed to be studied. A research-based understanding of specific leadership behaviors that promoted school success helped improve practice. Therefore, the researcher proposed to determine what specific behaviors successful principals exhibited.

Prior to 1965 the federal government's role in education was that of providing funding or land rather than matters of curriculum nor daily operations of schools. April 9, 1965 marked a significant change to American public education as President Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Standerfer, 2006). The ESEA was replaced in 1994 by Goals 2000 (Heise, 1994), which was later replaced by No Child Left Behind in 2001 (Van Roekel, 2008). In December of 2015 the latest version of federal education reform was passed called Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (Fennell, 2016). Consequently, demands on principals increased as they became the point person for criticism while maintaining the balance of leading a school and promoting positive school climate (Lashway, 2000). Understanding whether the principal was a factor in school academic achievement and promoting school climate became paramount.

According to Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) and Kythreotis, Pashiardis, and Kyriakides (2010) a principal's leadership behaviors, the way a principal responded

to various situations, was a factor that had a significant impact on student achievement outcomes. The behaviors of the principal changed significantly due to the need for school leaders to place more focus on instructional leadership (Soehner & Ryan, 2011), thus it was necessary to gain an understanding of the behaviors that had an impact on student achievement and school success (Soehner & Ryan). Cobb (2014) and Wilson (2011) agreed the building principal had a significant impact on school climate and student achievement. Cobb claimed that it was the principal who was responsible for establishing the school climate, norms and expectations based upon the behaviors they portrayed. Horng, Klasik and Loeb (2010) and Grissom and Loeb (2011) found a correlation between strong organizational behaviors and positive school performance. Horng et al. found a principal's ability to effectively execute organizational behaviors had a more direct impact on school effectiveness than those tasks directly related to instruction. With the understanding that the principal did influence academic achievement and had an impact on school climate, the specific behaviors that most influenced achievement and climate in a positive manner needed to be studied.

Perceptions of teachers regarding of school climate were shaped by principal behaviors; specifically, teachers saw school climate as positive when the principals' actions were aligned with their words (Allen, Grigsby & Peters, 2015). May and Sanders (2013) found when principals displayed transformational leadership behaviors they had greater success in improving schools. Day, Gu and Sammons (2016) claimed there was not a dominant leadership style, however effective principals utilized aspects of several different leadership styles. Urick and Bowers (2014) confirmed this claim in that the principal's action depended on the context, situation and other factors. International

studies concluded a significant relationship existed between teacher practices and transformational leadership of secondary school principals (Izham, Hamzah, & Yakop, 2011). Arbabi and Mehdinezhad concluded there was a significant positive correlation and teacher self-efficacy improved when principals displayed higher levels of collaborative leadership.

Historically, Loukas (2007) stated school climate was a complex compilation of physical, social and academic dimensions of the school. Understanding the influence school climate played in school success was essential. School climate was related to student development and student scholastic growth as well as teacher retention (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey & D'Alessandro, 2013). Hughes and Pickeral (2013) stated, healthy student and teacher relationships as well as student achievement improved, and school personnel developed meaningful ownership and individual engagement increased when principals demonstrated shared leadership. Further, Cohen and Brown claimed teacher job satisfaction and student achievement and success were high in schools with a positive school climate.

Purpose of the study

The researcher proposed the purpose of this mixed methods study was to gain understanding of the degree to which principal leadership behaviors influenced positive school climate. The researcher proposed to survey teachers in one school district in Georgia. The purpose was to gain perception data regarding principal leadership behaviors and school climate. Once the data was collected, the researcher analyzed the data using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient to determine correlations between Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) and Organizational Climate Description Question-

RS (OCDQ-RS). Specifically, the strength of correlation between teacher perception regarding leadership behaviors of principals and the influence of those behaviors on promoting positive school climate. The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) was originally developed in 1963 to understand the organizational climate of elementary schools (Halpin & Croft, 1963). The OCDQ-RS was later developed to understand the organizational climate in high schools (Kottkamp, Mulhern & Hoy, 1987). The instrument was revised and tested to ensure validity and reliability by the authors. In addition, Westhuzien and Mentz (1993) and Mentz and Westhuzien (1993) conducted investigations and determined the OCDQ-RS was valid and reliable. The LPI was developed in 1982 by first asking leaders to explain their personal best stories. What emerged after further testing was Five Leadership Practices; Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzer & Posner, 2017). Further testing was conducted to demonstrate the LPI was a valid and reliable instrument. After further testing to include cross cultural and gender analysis Posner and Kouzes (1988) claimed the LPI had strong internal reliability. In addition to surveying certified high school teachers, a focus group meeting was conducted with four high school principals in this school district. The purpose of this focus group meeting was to gain data pertaining to the deliberate behaviors these high school principals exercise to promote positive school climate.

Statement of Problem

Questions existed concerning what specific leadership behaviors promoted a healthy school climate in high schools. The literature provided insight for effective school leadership behaviors, however with the increasing importance of effective school

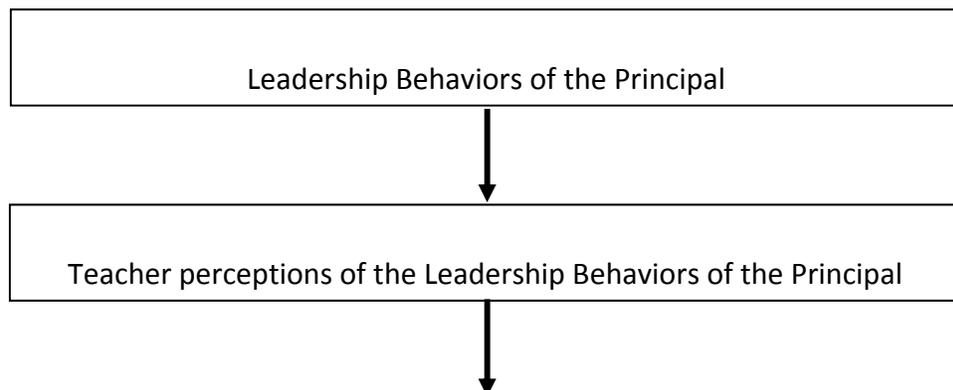
leaders and recent changes in school policy a new study needed to be conducted. The researcher proposed to ascertain which school leadership behaviors were perceived by teachers as effective in promoting a healthy school climate.

Research questions

Existing research provided insight for effective school leadership behaviors, however with the increasing importance of effective school leaders and recent changes in school policy, there was a gap in existing literature. Therefore, the researcher proposed to examine which school leadership behaviors were perceived by teachers as effective in promoting a healthy school climate. The following research questions guided this study.

- (1) To what extent do relationships exist between teacher perceptions of principal leadership behaviors when compared to the Leadership Practices Inventory?
- (2) To what extent do relationships exist between teacher perceptions of principal behaviors and school climate as measured by the Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire-RS?
- (3) What are the deliberate behaviors high school principals exercise daily to promote school climate as identified by high school principals?

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Teacher perceptions of School Climate

The conceptual framework above provided graphical representation of the direction for this study. The conceptual framework represented the theory that the leadership behaviors of the principal establish the teacher perception of the leadership behaviors of the principal. Teacher perceptions of principal leadership behaviors established teacher perceptions of school climate. Allen, Grigsby and Peters (2015) claimed teacher perceptions of school climate were shaped by principal behaviors specifically, when the principals' actions were aligned with their words teachers saw the school climate as positive. Cobb (2014) and Wilson (2011) agreed the building principal had a significant impact on school climate. Further, Cobb claimed that based upon the behaviors portrayed the principal was responsible for establishing the school climate, norms and expectations.

Significance of the study

Teachers were leaving the education profession at an alarming rate. Colleges and Universities were not graduating as many students from teacher preparation programs. Aragon (2016) stated the total enrollment in teacher preparation programs for the year 2008-2009 was 719,081. Five academic school years later the total enrollment was down to 465,536. In addition, from the 2010 to 2014 high school graduate interest in a general education major dropped 3% from 15,595 to 10,678 (Aragon). Owens (2015) reported within the first five years of teaching 44% of public school teachers were leaving the profession. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission conducted a survey in which 26,603 elementary school teachers, 11,989 middle school teachers, and 13,773

high school teachers responded (Owens). Teachers were asked to provide insight as to why they were leaving the profession and on the top 10 list was that of school and district leadership (Owens). Owens found teachers claimed leadership made an immeasurable impact on the cause of the teacher drop-out rate. While inconsistencies existed in whether leadership was positive or negative, strong leadership protected teachers from arduous and hectic situations (Owens). Understanding school leadership behaviors that positively impacted school climate and what behaviors effective school leaders exhibited was essential to curb this downward trend. The findings of this study could provide insight for leader preparation programs, policy development, and to improve school leader practice. The findings of this study had the potential to influence teacher and student experiences, promote healthier school climates and possibly promote student success.

The Georgia Department of Education began assigning schools with School Climate Rating on the 2014 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCPRI). The final school climate rating was published from one to five stars (Georgia Department of Education, 2017). The overall climate rating contained four domains survey responses, school discipline data, safe and substance free learning environment, and school wide attendance (Georgia Department of Education). Of the four high schools used in this study three earned star ratings of three stars and the remaining two schools earned star ratings of four stars (Georgia Department of Education). This further added to the significance of this study. Since schools were assessed and earned a specific rating based upon school climate a better understanding of what principal behaviors influenced school climate, provided an improvement for schools.

Research Design

The researcher used a mixed methods approach to conduct this research study. Gravetter and Wallnau (2016) stated statistics were a collection of mathematical procedures used for gathering and explaining data. These procedures were informative and summarize large quantities of data less complex in simpler terms (Gravetter & Wallnau). For this study, the researcher used the correlational method, which is the measurement of two different variables to define to what extent, if any, a relationship exists between the variables (Gravetter & Wallnau). Since the data collected for this study was in numerical form the quantitative method was preferred over other research designs. It should be noted that the correlation method had limitations. While the correlation method explained if a relationship existed between two variables, an explanation of the cause and effect was not established (Gravetter & Wallnau). Specifically, for this study the researcher employed the Pearson Correlation, which “measures the degree and the direction of the linear relationship between two variables” (Gravetter & Wallnau, p. 490). The researcher determined the linear relationship between principal leadership behaviors and teacher perception of those behaviors on school climate. To obtain this data, the researcher performed a Pearson Correlation study on survey responses from teachers of four different Georgia High Schools. The survey instruments used were the Leadership Practices Inventory and Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire-RS.

Procedures

The researcher conducted the study in four traditional high schools located in the state of Georgia. The survey was sent to all teachers regardless of subject or content taught in the four traditional high schools to increase participation and sample size. This research was focused to teacher perceptions in the traditional high school setting only,

therefore middle and elementary school teachers were not surveyed. The four traditional high schools spanned the spectrum of affluent to low-socioeconomic status, as well as high achieving and low achieving. The sample selected provided insight to the linear relationship, or lack of, regardless of demographics. The researcher used two different survey instruments for this study. The Leadership Practices survey was used to gain teacher perception data about principal leadership behaviors. Secondly, the Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire-RS was used to gain data pertaining to teacher perception of school climate. To conduct this study the researcher first the researcher asked the principals at each high school for permission to conduct this study at their schools. Secondly, permission from Columbus State University's IRB as well as the local districts IRB was obtained. The data was collected electronically, and a Pearson Correlation was conducted on the data. The data was reported in charts, tables as well as narrative form.

Limitations

1. The sample size was limited to one central Georgia School District, which included traditional high schools.
2. The number of participants was limited to teachers within the high schools.
3. The number of responses in this study were limited to the number of teachers who responded to the surveys.
4. The only factor of school climate studied in this research was that of teacher perceptions of principal behaviors.
5. One high school was excluded from data collection due to the researcher's position at the school.

Delimitation

1. According to previous studies the Leadership Practices Inventory was a reliable and valid research instrument.
2. According to previous studies the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire- Revised for High School was a reliable and valid survey.
3. The researcher conducting this study was employed by district in which the study was conducted.

Definitions

Leadership Practices Inventory- A 30 question survey that uses a Likert scale to measure the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership which are Model the Way, Inspire Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Organizational Climate Descriptors Questionnaire- revised for high school- A 34 question survey that uses a Likert scale to measure teacher perceptions of school climate. The descriptors were supportive principal behaviors, directive principal behaviors, engaged teacher behavior, frustrated teacher behavior, intimate teacher behavior and openness index.

Principal- For this study, a principal was a person employed to provide oversight for the total educational program for students in grades 9-12.

Teachers- For this study, teachers were defined as individuals who held a valid Georgia teaching certificate through the Georgia Professionals Commission and were employed in the district in which this study was conducted.

Educational reform- Educational reform was the results of civic and governmental forces seeking for school improvement to improve learning for all students without respect to gender, ethnicity, or economic status (Madsen, Schroeder & Irby, 2014).

School district- For this study, school district was defined as the school district in which this study was conducted.

High school- For this study, high schools refer to schools that instruct students in grades 9-12.

School climate- For this study, school climate was defined as the physical, social and academic dimensions of a school (Loukas, 2007).

Perception- For this study, perception refers to the thoughts and beliefs of teachers regarding their principal's leadership behaviors.

Leadership behaviors- for this study, leadership behaviors refer to those practices that school principals exhibit while leading schools.

Deliberate behaviors- for the purpose of this study, deliberate behaviors refer to the behaviors high school principals exercised intentionally in their day to day leadership of their school.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)- legislation passed by President Johnson to provide equal educational opportunities to disadvantaged students.

Goals 2000- legislation passed to provide federal funding to States for participating in national reform.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)- legislation passed to close achievement gaps which permitted government to put sanctions on school districts that did not meet increasing expectations.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)- growth measures that birthed out of NCLB where schools had to show gradual improvement based on Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)- legislation that replaced NCLB and AYP demands as well as interventions placed on states who consistently failed to meet AYP. Gave states and local districts more independence to address achievement gaps.

Summary

Through a mixed methods study the researcher studied the relationships of principal leadership behaviors and their influence on school climate. The researcher used a Pearson Correlation of LPI and OCDQ-RS to determine the relationship between teacher perceptions and principal leadership behaviors. The purpose of this study was to study the problem of understanding what leadership behaviors of the principal promoted a healthy school climate. Teachers were leaving the profession of education at an alarming rate and better understanding of how principals can promote school climates that are positive could potentially reverse this trend. The researcher surveyed teachers at four high schools in one school district and gained perception data.

Chapter two provided a review of literature pertaining to the history of school reform to demonstrate the change in principals' responsibilities. Further, the researcher presented research concerning various leadership styles of behaviors found in the literature. Literature about neuroscience and leadership, resilience and the role of leadership in the change process was briefly reviewed in Chapter two. Finally, the literature concerning the second major theme of this study, school climate, was reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The researcher reviewed the literature beginning with a historical overview of school reform to gain an understanding of how Federal government reform efforts impacted school principals. In addition, the researcher examined recent research pertaining to principal behaviors, specifically regarding transformational, transactional shared instructional leadership and integrated leadership styles. The researcher concluded by examining the impact of principal behaviors on school climate.

Historical Overview

During the presidency of Lyndon B Johnson, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed (Standerfer, 2006). Prior to *ESEA* the Federal government's involvement in public education was limited to funding special projects or providing land as public education was a state's rights. This new involvement of the federal government was expected to reduce the achievement gap, in that *ESEA* provided federal funding to schools based upon their socioeconomic status and left alone schools that were performing well. Standerfer claimed an appeal for accountability was birthed out of the increased involvement of federal funding.

The authors of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission of Educational Excellence, 1983) suggested that America was at risk due to the eroding foundation of America's educational system (Goldberg & Harvey, 1983). Goldberg and Harvey stated that education was the crucial dynamic undergirding the Nation's future. The purpose of this "clarion call" was to remind American citizens of

the importance of education that helped establish the foundation and blaze the trail for the future of the Nation (Goldberg & Harvey). The National Commission on Excellence in Education spoke specifically to school and school system leaders in that these individuals play a critical part in building support for and carrying out the reform they suggested. In addition, school boards were challenged with developing leadership skills in their leaders in order for these reforms to be successful (National Commission on Excellence in Education). Further, the reform suggested that Americans' hold these individuals accountable for achievement of students (Goldberg & Harvey).

Goals 2000 of 1994 signified the end of an era of school reform but marked the beginning of a new one (Heise, 1994). By establishing national educational goals and a system by which states could accept money for participating in national reform *Goals 2000* established a new position for federal government in public education (King, 1994). Even though *Goals 2000* was completely voluntary, the funding available to those who did volunteer was too attractive and useful to abandon as well as certain aspects within the reform that required all to comply (King). This new reform movement increased the federal government's authority and decreased state and local control over education policy (Heise). Even though the Constitution did not mention education, *Goals 2000* expanded the federal government's role in educational policymaking (Heise). In an article written in 2000, Larry Lashway contended the role of the principal and the idea of accountability were not new concepts. However, the state and federal policymakers brought a whole new meaning to the idea of school accountability. Lashway (2000) stated principals had always been accountable for fair treatment of staff, listening to stakeholders, being instructional leaders and ensuring fiscal responsibility. However, new

regulations shifted accountability to demand higher academic student achievement which typically translated to higher scores on standardized tests (Lashway). Lashway claimed the publication of school performance created an educational climate where schools were either shamed for poor performance or praised for high performance. To effectively lead in these changing times principals had work to find a balance and establish a vision that moved the school forward while sharing leadership with teachers (Lashway). Schools needed to adapt and build capacity to accept more scrutiny and the principal became the point person responding to critics while continually meeting the day to day needs of running a school (Lashway). Lashway further stated the principal needed to maintain high expectations for themselves and for the school, creating a no excuses paradigm in regards for student success.

Eliminating achievement gaps and increasing student achievement was the primary intent of *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (Van Roekel, 2008). An unintended consequence of this reform was placing the school leadership as the focal point in achieving the goals (Van Roekel,). *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) allowed leveled sanctions to be placed on schools which could reduce a principal's authority and ultimately lead to dismissing the principal if the school consistently failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (Van Roekel). Van Roekel further claimed that NCLB increased public scrutiny of principal performance due to increased parental notifications which led to increased stress to produce results.

Husband and Hunt (2015) reviewed empirical literature related to NCLB and its effectiveness on various student groups. Husband and Hunt claimed NCLB was the most significant educational reform passed in America in years. NCLB reform had major

implications on public perception of schools and significantly impacted the day to day activities of students, faculty and staff, and school leaders (Husband & Hunt). Increased accountability came in the form of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based upon Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMO's) which gradually increased yearly to ensure that by year 2014 all students, including all subgroups and students with special needs, would reach 100% proficiency in reading and math (Husband & Hunt). Husband and Hunt stated schools who did not meet AYP for two consecutive years were labeled as in need of improvement and schools who failed to meet AYP four consecutive years were subject to punitive action such as replacing staff, decreasing the principal's authority or a reorganization of the school. In addition, this reform gave parents the option of sending their child to a better performing school in the same district (Husband & Hunt). Husband and Hunt stated that even though NCLB was not successful in its attempts to improve achievement of all students, it caused school administrators to alter their practices in order to respond to the requirements of NCLB.

In December 2015 *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015 was signed into law (Brenner, 2016). The new law took effect in the fall of 2016 with the US Department of Education having one year to finalize regulations (Fennell, 2016). Darrow (2016) claimed that ESSA narrowed the federal government and gave more control to individual states and districts. Gone was Adequate Yearly Progress as well as the interventions imposed on schools who failed to meet AYP (Fennell). Schools were required report the performance of students and sub groups, but states and local school systems were given autonomy to intervene and develop improvement strategies on the behalf of students (Brenner). Individual states were also given the discretion to determine Highly Qualified

teacher requirements for teachers allowing flexibility for teacher requirements (Fennell). While under ESSA the Federal government's role decreased, Gross and Hill (2016), predicted special interest groups would continue to call the public's attention to achievement gaps and unproductive schools. This was due to the policy feedback theory which argued that remnants existed after policies were replaced (Gross & Hill). Specifically, the accountability aspects of NCLB continually called attention to the performance of schools and school leadership as many found value in school accountability (Gross & Hill)

Is the role of the principal important?

Historically, researchers examined the school principal as a factor of school effectiveness and Austin (1979) claimed schools that exceeded expectations had a principal that was an expert leader. Austin stated that teachers perceived their principals as instructional leaders. Exceptional principals held high expectations for students and teachers and as a result students rose to achieve at high levels (Austin). Effective school leaders developed a climate that promoted interactions of staff members to share ideas and avoided micromanaging teachers and gave them the freedom to innovate teaching and learning practices (Austin). Hallinger and Heck (1998) conducted a review of research from 1980 to 1995 to investigate the relationship principals and student achievement. Specifically, they reviewed 40 published journal articles, dissertations and papers delivered at peer-reviewed conferences. From their quantitative analysis Hallinger and Heck concluded principals had a statistically significant but indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement. This affect was in the form of organizational structure, culture, setting school performance targets and social interactions of students

and staff (Hallinger & Heck). Primarily, by creating a compelling vision, mission and specific focus the principal established the school's direction (Hallinger & Heck).

Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) performed a meta-analysis of research from 1978-2001 which included 650 building principals, 69 studies, 2802 schools, 1.4 million students and 14, 000 teachers. The goal of their study was to identify research-based practices of effective principals. Five years later Kythreotis, Pashiardis, and Kyriakides (2010) conducted a longitudinal study which involved 22 schools and 55 classes to determine the direct and indirect effects of principal behaviors on student achievement. According to Marzano et. al and Kythreotis et al. a principal's leadership behavior was a factor that had a significant impact on student achievement outcomes. Soehner and Ryan (2011) conducted a similar review of literature and concluded principals had an indirect on student achievement but were the groundwork for instructional leadership. The behaviors of the principal changed significantly due to the need for school leaders to place more focus on instructional leadership (Soehner & Ryan), thus it was necessary to gain an understanding of the behaviors that impacted on student achievement and school success (Soehner & Ryan). Cobb (2014) and Wilson (2011) agreed the building principal had a significant impact on school climate and student achievement. Cobb claimed that it was the principal who was responsible for establishing the school climate, norms and expectations based upon the behaviors they portrayed. Horng, Klasik and Loeb (2010) executed an investigation to observe the time principals spent on different administrative tasks. Grissom and Loeb (2011) conducted a quantitative study to understand which principal practices had the most influence for school success. Horng et al. and Grissom and Loeb both found a correlation between

strong organizational behaviors and positive school performance. Horng et al. found a principal's ability to effectively execute organizational behaviors had a more direct impact on school effectiveness than those tasks directly related to instruction.

What are the principal behaviors that effect schools?

Harvey and Holland (2013) stated five key behaviors effective principals exhibited were to shape a vision of academic success for all students, create a climate hospitable to education, cultivate leadership in others, improve instruction, and manage people, data and processes to foster school improvement. Successful principals demonstrated these behaviors in that they communicated high expectations for all students, established a climate where learning is the center of day to day operations, established channels by which leadership was being developed at all levels, spent time in classrooms to provide effective feedback to improve teaching and learning, and used data to make informed decisions about every aspect of their school (Harvey & Holland).

Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010) surveyed teachers from 180 schools from 45 different school districts to investigate if shared leadership, trust and instructional support influenced teacher effectiveness as well as did principal behaviors contribute to student achievement. Through their quantitative paired-sample t-test Louis et a. (2010) found effective principals involved teachers in the decision-making process and placed significant focus on instructional and shared leadership. Further Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, Anderson (2010) performed a mixed methods study by surveying 8,391 teachers, 471 school administrators, interviewing 581 teachers and administrators, 304 district office staff and 124 state level staff, and conducted 312 classroom observations. Louis et al. found that shared leadership centered on increasing teacher competency and