Early Childhood Program Director Leadership Characteristics and Program Quality

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This phenomenological research study was conducted to explore and describe how the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors, as described and perceived by the teachers, reflect the factors that are currently addressed in the indicators forming the basis for evaluating program quality. Teacher participants from six sites participated in a survey, questionnaire, and interview to determine director and program profiles. The Program Quality Assessment score was used as a standardized data source.

The data were collected, coded, and analyzed to determine the director and program profiles for each of the sites. The director and program data for each site were displayed in the director and program quality profile tables. The profiles were then grouped by Program Quality Assessment scores to establish three range groups. The programs in each grouping were analyzed for agreement and disparity within the director profiles and program profiles created from the four data sources. Next, the analysis focused on the strength of alignment among the descriptions of the directors’ leadership that existed between the program quality range groups.

This study confirmed a director profile for the high quality ranked programs was feasible. It also confirmed that the programs in other range groups displayed minimal commonalities to warrant program quality range group profiles. The second finding for
this research study confirmed that a shared program profile was possible across range
groups. The findings of this research study add to the literature by providing a better
understanding of the high quality program directors’ profile of leadership
characteristics, traits, and styles, as described by the teachers from the high quality
programs. In addition, the findings also illustrate how teachers in high quality programs
link program quality with the leadership of the director.
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CHAPTER I

RESEARCH PROBLEM

We are coming to believe that leaders are those people, who “walk ahead,” people who are genuinely committed to deep change in themselves and in their organizations. They lead through developing new skills, capabilities, and understandings. And they come from many places within the organization. (Senge, 1996, p. 45)

This quote by Peter Senge is markedly appropriate to the field of early childhood leadership. According to the literature and experts in the field, directors of early childhood programs have come, primarily, from within the ranks of the organization. In most cases, the directors have served as teachers in the program before becoming the administrator. This, however, is where the parallel with Senge’s quote ends in terms of prevailing orientations to early childhood program leaders. Unlike their K-12 counterparts in school administration, early childhood program directors are, most often, viewed and described in terms of their administrative and managerial functions relating to the operation of the organization (Bloom, 1988; Kagan & Bowman, 1997) rather than their leadership role which is concerned with the forward movement of the organization.

Kagan and Bowman (1997) have expressed their concern regarding how the field has nurtured individuals to assume early childhood leadership positions, observing that “our field has created ideas about leadership in a somewhat ad hoc manner, without building on major theoretical constructs—including, for example, stakeholder theory, situational leadership and/or contingency theory” (p. 6). Research has supported the position that major leadership theoretical constructs have an affirmative and noticeable
effect upon the operation of an organization (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001; Senge, 1990). This should be no less the case for organizations with the purpose of preparing preschool children for success in their formal K-12 education and points up the need to shift from a single to a cross-dimensional framing of the role of early childhood program leaders. This position is illustrated by the assertion from Kagan and Bowman: “If the field is to ensure the adequacy of its present and future child care and early educational systems, new leadership development efforts that are multidimensional focusing on an advocacy/policy leadership must be conceptualized and implemented” (p. xi).

A heightened consciousness and a systematic awareness of what specific elements comprise and sustain leadership for operating child care programs is needed. Current knowledge in leadership theory and practices has grown among early childhood theorists and practitioners through efforts to build capacity in the early child care field and to address its significance to quality programming. These realizations are prerequisites for work in the field to better meet the arising needs of families and children who are the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the affect of quality leadership. Effective leadership is beginning to be recognized as an essential component within the realm of a director’s duties in order to achieve high program quality (Kagan & Bowman, 1997). Leadership is a critical and significant element in achieving program quality, but it is not the only factor.

High program quality is a result of an effective delivery system of essential services to children and families. The delivery system of a program is comprised of the structural components which focus on the operation of the organization and the process
components which encompass the inputs, strategies, and resources that influence the experiences of children (Ackerman & Barnett, 2006).

The delivery system of early childhood programs to families and children is presently at an inferior state, threatening the intellectual and social growth of the nation (Kagan & Bowman, 1997). Only 14% of the early childhood centers in the United States are described as being good or excellent in the delivery of services (Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995). Kagan and Bowman (1997) substantiate this position further by citing that “eighty-six percent of services to young children are judged to be poor to mediocre” (p. 3). It is also known that “over half of the children under eighteen (thirty-eight million), in the U.S., have one or more risk factors for educational failure, and more than nine million of those children display four risk factors” (Schulman, Blank, & Ewen, 1999, p. 2). Risk status is identified by “personal, familial, and community factors that place children at risk of educational failure” (Children at Risk, 1988, as cited in Michigan Department of Education, 2000, p. 12).

With the rapidly rising percentage of children coming into preschool programs with one or more risk factors for educational failure, the quality of those programs becomes an even more significant issue. Along with the increasing demand for quality, comes the increasing importance of the quality of leaders. If 86% of our nation’s early childhood centers are underperforming and underserving families and children who have increasingly greater and more complex needs, those programs will need the type of leadership that can overhaul and customize current practices and delivery systems to yield high quality services tightly aligned with the specific needs of the populations they serve. This will require the field to move beyond static, pro-forma depictions of early childhood
program leadership to dynamic, transformational models of leadership reinforced through commonly accepted and applied program standards

The goal of high program quality needs to move from being a long-term vision to an immediate priority. Based on recent research on brain and child development (Shore, 1997), it is known that the delivery of programs that will stimulate intellectual, social, and emotional development at the earliest possible age is essential. Done well, these early childhood programs may be the key to enabling all children to reach academic proficiency and achieve intellectual, social, and emotional success (National Association of Elementary School Principals and Collaborative Communications Group [NAESP], 2005), despite identified factors of educational risk. In fact, since early childhood programs are, by design, interventions with the specific intent of reducing, eliminating, or ameliorating educational risk factors, nothing less than high quality expectations or standards will do in all areas of program planning, organization, and delivery. Meeting those expectations and standards will depend on the effectiveness of program leadership. This places new significance on the role of the early childhood program director and supports a much broader and more transformational set of standards for the selection, development, and performance of people who serve in this role.

Vincent Ferrandino, Executive Director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, expresses his support for high quality early childhood programs by stating, “Strong early learning leads to better educated and more employable individuals, as well as less remediation throughout the education system, benefiting all of society. High quality early childhood education is not just an ideal; it’s an essential investment” (NAESP, 2005, p. v). The investing in high quality childcare cannot be ignored since a
significant number of children are placed in child care and preschool programs for a large portion of their day (Piesner-Fienberg et al., 1999). “The U.S. Census Bureau reports that based on data from 1998, fifty-one percent of married couples had children and both parents had jobs. In addition, in 1999 seventy-one and one half percent of single mothers had jobs” (Click, 2004, p. 37). It can therefore be assumed that a large portion of these children are placed in child care. Society and the educational community are both communicating the importance of and need for high program quality.

The time has come to acknowledge that “the field of early childhood education is at a critical juncture” (Kagan & Bowman, 1997, p. 4), a point in time when the mere focusing on the administrative and managerial functions of the director’s position is not sufficient to attain high program quality. Effective leadership that encompasses both a foundation in early childhood development and a knowledge base of effective educational leadership practices contributes to reaching the goal of high program quality (Kagan & Cohen, 1996). Bennis and Nanus (1997) warn against an organization that lacks effective leadership. They state, “The absence or ineffectiveness of leadership implies the absence of vision, a dreamless society, and this will result, at best, in the maintenance of the status quo” (p. 220). Therefore, it is imperative to embrace the conviction that effective leadership is one necessary element for the purpose of achieving high quality for early childhood programs just as the field has come to recognize the connection between leadership and student achievement in the K-12 setting.

To improve the earlier referenced poor performance profile of many early childhood centers, more programs need to focus on the quality of services delivered to children and their families. This is of particular importance for those children who are at
risk. Committing to a vision of delivering services which is focused on best teaching practices and student achievement, effective leadership becomes the conduit through which the vision is realized. (Cohen & Kagan, 1996).

Kagan and Bowman (1997) caution early childhood practitioners by stating, “Despite this attention to leadership, the field does not have a commonly accepted definition of leadership, nor has it engaged in a systematic and collaborative discussion of the properties of leadership” (p. xi). First, the field has to explore through research the properties that comprise early childhood leadership and develop an understanding of the theoretical knowledge base, characteristics, skills, and competencies of leadership that are instrumental in affecting program quality.

Background

Research studies have explored the various effects of leadership within early childhood programs (Culkin, 1995; Love, 2001; Pipa, 1997; Seplocha, 1998). Culkin established through her research the importance of effective leadership in child care centers. She succinctly concluded that “an effective administrator was an important ingredient in the production of quality services” (p. 6). This knowledge then moved the field to look further into the administrator’s role and to begin to describe the role and its functions. Building upon previous research, Pipa focused specifically on identifying and describing the leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors of directors in state-funded early childhood educational programs in the San Francisco Bay area. His research was directed at whether these characteristics were similar to or different from those previously cited in the literature. He came to three conclusions based upon his research of these
specific programs: (a) directors of childcare centers rely on management rather than leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors; (b) currently there is no systematic preparation for directors that focuses on leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors, and (c) directors have created a strong supportive environment in their centers.

Pipa’s first two conclusions are significant to this study. The first conclusion addresses the distinction between leadership and management. The function of management is to maintain order, keep the operation of the organization on time and on budget, provide the operating talent necessary to keep the organization focused on the day-to-day tasks, and encourage efficiency, all of which provide stability for the organization (Bloom, 2003; Northouse, 2001; Sullivan, 2003). In contrast, the function of leadership is to produce forward movement for the organization, to provide conceptual talent that facilitates growth, change, and innovation, while acting as the change agent (Humphries & Senden, 2000, Sullivan, 2003).

Pipa’s second conclusion focuses on the preparation and training of directors. Experts in the field have determined that, in general, the directors of early childhood programs: (a) served as teachers in the program before moving on into the role of administrator, (b) did not possess formal training in the area, (c) fulfilled the minimum requirements as established by state licensing to serve as a director, and (d) were viewed and described in terms of their administrative and managerial functions (Bloom, 1988; Kagan & Bowman, 1997) rather than their leadership role. Paula Bloom’s work in the area of early childhood leadership training sheds light on the fact that an investment in leadership training programs for directors, such as college courses, postgraduate degrees,
and training modules in early childhood leadership, is an investment in program quality (Bloom, 1988, 2003).

Seplocha (1998) pursued the topic of leadership further and conducted a multicase study of early childhood preschool educational programs in which she shadowed six directors in an effort to establish a profile of common leadership behaviors of directors in high quality early childhood programs. Seplocha concluded that directors in the high quality early childhood programs she studied (a) are experienced and knowledgeable in child growth and development, (b) are skilled in leveraging resources, (c) exhibit a sense of ownership, (d) maintain a strong assistant and administrative team, (e) focus on the big picture, (f) support staff training, (g) remain active in the early childhood community, (h) exhibited a vision, (i) are collaborative and encourage teamwork, (j) are caring individuals, (k) show appreciation toward the staff, and (l) listened to the voices of parents.

Love (2001) redirected the research in this area by exploring the change process in a child care system. The focus of the study was the changes that occurred in the child care system through the influences of the director’s leadership as well as through the environment of the center. She discovered that systemic change occurs when a director establishes caring and consistent relationships with the total system and empowers the staff and others through leadership, which is characteristic of transformational leadership. This research literature established that the role of the administrator/leader was critical to the performance of the organization at many levels and that the function of leadership is an essential component for high quality early childhood programs.
Recent research and literature (Ackerman & Barnett, 2006; Lamy, Barnett, & Jung, 2005b) in the field of early childhood educational programs have emphasized the preparatory educational experiences of children. The subject group of the research study by Lamy, Barnett, and Jung was specifically state-funded early childhood programs. The primary reason that these researchers chose the state-funded programs was that the “universal goal amongst state-funded programs is to improve the learning development of young children and improve their preparation for the increasingly rigorous challenges of kindergarten” (Lamy et al., 2005b, p. 3). This reasoning is further supported by Ackerman and Barnett: “Policy makers, educators, and families embrace publicly (state) funded programs as a way to improve young children’s learning and development” (p. 1). The research and literature strongly support the use of state-funded early childhood programs as a viable research subject group, because they are goal focused on program quality and recognized by stakeholders as an excellent means to impact intellectual growth in young children.

The Lamy et al. (2005b) research study specifically investigated the language development and mathematics educational outcomes of children who attended state-funded early childhood education programs. The state programs that were studied were staffed by licensed teachers with 4-year degrees and certification in early childhood. The research concluded that children who attend state-funded early childhood programs are better prepared for their future general education in the areas of language development and mathematics (Lamy et al., 2005b).

Since the societal norm is for 4-year-olds to attend early childhood education programs (Ackerman & Barnett, 2006), program quality is an important issue within this
group. It is known that to achieve high program quality effective leadership is an essential component (Kagan & Bowman, 1997). The research and literature establish that state-funded programs have favorable results regarding student learning outcomes. Children who attend these programs make significant educational gains in literacy and mathematics, which is reflected on national standards-based assessments.

Statement of the Problem

In general, early childhood educational programs are a significant means of preparing the vast majority of children for the general education curriculum. They are also a means of early intervention to specifically address the needs of the school population that is becoming culturally and socially more diverse and more challenged by educational risk factors. By addressing the educational outcomes and the diverse population, early childhood programs are playing a critical role in achieving the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act. The act specifically addresses meeting the needs of subgroups: economically disadvantaged, limited English speaking, special education, and culturally diverse, while serving all children (NAESP, 2005). Research has shown that leadership makes a difference in the outcomes of all educational organizations (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005), which supports the premise that early childhood programs benefit from effective leadership (Kagan & Bowman, 1997).

Thus far, the research studies in the field of early childhood education have established the importance of effective leadership in early childhood programs (Culkin, 1995; Pipa, 1997). Other research examined the behaviors of the leaders in various types of early childhood quality programs (Seplocha, 1998; Culkin, 1995) as well as the
influences of leadership on the organizational changes that occurred in programs (Love, 2001). Research has also recognized the value of program quality which occurs in state-funded programs (Ackerman & Barnett, 2006; Lamy et al., 2005b). Early childhood research to this point has addressed leadership in early childhood programs from the perspective of the researcher and the director. Those studies have not analyzed a director’s leadership profile with a program quality profile measured on a consistent scale as viewed through the perspective of the licensed teacher. Therefore, recognizing the educational value of state-funded early childhood programs, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to specifically explore and describe how the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors, as described and perceived by the teachers, reflect the factors that are currently addressed in the indicators that form the basis for evaluating program quality.

Significance of the Research

A study of leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of directors in state-funded early childhood programs from the perspective of the teachers is important to the directors of early childhood programs and the stakeholders. Stakeholders include children and families, teachers, and government agencies/policy makers. The identification of leadership characteristics, traits, and styles is important to the stakeholders of the organization in a collective sense. Sullivan (2003) points out that “leadership produces forward movement in an organization, creates significant change, and provides the conceptual talent necessary to see the historical perspective that facilitates growth, change
and innovation” (p. 13). The stakeholders are impacted by the overall quality of the program which is, in turn, driven by the leader.

First, directors may benefit from this study by becoming aware of the characteristics, traits, and styles of other leaders who are recognized as influential in programs which are known to produce favorable educational outcomes. According to Kagan and Bowman (1997), leaders play a pivotal role in achieving and maintaining the quality of an early childhood educational program. They state:

How the individuals at the helm craft their mission, understand the organizational culture, manage for quality, and create capacity in others—all these aspects of leadership determine organizational effectiveness and well-being. Leadership is a preferred domain for investment in most institutions—one that yields long term, cost efficient rewards. (p. 5)

Bloom (2003) further states, “Self-awareness generates self-confidence; a faith in your own ability to meet the challenges of leadership and work with others to achieve your vision” (p. 33). Identifying personal leadership traits, styles, behaviors, and competencies is an opportunity for early childhood directors to make themselves aware of their own strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

The research may encourage directors to conduct a self-assessment leadership study through the use of the research methods used in this study or through other leadership assessment tools that are available. Realizing that leadership is a process of motivating followers to work toward common goals through shared values inspired by a moral and visionary response to the needs of both organization and followers, the research study will encourage directors in early childhood programs to look toward the followers as a source of leadership assessment.
Secondly, the children and families may benefit from this study by receiving a better early childhood experience at a program that is enhanced through better leadership. The ultimate reason for improving leadership is to improve programs to prepare children for success in their future general education. Also, research has shown that children who attend quality early childhood programs are less likely to become at risk adults (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2005). Families benefit by the improved success of their children.

Third, the government agencies/policy makers, who are concerned with the quality of programming that is being delivered, may also benefit from this research by gaining insight into the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors in state-funded programs. Policy makers are accountable for funds that are designated for state-funded early childhood programs. They are therefore interested in seeing that funds are being directed and used to affirmatively impact program quality.

By identifying the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors through the use of leadership assessment data collection sources used in this study, analyzing and interpreting the data electronically, individual program leadership needs may be identified and individually prescribed leadership training modules could be recommended for directors. As the arena of online professional development and course work is expanding, the possibility of offering online training modules which are specifically designed to address the individual leadership needs of directors is a cost- and time-effective means of improving program quality; the module would be client-specific. Use of research and technology will assist policy makers in meeting their fiduciary responsibility.
Another possible affected group is the teachers. The teachers may benefit from the satisfaction that comes from working in an organization that acknowledges their opinion and strives to use their opinion to improve program quality. There are benefits for a study that utilizes the Bloom Multi-Rater Leadership Assessment form and other qualitative measures that specifically define and examine the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of directors as well as discusses whether these features are components of program quality. By incorporating the opinions and perceptions of the teacher, followers within the organization, the principles of systems organizational thinking (Senge, 1990) become part of the entire organization, leading to a more effective and productive organization.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

Central Question: What leadership characteristics, traits, and styles are identifiable in directors in a state-funded early childhood program, based solely upon teachers’ perceptions about and description of leaders in these programs, and how do the teachers relate leadership characteristics, traits, and styles to program quality?

Subquestions:

- What are the identifiable leadership characteristics (behaviors, competencies, knowledge, and personal attributes) that teachers use to describe the leadership traits and styles (the balance between task and relationship orientation) of directors in a state-funded preschool program?
- How do the teachers describe and perceive program director leadership characteristics, traits, and styles?
How do the teachers describe and perceive the director’s leadership characteristics, traits, and styles as a component of program quality?

Methodology

Prior to conducting the research for this study, the mandatory Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) training for researchers was successfully completed. Additionally, the application form, the protocol narratives, and the data collection instruments for this study were submitted to HSIRB. Approval for this study was received from HSIRB on January 31, 2006 (Appendix A).

The research for this study was conducted in six state-funded preschool programs, each with more than 32 students, located in the state of Michigan, and without any initial consideration given to the program quality assessment score. The programs were selected from various geographical sections of the state to prevent any unique factors of a single region from disproportionately influencing the data collection pieces and the results. A purposive sampling of individuals in state-funded preschool programs was selected for this study because they were particularly well informed about the subject matter (McMillan, 2000). All participants in the research project had worked with their director for at least one year.

The teachers in these programs served as the subjects. The data collected in this qualitative study emphasized the lived experiences of the teachers. This focus required a phenomenological approach to the research problem. As a former teacher in a state-funded preschool program, the researcher conducted an epoche before the study (Patton, 2002). The data were collected by using a survey that expressed the teachers’ perceptions,
a semistructured questionnaire, and an interview to capture the lived experiences. The program data collection was conducted over an 8-week period. The written analysis of the data included results from the survey along with quotations from the questionnaires and the interviews to better illustrate and authenticate the results.

The study attempted to identify the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of the directors in the preschool programs as described and perceived solely by the teachers to determine a director profile. The study also looked at how these leadership elements are a component of program quality to determine a program profile. The study used the program quality assessment score as a standardized data source to identify each program's quality ranking. A cross-case analysis of the program sites was performed seeking commonalities and differences.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Creswell (2003) states “delimitations narrow the scope of the study” (p. 148). This study was delimited to the population of state-funded early childhood programs that are part of a local school district and located in the state of Michigan. Another delimitation of the study was the size of the programs chosen. Only programs receiving funding for 32 to 360 students were selected because these programs have a director and at least 2 but not more than 10 teachers at a center. The rationale for using these delimitations was to focus the research on a specific group of programs. The study was also delimited to the licensed and certified teachers that are associated with these programs.

Creswell (2003) states, “Limitations are the potential weaknesses of the study” (p. 148). A weakness of the study was that it examined only state-funded preschool
programs and not competitive funded programs or any other type of early childhood programs. Another limitation of the study was that the demographics for each of the programs were not reported in order to protect their anonymity. Further, out of necessity, this study included the perceptions of teachers that participated in the study and did not include teachers who did not participate in the study. Due to the small sample size of both program sites and participants from each site, these findings cannot be generalized. The findings can be used only as clues to areas of further investigation that might generate further studies. The study is also limited to the relationship of leadership behaviors to the Program Quality Assessment score.

Definitions

Director: The director is the person who is responsible for the management and leadership of the early childhood program. The individual is listed as the primary contact.

Leadership characteristics: The leadership characteristics are the behaviors, competencies, knowledge, and personal attributes of the leader.

Leadership traits: Leadership traits are the personal factors and distinguishing features in the leader's character which are associated with leadership.

Leadership style: Leadership style emphasizes the task and relationship behaviors of the leader. Task behaviors facilitate goal accomplishment, while relationship behaviors help subordinates feel comfortable with themselves, with each other, and with the situation in which they find themselves.

Michigan School Readiness Program: The Michigan School Readiness Program is a state-funded preschool program for preschoolers turning 4 years old by December 1
of that school year. The program is for 2½ hours per day, 4 days a week. The program is in session for a minimum of 120 student days. A classroom may have 16 to 18 students. The ratio of students to adults is 8 students to 1 adult. A classroom of 16 students is required to have a teacher and a paraprofessional. If there are 18 students, a third adult must be present in the classroom. Each enrolled student must meet 2 or more of the 25 risk factors established by the state.

Summary

This research study focuses on identifying the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of directors as described and perceived by the teachers in state-funded early childhood programs. It also looks at how the teachers describe and perceive these characteristics as influencing program quality. The introduction substantiates the basis for the undertaking of this research study. The background addresses the research in the field of early childhood leadership to this point. The statement of the problem expresses the need to expand the research in leadership characteristics as well as traits and styles of directors in early childhood programs. The research questions provide the foundation for the study. The significance of the study section describes the potential benefits of the research. The methodology section describes the format that will be used to conduct the research. The delimitations and limitations of the study explain the narrowed scope and the potential weaknesses of the research study. The definitions in Chapter I assist the reader with terms that are germane to the study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This qualitative phenomenology study focuses on identifying leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of early childhood directors based upon teachers' perceptions and how the teachers perceive these behaviors as a component of program quality. The central research question guiding this literature review is:

What leadership characteristics, traits, and styles are identifiable in directors in a state-funded early childhood program, based solely upon teachers' perceptions about and description of leaders in these programs, and how do the teachers relate leadership characteristics, traits, and styles to program quality?

The goal of the literature review is to examine literature related to early childhood program leadership and indicators of program quality. To this end, the literature review is divided into three major concept sections developed in a logical sequence to examine the research questions. Section one of the review focuses on leadership, approaches to leadership, and early childhood program leadership; section two looks at the literature on program quality, how quality is measured, and contributing factors to that quality; and section three discusses linking leadership and program quality.
Leadership and Management

Definition of Leadership

The term *leadership* has been defined and explained by numerous theorists in various terminologies. Some describe leadership as a process of influencing others to confront problems and situations (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Burns, 1978; Gardner, 1990). Burns, in his seminal work on leadership, defines it as, “inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivation, the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both the leaders and the followers” (p. 19). To induce followers to act, leaders are attentive to the many situations that arise in an organization and are responsive to their followers (Hersey et al., 2001). Thus, the leader motivates the followers to do more for the common good of the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Hersey et al., 2001). The leader becomes the architect, the visionary, and the moral authority figure of the organization, the one that is aware of the organizational culture and climate (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Owens, 2001; Schein, 1985; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1992). The leader is concerned about the welfare of the followers and the organization and is comfortable inspiring and encouraging shared leadership within the organization (Senge, 1990). More recently, Fullan (2001) lists five components of effective leadership: (a) moral purpose, (b) understanding change, (c) relationship building, (d) knowledge creation and sharing, and (e) coherence making. It is the leader who is the conductor of the organization and the initiator of the leadership process.

For the purpose of this study, *leadership* will be defined as a process of motivating followers to work toward common goals through shared values inspired by a
moral and visionary response to the needs of both the organization and the followers. This definition fits both the high moral purpose of early childhood programs and the context in which they are delivered, i.e., multiple stakeholders, values based work, and diversity. Because early childhood programs encompass a wide range of socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and special needs differences, program leaders must be able to attend to the full range of leadership responsibilities and strategies. Moreover, these leaders must be able to harness the capacity of everyone involved in the program to function at the highest levels of quality and service to children and families.

Since early child care programs are currently regarded as organizational systems, the works of the leadership theorists who view leadership through a moral and transformational lens have strong implications for the field of early childhood (Kagan, 2000). The early childhood program leader is the individual who influences the followers to achieve high program quality (Bloom, 2003; Kagan & Bowman, 1997; Morgan, 2000). It is the writer’s belief that the directors in early childhood settings are not only influential in leading the followers to achieve high program quality; they are also morally bound to employ leadership practices that have the greatest likelihood of achieving that quality. To fail at this leadership imperative is to fail at the opportunity to serve children in a manner that enhances their development and prepares them for future success in both learning and in society.

Definition of Management

Early childhood programs operate under strict licensing rules, regulations, and standards with a strong emphasis on management issues and technical requirements
(Morgan, 1978). For this reason, early childhood program directors (leaders) must devote a significant portion of their time and effort to the management aspects of the organization. This role can become cumbersome and take priority over their attention to leadership issues. Often early childhood program directors find themselves shifting emphasis toward task-oriented issues at the expense of people oriented leadership, so it is important to delve into how management responsibilities can be integrated into a dynamic leadership approach for directors of early childhood centers.

*Management*, for the purposes of this study, is defined as presiding over the way the organization functions, allocating resources, and making use of the people in the organization (Gardner, 1990). Managers, therefore, focus on the operation and the structure of the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Hersey et al., 2001), that is, being task-oriented and focusing on the budgetary issues, policies, and implementation of work plans (Kotter, 1990). The function of management focuses on the daily routine and the pursuance of stability for the organization (Bloom, 2003; Northouse, 2001), while the leadership function is more reflective, dynamic, and concerned with the values and planning of the organization while acting as the change agent (Humphries & Senden, 2000). The above cited descriptors of management serve well to account for the typical management responsibilities of early childhood program directors, given that they operate in a highly structured and regulated environment. Understanding the distinction between early childhood program directors' management responsibilities and leadership obligations is essential for interpreting the data collected in this study.
Differences Between Management and Leadership

Leadership and management serve different functions in the organization. Managers are concerned with the *how* of the communication and decision processes, and leaders are concerned with the *why* of the communication and decision processes (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bennis & Nanus, 1997). In her synthesis of effective management and leadership applications for working with young children, D.R. Sullivan (2003, p. 13) juxtaposes effective management and leadership functions as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juxtaposition of Management and Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides consistency and order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps an operation on time and on budget over the long haul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the operating talent necessary to keep an organization focused on the day-to-day tasks that must be completed if objectives are to be met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides efficiency in climbing ladder of success</td>
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Table 1 depicts one way of capturing the essence of the differences in the management and leadership skills required of early childhood program directors. The management skills of the director are essential to addressing the licensing rules and regulations and the daily operations of the organization (Bloom, 1988; Kagan &
Bowman, 1997). The management functions are described as task behaviors (Neugebauer, 2003). By using effective leadership skills, the director is able to find ways to draw together members of the child care organization to assist in achieving the goals of the organization (relationship behaviors) while attending to the management tasks (Sullivan, 2003). High program quality is attained when the director uses both management and leadership techniques to guide the organization (Kagan & Cohen, 1996; Rodd, 1998). Culkin (2000) supports this position by stating, "Quality is an inter-play of authority, management, practice, communication, and leadership in day-to-day practice" (p. 4).

Typically, directors of early childhood centers do not have formal leadership or management training (Bredekamp, 1995; Culkin, 2000). This is due to job promotion from within the organization, referred to as the learning as you go approach; but giving a person leadership status does not make them a leader (Bloom & Rafanello 1994; Rosemary, Roskos, Owendorf, & Olson, 2000). Seventy-eight percent of early childhood directors were classroom teachers prior to becoming administrators, and the majority of these directors had neither prior training in early childhood administration nor any courses or workshops in early childhood administration (Norton & Abromowitz, 1981; Bloom & Sheerer, 1992). The role of the manager, though, is paramount to the overall functioning of the center. The director has an important role in managing the organization to attain a vision of quality (Culkin, 2000). The role of the early childhood center director is a multifaceted role demanding skills in both management and leadership (Willer & Bredekamp, 1993). The quality of an early childhood center relies on the diverse interests,
abilities, and skills of the leader (Culkin, 2000; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; Kagan & Bowman, 1997).

To further understand the definition and process of leadership and the relationship to early childhood directors, various theoretical frameworks for leadership will be discussed. These frameworks include: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, instructional leadership, and systems thinking. These frameworks support the working definition of leadership proposed in this study for early childhood program directors, e.g., visionary, moral, inspirational, and flexible. The approaches discussed may have a significant bearing upon the analyzing of data from key informants.

Approaches to Leadership

Theoretical Perspectives on Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as a transforming process for both the leader and the followers to meet the needs of the organization. It involves raising another’s human consciousness and inspiring others to a higher level (Burns, 1978). To meet the needs of the organization, the act of leadership requires having a clear vision, being a social architect, creating trust, and initiating the creative deployment of self through positive self-regard (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Senge, 1990). The test of leadership is mobilizing and elevating the constituents to improve the organization (Fullan, 2001). In transformational leadership, the leader mobilizes and elevates the follower to raise each other to higher levels (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978). Therefore, the leader is concerned with the inside organizational process and how change
is happening within the organization, and not as concerned with the operational tasks of
the organization (Sergiovanni, 1996).

The transformational leader is also concerned with the morals and values of the
organization and the impact upon the followers (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2002;
Sergiovani, 1996). Moral authority is derived from the shared values, ideals, and ideas of
the organization (Fullan, 2001). The moral aspect of transformational leadership is
described as “having a relationship not only of power but of needs, aspirations, and
values” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). The needs, aspirations and values of the organization may be
analogized as the heart, head, and hand. The heart is what the leader believes and values,
the head is the theoretical constructs of leadership and aspirations of leadership, and the
hand is the decisions and actions that the leader must make for the needs of the
organization (Sergiovanni, 1992).

There is a clear distinction between transformational and transactional leadership.
Transactional leadership is an exchange that occurs between the leader and the follower,
with an eye on trading one thing for another (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978). The
transactional leader has a personal agenda without a concern for others. This type of
leader desires the followers to play by the rules, manipulates the followers, distrusts the
followers, emphasizes control, and exhibits a clear distinction of authority (Bass &
Avolio, 1994). In contrast, Bass states:

Transformational leadership motivates followers to do more than is expected by:
1) raising followers’ levels of consciousness about the importance and value of
specified and idealized goals, 2) getting followers to transcend their own self-
interest for the sake of the team or organization, and 3) moving followers to
address higher-level needs. (as cited in Northouse, 2001, p. 135)
Bass and Avolio (1994) identify four distinct concepts of transformational leadership: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. In other words, the leader utilizes leadership behaviors designed to build the capacity of the followers to carry out the goals of the organization. This is particularly relevant to the organizational purpose of early childhood centers (i.e., building a strong cognitive, social, and emotional foundation in every child), because the goals are challenging, complex, and require that members of the organization operate at a high level of personal autonomy and capacity. Bass and Avolio's four factors inspire the leader to bring about change in an organization. In the case of early childhood programs, change is in relation to program delivery (i.e., process and structural perspectives) in order to achieve program goals.

Transformational leadership is particularly applicable to the school environment since the nature of schooling is connected to change and growth (Marsh, 2000). The transformational instructional leader is described as: building school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modeling best practices and important organizational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture, and developing structures that foster participation in school decisions (Leithwood et al., 1999). Both the followers and the leaders are altered by the cascading effect that transformational leadership has on the school organization (Burns, 1978). The result fosters learning and growth in both the followers and the leaders.

Schools are dynamic systems and, as such, require leadership that attends to the processes that comprise the system (Marzano et al., 2005). The process of systems
thinking is interrelated with theories of transformational leadership. Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that the leader uses to influence the organization by altering fundamental processes, roles, and relationships (Senge, 1990). The four components of systems thinking are personal mastery, mental models, team learning, and building shared vision which may be applied to the transformation of an organization. Systems theory and transformational instructional leadership align with the constructs of an early childhood organization by supporting traditionally held early childhood program values such as “teamwork, participatory management, shared decision-making, and collaboration” (Rosemary et al., 2000, p. 186). Applied together, systems thinking and transformational instructional leadership enable leaders of early childhood programs in achieving high levels of program quality by inspiring the passion of followers around the mission of the program and unleashing the power of that passion through alignment of purpose, resources, time, materials, initiative, and creativity.

**Leadership Traits**

No discussion of leadership within the context of early childhood programs (or any organizational endeavor, for that matter) would be complete without visiting the question of whether or not certain traits or characteristics of leaders matter in the execution of an effective leadership approach. A trait is a distinguishing feature in one’s character (*Webster's Dictionary*, 1992). The research on leadership trait theory can be traced back to the turn of the last century. Researchers have examined the traits, personal factors, and distinguishing features in one’s character which are associated with leadership (Bass, 1981; Stogdill, 1974). The general conclusions from these studies are:
1. There are distinguishing features associated with leadership, defined as interpersonal, technical, administrative, and intellectual.

2. A person does not become a leader solely because of particular characteristics.

3. There is a relationship between the distinguishing features and the goals of the followers.

4. The distinguishing features are in constant flux depending upon the situation.

These findings do not support or reject a theory of leadership focused on traits, but they do indicate that the factors which determine an individual’s status in a group are difficult to isolate and evaluate (Bass, 1981).

Research in the area of leadership traits continued through the later part of the last century. Stogdill’s 1948 study revealed that leadership characteristics could be clustered into particular groups; however, leadership traits differ based on situational conditions (Bass, 1981). Stogdill’s second study in 1974 argued that both personality traits and situational factors are determinants of leadership behavior. Stogdill concluded that “who emerges as a leader and who is successful and effective is due to traits and consequences in the situation” (Bass, 1981, p. 82). That is, leadership traits themselves can only be linked to leadership effectiveness within the context of unique situations. Stogdill also completed a survey of research studies which identified 26 common leadership factors that distinguish among and help categorize unique leadership profiles. Stogdill’s work found a positive relationship between the factors and the effectiveness of the leader in particular situations (Bass, 1981). Locke (1991, as cited in Northouse, 2001) contributed to the area of leadership trait theory. He suggested that leaders have a set of common
motives and traits and possess a certain knowledge, set of skills, and abilities (Northouse, 2001; Youngjohn, 2000).

While the current state of leadership trait research does not suggest a set of traits that make leaders effective in all situations, it is recognized that there are particular leadership traits which stand out in leaders, in certain contexts, and which need to be recognized as part of the leadership process (Northouse, 2001). The strengths of the trait theory are: (a) it is appealing, (b) it is a century old in its findings, (c) it highlights the leader components of leadership, and (d) it gives benchmarks for leadership characteristics (Northouse, 2001). Bass (1981) states, “The many traits and factors associated with leadership contain the seeds of two propositions: to emerge as a leader, one must participate; to remain acceptable to others as a leader, one must exhibit competence” (p. 97), given that the definition of competence is situational.

Donald Goff (2003) researched trait and behavior theory as it applied to a larger organization: a community college. Goff referenced the leadership trait theory and behavior theories of leadership in this educational setting. He concluded that the ability to deal with challenges facing leaders in higher educational institutions required that the leader must be agile, experienced, adept at self-study, and prepared for the position through training. Goff states that leaders, especially those promoted from within an organization, “must make every effort to learn from their experiences and the experiences of others in order to develop and refine the needed leadership behaviors and traits” (p.16) and “applying leadership traits and behaviors to the task is truly an art, not a science” (p.18). If applied broadly to educational organizations, this study reinforces the utility of
transformational leadership approaches that emphasize continuous learning, growth, and evolution.

With respect to early childhood, the traits exhibited by the director of an early childhood program are determined by the demands of the situation. Having a thorough understanding of situations which arise in an early childhood program leads the director to differentiate traits which address the particular situation while keeping sight of the vision and goals of the organization (Rodd, 1998).

Leadership Styles

The style approach to leadership emphasizes the behaviors of the leader. The style approach identifies what leaders do and how they act. Thus, leadership is composed of two distinct styles: task behaviors and relationship behaviors (Bass, 1981). Task behaviors are related to goal accomplishments, and relationship behaviors are related to helping the subordinates feel comfortable with themselves, each other, and situations. The main purpose of the style approach is to explain how leaders use these two types of behaviors to influence their subordinates in reaching a goal (Northouse, 2001). The leader needs to analyze a situation, assess the readiness level of the followers, and evaluate the task and behaviors that are evident in a situation. The leader must arrive at a decision regarding the leadership technique or style that addresses that situation: directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating. The importance of the task and the relationship with the follower dictates the leader’s response to the situation and style of leadership that is applied (Hersey et al., 2001).
Other researchers explain the style approach to leadership from a grid perspective, attempting to show a balancing of task and relationship behaviors in varying degrees. Blake and Mouton (1978) used the grid approach and developed their grid to distinguish the leader's concern for production (task) and the concern for people (relationship). The concern for production relates to the leader's interest in achieving organizational goals. The concern for people relates to how the leader attends to the people in the organization who are trying to achieve the goals of the organization. The grid contains a horizontal axis representing the leader's concern for production and a vertical axis representing the leader's concern for people. Each axis is presented as a 9-point scale, 1 being a minimum emphasis and 9 being a maximum emphasis. Areas of the grid are given labels: country club management is described as high relationship and low task, team management is high relationship and high task, middle-of-the-road management is mid-relationship and mid-task, authority compliance management is low relationship and high task, and impoverished management is low relationship and low task (Blake & Mouton, 1978; Northouse, 2001). The style approach research contributes positively to the area of leadership for directors of early childhood programs because of the many combinations and permutations of situations that emerge from attempting to balance both the managerial and leadership issues and roles.

Taking the leadership style approach further, the contingency theory establishes that a leader's effectiveness is contingent upon how well the leader's style matches the situation (Bass, 1981; Northouse 2001). Fiedler argues that "changing leader-member relations or task structure or a leader's position power is easier than changing a leader's personality" (as cited in Bass, 1981, p. 357). While understanding that leadership style
cannot easily be changed, a leader who understands the interplay between staff relations and achieving results can apply a situational approach which permits the altering of leadership style according to the circumstances, the staff, and the value of the issue (Northouse, 2001).

Leadership styles are also discussed, specifically, in the early childhood literature. Early childhood experts refer to four leadership styles: task master/authoritarian, comrade, motivator/democratic, and un-leader/permissive. The motivator style is a preferred style of leadership (according to early childhood theorists) and is characteristic of a transformational leader (Click, 2004; Neugebauer & Neugebauer, 2003). Early childhood experts propose that having knowledge of one’s leadership style and preferences allows the leader to intentionally adapt their natural style to complement the strengths of the other team members in the organization (Bloom, 2003; Humphries & Senden, 2000; Neugebauer & Neugebauer, 2003).

Bloom (1988) suggests that the style of a director in an early childhood center also affects the climate of that organization. Bloom further proposes that the optimal climate for an early childhood program is one in which all adults work together and the staff and members are included in decision making (as cited in Click, 2004, p. 8). A director’s leadership style is strongly related to the teaching that occurs in the center and related to the interpersonal relationships within the center. Teachers prefer leadership that is high on both results and relationships (Click, 2004). Thus, it can be argued that what distinguishes one type of leader from another is the varying degrees of emphasis that are placed on achieving results and bringing about harmonious staff relations.
With respect to early childhood, the leadership style exhibited by the director of an early childhood program is how the leader uses a blend of these two types of behaviors (task and relationship) to influence their subordinates in reaching the goals of the organization. Blake and Mouton's (1978) research indicated that leaders normally have a dominant management style and a back-up style for use when the primary style does not produce a successful result (Northouse, 2001). A thorough understanding of relationship and task behaviors enables the director in an early childhood program to apply an appropriate leadership style to varying situations which may arise in the program.

Early Childhood Leadership

Skills and Competencies of Early Childhood Leadership

There are numerous skills and competencies which are necessary to successfully perform in the position of an early childhood leader. A *skill* is defined as the practical ability and dexterity, knowledge, expertness, and aptitude that an individual possesses. A *competency* is defined as properly qualified, suitable, and skillful (*Webster's Dictionary*, 1992). The skills and competencies of early childhood directors are classified by some researchers into five fields: technical, staffing, client-oriented, public relations, and cultural symbolic functions (Bloom, 1997; Hayden, 1996; as cited in Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003). Contemporary and subsequent literature suggests that the skills and competencies could be separated into two areas: organizational and individual. The organizational areas include: (a) develop and maintain an effective organization built upon morals and values; (b) create, plan, implement, and run administrative systems that
effectively carry out the program mission, vision, goals, and objectives; (c) effectively administer, guide, and mentor a program of personnel management and staff development; (d) foster and advocate for good community relations and influence the child care policy that affects the program; (e) maintain and develop the facility; (f) have the legal knowledge necessary for effective management; and (g) have financial management skills (Bloom, 2003; Culkin, 1995; Mitchell, 1997; Morgan, 2000; Muijs, Aubrey, Harris, & Briggs, 2004). The individual areas include: (a) the ability to be effective in analytical thinking and problem solving for the welfare of families and children; (b) the ability to communicate both written and verbally; (c) interpersonal skills to inspire, to motivate, and to deal with staff and stakeholders; (d) a positive attitude and disposition toward the many changes and regulations that present themselves; (e) being knowledgeable in the area of child development and family relations; and (f) serving as a symbol for the organization to promote feelings of trust and security (Bloom, 2003; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; Mitchell, 1997; Morgan 2000; Rodd, 1998).

Utilizing data from numerous studies, Rodd (1996, 1998) developed a typology of early childhood leadership characteristics, skills, and responsibilities. Eighty percent of the participants in theses studies perceived early childhood leaders to be goal oriented, assertive, proactive, professionally confident, visionary, influential, planning oriented, and able to serve as a mentor or guide (Rodd, 1998). This typology is a masterful blend of both managerial and leadership issues directly pertinent to the work of early childhood program directors. Rodd (1998) posits that “the typology may be an effective instrument for signaling important features, developing understanding of what constitutes leadership in early childhood and for enhancing self perception as a leader” (p. 26). To display the
characteristics, skills, and roles and responsibilities in a visual format, Rodd (1998, p. 27) constructed the typology presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Early Childhood Leadership Typology*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Characteristics</th>
<th>Professional Skills</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kind, warm, friendly, nurturing, sympathetic, patient</td>
<td>• Human resource management</td>
<td>• To develop and articulate a philosophy, values and vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Financial management</td>
<td>• To deliver a quality service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self aware, rational, logical, analytical, knowledgeable</td>
<td>• Effective communication</td>
<td>• To be accountable to act as an advocate for children, parents, staff, the professional and the general community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal oriented, planful, assertive, proactive, professionally confident, visionary, influential</td>
<td>• Technical competence as an early childhood professional in order to act as a model, guide</td>
<td>• To engage in a collaborative and partnership style of leadership, to be sensitive and responsive to the need for change and manage change effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Building upon the works of Rodd (1998) in the areas of personal characteristics, professional skills and roles and responsibilities, the understanding of management and leadership, and the importance of skills and competencies considered necessary for an early childhood director, Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2003) designed a more extensive and detailed early childhood leadership typology. Their typology synthesizes the
terminology associated with the fields and the areas cited in earlier literature. (see Table 3). The matrix adds the area of administration to the description of the duties of the early childhood director/leader. An analysis of the matrix dramatizes the relationship between the areas of roles and responsibilities, skills, and dispositions and the functions of administration, management, and leadership. For the purpose of this study, the typology developed by Ebbeck and Waniganayake is referred to as the Administrative, Management, and Leadership matrix (AML).

Seplocha (1998) also examined the leadership qualities of six directors of high quality early childhood centers in different regions of the United States. This qualitative case study incorporated in-depth interviews and questions of faculty and administrators, observations of administrators, and program documentation. In her research, she was able to identify particular behaviors and attitudes of directors in high quality programs. The behaviors and attitudes that she discovered are closely related to the skills and competencies that were noted by other researchers, while extending the information. Seplocha’s research concluded that there are several characteristics that are shared by administrators of high quality programs. It is possible to compare Seplocha’s finding with the Ebbeck and Waniganayake matrix of early childhood leadership to arrive at a summative conclusion regarding the leadership skills and competencies of early childhood directors.

Seplocha (1998) concluded that early childhood directors in the high quality programs she studied were experienced and knowledgeable in child growth and development, skilled in leveraging resources, exhibited a sense of ownership, maintained a strong assistant and administrative team, focused on the big picture, supported staff
Table 3

Administration, Management, and Leadership Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| These are expected behaviors of a particular job or position, and may be specified in one’s duty statement or job description. | - Maintain day-to-day tasks of data collection.  
- Set up a system of records and files  
- Keep track of correspondences and financial dealings | - Monitor quality assessment and improvement.  
- Analyze the needs of children, families, and staff every day.  
- Oversee day-to-day financial upkeep. | - Facilitates staff development and training.  
- Analyze the needs of children, families, and staff from a long term perspective.  
- Design and direct development. |

Skills

Learnt competencies acquired through training and experience, necessary to work as administrators, managers, and leaders.

- These are the technicalities or basic foundation competencies necessary for the organization to function.  
- Awareness of official guidelines and legal requirements.  
- Organizational skills such as documentation, correspondences and filings.  
- Follows policies and procedures precisely.  
- These are interactive skills necessary for maintaining a center and are concerned with immediate and short-termed mainly; communication skills, staff supervision and support.  
- Marketing and promotion; assessment and evaluation of programs; and services for staff.  
- Leadership skills relate to macro-level engagements, both inside and outside the center, and are primarily concerned with the future; delegation, research skills, advocacy and lobbying; liaison and networking; policy formation and analysis; and critical thinking.

Dispositions

Personal attributes or qualities of early childhood professionals that can affect their work. These may/may not vary according to each topic discussed.

- Organized; approaches work systematically  
- Eager to obtain sound information  
- Demanding in searching for accuracy  
- Follows set policies and protocols  
- Comfortable with use of technology  
- Understanding of the importance of accountability requirements  
- Enjoys working with staff and families  
- Concerned with risk assessment  
- Driven by efficiency and productivity  
- Entrepreneurial  
- Enjoys working with others both within the center and outside  
- Passionate about speaking out for children and families  
- Enjoys challenges  
- Visionary  
- Empowering  
- Articulate  
- Adaptable
training, remained active in the early childhood community, exhibited a vision, were collaborative and encouraged teamwork, were caring individuals, showed appreciation toward the staff, and listened to the voices of parents. To understand the fit between Seplocha’s findings on leadership behaviors and Ebbeck and Waniganayake’s (2003) matrix, an overlay can be created by cross-referencing Seplocha’s terms to the language in the Ebbeck and Wanaganayake matrix.

The roles and responsibilities area and the administration, management, and leadership functions of the matrix address Seplocha’s leadership behaviors of leveraging resources, supporting staff training, and listening to the voices of parents. The skills area and the management function of the matrix aligns with Seplocha’s leadership behaviors of maintaining a strong assistant and administrative team, collaborating and encouraging teamwork, and showing appreciation to the staff. The dispositions area and the leadership function of the matrix align with Seplocha’s leadership behaviors of having a sense of ownership, focusing on the big picture, remaining active in the early childhood community, exhibiting a sense of vision, and being a caring individual. This correlation between Ebbeck and Wanaganayake’s general matrix for integrating administrative, management, and leadership behaviors and research-identified skills and competencies of early childhood directors demonstrates the utility of the matrix for organizing other research studies into a compact descriptive summary. As illustrated by the cross analysis of the research by Seplocha (1998), the roles and responsibilities, skills, and dispositions that are listed by Ebbeck and Wanaganiyake (2003), and the administrative, management, and leadership functions (Table 3) are applicable as a relevant lens through which to explore early childhood program leadership.
The Ebbeck and Wanaganiyake (2003) matrix may further be discussed from a theoretical leadership perspective because of its detail and depth. The review of literature to this point has investigated the areas of theoretical perspectives on leadership (specifically transformational leadership theory and systems theory), leadership traits and styles, management and leadership, and the skills and competencies needed to lead an early childhood program. The review of literature and research has also identified a working framework for the integration of administrative, management, and leadership functions with the areas of roles and responsibilities, skills, and dispositions.

Further analysis of the Ebbeck and Waniganiyake matrix function of leadership strand reveals strong references to transformational leadership constructs, such as facilitating, critical thinking, delegating, being a visionary, empowering, and enjoying working with others. These factors are aligned with the transformational leadership perspective. There are also references to an awareness of the needs of children and families, demonstrating a function of moral leadership. A transformational leader is concerned with the followers and their level of consciousness. The matrix also relates to systems thinking from the perspective of teamwork and building a vision for the organization.

The traits and styles of the early childhood leader are referenced in this matrix. The matrix highlights certain traits that the leader should possess, such as communication skills, adaptability, and critical thinking skills. A task style of the leadership is described in the area of roles and responsibility/administration and management functions by describing the day-to-day responsibilities, maintaining the organization, and keeping track of the financial dealings. There are also references to the behavior style of leadership in
the area of roles and responsibilities/management and leadership functions by referring to analyzing the needs of the staff, children, and families. Since the matrix established by Ebbeck and Waniganayake may be interfaced with other research findings, it serves as grounding for the discussion of early childhood leadership.

As this literature review illustrates, it is apparent there is a detailed and complex set of skills and competencies that are needed for an early childhood director’s position (Brown & Manning, 2000; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; Kagan & Bowman, 1997). When these skills and competencies are performed by the leader, they inspire both the vision and the effective leadership that is needed to deliver a high quality program (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; Espinosa, 2002).

Indicators and Measurements of Leadership Effectiveness

Effectiveness of Early Childhood Program Leadership

The literature review to this point has examined theories pertaining to leadership approaches, strategies, dispositions, traits, characteristics, and styles, and concluded that the Ebbeck and Waniganayake matrix represents a useful lens for describing the application of these elements of leadership within the context of early childhood centers. The next section of the literature review specifically probes the definitions and indicators of effectiveness in the exercise of leadership within early childhood programs. This discussion is useful in isolating explicit behavioral descriptors of effectiveness for early childhood program leaders.
Being an effective early childhood leader is dependent upon the skills and competencies that the leader possesses and the ability of that leader to apply these skills and competencies for the betterment of the organization (Kagan & Bowman, 1997). For the leader to be effective, researchers have identified elements, functions, and roles of the early childhood leadership position. The five key elements of an effective leader are (a) providing a vision and communicating it, (b) developing a team culture, (c) setting goals and objectives, (d) monitoring and communicating achievements, and (e) facilitating and encouraging the development of individuals (Rodd, 1998).

The application of these elements is reflected in the different functions of the leader. The functions of the leadership position are: (a) setting the course, (b) leading the way, (c) implementing the program, (d) guiding staff performance, (e) working with parents, and (f) developing resources (Neugebauer, 2000). The elements and functions of the early childhood director are demonstrated in the leadership roles. These roles are to serve as an advocate for the organization, a pedagogical leader, a community advocate, a conceptual leader, an administrative leader, and a career leader (Blank, 1997; Crompton, 1997; Kagan & Neuman, 1997; Katz, 1997; Taba et al., 1999).

The elements, functions, and roles that the leader assumes are critical to an overall effectiveness in the position. It can be concluded that the effectiveness of the leader is dependent upon a working knowledge in the areas of communication, organizational skills, child development, and staff relationships, plus the ability to promote a positive environment both inside and outside of the organization (Bloom, 1997; Brown & Manning, 2000; Culkin, 1995; Hill-Scott, 2000; Kagan & Bowman, 1997). Research has also revealed that directors who provide leadership and who are effective are able to

There is a recent shift in thinking about early childhood program quality. Initially early childhood programs primarily focused on quality being limited to the classroom and the program; now the thinking is towards a broader vision encompassing the quality of the entire organization. This shift makes it imperative that the early childhood leader be effective in the many roles of this position (Kagan, 2000). With an increase in effective leadership in early childhood and general education, there is a concurrent increase in program quality and student achievement (Glasser, 1990; Marzano et al., 2005; NAESP, 2005). As previously stated, to have effective leadership, the training and preparation of an early childhood leader should ideally precede the appointment to the position (Bloom & Rafanello, 1994; Bloom & Scheerer, 1992). Up to this point, there has been little training and preparation for the position of early childhood leader (Bloom & Scheerer, 1992; Kagan, Clifford, Helburn, et al., 1995; Rodd, 1998). Effective leadership in early childhood organizations is reliant upon the skills, competencies, and roles of a trained, knowledgeable leader to impact program quality (Brown & Manning, 2000). As stated by Kagan and Bowman (1997), “The strength of any institution or field is the strength of its leader” (p. 160).

Measurement of Leadership Effectiveness in Early Childhood Programs

Since this study is investigating the leadership traits and styles of early childhood directors, the scope of discussion pertaining to the measurement of leadership is centered on the instruments and methodologies used to research this topic. Included are studies and
instruments that support theoretical transformational leadership principles. Leadership measurement leadership tools and studies were selected for review based on the working definitions of leadership and management used in this study.

In 1996, the International Leadership Project was convened as an opportunity to bring together five countries and seven universities to discuss the issues of early childhood leadership from a cross-cultural perspective (Hujala & Puroila, 1998). The project has generated numerous studies with a strong emphasis on the theoretical perspectives on leadership and how they are applicable to the early childhood setting. The studies that were presented at the 2001 forum address the issue that leadership is not only an issue for the leader; it is a concern for the entire community (Nivala & Hujala, 2002).

One specific study that relates to the work at hand was done by Waniganayake (2002). Through the qualitative research method of focus group discussions, which yielded the participants’ perceptions on the topic of leadership growth and training, the subjects interviewed generated a list of 17 skills that they perceived as critical to effective early childhood leaders. The skills are: articulating a vision, advocacy, analytical skills, business and management skills, counseling skills, critical reflective thinking skills, delegation, supporting and guiding others, effective communication skills, industrial relations skills, networking, mentoring, political activism, research skills, team-building, stimulating and managing change, and strategic planning. Reflecting on the previous literature regarding early childhood leadership skills and competencies, a strong relationship is seen between the previously cited work and this most current study from Australia.
Two prominent researchers in the area of early childhood leadership are Culkin and Love. Culkin (1995) focused on developing an administrative/leadership scale. The scale was based upon interviews with administrators, instructors, parents of children in early childhood programs, and directors of programs. The interviews were coded using Gardner’s tasks of transformative leadership. Culkin focused on pertinent areas of leadership, i.e., acting as a leader, communication, modeling early child care, and education. Each of the areas was explained in a narrative and accompanied by criteria statements. She developed the Behavior Scale of Leadership. Her work was validated and provides the early childhood community with a detailed leadership measurement instrument.

Love (2001), on the other hand, investigated the change process associated with early childhood leadership by using the qualitative individual case study methodology and approach. She used the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory to collect the data. Her research revealed that systemic changes can occur in child care centers. For this to happen though, the director has to build a caring and consistent relationship that empowers others (Love, 2001). This study and the previously mentioned studies demonstrate the interest of the early childhood field to address the issues of leadership from an organizational and a behavioral perspective.

Currently, Dr. Terri Talan and Dr. Paula Bloom (2004) developed the Program Administration Scale. This instrument was designed for program administrators and trained program assessors to measure administrative practices in early childhood programs. Talan and Bloom stated that “research has consistently found that the overall administrative practices are crucial for ensuring high quality outcomes for children and
families” (p. xx). This instrument includes 25 items clustered into 10 subscales that measure leadership and management functions of center-based early childhood programs (Talan & Bloom, 2004). The Program Administration Scale complements the classroom quality program scales that are currently used by early childhood programs to assess program quality. The design of the scale has multiple uses: program self-improvement, technical assistance, technical monitoring, training, research, evaluation, and public awareness. The subscales include human resources development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications. By using this tool, the program director is able to “assess the quality of the program and set goals for program improvement” (Talan & Bloom, 2004, p. 8). The leadership of the early childhood center director is a key component to the quality of the program.

Within this same period of time, the director leadership measurements instrument “My Director . . .” was developed by Dr. Paula Bloom (2003). It is a shorter assessment instrument than the previously cited Program Administrative Scale. This instrument was selected for this study because of its relationship to transformational leadership theory. Part 1 of the instrument is based upon the works of Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2001), Blake and Mouton, (1994), Giametteo (1975), and Yukl (2002) (as cited by Bloom, 2003). This portion of the assessment tool evaluates the leader’s style. Part 2 of the assessment tool is based upon the works of Neugebauer (1990, as cited in Bloom, 2003). It evaluates the degree to which the director exhibits 25 leadership traits (Appendix B).
In Part 1 of the instrument, the rater is given a partial phrase about the early childhood director’s leadership performance and three statements that would complete that phrase. The phrases are reflective of one of the three styles of leadership: task, people, or integrated. The task-oriented style emphasizes organizational needs, the people-oriented style focuses on people and their individual needs, and integrated style of leadership emphasizes the needs of the center and the individual worker. The rater chooses one of the three phrases. The rater is then asked to identify three words or phrases that most accurately describe their director’s leadership style. Bloom states, “The leadership style of the director is the most potent factor influencing organizational effectiveness” (p. 12). In Part 2 of the assessment tool, the rater uses a Likert scale to rank the leader on 25 leadership traits.

The results of the two parts are then tabulated. Part 1 responses are entered on to a scoring sheet according to the number of the response chosen. The numbered responses are grouped by leadership style. Part 2 of the assessment reveals to the evaluator the traits that are regarded by the teachers as strongest or weakest. By using this instrument, a center director is able to identify, through the input of the teachers, the director’s style and traits and then may be able to use this information to impact the quality of the center. The “My Director ...” instrument is best suited for this research because this study is concerned solely with the teachers’ perceptions of the director of the early childhood center. “My Director ...” uses both a survey and a scale perspective which is supported by the theoretical constructs of leadership that have been discussed.
Early Childhood Program Quality

Definition of Program Quality

Defining program quality is a formidable challenge. A quality early care program cannot be inflexible or set in stone; it should instead be agile and flexible, reflecting local needs, values, beliefs, knowledge, and preferences of those that are attempting to define it (Evans & Schaeffer, 1996; Kagan & Cohen, 1996). Penn and Moss (1994) state, “Quality in early childhood services is a constructed concept, subjective in nature and based on values, beliefs, and interests rather than an objective universal reality” (as cited in Evans and Schaeffer, 1996). The quality of a program takes shape from the personnel in the program, who believe in and value the concept that providing children with the best possible education and experiences is paramount. Program quality also results from the relationship among the standards and the factors rather than a list of separate components (Bredekamp, 1997). Quality in a program is not achieved by a “hit and miss” approach, but through the specific application of specific standards. Current licensing, funding, research, developmentally appropriate practices, accreditation, and program standards are moving early childhood programs into the arena of quality (Mitchell, 1997; Morgan, 2000). The standards set the guidelines and benchmarks for fulfilling the criteria defining program quality. The standards for early care program quality include both structural and process variables/components (Seplocha, 1998). The effectiveness of the leadership of the organization that is able to address the structural and process variable is essential to achieving program quality (Kagan & Bowman, 1997; Morgan, 2000). Therefore, in early
childhood programs, quality is a link between the static dimensions and appropriate child and program practices that result in positive child outcomes.

Significance of Program Quality

**Benefits of Program Quality**

Improved program quality benefits not only the family and the child, but also society. Friedman (as cited by Freeley, 2005) states that “to survive in a globally competitive world, today’s children will need creativity, problem solving abilities, a passion for learning, a dedicated work ethic, and life long learning opportunities” (p. 4).

The quality of a program is significant to the children and families who are associated with that program. A quality program addresses the child’s physical, affective, aesthetic, cognitive, and social-emotional development (Muijs et al., 2004). Research reveals that delivery of quality services to young children is not common. Kagan and Cohen (1996) state that “access to programs is uneven, with children from low-income families least likely to receive services; when they do, the child care services may not meet their health and social needs” (p. 3). This unfortunate fact emphasizes the seriousness of the quality issue. Increasing numbers of children are cared for in day care and early childhood centers. The program quality of centers needs to be examined so that the field of early childhood can provide the best care for the youngest segment of our population, who are the future of the nation. A common mantra that is heard in reference to program quality is “What is good for kids?” If high program quality is not present in
the delivery of instruction or child services, then the desirable educational and developmental outcomes for the child may not be achieved (Kagan & Cohen, 1996).

Child Development

The discussion of early childhood program quality focuses on the child. There is a need to improve the quality of child care centers, according to the research on brain development (Shore, 1997, as cited in Culkin, 2000). Early childhood programs should focus on providing experiences which are developmentally appropriate, with hands on activities that address the physical, affective and aesthetic, and cognitive domains of the child through play (Arce, 2000; Spodek & Saracho, 2003). To make informed decisions about what is appropriate for each individual child, the professionals in the program need to be aware of sound child development theory and practice (Bredekamp, 1997). It is also important that the teachers plan and interact with the children, enabling the children to construct their knowledge through creative play (Arce, 2000; Catron & Allen, 2003; Hendrick, 2003). Recognizing that child care is an important element in achieving the goal of having all children ready for school, it is also necessary to emphasize the development of the whole child in a developmentally appropriate manner (Bredekamp, 1997). It is substantiated that children who attend high quality child care centers do better on measures of cognitive development and social skills (Piesner-Fineberg et al., 2000).

Societal Impact

The societal impact of quality child care centers has been investigated by numerous researchers. The most outstanding study is the Cost, Quality and Child
Outcomes in Child Care Centers study begun in 1993. This study was designed to examine the influence of center-based child care on children’s development and performance as they moved into the general education system. The overall findings are summarized as:

1. High quality child care is an important element in achieving the national goal of having all children ready for school.

2. High quality child care continues to positively predict children’s performances well into their school careers.

3. Children who have traditionally been at risk of not doing well in school are affected more by quality of child care experiences than other children.

4. The quality of child care classroom practices was related to children’s cognitive development, while the closeness of the child care teacher-child relationship influenced children’s social development through the early school years (Piesner-Fineberg et al., 2000).

The longitudinal findings from this study are:

1. Children who attended child care with higher quality classroom practices had better language and math skills from the preschool years into elementary school.

2. Children with closer teacher-child relationships in child care has better classroom social and thinking skills, language ability, and math skills from the preschool years into elementary school.
3. Better quality child care was more strongly related to better math skills and fewer problem behaviors from the preschool years through second grade for children whose mothers have less education (Piesner-Fineberg et al., 2000).

The report further stated, “The longitudinal effects of quality child care could be found in language ability, math skills, cognitive/attention skills, problem behaviors, and sociability, indicating that children who experienced better quality child care were more advanced in their development” (p. 28).

There are three outstanding research studies that investigated whether formal early childhood programs made a long term difference in a child’s cognitive and social/emotional development as well as a societal impact. Each of the studies is unique in relationship to the subjects, but each study has significance to the societal impact of high quality early childhood programming. The three studies are: the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Program, which focused on children from infancy through age 5; the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, which focused on children ages 3-4; and the Oklahoma Universal Pre-K Study, which focused 4-year-olds in a state-funded program. Collectively these studies recognized that early intervention through quality early childhood programs has a significant positive impact on society.

Specifically, The Carolina Abecedarian Project Report (1999) reported that at age 21, participants in the study who had been in early childcare were enrolled in or had graduated from a 4-year college, scored higher in IQ in reading and math, delayed parenthood, and were employed. This study provided evidence that early childhood education improves the scholastic performance of poor children (The Carolina Abecedarian Project, 1999). The latest report on the High/Scope Perry Preschool project
is contained in the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 (Schweinhart, 2006). Previously, it was reported that the study found that “high quality early childhood programs significantly improved the long-term success of children born into poverty and ultimately returned seven times the original investment to taxpayers” (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1993, as cited in Epstein, 1999, p. 1). In the most current report, High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 (Schweinhart, 2006) states that “there are significant gains in the areas of education, economic performance, and crime prevention” (p. 1). The study revealed that the median monthly income of participants was greater, there were fewer arrests, and the public benefited from every dollar spent. This study substantiated the concurrent opinion that children benefit from good quality child care and that it is essential for the development of the child (Bredekamp, 1996; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1980). The third study was the Oklahoma Universal Pre-K Study, conducted from 2002-2003. This study reported that participants had higher standardized assessment results in the area of language and literacy skills. Also, there were gains noted in academic success across racial and socioeconomic groups (Gormley, Gay, Phillips, Dawson, 2005). Long-term early childhood research establishes that early childhood programs have positive effects on IQ, affect educational achievement, impact lower grade retention and special education placement, and have lasting positive societal benefits (Barnett, 1995).

In 1995, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) issued a position statement on quality, compensation, and affordability. The association supported the position that all children have the right to attend high quality programs, that high quality programs promote positive learning experiences and development, that staff
should have equitable salaries and benefits that are commensurate with their qualifications and job responsibilities, and that high quality early childhood programs should be available to all families (NAEYC, 1995). In 2004, the association continued its commitment to quality by addressing this issue in the newly revised NAEYC accreditation system standards. These standards support high quality early childhood programs, which are expected to have a greater societal impact.

To further substantiate the argument that high quality programs benefit young children and have an impact on society, the most recent work of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University explored this issue (Lamy et al., 2005b). A study was conducted of 5,071 children from Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia to measure the effects of state pre-kindergarten programs on young children’s school readiness. The results of the study were not only reported as a group but also by individual state. Since this study cited the Michigan School Readiness Program, the results pertinent to that group are reported.

The Michigan School Readiness sample group consisted of 865 children. It was found that “the Michigan School Readiness Program had statistically significant and meaningful impacts on children’s school early literacy and mathematical development” (Lamy, Barnett, & Jung, 2005a, p. 3). The individual state analysis report stated that “the Michigan Readiness Program produces significant, meaningful improvements in children’s early language, literacy and math skills development at entry into kindergarten, similar to the results of other relatively high-quality programs across the country” (p. 13). The study recognized overall that state-funded preschool programs favorably affected a child’s success in school, and from the previous citing it can be reasonably concluded that
there is meaningful societal impact from children participating in high quality early childhood programs.

Further, supporting the favorable opinions regarding the impact of high quality childcare, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2005) prepared a paper devoted to the need for high quality early childhood programs and the effect that these programs have on the future academic success of children. The paper recognizes that recent brain research has made it clear that children’s learning is enhanced by appropriate early childhood learning experiences. As schools in the 21st century move toward children becoming proficient in the areas of math and language arts, it becomes essential that children attending preschools are provided with experiences which prepare them for the K-12 education system.

Contributors of Program Quality

Process and Structural Quality Perspectives

The examination of the concept of program quality is viewed by numerous theorists through various lenses and from different perspectives. The Executive Summary Report on Child Care Quality supports defining program quality as having two areas: process quality factors and structural quality (Vandell & Wolfe, 2000) factors as contributors to program quality.

Process quality is determined by observing what occurs in a child care setting and relates it to the academic outcomes of the program (Phillips, 1996). This would include the children’s interactions with caregivers and other children as well as the activities in
which they are engaged. Two well regarded studies, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study (Caldwell, 1997) and the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study (1995), each support the value of process quality for academic growth and achievement. They affirmed respectively that process quality is directly related to the pre-academic skills of expressive and receptive language at age 3 and that children who attend higher-quality programs demonstrate better math skills through second grade (as cited in Vandell & Wolfe, 2000).

Structural quality is determined by looking at operational components of the program, that is, the child to adult ratio, the size of each group of children, and the formal education and training of the caregivers (Bush & Phillips, 1996). Lillian Katz (1994) analyzes structural program quality from five perspectives: (a) top-down, (b) bottom-up, (c) outside-inside, (d) inside, and (e) outside. The top-down perspective is concerned with the program issues of ratio, qualifications of staff, space, health, hygiene, and safety. The bottom-up perspective evaluates the program by making inferences about how each child would feel in the program. The third perspective, outside-inside, assesses the program from the perspective of the parent. The inside perspective encompasses how well the staff relates to one another, parents, and the sponsoring agency. The fifth perspective involves assessing the quality of the program from a community point of view. All perspectives contribute in differing ways to the overall quality of the program.

Other structural perspectives that are components of program quality include governance of the child care center and state licensing regulations (Kagan & Cohen, 1996). State governing agencies are responsible for the health, safety and welfare issues of the children and the establishment of training standards for staff. There is a strong
association between the process and structural indicators which affect program quality; as one indicator is modified, i.e., teacher qualifications, another indicator, i.e., interactions with caregivers, will predictably be altered.

Standards of Program Quality

Another contributor to program quality is program standards. Program standards for an early childhood program are the levels of achievement for the program. They reflect the current knowledge and shared beliefs about what constitutes a developmentally high quality program (Bredekamp, 1997). Standards include not only the curriculum but also the service to families, program philosophy, community relations, staffing, classroom environment, and assessment of a program. One of the national organizations setting standards for program quality and overseeing accreditation is the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1995). Whitebook (1996) states that accredited child care centers “provide higher than average quality services to children” (p. 35). The accreditation process establishes the criteria and standards for high quality child care programs (Bredekamp & Glowacki, 1996).

The subject group for this particular study is the state-funded Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP). There has been an evolution of the standards of quality for early childhood programs in the State of Michigan. A standard of quality is defined as “a group of acknowledged measures of comparison for qualitative and/or quantitative value which outlines what is expected or considered appropriate and adequate for the operation of a high quality preschool program for four-year olds” (Michigan State Board of Education, 1986). In 1992, a new document, Early Childhood Standards of Quality,
appeared which included and extended standards for pre-K through second grade (Michigan State Board of Education, 1992).

In 2004, a new set of standards was drafted for early childhood programs. The standards are stated and followed by indicators that describe what would be present in a quality program. The standards address both the structural and process perspectives. The structural standards are philosophy, community collaboration, community financial support, physical health, mental health, nutrition, safety, staffing support, administrative support, professional development, partnerships with families, the learning environment, child assessment, and program evaluation. The process standards are approaches to learning, social emotional development, intellectual development, language and early literacy, creative development, physical development, mathematics, science, social studies, and technology. More recently, the definition for a program standard is “the widely accepted expectation for the characteristics or quality of early childhood settings in home, centers, and schools”—addressing structural and process perspectives (Michigan State Board of Education, 2005).

*Infrastructure*

The definition of infrastructure is a substructure or underlying foundation, the basic installations and facilities on which the continuance and growth of a community and state depend (Webster's Dictionary, 1992). There is a shift from past thinking which did not include the infrastructure as relevant component or contributor to the organization. Kagan and Bowman (1997) state that “there is a profound shift from the classroom and programs as the primary locus of early childhood education to the entire early childhood
organization and system as the focus for change” (p. x). Early childhood researchers describe the infrastructure as consisting of (a) parent information; (b) professional development; (c) facility licensing, enforcement, and accreditation; (d) funding and financing; and (e) governance (Kagan & Cohen, 1996). Other cited components are societal, personnel preparation, technical, research, program evaluation, communication, demonstration of outstanding programs, data systems, and the comprehensive planning and coordination of support elements (Gallagher & Clifford, 2000). Both research teams agree that a sound infrastructure is basis for the essential care and services for young children and their families.

Valued leadership is one ingredient for building and establishing an infrastructure which can overcome barriers and move an organization forward. The vision of a high quality program is the centerpiece for the organization, which in turn is then supported by the infrastructure (Gallagher & Clifford, 2000). The importance of the infrastructure of the early childhood organization is a key element to program quality, which has as its by-product student achievement (Kagan & Neuman, 2003; Piesner-Feinberg et al., 1999).

Stakeholders

Quality in child care is no longer an issue for a small group of stakeholders. There are numerous stakeholders inside the organization who define and feel responsible for program quality and there are also outside stakeholders, i.e., licensing, who rely on the program quality of the child care center (Morgan, 1978) who contribute to the quality of the program. Stakeholders can be researchers in the field, organizations, advocates, parents, government agencies, and early childhood associations (Hujala, 2004). Diversity
within the stakeholder group is needed to reflect the multicultural socioeconomic perspective of early childhood (Phillips, 1996).

Ceglowski (2004) conducted a research study to assess the quality of Minnesota's regulated child care system by conducting interviews and focus groups of stakeholders who were interested in quality child care. The stakeholders in her study included parents, legislators, child care staff and administrators, licensed and unlicensed family child care providers, family and center-based child care licensors, child care resource and referral staff, and teacher educators. She concluded that Minnesota parents did not choose child care from a menu of high quality childcare programs, but rather from the family perspective and circumstances. The research study concluded that when considering quality programming the parent stakeholders focused on (a) structured programs that offered learning activities, (b) group size below the licensing regulations, (c) adequate facilities and equipment, (d) programs that are parent friendly, and (e) programs that seek accreditation. (Ceglowski, 2004, p. 107). This study suggested that the parent stakeholders' viewpoint and perspective are essentially governed by program attributes that are readily obvious to the parent(s). The issue of convenience overrode the parents' high quality program selection process. If parent stakeholders were better informed about the benefits of high quality programs, they would be more likely to choose on this basis, as opposed to the basis of convenience and serve as a more viable contributor to influencing program quality.

The business community (i.e., working families and other coalitions), who are also stakeholders, have stepped forward to contribute their support the need for higher program quality (Business Roundtable and Corporate Voices for Working Families,
2003). The *Why America Needs High-Quality Early Childhood Education* 2003 report stated, “Not only does high quality early childhood education make a difference for children, it matters to their employed parents” (Business Roundtable, 2003, p. 1). There is a need to face the issue of quality as it relates to the business world both today and in the future. James Heckman stated, “We cannot afford to postpone investing in children until they do not become adults, nor can we wait until they reach school age—a time when it may be too late to intervene” (NAESP, 2005, p. 73). The learning process is most effective when it begins at a young age and continues through adulthood, so that the outcomes are noticed by society (NAESP, 2005, p. 73).

Measures of Program Quality

Phillips (1996) states that the “quality of a program is assessed at a single point in time” (p. 50). Most early childhood programs perform an annual program assessment. The data are collected at a specific point in time and reflect the position of that program, as well as its progress up to that point in time. Since this study is specifically looking at state-funded preschool programs in the state of Michigan, the assessment tool that is used annually by these programs will be described in detail and other measures of quality will also be cited.

The Program Quality Assessment (PQA) is a program review process developed by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2003). It is used for measuring and assessing program quality. The administration manual states: “It is a rating instrument designed to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs and to identify staff training needs” (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003, p. 1). The first PQA was
developed in 1998 and then revised in 2003. The new version addresses the shortcomings from the first version.

The PQA examines all aspects of a program: the development of the young child, the family involvement, and the environment. The assessment is divided into two forms, the classroom items (Form A), and the agency items (Form B). The classroom form (Form A) is completed by the teachers and consists of four sections: learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, and curriculum planning and assessment. The agency form (Form B) is completed by the director of the program and consists of three sections: parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management. Each form is divided into sections, each section contains standards (Appendix C), and each standard contains rows of indicators. The rows of indicators are arranged in columns: level 1, level 3, or level 5. The quality level score for each standard is determined by the indicator phrase chosen in each row. The criteria scoring procedure is included in the manual (Appendix D). All scores for a particular section are averaged to obtain a quality score for that section. The total average classroom and agency scores are obtained by using the sum of the scores on all rated items and by dividing that by the number of items rated. The scores may range from 1 to 5. The new version requires raters to document the components of each item separately before assigning a total item score. These changes greatly improve the psychometric properties of the PQA, resulting in a wider and more representative distribution of the scores (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003). The 2004-2005 Michigan School Readiness Program, Program Quality Assessment, Statewide Data Report prepared by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005) states, “Scores less
than 3 indicate low quality, scores between 3 and 4.49 indicate medium quality, and scores at or above 4.5 indicate high quality” (p. 1).

The High/Scope Educational Foundation (2003) states, “The PQA is a highly reliable and valid instrument for measuring program quality and determining its relationship to staff qualifications, staff development initiatives, and young children’s developmental outcomes” (p. 15). The PQA is a reliable instrument with high interrater reliability (ranges from 0.57 to 0.75) and internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha averages 0.93). It is a valid instrument with an empirically based factor structure and has significant relationships with other measures of program quality and child outcomes. “There is substantial evidence for the validity of the quality constructs based on the confirmatory factor analysis and the relationship of the PQA to other quality measures” (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003, p. 15). The PQA is used by programs to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs and to identify areas for program improvement and future professional development, and to monitor the public and competitive Michigan School Readiness Programs.

Epstein (2000) researched the High/Scope Program Quality Assessment tool and its significance to measuring program quality. She supported the PQA process developed by High/Scope, which assists early childhood programs in identifying specific areas of programming that need attention. The 5-point scale used by the assessment tool puts the program on the path for program improvement in particular program areas. She also emphasized that quality is not achieved quickly. The director of the program needs to actively participate in the assessment of an individual classroom’s program quality to
assist in guiding the goals and professional development for the organization (Epstein, 2000).

Another program quality measurement tool is the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS). It was developed by Thelma Harris and Richard Clifford at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. It was first published in 1980 and revised in 1989 (Click, 2004). The assessment consists of 43 items divided into seven categories: personal care routines, space and furnishings, language-reasoning, activities, interactions, program structure, and parent and staff. It is a self-assessment tool. According to the ECERS-R information materials, the assessment is useful for both research and program improvement. It is a tool that is used in numerous early childhood centers to measure program quality. The results are reported in quantitative terms (Cryer, Harms, & Riley, 2003).

Another means of upgrading the quality of a program is through the accreditation process offered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1999). Click (2004) states, “This is a three step process: self-study by the director, teachers, and parents; validation visits by trained professionals; and an accreditation decision by a team of early childhood experts” (p. 408). The accreditation process measures 10 categories: interactions among staff, curriculum, staff-parent interactions, staff qualifications and development, administration, staffing patterns, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food services, and evaluation processes (NAEYC, 1995). A program may choose to do both an accreditation process and to further evaluate their program quality by using one of the measurement tools.
The process of measuring the program quality in an early childhood center allows the leader and the followers to view the organization from the structural and process perspective as well as management and leadership. For the process of program assessment and measurement to be effective, dialogue, communication, collaboration, and team building need to be part of the process (Lee & Walsh, 2004). The process, in itself, is a task that will present various situations that will bring out particular traits and styles of the leader. When programs perform an assessment and determine the level of quality, it assists with setting goals and attaining objectives. The process of program evaluation can be viewed from the perspective of transformational leadership, i.e., making the followers into leaders to bring about change in the organization. The measuring of program quality is the *engine* that can be started to move the organization to high quality programming.

**Relationship Between Leadership and Program Quality**

*Linking Leadership to Program Quality*

Research has linked leadership in early childhood to the quality of the program (Muijs et al., 2004). Phillips (1996) states, “Quality is a positive developmental outcome, not merely the ingredients that produce the outcomes” (p. 45). Research is showing that the quality of the program is linked to the leadership of the program director (Kagan & Bowman, 1997). Fleming and Love (2003) state, “The director is the leader of the childcare organization and leadership creates the change process within the organization” (p. 53). The director is the person who has the legitimate power to affect the quality of the
program by influencing and transforming the followers (Morgan, 2000). There is clearly a relationship between leadership and program quality. This is observable across the educational continuum, from pre-school through college (Goff, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; NAESP, 2005).

Achieving program quality requires leaders who are focused on delivering high quality programs (Morgan, 2000). As leadership development grows in the general education field to meet the need for program quality improvements, similarly leadership in the field of early childhood programs needs to grow to meet the demands for quality programming (NAESP, 2005).

The literature further supports the viewpoint that the director of an early childhood center is the *gate keeper to quality* (Bloom, 1999). Even though research on early childhood leadership has grown over the past three decades, there remains a lack of concrete empirical studies in the area that investigate the role of the director influencing the contextual factors that support or inhibit program quality. Directors of child care and preschool programs need to be trained and provided with professional development to assist them with the role of leader in a high quality child care program (Bloom, 1988, 1999, 2003; Bloom & Rafanello, 1994). Proper preparation for the position of director of an early childhood program is paramount to achieving program quality.

The link between leadership and program quality is having a cascading effect on general education. NAESP (2005) expresses that administration and leadership in early childhood education is crucial to meeting the standards for a high quality early childhood program. By improving early childhood program quality, the general education student's performance is favorably affected. The NAESP believes that elementary school principals
need to be at the forefront, advocating for programs and leadership in early childhood which will prepare the children for school. The association set six standards for early childhood leadership: (a) embrace high-quality early childhood programs, principles, and practice, as the foundation for education throughout the school community; (b) work with families and community organizations to support children at home, in the community, and in the pre-K and kindergarten programs; (c) provide appropriate learning environments for young children; (d) ensure high quality curriculum and instructional practices that foster young children’s learning and development in all areas; (e) use multiple assessments to create experiences that strengthen student learning; and (f) advocate for universal opportunity for children to attend high quality early childhood programs (NAESP, 2005). General elementary education leaders are recognizing the importance of high quality early childhood programs and the impact that these programs have on general education and academic growth and success. In general, effective leadership is linked to program quality and higher program quality has an impact on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). With an increase in early childhood leadership ability, there can be an increase in program quality which in turn affects future student achievement, therefore having a favorable impact on society.

Summary

The review of literature for this study focuses on leadership from the transformational approach, emphasizing the moral aspect of leadership and its relationship to the area of early childhood education. There are unique leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of an early childhood director which are situational and
contribute to the leader’s effectiveness. An understanding of the theoretical perspectives and characteristics sheds understanding on this leadership area. Early childhood leadership has recognizable specific skills and competencies which can be integrated into the areas of administration, management, and leadership, and aligned with the roles and responsibilities, dispositions, and skills the leader needs. The effectiveness of the early childhood program director has an influence on the program quality as well as on the stakeholders, infrastructure, standards, and the process and structural perspectives of an early childhood program. Achieving program quality requires leaders who have a moral focus and who thoroughly understand the linkage between the many aspects of the leadership position from both a managerial and leadership perspective. The field is reliant upon persons who can foresee the greater societal impact of quality leadership as relating to program quality.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The research was conducted at six state-funded early childhood programs in the state of Michigan using qualitative research techniques (Patton, 2002). The teachers in these programs served as the subjects. Since the research study emphasized the lived experiences of the teachers, the phenomenological approach to qualitative research was employed. As a former teacher in a state-funded program, the researcher conducted an epoche before the study. The data were collected by using a survey that allowed expression of each teacher’s descriptions and perceptions, a semistructured questionnaire, and an interview which captured the lived experiences. The program data collection was conducted over an 8-week period. The written analysis of the data included quotations from the data collected to better illustrate and authenticate the results.

The study attempted to identify the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of directors in state-funded preschool programs based solely upon the teachers’ perceptions. The study also looked at how these leadership elements are described and perceived as components of program quality. Three profiles were developed for the study: director profile, program quality profile, and a director and program quality profile. The Program Quality Assessment scores were used as a standardized source of data to identify each program’s quality ranking. Ranking groups were created and analyzed to determine
agreements and disparities within the director profiles and program profiles created from the four data sources. To conclude the analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed.

Phenomenological Method

The qualitative research method was used to obtain a richness of responses from the subjects in order to describe a phenomenon. Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as follows:

> Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

For this study, the qualitative method was selected so that the respondents' perceptions and descriptions of the leader could be obtained in a natural setting, analyzed, and reported as a holistic picture. The researcher selected the qualitative approach versus a quantitative approach because the researcher possesses personal lived experiences in a state-funded preschool program and this study was specifically concerned with the respondents' lived experiences since they are the persons being led by their director.

Since the perceptions and lived experiences of the respondents were the focus of the research study, the phenomenological method was used to collect and interpret the data. Phenomenology is defined as a method that "describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about concepts or the phenomenon and explores the structures of consciousness in human experiences" (Polkinghorne, 1989 as cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 51). The lived experiences of the teachers contained the richness that
the researcher was seeking to uncover. The researcher attempted to grasp the “outward appearance and the inward consciousness based on memory, image, and meaning” (Creswell, 1998, p. 52) from each of the respondents. The lived experiences are the “ordinary conscious experience of everyday life” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 114), but these experiences are the heart and soul of the individuals who are the recipients of the leadership. Keeping in mind that the goal of this study was to grasp the essence and expose the meaning and structure of the lived experiences and to describe the experiences of the respondents and to understand those experiences from their point of view (Patton, 2002), the phenomenological method was the most appropriate research method to use to gather the data. The researcher was concerned with how the teachers made sense of their personal experiences individually and collectively regarding the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of their leader and how they perceived these factors as a component of program quality.

The study explored and described the leadership traits and styles, behaviors, competencies, and personal attributes of early childhood program directors based solely upon teachers’ perceptions and descriptions of directors in selected state-funded preschool programs. It also explored how these teachers describe and perceive identified leadership behaviors as a component of program quality. The focus of this study was to understand the essence of the lived personal experiences of the teachers in regards to the phenomenon of leadership. It was essential to this study that the point of view of the respondents was clearly identified and understood. The essence of their responses regarding the social and professional interactions that the respondents had with the leader of their program assisted in developing the implications of the study.
Controlling for Researcher Bias

Epoche

Since the areas of early childhood education and educational leadership are of interest to the researcher, the specific topic of early childhood leadership was a natural educational subject for academic research for the researcher. Additionally, the researcher holds experiences as a teacher in a state-funded preschool program for 15 years. Because of these personal interests and experiences, and to prepare for conducting this study, the researcher completed a personal epoche related to the topic and research questions.

An epoche is a new way of thinking in which the researcher is able “to remove, or at least become aware of, prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation” (Patton, 2002, p. 485). Personal reflection and discussions with colleagues enabled the researcher to set aside any prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions about early childhood leadership and clarify what biases the researcher held regarding the topic. This process enabled the researcher to investigate the phenomenon from a new perspective in which all prejugments and experiences were set aside and intuition and imagination were relied upon to obtain the essence of the experience (Creswell, 1998). “The epoche helps the researcher to investigate the phenomenon from a fresh and open viewpoint, without prejudgment or imposing meaning too soon” (Katz, 1987, as cited in Patton, 2002). This process was undertaken so that the making of judgments or the imposing of meaning to the data was not done prematurely. The setting aside of judgment was essential in this phenomenological investigation and
thus required the researcher to set aside her personal viewpoint (Patton, 2002) in order to see the experiences of others for their value and significance.

This approach enabled the researcher to develop data collection pieces for the study that suspended any biases and judgments about the phenomenon. It also enabled the researcher to analyze that data from the respondents’ point of the view, relying on intuition and imagination to gather the essence of the experiences that the respondents recalled. Scriver (1998) emphasized striving for objectivity as a counter to bias (as cited in Patton, 2002).

Subject Selection Process

Criteria and Rationale for the Selection of the Subjects

Both the purposive and convenience strategies were employed to identify subjects for the study. The group of respondents for the research study consisted of teachers from a specific type of early childhood program. The specific program group was selected from a population of public school districts that received preschool funds from the State of Michigan for the fiscal year 2004-2005, identified as the Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP).

McMillan (2000) suggests that in purposive sampling the researcher select individuals particularly informed about the subject matter. The selection of subjects for this study uses the unique type of purposive sampling. Merriam (1998) defines the unique type “as unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of the phenomenon of interest and are unique to the study” (p. 62). The teacher respondents in this study are
unique in that they have all taught in a state-funded program and are knowledgeable about
the MSRP program, the program quality assessment tool, and the leader in their program.
The respondent group does not include pre-K teachers from any other type of program,
i.e., federally funded or tuition-based. Purposive and convenience sampling is the most
appropriate technique because of the criteria used to determine the program group and
identify the potential subject respondents.

To identify the program group (program) and thus the respondent group (teachers)
the following criteria was used:

1. The program group consisted of programs funded to serve at least 32 students
   and not more than 360 students, thus requiring at least 2 and not more than 10
   teachers. (program)

2. The program directors were on staff the preceding year. (program)

3. The respondent group consisted of teachers who were on staff with the
director during the preceding year. (teachers)

4. The programs met the Michigan School Readiness Program staff
   requirements. (program/teachers)

5. The programs were all public school state-aid-funded center-based models,
   not competitive grant programs, and adhere to one of the state curriculum
   models. (program)

6. The program group sites were located in different regions in the state of
   Michigan (lower peninsula)—west, east, central, and southeastern regions.
   (program)
Rationale for Criteria 1. A systematic procedure was used to obtain the program group. First, selection was based upon enrollment. The group consisted of programs funded for at least 32 and less than 360 students with at least 2 teachers and not more than 10 teachers. The rationale for the criteria was to include a variety of programs across the state and not allow any single large program in a large urban area to skew the results of the study. Also, adhering to these criteria prevented the possibility of a multilevel chain of command.

The total population for the public school district state-funded Michigan School Readiness Programs for the 2004-2005 school year was 455. Using criteria 1, the program group became 180 programs, which represented 39% of the total number of funded programs: 106 programs contained from 32 to 54 students and 74 programs served from 54 to 360 students. The programs at least had 2 and not more than 10 teachers.

Rationale for Criteria 2. Since the Program Quality Assessment data are collected in the spring of the school year and those data were being used in the data analysis, it was necessary that the director of the program, who the teachers were describing, be the same individual (i.e., not a different person than the one who was the director during the PQA process and to whom the score related).

Rationale for Criteria 3. The programs were solicited in the fall of 2005. The data collection process took place in the spring of 2006. A working relationship between the director and the teachers was necessary for the teachers to be able to respond to the survey, questionnaire, and interview as they related to the director and the program quality assessment data. This criteria point was checked before distribution of the survey materials.
Rationale for Criteria 4. The staff requirements for the Michigan School Readiness Program require that the teacher have a valid Michigan teaching certificate with an early childhood specialist endorsement (ZA) (Michigan School Readiness Program Implementation Manual, Michigan Department of Education, 2002a). This criterion was chosen so that the minimum qualifications of all the teachers in each of the programs would be consistent.

Rationale for Criteria 5. This research study focused on the public state-aid-funded child care programs associated with local school districts. The rationale for choosing public school state-aid-funded programs was to keep the sample group consistent. The study did not include competitive grant programs. For additional consistency, all programs were center-based program models (the children attended at the center and/or school) and each program used a curriculum model that was sanctioned by the Michigan Department of Education according to the 2002 Implementation Manual.

Rationale for Criteria 6. The research used only programs in different areas of the lower peninsula in the state of Michigan. The programs were located in the western, central, eastern, and southeastern areas of the state. This prevented any unique factors of a single region from disproportionately influencing the data and the results.

The program directors, upon receipt of the research study information, were informed of all the criteria points. If the program directors agreed to participate in the research study, it was understood by the researcher to signify that both the program and the teacher respondents met the criteria.
Setting

The data collection occurred in the respondents' naturalistic setting, their building and the classroom where they taught. According to Owens (2001), a place where the experiences occurred was the climate "the atmosphere, the tone, and the personality of the total environment of the school building" (p. 401). Since this study was concerned with the lived experiences of the teachers, the climate or environment/setting that the teachers were familiar with was of significance to the results and implications of the study.

The researcher arranged a date and time to visit each site that was convenient to the participants. Upon arrival at the site, the researcher was greeted at all of the sites by the school secretary or office designee. At two of the sites, the director gave the researcher a tour of the building. If a tour of the building was not formally given, the researcher made an asserted effort to walk around each of the buildings to absorb the essence of the environment in which the teachers worked.

All of the sites were early childhood centers specifically dedicated to the education and development of young children. They were configured in various ways: all early childhood classrooms (state-funded, federally funded, and tuition-based programs), early childhood classrooms and pre-primary impaired classrooms, early childhood classrooms and kindergarten through second grade classes. The buildings were all cheery, decorated, and inviting. The programs each appeared to have sufficient materials and outside play equipment. The setting for the data collection with each respondent was the teacher's classroom or another private room at the center. Since the data collection took
place on Fridays, the students were not present and the classrooms were quiet and undisturbed. The MSRP operates on a 4-day, Monday through Thursday schedule.

Instrumentation

The data for the research study were gathered from four sources. Patton (2002) states, "Using a variety of data sources in a study strengthens a study" (p. 247). The first three sources—the Multi-Rater Leadership Forms—two parts, a semistructured questionnaire, and a face-to-face interview—were used with the respondents. The fourth source, the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) scores for each of the programs, was obtained from the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. Each of the pieces served to probe the topic of leadership through the lived experiences of the respondents.

*Multi-Rater Leadership Survey*

The Multi-Rater Leadership survey form was developed by Dr. Paula Bloom. The research that supports the validity of this instrument was adopted from the works of Hersey et al., (2001), Yukl (2002), Blake and Mouton (1994), Giametteo (1975), and Neugebauer (1990) (as cited in Bloom, 2003). Further, according to McMillan (2000), "evidence based upon internal structure is provided when the relationship between items and parts of the instrument are empirically consistent with the theory or intended uses of the scores" (p. 134). These assertions supported the use of the Multi-Rater Leadership survey as a data collection piece for this research. The evidence, as to the extent that the inferences gathered from the Multi-Rater Leadership survey were appropriate, was based upon internal structure.
The survey consisted of two parts. In Part 1 of the survey the raters were asked to choose from among three situational phrases. The choices were then factored into three styles: the task-oriented style, the people-oriented style, and the integrated style. In Part 2 of the survey the raters were asked to rate the director on 25 leadership traits. Each trait was accompanied by an explanation. The respondents rated the traits on a 1-5 Likert scale (Appendix B). At this time, reliability studies have not been performed on the Multi-Rater Leadership form. Thomas (2003) further supports the use of surveys by stating that the typical procedure of conducting a survey is 1) specifying the characteristics (target variable) of interest, 2) identifying the collectivity that would display that variable (people), 3) deciding how best to gather information from the collectivity, 4) gathering the information, and 5) summarizing the results in a readily comprehensible form. (p. 42)

The advantage of using the survey approach in this study was that the participants were able to readily express their opinions and attitudes regarding leadership characteristics, traits, and styles in a confidential manner.

*Semistructured Questionnaire*

The semistructured questionnaire was developed by the researcher. It consisted of six questions (Appendix E). The purpose of the semistructured questionnaire was to offer the respondents the opportunity to express, in their own words, their personal perspective on the subject (Patton, 2002). The semistructured questionnaire gathered data through the use of essential questions related to the topic. Hatch (2002) supports this method of data collection by stating, "The idea is to gather information from several informants that can be compared systematically" (p. 95). This process allowed the subjects to express their opinions about the topic in written form.
Interview

The face-to-face interview questions were also designed by the researcher to explore the teachers' perception of the director's leadership characteristics, traits, and styles. The face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to explore, probe, and ask follow-up questions of the respondents. The conversational style of this data collection process was more spontaneous while it remained focused on the topic being researched. The face-to-face interviews were a means for the researcher to communicate orally with each of the respondents. The interviews enabled the researcher to ask questions of the respondents, to guide, and to probe further into the topic (Appendix F).

Coordination of Data Sources

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of the subjects. The three data collection sources (survey, semistructured questionnaire, and face-to-face interview) focused on the past experiences as well as the present images and feelings of the respondents. When the two qualitative data collection pieces were developed by the researcher, the phraseology and intent of each of the questions were given careful scrutiny for its relevance to the topic. These data sources helped the researcher to connect the past and present experiences of the respondents. The third data source, the MRL survey, was used to "assess opinions, perceptions, and attitudes" (Glatthorn, 1998, p. 38) of the respondents. The purpose of the semistructured questionnaire and the personal interview was "to uncover the meanings that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds" (Hatch, 2002, p. 91).
At times, meanings are often hidden from direct observation and taken for granted. Thus, the questionnaire and the interview techniques become the tools for “bringing these meanings to the surface” (Hatch, 2002, p. 91). It is the task of the researcher to work at structuring the interview questions so that there is an understanding of the respondents’ point of view and as well as an understanding of the meaning of their experiences.

The questions were designed to enable the researcher to develop a feeling of walking in the respondent’s shoes and to explain things as the respondent would explain them (Spradley, 1979, as cited in Hatch, 2002). The essential questions for both the semistructured questionnaire and the interview were developed and given a cross check with the survey for triangulation. This process ensured that the survey, the semistructured questionnaire, and the face-to-face interview were achieving the self-disclosure that was necessary to answer the central research question and to gather data which reflected both the past and present experiences of the respondents.

Program Quality Assessment

The present Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tool is a revised version from the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation done in 2003. As previously stated, the assessment is divided into two forms: the classroom items (Form A) and the agency items (Form B). The classroom form (Form A) is completed by the teachers and consists of four sections: learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, and curriculum planning and assessment. The agency form (Form B) is completed by the director of the program and consists of three sections: parent involvement and family services, staff
qualifications and staff development, and program management. Each form is divided into sections, each section contains standards, and each standard contains rows of indicators (Appendix C). The rows of indicators are arranged in columns: level 1, level 3, or level 5 (Appendix D) (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003).

The use of the PQA serves as a standardized data source, since all Michigan School Readiness Programs use the Program Quality Assessment tool to determine program quality. Webb (1981) classifies this type of data source as unobtrusive data. He states, “Data that is not filtered through the perceptions, interpretations, and biases of the participants” (as cited by Hatch, 2002, p. 119) may serve as a measurement reference point.

The specific program site PQA data were provided to the researcher from the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. Each program site director granted written permission for the release and use of these data. The specific data that were reported for each program site revealed how the teachers ranked the program on each of the items listed in Form A and how the director ranked the program on each of the items listed in Form B. This information was useful to the researcher to obtain a self-portrait of each of the programs visited and to garner an initial insight into the lived experiences of the respondents. The PQA scores, along with the data from the other three sources collected from each of the respondents, as well as knowledge of the standards of quality, assisted the researcher in analyzing and drawing conclusions about the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of directors and how the teachers describe and perceive these factors as components of program quality.
Pilot Study

Design

The pilot study for the research project used the Multi-Rater Leadership survey form and the 2003-2004 Michigan School Readiness Program public school grant allocation list. Five programs were selected from the list. Each pilot program was smaller in student allocation funding than the programs that were used in the research study and each pilot program was located in Oakland County, Michigan.

Implementation of the Pilot Study

First, the researcher chose the programs from the allocation list that met all of the criteria except size of program. The researcher used the Oakland Intermediate School District web site to locate the name of the early childhood director and the addresses for each of the selected early childhood centers.

The pilot study packet included a cover letter, the MRL surveys for the teachers, letter-size envelopes to collect each individual completed survey, a large postage prepaid manila envelope to consolidate and return all of the individual surveys, and a release form for the director to sign giving the researcher permission to obtain the PQA score from High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. The packets were mailed on June 1, 2005 to the directors at each of the selected sites.
Findings from the Pilot Study

As of June 20, 2005, three pilot study packets were returned. The other programs which were sent pilot study surveys may have closed for the school year. The surveys returned from the three programs were informative and did demonstrate a range of scores from 1 to 5 on the trait survey form. Two surveys rated the director in a 4 to 5 range, and one survey rated the director in a 1 to 5 range. On the style portion of the survey, analysis of the data revealed particular leadership style(s). From the responses, the researcher felt that it was necessary to improve upon the content of the cover letter. The researcher determined that the addition of the words and phrases “a realistically and balanced description of the director” to the cover letter was needed. It was hoped that the respondents would attend to the trait descriptors, and that there would be more realistic assessment of the director’s traits. From the pilot study data, the researcher felt assured by the responses that the research study would be a viable project.

Data Collection

To begin the data collection process, the researcher acquired a list of all public school districts that received funding for Michigan School Readiness Programs for the 2004-2005 school calendar year. The researcher then reviewed the list and identified the programs that received funds for 32 to 360 students. Because the research was using the Program Quality Assessment scores as a reference for program quality, a Data Sharing request form was filed with the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (Appendix
G). In agreement with the data release form, information obtained from this research will be shared with High/Scope Educational Foundation.

One hundred eighty sites met the criteria and were contacted using the recruitment letter (Appendix H). Seventeen sites responded. The responding sites were divided into geographic regions. There were at least two sites located in each region of the lower peninsula in the state. The sites were prioritized, most to least teachers at each site. The researcher contacted the site director by telephone to confirm interest in the research project. A script was used for the telephone conversation (Appendix I). If the director agreed to continue to participate, the researcher proceeded with the site recruitment process. A cover letter (Appendix J), explaining the purpose of the study and the need for the research, was sent to each director along with two site recruitment consent forms to confirm participation and to have a concurrent data file copy, two Program Quality Assessment Score release forms (Appendix K), and a postage prepaid envelope. The director was asked to complete the forms and return each of the forms to the researcher in the return envelope. If the director decided at this time not to participate, he or she was asked to return the forms unsigned. Six sites responded.

The data collection process from the consenting sites consisted of two parts: the site recruitment process and the subject recruitment process. After the researcher received the site recruitment consent forms, the researcher contacted the director by telephone and arranged a date and time that was convenient for meeting with the teachers. Since the Michigan School Readiness Programs do not have students on Fridays, all meetings were scheduled for Fridays for the convenience of the teachers. The researcher drove to each of the program sites and met with all of the MSRP teachers in a classroom at that site.
The teachers were given a cover letter (Appendix L). The researcher read through the cover letter and answered the participants' questions. Before the consent forms or surveys were handed out, they were coded. The name of the site was written on each instrument and numbered.

First, the teachers were given the survey consent form (Appendix M) and the interview consent form (Appendix N). Next, the researcher explained to the teachers the three different data collection options: (a) they could choose not to participate, (b) they could complete the survey and open-ended questionnaire and elect not to be interviewed, or (c) they could choose to complete the survey and questionnaire and be interviewed. The teachers who elected to participate in the study signed the consent forms and returned them to the researcher. Subsequently, the teachers who elected to participate in the study were given a survey and questionnaire to complete. They were asked to complete the survey and questionnaire before being scheduled for the interview. During the completion of the first two data collection pieces, the researcher separated the consent forms to determine who had given consent to be interviewed. The researcher spoke to each of the teachers as they handed in the survey and questionnaire to arrange a day and time that was convenient for the interview. Recognizing that the researcher had driven a considerable distance to most of the sites, the teachers consented to being interviewed immediately following completion of the survey and questionnaire. The researcher then met with each of the teachers in a place at the site that assured the privacy necessary to conduct a valid interview. The researcher tape recorded each of the interviews and backed it up with a voice recorder and hand-scribed notes. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher.
The tapes and the voice recordings were destroyed and deleted from the voice recorder, respectively.

After receiving the PQA score release forms from the site directors, copies of the release forms were sent to the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. The Foundation returned the PQA information for each program site by email in SPSS format. Since the study sought to examine the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of the director and how they reflect the factors that are addressed in the indicators that form the basis for evaluating program quality, the researcher selected to focus on the PQA classroom, agency, and total program scores for each site.

A log was kept containing the program name, the program number, and a teacher respondent number; this log containing the identification numbers associated with the study will be kept confidential along with the collected data. The identity of the subjects and the sites will also be protected. The data that were collected will be stored in secured file cabinets for the duration of the study and then stored in the Primary Investigator’s office (or in the Archives at WMU) for at least 3 years after the study closes.

Data Analysis

The researcher followed the steps of data analysis according to Creswell (2003):

organize the data, read through the data, begin a detailed analysis with a coding process, use the coding process to generate categories or themes for analysis, decide how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative, and then interpret the meaning of the data. (p. 191)

The data analysis focused on the general comments, patterns, and themes that emerged from the sources of data collection. The procedures for analysis were the six steps of
constructing a theoretical narrative developed by Carl Auerbach (2003). The steps used were: (a) state the research concern and theoretical framework, (b) select relevant text, (c) record repeating ideas, (d) organize repeating ideas into themes by grouping ideas into coherent categories, (e) develop theoretical constructs, and (f) create a theoretical narrative (pp. 37-41).

The data gathered from the multiple data sources were analyzed for patterns, categories, and themes that emerged. Further, the data were reviewed to look for relationships that connected the themes into a coherent whole. Creswell (2003) asserts this should be done in order to gain a wider theoretical perspective of the research. The categories and emergent themes were reported for three profiles.

The three profiles used by the researcher were the director profile, the program quality profile, and the director and program quality profile. The director profile consisted of the emergent themes derived from the semistructured questionnaire (questions 1-5), the interview (questions 1, 2, 3, and 5), and the MRL style and trait data. The program quality profile also consisted of emergent themes derived from the semistructured questionnaire (questions 1-6), the interview responses (questions 1-6) which related to program quality, and the PQA data. The director and program quality profile displayed the director profile themes across subjects, the MRL style description by subjects and the MRL leadership trait rankings across subjects, the program quality themes across subjects, and the PQA data. This data analysis process was consistently applied to all six program sites.

A cross-case analysis was developed by initially placing the six programs in cardinal order by their total Program Quality Assessment score. This separated the programs into three groups: High, High-Mid, and Mid range. A quality score is
determined by using specific criteria. Programs with “scores less than 3 indicate low quality, scores between 3 and 4.49 indicate medium quality, and scores at or above 4.5 indicate high quality” (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005). Appendix D includes an explanation of the scoring.

Each range group of two programs was analyzed to determine commonalities and disparities within the director profiles and program quality profiles created from the four data sources. A discussion was presented regarding the program range groups establishing a table. To conclude the cross-case analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed. The written results of the research contained quotations from the data, director and program quality profile charts, and program range group tables.

Validation

Triangulation and peer debriefing were used for validating the research study. Triangulation is the procedure of using multiple sources of data collection “to establish the fact that the criterion of validity has been met for the study” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 163). Schwandt further explains the use of triangulation as a means “to examine a single phenomenon from more than one vantage point and as a means of checking the integrity of the inferences one draws” (p. 163).

For this phenomenological research study, triangulation was used to compare the data obtained from one instrument with the data from the other instruments. The questionnaire and the interview were triangulated with the Multi-Rater Leadership style survey which is a quantitative scaled data source. The questionnaire and the interview
were also triangulated with the Multi-Rater Leadership survey, which is a scaled data source using a Likert scale. Each data collection piece—the questionnaire, interview questions, and the Multi-Rater Leadership survey—was checked for their relationship to the central question of the study and their support of the topic. The researcher used different data sources that were aligned to justify the conclusions that were drawn (Creswell, 2002) and to further validate the study.

To assure consistency, the same peer reviewer was used for debriefing and to assist with the data analysis (Creswell, 2003). The consistent peer debriefing process was used to enhance the accuracy of the research. The peer reviewer and the researcher discussed each subject’s responses in an “attempt to describe and analyze qualitative data to achieve some kind of consensual validity” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 113). The peer reviewer and the researcher met weekly throughout the dissertation process so that the integrity of the topic and the essence of the responses were not compromised by the lack of consistency or the researcher’s bias.

The research study demonstrated construct validity by using multiple sources of evidence and internal validity through the use of pattern matching across sources of data. External validity was demonstrated through the use of research design, replication through the use of consistent data collection with all subjects, and reliability through the use of protocol (Yin, 2003).

Summary

This qualitative research study used phenomenological research methods. The sample group consisted of Michigan School Readiness Program teachers. The data were
collected using the Multi-Rater Leadership form, a semistructured questionnaire, and face-to-face interviews. Individual program quality was determined through the use of the Program Quality Assessment score data. The data were analyzed using qualitative research analysis methods focusing on emerging themes, patterns, and clusters. The data were validated by triangulation and peer debriefing. The findings were reported by emergent themes related to the literature review. The research questions were addressed after a complete analysis of the data.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Directors or other administrators play a leadership role in managing organizations toward stating the vision of quality service. Taking a look at administrators means considering the interplay of authority, management practice, communication, and leadership in day-to-day practice in ECE organizations. (Culkin, 2000, p. 4)

This chapter presents the findings and results from the analysis of the data obtained through a research study of the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of state-funded preschool program directors. It also describes the interplay between these traits and styles and program quality. To better understand the context of the study, a discussion of the data collection instruments, the demographics of program sites, the analysis lens, the presentation of findings by program site, and a cross-case analysis of the programs grouped by quality score is presented in this chapter.

The data were obtained from the respondents' surveys, interviews, questionnaires, and the Program Quality Assessment tool. The qualitative findings were reported by major categories and themes that emerged from the analysis. The data were presented for each program site through three profiles: the director profile, the program quality profile, and the director and program quality profile. The cross-case analysis was developed by initially placing the six programs in cardinal order by their total Program Quality Assessment score. This separated the programs into three groups: High, High-Mid, and Mid range. Each range group of two programs was analyzed to determine commonalities and disparities within the director profiles and program quality profiles created from the
four data sources. A table was generated from the analysis of each range group. From each respective range group table, the researcher sought commonalities sufficient to construct range group profiles. A discussion was presented regarding the program range group establishing a table. To conclude the cross-case analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed.

Through the analysis of the data, this phenomenological study attempted to answer the following questions:

*Central Question:* What leadership characteristics, traits and styles of directors in the Michigan School Readiness Program, based solely upon teachers’ perceptions, are identifiable, and how do the teachers describe and perceive traits and styles as a component of program quality?

*Subquestions:*

- What are the identifiable leadership characteristics (behaviors, competencies, knowledge, and personal attributes) that the teachers use to describe the leadership traits and styles (the balance between task and relationship orientation) of directors in a state-funded preschool program?
- How do the teachers describe and perceive program director leadership characteristics, traits, and styles?
- How do the teachers describe and perceive the director’s leadership characteristics, traits, and styles as a component of program quality?
Data Collection Instruments

*Multi-Rater Leadership Survey*

The Multi-Rater Leadership Survey has two parts (Appendix B). First, the participant is asked to rate the director on 25 traits using a Likert scale. The definition of each trait is included on the MRL survey form. Second, the participant responds to 24 statements which determine a style of leadership. The styles of leadership are described on the MRL scoring sheet as task oriented, people oriented, and integrated.

*Semistructured Questionnaire*

The semistructured questionnaire consisting of six questions asked of each participant was prepared by the researcher (Appendix E). The six question responses were used in the analysis for both the director profile and the program quality profile. Question 6 on the questionnaire was used primarily in the program quality profile analysis; however, if a respondent's answer to question 6 made reference to leadership, that response was also included in the director profile analysis.

*Interview Questions*

The six interview questions were also prepared by the researcher (Appendix F). The respondents who agreed to this activity were asked the six questions. The responses were taped and transcribed by the researcher. The six interview question responses were used in both the director profile and program quality profile analyses. Question 4 in the interview was used primarily in the program quality profile analysis; however, if the
respondent’s answer to question 4 made reference to leadership, that response was also included in the director profile analysis.

*Program Quality Assessment Tool*

The Program Quality Assessment (PQA) (Appendix C) tool that produces the program quality score for a Michigan School Readiness Program consists of standards with multiple level rubric criteria valued at 1, 3, or 5 points. The criteria level is selected that best matches what is transpiring in each classroom (Form A-Classroom Items) or at each center (Form B-Agency Items). According to the Program Quality Assessment booklet (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003), a quality score is determined by using specific criteria. Programs with “scores less than 3 indicate low quality, scores between 3 and 4.49 indicate medium quality, and scores at or above 4.5 indicate high quality” (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005). Appendix D includes an explanation of the scoring.

*Demographics of the Program Sites*

Six program sites were used for the research. To ensure the anonymity of the participants at the sites, fictitious names were assigned to each of the participants. The words *the director* were used in general terms, not as a gender reference, to refer to the director of the program.

The six sites used in this research project reflected a wide diversity in location and demographics. The sites were located in different quadrant areas of the lower peninsula of the state of Michigan. Additionally the sites were located in both rural and urban/
suburban areas. All of the sites were Michigan School Readiness Programs. All sites were within proximity of low income areas. All programs followed the Michigan School Readiness Program Implementation Manual (Michigan Department of Education, 2002a) guidelines that state “more than fifty percent of the children must exhibit factor #18 (low income) and each child must exhibit at least two risk factors” (p. 13).

At all sites, the entire Michigan School Readiness Program was located solely in one building. The buildings were configured in three different ways: (a) only early childhood programs, Head Start (HS), and the Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP); (b) early childhood programs (HS and MSRP) and early childhood special education programs; or (c) early childhood programs (HS and MSRP), kindergarten, first and second grade. Regardless of the configuration, the six sites all referred to themselves as early childhood centers. In each of the programs, the title of center referred to the building which accommodated children ranging in ages from 2½ to 8 years old. The centers were located in either older elementary school buildings or newly renovated buildings. Half of the centers were brightly decorated while the other half were visually less appealing. All of the centers had outdoor play areas.

All of the teachers were visited and interviewed in the classroom in which they taught. The six sites generated a total of 18 participants. All 18 teachers consented to completing the survey and the semistructured questionnaire. Sixteen teachers consented to completing the survey, the semistructured questionnaire, and the face-to-face interview. All of the subjects who participated in the study were Caucasian women. Through observation, it was estimated that the ages of the participants ranged from early 20s to late 50s.
The Analysis Lens

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to specifically explore and describe how the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors, as described and perceived by the teachers, reflect the factors that are currently addressed in the indicators that form the basis for evaluating program quality. The data for the study were collected using three different methods, a survey, a semistructured questionnaire, and an interview. The Program Quality Assessment tool was used as a standardized source of program quality data for each program site. The different forms of data enabled the researcher to capture the interactions between respondents' responses from the interview and their perceptions reported on the questionnaire and the survey. The three pieces of data were triangulated, ensuring validity of the study.

Because the research questions were searching to identify the leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of the MSRP directors, as depicted through the experience of teachers in their programs, and how these factors relate to program quality, the researcher chose to establish three profiles to address the issue: the director profile, the program quality profile, and the director and program quality profile. The three profiles were constructed for each of the six program sites.

Director Profile

The director profile consisted of the emergent themes derived from the semistructured questionnaire (primarily questions 1-5), the interview (primarily questions 1, 2, 3, and 5), and the MRL trait and style survey results. Other qualitative responses
from the data which related to director leadership were also used in the director profile. To extract the emergent themes, the researcher coded the questionnaires and interviews of the subjects at each program site. The coding followed the procedure of “dividing the data into text segments, labeling the text segments, examining the codes for overlap and redundancy and collapsing these codes into themes” (Creswell, 2002, p. 266). A code word or phrase was used to describe the meaning of the individual portions of the text. The sentences or lengthy statements that related to a single code word or phrase were referred to as text segments. These codes were further condensed into categories and themes. Also, redundancies and codes that could not be conveniently categorized were eliminated (Creswell, 2002, p. 271).

The researcher used the results of the coding and the clustering of text segments to identify the major categories and themes. Analysis of the data resulted in the identification of two major theme categories: (a) leadership style, and (b) characteristics. Within these two categories, there were 10 themes. In the leadership style category, the themes included (a) task-oriented behavior, (b) people-oriented behavior, and (c) integrated behavior. The second category was characteristics. The themes in this category were (a) communication, (b) high expectations, (c) relationships, (d) personal qualities, (e) concern for others, (f) confidence in staff, and (g) being knowledgeable. As a result of the semantic analysis, the researcher constructed a narrative description of the findings presented by the individual program sites.
Program Quality Profile

As stated in the literature review, there is link between leadership and program quality. To address this link, the program quality profile was constructed using responses from the semistructured questionnaire (questions 1-6), the interview responses (questions 1-6), and the PQA scores. Other qualitative responses from the data which related to program quality were used in the program quality profile. To reiterate an important concept from the literature review, “quality is a positive developmental outcome, not merely the ingredients that produce the outcomes” (Phillips, 1996, p. 45). The program quality profile contributed to understanding the ingredients of program quality.

The researcher coded the questionnaires and interviews from all six program sites in order to extract the emergent themes for the program quality profile. The coding followed the Creswell (2002) procedure as cited previously. A code word or phrase was chosen to explain the meaning of the individual portions of the text. The sentences or lengthy statements that related to a single code word or phrase were referred to as text segments. By narrowing and combing the coded data, the coded data were collapsed into fewer code words and phrases. These codes were further condensed into themes.

Analysis of the data resulted in the identification of two major theme categories: (a) program responsibility, and (b) quality standards. Within these two categories there were four themes. The program responsibility major category identified the themes of (a) varied opinion, and (b) agreement. The quality standard category identified the themes of (a) agency, and (b) classroom. This analysis was presented in a narrative description for each of the individual program sites.
**Director and Program Quality Profile**

The director profile and the program quality profile were merged together to form the director and program quality profile. This profile presented the findings of the research study that reflected the leadership characteristics, traits and styles of directors, and the program quality data in a director and program quality profile chart. The profile chart consisted of the director profile themes across subjects, the style description by subjects, the leadership trait groupings across subjects, the program quality themes across subjects, and the PQA scores. Each site’s chart is included in the Appendices: Programs A-F can be found in Appendices O-T, respectively.

To incorporate the MRL survey data, the researcher initially clustered each participant’s responses on the MRL trait survey by Likert scale ranking. This analysis exposed the participant’s trait perception of the director. The trait rankings for all subjects at a site were further grouped into three categories: Distinct (4 or 5 ranking), Neutral (3 ranking), and Unrecognized (1 or 2 ranking).

The MRL style survey data were collected from each of the individual participants at each of the program sites and recorded either as the task-oriented, the people-oriented, or the integrated style of leadership. The participants’ style ratings were reported individually on the director and program quality profile chart.

The PQA data for each site were obtained from the Program Quality Assessment data received from High/Scope Education Research Foundations. These data were reported by classroom, agency, and total PQA score for each program site.
Completion of Data Analysis

To complete the data analysis process, a cross-case analysis was performed based upon program quality rankings. Initially, the six programs were placed in cardinal order by their total Program Quality Assessment score. A quality score was determined by using specific criteria: programs with “scores less than 3 indicate low quality, scores between 3 and 4.49 indicate medium quality, and scores at or above 4.5 indicate high quality” (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2005). This separated the programs into three groups: High, High-Mid, and Mid range. Each range group of two programs was analyzed to determine commonalities and disparities within the director profiles and program quality profiles created from the four data sources. A discussion was presented regarding the program range group profiles. A table was generated from the analysis of each range group. From each respective range group table, the researcher looked for any consistent patterns in how the teachers described their director’s leadership behaviors within the range group to determine a program quality director profile. To conclude the cross-case analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed.

The Program Site Analysis

The program site analysis was presented in chart form. The director and program quality profile chart included the director profile themes across subjects, the MRL style data, the MRL trait data, the program quality profile themes across subjects, and the PQA scores for each site.
The director theme data used the responses from the semistructured questionnaire (questions 1-5) and the interview (questions 1, 2, 3, and 5). The style data were reported out by individual respondents. Each style profile reflected the results of the respondents' choices to the scenarios on the survey. The total of possible responses for the style survey was eight. The trait survey data were reported by groupings: distinct (ranked at 4 and 5), neutral (ranked at 3), and unrecognized (ranked at 1 and 2). The style and trait categories were labeled for level of correspondence between the respondents. The terms strong, mixed, close, and low were used to identify the alignment of the participants' responses.

The program quality theme data were taken from the semistructured questionnaire (questions 1-6) and the interview (questions 1-6). The PQA score data were reported by classroom average, agency average, and total score average. A narrative of the director themes and program quality themes supported and described the information displayed in the director and program quality charts that are included in the Appendices.

Program A—Director Profile

Style Theme 1: Task Oriented

The task theme emerged from the data taken from the participants' questionnaires and interviews. The task style of leadership describes the director as exhibiting a strong concern for high performance and accomplishing tasks with an emphasis on planning, directing, following procedure, and applying uniform standards. The director may be viewed as structured, bureaucratic, and inflexible (Bloom, 2003)
Supporting the theme of a task style of leadership, Ann listed on the questionnaire the director’s leadership traits as “job-driven, office oriented, and being the boss.” In an interview question, Ann described her director’s task style of leadership as being high on direction and low on feedback. She cited the director’s insistence on giving directions and applying uniform standards by stating:

(The director) always feels that things need to be done his/her way and we have some pretty good ideas too. If we could have open dialogue, it would make life easier for everyone. We had a principal before who never made a schedule without sitting down with a representative from every grade level and saying “OK, here is what we got. Here are the time slots. Let’s fill them in or is this the issue that we need to deal with now let’s talk about it.” Now we have someone who says, “This is the way we are doing it—make it work.” It is a very difficult style for us. We felt involved before now we don’t feel as much involved.

Abigail on the questionnaire also referred to the director’s task orientation. She wrote that “(The director) is making great efforts toward efficiency toward the tasks.” She also cited on the questionnaire that the director monitors tasks in an isolated manner which is low on involvement in decision making. She stated, “(The director) writes the goals for the program and follows up on whether they are met or not.” Ann agreed with the task behavior of monitoring and following procedures, by responding in the interview that the director “assesses the teachers, (the director) is in and out of the rooms.”

Ann made another reference to the bureaucratic component of the task style of leadership by stating in the interview, “(The director’s) management style is, this is how it is going to be done, this is what happens and you take it from here.” In another interview question, Ann cited the director’s inflexibility and lack of desire for feedback by stating:

I miss the ability to talk. I have to temper how I speak to (the director). I have to be careful how I word things. For me this is uncomfortable. I would like to be able to talk. I miss that part. I think that is the style of directorship, more directive and less cooperative.
Characteristic Theme 1: Communication

The first theme to emerge from the data in the category of characteristics was communication. This theme focused on the director's inconsistent ability to communicate and interact with others. On the questionnaire, Ann succinctly noted the director as exhibiting "limited communications." She repeated this observation, when asked on the questionnaire about the areas that the director could improve upon, answering "communication—open and flowing." Further on the questionnaire, she addressed an area of weakness for the director as being "communication—open to staff discussions." When asked a question during the interview, Ann commented on the director's disregard for open dialogue and a disinterest in input and feedback from others by stating:

Be more open in communication and be more willing to discuss things with the staff and not feel that we are threatening (the director). If we could have open dialogue it would make life easier for everyone. The communication here is not flowing and open.

Later in the interview, Ann expressed her feelings regarding the lack of open dialogue and feedback by stating:

One of the biggest challenges in this building is communication. There are so many of us for (the director) to be able to communicate everything that is going on. It is difficult. Communication is a big issue. It is not (the director's) forte. Communication is one of (the director's) weaknesses.

Abigail offered a differing opinion on the questionnaire regarding communication. She felt the strength of the director was communicating to parents. She wrote, "(The director) has the ability to communicate with parents from all walks of life." On the questionnaire, Ann concurred with this opinion by stating, "One of (the director's)
strengths is parent relationships.” Abigail further supported the theme of parent communication when she stated in the interview:

One of the hardest things is that (the director) has to face dealing with the kinds of people that (the director) has to deal with sometimes. (The director) has to speak to parents who are not always rational, having to develop a rapport with people who are quick tempered. (The director) has to calm the atmosphere when they are upset. Everything is a big deal to the parents every little thing. (The director) sees a lot of complaints that we would think are very minute. To the parents they are a big deal they come in and she relates to them.

Ann’s comments on the questionnaire highlighted the striking contrast between the communication with parents and the communication with staff. She stated, “A weakness of the director was (the director’s) lack of communication and open(ness) to staff discussions.” On another questionnaire response, Ann reiterated, “The director could improve upon his/her communication and being more open and flowing with discussions.”

On the questionnaire, Ann did acknowledge that the director was a strong advocate for the program and communicated this to the community. She wrote, “The director is a strong advocate for the program, proudly presenting it to the community.”

**Characteristic Theme 2: Goal Oriented With High Expectations**

The second theme that emerged was being goal oriented with high expectations. This theme refers to the director’s concern for high performance and the accomplishment of tasks. On the questionnaire, Ann stated that director had “high expectations” for the program and staff. Abigail commented on the director’s high expectations with regard to setting goals and standards and monitoring the program. On the questionnaire, Abigail described the director as “goal oriented.” She gave an example of the leadership actions
of the director in setting goals and monitoring by stating, "(The director is) writing goals for the program, and following up on whether or not they were met. Ensuring that the teacher has all the tools she needs." Again on the questionnaire, Abigail commented on her perception of the director's high expectations by responding with, "How the director performs his/her job sets the tone for staff members. When I see my director making great efforts toward efficiency and success, I know that the same is expected of me and others."

Ann felt that the director was focused on goals along with high expectations for the program by monitoring the classrooms and the teachers on a regular basis. She stated in the interview, "The director regularly assesses teachers. (The director) is in and out of four rooms." Abigail referred to monitoring and low feedback in the interview question regarding the PQA score and leadership of the director affecting or enhancing the quality. She replied:

I haven't seen my PQA. The PQA reviewer mentioned some things she thought would be helpful to the program. She mentioned things that would improve this room. I would like to see feedback on that; I would like to see follow-up on that. What is turned in on your PQA and what is being done I would like to see follow up on that.

*Characteristic Theme 3: Minimal Involvement*

The third theme that emerged was minimal involvement by the director. This theme refers to respondent’s perception that the director was not proactive in certain aspects of the program. This theme was cited numerous times by one of the respondents. Ann commented on the questionnaire regarding the director’s low level of support through her statement, "Our director expects that the job will be done by the teachers with as little help from (the director) as needed. We are expected to deal with any issue that
arises and all aspects related to the grant.” Later, in the interview, Ann reinforced the theme of minimal involvement by stating:

When it comes to guidance on curriculum that is my job, I am the one who has been doing it the longest. I am the one who understands the outcomes. I must be trusted to do that, he/she has continued to let me do that.

She further elaborated on this theme in the interview by stating:

I know what to do and I get it done. I am on that schedule. I don’t know that (the director) manages me. I have things that I know I have to get done and if I need some kind of help from (the director) I am pretty much able to get it.

Additionally, Ann described the director in an interview response as, “Now we have someone who says this is what we are doing—make it work.”

Program A—Program Quality Profile

Program Responsibility Theme 1: Varied Opinion

The first theme that emerged from the data addressed the theme of varied opinion regarding program responsibility. This theme focused on “who” at the center was responsible for program quality. At this center, the participants had varied opinions on this topic.

On the questionnaire, Ann felt that the teachers were responsible for the quality of the program. She stated, “The teachers carry the major portion of the work, teaching, planning, carrying through, longitudinal study, grant work, and home visits.” In the interview she affirmed her position on who has responsibility for program quality with the following:

I really think that a lot is based on the classroom kind of things. So I think a lot of that is more related to teachers and styles and things that go on the classroom.
(Quality) is based more on what happens with the teachers and the teaching styles and the outcomes. We have the Creative Curriculum. This is the curriculum that we chose from the state, but we also have the Public School curriculum and our outcomes that we have to follow that are built into the program.

Later in the interview, Ann continued with:

I truly do believe it is the teachers in the program. I don’t say that just because I am the teacher. I have worked for the past five years in this program. I truly do believe that the teacher has more to do with the quality of the program than the director. The people who do the day-to-day stuff, they make the difference. (The director) is around. (The director) evaluates the people. When it comes to the guidance on the curriculum, that’s my job, I am the one that has been doing it the longest. I have been the mentor of everyone. I am the one who understands what outcomes mean, what the Creative Curriculum means.

On the questionnaire though, Abigail expressed another opinion regarding who is responsible for program quality. She felt that the quality of the program was a shared responsibility. She stated: “It is the responsibility of the director and the teacher to make the program successful. Both of them need to take ownership.” In the interview she supported her position again with the following comment: “The responsibility lies with everyone: the teacher, the director, everyone involved. If everyone is not doing their share it cannot be a good program.”

Quality Standards Theme 1: Agency

Agency items include the categories of parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in Preschool Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The agency themes that emerged from this program site’s data were the
recruitment and enrollment of students, in-service training, lack of adequate funding, program director background, and instructional staff background.

In the interview, Ann made a reference to the uncertainty of state funding and the impact that it had on the recruitment and enrollment plan of the program. She noted:

I don’t feel good about waiting until October to start the program because the (State) doesn’t have the figures in line. We are wasting a month to see what number of kids we are getting. As a teacher, I want to be teaching. I want that issue dealt with in a better fashion. If it means taking us out of the state aid side, then that’s what it means. Those are the issues that need to be dealt with. Once we get the money, we take off and do a very good thing with our kids.

In the interview, Abigail commented on the in-service training that is provided to the program through the state grant funds. She felt that the issue was the lack of state support and funds for training and therefore a void in this area of the state grant ultimately affected the program quality. She replied with:

My own experience is what I am seeing in the program. Directors are hiring new people and not being able to supply training. Throwing everything in their lap and expecting them to come up with some kind of good program, not giving them mentors, not putting them with someone to learn the program. There is a void between the hiring and the leadership. The leader is not getting the support that they need to do this program. There is paper work and documentation. A person brand new to a program like this—this is a unique program and it is a very unique situation to be in.

On the questionnaire, Ann felt that even though there were multiple programs in the building, the local director’s knowledge about the MSRP program had a positive influence on the program quality.

Our director can be supportive when it comes to the differences between our job and the job of the regular educators in our building and (the director) does work with us on the differences. (The director) is a very strong advocate for the program, as he/she once taught in the program.
In the interview, Ann commented that the instructional staff background was a factor of program quality. She felt that the responsibility of the curriculum fell on the teacher's shoulders, and stated:

When it comes to guidance on the curriculum—that's my job. I am the one that has been doing it the longest. I have been the mentor for every one of the new teachers. I am the one who understands what the outcomes mean. I must be trusted to do that. (The director) has continued to let me do it.

In the interview, Ann summarized with: “But we have to remember to get the whole act together—more kids, more teachers, more money is needed.”

*Quality Standards Theme 2: Classroom Issues*

Classroom items include the categories of learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, curriculum, planning and assessment and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in *Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual* [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The classroom theme that emerged was plentiful materials.

On the questionnaire, Abigail referred to goals of the program and materials that are needed to enhance the experiences of the children. She stated that leadership actions of the director influence the experiences: “(The director) is writing goals for the program and following through on whether or not they were met, ensuring that the teacher has all the tools that she needs.” However, she felt that there was a lack of follow through and commented in the interview:

I wish (the director) would be more supportive when I express needs for classroom supplies. When I first came into this classroom, the manipulatives were very scant. The person who evaluated us on the PQA noted that. We should make it a priority.
Program B—Director Profile

Style Theme 1: Task

The task theme emerged from the data taken from the participant’s questionnaires and the interviews. The task style of leadership describes the director as exhibiting a strong concern for high performance and accomplishing tasks with an emphasis on planning, directing, following procedure, and applying uniform standards. The director may be viewed as structured, bureaucratic, and inflexible (Bloom, 2003).

The comments made by the participants at this site referenced the director’s demanding, controlling, and micro-managing style of leadership. The following is Barbara’s response on the questionnaire:

(The director) strives to control too much and is often forgetful. Because (the director) takes on so much, things aren’t always done effectively. Most of the time, these qualities are challenging for me, and create stressful situations.

Barbara also cited an example of the director’s structured bureaucratic leadership actions, by further stating on the questionnaire:

(The director) doesn’t allow teachers to have input in decision making for trainings or workshops. (The director) tells teachers what workshops and conferences they will be attending. (The director) overrules a teacher that does not want to go and insists that she goes.

Both participants, Barbara and Betty, used the term micro-manager when they completed the questionnaire. Barbara did make a reference to this style of leadership as sometimes being helpful. On the questionnaire she wrote, “At other times (the director’s) micro-managing style is helpful to me. Usually these helpful times are when (the director) fixes something that is broken or purchases items for our program.”
Betty replied to a question in the interview that referenced the director’s bureaucratic micro-managing style with:

(The director) has to do it. (The director) won’t turn loose any power. An example of this style is when we had to do CPR training. CPR training is needed every year, instead of just believing the teachers, (the director) had to call licensing to verify.

**Characteristic Theme 1: Relationships**

The data from the participants at this site pointed out the theme of relationships, noting the director’s lack of people skills which are demonstrated by the inability to work with staff and parents. Barbara commented in the interview on the director’s inability to work with others by offering:

(The director’s) people skills are poor. (The director) struggles in relationships with teachers and parents. (The director’s) personal mannerisms are not an inviting personality style. (The director’s) personality style with teachers is not effective. I think that (the director) is a little intimidating toward parents. (The director’s) personality style with his teachers is not effective. If (the director) could work on (his/her) personal skills in leadership training, it would train (him/her) how to improve (the director’s) relationship with people.

On the questionnaire, Barbara indicated that an area that the director could improve upon was “people skills.” Also on the questionnaire, Betty concurred with the following, “Basically, (the director) is not a people person.”

Both teachers at this site expressed a perception of being disrespected as classroom teachers by the director. This disrespect affected their relationship with the director. Barbara cited an example to support this position. On the questionnaire, she wrote, “(The director) will interrupt teachers while they are working with students to talk about business or classroom things. While I was leading our whole group time, (the
director) wanted to talk to me about the budget for next year.” Betty also cited an example of disrespect by the director. She cited the following example:

Early in the school year (the director) wanted to take pictures of each child to enter into a data base in (his/her) computer. As teachers we had already done this, but our way wasn’t (his/her) way and (the director) insisted on doing it again so without asking if the time was OK. (The director) just barged into the classroom interrupting group time and started taking children one at a time into the hall and taking their pictures. (This was) very intrusive and somewhat upsetting for the children and the staff.

In the interview when Betty was asked to complete the phrase, “I wish my director would . . .” she replied, “Respect us as professionals in early childhood.” To further demonstrate the low people skills and the poor relationships between the director and the teachers at this site, when asked in the interview, “I wish my director would . . .” Barbara emphatically replied with, “be given another assignment. That MSRP wouldn’t be (his/her) assignment, (his/her) extra. I wish we could have a different director.”

Characteristic Theme 2: Undesirable Personal Qualities

The second theme that emerged from the data further developed the director’s quality of character. References were made by the participants to the several undesirable personal qualities that the director exhibited. On the questionnaire, Betty addressed her feeling of being unappreciated and dealt with inconsistently by the director. She offered:

(The director) makes me feel unappreciated and to some extent unnecessary. (The director) does not trust me to act in a professional manner with the best interest of the program and children at the forefront. (The director) often says one thing and later reverses (his/her) position.

The subjects also addressed the director’s inconsistency from the perspective of the director’s forgetfulness. Barbara stated on the questionnaire “The director’s
forgetfulness affects the director’s leadership.” In responses on the questionnaire both Betty and Barbara agreed that “forgetfulness” was a trait that would be descriptive of the director. Barbara mentioned on her questionnaire that the director displayed a characteristic of being unpredictable: “Our director’s leadership is unpredictable.”

Betty responded in both the interview and on the questionnaire that she perceived the director as being “distrustful.” She indicated, “The director is untrusting. The director doesn’t want to trust anyone.”

Barbara’s statement in the interview summarized the undesirable personal qualities of the director with, “The director doesn’t have those (leadership) qualities naturally. (The director) doesn’t have what some people call charisma. The ability to lead is innate. (The director) doesn’t have these skills. (The director) could use some training.”

Program B—Program Quality Profile

Responsibility Theme 1: Agreement

The teachers at this site responded to the questions regarding program responsibility from the perspective of: (a) what was actually happening at their center, and (b) what would be an ideal situation. Betty expressed this duality by responding to a question on the questionnaire with, “At our facility the teachers are responsible for the quality of the program, but I would love to have a partnership with a really good leader.” But Betty also recognized that quality was influenced by the teachers and the staff. She noted in her interview, “Quality is the teachers’ and staff’s responsibility.” Another
comment from the interview regarding the program quality was, “The teachers and support staff have the biggest impact.”

In the interview, Barbara felt that the teachers were responsible for the program quality. She responded with, “For the day-to-day quality in those teacher/child interactions for the PQA, the classroom safety and those types of things on the PQA, the teachers have the greatest impact.”

On the questionnaire, Barbara also shared her vision of an ideal program responsibility situation. She expressed the following:

In the best situation, the director and the teachers would work as a team to promote program quality. Directors would participate in the classroom—not just observe—and would have prior early childhood teaching experience. Teachers and directors would plan family events together—focus on meeting family needs together.

Barbara later responded in the interview that a team effort is a more acceptable situation for addressing program quality responsibility, but that it was not existing situation at this center. She strongly noted, “I would like to see a team effort. However, at this time we don't have one. The two teachers in this building, we have created a team.”

Another comment from her interview was that the teachers are responsible for the program quality, not the director. “For the most part I think that the quality of our program at this time, the majority that influences it, comes from the teachers. (The director) doesn't have a direct impact on the quality.” On the questionnaire, Barbara stated that the director could improve upon “creating a team atmosphere at the center” to positively affect program quality.
Quality Standards Theme 1: Agency

Agency items include the categories of parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The agency themes that emerged from this program site’s data were program director background, and a need for adequate funding.

In the interview, Barbara identified a missing “piece” to the on-site program director’s background qualifications and the need for funding to provide a qualified local director. Barbara shared her thoughts on the subject with:

I would like to see specific language in the grant that addresses the director and their qualifications. I know that there is language there (in the state grant), but I would like to see it. The language could be a little different. It should be more defined so that the elementary principal could not be a director of the MSRP program. Additional funding that would pay for an early childhood director specifically, so that we could truly have an early childhood leader, not just an elementary principal doing an extra job. I think the way we are getting around it—is at the ISD. We are using the early childhood person at the ISD; she has the early childhood specialist’s degree. On paper she is the specialist. I would like to see that not happen. She does not have an impact upon our program as far as quality. Her direction is elsewhere. She is doing great things elsewhere. She has no impact as far as our program quality.

In the interview, Barbara referred again to the director’s lack of knowledge of early childhood. “I don’t think (the director) has an early childhood background. I don’t think (the director) understands early childhood. I don’t think (the director) really knows what makes a good early childhood program.” In her interview, Betty added further support to this theme with, “The principal (the director) has no early childhood background.” She then went on to add, “Anyone in this position needs a background in
early childhood.” On the questionnaire she also indicated, “(The director) really knows very little about ECE and approaches our program as if it was an elementary school.”

Program C—Director Profile

Style Theme 1: Integrated

The theme of the integrated style of leadership emerged from the data at this site. The integrated style of leadership is defined on the MRL style form as achieving both center goals and maintaining high morale. The director is flexible and fair, recognizing that different situations may require a different emphasis on center-wide needs and individual needs (Bloom, 2003).

Both participants at this center spoke very highly about the director’s ability to focus on the goals of the program, to address staff morale, and to be fair and flexible. In the interview, Cora indicated that the director at this center was very supportive of improving the program and was helpful to the teachers. She stated, “The director helps when we need to improve areas that pertain to our Program Quality Assessment score. (The director) provides us with materials and resources.” An integrated leadership style supports the goals of the center and is fair and flexible. Clara cited the director’s ability to balance tasks and relationships with flexibility. She expressed:

I think (the director) is wonderful. (The director) knows the rules and regulations. (The director) tells them to us. (The director) helps us achieve whatever it is that we need. (The director) gives us the flexibility to be creative and do what we need to do to reach the goals. (The director) makes sure that we have everything we need. (The director) tells us what we need to do in the program and then gets us whatever it is we need.
On the questionnaire, Clara referenced the director’s innate ability to balance the classroom goals with the acquiring of supplies, enabling the teachers to maintain a sense of high morale: “(The director) is able to get supplies and other things we need for the classroom to make learning exciting and meaningful.” Clara also wrote on the questionnaire about the collaborative way the staff and director worked together. “(The director) works together with the staff to improve the quality of the program.”

On the questionnaire, Cora wrote a statement that addresses both realms of the integrated style of leadership. She stated “(The director) gets the job done while caring for staff and children.” In the interview, Clara expressed her high morale, “I am happy with (the director) as my leader in this program.”

Both respondents described the director using high energy words. Cora felt that the director was “effective, innovative, energetic, positive, informed.” Clara considered that the director to be “knowledgeable and energetic.”

*Characteristic Theme I: Concern for Others*

The first theme of concern for others emerged from the data and related to the director’s caring personality, supportive nature, and empathy toward all of the stakeholders in the program. On the questionnaire, Cora mentioned the director’s support and empathy and how these traits affect her. She expressed, “The director’s empathy and support encourages me to do my best.” On the questionnaire, Cora described the director as “caring, helpful, and honest.” Clara, on the questionnaire, concurred that the director was “caring and helpful” and added, “My director is supportive and helpful.”
On the questionnaire Clara referred to the director's ability to perform as a director and remain a caring person. "(The director) gets the job done while caring for staff and children." On the questionnaire Cora described the director's caring and concern for others persons by when she offered, "The director's attitude about making the school welcoming and child friendly enables the staff, students and community to feel safe and happy in the building."

Clara elaborated on the theme of concern for others. In the interview, she expressed her thoughts:

(The director) teaches me a lot of things. (The director) is willing to work right beside you. (The director) gives you ideas. If I go to (the director) and say I want to do this, (the director) is right there.

Program C—Program Quality Profile

Responsibility Theme 1: Agreement

The respondents at this site both agreed that the responsibility for program quality was shared between the teachers and the director. On the questionnaire, Clara indicated that "(The director) works together with the staff to improve quality of the program." She again supported her position of shared responsibility by noting on the questionnaire:

Both the director and the teachers (are responsible). My director gives guidelines of requirements and we plan together to reach the goals. We just got done working hard together for our accreditation and to do this; it was working together that made it happen.

On the questionnaire, Cora also commented on the shared responsibility for the program. She offered the following, "It is the responsibility of the teachers and the director. The director sets policies and guidelines and the teachers carry out the plans."
She supported her position in the interview, "The teachers and director are responsible (for the program quality)."

In the interview, Clara elaborated on the shared responsibility theme. She responded to a question regarding program responsibility with:

The staff and the teachers and the director together (are responsible). (The director) has to give us the guidelines and the information that he/she gets of what has to be done. (The director) tells us, he/she gives us the creativity to be able to do it. We discuss how we are going to do things and we’re able to do the things. (The director) trusts us enough to be able to go for it. (The director) is right there watching, making sure that we get done what needs to get done.

Quality Standards Theme 1: Agency

Agency items include the categories of parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual [HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The agency themes that emerged from this program site’s data were the program licensing and operating policies and procedures, program director background, ongoing professional development, and lack of adequate funding.

On the questionnaire, Clara commented about the director’s knowledge of the rules and regulations for the program: "(The director) is knowledgeable about all regulations on the program and the requirements." Later in the interview she expressed, "(The director) knows the rules and regulations."

In the interview, Cora addressed the program director’s background knowledge theme from the perspective of the director’s knowledge of what is needed for program
improvement. She indicated, "The director helps when we need to improve areas for the PQA. (The director) provides materials and resources."

On the questionnaire, Cora referenced the program director’s attention to professional development trainings. In her response, Cora wrote, "Our director seeks workshops for professional development that are meaningful."

In the interview Clara referred to the lack of state funding for the program. She expressed her frustration with the fact that since this is a state-funded grant program, other monies were not available for the program. She commented, "There are very few grants for preschool—no other money available."

*Quality Standards Theme 2: Classroom*

Classroom items include the categories of learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, curriculum, planning and assessment, and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in *Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual* [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The classroom themes that emerged were plentiful materials and program director’s background.

On the questionnaire, Cora’s comments were directed toward the necessity for materials to enhance children’s experiences. She shared, "(The director) has a boundless amount of energy to find materials for the school and the individual teacher—this makes for good child experiences."

In the interview, Clara also referred to the understanding of the importance of materials to help educate children and the director’s involvement. She stated, "(The
director) is resourceful in getting materials to educate children.” She followed up this quote with an example:

I asked (the director) for a flashlight. We were doing prisms. I wanted to be able to show it to the kids and have a rainbow come up. (The director) had this thing because (the director) used to do science, you put it on the overhead like this and the rainbow shows around the whole room. Not only did (the director) give it to me, (the director) came down and showed me how to do it.

In addition, Clara felt that the director’s personal early childhood knowledge was beneficial to the program. In the interview she commented on the director’s knowledge of early childhood. She offered, “(The director) has past early childhood experience and has a ZA.” Cora supported that position, by stating in the interview, “We need people who are innovative and informed about the changes in early childhood.”

Program D—Director Profile

Style Theme: People

The people style of leadership theme emerged from the data at this site. The people style of leadership is characterized by achieving harmonious group relations. The director places a strong emphasis on maintaining comfortable, friendly, and satisfying working conditions and allowing staff to exercise control and be self-directed with minimal intrusion of center-wide policies. Staff working in centers with this style of leadership may complain about the lack of order and coordination (Bloom, 2003).

The comments of the respondents at this site supported the people style of leadership by citing the director’s respect for staff, valuing them as people, and providing the flexibility to determine individually how to achieve their greatest potential. In the
interview the respondents commented on the respect for teachers and the flexibility that
the director allowed them. This translates into teacher autonomy with director support
allowing the staff to exercise control in the program. In the interview, Diana commented
on her autonomy as a teacher. She replied with:

Our director gives us the flexibility to improve. The teacher is working with the
parent and child directly and they know what the needs of the program are. Many
times the director is not hands on and not in touch with that environment. The
necessary changes cannot be made. By working with our director, who is aware of
those things, (our director) gives us the flexibility and the respect as teachers to
make those changes possible and know that when we bring it to him/her, they are
our needs and (the director) respects that.

In the interview, Doris offered her opinion on her ability to exercise control and be self-
directed which exemplifies the people style of leadership of the director with the
following:

I think one of the major things that is beneficial for us is that (the director) is so
respectful of us. When (the director) asks us to do something we are more than
willing to do anything that (the director) asks. You get that loyalty from your
employees when you give that respect and loyalty. We have flexibility and control
over the program by letting (us) make decisions and giving us respect as
professionals. We know what we are doing. (The director) respects us.

On the questionnaire, Diana further addressed the theme of respect and flexibility
and how these traits inspire her, by stating, “I feel that my director supports and respects
me as a teacher. (The director) is flexible with my needs and that encourages me to give
110% to the program.” She commented again how the director’s people style of
leadership gave her confidence to do an outstanding job. She wrote:

The leadership of a director sets the tone for the program and the teachers. Our
director gives people in the program the flexibility to do a job at their best and
greatest potential. (The director) encourages them to be highly qualified, do what
is best for the kids, and run a program of quality. However, I know and do my job
the way I feel it should be done.
Later in the interview, Diana summarized her thoughts by adding, "I appreciate his/her flexibility. I can't imagine working with anyone different. I have the best of both worlds. (The director) knows that we are specialized and are motivated to keep ourselves current. (The director) respects and supports us."

The respondents commented on their perception of being valued by the director. Donna wrote on the questionnaire, "(The director) values the employees." In response to an interview question Doris replied, "(The director) knows to listen to people who know more about the program's daily ins and outs. (The director) knows to rely on people as resources as well."

Since the teachers at this site felt that they were valued by the director, they could then exercise initiative and control in solving problems which arose in the program. Diana in the interview recalled:

Our parent advisory group that we started this year came directly from the PQA. It cost money for the parapros and the day care. We have the flexibility to make improvements that came directly from the PQA assessment. There was a need. We told him/her about the need. (The director) trusts our judgment. Then (the director) helped us problem solve ways to have it become a reality for our program.

On the questionnaire, Doris described the director as "fair, flexible, and supportive," and Donna used the terms, "fair and encouraging." Donna further stated in the interview, "(The director) is encouraging and motivating us to be better. (The director) is wonderful. We adore him/her. (The director) allows us autonomy to run the program."
Characteristic Theme 1: Concern for Others

The theme of concern for others relates to the director’s caring personality toward families, children and staff. As an example of the director’s concern for parents and families, Doris cited three times in the interview the parenting program that the center recently established. She began with the following:

We set up a parenting program and that meant that we had to take money out of our budget to pay the parapros. (The director) said “Hey, do it.” What is best for the program? A better program—what’s best for kids. You get parents involved in the schools. That’s what you need to do.

Her second reference cited the demographics of the community and the director’s response to their specific needs.

We are a very at risk district. Over 50% are Spanish-speaking parents. For them to come to a parenting program like this, we offer translators. The director encourages us to do this. (The director) pays the translators, the parapros. (The director) helps organize daycare with the Alternate Ed students. (The director) knows to listen.

Doris’ third statement pointed out the empathy of the director toward working families. She went on to say:

We offer the parenting program at night. (The director) said, “I am glad you offer that.” (The director) comes from the perspective of the working parent. When you always don’t have the job flexibility to take time off during the day to come to the program, (the director) helped us look at it differently and not so harsh on the parents. They might need a little help to get in here. (The director) helped us look at that—(the director) understands the parent.

On their questionnaires, all three respondents commented on the director’s concern for children. Diana described the director’s philosophy as, “Doing what’s best for kids—‘What can I do to assist you in this matter?’ (The director) does whatever it takes to be supportive in order to run the best program possible.” Donna indicated, “Kids are
put first.” Doris also commented “(The director) always tells us—‘do what is best for kids.’”

Consistently, the theme of caring for staff was cited on the questionnaire and in the interview by the respondents. Diana described the director as “thoughtful and respectful of others.” Doris described the director as “caring.” In the interview, Donna described the director with “(The director) is caring. (The director) is there when we really do need (the director). (The director) is accessible.”

*Characteristic Theme 2: Confidence in Staff*

The theme of confidence in staff refers to the director’s trust and positive attitude toward the people who work at the center. This theme was reflected in the comments by the respondents that referred to the trust that the director places in the center staff. In the interview, Diana referenced on the trust given the staff regarding the administering of the program. She shared:

> We actually do administrative work on Fridays. We have the masters’ degrees and we share the work equally. There isn’t one person over the other. We are all versed in all areas of the grant. We each have our strengths separately. My strength is with the parents and the parenting program. Donna’s strength is that she has been with the program the longest. (The director) makes sure that the I’s are dotted and T’s crossed. Things are done in a timely manner. We both balance each other out. Doris is bringing in her own strengths. It is definitely our job. Without a director like we have we wouldn’t be able to do it.

Donna also felt that the director trusted the staff. Her perspective was from the classroom point of view. On the questionnaire Donna wrote, “(The director) shows respect in that she trusts what we are doing with our children. (The director) places a lot of confidence in us. That drives us to do our very best.” Further, in her Donna reiterated
her feeling with interview she stated, “I think that our director has enough confidence in us to know that we are doing the right thing. (The director) thinks that we are doing a fine job.”

Also speaking from the classroom point of view, on the questionnaire, Doris wrote, “(The director) allows me to be creative by trusting in my capabilities. (The director’s) trust in me as a teacher allows me to relax in the classroom and perform to the best of my ability.”

**Characteristic Theme 3 Communication**

The theme of communication focused on the director’s accessibility and open dialogue. The theme of communication was cited by all respondents. In the interview Donna stated, “We do look at our faults objectively and we can and do talk to our director and tell him/her how we want to change things.” Diana said in the interview:

(The director) comes into the classrooms (the director) makes his/her presence known. We email (the director). We have regular monthly meetings with (the director) on a scheduled basis. When we need (the director) we can call (the director) on his/her cell phone or call his/her office.

In her interview, Doris noted the following about the director:

(The director) is constantly sending us updates from the state. (The director) requires us to stay in the loop. We have to talk to (the director) before we do things. (The director) allows us to do what is best for the program. (The director) is extremely supportive.
Program D—Program Quality Profile

Responsibility Theme 1: Agreement

The respondents at the site both agreed that the responsibility for program quality was shared by the teachers and the director with an emphasis on the teacher’s responsibility. On the questionnaire, Diana felt that the program quality was a shared endeavor. In her response she shared:

I believe that both the director and the teachers are responsible for the program quality. Teachers, administrators and parents need to work together to ensure that each child can reach their greatest potential. A director needs to have the children’s best interest at heart.

On the questionnaire, Donna also supported the shared responsibility theme. She wrote, “The director and teachers are responsible for the program. (The director) will support almost anything we want to do or get for the program as long as it is educationally sound and for the kids.” In both the questionnaire and the interview, Doris opined that the director and teachers were responsible for the quality of the program:

I feel both the director and the teachers are responsible for the program quality. He/She motivates us to be a better program and supports us in our ideas to improve the programs. He/She hires competent people whom he/she can trust and who will be motivated to teach in a quality program.

She continued her thoughts on responsibility. During her interview when she stated, “I think we all are. I think that the teachers, the director, and the parents in the program. The parents have blown us away with how involved they wanted to be.”

In the interview Diana mentioned that the director was supportive, but felt that the teachers were the primary influence on program quality. She indicated as such with the following:
I would say it is the teachers who are responsible for quality. We both have our Masters in Early childhood. We figure that it is our responsibility. Doris has a ZA and is working on a Masters. It falls on us. The quality comes directly from us. We are the ones that have the early childhood education. We are the ones that meet with the parents. We see the children on a daily basis. We work with the paraprofessionals making sure that they are current with their professional development. We know their strengths and weaknesses. We are making sure that we also use our strengths. (The director) respects us and is supportive and lets us do our jobs best. The quality is directly on us.

Quality Standards Theme 1: Agency

Agency items include the categories of parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The agency themes that emerged from this program site’s data were program director’s background, instructional staff background and in-service training, lack of adequate funding and advocating for funds.

The theme of program director’s background refers to the director’s appropriate education, training, and expertise. At this program site, the participants addressed the expertise of the director, taking into consideration the director’s job responsibilities. In her interview, Donna shared her thoughts regarding director responsibility with:

(The director) has got so many hands in so many different pots. (The director) can’t give our program as much time as he/she would like to give us. (The director) is a busy person. We are only a portion of (the director’s) job. (The director) doesn’t have the time that he/she would like to devote to us.

Doris supported this position in a questionnaire response by stating:

(The director) is overworked. (The director) has too many jobs. He/She has too many jobs. Being a small district we don’t have a lot of people. We don’t have the
resources to have one person as this and one person as that. (The director) wears many hats. (The director) gives 110%. (The director) is trying to be the best at whatever he/she does. (The director) is in charge of ESL and the alternative school. There are a lot of hats and jobs and a lot of information to stay current on. (The director) does a good job doing that but it is very time consuming.

Diana agreed that the director had multiple responsibilities. She indicated in an interview that, "(The director) wears many hats. (The director) is curriculum director, Community Ed director, director of MSRP, summer school director, day care director."

In the interview, Diana suggested that the director was attentive to the hiring of instructional staff and the in-service training provided for the program. She offered, "(The director) hires the best qualified people. When we need outside resources he/she helps us get them. (The director) makes sure our professional development is current."

In the interview, Diana expressed her feelings about the adequacy of funding. She shared her opinion that that there was a lack of state funding for the program with the following:

There is a lack of funding. I have been in the program 6-7 years and there hasn’t been an increase in funding—salaries and insurance have risen. Look at the needs of the programs. There are people of quality in these programs. Make sure that those people are making the decisions. When you want the quality people you have to pay them. Follow it with funding. No funding increases in six years. Early childhood funding—no increases, just do a better job.

Later in the interview, Diana mentioned the lack of adequate funds for the program. She expressed:

(The director) controls the entire budget and gives us input but does not work with us in a collaborative effort in this area. With the increases in the budget, and crunches, this is becoming more of a problem. Funding needs to be increased.

In her interview, Donna addressed the state funding issue from another perspective. She felt that a there was a need for an advocate who would specifically work
to get more funds. She noted that the director should "Be an advocate for putting the money where it belongs. Rather than cutting the program, have the program grow and put more money into it. Provide more money for kids."

Quality Standards Theme 2: Classroom

Classroom items include the categories of learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, curriculum, planning and assessment and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The classroom themes that emerged were curriculum standards, team planning, and assessment of children.

During her interview, Doris referred to the state standards and the curriculum that the program focused on to meet the needs of the children. In her response, she indicated the following:

We have a lot of standards that just came down from the state. From here how can we do our curriculum and necessarily align things together? (The director) was very helpful facilitating that conversation. How do we get these standards to align with our work sampling, innovative thinking and flexibility?

She also referred to the director's role in standards-based education and team planning by adding, "(The director) encourages us to be better. (The director) encourages us to do things that make ourselves better as well as the curriculum. (The director) sat down and we did standards together."

To summarize the program's approach to standards, curriculum, and assessment Doris indicated:
Our portfolio work sampling program is truly reflecting that the kids are learning. Standards line up the curriculum and aligning up with our assessment to our standards. (The director) is constantly doing that and he/she is helping us. (The director) is aligning our goals with those things as well. When we created our goals at the beginning of the year, one of the things that (the director) asked us to do was to align our assessments to our standards.

On the questionnaire, Donna described the director's support of the curriculum standards approach by when she wrote, "(The director) will support almost anything we want to do or get for the program as long as it is educationally sound and for the kids."

Program E—Director Profile

Style Theme: Task

The task theme emerged from the data taken from the participant's questionnaires and interviews. The task style of leadership describes the director as exhibiting a strong concern for high performance and accomplishing tasks with an emphasis on planning, directing, following procedure, and applying uniform standards. The director may be viewed as structured, bureaucratic, and inflexible (Bloom, 2003).

The respondents at this center expressed their perception of the director's concern for center goals, emphasis on planning and directing, and concern for accomplishing tasks resulting in high performance. On the questionnaire, Evelyn made several references to the director's concern for center goals. She expressed that "(The director) sets goals that are clear. (The director) holds meetings to let us know of changes, issues and events."

Evelyn gave a specific example of the director addressing the fiscal goals of the center when she shared the following:
(The director) is working on the budget. We have been cut. (The director) is making sure the children get what they need. That we fill up the classes. (The director) wants to make sure that there are enough children so we can keep our teachers. (The director) doesn’t want to get rid of any teachers. We are having a meeting so (the director) can let us know that is going on. (The director) is arranging the times and the amount of days. (The director) does a good job.

She further added that the director not only was focusing on the budget, but also exhibited an emphasis on planning. She went on to say:

(The director) is planning the budget for next year. (The director) wants to be sure that everything runs smoothly and everyone keeps their job. (The director) is writing grants and finding ways to serve as many children as we can in the best way that we can.

On the questionnaire, Edith commented on the confidence that she had in the director making good decisions in the interest of the center, which again was an example of the director’s emphasis on planning, enabling the teachers to concentrate on their duties. She expressed her opinion with:

I have confidence that she will support the staff and make the best decisions for the program. It allows me to concentrate on my role as teacher. I know if a problem arises I can take it to the director and (the director) will advise me in the correct procedure.

On the questionnaire, Evelyn reiterated the director’s interest in accomplishing tasks. She stated, “(The director) does what is needed to be done, but also looks for ways to strengthen the program and staff and environment for the children.”

On the questionnaire, Evelyn commented on how the director’s attention to accomplishing tasks and planning made her feel confident at the center. She wrote, “I feel confident in my job because I know what’s going on in the workplace and what’s expected of me.” She further stated on the questionnaire, “(The director) goes more by the book, but is concerned with the employees needs.” In the interview, she expressed how
the order and consistency of the director's leadership made her feel. She indicated how she felt with, "I am very happy here. I don't have any issues."

On the questionnaire, Edith commented on the director's ability to address the needs of both the teachers and the students by taking action and accomplishing the task. She gave this example:

My director took action when there needed to be a plan instituted to better accommodate my role as teacher and the need that a child had for medication. (The director) made many phone calls to the parent and brought in the expertise of support staff to solve the problem.

To further illustrate her feelings regarding the capability of the director to meet the needs of the teachers and staff, Edith described the director on the questionnaire as "thorough and supportive."

_Characteristics Theme 1: Communication_

The theme of communication emerged from the data on both respondents' interviews and questionnaires. The theme addressed communication at the center. Edith commented in the interview on a solution to the communication problem that was a challenge in the past, but was resolved. In her response, Edith stated:

Communication is a challenge. It is better in this building now that we are all in one building. But I think that it was a real challenge. It was just communication. Memos, getting them back. Communication when you have this many people operating under one building—communication is probably the biggest challenge. We do that now by means of trying to meet in a weekly chat. The entire building comes together. The director leads the discussion and has some topics. (The director) brings up some topics then the support staff brings up topics. Then, if other staff members or the teaching staff has questions or concerns, we can bring those up.
On the questionnaire, Edith agreed with the present system of communication and wrote, "(The director) holds meetings to let us know of changes, issues, and events. I always know what’s going on."

Edith cited another aspect of communication, the open door policy of the director which allowed for accessibility to the director. She indicated in the interview:

I can approach him/her on any issue. (The director’s) door is always open unless (the director) is in a private meeting. If (the director) is in the building you are welcome to step in his/her office at any time. I never feel that (the director) doesn’t want to talk to me or hear what I have to say. I always feel like his/her door is open to me and I step in and say “Can I have a minute? Can I share something with you?” and (the director) will say, “Yeah, sure, come on in.” (The director) never said, “Go away. I can’t talk to you now” or “I am too busy.” I’ve never seen him/her act like he/she is too busy. You can always call (the director’s) voice mail. I can leave a voice mail or email. I never feel that (the director) is distant. I feel like (the director) is right there. Because (the director) treats me like that I feel that (the director) treats everybody on the staff like that.

To summarize, Edith indicated her perception in the interview, “We are good team players. We have good communication between leadership and support staff and teachers. We have a good staff.”

**Characteristic Theme 2: Knowledgeable**

Both respondents frequently used the word *knowledgeable* when describing the director. On the questionnaire Edith wrote, "(The director’s) strength is his/her wide knowledge base. (The director) comes with some knowledge of counseling, Head Start policies and guidelines, and experience in the classroom.” In the interview, Edith further added:

(The director) comes with a wide base of knowledge. (The director) comes from a background of counseling and a working knowledge of Even Start and (the
director) has been a teacher in the Head Start program and (the director) knows all of the policies and procedures. (The director) is just very knowledgeable.

Evelyn, on the questionnaire, offered her assessment of the director’s knowledge, with “(The director) has a great knowledge base” and “(the director) seems to know the program and much more.”

Program E—Program Quality Profile

Program Responsibility Theme: Shared

The respondents at this site supported the theme of shared program quality responsibility. On the questionnaire, Edith wrote about the joint effort to maintain program quality. She expressed that:

Both the director, the support staff, and the teachers are responsible for the program. All staff working together in the harmony that good leadership provides. It is a joint effort to maintain program quality, especially in these days and times where financial resources are sparse.

In the interview, Edith echoed this theme. She reiterated her thoughts on shared program quality responsibility with the following:

It is the whole staff that is responsible for the quality of the program. There is not just anyone person that is responsible. If our program quality goes down we will be made aware of it. You bet on that. We will all have to step up to the plate. The key is when you have a reputation to uphold you need to keep that reputation. We are aware of that. We have a good reputation and we want to keep it that way. It is the total staff, not any one person. It is a team effort. We call upon each other all being in one building is a real assist. We can call on the strengths of the whole staff. You have so many strengths and abilities and lots of different teachers and lots of support people you can pull on. We are all aware of this interlink and camaraderie that exists.

To further support the concept of shared program quality responsibility, on the questionnaire, Evelyn concurred with Edith’s opinion. Evelyn emphatically indicated:
Both! The director is responsible for making sure the program is running smooth and the teachers know their jobs and do them. The teachers are responsible for planning, making their classes run smooth and meeting the needs of the children while also connecting and communicating with the parents and guardians. Our ultimate goal is to have the children learn something (socially and academically) making it fun and interesting. We should be fair and honest.

In the interview, Evelyn and Edith made the following statements, respectively, “I think it is everyone’s job—teachers, coordinator, director, everybody.” Edith’s comment was, “The leader has to encourage the rest of the staff. It is a partnership, that’s why we have done so well.”

Edith commented that the leadership of the program director was essential and through this leadership program quality becomes a responsibility of the total staff. She shared the following in the interview:

I think the leadership of the director is extremely important because if your director doesn’t have a vision and know where you are going, then the rest of your program is out there grasping. It is the total staff that makes the program. You have to have a leader.

*Quality Standards Theme 1: Agency*

Agency items include the categories of parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in *Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual* [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The agency themes that emerged from this program site’s data were serving families, the lack of adequate state funding, and transitioning students to kindergarten.
In the interview, Edith addressed the numerous programs that were available to parents at their center and how this total interest in families and children reflected the center as a whole. She stated:

We have the Head Start Home Bound Program where they work with the parents and get them ready for the GED. We have Head Start and Michigan state funded. We have the Explore program, which is between Early Head Start and Head Start. There is an age group there. There are 12 preschool programs plus community education in this building. We have two community education programs. There are a lot of good things going on in this building for children and families.

Later in the interview, Edith stressed the importance of the MSRP program, the families it serves and the need for adequate funding. She expressed her thoughts with:

The state needs to support this (MSRP) program for the families. When we talk about the working poor, it is mainly who I see that we are serving. Both parents are working and struggling to make a living. Servicing these children is very important. It is about trying to prepare families. Not just the child—but the entire family. There are more components to this program than just the education of the child—social, nutritional, parenting. The program needs to be expanded. It is a challenge to run these programs. Financial restraints keep happening. The challenge is at the financial end. Money is being allocated as it was in the past. The salaries are not that good for teachers who work with young children. Early childhood is not readily funded. We work hard.

Regarding the funding for the MSRP Program, Edith later stated in the interview that the school district that sponsored the program supported it with additional funds. She said:

Our school district is very supportive on the financial end for this program because we feed our school. They look at us as part of the school system. They give us whatever support they can offer us. Not every program has that luxury.

In the interview, Evelyn cited the importance of the MSRP Program in assisting with the child's transition to kindergarten. She indicated the significance of such with, “It is very important that we have these programs before kindergarten. It is very important that the kids have it.”
Program F—Director Profile

Style: Integrated

The theme of the integrated style of leadership emerged from the data at this site. The integrated style of leadership is defined on the MRL style form as achieving both center goals and maintaining high morale. The director is flexible and fair, recognizing that different situations may require a different emphasis on center-wide needs and individual needs (Bloom, 2003).

The respondents at this center commented on the director’s support of the staff, positive tone, and promotion of team spirit contributing toward high morale. The respondents also referred to the director’s openness to staff input and goal orientation. On the questionnaire, Fran felt that the director’s support of her teaching allowed her to perform as a professional maintaining a high level of morale. She wrote:

As a teacher I feel that a knowledgeable caring director impacts my ability to teach dramatically. If my director makes me feel comfortable and is open to new concepts and ideas, then as a teacher I feel at ease knowing that my lessons and ideas are not judged or ridiculed. Our director trusts and respects us as teachers.

Freda’s expressed her feelings of having high morale because of the manner in which the director related to her. She expressed on the questionnaire:

(The director) supports me when needed. Makes me feel as if I am part of the family and my opinion is important. I am able to go to (the director) with a situation and he/she is able to help me find a solution.

The respondents also mentioned the way that the director encouraged a team concept at the center. The comments from the respondents reflected the perception that working as a team supported their high morale and contributed to goal achievement for
the program. Faith wrote on the questionnaire, "(The director) is a team player and really encourages staff to be team players as well." On the questionnaire, Fern wrote, "(The director) is very determined in what he/she does and he/she will usually follow through. We work more as a team," and later went on to add:

(The director’s) leadership impacts me as a teacher because his/her decisions about the center have an impact on me as well as reflects me. We are a team and whatever (the director) decides not only would affect (the director) but would have a high impact on the whole center.

Achieving center goals is also a characteristic of the integrated style of leadership.

Fern referenced the director’s interest in the achievement of goals, by writing on the questionnaire, "(The director) is eager to achieve goals." She further elaborated on the director’s setting of goals by stating:

(The director) is standing strong and ensuring things that need to get done get done and do actually get done. Following through with what he/she says and understanding that to be a director it may at times take extra effort and may not always be as easy as he/she would like.

Fiona, in the interview, commented about the director’s ability to set direction for the center. With strong conviction she stated the following:

I think that it is really important to have a strong leader. Then everyone knows what is expected of them. (The director) knows what we have to do and where we have to go. I think that really enhances the quality of the program. Our director is a strong person and caring person. We know that he/she cares about us, what we do in our program.

By setting a positive tone at the center, the director demonstrated his/her ability to address both the center’s needs and individual needs. Faith stated in the interview and on the questionnaire, "(The director) takes a positive role in leading the center" and "(The director) sets the tone for the center. His/Her positive leadership makes this place a great school to work in." Faith cited on the questionnaire item regarding individual needs that
“(The director) takes the lead when dealing with a difficult employee in this building.”

On the questionnaire, Fiona also referred to the positive tone at the center: “(The director) provides a good climate to work in.” Freda commented on the questionnaire, “(The director) helps us as a center with classroom problems as well as personal problems if he/she can.”

In the interview, Freda gave an excellent description of the director’s integrated style of leadership. She commented on how the director recognizes that different situations may require different emphases. Freda indicated that:

We know that (the director) is in charge. If we have any type of problem—classroom problem or personal problem we can go to him/her. (The director) is a (parent) figure. Bring it to him/her and (the director) will listen to us, give us ideas. (The director’s) hat changes as to the situation. (The director) is very intelligent. A lot of background. (The director) can tackle anything that comes his/her way.

*Characteristics Theme 1: Concern for Others*

The concern for others theme is apparent in the responses by the participants that focus on the director’s caring, kind, and compassionate nature toward staff and families. In the interview, Fay commented, “I love (the director). (The director) is wonderful. (The director) is compassionate. (The director) has some wonderful qualities about him/her. (The director) doesn’t want to offend anyone.” On the questionnaire Fay described the director as “compassionate to and for others.” She then went on, “(The director) is very kind, compassionate, and easy to talk to on all subjects. (The director) is warm, friendly and good to children.”
Fiona described the director on the questionnaire as “empathetic and caring.” Then she elaborated on the questionnaire: “Our director is very empathetic about the well-being of staff and families. (The director) truly cares about our center.” Fran agreed with the description of “caring” by listing it as a word to describe the director. Felicia agreed with the statements given by the others. On the questionnaire, she wrote, “(The director) is fair, kind, professional, and caring.”

*Characteristics Theme 2: Communication*

The majority of the respondents at this site felt that a strong characteristic of the director was the director’s ability to communicate, citing both listening and conveying information. On the questionnaire, Fran directed her comments toward the director’s openness and willingness to listen to staff concerns. She responded with:

> Our director lays out a plan of action at staff meetings. (The director) is open to hearing our needs and concerns only after her objectives are covered. Knowing he/she has a plan and hearing our daily concerns listed in the agenda, make us aware of the fact that (the director) is truly listening to our concerns.

On the questionnaire, Fiona commented that the director was a “good listener” and also able to communicate information to the staff. She wrote, “We have monthly meetings where we have an agenda of issues our center needs to address, information, or dates that will affect our center. Our director supplies information and discusses issues with the staff.” In the interview, Fiona supported her position on the director’s good listening by stating, “(The director) is available for us to talk to.” Freda agreed with Fiona and wrote on the questionnaire, “(The director) is a good listener and very friendly.” On her questionnaire, Felicia cited that “(The director’s) door is always open.” Faith
supported the good listener characteristic of the director and applied it to the families in
the program. She stated, "(The director) is very good at communicating with parents and
dealing with difficult situations in a calm manner."

Fran agreed with the idea that the director was open to listening, but followed that
comment on the questionnaire with an observation about the director’s occasional lack of
follow through. "(The director) is always open to listening but not always about to follow
through with the staffs needs when it comes to random needs." Fay basically agreed with
Fran on this issue of follow through in communication. In the interview, she expressed:

I think there are times when effort has to be made. (The director) has a million
things to do. Problems are brought to (the director). (The director) does not
remember having conversations about what needs to be done or even remembers
the conversation.

Fran was consistent in reporting her impression regarding follow through and shared the
following on the questionnaire:

I think that our director could follow through more with our ideas. I don’t think
that (the director) intentionally forgets about certain issues, but his/her job is very
demanding and (the director) is often over whelmed by outside issues whether
district or family issues.

Felicia commented on the questionnaire about the team concept and
communication at the center. She wrote, “I feel a part of a community where I can discuss
my issues and concerns.”

*Characteristics Theme 3: Personal Qualities*

The data gathered from the respondents at this center addressed the theme of
personal qualities citing an inconsistency toward dealing with tasks. A few respondents
perceived the director as attending to tasks and others felt that the director did not always
address issues. On the questionnaire, Felicia wrote that she felt the director attended to
tasks by stating, "(The director) plans monthly staff meetings, daily classroom visits and
(the director) attends many development trainings." Fern echoed this theme in the
interview when she voiced her opinion on the director with, "(The director) is so
organized, and he/she tells us what is going on." Fay also praised the director’s attention
to tasks by writing on the questionnaire, "(The director) leads collaborative staff
meetings. (The director) assists the teachers in planning field trips." Freda used the word
"organized" to describe the director’s attention to tasks.

Contrarily, other respondents felt that the director showed a lack of attention to
tasks. In the interview, Fay offered an example to illustrate her opinion with:

I think that (the director) tends to want to make everything seem like everything is
fine. I had a situation with a child where I needed it to go to special services. I
needed the next step and it wasn’t handled in a timely fashion.

Fran also supported the opposing position and stated in the interview, "(The director)
needs to be more hands on. Sometimes a lot of daily things that need to be done with the
program tend to fall on other staff members’ shoulders." Faith wrote on the questionnaire
about the hands-on issue. She responded with, “The director could be more hands on. I
feel that the parent involvement coordinator does more than his/her share of the work.
(The director) needs to be more present.”

From the perspective of the teachers and on the theme of inconsistency, Fiona
wrote on the questionnaire, “Our director is out of the building attending meetings
frequently. (The director) is not available if problems arise. I feel (the director) needs to
visit classrooms more frequently to support staff members.” Felicia also felt that the
director needed to be more attentive to issues and wrote, “I think (the director) needs to
know more about what's going on in the classroom regarding the lesson plans. That the lesson ideas are not collected.” Fern agreed with this position and stated in the interview, “I wish (the director) would be involved with more staff development stuff. When we have it, I wish that (the director) would be in there with us. Be in professional development with us.” Fern reaffirmed her position when she wrote on the questionnaire, “I think that (the director) could use improvement in following through with certain things. (The director) is always there for us but sometimes just needs a friendly reminder.”

The respondents also addressed numerous other personal attributes of the director. On the questionnaire, Fern, Faith, and Fran, respectively, described the director as, “fair, honest, trustworthy, eager, and respectful”; “supportive and collaborative”; and “strong, energetic, motivational, and encouraging.” On the questionnaire, Fern went on to further express that “(The director) is very helpful and (the director) doesn’t act like a boss. (The director) is more like one of us.” She then added, “I think (the director) is doing a great job.” Further on another question she wrote “(The director) keeps an open mind and is willing to try new things to improve the center,” adding, “(The director) is confident and accessible.”
Program F—Program Quality Profile

Responsibility Theme: Agreement

All of the respondents at this site agreed that the responsibility of the program is a shared responsibility of the teachers and the director. Fern wrote on the questionnaire about the specific break down of responsibility. She stated:

Both the director and the teachers are responsible for program quality. We usually work together but we are both responsible for different parts of the program quality. We are responsible for what goes on in our classroom and she is responsible for every classroom’s quality.

Fay supported the shared responsibility theme with an emphasis on the teachers. In her interview, she expressed:

Both the director and the teachers are responsible for the program quality. More of it falls on the teachers. As a teacher you have to make sure that they are getting an education. Whatever it needs to be—it falls more on the teacher. Things are out of our hands. We can only do so much. Hand in hand. It takes a strong director and strong teachers to have a fully functioning quality program.

Both Fay and Fran agreed that program quality was a shared responsibility. On her questionnaire, Fay indicated the following:

Both it is the teacher’s job to see that she is a leader herself in her classroom and needs to ensure she is doing all that she can to teach to every child and help them achieve all that they can. It is the director’s job to ensure every teacher is doing her best in the classroom; to help teachers when necessary. Whether it is with classroom problems, problems with individual children/families or anything else that a director would be able to handle or help with.

Fran also stated on her questionnaire:

Both the teacher and the director are responsible for program quality. It takes a team to run a good program. There are certain jobs each one of us has, but it we don’t work together to solve problems or make changes then the whole system would fall apart. We are only human and sometimes we need each other to make reminders in order for things to follow through.
Faith wrote on her questionnaire, “Everyone who works for this program is responsible for program quality. The director guides us while the teachers implement the strategies.”

Fiona commented in both the interview and the questionnaire on the shared responsibility for quality. In the interview she shared, “The director and the staff—we are responsible for the quality of the program.” On the questionnaire she wrote, “I feel both the director and teachers are responsible for program quality. I feel that our director supports me as a teacher and I can depend on her for guidance and support.”

Freda echoed this theme and elaborated on the concept of the team being responsible for program quality. During her interview, Freda expressed, “Everyone, all the teachers, all the staff, we work as a team. We always lean on one another to help out. The staff as a whole makes the quality. It takes the total staff.” Felicia then went on to write on her questionnaire, “I feel the teacher and the director are equally responsible for program quality. The teacher needs to prepare the children for kindergarten and the director needs to prepare the teachers.”

The respondents at this site also noted the importance of the director’s leadership on program quality. Fern wrote on the questionnaire, “(The director) is concerned about the quality of the program she wants to make sure that we are doing good in everything. If we have concerns we can go to (the director) about it. Citing the influence of the director, Fay shared her beliefs regarding the influence of the director with the following response to an interview question:

I think that the leadership abilities of our director reflect huge on the quality. It goes hand in hand with the teachers. I think that you need strong teachers to have quality program, but you also need a strong director. There are times that
there are situations that are out of our hands, and then it goes to the person above us, which is the director. If (the director) doesn’t handle things in a timely manner or if he/she doesn’t handle things strong enough, then it reflects on all of us and it doesn’t show a strong program.

Faith supported the theme of the leader’s influence on program quality. In her interview, she expressed her thoughts with:

The leadership definitely enhances the quality of the program. (The director’s) leadership, the decisions he/she makes. The way that (the director) guides us and the way that we implement the strategies, really affect the overall program quality. (The director) is the guiding force behind the quality. Team effort, everyone is on the same path.

Faith went on to state on the questionnaire that program quality is a shared responsibility. Everyone needs to function as a team. She indicated:

It is everybody—a team thing. She guides us she leads us she gives us suggestions. Overall it is the teacher’s responsibility to implement the quality of the program. Everyone is responsibility for the overall quality, making sure that they are doing their jobs and doing the best that they can do.

Quality Standards Theme: Agency

Agency items include the categories of parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management and the standards and indicators for those categories (see Appendix A in Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual [High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2003]). The agency themes that emerged from this program site’s data were lack of adequate funding, recruitment and enrollment, program director’s background, professional development, and program assessment.

In the interview, Fay expressed her feelings about the lack of state funding and the need to have more funds available to impact the education of children. She felt:
I feel that so many times that funding is the issue. It holds programs back. It is such a problem for so many programs. You need money to educate the children in the manner that the state wants you to, but the government doesn’t want to provide as much funding as is needed. The funding is not there. It doesn’t get addressed. The education of young children is what starts the rest of life. It all starts here. I don’t think people understand that.

In the interview, Freda also felt that adequate funds were important to the quality of the program. In her opinion, “Money—can’t get quality without money. Can’t expand—can’t serve because we don’t have the money to keep it running. Our main goal is to help our little kids.”

In the interview, Freda addressed the importance of recruiting and enrolling of students and the timing of the distribution of state funds. She commented:

Instead of waiting until the middle of September, (the state) should come to a decision during the summer about how much money and how many kids we are getting for the next year. We can’t wait until October. It shouldn’t be waiting until the kids are in school until we have the money and know if we have a job. Parents are out finding their child a spot all summer long. Do we have a job or are we going to continue or end in September? A teacher needs to get class lists and get a class going.

In the interview, Fiona and Freda addressed the importance of the program director’s background and knowledge and the relationship these have to program quality. Fiona stated, “We need directors that are knowledgeable.” Freda expanded on this thought with, “They (directors) take the PQA and set up the grant for the next year. (The director) also uses the PQA if there are any weaknesses. (The director) gets ideas from it.”

Freda continued further in the interview to address professional development as it related to program quality. In her opinion:

If we see any conferences in a target area, (the director) can go to the PQA and say “This is where this class is weak in and they really wants to go to a conference to build up their strengths. We can afford it in the budget.” Then they send me. Or they get somebody in here to help with meetings and professional development.
That enhances the program. They use it (PQA) to make our center better wherever we are weak. It guides us for the next year.

On the questionnaire, Faith addressed the theme of program assessment and how this center was striving to improve their program quality by seeking accreditation. She cited, “(The director) has really taken the lead and actions necessary to get our center accredited.” In the interview, Fern added, “We are trying to get accredited. We are making sure that all of that is in order so that we are going to be able to qualify for it. Getting accredited is a big deal.”

The Cross-Case Analysis

The cross-case analysis was developed by initially placing the six programs in cardinal order by their total Program Quality Assessment (PQA) score. This separated the programs into three groups: High, High-Mid, and Mid range. The group rankings were determined by the scoring information provided in the 2004-2005 Michigan School Readiness Program, Program Quality Assessment Statewide Data Report (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2005). Each range group of two programs was analyzed to determine commonalities and disparities within the director profiles and program quality profiles created from the four data sources. A discussion was presented regarding the program range groups profiles. A table was generated from the analysis of each range group and was displayed at the end of the discussion. From each respective range group table, the researcher looked for any consistent patterns in how the teachers described their director’s leadership behaviors within the range group to determine a
director profile. To conclude the cross-case analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed.

Throughout the director profile analysis, terms were used to categorize the factors within the themes. The researcher used the terms *positive* and *negative* to categorize the perceived style and characteristics theme factors. The term *positive* was assigned to factors which were described as affirmative, optimistic, helpful, encouraging, and constructive. The term *negative* was given to factors which were described as pessimistic, unconstructive, and unenthusiastic. For example, the theme of communication was frequently mentioned by the respondents. If a respondent referred to the director in a favorable manner, such as “open to staff comments,” the factor was interpreted as meaning that the director was encouraging comments from the staff. Therefore, the word *positive* was used by the researcher. If the respondent referred to the director in an unfavorable manner, such as “not open to input from the staff,” the factor was interpreted as meaning that the director was off-putting toward the staff. Therefore, the word *negative* was used by the researcher.

Additionally, the researcher used the terms *strong*, *mixed*, *close*, and *low* to identify alignment of the participants’ responses at each site. Furthermore, the analysis of the MRL trait data incorporated all respondents’ rankings. The MRL rankings were labeled as distinct (ranked at 4 and 5), neutral (ranked at 3), and unrecognized (ranked at 1 and 2). The narrative cited the traits that overlapped between rankings and the traits that appeared in only one ranking. In addition, the quality standards category of the program quality profile used the terms *program* and *director* to refer to the type of factors that were mentioned most frequently by the respondents in the agency theme. In the range
group tables, the researcher also placed the numerically favored style of leadership first and in bold and the subsequent ranked style second. Finally, the terms yes and no were used in the classroom theme portion of the tables to distinguish whether the program respondents made classroom program quality comments. The tables included the profile headings from the director and program quality profiles, the respective program site letter identifiers, and the terms used for analysis by the researcher.

High Range Group Analysis

The high range group consisted of Programs E and C, which had total PQA scores of 4.95 and 4.6, respectively (see Table 4).

Director Profile

Leadership style. In the analysis of the director profiles for Programs E and C, the data from the MRL survey revealed the identification of both task and integrated styles of leadership, respectively. The results of the MRL leadership style survey indicated a strong correspondence in respondent identification of their director’s leadership style at both sites. The researcher’s designation of strong correspondence implies that the respondents had very similar views of the director’s overall leadership style.

Program E, which had the higher rating, reported a higher task leadership style but also acknowledged the presence of an integrated style of leadership. Program C, on the other hand, reported a higher integrated leadership style but also acknowledged the presence of the task style of leadership.
### Table 4

*High Range Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Quality Groups</th>
<th>Program E</th>
<th>Program C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style</strong></td>
<td>Task/Integrated</td>
<td><strong>Integrated/Task</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style theme</strong></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristic theme</strong></td>
<td>All positive</td>
<td>All positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traits</strong></td>
<td>Strong correspondence</td>
<td>Strong correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PQA data</strong></td>
<td>Total: 4.95</td>
<td>Total: 4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program responsibility theme</strong></td>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Standards</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
<td>Program Issues</td>
<td>Director Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first commonality was the mixture of the task and integrated styles of leadership. In the high range programs, a correspondence was noted. Program E was primarily task style with integrated and Program C was the integrated style with task. The next commonality was the absence of the people style of leadership. In the high range programs, there was no agreement on whether the predominance of the task or integrated style of leadership produced this result, but the mixture of task and integrated styles of leadership produced the high result.

**Director style theme.** The director style theme profiles differed for each of the sites. At each site, the data revealed certain director behaviors which were consistent with
the general definition of that director's leadership style. The data from the respondents at Program E identified the director as utilizing primarily a task style of leadership. The behaviors that supported this style were; shows concern for center goals, places emphasis on planning, and focuses on accomplishing tasks. These were interpreted by the researcher as positive task style behaviors. The data from the respondents at Program C identified the director as utilizing primarily an integrated style of leadership. The behaviors that supported this style were supportive of the program, able to balance goals and relationships, exhibits high energy, and highly collaborative. These behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as positive integrated leadership style behaviors. Whereas both directors were identified as having different leadership styles, the behaviors within each style were positive.

**Director characteristic themes.** The identifiable characteristics that emerged from the data also varied between the two program sites. The respondents at Program E identified the director as strong in communication and knowledge. Within the theme of communication, it was noted that the director had improved the process of communication within the site, had an open-door policy, and was always accessible to the staff. Within the theme of being knowledgeable, it was noted by the respondents that the director possessed a wide base of knowledge. All of these behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as positive relative to communication and knowledge. The director of Program E was identified as a good communicator possessing a strong knowledge base.

The respondents at Program C identified the director as having concern for others. This theme focused on exhibiting empathy, supporting of teachers, being helpful toward
the staff, and demonstrating a caring attitude. All of these behaviors were considered by the researcher to be positive aspects of the people side of the integrated style of leadership.

There was a disparity in the characteristics noted by the respondents at these two sites with respect to a director in a high range program. The researcher noted that positive behaviors within the respective dominant leadership styles were apparent at both sites.

**Director traits.** The trait portion of the MRL survey revealed a strong correspondence between the trait rankings by the respondents. Program E listed five traits that overlapped between the distinct and neutral rankings. These were collaborative, confident, creative, objective, and organized. All other traits were identified only as distinct. Program C identified all MRL leadership traits at the distinct level. Neither program identified their director as demonstrating unrecognized leadership traits. The commonality in the high range program group was the strong distinct rating given to the majority of the MRL leadership traits by respondents at both sites.

**Program Quality Profile**

**Program responsibility.** In the high range program grouping, a commonality was apparent. The respondents at Programs E and C were in agreement that the responsibility for program quality was a shared responsibility between the teachers and the director.

**Quality standards.** Both programs in the high range group addressed agency themes affecting program quality. Program C addressed classroom issues affecting program quality, while Program E did not. The agency theme factors affecting program
quality that the respondents at Program E mentioned were a dedication to servicing families, a lack of adequate state funding, and a responsibility for assisting in transitioning to kindergarten. These factors were interpreted by the researcher as program issues. The agency theme factors that the respondents at Program C mentioned were the director's knowledge of program licensing and operating policies and procedures, the program director's specific knowledge of early childhood, the attention to on-going professional development, and the lack of adequate state funding. The majority of the factors at this site were interpreted by the researcher as director issues. Program C cited the need for more materials as a classroom factor affecting program quality. The two programs cited different agency issues but agreed on the lack of adequate state funding.

The analysis of the data revealed that a strong alignment in the descriptions of the directors' leadership existed between the two high range group programs. Thus, a profile of a director of a high quality-ranked program was describable.

High-Mid Range Group Analysis

The Mid range group consisted of Programs A and F which each had total PQA scores of 4.4 (see Table 5).

Director Profile

Leadership style. In the analysis of the director profiles for Programs A and F, the data from the MRL survey revealed the identification of both task and integrated styles of leadership, respectively. The results of the MRL leadership style survey indicated a strong respondent correspondence at Program A and a mixed correspondence at Program F. The
researcher's designation of mixed correspondence implies that the respondents had varying perceptions of the director's leadership style.

Table 5

*High-Mid Range Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Quality Groups</th>
<th>Program A</th>
<th>Program F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Task/Integrated</td>
<td>Integrated/People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style theme</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic themes</td>
<td>Negative/Positive, Positive/Negative, Negative</td>
<td>Positive, Positive/Negative, Positive/Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traits</td>
<td>Low correspondence</td>
<td>Mixed correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQA data</td>
<td>Total: 4.4</td>
<td>Total: 4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program responsibility theme</td>
<td>Varied opinions</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Standards Agency</td>
<td>Program issues</td>
<td>Program issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program A reported a higher task leadership style but also acknowledged an integrated style of leadership. In Program A, one of the respondents partially completed the survey, providing a total score of 6 out of 8 possible points, dividing her score equally between the task and integrated styles of leadership. The other respondent at this site leaned heavily toward the task style of leadership.
At Program F, the respondents reported a higher integrated leadership style but also acknowledged the task and people style of leadership. After assessing the MRI style data for this site, it was apparent that the people style of leadership was the next most recognized leadership style reported by the respondents, followed by the task style of leadership.

The first commonality was that there were two styles of leadership present at each site. Program A was primarily task style with integrated style, and Program F was an integrated style combined with the people style. The next commonality was that both sites had integrated as one of their two recognizable styles. In the High-Mid range programs, there was no agreement on whether the predominance of the task style or the integrated style of leadership produced this result, but the researcher observed that a mixture of the integrated style plus a second style produced this quality range result.

**Director style theme.** The director style theme profiles differed for each of these sites. Again, at each site the data revealed certain director behaviors which were consistent with the general definition of that primary leadership style. The data from the respondents at Program A identified the director as utilizing a task style of leadership. The behaviors that supported the task style were high on direction, low on feedback, and low on teacher involvement in decisions. These behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as less appealing or negative task style behaviors. The data from the respondents at Program F identified the director as utilizing primarily an integrated style of leadership. The behaviors that supported this style were uses team concept, values high morale, exhibits support of staff, remains goal oriented, sets a positive tone, and using an
appropriate emphasis in different situations. These behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as constructive and positive integrated leadership style behaviors. The directors at these two sites were identified as having substantially different leadership styles and behaviors, suggesting a disparity regarding leadership style exhibited at the High-Mid range quality level.

**Director characteristic themes.** The identifiable characteristics that emerged from the data also varied between the two program sites. The respondents at Program A identified the director as strong in communication, goal oriented with high expectations, and showing minimal involvement. Within the theme of communication, the director was viewed as being low on open dialogue, low in feedback, and not open to input from staff. These behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as negative or unappealing aspects of communication. The Program A director, though, was noted for communicating well with parents and being a strong advocate for the program. These behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as positive aspects of communication. The director at this site was viewed by the teachers as disinterested in internal communication but competent at external communication. Within the theme of goal oriented with high expectations, it was noted by the respondents that the director set goals and standards, monitored for achievement, but provided little support. These behaviors were again interpreted by the researchers as both positive and negative. The third theme was minimal involvement by the director. The respondents discussed the low level of support from the director. The behaviors within this theme were viewed by the researcher as negative. The director of Program A was characterized as not able to communicate with staff but interested in communicating
with the external stakeholders. This director set high expectations but provided limited support and had minimal involvement in the program.

The respondents at Program F identified the director characteristics as having concern for others, ability to communicate, and displaying personal qualities. The concern for others theme recognized the director as caring, kind, compassionate, and displaying empathy. These behaviors reflect the people side of the integrated style of leadership and were interpreted by the researcher as positive and pleasant. Within the theme of communication, the director was described as being open to staff comments, demonstrating good listening skills, and communicating well with parents. These behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as positive comments about the director. The only negative comment regarding the director’s ability to communicate was the director’s lack of attention to follow through. In general, the director communicated well with staff and parents. The respondents at this site did mention in the theme of personal attributes that the director possessed positive personal attributes, but at times was inconsistent in dealing with tasks. This director communicated well, showed concern for others, and possessed positive personal attributes with limited negative behaviors.

The two directors of programs at the High-Mid range quality level displayed differing sets of characteristics. There was no agreement by the respondents across the two sites as to the type of characteristics which were related to the quality of the program. The director of Program A displayed both positive and negative characteristics depending upon the situation. The director of Program F displayed essentially positive characteristics with limited negative behaviors.
Director traits. The trait portion of the MRL survey revealed a low and mixed correspondence between the trait rankings by the respondents at Program A and Program F, respectively. At Program A, the following traits appeared in both the distinct and unrecognized rankings: collaborative, fair, flexible, objective, problem solver, respectful, dependable, optimistic, predictable, and visionary. The traits that appeared only in the distinct ranking were creative, confident, supportive, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, open, organized, and resourceful. The remainder of the traits overlapped in the distinct and neutral rankings. The respondents at this site shared little commonality on their perceptions of the director's traits.

The respondent at Program F had a mixed correspondence regarding the perception of the director's traits. The trait of accessible was the only trait that was included in all three rankings, and was noted as the only trait ranked unrecognized. The following traits were noted in both the distinct and neutral categories: collaborative, confident, dependable, direct, creative, problem solver, organized, inspiring, resourceful, and objective. The traits that appeared solely in the distinct category were empathetic, enthusiastic, ethical, fair, flexible, friendly, good listener, inspiring, knowledgeable, open, optimistic, predictable, respectful, supportive, and visionary. Program F had the most respondents completing the MRL trait survey, which accounts for the quantity of traits which appeared in more than one category and thus resulted in a mixed correspondence designation by the researcher.

There was a strong disparity in the teacher perceptions of the leadership traits of the two directors. The respondents at Program A expressed numerous opposing
viewpoints regarding the traits of the director, while Program F had a mixed correspondence in the ranking of the traits.

Program Quality Profile

Program responsibility. In the High-Mid range program grouping, a disparity was apparent. The respondents at Program A expressed a varied opinion of the persons who were responsible for program quality. One respondent felt that the responsibility belonged to the teachers, while the other respondent saw program responsibility shared with the director. The respondents at Program F were in agreement that the responsibility for program quality was a shared obligation.

Quality standards. Both programs in the High-Mid range group addressed agency themes affecting program quality. Program A addressed classroom issues affecting program quality, while Program F did not. The agency theme factors affecting program quality that the respondents at Program A mentioned were uncertain recruitment and enrollment issues, grant not supportive of in-service training, lack of adequate funding, and strong program director background. These factors were interpreted by the researcher as primarily program issues. The agency theme factors that the respondents at Program F mentioned were lack of adequate funding causing problems with recruitment and enrollment, general need for knowledgeable program directors, aligned and targeted professional development, and using program assessment for improvement. The majority of the factors at this site were interpreted by the researcher as program issues. Program A cited the lack of plentiful materials in the classroom in the classroom issues theme. The
commonality between these two programs was the similarity between the agency factors which stressed program issues cited by the teachers as affecting program quality. Again, both programs cited the lack of state funding as an issue.

The analysis of the data of the High-Mid range group programs revealed a weak alignment among the descriptions of the directors at this quality ranking level across all program headings as perceived by the teachers. Therefore, a distinct profile of a director at this level was not apparent.

**Mid Range Group Analysis**

The Mid range group consisted on Programs B and D which each had total PQA scores of 4.1 (see Table 6).

Table 6

**Mid Range Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile Headings Programs</th>
<th>Program B</th>
<th>Program D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style</strong></td>
<td><strong>Task</strong></td>
<td><strong>People/Integrated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style theme</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic theme</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traits</td>
<td>Mixed correspondence</td>
<td>Strong correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQA data</td>
<td>Total: 4.1</td>
<td>Total: 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program responsibility</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Standards Agency</td>
<td>Director issues</td>
<td>Director/Program issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Director Profile

Leadership style. In the analysis of the director profiles for Programs B and D, the data from the MRL survey revealed the identification of both task and people styles of leadership, respectively. The results of the MRL style survey indicated a strong internal correspondence at both Programs B and D. The strong correspondence implies that the same leadership style was consistently identified by each of the respondents within that site.

Program B reported a high task leadership style. Both respondents selected the task style of leadership with minimal recognition of the other styles. Program D, on the other hand, reported a dominant people leadership style, but also acknowledged the integrated style of leadership.

The Mid range programs revealed a disparity between the styles of leadership at each of the sites. Program B was purely task style, and Program F was the people style with influences of the integrated style. In the Mid range programs, there is no agreement on whether the predominance of the task style or people style of leadership produced this result.

Director style theme. The director style theme profiles differed for each of these sites. At each site, the data revealed certain director behaviors which were consistent with the general definition of that director's leadership style. The data from the respondents at Program B identified the director as utilizing a task style of leadership. The behaviors that supported this theme were controlling, demanding, and micro-managing. These were interpreted by the researcher as negative or unpleasant task style behaviors. The data from
the respondents at Program D identified the director as utilizing primarily a people style of leadership. The behaviors that supported this style were allows staff to exercise control, permits flexibility in the program, demonstrates respect for teachers, allows teacher autonomy, values the staff, and is a problem solver. These behaviors were interpreted by the researcher as pleasant and positive people leadership style behaviors. Within this sample of Mid range program quality, there is a clear disparity in leadership styles and behaviors.

Director characteristic themes. The identifiable characteristics that emerged from the data varied between the two program sites. The respondents at Program B identified poor relationships and undesirable personal qualities as the themes in this category. Within the theme of relationships, it was noted that the director had low people skills and was disrespectful of teachers. These were regarded by the researcher as negative aspects of staff relations. Within the theme of undesirable personal qualities, the respondents characterized the director as being unappreciative, forgetful, inconsistent, unpredictable, and distrusting. Again, these characteristics were regarded by the researcher as negative behaviors. The director of Program B was summarized as a task style director with poor people skills.

The respondents at Program D identified the director as having concern for others, showing confidence in the staff, and being able to communicate. The theme of concern for others focused on the director’s caring for families and staff, showing empathy, meeting the needs of parents, and doing “What is best for kids.” These were classified by the researcher as positive characteristics. The theme of confidence in the staff addressed
the trust the director showed toward the staff members. The theme of communication addressed how the director encouraged open dialogue and was accessible. These two themes were regarded by the researcher as positive. The positive characteristics highlighted by the respondents at this site support the people style of leadership of this director.

The two directors at this program quality level are not aligned on characteristics or behaviors. The director at Program B displayed characteristics which were unpleasant and basically negative. The director at Program D displayed characteristics that were positive and supportive.

**Director traits.** The trait portion of the MRL survey resulted in a mixed correspondence in Program B and strong correspondence in Program D in respondent identification of their director's traits. In Program B the following traits appeared in both the distinct and unrecognized rankings: good listener and empathetic. Overlaps between neutral and unrecognized rankings were collaborative, dependable, direct, inspiring, optimistic, respectful, resourceful, and visionary. In the distinct and neutral rankings the overlapping traits were accessible, ethical, knowledgeable, supportive, and flexible. The traits that appeared only in the unrecognized ranking were creative, enthusiastic, organized, and predictable. At this program site, the identification of the traits was mixed and nonspecific among the respondents. Program D had a strong correspondence between respondents. At Program D all of the MRL traits were included in the distinct ranking.

There was a strong disparity in the teacher perceptions of the leadership traits of the two directors in the Mid range group. The respondents at Program B expressed
opposing viewpoints regarding the traits of the director, while Program D had a strong correspondence in the ranking of their director’s traits.

Program Quality Profile

Program responsibility. In the Mid range program grouping, a disparity was apparent even though the respondents at the site agreed among themselves about who was responsibility for program quality. The respondents at Programs B expressed agreement that responsibility for program quality was the responsibility of the teachers. The respondents at Program D were in agreement that the responsibility for program quality was a shared obligation. The respondents at Program B, though, expressed the opinion that they would like the responsibility to be shared.

Quality standards. Both program in the Mid range group addressed agency themes affecting program quality. Program D addressed classroom issues affecting program quality, while Program B did not. The agency theme factors affecting program quality that the respondents at Program B mentioned were program director’s lack of background and qualifications, program director’s lack of knowledge of early childhood, and need for adequate program funds. These factors were interpreted by the researcher as primarily director issues. The agency theme factors that the respondents at Program D mentioned were strong expertise of program director, emphasizes good instructional staff background, need for in-service training, lack of adequate funds for program, and the unfilled need for a program funding advocate. The factors at this site were interpreted by the researcher as both director and program issues. Program D cited the following issues
in the classroom theme: use of curriculum standards, use of team planning, and use of student assessments. The commonality was the need for adequate state funding. The two programs did not agree on the director agency issues.

The analysis of the data of the Mid range group programs revealed a weak alignment among the descriptions of the directors at this quality ranking level across all program headings as perceived by the teachers. A profile of a director at this level was also not apparent.

Alignment and Differences Across Program Range Groups

To further analyze and synthesize the data of the three range groups, the researcher used the three program range group tables. To conclude the cross-case analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed. The discussion was organized by the profile headings found in the range group tables. An additional table was created to visually display the information in this section and was shown at the end of the discussion.

*Style and Style Themes*

In the High range group Programs E and C, a strong alignment in style was observed. The style mixture of the task and integrated styles of leadership was noted in each program in this range group. Also, there was alignment between the two programs in this range group in the positive style theme factors reported by the respondents. In the High-Mid range group, Program A had a strong alignment with the High range group Programs E and C by exhibiting the same task/integrated style mixture of leadership, but
the style theme factors that were identified by the Program A teachers were negative as compared to all positive factors in the High range group programs, which was a significant difference.

Program F in the High-Mid range group exhibited a completely different leadership style mixture than the High range group Programs E and C. Program F respondents identified the director as utilizing an integrated/people style of leadership. Mid range group Program D aligned with High-Mid range group Program F by also displaying a mixture of the people/integrated leadership style. An alignment of Mid range group Program D with High range group Programs E and C was evident in the positive style theme factor comments. An additional alignment was the positive style theme factor comments for High-Mid range group Program F. A similarity between the High-Mid range group Program F and the Mid range group Program D was that neither of the directors were identified as utilizing the task style of leadership. The absence of the task style of leadership contrasts these two programs with the other programs in the study.

The last site, Mid range group Program B, was dissimilar to the High range group Programs E and C, the High-Mid range group Programs A and F, and the other Mid range group Program, D. The director of Program B was characterized by the respondents as displaying solely a task style of leadership with no secondary style of leadership. Even though the task style was a feature of the High range group Programs E and C and Program A in the High-Mid range group, the integrated style of leadership was also apparent. The other programs, F and D, in the other range groups both cited the presence of the integrated style of leadership. There was a strong alignment running through the program range groups of the integrated style of leadership. It was also interpreted by the
researcher that the teachers in Program B offered comments in the style theme factors which were all negative in nature. This was a strong difference compared to Program D from the same Mid range group, Program F from the High-Mid range group, and two High range group programs, E and C.

Characteristics Themes

There was a strong alignment for the High range group Programs E and C. Even though the characteristics themes were different between the two programs, all the characteristics theme factors referenced in the themes were positive. Program D in the Mid range group aligned to High range group Programs E and C by displaying positive characteristics theme factors. The two High-Mid range group programs, A and F, both displayed a difference to High range group Programs E and C, and Mid range group Program D, as these two programs each had a mixture of both negative and positive characteristics theme factors. Mid range group Program B, on the other hand, displayed a strong difference to all the other programs in the study. Program B had only negative characteristics theme factors noted by the respondents.

Traits

The respondents in both of the High range group Programs E and C had a strong correspondence in their identification of the leader’s traits with most leadership traits being noted as distinct. The only other program which aligned with the High range group Programs E and C was Mid range group Program D, which also reported a strong correspondence in trait responses. High-Mid range group Program F and Mid range group
Program B reported mixed correspondences as contrasted to the strong correspondences reported in the three previously mentioned programs. The only program reporting a low correspondence in trait responses was High-Mid range Program A, which was noticeably unlike the other programs.

Program Responsibility

These two High range group Programs E and C, High-Mid range group Program F, and Mid range group Program D all showed strong alignment in reporting program responsibility and by agreement that this duty was shared between the teachers and the director. High-Mid range group Program A respondents had varied opinions regarding program responsibility. These respondents felt that it was either the teachers’ responsibility or it was a shared endeavor. Program B respondents were in agreement among themselves, but noted that at the present time the program responsibility fell upon the teachers. They agreed that they would have preferred an ideal situation of the responsibility being shared between the teachers and the director.

Program Quality Standards

The high range group Programs E and C disagreed on the quality standards agency theme. Program E expressed more program issues, while Program C expressed more director issues. The respondents in the High-Mid range group Programs A and F agreed on the agency issue of programs, which aligns with Program E in the High range group. Mid range group Program B respondents focused on the director issues in the agency theme factors which can be aligned to High range group Program C. Mid range group
Program D was the only program that cited agency issues as being both director and program.

One program from each range group discussed classroom issues: High range group Program E, High-Mid range group Program A, and Mid range group Program D. The other programs, High range group Program C, High-Mid range group Program F, and Mid range group Program B, did not mention classroom issues. There were equal alignments and differences within this profile heading.

Summary of Key Findings

There were two major findings from this research study. The first major finding originated from within the range group tables. The High range group programs displayed sufficient commonalities in all profile headings to enable the researcher to develop an overall High range group director profile. In an analysis of the data collected within the High range group, the researcher found more congruence in how the teachers perceived the directors' characteristics, traits, and style of leadership than in the other program range groups. During the analysis, the leadership profile for the High range group became evident through the congruence of the terminology assigned by the researcher to the profile headings However, it should be noted that both the High-Mid range group and the Mid range group displayed too few commonalities and too many differences within their range groups to justify a profile for either range group. Therefore, the study produced a director profile for the High range group, but fell short of producing a profile for the remaining range groups.
Table 7

*Alignment and Differences Across Program Range Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile Headings</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High-Mid</td>
<td>High-Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Task/Integrated</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People/Integrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style Themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative/Positive</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics Themes</td>
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<td>Negative</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mixed Correspondence</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second major finding, the shared program profile, was revealed through the presentation of the data across range groups in the alignment table. The analysis of the data revealed that one of the Mid range group programs, Program D, showed very consistent alignment to the two High range group programs, Programs E and C. Consistency existed among all profile headings except for which leadership style was combined into the integrated style. In Programs E and C, the directors’ additional leadership style was task oriented; in Program D, the director’s leadership style was people oriented. Given the disparity of PQA score between Program D and the High range group Programs E and C, it may well be that a key factor in determining program quality is the presence of task-oriented behavior on the part of the director. Thusly, the findings of this study indicated that a shared program profile was determinable.

The two major key findings will be presented in Chapter V. The High range group director profile and the shared program profile will be supported by references from the review of literature.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to specifically explore and describe how the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors, as described and perceived by the teachers, reflect the factors that are currently addressed in the indicators that form the basis for evaluating program quality. This chapter presented a discussion of the data collection instruments, demographics of the program sites, the analysis lens, the presentation of findings by program site, and a cross-case analysis of the staff descriptions of the relationship between leadership and early childhood program quality.
Because the research questions were searching to identify the leadership characteristics, traits and styles of MSRP directors and how these characteristics, traits, and styles relate to program quality, the researcher chose to establish three profiles to address the issue: a director profile, a program quality profile, and a director and program quality profile. The three profiles were constructed for each of the six program sites. The data were presented in chart form and the themes that emerged from the qualitative data sources were presented in narrative form.

Analysis of the data for the director profile resulted in two major theme categories: (a) leadership style, and (b) characteristics. Within these two categories, there were 10 themes. In the leadership style category, the themes included (a) task-oriented behavior, (b) people-oriented behavior, and (c) integrated behavior. The second category was characteristics. The themes in this category were (a) communication, (b) high expectations, (c) relationships, (d) personal qualities, (e) concern for others, (f) confidence in staff, and (g) knowledgeable. The data also identified the two major categories and themes for the program profile. The major categories were (a) program responsibility, and (b) quality standards. Within these two categories there were four themes. The program responsibility major category identified the themes of (a) varied opinion, and (b) agreement. The quality standard category identified the themes of (a) agency, and (b) classroom.

The cross-case analysis was developed by initially placing the six programs in cardinal order by their total Program Quality Assessment score as determined by the MSRP Program Quality Assessment Data Report (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2005). This separated the programs into three groups: High, High-Mid, and
Mid range. Each range group of two programs was analyzed to determine commonalities and disparities within the director profiles and program quality profiles created from the four data sources. Continuing the cross-case analysis, a discussion was presented regarding the range group profiles. A table was generated for the analysis within each of the range groups. From each respective range group table, the researcher looked for patterns to determine range group profiles. Only the High range group, Programs E and C, demonstrated sufficient commonalities to generate a range group profile. To conclude the cross-case analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed. The alignment table revealed a shared program profile for Programs E, C, and D.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

To assist the reader in the understanding of this research study, the final chapter of this dissertation begins with an overview of the study. The overview includes background of the study, a restatement of the research problem, and a review of the methodology utilized in the study. The research findings from Chapter IV are examined. The chapter then discusses the implications related to the significance of the research findings that were derived from the data. Recommendations for further research in the area of early childhood leadership and program quality are suggested. The chapter concludes with personal reflections from the researcher.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to specifically explore and describe how the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors, as described and perceived by the teachers, reflect the factors that are currently addressed in the indicators that form the basis for evaluating program quality. The study examined state-funded preschool programs, since research in this area has suggested that, when these programs are of high quality, they are influential in preparing children for the rigorous demands of general education (Ackerman & Barnett, 2006). These findings have resulted in a focus on program quality and to the establishment of standards of quality for evaluating preschool program delivery systems. Additionally, research studies have linked leadership in early childhood programs to the quality of the programs (Muijs et al., 2004). While earlier
research studies conducted by Culkin (1995), Pipa (1997), Seplocha (1998) and Love (2001) regarding early childhood leadership and program quality found respectively that
effective leadership in early childhood centers was important; identification and
description of leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors of directors was possible;
establishment of a profile of common leadership behaviors of directors was possible; and
the directors' leadership was influential in the change process in a child care center; the
link between program quality and leadership has not been studied in such a way that
teachers' descriptions of their program director's leadership characteristics, traits, and
styles have been examined against the current measures of program quality used in the
field.

This phenomenological study was unique in that it utilized data collection pieces
that gathered descriptions and perceptions from the teachers of the leadership
characteristics, traits, and styles demonstrated by their program directors. The study used
these descriptions to seek out any consistent patterns in how teachers describe their
director's leadership behaviors within scoring levels on a program quality assessment.
The study utilized the Multi-Rater Leadership trait and style survey form, a
semistructured questionnaire, and an interview as instruments for data collection and
analysis. It also incorporated the results for the 2004-2005 year from the Program Quality
Assessment tool developed by the High/Scope Educational Foundation (2003) as a
standardized data source to identify the program quality scores for each program.
Overview

With the total student enrollment in state-funded preschools across the nation on the rise, it is important to focus research on the link between program leadership and program quality. State-funded preschools alone are now serving 20% of the 4-year-olds across the nation (Barnett, Hustedt, Hawkinson, & Robin, 2006). The demand for high quality programs is increasing. High program quality results from an effective delivery system of essential services to children and families (Ackerman & Barnett, 2006) and should lead to higher achievement levels for the students these programs serve. A central assumption of this study is that there is a similar relationship between quality and achievement outcomes for preschool programs and that of K-12 programs, in general (Marzano et al., 2005).

Research has linked leadership and program quality (Kagan & Bowman, 1997) and supports the position that the director has the legitimate power to affect the quality of the program by influencing and transforming the followers (Morgan, 2000). Research in this field also supports the position that there are areas (roles and responsibilities, skills, and dispositions) and functions (administration, management, and leadership) that may be analyzed from data collected from participants to clarify patterns of leadership that may align with program quality (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003); however, early childhood leadership research has not extensively investigated the link between director leadership as described by teachers and program quality as measured on a consistent program quality scale.
A qualitative research design was used for this study to obtain a richness of responses from the subjects in order to describe a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998), i.e., director leadership of state-funded preschool programs. The naturalistic data collected from the participants in this study included written responses and face-to-face interviews at the program sites. To further address the central question of the study, data on how the teachers described the director was obtained by having the participants complete a style and trait survey form. The researcher also secured the Program Quality Assessment scores from the High/Scope Educational Foundation. Since the researcher was familiar with the Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP), the researcher undertook the process of an epoche before commencing with the research. The data were collected over an 8-week period by the researcher driving to the six sites. The data were coded and analyzed for categories and themes that emerged during the analysis. The data were presented for each program site through three profiles: the director profile, the program quality profile, and the director and program quality profile.

To complete the data analysis process, a cross-case analysis was performed based upon program quality ranking, placing the six programs in cardinal order according to their total Program Quality Assessment score. This separated the programs into three groups: High, High-Mid, and Mid range. Each range group of two programs was analyzed to determine commonalities and disparities within the director profiles and program quality profiles created from the four data sources. A discussion was presented regarding the program range group profiles establishing a table. To conclude the cross-case analysis, the strongest and weakest alignments and differences across all program range groups were reviewed and discussed. The written results of the research contained
quotations from the data, director and program quality profile charts, program range
group tables, and an alignment table of all six sites.

Findings

The central question that guided this study examined what leadership
characteristics, traits, and styles were identifiable in directors in state-funded early
childhood programs based solely upon teachers’ perceptions about and descriptions of
leaders in these programs. To accomplish the purposes of this study, the researcher
examined teacher-described leadership characteristics, traits, and styles of their directors
through the lens of their experiences working with those leaders. After distilling themes
and patterns from how teachers experience their director’s leadership and attribute
leadership characteristics, traits, and styles to those leaders, the study looked at patterns of
teacher-described leadership attributes in their directors in relation to how the program
was evaluated utilizing the PQA, the prevailing measure of program quality accepted in
the field to assess state-funded preschool programs.

The data collected from teacher experiences and perceptions allowed the
researcher to create a director profile for each program director and examine the profiles
of all directors for common patterns and themes. To address the central research question,
the researcher looked for commonalities and differences and strength of alignment in the
director profiles within the scoring range groups which were determined by the program
quality evaluation instrument, and across all programs to find out if there were distinct
profiles.
The findings from the within range group tables suggested that a director profile with common themes and patterns for the high program quality scoring range group of programs was feasible. A distinctive profile for the other two program quality range groups was not as definitive. Both the High-Mid range group and the Mid range group displayed minimal commonalities among the programs within their group based on teacher descriptions of their leaders' characteristics, traits, and styles. Thus, within these two program quality scoring levels, there was no prominent leadership profile.

The findings in this study fell short, however, of producing a clear pattern of specific teacher-described leadership characteristics, traits, or styles that can be linked to any program quality profile other than the highest scoring category on the High/Scope Program Quality Assessment tool. In fact, within both the High-Mid and Mid range scoring categories of the PQA assessment, there were wide variations and disparities in how teachers described their directors' leadership characteristics, traits, and styles.

The findings from the alignment table did suggest, though, a shared program profile. This conclusion was based upon the alignment of the profile headings in the alignment table. Although two of the programs ranked in the High range group and the third was in the Mid range group, analysis of the findings suggested that a shared program profile was discernable for Programs E, C, and D to the extent of the majority of the profile headings, but not in the area of a specific leadership style.

The findings in this study for the highest range group of program quality scores on the commonly accepted evaluation instrument support Kagan and Cohen (1996) that educational leadership contributed to program quality. The strongest common leadership characteristics, traits, styles, program responsibility, and program standards as described
by the teachers for the range group program profile and the shared program profile are discussed in the recap summary of findings below.

High Range Group Director Profile

The findings from this range group indicate that a profile of a director in a high quality program is discernable. The profile of the directors in this range group is supported by the qualitative data and is consistent with previous literature and research. The findings are discussed below, in the order of the High range group table headings (see Table 4).

Style

The directors in both programs displayed a mixture of the task and integrated styles of leadership. The followers in each of the programs recognized that the directors engaged in the style mixture approach in order to attain a high program quality ranking. It was clear from the favorable responses given by the participants on the questionnaire and in the interview and from the style choices made on the survey form an effective blend of these two styles of leadership was influential in achieving program quality.

This style mixture approach, because it contains multiple elements, corresponds with the research which indicated that leader behaviors were either task- or relationship-oriented (Bass, 1981). Northouse (2001) stresses the style mixture approach in successful leaders. Blake and Mouton’s (1985) research indicates that leaders normally have a dominant style and a back-up style for use when the primary style does not produce a successful result (as cited in Northouse, 2001). Click (2004) posits that teachers prefer
leadership that is high on both results and relationships. Further research asserts that the task style of leadership which addresses the managerial issues of the organization along with leadership techniques is more conducive for attaining high program quality (Kagan & Cohen, 1996; Neugebauer, 2003). Hersey et al. (2001) contend that the importance of the task and the relationships with the followers dictates the leader's response to the situation and cycle of leadership that is applied.

The findings in this research study directly link the blended style approach with program quality. The findings confirm the assertions of researchers that what distinguishes one type of leader from another are the varying degrees of emphasis that are placed on achieving results and bringing about harmonious staff relations (Bloom, 1988; Click, 2004). These findings support the efficacy of the task and integrated style mixture approach as it relates to high program quality as measured by the PQA.

**Characteristics**

The directors in the High range group programs displayed common positive leadership characteristics. As referred to in Chapter IV, the word *positive* was used to describe factors of the director that were affirmative and optimistic. This research study identified the characteristics themes of communication, being knowledgeable, and showing concern for other as associated with High range group directors. It was evident by the constructed responses from the participants on the questionnaire and in the interview that teachers viewed the factors included in the characteristics themes as influential in contributing to effective early childhood program quality.
Other researchers have identified these same characteristics as recognizable in effective early childhood leaders (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; Rodd, 1998). Research by Rodd indicated that the professional skill of communication and the personal characteristics of being knowledgeable and showing concern for others are important common attributes of early childhood leadership. The Administration, Management, and Leadership (AML) matrix developed by Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2003) also recognized these characteristics as desirable components of leadership. The AML matrix addressed communication as a skill, being knowledgeable as a disposition, and showing concern for others as a role and responsibility. Other research in the area has supported the position of promoting a positive environment both inside and outside of the organization as a necessary element for effective leadership (Bloom, 1997; Brown & Manning, 2000; Culkin, 1995; Hill-Scott, 2000; Kagan & Bowman, 1997).

The recognition of these characteristics by the teachers in this study served to support the assertion that leadership in high quality early childhood organizations is related to specific skills, competencies, and roles of a trained and knowledgeable leader to impact program quality (Brown & Manning, 2000). The findings in this study confirmed the position that specific patterns of leadership characteristics were identifiable in directors of very high quality programs as measured by the PQA, but not in the High-Mid or Mid range rated programs on that same measure. These findings suggest that either the PQA, as a measure of program quality, has considerable variability in reliability below the highest quality assessment levels, or that anything less than the highest program quality rating can correspond to loss of a distinct pattern of corresponding leadership.
Traits

With the exception of five traits ranked in the neutral category, the teacher respondents in the High range group ranked the traits of the directors in both of these programs in the distinct category. The research study, based on the respondents' input, supported the position that the directors at these high quality program sites exhibited the majority of positive leadership traits identified by Bloom (2003) and incorporated into her survey instrument. It was confirmed through the responses given by the teachers that the director's utilization of leadership traits was also a contributor to achieving program quality.

As reported in the literature review, Stogdill (1974) asserted: "Who emerges as a leader and who is successful and effective is due to traits and consequences in the situation" (as cited in Bass, 1981, p. 82). The overall high ranking given to each director of programs scoring in the highest PQA range by their teachers on the majority of the 25 traits on the MRL survey support Stogdill's premise. The teacher depictions of the high range PQA program directors in this study create a strong profile of traits associated with positive leadership models. This does not hold true, however, for the teachers' descriptions of leadership traits for directors of programs that fall out of the highest scoring range on the program quality assessment instrument.

The findings from this research study further support the assertion that a director who exhibits a strong assortment of positive leadership traits is well prepared to address the multitude of situations which arise in an early childhood setting and thus influence achievement of high program quality.
Program Responsibility

The respondents in both of the programs in the highest PQA range group agreed that responsibility for program quality was a shared responsibility between the teachers and the director. This sharing of responsibility by the staff in these two programs signified a presence of leadership which valued shared leadership and was able to create a team culture where that shared leadership could flourish. It was evident from the comments made by the personnel in these two programs that sharing program responsibility created a harmonious environment of people working together to provide children with the best possible education, therefore affecting program quality.

Research indicates that a key element contributing to the effectiveness of an early childhood leader is developing a team culture (Rodd, 1998). Additionally, the function of sharing program responsibility aligns with the constructs of early childhood organizations which value “teamwork, participatory management, shared-decision making and collaboration” (Rosemary et al., 2000, p. 186). Also, in dynamic educational settings, leadership which attends to the process of systems thinking and the precepts of transformational leadership is more prone to achieve high program quality (Marsh, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005; Senge, 1990). By developing a team culture and embracing the practice of systems thinking which is interrelated with the theories of transformational leadership, high program quality is achievable (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978; Senge, 1990).

The findings in this research study concur with the literature regarding team culture and its influence on achieving high program quality. The comments from the
respondents verify that the quality of the program is not a divided endeavor but is achieved through a joint effort of all parties within the program. Again, however, this pattern of shared responsibility and team culture becomes less consistent in the described experiences and comments of teachers from programs scoring in the High-Mid and Mid ranges of program quality on the PQA.

*Program Quality Standards*

The respondents in the High range group discussed the quality standards theme of agency from the perspectives of director and program issues. The participants in these two programs focused on the structural components of program quality that included governance and personnel issues. There are two components of program quality as measured the PQA assessment: the structural and the process components. It was evident from the comments of teachers from the two highest range group PQA rated programs that these two issues within structural quality were most relevant in their assessment of what contributed to their program’s quality rating. This depiction of how program quality is achieved did not hold for the programs in the other two PQA scoring ranges.

Research has indicated that program quality is described in two ways: structural and process (Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). Researchers in the area of early childhood program quality have asserted that there is an association between the process and structural indicators that affect program quality (Bush & Phillips, 1996; Kagan & Cohen, 1996; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). Additionally, structural matters included the operational components of the program (Bush & Phillips, 1996), which in turn are related to the adequacy of funding which supports operations. Effective executions of structural matters
that include operational components of a program are necessary for the achievement of high program quality. In this study, the structural concerns of governance and personnel practices were described as most strongly associated with quality in their programs.

The findings in this research concur with the literature in suggesting that structural components are essential in attaining program quality. The respondents in the High range group also specifically address the structural issue of the lack of funding as affecting the quality of the program; however, no conclusions can be drawn from this reference since all the programs in this study are funded through the State of Michigan in the same manner and at the same per pupil levels.

\textit{Shared Program Profile}

The findings for the shared program group indicated that a profile was discernable. The profile of the directors in this shared program group is supported by the qualitative data and is generally consistent with previously discussed literature and research findings contained in the High range group director profile analysis. Aside from leadership style, all profile heading terminology was consistent for Program D and the High range group Programs E and C and was previously discussed. Program D, the lower scoring program, associated a people style of leadership with an integrated style, whereas the High range group Programs E and C exhibited a task/integrated style mixture.

Even though Program D had a PQA score of 4.1 and Programs E and C had PQA scores of 4.95 and 4.6, respectively, they did align across the majority of the profile headings except for leadership style. The profile heading descriptors were consistent across all three programs. The style themes as well as the characteristics themes were
positive, the trait indicators strongly corresponded among the respondents, and there was agreement for program responsibility and agreement on program quality agency issues. The research and literature to support the alignments of these profile headings among the three programs were substantiated in the discussion of the supportive research and literature cited in the range group director profile.

Although these commonalities existed among these three programs with similar profiles, there is a significant difference between them. The leadership style for the three programs differed in emphasis. The integrated style of leadership was recognized in all three of these programs, but the programs differed on task and relationship behaviors. Programs E and C were described as displaying task/integrated style mixtures, while Program C displayed a people/integrated style mixture. The distinguishing factors were that Programs E and C emphasized the task behaviors of the leader, and Program D had more emphasis on relationship (people) behaviors.

The followers in each of these programs recognized that the directors engaged in the style mixture approach. It was clear from the favorable responses given by the participants on the questionnaire and in the interview and from the style choices made on the survey form that a blend of two styles of leadership was utilized by the directors and supported by the teachers but resulted in differing PQA scores for each of the programs. The style mixture of leadership was supported through the literature cited in the High range group profile analysis.

The findings of this research project confirmed the assertions of researchers that what distinguishes one type of leader from another are the varying degrees of emphasis that are placed on achieving results and bringing about harmonious staff relations.
(Bloom, 1988; Click, 2004). The findings of this study were consistent across the other profile heading alignments permitting the researcher to develop a shared program profile. Of the six program sites involved in this research study, there were three programs which shared almost identical reported indicators in profile headings with one major profile heading difference. That difference, task behavior versus people behavior in leadership, may explain the disparate quality scores among these three programs. It appears, then, that the seemingly small difference between an integrated approach including task and an integrated approach including people may indeed be quite important to the overall quality ranking of a program. The absence of the task-oriented behavior of the director in Program D may be an important factor in explaining the lower quality ranking obtained by this program relative to the High range group programs. Since there are no other profile heading disparities for these three programs, the style mixture difference stands as the most likely explanation for PQA score differences among these three programs.

Summary

In summary, this study confirms that through the teachers’ descriptions of their director’s leadership characteristics, traits, and styles examined against a current measure of program quality, a link exists between a specific profile of director leadership and the achievement of high program quality. The High range group director profile describes the directors as displaying a style mixture of task and integrated behaviors; the respondents positively supporting the style, exhibiting favorable characteristics of communication, being knowledgeable, and showing concern for others; having a distinct identification of
the majority of leadership traits on the Multi-Rater Leadership survey; creating a team culture to foster shared program responsibility; and giving attention to the agency issues of the director and the program. The shared program profile describes the directors as having style mixtures that are supported positively by the respondents, exhibiting favorable characteristics of communication, concern for others, being knowledgeable, and confidence in staff, distinct identification of the majority of leadership traits on the Multi-Rater Leadership survey, creating a team culture to foster shared program responsibility, and giving attention to the agency issues of program and director. The strong similarities between the two profiles are apparent. The two profiles are different only in program quality score—Programs E and C are in the high range, and Program D is in the Mid range—and in leadership style mixture.

The findings from this study when added to the literature in the area of early childhood leadership provide a better understanding of early childhood program director’s characteristics, traits, and styles which are associated with successful leadership and its relationship to program quality. The findings are limited, however, by discernable patterns of leadership characteristics, traits, and style associated only with programs ranked at the highest level of PQA assessment scores. Due to the small sample size of both program sites and participants from each site, the findings cannot be generalized. The findings can be used only as clues to areas of further investigation that might generate further studies. The study is also limited to the relationship of leadership behaviors to the Program Quality Assessment score.

Specifically, the data collected in this phenomenology revealed that through the consistent patterns in how teachers describe their directors’ leadership behaviors and the
grouping of programs by the Program Quality Assessment score, the only discernable director leadership profile that evolved was from the High quality range group. The other range groups in this study did not display common descriptors which could be developed into distinctive profiles. This research study supports the assertion made by Kagan and Bowman (1997) that “the strength of any institution or field is the strength of its leader” (p. 160) but only for the limited context of very high program quality based on a common assessment of state-funded early childhood programs.

Implications

It is apparent through the work of previous researchers that early childhood programs are a significant means of successfully preparing children for future educational experiences (Kagan & Cohen, 1996). It is also well recognized that sound leadership in the field of early childhood education is needed to properly address educational outcomes and to achieve goals (Marzano et al., 2005). The most recent research in the area of state-funded early childhood programs enunciates the position that children who attend state-funded programs are better prepared for their future general education experiences (Lamy et al., 2005a). This research study focuses on teachers’ perceptions of the directors in state-funded early childhood programs. There are clearly implications that may be derived from this study. Significant implications derived from the study are recognizing the importance of the impact that leadership has on achieving the highest levels of program quality, at least to the degree that the PQA assessment is a true measure and discriminator of varying program quality levels. Clearly, there is a need for both further qualitative and quantitative studies in this area.
This research has pointed out that teacher descriptions of their early childhood program directors can identify a profile of leadership for the highest ranked programs based upon the PQA. There are two areas of further research suggested. First, research would be needed to determine if the profile created in this study would hold up for a broader sample of early childhood programs that score in the highest category of the PQA assessment. Secondly, the shared program profile suggests that research is needed to determine if the PQA assessment is a true measure and discriminator of program quality ranges. This additional research would explore the reliability and validity of the PQA to discriminate the levels of program quality differentiation. Certainly, both types of study could prove to be valuable. With early childhood vying for scarce public education funding sources and with these same programs sharing responsibility for the outcomes of a national educational agenda based on high levels of student proficiency for all students on a globally competitive curriculum, understanding more about how leadership impacts program quality would be of considerable value to policy makers and school leaders alike.

When considered along with the findings on leadership style and characteristics, this study suggests that a combination of effectively blended leadership styles coupled with varying applications of positive leadership characteristics and traits (as described by Bloom [2003]) may aid program leaders in understanding and responding to situations which arise in early childhood programs. This may make them more effective in differentiating which styles, characteristics, and traits to apply in addressing a particular situation while keeping sight of the visions and goals of the organization (Rodd, 1998).
The research has pointed out that, irrespective of the PQA score, a shared program profile was apparent in the areas of leadership characteristics, traits, program responsibility, and program quality. The findings are consistent for leaders of programs that score in the highest range on the PQA assessment, suggesting that either the assessment instrument is not sensitive to variation of program quality in the High-Mid and Mid scoring ranges, or that patterns of effective program leadership as experienced and described by teachers are not as clear or consistent as soon as a program moves out of the highest range of program quality.

The study suggests the difference between the task and relationship behaviors of the leader may be associated with program quality. There is a discernable difference in the two styles of leadership in the two profiles. Certain research asserts that the task style of leadership which addresses the managerial issues of the organization along with leadership techniques is more conducive for attaining high program quality (Kagan & Cohen, 1996; Neugebauer, 2003).

As reported recently in August 2007, in the Education Update newsletter released by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, focusing on early childhood, it is apparent that the educational community has recognized the importance and need for quality early childhood programs (Gill, 2007). On the other hand, the article lacks mention of director leadership as a means to achieving this lofty outcome. Past research and this study support the position that high quality programs are related to an effective delivery system provided by an effective leader. Since a profile of the leader of high quality programs appears to be discernable, further attention to this area is justified.
To impact early childhood leadership, specifically in state-funded early childhood programs, an increased emphasis on identifying and replicating effective leadership norms and practices could be a valuable focus of public policy attention and funding allocation. Firestone (2007) said, “Research shows that for every dollar spent at the preschool level, there is a seven dollar return. They’re (students who experience quality early childhood programs) more likely to go to secondary school, to have jobs and contribute to society—and less likely to get arrested.” To achieve this desirable overall societal impact, more research in the area of early childhood program quality and leadership development is needed in order to determine what policy and funding supports are required to deliver a quality early childhood program system.

Another implication of this study is that quantitative and qualitative data should be synthesized to better determine program quality. Although the numerical score discrepancy appears small between the program range groups, the program quality differences between the range groups could be greater than the raw score differential would appear to indicate. For example, the difference between 4.6 and 4.4 and 4.1 is not a great numerical differential, but the program quality differences between these range groups as described and explained by the qualitative data is much more evident. The qualitative data more clearly exposes the program quality differences between the program range groups. Therefore, an implication from this study is that for a more comprehensive dissecting of the quality of early childhood programs, the synthesizing of quantitative and qualitative data needs to occur.
Recommendations for Future Research

This phenomenological study was conducted to explore and describe how the characteristics, traits, and styles of directors, as described and perceived by the teachers, reflect the factors that are currently addressed in the indicators that form the basis for evaluating program quality. Although this study revealed that the directors’ leadership as described by and perceived by the teachers can reveal a leadership profile (based on leadership characteristics, traits, and styles) that can be associated with a High range program quality score, additional research should be conducted in this area to determine if a broader study could reveal leadership profiles associated with other scoring ranges on the PQA.

Another recommendation for further research would suggest using specific program sites with program quality scores other than in the high range. This research study suggests investigating the leadership behaviors of the director and the relationship of these behaviors to the quality score. The type of style displayed by the director and the attainment of a program quality score ranking are areas of investigation. Further research in this area is needed to understand the leadership behaviors that affect program quality.

A recommendation for future research would be to explore and describe how the MSRP directors, in this study or at other MSRP sites, perceive their characteristics, traits, and styles as influencing program quality. The replication of the study using the directors as subjects would allow for a comparison between the data gathered for this study and other data from a similar study using a different subject group. This would give the field another lens from which to look at the topic of leadership and program quality.
Another recommendation is for a study that would focus on more sites, specific urban or other demographic areas in this state or in other states. The findings from another study would be an extension to the findings of this study. Furthermore, a study similar to this study could also be replicated in a future time period, such as 5 years.

Since the 2002 Michigan School Readiness Implementation Manual (Michigan Department of Education, 2002a) now addresses four ways that children may be assessed, a need for coordination between the assessment pieces and the Program Quality Assessment tool may inspire a forum for discussing program quality from both the structural and process perspectives. A study researching the structural and process components of a program and the relationship with the program quality score may prove to be an interesting topic for research. Since we know from the Lamy, Barnett, and Jung (2005a) research that MSRP programs in general successfully prepare young children for school, it would be relevant to investigate the assessment tools used internally by the programs and the PQA scores of these programs. Additionally, the Program Quality Assessment instrument itself should be examined for its reliability and validity in discriminating other than the highest or lowest extremes of program quality in ways that link quality measures to student impact.

Concluding Remarks

Since I have previously taught in a state-funded program for 15 years, I had first-hand experience with the program. My experience and knowledge about the field of early childhood leadership heightened my curiosity about the influences of leadership upon program quality, which motivated me to undertake this research study.
I was impressed by the warm welcome that I received from every program site that I visited in the state. I traveled many miles and made many new “MSRP friends.” The teachers that I met were warm and friendly people, who were excited about the fact that “an MSRP teacher” was stepping forward and doing research on the MSRP program. The teachers hoped that my interest in the MSRP program would motivate others in the state to continue to research other aspects of this program. The teachers were also excited about the fact that the study concentrated on their perceptions of the leader. They wanted their voices heard. While traveling from site to site, I had time to reflect on what was said to me and the impact this program has on all of its stakeholders.

The challenging part of the research study was being able combine my interest in and passion for the areas of early childhood education and educational leadership into a dissertation. It was also a challenge to reduce the data so that the message and essence of the participants’ thoughts and feelings about early childhood leadership and program quality were voiced. The voices have been heard and reported and the story told.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
Date: January 31, 2006

To: Patricia Reeves, Principal Investigator
   Barbara June, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 05-12-11

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "A Case Study of Leadership Traits and Styles of State Funded Michigan School Readiness Program Directors" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: January 31, 2007
Appendix B

Multi-Rater Leadership Style and Trait Survey and Letter of Permission
Overview

The leadership style of the director of an early childhood program is perhaps the most critical factor influencing organizational effectiveness. The director must create an environment based on mutual respect in which individuals work together to accomplish collective goals. The success of this endeavor depends in large part on the director's ability to balance organizational needs with individual needs. Research in this area suggests that leaders who head the most effective organizations tend to be those who apply an integrated leadership style—the ability to adjust their style to the demands of each situation so that both organizational needs and individual needs are met.

Part I of this assessment was adapted from the work of Blake and Mouton (1994); Giammatteo (1975); Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson (2001); and Yukl (2002). It assesses three different leadership styles: the task-oriented style emphasizing organizational needs; the people-oriented style focusing on people and their individual needs; and the integrated style stressing an appropriate emphasis on both the center's needs and the individual worker's needs, depending on the situation. Part II of Assessment Tool #4 provides staff with an opportunity to assess the degree to which you the director exhibit 25 different leadership traits. It was adapted from the work of Neugebauer (1990).

Directions to Teachers:

The Leadership Survey form is comprised of two parts: Part 1 leadership styles and Part 2 leadership traits. (If the director is a male, the gender pronouns used in the survey may be altered) Be sure to complete both assessments yourself. Please do not put any identifying marks on the survey forms.

After the forms are completed please place the survey in the pre-paid postage envelope provided and seal the envelope and mail it to the researcher. Place one of the signed consent forms in the envelope also.
Part I

Dear MSRP teacher:

Early childhood leadership has become an area of ongoing research. Your feedback about the leadership style and traits of MSRP directors is important in helping to further the research to develop a profile of early childhood leaders. Please take a few minutes to complete these leadership surveys. When you have finished both forms place them in the white envelope provided and give them to the director, who will return the surveys to the researcher. The forms are coded for research purposes. All information is confidential.

Thank you.
Barbara J. June

Part I: Place a check (✓) in front of the statement that most nearly reflects your director's leadership style in different situations. (Check only one response in each group).

With respect to planning, my director . . .

1. _____ does most of the planning him/herself by setting goals, objectives, and work schedules for staff to follow. He/She then works out procedures and responsibilities for staff to follow.

2. _____ does very little planning, either by him/herself or with the staff. He/She tells the staff she has confidence in them to carry out their jobs in a responsible way.

3. _____ gets staff members together to assess center wide problems and discuss ideas and strategies for improvement. Together they set up goals and objectives and establish individual responsibilities.

With respect to work assignments and the day-to-day operation of the center, my director . . .

4. _____ checks with staff regularly to see if they are content and if they have the things they need. He/She does not see the necessity of precise job descriptions, preferring instead to let the staff determine the scope and nature of their jobs.
5. ____ is flexible in adapting job descriptions and changing work assignments as needed. Updates center polices and procedures depending on the needs of the staff, parents, children, and board.
6. ____ tends to go by the book. Expects staff to adhere to written job descriptions. Follows policies and procedures precisely.

With respect to leadership philosophy, my director . . .

7. ____ tends to emphasize people’s well-being, believing that happy workers will be productive workers.
8. ____ tends to emphasize hard work and a job well done. We are a results-oriented program.
9. ____ tends to emphasize both what we do and what we need as people.

During meetings, my director . . .

10. ____ keeps focused on the agenda and the topics that need to be covered.
11. ____ focuses on each individual’s feelings and helps people express their emotional reactions to an issue.
12. ____ focuses on differing positions people take and how they deal with each other.

The primary goal of my director is . . .

13. ____ to meet the needs of parents and children while providing a healthy work climate for staff.
14. ____ to keep the center running efficiently.
15. ____ to help staff find fulfillment.

In evaluating the staff’s performance, my director . . .

16. ____ attempts to assess how each individual’s performance has contributed to center wide achievement of goals.
17. ____ makes an assessment of each person’s performance and effectiveness according to predetermined established criteria applied equally to all staff.
18. ____ allows people to set their own goals and determine performance standards.
My director believes the best way to motivate someone who is not performing up to his/her ability is to . . .

19. _____ points out to the individual the importance of the job to be done.

20. _____ tries to get to know the individual better in an attempt to understand why the person is not realizing his/her potential.

21. _____ work with the individual to redefine job responsibilities to more effectively contribute to center wide goals.

My director believes it is his/her role to . . .

22. _____ makes sure that staff members have a solid foundation of knowledge and skill that will help them accomplish center goals.

23. _____ help people learn to work effectively in groups to accomplish group goals.

24. _____ help individuals become responsible for their own education and effectiveness, and take the first step toward realizing their potential.

What three words or phrases most accurately describe the leadership style of my director:

__________________________  __________________________  __________________________
**Part II**

**Part II.** Circle the numeral from 1 to 5 (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) that most nearly represents your assessment of the director's performance in each of the areas described.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>My director is ...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly agree</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accessible—is available when staff, parents, or community representatives need to reach him/her.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborative—encourages staff to participate in center wide decisions impacting their welfare.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confident—has a can-do spirit and sense of optimism about the future.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative—looks for new and novel ways to solve problems and keep things interesting.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependable—can be counted on to follow through on commitments and responsibilities.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct—is clear and forthright in both oral and written communication.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empathetic—is genuinely concerned about the well-being of the staff and children.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enthusiastic—has the energy and stamina to handle the daily demands of the director’s job.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethical—demonstrates integrity in both words and actions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair—looks at all sides of an issue and takes into consideration equity factors when making tough decisions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flexible—is willing to make accommodations when necessary to support staff and families.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendly—displays a warm and gracious manner to staff, parents, and visitors to the center.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good listener—knows how to listen respectfully and attentively to others.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inspiring—has high expectations and helps people achieve their personal best.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledgeable—keeps current about new developments and best practices in the field of early childhood education.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My director is ...</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objective—makes decisions after seeking different perspectives and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open—shares important information about the center with staff and parents.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optimistic—has a positive attitude and keeps things in a healthy perspective.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organized—knows how to create organizational systems to ensure the smooth functioning of the program.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predictable—ensures that expectations are clearly defined and policies are consistently enforced.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem solver—gathers needed data to solve problems in a systematic and timely manner.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resourceful—knows how to tap community resources to get things done.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respectful—treats each employee as a unique and special person and appreciates diversity as an organizational asset.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supportive—promotes the professional growth of staff by providing opportunities for ongoing training and development.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visionary—has a sense of mission and communicates a clear vision for the future.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your responses are confidential.

November 13, 2007

To whom it may concern:

I grant permission to Barbara J. June to use one of my assessment tools, "My Director," for her doctoral research on leadership characteristics of early childhood administrators as a component to her doctoral degree requirements at Western Michigan University. This permission extends from the beginning of her research in January 2005 and until the conclusion of her doctoral studies. I have been in contact with Barbara June and discussed this project with her. She is planning to share her findings with me.

Cordially,

Paula Jorde Bloom
Ph.D.

Michael W. Louis Endowed Chair
Appendix C

Program Quality Assessment Sections and Standards
Program Quality Assessment Sections and Standards

I. Learning Environment
   A. Safe and healthy environment
   B. Defined interest areas
   C. Logically located interest areas
   D. Outdoor space, equipment, materials
   E. Organization and labeling of materials
   F. Varied and open-ended materials
   G. Plentiful materials
   H. Diversity-related material displays of child-initiated work

II. Daily routine
    A. Consistent daily routine
    B. Parts of the day
    C. Appropriate time for each part of the day
    D. Time for child planning
    E. Time for child-initiated activities
    F. Time for child recall
    G. Small-group time
    H. Large-group time
    I. Choices during transition times
    J. Cleanup with reasonable choices
    K. Snack or meal time
    L. Outside time

III. Adult-Child Interaction
     A. Meeting basic physical needs
     B. Handling separation from home
     C. Warm and caring atmosphere
     D. Support for child communication
     E. Support for non-English speakers
     F. Adults as partners in play
     G. Encouragement of child initiatives
     H. Support for learning at group times
     I. Opportunities for child explorations
     J. Acknowledgement of child efforts
     K. Encouragement for peer interactions
     L. Independent problem solving
     M. Conflict resolution
IV. Curriculum Planning
   A. Curriculum model
   B. Team teaching
   C. Comprehensive child records
   D. Anecdotal note taking by staff
   E. Use of child observation measure

V. Parent Involvement and Family Services
   A. Opportunities for involvement
   B. Parents on policy-making committees
   C. Parent participation in child activities
   D. Sharing of curriculum information
   E. Staff-parent informal interactions
   F. Extending learning at home
   G. Formal meetings with parents
   H. Diagnostic/special education services
   I. Service referrals as needed
   J. Transition to kindergarten

VI. Staff Qualifications and Staff Development
   A. Program director background
   B. Instructional staff background
   C. Support staff orientation and supervision
   D. Ongoing professional development
   E. In service training content and methods
   F. Observation and feedback
   G. Professional organization affiliation

VII. Program Management
   A. Program license
   B. Continuity in instructional staff
   C. Program assessment
   D. Recruitment and enrollment plan
   E. Operating policies and procedures
   F. Accessibility for those with disabilities
   G. Adequacy of program funding
Appendix D

Program Quality Assessment Criteria Scoring
PQA Scoring

For standards with three or more indicators an indicator level score is determined as follows:

Level 1: Half or more of the level 1 boxes are checked (regardless of the level 3 or level 5 boxes that may be checked).

Level 2: Fewer than half of the level 1 boxes are checked, and some of the level 3 boxes and/or level 5 boxes are checked.

Level 3: Half or more of the level 3 boxes are checked, and no level 1 boxes are checked.

Level 4: Fewer than half of the level 3 boxes are checked, and the remaining boxes are checked at level 5.

Level 5: All the level 5 boxes are checked, and no level 1 boxes or level 3 boxes are checked.

For standards with two indicators an indicator level score is determined as follows:

Level 1: Both level 1 boxes are checked.

Level 2: One level 1 box and either one level 3 boxes or one level 5 boxes are checked.

Level 3: Both level 3 boxes are checked.

Level 4: One level 3 boxes and one level 5 box are checked.

Level 5: Both level 5 boxes are checked.
Appendix E

Semistructured Questionnaire
Questionnaire

1. How does the leadership of the director impact you as a teacher?

2. Give one or more examples of leadership actions of the director.

3. List five words that describe the leadership traits of the director.

4. What areas of leadership do you feel your director could improve upon, if any?

5. What do you feel is your director's leadership strengths and/or weaknesses?

6. In your opinion who do you feel is responsible for program quality—the teacher, the director, or both director and teachers—and to what extent?
Appendix F

Interview Questions
Interview Questions

1. Reflecting upon the Program Quality Assessment score for the program, how does the leadership of your director affect or enhance the quality of this program?

2. What do you feel is the greatest leadership challenge facing your director?

3. How do you distinguish between the management aspect and the leadership aspect of your director’s job?

4. Who, in your opinion, is responsible for the quality of the program?

5. Complete this phrase from a leadership perspective: “I wish my director would…”

6. If you were able to speak to the Michigan legislature about the Michigan School Readiness Program what would you say regarding the leadership that is needed for these programs?
Appendix G

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
Data Sharing Letter
September 24, 2005

Dear High Scope Educational Research Foundation,

I am a student at Western Michigan University, working on a doctoral degree in educational leadership through the College of Education, Department of Teaching Learning and Leadership. I have been a Michigan School Readiness teacher for the past fifteen years and have served as the budget and grant manager for the Oak Park School District MSRP program. Because of my professional interest in early childhood and my doctoral interest in educational leadership, I focused on the area of early childhood leadership. Through the academic support of Western Michigan University, I have been approved both by the chair of my committee, Dr. Patricia Reeves and committee member Dr. Joan Firestone to pursue research in the area of early childhood leadership in state funded preschool programs.

I am submitting to you upon your request the data sharing request form. If you should have any further questions about the research, please contact me at 2xx-433-xxxx or email me at junefamily@sbcglobal.net. Thank you for the support and communications that we have had which has enabled me to move forward in this area of research.

Respectfully,

Barbara J. June
Appendix H

Recruitment Letter and Consent Form Letter
Dear MSRP Director,

You and your staff are invited to participate in a research project entitled “A Case Study of Leadership Traits and Styles of state funded Michigan School Readiness Program Directors.”

The purpose of this multi-case study will be to explore and describe the teachers’ perception of the leadership traits and styles of directors in the Michigan School Readiness Program and how the teachers perceive these traits and styles as a component of program quality, by using consistent qualitative measures. The rationale for the study will be to determine which leadership traits and styles are most common in these state funded programs and may suggest targeted professional development in the area of leadership. This project is Barbara June's dissertation project.

The study is based upon specific criteria. To participate in the study the program must meet the following criteria. Please review the criteria before agreeing to participate in the study. The criteria for choosing the sample group from the total public school funded Michigan School Readiness Program population is: 1) programs over thirty two students and less than three hundred sixty students, 2) programs where the director has been on staff for the preceding year, 3) programs that meet the Michigan School Readiness staff requirements, 4) programs that are public school funded, center based and adhere to one of the state curriculum models, 5) programs that have two or more teachers, 6) programs that are located in different areas of the lower peninsula – west, east, central, and southeastern regions of the state.

Your participation as a research site is voluntary. You may elect not to participate at any time, or to request your data not be included in the analysis without prejudice or penalty. If you do elect to not participate, please return the complete packet of information to the researcher in the manila envelope with the pre-paid postage. If the center meets the criteria and you chose to participate, the teachers at the center will be asked to complete a survey, questionnaire, and interview regarding your leadership traits and styles. This survey is strictly based upon the teacher’s perception. The survey consists of two parts: Part 1 leadership styles and Part 2 leadership traits. The survey will take each staff member approximately 30 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is six open ended questions that may take 30 min to complete and a face-to-face interview that may take 30 minutes to complete. As the director you will be asked to sign a release form so the
researcher may obtain the Program Quality Assessment score for your center from the High Scope Educational Research Foundation.

All information collected from the teachers is confidential. That means your name and the names of the teachers or any other identifying features will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will be coded, and Barbara June will keep a separate master list with the names of the programs and the participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed. Data will be reported in individual and as a unit case study. All surveys, questionnaires, and interviews will be retained for at least three years in a locked file, with only coded identifying marks, in the principal investigator's office. Only the co-investigator will have access to this file.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may email or call: Barbara J. June at: ccccc@sbcglobal.net call (2xx)219-xxxx or Patricia Reeves at xxxxx@wmcih.edu or call (2xx) 387-xxx. You may also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298 with any concerns you have.

The recruitment letter and consent form has been approved for you for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right hand corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Thank you for the time and effort you and your staff have put into the participation in this research project. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. June

Your signature below indicates that you have read and had explained to you, or both, the purpose and requirements of the study.

__________ I approve of this site participating in the research study.

__________ I disapprove of this site participating in the research study and will return all surveys and materials to the researcher in the pre-postage paid manila envelope.

Your
Signature_________________________________________ Date________________
Appendix I

Telephone Script
Telephone Script

*Script that will be used when calling the directors of sites that have shown an interest in the study*

Ms. xxxxx this is Barbara June calling you regarding my dissertation research project on the Leadership traits and styles of directors of state funded Michigan School Readiness Program.

You initially expressed an interest in this research.

Due to a lack of response for a quantitative research project, the methodology had to be changed to qualitative. The data for this research will include the initial survey with an open ended questionnaire and a face-to-face interview with teacher’s who consent to be interviewed.

I will be using a multi-case study approach. I would like to include MSRP programs that are in different areas of the lower peninsula.

I would like to invite your site to participate in the study; you may choose to participate or not to participate.

I will again send you a packet of materials that explains the new reach project. After I receive the materials back from you, I will call you and set up a date that I can visit the site and meet with the teachers to explain the research project and conduct the data collection.

Do you have any questions?

Do you need any further information regarding this project?

Thank you very much for your time.
Appendix J

Director Cover Letter
Dear MSRP Director,

As the director of a public school funded Michigan School Readiness Program, you and your staff are invited to participate in a research project entitled "A Case Study of Leadership Traits and Styles of state funded Michigan School Readiness Program Directors."

The purpose of this multi-case study will be to explore and describe the teachers' perception of the leadership traits and styles of directors in the Michigan School Readiness Program and how the teachers perceive these traits and styles as a component of program quality, by using consistent qualitative measures. The rationale for the study will be to determine which leadership traits and styles are most common in these state funded programs and may suggest targeted professional development in the area of leadership. This project is Barbara June's dissertation project.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. You, as the director of the program, may choose to or not to have your program participate. As the director of the site you may agree to have the site participate, but each individual teacher will have the option to participate or not participate. If you choose not to participate, please return the complete packet of information to the researcher in the pre-paid postage envelope. If you choose to participate as a site, each teacher in the program will be sent the Multi-rater Leadership survey, questionnaire, and an invitation to participate in a face-to-face interview.

All information collected from the program, the Program Quality Assessment score and the survey, questionnaire and interview data is confidential. That means neither your name nor other identifying information will appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will be coded, and Barbara June will keep a separate master list with the names of the participating programs and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and prepared for analysis, the master list will be destroyed.

The PQA score will be used to assist the researcher in discussing the traits and styles and the program quality. The name of the program, names of the directors and teachers, or any other identifying information will not appear on any information or be identified in any reports or publications. All Program Quality Assessment scores, surveys, questionnaires and interview data will be retained for at least three years in a locked file, with only coded
identifying marks, in the principal investigator's office. Only the co-investigators will have access to the file.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may email or call: Barbara June at: xxxx@sbcglobal.net or call (2xx) 219-xxxx or call Patricia Reeves at xxxx@wmich.edu or call (2xx) 387-xxxx. You may also contact the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

The consent documents have been approved for you for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right hand corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Thank you for the time and effort you have put into your participation in this research project. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. June
Appendix K

Program Quality Assessment Score Consent Form
Western Michigan University  
Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership  

PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT SCORE  
CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Patricia Reeves  
Student Investigator: Barbara June

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “A Leadership Profile of Directors of state funded Michigan School Readiness Programs.” The purpose of the study will be to investigate the link between leadership traits as well as styles of directors in the Michigan School Readiness Program and the Program Quality Assessment score to develop a profile of directors that will predict a program quality score. This project is Barbara June’s dissertation project.

If you choose to participate, you are asked to agree to have the 2004-2005 Program Quality Assessment classroom scores for this Michigan School Readiness Program released from the High Scope Education Research Foundation to the investigators. The High Scope Educational Research Foundation requires that for the data being sought, written permission needs to be given.

This information will be kept confidential. That means the name of the program will not be used in any reporting of the research. Data will be reported in the aggregate form. All information will be retained for at least three years in a locked file, with only coded identifying marks, in the principal investigators office. Only the co-investigators will have access to this file.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may email or call Barbara June at: xxxxx@sbcglobal.net or call (2xx) 219-xxxx or Patricia Reeves at xxxxxxx@wmich.edu or call (2xx) 387-xxxx. You may also contact the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

This consent document has been approved for use by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Your signature below indicates that you have read or had the explained to you, or both the purpose and requirements of the study, and that you agree to participate.
COPY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON TO LETTERHEAD
BEFORE RETURNING

As the director of the ________________________, I agree to have the 2004-2005 Program Quality Assessment classroom scores for this program released.

Print:
Name of Center: ________________________________

Address: ______________________________________

_______________________________________________

School District: ________________________________

Director’s Name: ________________________________

Director’s Signature: ____________________________ Date ______

Consent obtained by: ____________________________ Date ______

There are (number)___________ MSRP teachers in this program.
Appendix L

Teacher Cover Letter
Western Michigan University  
Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

TEACHER COVER LETTER

Principal Investigator: Patricia Reeves  
Student Investigator: Barbara June

Dear Teachers,

The director of your MSRP Program has elected to participate in a research project entitled “A Case Study of Leadership Traits and Styles of state funded Michigan School Readiness Program Directors.”

The purpose of the study will be to explore and describe the teachers' perception of the leadership traits and styles of directors in the Michigan School Readiness Program and how the teachers perceive these traits and styles as a component of program quality, by using consistent qualitative measures. The rationale for the study will be to determine which leadership traits and styles are most common in these state funded programs and may suggest targeted professional development in the area of leadership. This project is Barbara June’s dissertation project.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. You may choose to participate as a survey and questionnaire participant, or as a survey, questionnaire, and interview participant. The completion of the survey and questionnaire will take approximately 60 minutes and the interview 30 minutes.

All information collected from the survey, questionnaire, and interview is confidential. That means neither your name nor other identifying information will appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will be coded, and Barbara June will keep a separate master list with the names of the participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and prepared for analysis, the master list will be destroyed. Data will be reported in individual and as a multiple case study. All Program Quality Assessment scores, surveys, questionnaires, and interviews will be retained for at least three years in a locked file, with only coded identifying marks, in the principal investigator’s office. Only the co-investigators will have access to the file.

There are three options of the research project: you may not agree to participate in any part of the research, you may agree to complete the survey and questionnaire, or you may agree to complete the survey and questionnaire and agree to be interviewed. A consent document will be distributed to you to read so that you may knowledgeably choose to
participate in the study or not. You, as an individual may choose not to participate. You may also withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may email or call: Barbara June at: xxxx@sbcglobal.net or call (2xx) 219-xxxx or email or call Patricia Reeves at xxxx@wmich.edu or call (2xx) 387-xxxx. You may also contact the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

The consent documents have been approved for you for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right hand corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Thank you for the time and effort you have put into your participation in this research project. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. June
Appendix M

Teacher Consent Form – Survey and Questionnaire
Western Michigan University  
Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

TEACHER CONSENT FORM  
Survey and Questionnaire

Principal Investigator: Patricia Reeves  
Student Investigator: Barbara June  

Dear MSRP Teacher,  

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: “A Case Study of Leadership Traits and Styles of state funded Michigan School Readiness Program Directors.”

The purpose of the study will be to explore and describe the teachers’ perception of the leadership traits and styles of directors in the Michigan School Readiness Program and how the teachers perceive these traits and styles as a component of program quality, by using consistent qualitative measures. The rationale for the study will be to determine which leadership traits and styles are most common in these state funded programs and may suggest targeted professional development in the area of leadership. This project is Barbara June’s dissertation project.

If you chose to participate, you will be asked to complete the Parts 1 and 2 of the Multi-rater Leadership Survey form, to answer six open ended questions, and to participate if you choose in a face-to-face interview. In Part 1 of the survey you will be asked to choose between three statements that most nearly reflects your director’s leadership styles in different situations. In Part 2 you will be asked to circle the number from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that most nearly, realistically, and proportionally balanced, in your assessment that represents a leadership profile of your director for each of the traits. This survey will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. The open ended questionnaire will be six short answers that may take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The third part of the research is a face-to-face interview that will consist of six questions. The interview will be tape recorded and later transcribed. You may agree to participate in the survey and questionnaire portion of the research and the interview, or you may agree to participate in the survey and questionnaire but not the interview. Only subjects that complete the survey and questionnaire will be interviewed. A separate interview consent form is enclosed. You may also choose not to participate in the research.

As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. All the information collected from you is confidential. That means your name will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will all be coded, and Barbara June will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed.
Data will be reported only in aggregate form. All surveys will be retained for at least three years in a locked file, with only coded identifying marks, in the principal investigator’s office. Only the co-investigators will have access to the file.

One of the ways that you may benefit from participating in this research is to have the opportunity to describe the leadership traits and styles of your program director and to express your opinion how these traits and styles are or are not a component of program quality. The data that you will provide the researcher, will serve to identify which leadership traits and styles of Michigan School Readiness Program directors. The dialogue and conversation that is generated by this information may prove useful in addressing the Standards for Program Quality, bringing about change in an organization, identifying areas of professional development for both staff and directors, and furthering the overall movement of universal state funded preschool programs in the State of Michigan. The results of the study will be shared with all participating programs.

You may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact either by email or call: Barbara June at xxxx@sbcglobal.net or call (2xx) 219-xxxx or Patricia Reeves at xxxx@wmich.edu or call (2xx) 387-xxxx. You may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8923 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298 with any concerns that you have.

The consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right hand corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Please complete and sign the following consent form and return one of the forms to the researcher in the pre-paid postage envelope. If you have decided to participate in the research place the survey and questionnaire place the completed survey and questionnaire in the same envelope.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and/or had explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate.

________________________________________  ___________
Signature                                      Date

Consent obtained by:                          _____________________________
                                            Initials of researcher  Date
Appendix N

Teacher Consent Form – Interview
Dear MSRP Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: “A Case Study of Leadership Traits and Styles of state funded Michigan School Readiness Program Directors.”

The purpose of the study will be to explore and describe the teachers’ perception of the leadership traits and styles of directors in the Michigan School Readiness Program and how the teachers perceive these traits and styles as a component of program quality, by using consistent qualitative measures. The rationale for the study will be to determine which leadership traits and styles are most common in these state funded programs and may suggest targeted professional development in the area of leadership. This project is Barbara June’s dissertation project.

Since you have agreed to complete the survey and questionnaire, the third part of the research study is face-to-face interview that will consist of six questions. The interview will be tape recorded and later transcribed. You may agree to participate in the interview or not. Only subjects that complete the survey and questionnaire will be interviewed. A separate interview consent form is enclosed. You may also choose not to participate in this portion of the research.

As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. That means your name will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will all be coded, and Barbara June will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed. Data will be reported only in aggregate form. All surveys will be retained for at least three years in a locked file, with only coded identifying marks, in the principal investigator’s office. Only the co-investigators will have access to the file.

One of the ways that you may benefit from participating in this research is to have the opportunity to describe the leadership traits and styles of your program director and to express your opinion how these traits and styles are or are not a component of program quality. The data that you will provide the researcher, will serve to identify the leadership traits and styles of Michigan School Readiness Program directors. The dialogue and conversation that is generated by this information may prove useful in addressing the Standards for Program Quality, bringing about change in an organization, identifying
areas of professional development for both staff and directors, and furthering the overall movement of universal state funded preschool programs in the state of Michigan. The results of the study will be shared with all participating programs.

You may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact either by email or call: Barbara June at xxxx@sbcglobal.net or call (2xx) 219-xxxx or Patricia Reeves at xxxx@wmich.edu or call (2xx) 387-xxxx. You may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8923 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298 with any concerns that you have.

The consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right hand corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Please complete and sign the following consent form and return it in the pre-paid postage envelope. The researcher will contact you regarding the interview, at a time and place that is convenient for you.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and/or had explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate.

_________________________    _______________________
Signature                  Date

Consent obtained by: ________________________    Date

Initials of researcher
Appendix O

Program A – Director and Program Quality Profile Chart
**Director Themes**

**Style:**
- High on Direction
- Low on Feedback
- Low on teacher involvement in decisions

**Characteristics:**

**Communication**
- Low on open dialogue
- Low in feedback
- Not open to input from staff
- Communicates well with parents
- Strong advocate for Program

**Goal Oriented with high expectation**
- Sets goals and standards
- Monitoring for achievement
- Provides little support

**Minimal Involvement**
- Low level of support

---

**Program A**

**Traits**

- Low correspondence across subjects
- Distinct: Collaborative, creative, confident, direct, ethical, fair, flexible, good listener, inspiring, objective, problem solver, respectful, supportive, accessible, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, open, organized, resourceful, dependable, empathetic, friendly, optimistic, predictable, visionary

**Program Quality Themes**

- Program Responsibility: Varied Opinions
  - Teachers
  - Shared

**Quality Standards:**

**Agency**
- Uncertain recruitment and enrollment issues
- Grant not supportive of in-service training
- Lack of adequate funding
- Strong program director background

**Classroom**
- Lack of plentiful materials

---

**PQA scores**

- Total Program rating: 4.4
- High/Mid range
- Agency rating: 4.5
- Classroom ratings: 4.2
Appendix P

Program B – Director and Program Quality Profile Chart
Director Themes

Style: Task
- Controlling
- Demanding
- Micro-managing

Characteristics: Relationships
- Low people skills
- Disrespectful of teachers

Undesirable Personal Qualities
- Unappreciative
- Forgetful, inconsistent, and unpredictable
- Distrusting

Program B

Traits
Mixed correspondence

- Distinct: accessible, ethical, good listener, empathetic, knowledgeable, supportive, flexible,
- Neutral: accessible, collaborative, confident, dependable, direct, ethical, fair, flexible, friendly, inspiring, knowledgeable, open, optimistic, problem solver, respectful, resourceful, supportive, visionary
- Unrecognized: collaborative, creative, dependable, direct, empathetic, enthusiastic, good listener, inspiring, objective, optimistic, organized, predictable, visionary, problem solver, respectful, resourceful

Program Quality Themes

Program Responsibility: Agreement
- Presently teachers
- Ideally shared

Quality Standards: Agency
- Program director’s lack of background and qualifications
- Program Director’s lack of knowledge of early childhood
- Need for Adequate program funds

PQA Scores
Total Program rating: 4.1
Agency rating: 3.9
Classroom rating: 4.2

Program B

Traits
Mixed correspondence

- Distinct: accessible, ethical, good listener, empathetic, knowledgeable, supportive, flexible,
- Neutral: accessible, collaborative, confident, dependable, direct, ethical, fair, flexible, friendly, inspiring, knowledgeable, open, optimistic, problem solver, respectful, resourceful, supportive, visionary
- Unrecognized: collaborative, creative, dependable, direct, empathetic, enthusiastic, good listener, inspiring, objective, optimistic, organized, predictable, visionary, problem solver, respectful, resourceful

Program Quality Themes

Program Responsibility: Agreement
- Presently teachers
- Ideally shared

Quality Standards: Agency
- Program director’s lack of background and qualifications
- Program Director’s lack of knowledge of early childhood
- Need for Adequate program funds

PQA Scores
Total Program rating: 4.1
Agency rating: 3.9
Classroom rating: 4.2
Appendix Q

Program C – Director and Program Quality Profile Chart
Program C

Director Themes

Style: Integrated
- Supportive of the program
- Able to balance goals and relationships
- Exhibits high energy
- Highly collaborative

Characteristics:
- Concerned about others
- Exhibits empathy
- Supportive toward teachers
- Helpful toward staff
- Demonstrates caring attitude

Style

Strong Correspondence

Traits

Program Quality Themes

Program Responsibility:
Agreement
- Shared

Quality Standards:
Agency
- Director’s demonstrated knowledge of program licensing and operating policies and procedures
- Program director’s specific knowledge of early childhood
- Attention to on-going professional development
- Lack of adequate funding

Classroom
- More materials needed for experiences

PQA Scores

Total Program rating: 4.6
High range

Agency Rating: 4.7

Classroom rating: 4.4
Appendix R

Program D – Director and Program Quality Profile Chart
### Director Themes

**Style:** People
- Allows staff to exercise control
- Permits flexibility in program
- Demonstrates respect for teachers
- Allows teacher autonomy: self directed
- Values staff
- Problem solver

**Characteristics:**
- Concern for others
  - Exhibits caring for families and staff
  - Shows empathy
  - Meets the needs of parents
  - Promotes “What’s best for kids”

- Confidence in staff
  - Shows trusts staff

**Communication**
- Encourages open dialogue
- Stays accessible

### Program D

**Traits**
- Strong Correspondence

**Program Quality Themes**

#### Program Responsibility: Agreement
- Shared
- Emphasis on teachers

#### Quality Standards: Agency
- Strong expertise of program director
- Emphasizes good instructional staff background and in-service training,
- Lack of adequate funds for program
- Unfilled need for program funding advocate

#### Classroom
- Use of curriculum standards
- Use of team planning
- Use of student assessments

**PQA Scores**

- **Total Program rating:** 4.1
  - Mid range
- **Agency rating:** 4.0
- **Classroom rating:** 4.2
Appendix S

Program E – Director and Program Quality Profile Chart
**Director Themes**

**Style:**
- Shows concern for center goals
- Places emphasis on planning
- Focuses on accomplishing tasks

**Characteristics:**
- Communication
  - Is improved—was a challenge
  - Has an open door policy
  - Always accessible to staff
- Knowledgeable
  - Possesses a wide knowledge base

**Program E**

**Traits**

**Program Quality Themes**

**PQA Score**

- **Total Program rating:** 4.95
  - High range

- **Agency Rating:** 4.9

- **Classroom rating:** 5.0

**Program Responsibility:**
- Shared

**Quality Standards:**
- Dedicated to servicing families
- Lack of adequate state funding
- Assists in transitioning to kindergarten

**Program E**

**Traits**

**Strong Correspondence**

- Close Correspondence

**Distinct:** accessible, collaborative, confident, creative, dependable, direct, empathetic, enthusiastic, ethical, fair, flexible, friendly, good listener, inspiring, knowledgeable, objective, open, optimistic, organized, predictable, problem solver, resourceful, respectful, supportive, visionary

**Neutral:** collaborative, confident, creative, objective, organized,

Unrecognized: none
Appendix T

Program F – Director and Program Quality Profile Chart
Program F

Director Themes
Style: Integrated
- Uses team concept
- Values high morale
- Director exhibits support of staff
- Remains Goals oriented
- Sets positive tone
- Different situation-uses appropriate emphasis

Characteristics
Concern for others
- Recognized as caring, kind, and compassionate
- Shows Empathy
Communication:
- Is open to staff comments
- Demonstrates good listening ability
- Low on follow through
- Communicates well with parents

Personal qualities
- Inconsistent attention toward tasks
- Shows positive personal attributes

Traits
Strong Correspondence
Distinct:
accessible, collaborative, confident, creative, dependable, direct, empathetic, enthusiastic, ethical, fair, flexible, friendly, good listener, inspiring, knowledgeable, objective, open, optimistic, organized, predictable, problem solver, resourceful, respectful, supportive, visionary

Neutral: collaborative, confident, dependable, direct, creative, problem solver, organized, accessible, inspiring, resourceful, objective

Unrecognized:
accessible

Program Quality

Themes
Responsibility:
Agreement
- Shared

Quality Standards:
Agency
- Lack of adequate funding causing problems with recruitment and enrollment
- General need for knowledgeable program directors
- Aligned and targeted professional development
- Using program assessment for improvement

Classroom

PQA Score

Total rating:
4.4
High/Mid range

Agency rating:
4.7

Classroom rating:
4