The Leadership Style of an Administrator: Influence on Teachers' Willingness to Implement Selected Instructional Strategies

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THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF AN ADMINISTRATOR: INFLUENCE ON
TEACHERS’ WILLINGNESS TO IMPLEMENT SELECTED
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

by

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A Specialist Project
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THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF AN ADMINISTRATOR: INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS’ WILLINGNESS TO IMPLEMENT SELECTED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

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This project examined an elementary public school principal with regard to their leadership style and how it influences classroom culture or climate. A 45-questionnaire was administered to one principal in a public school setting and a classroom survey instrument was administered to nine teachers in his building.

Significant findings based on literature in this project indicated a transformational leader was more inclined to support teachers and utilize different instructional modalities than a principal whose leadership style is transactional. The teacher survey collected data from teachers’ perception about their administrator across different instructional domains. The researcher utilized statistical means to determine whether there was a difference in the mean scores of teachers who perceived their principal’s leadership style as transformational as compared to those teachers who perceived their principal leadership style as transactional.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The journey to complete this project was one like no other, full of experiences that propelled me to my limits of knowledge and extended my capacity of learning. I am acknowledging God for his continuous presence in my life through the whole process of this journey. I also acknowledge my husband, son, and the rest of my family for their prayers, encouragement and support through the years.

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Brenda Lopez Martinez
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................. ii

LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................... vi

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................... 1

   Statement of the Problem ........................................................................ 6

   Limitations of the Study ....................................................................... 6

   Significance of the Study ................................................................... 7

   Research Questions ............................................................................. 8

   Literature Review ............................................................................. 9

   Method ............................................................................................... 10

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ........................................................................ 12

   Transformational and Transactional Leadership .................................... 13

   Marzano’s Model of Leadership Competencies .................................... 14

   Avolio and Bass Model of Leadership Components ............................ 23

   Leadership and Instructional Climate .................................................. 26

III. METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................... 31

   Sample Composition and Selection ...................................................... 32

   Sampling Frame .................................................................................. 32

   Sample Design .................................................................................... 32
CHAPTER

Sampling Procedures ............................................................... 32
Instrumentation ................................................................................ 33
Data Collection Procedures ........................................................ 35
Data Analysis ................................................................................... 35
Independent and Dependent Variables ...................................... 36
Limitations of the Study ............................................................ 36
Summary ......................................................................................... 36
Definition of Terms ........................................................................... 37

IV. FINDINGS OF STUDY ................................................................. 38

Review of Procedures .................................................................... 38
Participation Rate .......................................................................... 39
Results ............................................................................................. 39
Restatement of Question .................................................................. 41

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........ 46

Discussion ...................................................................................... 46
Purpose 1 ......................................................................................... 46
Purpose 2 ......................................................................................... 47
Purpose 3 ......................................................................................... 48
Purpose 4 ......................................................................................... 49
Concluding Remarks ....................................................................... 49
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Recommendations .................................................................................. 50

APPENDICES

A. Permission to Use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) ..... 51
B. Letters to Participating Principal and Teachers .................................... 53
C. Classroom Teacher Survey Instrument ................................................ 57

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................... 63
LIST OF TABLES

1. MLQ Scores of Administrator ............................................................ 40
2. Disparity in Perceived Leadership Style ............................................. 43
3. Impact of Principal’s Leadership Behavior on Classroom Culture ........ 45
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The central point of previous studies by researchers was on school leadership and the separation of the variables interconnected to school leaders in a school system. Conclusively, amidst the numerous factors and players who comprise a learning institution, past and current research indicates an undeniable correlation between effective school leadership and measurable student achievement (Marzano, McNulty, & Waters, 2004; Portin, 2004; Shen, 1998).

Research identifies the school principal as the intrinsic factor in providing leadership and guidance in establishing best practices and expectations for students and teaching staff. Furthermore, empirical studies suggest that educational leadership is related and affects the quality of school culture and students' learning (Marzano et al., 2004).

Over the past 30 years the role of the principal has evolved from program manager to instructional leader. As a program manager, the principal of the past focused on maintaining facilities and handling teacher placement. Today, the instructional leader must focus upon curriculum, instruction, and student assessment. This transition continues, spurred by the changing times and social climate (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Previous research documents the inadequacy of administrative preparation programs. Muse and Thomas (1991) mentioned that despite the year principals are
appointed to a school, they are not fully prepared. Principals are certified as administrators in programs that are inadequate or irrelevant for their required field-based responsibilities. In 1998, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and Educational Research Service (ERS) conducted a study on current and potential principals. The results of this study indicated that there is a shortage of qualified principals in the United States. In ERS’s national survey, only one fourth of the districts in the United States reported having a program for recruiting and preparing candidates. Fewer than half of the districts have a mentoring program for new principals. In this study, principals discussed their credential program and experiences they felt equipped them for leadership. The consensus was that they considered their preparation programs were of little value, theoretically, and disconnected from the challenges posed by changing times in present-day classrooms (Partin, 2004). These challenges include knowledge of curriculum, knowing best instructional practices to implement, using assessments effectively, and dealing with classroom cultures.

Each principal is accountable to lead teachers and students to greater student academic achievement. Given the uniqueness of each school’s demographics and culture, the strategies that are effective for leading and teaching one student population may not work for another population (Portin, 2004).

It is apparent that the leadership curriculum in preparation programs for aspiring principals is not adequate to address the demands of an ever-changing society and the pressures of instructional goals on public schools.
This constant evolution of the principal's role has resulted in the need for change in leadership styles that will inspire students to learn and teachers to excel in their teaching style. It has been suggested that the most appropriate approach for school principals in the midst of change is to be a transformational leader (Freidman & Langbert, 2000). The transformational leadership approach seeks to raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration for both the leader and follower, transforming both (Burns, 1978).

An important ingredient in creating a conducive learning environment for students and teachers is for the principal's positive working relationship with their faculty. This study will address effective leadership training for current and future school principals. It will also provide information on a principal's leadership style and the effect on classroom culture (Allison, Haas, & Haladyna, 1998).

Transformational leadership is characterized by the process that challenges individuals to raise their awareness level of their morality for the good of others (Avolio & Bass, 2002). The transformational leader shapes, alters, and even elevates the followers' motives and values. This process unites members in their pursuit of higher goals and motivates followers to reconsider existing viewpoints and perceptions of the best outcomes for the organization (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership is useful in providing meaning and understanding in the midst of changing and challenging educational environments. Principals who practice this type of leadership are able to inspire followers by stimulating and persuading them to expand the use of their abilities in the school environment. This would occur in the capacity of the leader as principal or
teacher and the follower as teacher or student. The principal’s transformational influence on teachers elevates them to become transformational leaders of student in the classroom.

Transformational leadership addresses short- and long-term goals and personal motivation factors. This promotes change in the follower’s motive base, which opens a viable path toward student achievement and success (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Burns, 1978). Essentially, the leader that focuses on the follower’s capabilities and well-being enhances the follower’s commitment to the organization (Bass, 1998). Such solidarity is a key factor in the organization’s ability to withstand the challenges that are vital in today’s education.

In the forefront of such challenges, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is putting schools to the test for change. This legislation seeks to improve academic excellence through higher standards and improvement of teacher quality. With the implementation of this Act, schools are held to higher standards and increased accountability. They are more responsible for ensuring instructional success of all learners. The Act mandates that school leaders should focus on influencing teacher quality, student assessments, curriculum, encouraging safe schools, and implementing other accountability components leading to academic growth (Bush, 1995). The principal plays a significant role in formulating success.

Students’ underachievement on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) tests has fueled a popular conception that students in elementary and secondary school systems are slipping in their academic performance. Some of the factors that
contribute to low performance are for better or worse, “quality and quantity of instruction, motivation, cognitive ability, and the amount and quality of family support, attitude, adequacy of instructional materials and educational leadership” (Allison et al., 1998, p. 271). Such factors require school principals to demonstrate higher levels of instructional leadership, creating a fertile environment for academic growth and development of all students and teachers. Their success can build a classroom culture that opens up possibilities for academic advancement.

As instructional leaders, principals need an established leadership program so they are better able to affect, inspire, and facilitate teachers in fostering a classroom conducive to student learning and, hence, success.

With the implementation of NCLB, the responsibility of the school district has doubled: in addition to finding prepared and qualified instructional leaders (NAESP, 1998), districts are required by law to raise student achievement. Principals are the key to setting the stage for student success by creating positive learning environments.

Principals who are willing to invest their time and efforts in developing new leadership skills for this new age must demonstrate transformational leadership by motivating teachers to improve student academic levels. A principal’s leadership is the vanguard component in initiating and maintaining a positive learning culture. Their leadership style, combined with knowledge of instructional practices, permeates throughout the school and stimulates the advancement of teacher awareness and positive academic outcomes.
Statement of the Problem

To what extent can the principal’s leadership style influence the classroom culture and the development of best practices designed to enhance opportunities for student achievement? A paucity of research that determines the impact of leadership style and its effect upon teachers’ instructional practices in the classroom warrants the need for this study.

The centrality of the organizational culture to the cultivation of “best practices” is well documented in the literature. Best instructional practices in the classroom include a positive classroom culture, teacher instruction, knowledge of instruction and curriculum, ongoing assessment, and collaboration (Gruenert, 2000; Marzano et al., 2004). But a principal’s success in implementing these “best practices” depends in great measure upon the efficacy of his or her leadership style. Few have made the connection between principals’ leadership style and their effect upon teacher’s ability to create a classroom climate conducive to positive student learning outcomes. Current school principals who wish to help their schools achieve greatness, and those who aspire to principalship, will need to understand the relationship between their leadership style and its effect on teachers in the classrooms.

Limitations of the Study

Through the development of the project a few limitations have been identified: (a) the sample size is small, (b) data are gathered from only one elementary school in
Michigan, (c) the results cannot be generalized. As other limitations in this study become apparent, they will be reported in Chapter V—Discussion.

Significance of the Study

As leadership styles continue to be identified, developed, and practiced, the whole concept of leadership remains complex. The purpose of this project is (a) to review literature on transformational and transactional leadership style of school leaders, (b) to examine the perceived and practiced leadership style (transformational or transactional) of a mid-Michigan elementary public-school principal, (c) to examine classroom teachers’ perceptions of the leadership style practiced by their principal, and (d) to examine the data gathered regarding these perceptions and to determine their influence on continuous development of the school improvement plan.

This project is important to the field of educational research because it will provide insights into the perceived and actual leadership styles of this elementary principal and possibly reveal the effect that principal’s leadership style can have in creating a positive classroom environment for teachers and students. It will help identify and correct gaps between the principal’s leadership style and the “best practices” the leader hopes to stimulate. It also will illuminate the leadership style most likely to elicit success, defined by the marked improvement of student achievement in the classroom. This information will may allow the principal and teachers to improve their school improvement plan by sharing the data with faculty to see what strategies are working and whether other strategies need to be implemented.
Lastly, the project will inform educators and educational institutions about the necessity of changing requirements in principal preparation programs. The educational leadership preparation requirements must be connected with the actual challenges a school leader will encounter.

In addition, one of the components in this preparation program should include the importance of leadership styles on school culture. With national assessments indicating low student performance in reading, writing, mathematics and science, this vital research is a key to reversing the trend. Leadership is the vehicle that allows principals to effectively transmit their knowledge and skill in aligning curriculum, assessments, and instruction for student learning outcomes. Elementary students, their parents, faculty, and society as a whole will be the ultimate benefactors as student outcomes improve.

Research Questions

This study will attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How does a public school elementary principal in a selected Michigan school perceive his leadership style? Is there any difference between the way he thinks he is leading and the way he actually leads?

2. How do nine public school elementary teachers in this selected Michigan school perceive their principal’s leadership styles?

3. What is the effect of the principal’s leadership style upon the classroom climate or culture?
The components of the studies that comprise the literature review will be:
(a) critical studies that discuss transformational and transactional leadership as defined in
the review, (b) Marzano's model of transformational leadership and best practices, and
(c) Avolio and Bass's model as the only instrument specifically targeted to identify and
categorize a transformational and transactional leadership behaviors to a high degree in
validity and reliability—the interrater reliability reported for the survey was above .70 in
all scales, and (d) critical studies that describe the effect of principals' leadership style
upon the instructional climate.

The Avolio and Bass model will be used as a framework to measure shared
patterns of behavior in leadership styles of elementary principals. It was selected on the
basis of past research. The researchers' instrument, Multifactor Leadership
Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio & Bass, 2004), is the best to use for this project because it
allows the gathering of data on leadership perceptions. This model targets the
performance of a leader on a range of leadership styles and directs the leader on how to
be more effective. Hundreds of studies have been conducted to support the connection
of the "full range" model of leadership to the expected performance outcome (Avolio &
Bass, 2002).

The MLQ measures leaders' self-perception of their leadership style. If this were
an extensive study, teachers could administer the questionnaire to measure how teachers
perceive the principal as the leader. The teachers' responses would direct leaders to
pursue further study on the leadership style that would be most effective in their own particular school setting.

Method

Before this project process began, a Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) application was completed and sent to the Institutional Review Board committee for approval.

Many times leaders may perceive that the leadership styles they are practicing are effective. The teachers, as followers of the principal, are the best sources of impact to evaluate this premise. This project investigated leadership style used by a selected mid-Michigan public elementary school principal. Nine elementary teachers in the principal’s school were asked to take part in this study.

This project was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the perceived leadership style of this selected principal was collected. The second phase utilized the fourth grade teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s leadership style—whether he practiced using transformational or transactional leadership styles. In addition, this phase explored the effects, if any, that leadership styles had on the classroom environment for fourth-grade students.

The project involved the use of a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) survey for the principal. The Teacher Strategy Survey was administered by the nine fourth-grade teachers. The survey was created in two sections: the first section reported instructional strategies being implemented in the classroom. The second section of the
survey focused on leadership strategies that the principal practiced in his building. The survey used was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). This questionnaire consists of 45 descriptive statements and clear and self-explanatory directions (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Responses are to remain confidential and a stamped pre-addressed envelope was included for each instrument to be sent directly to the researcher. Respondents were given two days to complete it.

When all the data were collected, the results were used to analyze the criteria and form conclusions about the correlation between the principal’s actual and perceived patterns of leadership behavior and the possible effect on the learning environment.

The detailed methodology used in this project was presented in Chapter III. Chapter IV reviews the results and analysis of the study. In conclusion, Chapter V contains an overview of the research findings, discussion, recommendations for future studies, and the limitations of this research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leadership is a complex theory. It is considered a theory because people have diverse ideas of what leadership means. Numerous researchers have conducted empirical studies on a variety of approaches in leadership, directing their study on their own theories. Among researchers who have applied leadership theory to the field of education, examples of the approaches include leadership that sparks learning (Marzano, McNulty, & Waters, 2005); teachers’, principals’, and superintendents’ conceptions of leadership (Shen, 1998); and the roles that principals play (Portin, 2004). In all these studies, the common element is the researchers’ agreement that the leadership component in the educational environment is important to the success of the organization.

The complexity of this theory lies in the diversity of leaders studied and their researchers’ varied interpretations of leaders and leadership. Cattell (1951) described a leader as the person who creates effective changes in group performance. Boleman and Deal (1997) define leaders as those who get things done and influence others to do the same.

Pfeffer (1992) suggests that leadership is the ability “to get people to do things they would not otherwise do” (p. 30). Boleman and Deal (1997) believe leadership is not tangible, that it exists in relationships, imaginations, and the perception of those engaged parties. Burns’ (1978) definition reads as follows: “leadership over human beings is
exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers" (p. 18). The thread that weaves these definitions of leadership together is the relationship between the people.

The view on leadership has shifted through the years, from the focus on the individual as leader to a greater focus on the relationship between the leader and follower (Moxley, 2000). Along with the shifts in leadership style, the requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandates that leaders implement numerous changes that affect norms and values, and motivates them to acquire new knowledge and skills.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

The leadership model created by Avolio and Bass (2004) provides a framework to measure shared patterns of behavior in leadership styles of elementary principals. Their model was developed to give researchers the full range of styles typically investigated in the field of leadership, from the low range of transactional involvement to the highest measure of transformational participation. According to these researchers, it is important to include a "full range" of leadership styles using models and measurement to assess leadership styles. It was for this reason the measurement tool known as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was created. This instrument is most commonly used to measure transformational and transactional leadership factors. Avolio and Bass created this measurement tool because in the past 20 years there has been a new paradigm of testing transformational and transactional leadership.
Downton's concept was not popular until Burns' political leadership concept surfaced in 1978. Burns noted that transactional leaders in the political arena motivated their followers with the exchange of rewards for services. This leadership style focuses solely on the leader's need to ensure that tasks are done.

Burns terms the transformational leadership as a higher order of leadership. The transformational leader attempts to engage followers so they may develop into leaders. The leaders begin by addressing and nurturing the followers' needs from lower to elevated levels of maturity.

A transformational leader makes contact with others in such a way that the leader and follower stimulate one another to higher levels of motivation. This elevation converts followers into leaders, and leaders into moral agents (Burns, 1978). The motivation that is released from the leaders allows others to do what they believed was impossible. These transformational leaders motivate everyone around them to take their eyes off of themselves and focus on the group, society, or organization.

When employees are empowered, the results of efficiency and productivity are great (Polgase, 2003). Transformational leadership can occur top-down, between associates, or bottom-up where a follower influences his/her leader to reconsider vision, focus, or the mission that is being pursued.

Marzano's Model of Leadership Competencies

Marzano (Marzano et al., 2005) describes 21 “competencies,” or responsibilities, that appear to touch on the perspectives of transformational and transactional behaviors. His competencies are research-based and the findings indicate them to be important in
executing effective leadership in schools. This meta-analysis “allows researchers to form statistically based generalizations regarding the research within a given field” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 7). The meta-analysis technique was formally developed and popularized by Gene Glass and his colleagues (Glass, 1976; Glass, McGraw, & Smith, 1981).

Another researcher, Hunt (1997), wrote illustrations of the successful use of meta-analysis in the fields of medicine, psychology, criminology, and other fields.

Marzano et al. (2005) believed effective principals would exhibit these 21 competencies, which can be categorized into transactional and transformational leadership behaviors. They gathered data from 69 studies, in the time frame of 1978-2001, involving 2,802 represented schools. In these studies, questionnaires were given to teachers focusing on their perception of the principal’s leadership behavior.

Marzano et al.’s study evaluated the schools and the score representing the students’ achievement, and summarized the average perception of the teachers’ perceptions of leadership behaviors. Their study concluded that leadership behavior does have a profound impact on student achievement.

The study of meta-analysis done by Witeiers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) suggested almost no correlation between leadership behavior and student achievement. However, Marzano et al. (2005) analyzed their results and identified three reasons for differences between their own study and that of Witeiers and colleagues. First, they had conducted the study on literacy from the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (IEA) in 25 other countries, as opposed to the United States. These countries reported low correlation between leadership and literacy achievement.
When Witeiers and his colleagues excluded the IEA studies, they found the correlation had doubled between the leadership and achievement.

Computation issues also accounted for some differences. In Marzano et al.’s (2004) meta-analysis, the average correlations within and between studies used a process excluding conceptual and statistical outliers—those correlations that are different in “a set based on conceptual or statistical criteria” (p. 33).

The third factor that helps explain the disparity between leadership and student achievement in Marzano et al.’s study was the correction in the decrease of the correlation coefficient caused by the measuring instrument’s lack of precision. His questionnaire dealing with leadership abilities featured extremely low reliabilities. Using this measurement instrument (questionnaire) resulted in underestimation of the correlation between leadership and student achievement.

In summary, Marzano et al.’s average (.25) correlation estimated the relationship between principals’ leadership behavior and student achievement, using the following conditions: (a) all schools are in the United States, (b) leadership behaviors and student achievement are computed measuring the same constructs and the scores for leadership behavior, and (c) scores on leadership behavior are computed using correlations and student achievement and have been corrected for lack of reliability (Marzano et al., 2005).

In applying their 21 competencies to the nature of school leadership, Marzano et al. (2004) identified the following three transactional competencies:
1. Affirmation recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments, and acknowledges failures. This is similar to Avolio and Bass's (2004) management by exception.

2. Change agents refer to the leader's disposition to challenge the status quo.

3. Contingent rewards allow leaders to recognize individuals and reward their accomplishments. Both Avolio and Bass (2004) and Kouzes and Pozner (1995) emphasize that contingent rewards send a message to teachers and administrators. The specific behaviors in the meta-analysis competencies are recognition and reward for hard work and performance, not seniority of the staff members. These competencies align with the transactional definitions of leadership provided by Avolio and Bass.

Marzano et al.'s transformational competencies are listed and defined below:

4. Communication: The extent to which the school leader encourages strong communication between teacher and student is a vital component to the organization. Elmore (2000), Fullan (2001), and Leithwood and Riehl (2003) agree that communication is the most important concept in leadership. The leader must be accessible and develop ways in which teachers can communicate their knowledge with one another.

5. Culture: The leader emphasizes what is important as staff develops their knowledge about the uniqueness of culture of their school. The culture of the school should promote cohesiveness among staff, assist them to understand their purpose, and develop a shared vision for the way the school environment should look. Leaders positively influence teachers and the teachers in turn influence their students. Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) found that principals can indirectly influence
student achievement. Marzano et al. (2005) stated that student achievement could be raised if the principal fosters an effective culture.

The principal as leader should work toward creating a collaborative climate for the staff. Such an environment enhances the ability of personnel to respond to problems and opportunities effectively, productively, and efficiently (Shedd & Bacharach, 1991). It leads to better decision-making and improves the relationship between teacher and principal (Smith & Scott, 1990). Additionally, a collaborative climate allows teachers the freedom to express viewpoints and improves communication. It also increases job satisfaction and raises morale for teachers and trust for principals. It lessens stress, conflict, and burnout for teachers. Collaborative work between principals and their teachers allows freedom for aligning curriculum, lesson planning, and executing instruction and skills. Nurturing a positive school climate facilitates continuous improvement of instruction and student achievement (Riggins, 2002).

6. Discipline: The school principal should protect teachers from distractions or interruptions in teaching, internally or externally. Elmore (2000) stated, “School leaders are hired and retained based largely on their capacity to buffer teachers from outside interference” (p. 7).

7. Flexibility: The leader should adapt their leadership behavior to the current situation. The effective leader encourages, protects, and nurtures individuals who initiate different points of view. Leaders encourage people to express themselves, even if they have a different point of view, and make changes if needed. Just as importantly, when there is a different point of view, or when changes are made, followers need to be comfortable with how things are done.
8. **Focus**: Goals should be clearly stated, allowing teachers to teach curriculum using optimum instruction practices, and utilize assessment practices that help evaluate students' learning. Some of the best practices identified in the literature as contributing to the creation of a classroom climate conducive to positive student learning outcomes are ongoing student assessments/tests, teacher instruction, teacher observations, collaboration, and professional development (Marzano et al., 2005).

Teachers who use ongoing assessments for learning find them beneficial in supporting, teaching, and adapting instruction to meet the students' needs. There are assessments *for* learning and assessments *of* learning. The latter are difficult to use because little time is allotted to the standards on skills being taught (Fox, 2003).

If educators are going to use assessments to improve instruction, assessments will need to be fine-tuned so the information can assist teachers in modifying instruction (Siobhan, Lyon, Thompson & William, 2005). Educational leaders must differentiate between evaluation and assessment. In evaluation the teacher is observing whether learning has occurred, knowing there will be no intervention, reassessment, or changing outcomes. Assessments are used to gather information to instruct or intervene in students' instruction, for effective teaching and learning assessments are vital components.

Assessment and evaluation are not to be done in isolation. If evaluations are done before assessments, it is defeating the learning process.

Guskey (2003) has three recommendations in using assessments. The results should be useful for corrective instruction, and feedback to the students should include
that instruction. Most importantly, students being assessed must have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and competence.

To optimize meaningful assessments, teachers and principals should dialogue about students’ work and instruction. To gather data, a baseline should be established, choosing an area of focus and analyzing the results of these assessments. An effective assessment will lend information for directing and guiding instruction.

It is important that assessments not be a process where scores are documented and the class moves on to the next unit without any follow-up for student learning. When effective principals and teachers understand that the data has been gathered to guide instructional decisions, educators gain insight into student learning. Using assessments helps educators “monitor students’ learning over a period of time, distinguishes effective from ineffectual instructional practices, and provides timely and effective interventions to meet individual learning needs” (Fox, 2003, p. 14).

The best way to get the most from the data of assessments depends on the principal’s leadership. Principals as leaders must know strategies for organizing and analyzing data to assist teachers in implementing the process (Fox, 2003). Every elementary teacher plays a vital role in impacting student learning ( Abrams, Padulla, & Madaus, 2003; McNeil, 2000; Smith, 1991).

Marzano et al.’s transformational competencies continue with the following:

9. Ideals and beliefs: Depree (1989) describes this as beliefs connected to intimacy. Beliefs come from policies, standards or practices. If leaders do not believe in what they are practicing they will perceive themselves as isolated. Leaders who understand methodology and quantification but who have no beliefs will have the
required head knowledge but no relationship with followers. Without relationship with followers, competency or confidence cannot exist. Bennis (2003) view beliefs as a powerful force and important for effective leadership. He also suggests that principals shape the school environment and teaching practices by implementing their beliefs.

10. Input: The school leader involves the teacher in designing and implementing important decisions and policies.

11. Intellectual stimulation: The school leader ensures faculty and staff are updated and that they regularly discuss current theories and practices in maintaining an effective school.

12. Involvement and knowledge in curriculum, instruction and assessment: The extent to which the principal takes a hands-on approach in these areas at the classroom level is a critical component of instructional leadership. Stein and D'Amico (2000) agree that the knowledge of subject matter should be as important to administration as to teachers. Both Fullan (2001) and Elmore (2000) refer to a leader who is aware of the best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment to guide teachers on a daily basis in teaching and learning.

Principals need the teachers' commitment to educate all students using elevated standards. Teachers must be effective in meeting “curriculum standards assessed in the testing environment. Understanding how teachers perceive testing and how they see the principal's role as instructional leader influencing their success in this endeavor can help principals in meeting this challenge” (Kaplan & Owings, 2001, p. 15).

13. Monitoring and evaluating: A leader gathers feedback on student achievement to evaluate the effectiveness of school practices.
Teacher observations are a critical component. They allow principals to learn individual teachers’ performance skills and gauge their willingness to change (Protheroe, 2002). Observation also assists principals in assessing the effectiveness of each teacher and helping them improve instructional performance. In order to identify effective teachers, principals must understand the standards for student learning and articulate constructive feedback to the teacher being observed.

14. **Optimizer:** A leader sets an emotional tone, whether positive or negative. An effective leader can help make changes with their optimism and energy. This criterion refers to the amount of inspiration and drive a leader demonstrates when implementing a challenging innovation.

15. **Order:** The leader creates structure using principles, boundaries, and routines that will be followed by staff and students. Supovitz (2002) identified order as a necessity: “Groups need structures that provide them with the leadership, time, resources, and incentives to engage in instructional work” (p. 1618).

17. **Outreach:** A principal must communicate with people inside and outside the school; the boundaries extend beyond the school to the community as a whole.

18. **Relationships:** Central to the other responsibilities, an effective leader will build and foster professional relationship by demonstrating awareness of the staff’s personal life. Maintaining this relationship helps in times of uncertainty and change.

19. **Resources:** Extending beyond books and materials, resources include space, time, new ideas, technical resources, people, professional development, and expertise. Professional development is an essential component for teachers and principals to create strong instruction in the classroom for the success of students.
20. **Situational awareness:** The leader is responsible of all the functions that occur in the school. It is important that a leader be aware of what is occurring in the school environment so they can respond promptly to the organization’s needs.

21. **Visibility:** The school leader has a responsibility to be visible and have frequent contact with teachers, students, and parents. Fink and Resnick (2001) explain that effective principals “are in teachers’ classrooms every day. Walk-throughs in the classroom are an effective method of being visible.” Blase and Blase (1999) agree that effective principals are in classrooms routinely. The visibility of the school principal demonstrates that the principal is engaged and interested in the daily activities, and affords an opportunity for teachers and students to interact with the leader.

**Avolio and Bass Model of Leadership Components**

These competencies are interrelated in the area of leadership and instructional climate. Avolio and Bass (2004) also have studied leadership behaviors and have identified some of the same competencies but refer to them as components.

The model developed by these researchers focuses on two styles of leadership: transactional and transformational, representing a spectrum of input and involvement with the follower.

The transactional leader takes the initiative in making a connection with others for the purpose of exchanging valued favors or actions. Once the exchange has been made the relationship ends (Burns, 1978). Burns distinguished this style of leadership as the lower-order of organizational technology. Avolio and Bass (2004) provide the following definitions of transactional leadership components:
**Contingent reward:** This transaction is reasonably effective, although it does not compare to the transformational component in motivating others in development and performance at a higher level. In the use of contingent reward the leader assigns or gets agreement from followers on what must be done; the followers receive a reward (such as a raise, promotion, or more interesting assignments) for completing the task satisfactorily.

**Management by exception:** This corrective transaction may be active or passive. In an active corrective transaction the leader monitors standards and mistakes, then corrects the follower as necessary. A passive corrective transaction involves the leader waiting to observe mistakes and errors before taking corrective measures.

**Laissez-fair leadership:** This type of leadership offers no transaction. Inactive and ineffective, it shows no evidence of leadership.

Transformational leadership is an expansion of transactional leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Using only the transactional approach will fall short because of the resource constraints in which these leaders operate. These leaders operate by avoiding making decisions, delay in getting involved, and responding to urgent questions (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The base of transformational leadership is when the leader focuses on the individualized needs of the followers by recognizing their needs and promoting leadership.

Avolio and Bass (2004) identify and define four components of transformational leadership.

**Idealized leadership:** These leaders are role models for their followers because of the behavior they demonstrate (Bush, 1995). Followers admire, respect, and trust them.
These leaders demonstrate a care for others' needs rather than their own personal needs. The transformational leader shares risks with followers and communicates them repeatedly (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger, 1994). These leaders do the right thing, holding high standards and ethical and moral conduct as their compass. Power is used only when needed and not for their own gains. This component is comparable to Bush’s cultural perspective: this type of leader sustains the organization’s culture. They lead by example, communicate core values and beliefs, and utilize rituals and ceremonies that convey the culture of the organization (Boleman & Deal, 1997; Pfeffer, 1992).

**Inspirational motivation:** The transformational leader motivates and inspires his or her followers with meaning and challenge. At work, team spirit is uplifted, enthusiasm is displayed. The leader communicates clear expectations and is committed to the organization’s goals and shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

**Intellectual stimulation:** The leader encourages followers to be creative and innovative by asking questions and approaching situations from other viewpoints. Criticism is not involved when mistakes are made. Ideas, solutions, and new ideas may be offered without criticism by the followers involved in the process for a task. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner’s view of leadership in challenging the process encourages followers to experiment, take risks, and learn from their mistakes.

**Individualized consideration:** The leader is a coach and/or mentor to his or her followers. Leaders pay attention to the followers’ needs for achieving. Followers involved with the transformational leader are developed and usually demonstrate a higher level of potential. A supportive climate is created and each individual’s needs and desires are recognized. The leader encourages two-way communication by listening attentively
Effective communication is an important, and rare, factor in the role of leadership. Without it, one cannot lead or attain educational excellence. Such communication eliminates misunderstandings. Any communication breakdowns that do occur are temporary rather than permanent. A system of communication must be in place to distribute the same information to everyone in the organization (DeBruyn, 1976).

It is essential to evaluate the different styles of leadership in the educational organization to assist principals in using best leadership styles to create a positive learning culture in our public schools. They in turn transfer their knowledge to teachers so teachers use best instructional practices for a positive classroom culture to enhance student achievement.

Leadership and Instructional Climate

Several researchers identify the principal of the school as the key person to provide leadership and guidance in setting the expectations for the school. Empirical studies have suggested educational leadership is related to the quality of schools and students' learning. These studies have interpreted effective leadership influences regarding student achievement and classroom climate (Marzano et al., 2005). Just as there are many definitions of leadership, there are many for climate. Climate is defined as three-dimensional, involving relationship, personal development, system maintenance, and change (Moos, 1974). Other researchers view climate to include variables of leadership, classroom instruction and management, the physical surroundings, and the values of individual structures and relationships (Anderson, 1982). Still others contend there should be a distinction between school climate and individual classroom climate.
Fraser, and Saldern (1986), generally agreed that there was a correlation between classroom climate and student achievement. There is also evidence that the climate can be changed (Fraser & O’Brien, 1985). Whatever the viewpoint of researcher, it appears to indicate that the perception of climate concerns the psychological, social, and physical environment aspects of the climate effect on student’s behavior and achievement (Dunn & Harris, 1998).

A study on school leadership spanning more than 25 years by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) sought to determine whether educational leadership does make a difference in the quality of students’ learning. It was the third study in a series, named School Leadership That Works. This study focused on “meta-analytic studies of the classroom, school, and leadership practices that are highly correlated with student achievement,” and found that there was “a significant positive correlation between effective school leadership and student achievement” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 48). This study defined effective leadership as leaders knowing what to do, and also how, when, and why they do what they do. The researchers concluded that these leaders understood school changes and the updates required to improve student achievement, the implications for the staff and the community, and the leadership practices that are essential to acquire the results. The study demonstrated that as the leadership improves, there is also improvement in student achievement (Marzano et al., 2004). From this research we may conclude that if the leader is ineffective, the student achievement is more likely to be at a low percentile.

The most important yet difficult job an instructional leader encounters is to change the existing climate of a school when it is not improving or having a positive
impact on student achievement. The principal cannot change the school culture single-handedly but can make adjustments and provide leadership to help transform it. The principal should identify the proper focus for improving the school and classroom to have a positive impact on student achievement.

A school’s culture is ingrained in the core of the organization. It incorporates the norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths of the organization; it shapes the way people think and act. Each school has its own culture; it can be vibrant or toxic. One common element in all schools is that cultures resist change, making school improvement difficult. If there is resistance, then “to change the culture of the school, innovations, higher standards, and assessments will have to fit in and around existing elements of the culture” (Barth, 2002, p. 6).

This is something Dr. W. Edwards Deming utilized when he taught the principles and methodologies of Total Quality in Japanese corporations after World War II (Hanna, 2001). Change from the inside out is a concept well suited to the Japanese culture; it allows for the development of a foundation of trust, which is required for lasting cultural change. The process of change is not complete until it permeates the outer circles.

There is debate as to what approach to use to change culture. Hanna (2001) suggests that leaders must make the changes first in themselves, to model the behavior (walk the talk) they expect and state the vision clearly, and to have consequences for desired and undesired behavior.

“Leaders can act like effective leaders, but if they fail to guide their schools toward making the correct changes, these changes are likely to have a diminished or negative impact on student achievement” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 50). One way the
principal as an instructional leader can transform the culture of the school is to acknowledge and address the topics that teachers want to discuss, but also those they may not want to discuss (Barth, 2002).

Secondly, a leader must communicate with new teachers in the building. Oftentimes when new teachers arrive, the school’s existing culture will dictate whether they can voice their thoughts or not. If the culture is perceived to be threatening, the teacher will not feel the freedom to share thoughts or opinions. If years can go by and the same climate persists, by the time the teacher is tenured, he or she has been immersed in the school’s existing culture. Adapting to their environment, the teacher no longer perceives cultural patterns of leadership, competition, self-interest, or lack of support.

Cultural transformation requires devoted participation by all involved, guided by the principal’s skill and courage. Unhealthy elements will have to be replaced by positive ones, motivating the teachers to focus on using best practices in the classroom. Cultural norms identified by Saphier and King (1985) that improve and promote school learning for teachers are collegiality, high expectations, trust and tangible support, involvement in decision making, and honest and open communication.

The unhealthy elements of school culture tend to foster “at-risk students” who will leave school (before or after graduating) with a lack of desire to continue learning. These unhealthy elements must be addressed so a positive climate can be created and supported. A focus on accountability for student achievement sends a strong message to all educators that it is not business as usual.

As leaders guiding their teachers, principals must be aware of the instructional climate that exists in their building and observe whether teachers are creating a culture
for students that threatens them to learn or gives them the freedom to experience the beauty of learning and striving to become lifelong learners. "Show me a school where instructional leaders constantly examine the school’s culture and work to transform it into one hospitable to sustained human learning, and I’ll show you students who do just fine on those standardized tests" (Barth, 2002, p. 9). To summarize, the implementation of best instructional practices in the classroom for students will help create a positive classroom culture.

Although there are many factors that affect leadership, leaders continue to strive to face the challenges with the knowledge they have acquired, to support teachers, and to impact student achievement.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The present study as introduced in Chapter I presents the design and methodology used to examine this study. Research identifies the school principal as the intrinsic factor in providing guidance in establishing best practices and expectations for students and teaching staff. Furthermore, empirical studies suggest that educational leadership is related to and reflects the quality of school culture and students’ learning (Marzano et al., 2004).

The purpose of this project will provide answers to the following specific questions:

1. How does a public school elementary principal in a selected Michigan school perceive his leadership style? Is there any difference between the way he thinks he is leading and the way he actually leads?

2. How do nine public school elementary teachers in this selected Michigan school perceive their principal’s leadership style?

3. What is the effect of the principal’s leadership style upon the classroom climate or culture?

This chapter is organized in the following sections: (a) sample composition and selection, (b) instrumentation, (c) data collection procedures, and (d) data analysis.
Sample Composition and Selection

Sampling Frame

The subjects of this project were one principal and nine elementary teachers who work in a public K-12 school district located in the Midwest. They were responsible for providing instructional and supervisory responsibilities for children enrolled on a full-time basis in regular education classrooms.

Sample Design

The design for this project was based upon collecting data from building staff in one Midwestern school district. The selected school district comprised 4,021 students. Of these, 1,883 students attended elementary schools, 1,044 students attended the middle school, and 1,494 students attended the high school. The district was selected based upon the investigator’s knowledge of the district and the willingness of district staff to participate in this project for the purpose of improving their school improvement efforts. The district’s superintendent was approached and permission was obtained for this investigator to conduct this project. With support of the superintendent, the principal of the elementary school was then contacted.

Sampling Procedures

The sampling frame from which data were collected was obtained from one Midwestern school district. With the approval of the district superintendent, the
investigator was able to obtain consent to include the building principal and teachers within the building.

Instrumentation

The design of this project examined the principal’s and teachers’ perceptions of transformational and transactional leadership style. Two methods were used to gather the data. They were the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Form 5X-short) developed by Avolio and Bass (2004), and the Teacher Classroom Survey Instrument, an instrument developed by the investigator that is based upon classroom instructional strategies that are closely linked to improved student achievement (Marzano et al., 2004).

Utilizing RefWorks, the Buros Manual, ERIC documents, and other related resources, the investigator was able to identify an instrument, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), that is capable of differentiating the leadership styles of both transformational and transactional leaders (Avolio & Bass, 2004). This instrument was originally designed to measure transformational and transactional leadership behaviors in a self-reporting format as perceived by the leader (the principal) and by the follower (the teacher). Further research studies conducted by Avolio and Bass (2004) revealed that the MLQ instrument is both valid and reliable on all scales ($r = .70$).

The MLQ instrument contains 45 descriptive statements that are rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 0 to 4, where 0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly often, and 4 = Frequently, if not always (Avolio & Bass, 2004).
For this project, the MLQ was administered to the principal to determine his preferred leadership style (see Appendix A).

The Classroom Teacher Survey Instrument was developed by the investigator to measure the overall classroom climate. More importantly, this instrument was designed to identify the type of instructional strategies used by teachers and perceived to be influenced by the leadership style of the principal. The Classroom Teacher Survey instrument is based on selected classroom instructional strategies identified by Marzano et al. (2004) that are closely associated with improved student achievement. The rationale for creating this instrument was to determine whether there was a relationship between the use of selected teaching/learning strategies and the principal’s leadership style.

The Classroom Teacher Survey instrument has two sections. The first section contains a listing of classroom instructional strategies that the principal encourages teachers to use in the classrooms. The second section of the instrument focuses on the leadership style of the principal and the practices he utilizes to encourage teachers to incorporate selected instructional strategies within their classrooms.

To test the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, a field test was conducted with the assistance of four teachers who were not included in the population of teachers queried. Any question that did not have at least an 80% level of agreement as being a good instructional strategy was eliminated. The Classroom Teacher Survey Instrument was edited and submitted to the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) for approval to administer (see Appendix D).
Data Collection Procedures

The investigator identified a particular Midwestern school district with which she was familiar and whose leaders would be willing to participate in a project that would improve their school improvement planning process. Approval was obtained from the superintendent to allow the investigator to talk with the elementary principal and teachers about their willingness to participate in the project. After meeting with the principal and teachers involved, the investigator was given permission to proceed with the project. The investigator mailed to each participant the appropriate instrument, to be returned in an anonymous self-returned envelope. The packet received by each participant included a cover letter briefly outlining the purpose of the study, a survey, and assurance that individual responses would not be reported and that all data received would be reported in the form of aggregate statistics. The principal was administered the MLQ, and teachers completed the Classroom Teacher Survey Instrument.

Data Analysis

This project, by nature, is descriptive. The Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program was used to analyze the data collected. Appropriate statistical procedures, including means and standard deviations, were used to determine the degree to which teachers felt the principal's leadership style encouraged them to use various instructional strategies within their classroom.
Independent and Dependent Variables

The dependent variable (DV) in this project is the leadership style of the principal as measured by the MLQ. The independent variables (IV) are the 17 instructional strategies identified on the Classroom Teacher Survey Instrument.

Limitations of the Study

This is a research project and it is limited in terms of its scope and purpose. Because this is a research project, there should not be any inferences or generalizations made beyond the individuals who participated in this project. Therefore, this research project will be limited to the principal and teachers who completed survey instruments and will not include other principals and teachers in the Midwest.

Summary

This chapter described the methods and procedures used to determine the extent to which a principal’s leadership style had an influence on the overall classroom culture. Utilizing the MLQ to determine the preferred leadership style of the principal, nine teachers were administered an instrument to identify the kind of instructional strategies they incorporated in their classroom based upon the perceived influence of the principal’s leadership style.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF STUDY

The purposes of this project were four-fold. They were: (1) to review the literature on transformational and transactional leadership styles as exhibited by school leaders, (2) to evaluate the leadership style of a mid-Michigan elementary public school principal, (3) to examine classroom teachers’ perception of the leadership style practiced by their principal, and (4) to examine perceptual data and determine its influence on the development of the building staff’s school improvement plan.

Review of Procedures

The elementary school selected in this project was based on the investigator’s knowledge of the district and the willingness of district leaders and staff to participate in this project. A teacher survey was developed by the researcher to measure (a) the extent to which teachers implemented classroom instructional strategies, and (b) the extent to which the principal supported teachers in creating an environment where they felt comfortable in implementing strategies that were aligned to student achievement. In addition to this, the researcher administered a second questionnaire, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) that was developed by Avolio and Bass (2004) to measure the principal’s perception of his preferred leadership style—e.g., transactional or transformational. In this project, and based upon the review of the literature, it was discovered that if the principal was a transformational leader, he would be more inclined
illustrates how the administrator perceived his leadership behavior across eight different domains.

Table 1

*MLQ Scores of Administrator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformational*</th>
<th>M Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Idealized Influence (Attributed)</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Idealized Influence (Behavior)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Extra Effort</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Effectiveness</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.62</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactional**</th>
<th>M Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contingent Reward</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contingent Reward</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Management-by-Exception (Active)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Management-by-Exception (Passive)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A score of 3.00 or higher indicates the respondent’s leadership behavior is transformational.

**A score less than 3.00 means that the respondent’s leadership style is transactional.
In reviewing the data in Table 1, the principal had an overall mean ($M$) score of 3.62 across nine different leadership domains. The combined responses indicate that the administrator perceived himself of being a transformational leader.

When teachers were administered the Classroom Teacher Survey Instrument, they were given the definition of a transactional and transformational leader. Of the three responding teachers, all three (or 100%) indicated that the principal was a transformational leader.

Restatement of Question

In this section, the investigator will restate the questions and then provide the corresponding data to answer each question posed.

Question 1: How does a principal in a selected Michigan public elementary school perceive his leadership style? Is there any difference between the way he thinks he is leading and the way he actually leads?

The MLQ score of 3.62 suggests that the administrator's leadership behavior is transformational. Of the 12 leadership domains, the administrator rated himself a 3 ("fairly often") in 6 of the 12 domains, e.g., idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and extra efforts. In addition, the administrator rated himself a 4 ("frequently, if not always") on 2 of the 12 leadership behavior domains. The overall mean score of the administrator's leadership behavior was 3.62. (The reader is referred to Table 1.)
The data in Table 2 illustrate the disparity in the perception of the administrator in terms of how he leads as compared to how teachers perceive the way he actually leads. To obtain the level of disparity between these two measures, the investigator collapsed the 5-point response scale into two major categories. A teacher’s rating of “fairly often” to “frequently, if not often” was collapsed into a category which suggest that teachers felt the administrator did in fact support a particular classroom strategy. On the other hand, if the teacher selected the “not at all,” “once in a while,” “or “somewhat” categories, then there is a high likelihood that the building administrator did not support teachers’ use of selected instructional strategies.

Based upon the information in the Table 2, the data suggest that there was some disparity between the building principal’s perception and the perception of teachers regarding the way he leads with respect to supporting teachers in the following areas: (a) Creating and enforcing classroom rules and procedures school-wide to maintain a positive culture, (b) Encouraging professional development in areas aligned with the school’s focus, (c) Allocating resources for instructional purposes, (d) Responding to issues/concerns in an open-ended and clear manner, (e) Communicating learning goals to discuss concerns related to students’ learning outcomes, (f) Collaborating and planning faculty meetings to create units to employ research-based strategies, (g) Enabling attendance of workshops/conferences that will enable you to become more proficient in the instructional content areas, (h) Experimenting with instructional strategies that would motivate students to learn, and (i) Monitoring and sharing students’ progress and findings to advance learning strategies.
Table 2

*Disparity in Perceived Leadership Style*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Strategies</th>
<th>% of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creating and enforcing classroom rules and procedures school-wide to maintain a positive culture</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Monitoring and aligning curriculum being taught with state standards and assessments</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Encouraging professional development in areas aligned with the school’s focus</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Allocating resources for instructional purposes</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Responding to issues/concerns in an open-ended and clear manner</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Communicating learning goals to discuss concerns related to students’ learning outcomes</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Collaborating and planning faculty meetings to create units to employ research-based strategies</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Enabling attendance of workshops/conferences that will enable you to become more proficient in the instructional content areas</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Experimenting with instructional strategies that would motivate students to learn</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Monitoring and sharing students’ progress and findings to advance learning strategies</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, teachers felt the principal did not exhibit a transformational leadership behavior as it relates to monitoring and aligning curriculum being taught with state standards and assessments.

*Question 2:* How do nine public school elementary teachers in this selected Michigan school perceive their principal’s leadership styles?
When the investigator asked elementary teachers to rate their building principal as "transactional" or "transformational," all of the responding teachers (N = 3) indicated that the building administrator was "transformational." However, when the investigator asked teachers the extent to which the principal exercised the appropriate leadership behavior needed to support instructional effectiveness, all of the responding teachers indicated that the principal was a transformational leader with respect to the following areas: (a) Creating and enforcing classroom rules and procedures school-wide to maintain a positive culture, (b) Encouraging professional development in areas aligned with the school’s focus, (c) Allocating resources for instructional purposes, (d) Responding to issues/concerns in an open-ended and clear manner, (e) Communicating learning goals to discuss concerns related to students’ learning outcomes, (f) Collaborating and planning faculty meetings to create units to employ research-based strategies, (g) Enabling attendance of workshops/conferences that will enable you to become more proficient in the instructional content areas, (h) Experimenting with instructional strategies that would motivate students to learn, and (i) Monitoring and sharing students’ progress and findings to advance learning strategies. However, selected responding teachers felt that the administrator was transactional in the way he monitored and aligned curriculum being taught with state standards and assessments.

**Question 3:** What is the effect of the principal’s leadership style upon the classroom climate or culture?

The data in Table 3 demonstrate the impact of the principal’s leadership style on the classroom climate or culture.
### Table 3

**Impact of Principal's Leadership Behavior on Classroom Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Strategies</th>
<th>% of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Protecting instructional time in content areas</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teaching using lesson plans that address essential content areas of instruction</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Administering and gathering ongoing assessments in math, reading, and science to re-teach skills and give students feedback on their progress</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Being encouraged to use different approaches using content materials multiple times</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Utilizing curriculum materials aligned with the instruction being taught</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Collecting and analyzing students' data to discuss and implement instructional changes, if needed</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 3 illustrate that teachers felt the principal’s leadership style helped to create a positive classroom climate or culture by supporting teachers in the following ways: (a) Teaching using lesson plans that address essential content areas of instruction, and (b) Being encouraged to use different approaches using content materials multiple times. On the contrary, responding teachers felt ambivalent about the extent to which the administrator (a) protected instructional time in content areas; (b) administered and gathered ongoing assessments in math, reading, and science to re-teach skills and give students feedback on their progress; (c) utilized curriculum materials aligned with the instruction being taught, and (d) collected and analyzed students’ data to discuss and implement instructional changes, if needed.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purposes of this project were to (a) review literature on transformational and transactional leadership styles of school leaders, (b) examine the perceived and practiced leadership style (transformational or transactional) of a mid-Michigan elementary public school principal, (c) examine classroom teachers’ perceptions of the leadership style practiced by their principal, and (d) examine the data gathered regarding these perceptions and to determine their influence on continuous development of the school improvement plan. To shed light on each of the stated purposes, the investigator will restate each purpose and provide a corresponding response.

Purpose 1

The first purpose of this study was to review the research literature on transformational and transactional leadership styles of school leaders. In my review of the research literature, I learned that the transformational and transactional domains of Avolio and Bass (2004) and Marzano et al.’s (2005) competencies are very similar across several domains and both can be utilized to explain the leadership behavior and styles of administrators who lead schools.
Purpose 2

The second purpose of this study was to examine the perceived and practiced leadership style of a mid-Michigan elementary public school principal. In this regard, the investigator queried the administrator about his leadership style and felt that he was a transformational leader. The investigator administered a survey to nine teachers in the building regarding the extent to which teachers perceived they had support from the building administrator needed to implement selected research-based instructional strategies that were closely correlated to student achievement. Based upon the data that were collected, it appears that the principal was a transformational leader in supporting teachers regarding (a) teaching using lesson plans that address essential content areas of instruction, and (b) being encouraged to use different approaches using content materials multiple times. The principal demonstrated a transactional leadership in the areas of (a) protecting instructional time in content areas; (b) administering and gathering ongoing assessments in math, reading, and science to re-teach skills and give students feedback on their progress; (c) utilizing curriculum materials aligned with the instruction being taught; and (d) collecting and analyzing students' data to discuss and implement instructional changes, if needed.

Findings in this project clearly suggest that although principals felt they are uniform in how they perceive and practice leadership styles, they may actually be transformational in some areas while transactional in other areas. In this study, I also found that the principal was a transformational leader as perceived by teachers, but, according to teachers, was deemed a transactional leader in the following areas:
(a) Creating and enforcing classroom rules and procedures school-wide to maintain a positive culture, (b) Encouraging professional development in areas aligned with the school's focus, (c) Allocating resources for instructional purposes, (d) Responding to issues/concerns in an open-ended and clear manner, (e) Communicating learning goals to discuss concerns related to students' learning outcomes, (f) Collaborating and planning faculty meetings to create units to employ research-based strategies, (g) Enabling attendance of workshops/conferences that will enable you to become more proficient in the instructional content areas, (h) experimenting with instructional strategies that would motivate students to learn, and (i) Monitoring and sharing students' progress and findings to advance learning strategies. However, responding teachers felt that the administrator was transactional in the way he monitored and aligned curriculum that was taught that was aligned with the state standards and assessments.

**Purpose 3**

The third purpose was to examine classroom teachers' perceptions of the leadership style practiced by their principal. In examining the data, I found that, overall, all respondents perceived their principal's leadership style was transformational. This demonstrates that the administrator allowed teachers to make their own decisions about implementing instructional strategies they felt would influence improved student achievement. This finding clearly supports the notion that a transformational leader, as compared to transactional leader, has a greater impact on teachers' motivation, self-efficacy, and individual and group performance (Burns, 1978).
Purpose 4

The final purpose of this study was to examine the data gathered and make a determination about the extent to which the perception of teachers regarding the leadership behavior of the principal influenced their school improvement efforts. Due to extenuating circumstances surrounding the restructuring of the building and staff, the investigator was unable to collect data in this area.

Concluding Remarks

This project provides ample support that a principal’s leadership style has an influence on the kind and type of instructional strategies that teachers incorporate in their classrooms (Mazano et al., 2004; Portin, 2004; Shen, 1998). Research findings tend to suggest that a transformational style of leadership helps to support research-based instructional strategies that teachers perceive lend to improved student achievement.

A finding from this project also suggests that principals may not be aware of the fact that they can be both a transformational leader in some areas and a transactional leader in other areas. While these findings are important, this study was not able to determine the extent to which the leadership behavior of a principal would influence the school improvement planning process in a more positive direction. Additional study is this area is sorely needed.
Recommendations

The findings in this project are quite encouraging while recognizing that additional study is needed. In order to shed light in this area, it is recommended that this study be replicated. If this is done, it is suggested that the sample size be increased to more accurately measure the precision of the sampling estimates, as well as to determine the extent to which the study can be generalized to the larger population of teachers and principals.
Appendix A

Permission to Use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)
MLQ  Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Bulk Permission Set

Leader Form, Rater Form, and Scoring Key for MLQ Form 5x-Short

Permission for Brenda Martinez to reproduce either leader or rater forms for up to 20 copies in one year from date of purchase:

January 25, 2007

by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio

Distributed by Mind Garden, Inc.

info@mindgarden.com
www.mindgarden.com

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Appendix B

Letters to Participating Principal and Teachers
February 21, 2007

Dear Elementary Principal:

My name is Brenda Martinez. Currently, I am a graduate student at Western Michigan University and am working towards the completion of an Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) in the College of Education's Department of Educational Leadership. As part of my research project, I am conducting a study that is designed to measure the influence of a principal’s leadership style on the overall classroom culture. It is my sincere hope that the findings from this study will be used by the principal, and teaching staff, to identify future professional development opportunities that are closely aligned to a principal’s leadership style and the instructional strategies that teachers feel will improve the school culture and student achievement.

You will be receiving a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) that will take about 15 minutes to administer. Each 4th grade teacher in your building will receive a Classroom Teacher Survey instrument. This document will take about 15 minutes to complete. All instruments will include a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Your responses will be kept confidential, and no name of individuals, or school building, will be identified and reported. Upon completion of my project, I will share my general findings with all who participated and request the study’s results.

If additional information about my request or project is needed, please contact me at (616) 393-0439 or brendal@chartermi.net. In addition, the chairperson of my research project is Dr. Wegenke. He is available to answer questions at gary.wegenke@wmich.edu or by telephone at (269) 387-2966.

Thank you very much for considering my request. I am looking forward to your response.

Brenda Martinez
Graduate Student
February 21, 2007

Dear Elementary School Teacher:

My name is Brenda Martinez. Currently, I am a graduate student at Western Michigan University and am working towards the completion of an Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) in the College of Education’s Department of Educational Leadership. As part of my research project, I am conducting a study that is designed to measure the influence of a principal’s leadership style on the overall classroom culture. It is my sincere hope that the findings from this study will be used by the teaching staff, and principal, to identify future professional development opportunities that are closely aligned to a principal’s leadership style and the instructional strategies that teachers feel will improve the school culture and student achievement.

Each 4th grade teacher will receive a Classroom Teacher Survey instrument. This document will take about 15 minutes to complete. A stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

Your responses will be kept confidential, and no name of individuals, or school buildings, will be identified and reported. Upon completion of my project, I will share my general findings with all who participated and request the study’s results.

If additional information about my request or project is needed, please contact me at (616) 393-0439 or brendal@chartermi.net. In addition, the chairperson of my research project is Dr. Wegenke. He is available to answer questions at gary.wegenke@wmich.edu or by telephone at (269) 387-2966.

Thank you very much for considering my request. I am looking forward to your response.

Brenda Martinez
Graduate Student
Appendix C

Classroom Teacher Survey Instrument
**Introduction**

This instrument is designed to measure the extent to which teachers implement selected classroom instructional strategies. To complete this instrument, please check the most appropriate box that indicates the extent to which you implement the following instructional strategies. Pretest experience indicates it will take you approximately ten (10) minutes to complete this survey. Please be advised that your responses will remain anonymous, and that no name or individual responses will be reported or otherwise released. Please tell me the extent to which you have the opportunity for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Strategies</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Once in a while</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Fairly often</th>
<th>Frequently if not often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Protecting instructional time in content areas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Teaching using lesson plans that address essential content areas of instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Administering and gathering ongoing assessments in math, reading, and science to re-teach skills and give students feedback on their progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Being encouraged to use different approaches using content materials multiple times</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Utilizing curriculum materials aligned with the instruction being taught</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Observing teachers in the classroom by doing walk-throughs and giving them feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Collecting and analyzing student’s data to discuss and implement instructional changes, if needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Other (please specify)</td>
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</table>


This portion of the survey asks you to identify ways in which your principal supports your instructional effectiveness. To what extent would you say that your principal supports you as a teacher by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Strategies</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Once in a while</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Fairly often</th>
<th>Frequently if not always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creating and enforcing classroom rules and procedures school-wide to maintain a positive culture for learning</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Monitoring and aligning curriculum being taught with state standards and assessments</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Encouraging professional development in areas aligned with the school’s focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Allocating resources for instructional purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Responding to issues/concerns in an open-ended and clear manner</td>
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<td>( )</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Communicating learning goals to discuss concerns related to students’ learning outcomes</td>
<td>( )</td>
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<td>7. Collaborating and planning faculty meetings to create units to employ research-based strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Enabling attendance of workshops/conferences that will enable you to become more proficient in the instructional content areas</td>
<td>( )</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Fostering professional organizations that support research in effective teaching and learning practices</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Strategies</td>
<td>Not at all (0)</td>
<td>Once in a while (1)</td>
<td>Somewhat (2)</td>
<td>Fairly often (3)</td>
<td>Frequently if not always (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Experimenting with new instructional strategies that would motivate students to learn</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
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<td>( )</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Monitoring and sharing students’ progress and findings to advance learning strategies</td>
<td>( )</td>
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<td>( )</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Other</td>
<td>(please specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
Date: March 7, 2007

To: Gary Wegenke, Principal Investigator
    Brenda Martinez, Student Investigator

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 07-02-24

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Perceived Leadership Style Behavior: A Study on Public School Teachers” 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: March 7, 2008
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Fraser, B. J. (1986). Two decades on perceptions of classroom environment. In B. J. Fraser (Ed.), *The study of learning environments* (pp. 1-33.) Salem, OR: Assessment Research.


