A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS IN NATIONAL
BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS
AND MATCHED SETS OF
SELECTED NON-BLUE
RIBBON SCHOOLS IN
PENNSYLVANIA

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ABSTRACT

With a focus on leadership, this study examines the leadership characteristics of principals in schools that are recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools by the United States Department of Education. This mixed methodology study utilizes the causal comparative method to compare what teachers consider to be effective leadership characteristics of principals in National Blue Ribbon Schools to those of principals in matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania. The Audit of Principal Effectiveness is used to collect quantitative data and a survey protocol is used to identify confounding factors and extraneous variables. The research revealed significant findings in nearly all areas of the Audit of Principal Effectiveness. Principals in the selected matched-set schools were ranked higher than principals in National Blue Ribbon Schools. Additional analysis using a multiple regression showed that teachers perceive their principal as effective if the principal has good relations with them, employs and evaluates staff effectively, has high expectations, and does not exceedingly involve the community in the life of the school.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A teacher is one who inspires. I truly believe that to be a teacher you must be willing to sacrifice and give of yourself so that those who put their trust in you to reach their highest potential. I would like to formally acknowledge the fine faculty at Temple University for a first class educational experience. My work throughout this program has expanded my capacity to be a better school leader and a more productive citizen. Most notably, I would like to thank Dr. Steven J. Gross. I believe that his work both in the classroom and through his research and publications has contributed to the advancement of education. His tutelage has allowed me and countless other students an opportunity to see a "Democratic Ethical Educational Leader" first hand.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and supportive wife. Without her, none of my life's

ambitions would be possible.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Identifying the specific combination of attributes that enables a person to become a successful leader may prove difficult to uncover. The goal of this study is to identify teachers' perceptions of the most effective leadership practices of their principals within a National Blue Ribbon School and compare and contrast them with teachers' perceptions of the most effective leadership practices of their principals in matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania.

While research exists that identifies the attributes of leaders, including principals, very little attention has been given to teacher perception of the effective practices of principals (Barnett, 2004; Hager, Scarr, 1983; Hersey, Blanchard, Johnson, 1996; Kelly, et. al., 2005; Maehr, Midgley, 1992; Smith, Williams, 2000; Valentine, Bowman 1989). While perceptions are subjective, it is noted that the perceptions of the leader's effectiveness are important. "Although leadership style can be thought of as the cumulative effect of *all* traits, skills, and behaviors, it generally describes what is perceived as the key—or at least a prominent—aspect of the universal set of leadership characteristics" (Van Wart, 2005, p. 19).

This study examines what selected teachers perceive as the most effective practices of principals. Perceptions of teachers were obtained by administering of the Audit of Principal Effectiveness (Valentine, Bowman, 1987). This instrument was used to gather data from teachers in nine of the twelve National Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania. The results are compared and contrasted to the data collected from teachers in nine matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of effective leadership by principals is highlighted in literature regarding the effectiveness of schools (Dwyer, 1984; Hallinger, et. al., 1987; Hallinger, Heck, 1998; Kitto, 2007; Purkey, et.al., 1982; Williams, 2000). These studies note that effective schools in fact have effective leaders. A school where the educational growth of both student and teacher is the focus remains at the forefront of current educational change. Some of these schools are referred to as professional learning communities; these schools are characterized by having learning embedded in their culture. Teachers engage in ongoing professional dialogue to enhance their practice, make informed changes to their teaching, and as a result, the learning of all improves (Darling-Hammond, Milbrey, Mclaughlin, 1995; Dufour, 2004; Gross, 2001; Vescio, Vicki; Ross, Dorene; Adams, Alyson, 2008). Leaders in this environment must continue to grow and develop as well to ensure the effective facilitation of the environment to allow for teacher collaboration and learning.

Previous studies conducted on this topic similarly focused on the effectiveness of the school principal. Valentine and Bowman conducted a similar study in 1989 during which the Audit of Principal Effectiveness (APE) was developed and Williams' study followed in 2000 reflecting similar topics and using the APE to collect data, though none were conducted comparing Blue Ribbon Schools to other schools (Barnett, 2004; Coulon & Quaglia, 1989; Kelly, et. al., 2005; Smith, et. al., 1992; Valentine, Bowman, 1989; Williams, 2000). This body of work falls short of comparing and contrasting teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of principals in National Blue Ribbon Schools and a matched-set of selected non-blue ribbon schools in Pennsylvania. Adding to the body of research on the topic of leadership within a school, this study examines effective practices of principals as identified by teachers.

Purpose of the Study

While many factors lead to the success of an organization, one of the major

characteristics that distinguish successful organizations from unsuccessful organizations is the

presence of effective leadership (Hager, James, Scarr, 1983; Valentine, Bowman, 1989; Smith,

Maehr, Martin, Midgley, 1992; Hersey, Blanchard, Johnson, 1996; Williams, 2000; Barnett,

2004; Kelly, et. al., 2005). To fully conceptualize leadership, one must first understand the

definition of the word *Leader.* In his study of successful leaders and how they lead, Gardner

defined leaders as "persons who, by word and/or personal example, markedly influence the

behaviors, thoughts, and/or feelings of a significant number of their fellow human beings" (1995,

p. 8). In his work, Gardner uses case studies to demonstrate the power individuals possess to

impact the behavior of others either directly or indirectly.

Hersey et. al. concluded that the task of any leader involves "the process of influencing

the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation"

(1996 p. 35). Effective leadership involves not only a successful leader, but also the followers

and the environment. In summarizing the findings on leadership, Hersey, et.al. also found that

successful leaders adapt their leadership behavior in response to the situation and to the needs of

the people involved. The effectiveness of any leader is tied to the followers' characterizations of

the leader's motive for action (1996).

It is evident that effective schools are not created by chance. Effective schools, where

learning is the focus, are created through a culture facilitated by the leaders in that school. Hord

(2004) refers to the "unwavering commitment to student learning that is consistently articulated

and referenced in the staff's work" (p. 7). She further speaks about schools where successful

programs exist, describing examples where under the direction of the principal who created

schedules and provided time for them to work together, "teachers helped one another, took collective (not just individual) responsibility for student learning, and worked continuously to improve their teaching practices" (p. 13).

What makes a leader effective varies among schools according to the uniqueness of the environment within the school. The behaviors and practices of the principals are observed by many, including teachers. It is the teachers' perceptions of these behaviors and practices by leaders that are the focus of this study. Several questions guide the research and inform the purpose of this study.

Research Questions

As this study considers teacher perceptions of the effective practices of principals, an overarching question emerges: When comparing and contrasting teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their principals in National Blue Ribbon Schools and matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania, what is the outcome? Related questions are: 1) What do teachers perceive as the effective leadership practices of the principals in National Blue Ribbon Schools? 2) What do teachers perceive as the effective leadership practices of the principals in non-Blue Ribbon Schools?

Leadership characteristics, behaviors, and practices are collected from multiple perspectives. To answer the questions above and effectively identify the outcomes of the study, teachers will be invited to participate in the study. Teachers were surveyed to determine their perspective of leadership within their school. Follow-up interviews were conducted to identify unexplained variables that may exist. The results of data collected from each instrument are correlated and categorized.

Definitions

Effective: For purposes of this study, Creemers' definition of effective will be used; "change that enhances student learning outcomes as well as the schools capacity for managing change" (2002, p.345).

Leader: One who influences the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation (Hersey, 1996). For purposes of this study the leader is the school principal.

National Blue Ribbon Schools: Schools that meet either of two assessment criteria: 1. Schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance in accordance with state assessment systems; or Schools that score in the top 10 percent on state assessments (www.nces.ed.gov).

Significance of this Study

Leadership in education is vital for the growth of learning. According to Richard Dufour, the most important component of school change is the commitment of professionals to make the necessary changes and do what is best for student learning (2004). To accomplish this, the school must have an effective leader. Research findings have revealed the powerful impact of leadership on school effectiveness and improvement. (Van Velzen et al., 1985; Ainscow et al., 1994; Stoll, Fink, 1996; Harris, 1999 in Harris, Day & Hadfield, 2003). Schools that are effective and have the capacity to improve have leaders who make a significant and measurable contribution to the effectiveness of their staff.

The results of this study provide a base for changes in educational leadership preparation and goal attainment. Further, this study enables leaders to focus on what matters most to

teachers and facilitates a more cohesive work environment that benefits student growth and

development.

Educational institutions, such as schools, should have a primary focus on improving

education. While that may sound obvious, the current state of education in the United States,

some argue, is not reflective of this idea (Earl, Fullan, 2003). Schools must focus on what

matters most, student growth and learning, to be considered effective (DuFour, 2004). Purkey

and Smith reviewed literature on school effectiveness and identified that differences among

schools do affect a students' academic achievement (1982). Creemers analyzed school

effectiveness theory and found that one component of effective schools was that of principals

facilitating an environment where teachers become self-regulating. The culture and climate of

the schools was also identified as a vital factor to school improvement. Leadership by the

principal is shown to be a key factor in these areas (2002). The leaders within the school have

the ability to facilitate differences that create excellence in teaching and learning. Effective

school leadership means creating the conditions under which teachers can perform effectively in

schools (Muijs, 2006). Principals must constantly stir up in a staff the desire to continually

improve the academic program and stress the importance of academic success among students

for positive growth to occur (Purkey, Smith, 1982; Creemers, 2002).

Effective schools are described as institutions where "high evaluations of students, high

expectations, high norms of achievement, with the appropriate patterns of reinforcement and

instruction in which students acquire sense or control over their environments" are apparent

(Purkey, Smith, 1982 p. 68). This type of reform does not take place without much insight into

current data. "Some leaders are becoming convinced that they need to pay attention to data to

focus and clarify their decisions" regarding school change (Earl & Fullan, 2003 p. 388). It is this

type of work environment that needs to be developed to create a culture within a school where change and the educational growth and development of students is the norm. In this environment teachers and leaders use their collective capacity "to examine data, make critical sense of it, develop action plans based on the data, take actions and monitor progress along the way" (Fullan, 2001 in Earl & Fullan, 2003, p. 392).

Teachers, principals, and teacher leaders must be working together to make effective change happen. The significance of effective leaders is evident in the climate of the school. De Maeyer notes that whether directly or indirectly "educational leadership contributes to the effectiveness of schools (2007, p. 129). Smith, Maehr, and Midgley identify several roles of leaders in an educational environment including promoting a positive instructional climate (1992). All professionals must work cohesively to create an environment where students flourish academically. The characteristics, behaviors, and practices of principals and teacher leaders are of paramount importance in facilitating this environment. Each leader may choose to react differently in situations depending on the circumstances. Hersey and Blanchard indicate that this is an appropriate approach for a leader to take. They state, "…it is appropriate for leaders on different occasions to use differing styles depending on the specific problem or circumstance" (1982, p. 50). Information regarding what teachers perceive as the most effective practices in these situations should prove to be valuable to principals and teacher leaders as they determine how to respond to a problem or circumstance. With this knowledge, leaders will engage in decision-making that promotes a collaborative climate within the school. This climate will directly impact the education of the students and will promote academic growth. This academic growth of students and the promotion of a collaborative climate within the school by the leaders will facilitate excellence in education.

Theoretical Base

Effective leadership in schools is evidenced by how a leader reacts to a situation. Hersey explains, "the leader will respond with the appropriate mix of relationship behavior and task behavior" (2002, p. 34).   Dwyer (1984) studied principals' routines in day-to-day situations and found that a principal's rationale of what might work for a particular context in a particular school was the most influential in their leadership style. This reliance on the specifics of a situation is the core of situational leadership theory, the base for this study on teacher characterization of effective leadership practices.

Hersey and Blanchard describe situational leadership theory as the leader reacting to the environment and adjusting his or her leadership style based on the situation. An educational environment provides opportunities for a variety of situations to which leaders must react (1994). An effective leader in a school setting must deal with many different challenges with various, specific facets.

Dwyer noted that the most important lesson learned from his study was, "the recognition of the diversity of approaches to successful instructional management" (1984, p. 37).   This study supports Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory noting that adjustment of styles was necessary for successful achievement in educational leadership. Hersey further support this idea as he found, "the multiplicity of role demands requires today's educational administrator to be and adaptive leader…[with] the ability to vary his leader behavior appropriately in differing situations" (2001, p. 79).

Because they were primarily concerned with leadership in the workplace, Hersey and Blanchard (1970) initially conceptualized the model in terms of task and relationship behaviors. However, in non-corporate settings, such as schools, other terms may be more appropriate. He

suggests that terms such as guidance and support behaviors or directive and facilitating behaviors

may more accurately describe the interaction process (Hersey et al., 2001).Hersey further

clarifies the characteristics of a leader in an interview,

> "Task behavior is predominantly one-way communication. However, relationship behavior depends on two-way communication, active listening, and providing socio-emotional support. I often call relationship behavior, supportive behavior. You are supporting the employee through interpersonal relationships" (2002, p. 2).

An effective leader is able to assess his or her followers and adjust the level of leadership to fit

the individual and the situation.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leadership Theory has developed throughout the last century. During the industrial revolution, leadership focused on productivity and the assignment of tasks to workers who possessed the greatest skill in a particular area. From 1900-1930, Frederick Taylor's theory of scientific management was the guiding force behind labor and management relations (Rieger, 1995). Efficiency reigned supreme and eventually the lack of concern for the people involved in the labor gave way to a more humanistic approach to management. Mary Parker Follett championed the human relations movement in management theory. She surmised that the human element was the key to success in an organization (Rieger, 1995). While this theory was appealing to many, there was no concrete evidence to suggest that it had merit until Elton Mayo and Fritz Rethlisberger conducted a productivity study at Western Electric's Hawthorne Works. Their study revealed, albeit unintentionally, that "interpersonal relationships were the primary factors that determined productivity rates…and morale…affected productivity" (Rieger, 1995, p. 4). This study became the catalyst for additional research into the human relations aspect of management and leadership. Throughout the research a number of leadership theories emerged, leadership traits, leadership behavior, situational leadership, and transformational leadership theories.

The themes that were identified in the literature regarding leadership theory initially focused on identifying the traits of leadership, suggesting that specific characteristics were essential to leader effectiveness. Focus was placed on the idea that certain traits identified successful leaders, and whomever possessed those traits were considered to have leadership potential. The trait approach suggested that leadership training would be beneficial to only

those who already possess the characteristics of a successful leader (Hersey et al., 1996). Those who have researched the trait approach to leadership theory have not been able to identify significant qualities that distinguish leaders from non-leaders (Johns & Moser, 1989). It was then determined that leadership had its base in the interaction among of a number of factors that are constantly changing.

In response to the lack of attention the scientific management theory gave to workers, Mary Parker Follet championed the human-relations movement in management theory (Rieger, 1995). She asserted that the human element, which was discounted for inefficiency in Taylor's model, was the key to success in industry. It wasn't until 1924, when Western Electric and the National Research Council partnered in a project to explore the relationship between the environment and worker efficiency at their Hawthorne Works facility, that they discovered that interpersonal relationships were the primary factor in productivity rates (Rieger, 1995). This spawned further research into the human-relations aspect of management and leadership. Still referenced today, the findings of the Hawthorne study provided a basis for research into the field of leadership beyond leadership traits. Studies were conducted to uncover the behavioral aspects of leaders and leadership. This ushered in the next wave of leadership thought, the behavioral approach to leadership.

A second theme that emerged from the research is behavioral leadership. Behavioral based research into the development of leadership theory was conducted nearly simultaneously at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan. Both groups of researchers placed the description of leader behavior into two categories, one being an attention to task, the other focused on inter-personal relations.

Research conducted at Ohio State regarding leadership focused on the behavior of leaders. To better understand the behavior of leaders, a questionnaire was developed to assess how leaders performed their duties. This questionnaire was given to the subordinates to asses leader performance as perceived by others. From the results of the questionnaire it was discovered that leader behavior can be categorized into two distinct dimensions. The Ohio State University researchers defined these dimensions as initiating structure and consideration (Johns & Moser, 1989). Initiating structure referred to leader behavior which is task oriented; while consideration was defined as "the extent to which a leader is likely to maintain personal relationships between himself and the members of his group (followers) in terms of socio-emotional support; characterized by friendship, mutual trust, and respect for followers ideas" (Blanchard & Hersey, 1970, p. 304).

The researchers subsequently discovered that these two dimensions were not mutually exclusive of one another. A leader may have traits common to both dimensions at varying degrees. Hersey discovered that leadership behavior could involve a mix of the two identified dimensions allowing them to be plotted in quadrants to reveal the various combinations of leadership styles (1996).   These areas were plotted on two axes and delineated into four quadrants with varying dimensions of each category represented in each quadrant. These four quadrants further illustrated subtle nuances in leadership styles in terms of Initiating Structure and Consideration (Blanchard & Hersey, 1970).

Around the same time the studies at Ohio State were being conducted, researchers at the University of Michigan were also investigating leadership behavior. Here, the researchers attempted to establish groups of related characteristics and determine the effectiveness of the leader. Identifying two behavioral concepts, researchers labeled them employee orientation and

production orientation. Employee orientation applied to situations where leaders emphasized the relational aspects of the job. Production orientation applied to those situations where the leader emphasized production and efficiency (Hersey et al., 1996).

Similar to the Ohio study of leader behaviors, the research findings at the University of Michigan indicated that leadership styles and characteristics vary greatly from person to person (Hersey et al., 1996). The terms used to identify these styles and characteristics were similar to the Ohio study as well. Leaders who stressed the completion of tasks were described as authoritarian leaders, while those who stressed relationships were viewed as democratic leaders (Hersey et al., 1996). Throughout the Michigan research neither of the characteristics appeared to be dominating. As at Ohio State, the dimensions of leadership were plotted on two separate axes to demonstrate the combination of styles.

Conducting research to determine the leadership characteristics of high-producing managers, researcher Rensis Likert based his work on studies completed at the University of Michigan (1961). Likert discovered that managers who engaged in less intense supervision of employees enhanced productivity among the employees. Likert found that direct supervision produced no increase in the performance or production of the employees. From his findings, Likert focused on developing programs designed to help organizations shift from an atmosphere that promotes immature behavior to one that encourages and develops mature behavior in its employees and implementing motivators to facilitate production (Hersey et al., 1996).

Hersey and Blanchard continued to develop their theory through research focused on the behavior of both leaders and followers in various situations. As their research evolved it was evident that the characteristics of effective leaders are a combination of several leadership

dimensions. This situational approach to leadership theory came to light. This theory focuses on the leader, the followers, and the situation simultaneously.

Another theme that emerged from the literature was that of situational leadership. Evidenced by the previous studies on leadership, defining an effective leader is not a simple task. Looking at the traits or behavior of the leader independent of the task will not necessarily provide an accurate assessment. A leader who is successful in one situation may prove ineffective in another. It is for this reason that situational leadership has gained focus in research on the characteristics of effective leaders and leadership.

In the situational approach to leadership the emphasis is on leader behavior in specific situations, as opposed to the leadership traits possessed by that person. The focus of this approach is on the observed behavior of leaders and their followers in a variety of situations. Situational leadership theory focuses on the interaction between the leader, followers, and situation (Hersey, 1996). Several researcher models exist following the situational leadership approach including F.E. Fiedler's Contingency Model, Robert House's Path-Goal Theory of Leadership, and Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Tri-dimensional Leader Effectiveness Model. Each of these models requires the leader to behave in a flexible manner by diagnosing and applying a leadership style that is appropriate to the situation.

The Leadership Contingency Model, developed by Fred E. Fiedler, proposed three variables which interact to determine the quality of the situation as it relates to the leader and his or her ability to effectively lead in that environment. The three variables he identified are: (1) leader-member relations – their personal relationships with the members of their group, (2) task structure – degree of structure in the task which has been assigned, and (3) position power – the power and authority provided by their position (Fiedler, 1967). These variables are

dependent upon one another and are used to predict how a leader will perform in a given situation.

In Fiedler's model, eight different combinations of the three variables can occur. As the leader-member relationships vary from good to poor, the task structure from high to low, and the power position from strong to weak, the subsequent ratings, as determined by where each variable falls, correlates to one of eight categories (1967). Following the development of the model for classifying group situations, Fiedler tried to identify whether task or relationship oriented leadership was most effective for each of the eight categories. In his study, Fiedler defined favorableness as "the degree to which the situation enables the leader to exert influence over the group" (Fiedler, 1967, p. 13).

By examining current and previous leadership studies of the time, Fiedler came to the following conclusions:

1. Task-oriented leaders could perform well in group situations that were either favorable or unfavorable to the leader.

2. Relationship-oriented leaders performed best in situations that were between the extremes of favorableness.

Fiedler's theory contributed to the development of leadership theory as he focused the situations in which the leaders lead. His consideration of the many variables that impact a leader's effectiveness had profound influence in the area of situational leadership. Continuing work in the area of situational leadership was Robert House, whose interest lay in explaining which style of leadership was most effective in a particular situation and why that style was most effective.

House wanted to match particular leadership styles with situations in which those leadership styles would be most effective. House utilized the terminology developed in the

Ohio State Study though the definitions differed slightly for his work. House (1971) defined initiating structure as describing "the degree to which the leader initiates intellectual organization for [his or her] subordinate."(p. 27) Consideration is described as "the degree to which the leader creates a supportive environment of psychological support, helpfulness, friendliness, and warmth."(p. 27) The major concern in House's theory is "how the leader influences the [followers'] characterizations of their work goals, personal goals and paths to goal attainment" (House & Mitchell, 1974, p. 29). According to the Path-Goal theory, leaders must articulate the goal so it is clearly understood by the followers and clear the path toward that goal. According to this theory, leaders must ensure that followers have all the tools needed to complete the goal effectively. The Path-Goal theory is a good example of the need for a leader to evaluate the situation first and then implement a leadership strategy he or she feels will promote the best outcome.

Further developing the idea that leadership is a combination of attention to tasks and relationships, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) added a third dimension of effectiveness to their leadership model. Hersey and Blanchard incorporated the environment into their assessment of leader effectiveness. This new model of leadership is called the Tri-dimensional Leader Effectiveness Model.

With definitions similar to those used to describe initiating structure and consideration, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) used the terms task behavior and relationship behavior in the Tri-dimensional leader effectiveness model. The behavioral variations among the four basic leadership quadrants are similar to those first used in the Ohio State leadership studies. The quadrants are: (1) high task and low relationship behavior, (2) high task and high relationship behavior, (3) high relationship and low task behavior, and (4) low relationship and low task

behavior (Hersey et Al., 1996). A leader's behavior toward followers moves through these quadrants as the behavior of the followers is perceived to grow more mature.

As in other models of situational leadership, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) surmised that the effectiveness of leaders is dependent on using a leadership style that is appropriate to the situation in which they operate (Hersey et al., 1996). By adding the third dimension of effectiveness to task and relationship behavior, environment, Hersey and Blanchard attempted to account for the leadership style demonstrated by the leader within the confines of a situation in a specific environment. When a style was appropriate to a particular situation, it was described as effective. When an inappropriate style was used for the situation, it was described as ineffective (Hersey et al., 1996).

Determining the appropriateness of a particular leadership style differentiates the Tridimensional Model from other leadership models. In this model the effectiveness of a leader is not necessarily determined by his or her style or behaviors. The additional stipulation rendered in the Tri-dimensional leader effectiveness model is whether or not the style or behaviors are applied appropriately for each situation. The interaction of the behavior with the environment determines if the leader was effective or ineffective in his or her leadership. To determine effectiveness in this model the leader's response to the environment is measured, not just the initial behavior of the leader (Hersey et al., 1996).

Two instruments were developed as a part of this model. The instruments were used to gather data about the behavior of leaders. These instruments were designed for use in leader training, the LEAD (Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description) SELF and the LEAD-OTHER; both are used for measuring leader effectiveness. The LEAD-SELF is given to the leader and he or she self-evaluates his or her own individual leadership characteristics. The

LEAD-OTHER is given to the followers and measures their characterization of the leaders'

behavior.   Each instrument measures the leader's style, style range, and style adaptability

(Hersey et al., 1996). The information gleaned from the LEAD-SELF and the LEAD-OTHER

is helpful in the understanding effective leader behavior as these instruments allow the

researcher to look at leader behavior from a variety of sources.

      Leaders who espouse a transformation leadership theory attend to the individual needs

of followers and are inspirational and motivational to organizations by assigning meaning to

their work rather than just rewarding performance. Generally, transformational leadership is

defined as an influence and power theory with the leader and the followers together working

toward a common goal, motivating movement toward a particular purpose (Rost, 1991). This

power and influence approach cast a shadow on the traditionally accepted wisdom of

transactional leadership. Leaders were not just to exchange rewards or administer punishments

for following or not following their wishes; leaders instead were relied on to guide followers in

organizational processes. Burns (1978) is credited with developing the theory of

transformational leadership which had been adapted and elaborated on by many researchers

(Rost, 1991).

      The role of ethics and morals is a central component that defines transformational

leadership. Burns (1978) defines leadership as a mutual process based on an ethic of care for

the follower that is focused on socially desirable ends. To determine socially desirable ends and

to act in ways that show caring, leaders need to be guided by ethics and morals. Earlier

leadership theories focused on the outcomes of organizational effectiveness and performance.

Although effectiveness may be socially desirable, in transformational leadership theory moral

issues, such as equity, now take distinction over purely practical objectives (Burns, 1978).

As Rost (1991) notes, transformational leadership acts as a bridge between old and new views of leadership. Transformational leadership begins to conceptualize leadership as a process by emphasizing the interaction between leaders and followers. However, the leaders remain distinguished from the followers maintaining an organizational hierarchy. Generally, transformational leadership studies focus only on the characteristics of the leader. The process and interactions between leader and followers is not as important as the characteristics or qualities of transformational leadership such as inspiration, trust, passion, and commitment (Rost, 1991).

Most current transformational leadership research focuses on providing empirical evidence for the concepts Burns (1978) articulated in his work. Bass (1985) helped employ and test the idea of transformational leadership, developing a survey instrument called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which looks at four main factors—charisma, inspiration, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. In his research, Bass asked people to describe individuals they considered to be transformational leaders. He continues to follow up on this work, trying to distinguish between authentic transformational leadership and pseudo transformational leaders who do not have an ethical underpinning (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

Building on Burns' work, Kouzes and Posner (2002) called on leaders who were considered great to write detailed statements of their practice in an attempt to better understand the qualities of transformational leaders and develop a concise definition of transformational leadership. From these notes, five types of behavior emerged and were identified as part of transformational leadership: (1) challenging the process; (2) inspiring a shared vision; (3) enabling others to act; (4) modeling the way; and (5) encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner,

2002). While this does serve to promote the creation of a definition of transformational leadership, disagreement still exists.

Of the concerns that abound regarding transformational leadership, many are related to whether the transformational leadership model is a generalizable model in all organizational and societal contexts. Concerns also exist about the hierarchical leader-centric nature of this approach. Barker (2001) advocates that the focus on superior/subordinate relationships overshadows other important organizational and contextual variables related to leadership.

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) assert that many recent studies of transformational leadership do not contain ethical provisions and as a result are not really studying transformational leadership as defined by Burns (1978). They assert that for leadership to be considered transformational, it must be guided by moral and ethical considerations. Many in the field support this need for ethical considerations when engaging in leadership. Dilemmas that arise must be dealt with by leaders in a purposeful way to assure the consideration of all areas of the ethical paradigm (Gross & Shapiro, 2004; Starratt, 2005; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Shapiro & Gross, 2007). Transformational leadership is an important concept for understanding effective leadership.

Cognitive theories of leadership focus on examining how people assign causes to interpersonal events and organizational outcomes. This will aide in the explanation of the mental processes by which individuals attribute certain actions and outcomes to leaders (Chemers, 1997). Another area of cognitive research uses a social constructivist paradigm to study how individuals value leadership for explaining organizational outcomes. This research suggests that people want to believe in leadership and, therefore, mentally construct some values to facilitate cognitive processing of organizational events (Chemers, 1997).

Cognitive theories tend to focus on the mental processes of leaders or other individuals involved in leadership processes (Rost 1991). The meaning and importance of this type of leadership cannot be understood by merely analyzing traits or behaviors; instead, the thought and interpretation processes of individuals provide greater insight into all aspects of the leadership process. Researchers believe that the omission of thoughts and interpretation processes of the individual was a great weakness in the understanding of cognitive theory because even if a leader says he or she is exhibiting a particular behavior does not mean that followers perceive that behavior the same way the leader intended (Boleman & Deal, 2003). In addition, theories such as transformational leadership focus on the emotional side of leadership, ignoring how a leader's thought processes or learning affects his or her performance (Rost 1991).

Cognitive theory suggests that leaders use complex mind-sets to analyze and assess leadership issues. One of the main works that uses this model for understanding leadership is Boleman and Deal's *Reframing Organizations* (2003). These authors demonstrate that leaders tend to examine situations through one or more lenses or cognitive orientations (political, symbolic, structural, human resource). Different situations might require different cognitive approaches to leadership; a political orientation might serve a leader in one situation, while a bureaucratic orientation is important in another. Morgan identifies eight metaphors for which organizations can be conceptualized within. By using metaphors, such as machines, organisms, brains, culture, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, or domination, one is able to extend the realm of their insight and think more broadly and abstractly in an effort to facilitate a deeper consciousness regarding a given situation (2006). Successful leaders move between various lenses or approaches to leadership and use all cognitive lenses rather than

focusing on the one or two with which they feel most comfortable (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997; Morgan, 2006).

In addition to research on mental models, organizational learning has been a major area of study in cognitive theory. The focus on intricacy and uncertainty in the postmodern paradigm led scholars to realize the importance of organizational learning and ethics to the leadership process and begin a line of research solely on this concept (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997; Shapiro, 2003; Shapiro & Gross 2007). The concept of organizational learning became particularly important in the 1990s in response to concerns that leaders were unable to respond to challenges from the external environment and that bureaucratic structures had created inflexible environments where workers were no longer engaged in thoughtful reflection (Wheatley, 1999). The literature on leadership and organizational learning focuses on creating organizations that can be adaptable, flexible, experimental, and innovative. Organizational learning is important to leadership at both the individual and organizational level. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) emphasize the importance of leaders' metacognitive development, providing a blueprint for developing an organizational learning agenda to promote leadership. Leaders need to constantly renew their skills and conceptualize leadership throughout their lifetime, the tenant of life-long learning (Tomlinson, 2004).

The leader's role is building learning communities committed to improving the lives of her or his stakeholders. Building learning communities entails creating trust through social and professional relationships, identifying and reconstructing commonly held assumptions and beliefs, building new shared knowledge, and altering individual and group behaviors to create new ways of working (Shapiro, 2003; Shapiro & Gross, 2007). Leadership is about leading different types of conversations and engaging people, without whom the purpose of the

organization would lay idle. Consensus building by leaders is key and reflection, sharing and building ideas, listening, connectivity, common purpose, and developing a vision are key components (Kelly, 2005).

Learning and intellect have historically been downplayed in the leadership literature. Transformational leadership models, for example, do not place any importance on the role of learning or an intellectual role for leaders, although they do note that the leader challenges followers' assumptions, which might be a form of learning, and that one of the common measures of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. The importance of learning to leadership varies vastly in the research. For example, limited empirical research to date supports the idea that learning creates more effective leaders, yet a plethora of research suggests that learning is important to other organizational functions such as decision making (Senge, 1990). More research is needed to determine the importance of learning for leadership and bridge the gap in existing scholarship. Other criticisms have been leveled against cognitive leadership perspectives: some researchers believe learning is a fad focused on creating greater innovation in organizations but is not inherently part of leadership (Birnbaum, 2000), and other scholars assert attribution theories are not helpful and provide no guidance for practice (Rost, 1991).

While evaluating effective leadership proves difficult, as the variables in each situation are many, research into traits, behaviors, situations and transformation, has provided useful information to promote efficiency and effectiveness in many leadership arenas. The future of leadership theory is yet to be determined. Previous research conducted by many prominent researchers has provided a solid foundation. Future research endeavors in the field of leadership theory will undoubtedly compliment the work of these researchers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The principle focus of this study is to compare and contrast teacher perceptions of the effective practices of principals within National Blue Ribbon Schools to matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania. These practices are studied among the teachers in schools identified as National Blue Ribbon Schools and matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania. Teachers from multiple grade levels are a major source of data. Teachers of all grade levels identify similar characteristics with regard to the principals in their schools so this particular sample provided adequate data for this study.

National Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania were identified by accessing the public listing on the United States Department of Education website (see Appendix B). The principals of each of the twelve schools were contacted by phone and asked to participate in this study. Nine of the schools responded affirmatively, agreeing to participate. One school declined to participate and two schools did not acknowledge the request. Principals of the nine schools that agreed to participate were asked to identify another school in their geographic region that they considered to closely match their school in size and compositions. For example, a private school with grades K-12 would be asked to identify another private school in their geographic region that also served grades K-12.

Using information from the Principal of the school and each school's website, teacher email addresses were obtained and The Audit of Principal Effectiveness (APE) was sent to the faculty of each building using a list serve. The surveys were coded to reference each school that responded so the data from the Blue Ribbon School is compared and contrasted with the corresponding matched Non-Blue Ribbon School. For example, Blue Ribbon School A

completed APE A-1, and the matched Non-Blue Ribbon School completed APE B-1. The data were analyzed using MANOVA comparing the means of the two groups. The faculties were asked to complete the survey within a 30-day window. The interviews were conducted shortly after the survey completion date.

A description of leadership styles provided insight into each of the principals' behaviors with regard to leadership. The description included the way in which leaders utilizing various leadership styles react to different situations. Leadership characteristics of each principal were obtained through the use of the (APE) which was administered to teachers to determine their perceptions of the effective leadership practices of Principals within their buildings. A researcher developed interview schedule followed the administration of the APE instrument to provide clarification for confounding factors and extraneous variables. From these data, discrepancies in leader characterizations as well as parallels in these characterizations were identified. The schedule of the interviews was developed by the researcher using the survey instrument data analysis (see Appendix A). Tashakkori and Teddlie identify this type of mixed methodology study as sequential, or two-phase. This format allows the use of each method sequentially, "such that results from the first method inform the use of the second method" (1998, p. 43). The interviews were conducted to determine why teacher perceptions were parallel or discrepant from one another.

The focus for the qualitative side of this mixed methodology study lay in the interviews of the participants. Through the use of the constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis latent themes were discovered in the form of repeated descriptors of principals by the respondents. The analysis of the data collected from the survey instruments was used as the starting point for this qualitative analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Responses from the

interviews were analyzed and categorized according to the characteristics of leadership that emerged. These characteristics were arranged by theme, correlated with one another, and organized for analysis. The responses of the teachers in each group were analyzed separately prior to any correlations.   Triangulation of the data increase the reliability and validity of the data collected (Merriam, 2001)

The research proposed was minimally influenced by the researcher. The researcher is currently serving as an elementary school principal who participates in collaborative staff development training in a school. Insights and emotions felt by the researcher help guide the study to reveal aspects of the topic that are not readily available through a surface evaluation. The researcher admits to holding certain biases regarding leadership in schools. Additionally, the researcher has worked with a number of principals and teacher leaders that were examples of both effective and ineffective leaders. These biases were addressed and appropriately mitigated through the supervision of the Temple University faculty. Individual bias on the part of the researcher was kept in perspective and tempered during this study.

Population and Sample

To conduct this study of teacher perceptions of the effective practice of principals, a list of National Blue Ribbon Schools was obtained from the Department of Education. From this list, the 12 Blue Ribbon schools in Pennsylvania were selected to participate in the study. A non-blue ribbon schools in Pennsylvania that closely matches each of the blue ribbon school was also obtained. The non-blue ribbon schools were selected by identifying schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that were closely matched to the National Blue Ribbon School, for example, a private school, a parochial school, a magnet school, an elementary school, or a secondary school (Appendix C).

Data Collection

To collect the data necessary for completion of this study, two instruments were used. The first instrument was given to the teachers within the National Blue Ribbon Schools and the matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania. This instrument, The Audit of Principal Effectiveness (APE), was developed by Valentine and Bowman (1987) of the University of Missouri as a tool for administrators to change their practices based on their subordinates' responses. Consisting of 80 items, the APE rates principals in three domains "(1) Organizational development containing the factors of organizational direction, linkage, and procedures, (2) organizational environment containing the factors of teacher and student relations, and interactive and affective processes; and (3) the educational program containing the factors of instructional and curricular improvement" (Valentine & Bowman, 1987).

The Audit of Principal Effectiveness provides information about the effectiveness of principals in dealing with personnel inside and outside the school setting, nurturing school climate, and serves as the educational leader of the school. Contained within the survey are 80 questions for which a nine point rating scale is provided allowing participants a continuum for evaluation. The questions were grouped into three main domains which are further divided into nine factors.

The domain of Organizational Development provides insight about the ability of the principal to work with personnel inside and outside the school setting to establish processes and relationships that effectively promote growth and change of the organization as a whole. The specific statistical factors for Organizational Development are defined below (27 items).

> "Organizational Direction: The principal provides direction for the school through work with faculty to develop goals, establish expectations, and promote appropriate change (7 items). Organizational Linkage: The principal promotes positive working relationships between the school, the community the school serves, and other educators and agencies

that work with the school. (11 items). Organizational Procedures. The principal utilizes effective procedures for problem-solving, decision-making, and change. (9 items)" (Valentine and Bowman, 1987, p.2).

The domain of Organizational Environment provides insight about the ability of the principal to nurture the on-going climate of the school through development of positive interpersonal relationships among members of the organization and effective day-by-day operational procedures for the school. The specific statistical factors for Organizational Environment are defined below (37 items).

"Teacher Relations: The principal develops effective working relationships with staff through appropriate communication skills, sensitivity to needs, appropriate support, and reinforcement.(13 items). Student Relations: The principal develops effective working relationships with students through appropriate communication skills, encouragement, support, and high visibility (8 items). Interactive Processes: The principal organizes tasks and personnel for the effective day-by-day management of the school, including providing appropriate information to staff and students, developing appropriate rules and procedures, and setting the overall tone for discipline in the school (9 items). Affective Processes: The principal encourages the expression of feelings, opinions, pride, and loyalty through team management, sensitivity, humor, and personal example (7 items)" (Valentine and Bowman, 1987, p.2).

The domain of Educational Program provides insight about the ability of the principal to serve as the educational leader of the school through active involvement in instructional leadership and curriculum development. The specific statistical factors for Educational Program are defined below. (15 items)

"Instructional Improvement: The principal influences positively the instructional skills present in the school through clinical supervision, knowledge of effective schooling, and commitment to quality instruction (8 items). Curriculum Improvement: The principal promotes an articulated, outcome-based curriculum through diagnosis of student needs and systematic program review and change (7 items)" (Valentine and Bowman, 1987, p.2).

Additionally, demographic data were collected (figures 1 to 5) through a number of questions including; "What is your highest academic degree?, How many years have you been a

teacher?, How many years have you worked as a teacher with this administrator?, Do you have any administrative responsibilities in the school (team leader, dept. head, etc.)?, Were you hired by the administrator you are assessing?' Please identify your gender." (Valentine and Bowman, 1987, p.2).

A second approach used was a researcher developed interview protocol used to clarify confounding factors and extraneous variables. A convenient sample form the teachers surveyed contained teachers who volunteered to take part in the phone interview. A transcribed copy of each interview was produced for review and the researcher engaged in note take immediately following each interview.

Data Analysis

Data collection took place using two instruments, one existing proven instrument and one researcher created instrument. The Audit of Principal Effectiveness was used to gather the initial data for this study. This instrument collects data relative to teacher perception of leadership (Valentine & Bowman 1987). The Audit of Principal Effectiveness is given to teachers in a school to evaluate their perceptions of leader effectiveness. Analysis of the data collected during research on teacher perceptions of the effective practices of their principals is correlated using multi-variant statistical analysis. Discrepancies and parallels between the information provided by the Audit of Principal Effectiveness forms the basis for the second part of the study. This is consistent with the description of a sequential mixed-method design as identified by Tashakkori and Teddlie. They state, "The researcher conducts a qualitative phase of a study and then a separate quantitative phase, or vise versa" (1998, p. 18).

Data gathered from the Audit of Principal Effectiveness that are both supporting and contrasting National Blue Ribbon School leaders to matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon

Schools in Pennsylvania were targeted. Purposeful sampling was used to examine these two areas (Maxwell, 1996). Teachers who volunteer to participate in a follow-up interview were contacted. The schedule for the interview was constructed from the data gathered using the previous instruments. Insight into the reasons for the differences and similarities in answers regarding the leadership of the principals and teacher leaders was investigated through the interview questions. The researcher engaged in note-taking immediately following the interview and a transcript of each interview was made. This data were analyzed using the constant comparative method of data analysis. The data collected from the interviews was examined and themes were identified. As new themes emerged from the data they were compared to the themes previously identified. This is consistent with Merriam's description of the constant comparative method of data analysis (2001).

Several methods of verification serve to promote the validity of this study of teacher perceptions of the effective practices of principals. The data collection that takes place through electronic means was conducted using a pre-existing instrument that has reliability and validity. The Audit of Principal Effectiveness is a valid instrument (Valentine & Bowman 1987). Furthermore, the administration of this instrument to the teachers within each of the samples provided an abundance of data, eliminating the chance that the results could be swayed by a few outlying responses. The use of the statistical treatment for the analysis of the data collected by these instruments provides for statistical conclusion validity as Cook and Campbell explain in Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). Additionally, the volume of data collected and analyzed from the survey instrument aided in the acquisition of results that are representative and generalizable to like populations.

To ensure the validity of the interviews, the researcher engaged in note-taking immediately following the interview to promote retention of the emphasis suggested by each interviewee. Member checks were also conducted following the review of the transcripts by the researcher. The themes gleaned from the interview were discussed with each interviewee to ensure proper interpretation

The use of these verification methods will ensure the data collection and analysis are not disadvantaged by a threat to validity. Survey data were analyzed using multi-variant statistical analysis and purposeful sample of interviewees. Interviews took place to further identify reasons for parallels and discrepancies in teacher perceptions of effective leader practices. Themes revealed through the analysis of the data were compared through the use of the constant comparative method of data analysis. The data and analysis are free from bias due to the afore mentioned triangulation methods to ensure valid results and facilitate the addition of this research to current literature in the topic. The researcher is currently working with Temple University to publish the results of this study in educational journals.

Ethical Issues

To preserve the integrity of the participants and ensure that proper ethical procedures are followed during this study the following safeguards were instituted. The researcher ensured that participants in this study were made fully aware of their role in the research. Following approval of the Institutional Review Board, the researcher administered consent forms to all of the study participants that indicated acknowledgement of understanding with regard to the study parameters. Subjects had the ability to withdraw from the study at anytime during the data collection process. Confidentiality was maintained with regard to the identity of the participants as no names were requested. The volume of data collected also promoted the anonymity of the

participants. Transcripts, tapes, and survey instruments were kept in a locked facility and were

destroyed upon completion of the study. Full measures were taken to ensure that all ethical

concerns are attended to and the integrity of the participants is preserved.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the mixed method study designed to examine teachers' perceptions of their principal's effectiveness. The survey, descriptive data, and response rates are briefly reviewed and the results of the survey are presented. Findings for each of the three Domains; Organizational Development, Organizational Environment, and Education program, examined through nine factors, is discussed. Next, cross tabulation result including various factors, domains, and demographics are explained, the data of the structure matrix for non-blue ribbon schools are then presented. Finally, a review of the qualitative survey data is presented.

Endorsed by the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (PAESSP), and the Pennsylvania Department of Education and with the interest of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), this study used the Audit of Principal Effectiveness survey, created by Valentine and Bowman (1989), which was sent electronically to each teacher in eight of the twelve National Blue Ribbon School in Pennsylvania in June of 2009. The remaining four of the twelve Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania declined to participate in this study despite repeated contacts by the researcher. The Audit of Principal Effectiveness provides information about the teachers' perception of the principals' effectiveness in dealing with personnel inside and outside the school setting, nurturing school climate, and serving as the educational leader of the school. Contained within the survey were 80 questions for which a nine point rating scale is provided allowing participants a continuum for evaluation. The questions were grouped into three main domains which are further divided into nine factors.

Additionally, descriptive data were collected through a number of questions including; "What is your highest academic degree?, How many years have you been a teacher?, How many years have you worked as a teacher with this administrator?, Do you have any administrative responsibilities in the school (team leader, dept. head, etc.)?, Were you hired by the administrator you are assessing?' Please identify your gender." (Valentine and Bowman, 1987).

The principals of each National Blue Ribbon School were contacted by the researcher and, after providing information and answering questions, were asked to allow the teachers in their school to participate in the study. Additionally, the principals were asked to identify a nearby school that closely matched the demographic make-up and student enrollment of their school. Once identified, the researcher contacted the principals of each of the selected matched-set schools and sought their teachers' participation as well.

An electronic survey tool was used to disseminate the survey in the most expedient manner. The survey was open for 30 days, after which the data were compiled. A total of 363 teachers were sent surveys with 162 representing National Blue Ribbon Schools and 201 representing the selected matched-set schools. From the National Blue Ribbon Schools, 40 completed surveys were recorded, a 25% response rate, and the selected matched-set schools returned 50 completed surveys, a 25% response rate. Overall, 90 of 363 completed surveys were returned, a 25% overall response rate. Table 4.1 shows that of the 90 respondents, 65 were female, accounting for 72% of the total respondents, and 17 were male, accounting for 18% of the total respondents.

Table 4.1

Gender results

Group			M	F	Total
Blue Ribbon	Count	4	32	4	40
Blue Ribbon	Percent	10.0%	80.0%	10/0%	100.0%
Matched-Set	Count	4	33	13	50
Matched-Set	Percent	8.0%	66.0%	26.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	8	65	17	90
Total	Percent	8.9%	72.2%	18.9%	100.0%

The frequency table, Table 4.2, shows the response rate from each school, National Blue Ribbon

Schools were identified with the letter "A" and selected matched-set schools with the letter "B."

Table 4.2

Frequency table of National Blue Ribbon School and selected matched-set schools.

School	Responses	Percentage	School	Responses	Percentage
A1	7/47	15%	B1	17/39	44%
A2	3/17	18%	B2	7/21	33%
A3	13/29	45%	B3	8/21	38%
A4	4/12	33%	B4	1/24	4%
A5	2/12	17%	B5	5/13	38%
A6	1/11	9%	B6	5/14	36%
A7	7/16	44%	B7	1/53	2%
A8	3/18	17%	B8	6/19	32%

Further demographic data were collected to determine the educational composition of the

respondents. Table 4.3 contains the highest level of academic degree earned. Ten percent of the

data were missing, indicating that nine participants did not indicate their highest academic degree

earned.

Table 4.3

What is your highest academic degree?

Degree	Frequency	Percent
Missing	9	10.0
Bachelor	26	28.9
Master	18	20.0
Beyond Master	37	41.1
Total	90	100.0

Taking into consideration the longevity of the teachers, the responses to the next question indicate what experience range the respondents have as a teacher in years. The responses fell within four possible ranges of years. As is evident in Table 4.4, veteran teachers with more than 13 years of experience in teaching were the group most represented at 60%, and novice teachers, with zero to two years of teaching, were the least represented at 2.2%. Of the 90 respondents, 8.9% did not respond to this demographic question. A mean was not able to be calculated as the responses were ranges of years and not absolute numbers.

Table 4.4

How many years have you been a teacher?

Years	Frequency	Percent
Missing	8	8.9
0-2	2	2.2
3 to 5	12	13.3
6 to 12	14	15.6
13+	54	60.0
Total	90	100.0

The number of years a teacher has worked with the administrator being rated is noted in Table 4.5. Responses indicate that the majority of the respondents have worked with the administrator they are rating between three to five years.

Table 4.5

How many years have you worked as a teacher with this administrator?

Years	Frequency	Percent
Missing	8	8.9
0-2	9	10.0
3 to 5	38	42.2
6 to 12	24	26.7
13+	11	12.2
Total	90	100.0

Table 4.6 shows that eight respondents did not respond to the school leadership question. The

majority of the responses indicate that more than half, 56.7%, of the teachers in this study do not

have a leadership role within the school. Table 4.7 demonstrates that the majority of the

respondents were not hired by the administrator they are rating.

Table 4.6

Do you have any administrative responsibilities in the school

(team leader, dept. head, etc.)?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Missing	8	8.9
N	51	56.7
Y	31	34.4
Total	90	100.0

Table 4.7

Were you hired by the administrator you are assessing?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Missing	8	8.9
N	53	58.9
Y	29	32.2
Total	90	100.0

When the 30 day response window was closed there were a number of incomplete surveys, in which more than a third of the survey was not completed, from both the National Blue Ribbon Schools and the selected matched-set schools, these surveys were not factored into the results of this study. Additionally, in the completed surveys received from the schools any items left unrated by the respondents received the mean score for each factor. The means for each of the major Domains and for the nine Factors for the Blue Ribbon and matched-set school are presented in table 4.8. The significant results, at less than .05, are noted with an asterisk.

Table 4.8

Mean Scores in each Domain, in bold, and Factor on the Audit of Principal Effectiveness.
Asterisk indicates significant at <.05 level.

Domain/Factor	Mean of Blue Ribbon School	Mean of Matched-Set School	T-Score	Significance
Organizational Development	21.96	23.45	1.64	.105
Organizational Direction	7.64	7.87	.70	.495
Organizational Linkage	7.31	7.80	1.64	.104
Organizational Procedures*	7.01	7.78	2.23	.028
Organizational Environment*	22.83	25.74	2.62	.010
Teacher Relations*	7.22	7.97	2.24	.028
Student Relations*	9.25	10.64	2.72	.008
Interpersonal Processes*	6.36	7.13	2.44	.017
Affective Processes*	6.73	7.73	2.74	.007
Educational Program*	21.27	23.86	2.72	.008
Instructional Improvement*	7.21	8.11	2.66	.009
Curriculum Improvement*	7.33	8.02	2.23	.028
Total Scale	66.05	73.05	2.42	.018

A two-group MANOVA was conducted on the data, followed by univariate t-tests. The overall multivariate test was highly significant (Wilks' Lambda = .767, p=.007). As evident from the data presented in Table 4.8, significant differences were found between the principals of the Blue Ribbon schools and the matched-set schools on every factor except Organizational Direction and Organizational Linkage. It is also evident from Table 4.8 that the principals of the Blue Ribbon schools are rated lower by their teachers in all domains and factors as compared to the principals of the matched-set school. Specific patterns in the data are explored below.

The Domain of Organizational Development indicates that the principal "understands the direction the school needs to take in order to improve and helps the faculty develop goals which will take the school in that direction. The principal realizes the school does not operate in a vacuum and seeks to provide information about the school to the public and involve the community in the life of the school. The principal uses organizational procedures appropriately to ensure the school operates smoothly" (Valentine & Bowman, 1987, p.5). Within this domain there are three factors, Organizational Direction, Organizational Linkage, and Organizational Procedures. The study found a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of teachers in Blue Ribbon Schools and those in matched-set schools in the factor of Organizational Procedures. The data indicate that principals in the selected matched-set school are perceived by their teachers to be more effective in involving staff in decision-making processes within the school especially when school-related problems are discussed. The data also indicated that there was no statistical difference in the teachers' perceptions of principal effectiveness between Blue Ribbon Schools and selected matched-set schools when setting high expectations for staff, envisioning future goals, and encouraging changes that will lead to a better school. Also, there was no statistical difference found, between Blue Ribbon Schools and selected matched-set

schools, in teacher perceptions of their principal's effectiveness when considering the involvement of the community, adherence to policies, and maintaining working relationships with other administrators.

The Domain of Organizational Environment indicates that, "through the principal's work with teachers and students, a positive organizational environment is created. The principal's use of effective managerial and organizational procedures in the day-to-day operations of the school also adds to a good working climate" (Valentine & Bowman, 1987, p.6). Four factors comprise this domain and all four were found to have a statistically significant comparison between Blue Ribbon Schools and selected matched-set schools.

Teachers in the selected matched-set schools indicated that their perceptions of their principals effectiveness are greater then those of the Blue Ribbon Schools as they relate to teachers, students and the interactive and affective processes of the school. The perceptions indicated that teachers believe principals in selected matched-set schools are more effective in making the teachers feel comfortable sharing ideas and concerns about the school and in anticipating teacher needs. Additionally, this perception about teacher relations applies to offering sincere compliments of teachers work and the promotion of confidence throughout the school by the principal. With regard to student relations, the perceptions indicated in this study show that teachers feel principals in selected matched-set schools are more effective in dealing and interacting with students.

The facilitation of the processes of the school, both interactive, through the use of effective communication skills, and affective, through the improvement of the overall school climate, by the principal, were perceived by teachers in selected matched-set schools to be more effective then the teachers in Blue Ribbon Schools. This indicates that the teachers in selected

matched-set schools feel that their principal is more effective in being able to organize activities, tasks and people by developing appropriate rules and procedures. Additionally, this perception also applies to the principal's use of humor and ability to share personal feelings about school issues to improve school climate and help teachers develop a sense of pride and loyalty in the school (Valentine & Bowman, 1987).

The Domain of Educational Program indicates that, "the principal is committed to improvement of the educational program. The principal works with teachers to help them improve the quality of their instruction. The principal systematically reviews the curricular program and seeks to make the program fit the needs of the learners of the school. This domain is what sets the principalship apart from managers in other disciplines" (Valentine & Bowman, 1987, p.7).

When considering the overall domain, there was a statistical difference indicating that teachers' perceptions of their principals' effectiveness in matched-set schools were greater than those in Blue Ribbon Schools. Breaking that domain into its two factors, the data reveal that there is a significant difference in teacher perceptions of their principal's effectiveness in both the factor of instructional improvement and curriculum improvement. Principals in selected matched-set schools are perceived to be more effective in instructional observations and addressing teachers' weaknesses. Additionally, teachers perceive principals in selected matched-set schools to be more knowledgeable of various teaching skills and strategies.

The data indicate a statistical difference in perceptions of the teachers with regard to the factor of curriculum improvement; specifically the principal's participation in instructional improvement activities, such as curriculum planning and monitoring student learning outcomes. The data show that selected matched-set school principals are perceived to be more effective

then Blue Ribbon School principals at "promoting the diagnosis of individual and group learning needs of students and application of appropriate instruction to meet those needs" (Valentine & Bowman, 1987, p.7).

When considering the selections of the teachers in each Domain and Factor in the survey, it is interesting to also note the similarities between the two types of schools. Table 4.9 shows the mean Factor scores in rank order, from highest to lowest. Both teachers in Blue Ribbon schools and matched-set schools rate their principal's highest in the area of student relations and lowest in the area of interpersonal processes. The largest disparities are in the areas of student relations and instructional improvement. Teachers in Blue Ribbon schools rated organizational direction as the second most effective area for their principal while matched-set teachers rated this factor as the fourth most effective for their principal. In the area of instructional improvement, teachers in Blue Ribbon schools rated this area as the sixth most effective area, and teachers in matched-set schools rated this as the most effective area for their principals. The only mean factor scores that fell below 7.00 were in Affective Processes and Interpersonal Processes in the Blue Ribbon schools and in Student Relations in matched-set schools.

Table 4.9

Rank order of mean scores in each Factor on the Audit of Principal Effectiveness.

Factor	Mean of Blue Ribbon School	Factor	Mean of Matched-Set School
Student Relations	7.98	Instructional Improvement	8.11
Organizational Direction	7.64	Curriculum Improvement	8.02
Curriculum Improvement	7.33	Teacher Relations	7.97
Organizational Linkage	7.31	Organizational Direction	7.87
Teacher Relations	7.22	Organizational Linkage	7.80
Instructional Improvement	7.21	Organizational Procedures	7.78
Organizational Procedures	7.01	Affective Processes	7.73
Affective Processes	6.73	Interactive Processes	7.13
Interactive Processes	6.36	Student Relations	6.93

Upon review of the rank order of the factors, an analysis was conducted to look at the biggest difference, based on significance, at the individual item level. Table 4.10 identifies the ten items having the most significant difference between teacher rating of Blue Ribbon School and matched-set schools. Of the top ten items that were ranked as having the biggest difference between Blue Ribbon schools and matched-set schools, the first four were from the Domain of

Organizational Environment and the factor of Affective Processes. The remaining six items

were also rated by teachers in favor of the matched-set school over the Blue Ribbon school with

the Domain and Factor noted as well. In order of most significant difference, the following items

were in favor of the matched-set school over the Blue Ribbon school.

Table 4.10

Most significant difference in teacher rating by item.

Item Number	Domain	Factor	Question Text (Valentine & Bowman, 1987)
58	Organizational Environment	Affective Processes	"The principal works with other leaders of the school in the implementation of a team approach to managing the school."
60	Organizational Environment	Affective Processes	"The principal helps teachers clarify or explain their thoughts by discussing those thoughts with them."
64	Organizational Environment	Affective Processes	"Personal thoughts shared by the principal about school help teachers develop a sense of pride and loyalty as members of the school."
59	Organizational Environment	Affective Processes	"The principal encourages faculty to be sensitive to the needs and values of other faculty in the school."
14	Organizational Development	Organizational Linkage	"The principal invests time with the district office and other external agencies to obtain support and resources from the agencies."
78	Educational Program	Curriculum Improvement	"The principal has a systematic process for program review and change."
79	Educational Program	Curriculum Improvement	"The principal encourages articulation of the curricular program."
41	Organizational Environment	Student Relations	"The principal finds the time to interact with students."
42	Organizational Environment	Student Relations	"Students feel free to initiate communication with the principal."
46	Organizational Environment	Student Relations	"The principal is highly visible to the student body."

Table 4.11 identifies the items that were rated higher by teachers in Blue Ribbon Schools then

matched-set schools. On the 80-question instrument, there were only five items where the

difference in teacher ratings favored the Blue Ribbon school over the matched-set school. Those

items are as well as their factors and domains are noted below.

Table 4.11

Items rated in favor of Principals in Blue Ribbon Schools in rank order, highest to lowest.

Item Number	Domain	Factor	Question Text (Valentine & Bowman, 1987)
55	Organizational Environment	Interactive Processes	"The principal establishes the overall tone for discipline in the school."
75	Educational Program	Curriculum Improvement	"The principal administers a school-wide curricular program based upon identification of content goals and objectives and the monitoring of student achievement toward those goals and objectives."
74	Educational Program	Curriculum Improvement	"The principal promotes the diagnosis of individual and group learning needs of student and application of appropriate instruction to meet those needs."
52	Organizational Environment	Interactive Processes	"The principal is able to organize activities, tasks, and people."
51	Organizational Environment	Interactive Processes	"When teachers are informed of administrative decisions, they are aware of what the principal expects of them as it relates to the decision."

Following the collection of the quantitative survey data, a follow-up telephone interview

was conducted. The participants were a convenience sample of survey respondents who

indicated their willingness to participate in the interview. Survey respondents indicated to the

researcher that they were willing to participate in the interview by providing their name and

telephone number at the end of the survey. Of the 40 completed surveys returned, ten survey

respondents, 25 %, the indicated their willingness to participate in the telephone interview. Only

eight, 80%, were able to be reached. Of these eight respondents, three, 38%, were from Blue

Ribbon Schools while five, 62%, were teachers in one of the selected matched-set non-blue

ribbon schools.

All eight of the participants were reminded that their participation in the interview was voluntary and that no compensation would be given and they could choose to stop the interview at any time without penalty. The researcher conducted the interview and transcribed the responses to the eight questions. Upon completion, the participants were given the opportunity to review their responses and respond with corrections, additions, or deletions to the material. Once their data were verified, the responses were analyzed to look for themes and trends in their answers. As the respondents spoke about what they believe make a principal effective, some repeated words became evident. When considering the results of the quantitative data, the four highest rated items by teachers were in the Domain of Organizational Environment and the Factor of Affective Processes. According to Valentine and Bowman (1987), affective processes means,

> "The principal works with other leaders of the school in implementing a team approach to managing the school. The principal encourages faculty to be sensitive to the needs and values of other faculty in the school. Humor is used by the principal to improve the school climate. The principal shares personal feelings and opinions about school issues with teachers and helps them to develop a sense of pride and loyalty in the school" (p.6).

Table 4.12 identifies affective words that were used multiple times by the interviewees. The responses are divided according to the school in which the respondent currently teaches. Frequency of usage is noted for each affective word as well.

Table 4.12

Words used to describe effective principals in interview with frequency noted.

Blue Ribbon School	Frequency	Non-Blue Ribbon School	Frequency
Community	4	Open	6
Trust	3	Positive	4
Open	2	Collaborative	3
Relationship	1	Relationship	3
Respect	1	Supportive	2
Supportive	1	Approachable	1
Collaborative	0	Community	0
Approachable	0	Respect	0
Positive	0	Trust	0

Teachers in Blue Ribbon Schools noted that within the school they felt a sense of belonging to something larger then themselves, an overarching community. One respondent from a Blue Ribbon School said, "I love this school and would stay forever. …it is a community atmosphere [with] a sense of community." Another teacher from a Blue Ribbon School noted, "You have to work hard and believe and trust the people who are willing to help you and do things…they will give you ideas and not be afraid…and the relationship is key, you gotta trust one another."

Teachers in non-blue ribbon schools, made similar statements, but focused on different affective traits. When asked how the principal overcame unpopular decisions, one respondent stated, "A consistent positive attitude towards staff, a willingness to listen all the time." The same respondent noted that in his experience, the most effective principals are "positive." Other respondents noted that there should be "open communication" an "open door policy" and principals should be "open to listen to ideas" and promote an "open forum and run [things] by us to see what we think." Additionally, one teacher noted that, "a principal should know where you

are coming from and be open to ideas and criticism that is credible and be willing to change and do things differently and not have thing sent in stone as to how it's going to go."

When looking at the affective words used by teachers to describe their principal, it may be equally important to identify those words left unsaid. Teachers in Blue Ribbon Schools used the words, "community," "trust," "open," "relationship," "respect," and "supportive," in some capacity to describe their principal's leadership. Teachers in non-blue ribbon schools used the words, "open," "Positive," "Collaborative," "Relationship," "Supportive," and "Approachable" in some capacity to describe their principal's leadership. Looking closely at the transcripts of the interview, there are words that were used by the teachers in the Blue Ribbon Schools to describe their principal that those teachers in non-blue ribbon schools did not use to describe their principal. Principals in non-blue ribbon schools were described "collaborative", "approachable", and "positive," words not used by teachers in Blue Ribbon Schools. The words "community," "respect," and "trust" are used to describe the principal in a Blue Ribbon School, but not to describe the principal in a non-blue ribbon school.

Question 80 in the APE asks the teachers to rate their principal's overall effectiveness using the same 9-point scale that was used for the other questions. The specific wording of Question 80 is: "Using the nine-point scale, give your rating for your principal's overall effectiveness". Since this question is not used in any of the nine factors of the APE, an analysis was performed to ascertain which of the factors in the APE contributes most to this overall evaluation. The analysis was conducted in two steps: first, Pearson correlations were computed between Question 80 and the nine scales of the APE; second, a full-scale multiple regression was conducted using the same data. These results were conducted for all of the teachers across both

the Blue Ribbon and Matched schools since the sample sizes in the separate groups are not large

enough to support these analyses. These results are presented in Tables 4.13 and 4.14.

Table 4.13

*Pearson Correlations of Question 80 with the APE Scales ** p < .01*

Domain and Factor of the APE	Pearson Correlation
Organizational Development: Organizational Direction Organizational Linkage Organizational Procedures	.927** .862** .835** .928**
Organizational Environment Teacher Relations Student Relations Interactive Processes Affective Processes	.935** .944** .881** .884** .850**
Educational Program: Instructional Improvement Curriculum Improvement	.851** .850** .807**

As evident from Table 4.13, all of the domains and factors of the APE correlate

significantly and positively with Question 80. These results are consistent with the fact that, in

general, teachers rated their principals positively on all of the domains and factors of the APE. A

different perspective on these results, however, is presented in Table 4.14 which contains the

results of the multiple regression. The difference between these two analyses is that the Pearson

correlations look at each domain and factor of the APE separately. The multiple regression,

however, looks at all of the factors together. In this analysis, it is not appropriate to include the

domain scores since these are produced by combining the factor scores. Therefore, the multiple

regression was conducted using only the nine factors.

Table 4.14

Multiple Regression Results

Predictor Variable	Beta Weight	Significance in the Equation
Organizational Direction	.342	.003
Organizational Linkage	-.245	.018
Organizational Procedures	.381	.002
Teacher Relations	.455	.000
Student Relations	.043	.598
Interactive Processes	-.008	.936
Affective Processes	.014	.896
Instructional Improvement	-.075	.464
Curriculum Improvement	.092	.263

The interpretation of the results from the multiple regression is that four of the factors in

the APE contribute significantly to the prediction of Question 80: Organizational Direction,

Organizational Linkage, Organizational Procedures and Teacher Relations. Of these, Teacher

Relations is the most important, followed by Organizational Procedures, Organizational

Direction and Organizational Linkage. Surprisingly, however, Organizational Linkage has a

negative beta weight. In statistical terms, when a variable changes its relationship in a multiple

regression, the variable is called a suppressor variable. That is, when the variance attributable to

the first three predictors in the equation has been accounted for, the suppressor variable

correlates negatively with the remaining variance. The interpretation in this case is as follows:

teachers perceive their principal as effective if the principal has good relations with them, if the

principal employs and evaluates staff effectively, if the principal has high expectations for

himself or herself, as well as for the faculty and the school, and if the principal does not

exceedingly involve the community in the life of the school. While these results must be viewed

somewhat cautiously due to the small sample size, this finding suggests some interesting avenues

for future research.

Conclusion

The instrument used in this study, The Audit of Principal Effectiveness, is a tested and

validated survey instrument. The results recorded by the teacher responses indicate a shift from

the logical assumptions that principals in Blue Ribbon schools would be perceived as more

effective then a non-blue ribbon school. When reviewing the data collected, the data seem to

indicate that, although the differences in scores are slight in some cases, the trend indicates a

paradox from the logical assumptions. Are principals in non-blue ribbon schools actually more

effective leaders then principals in Blue Ribbon Schools?

At the outset of this study, the research on school leadership seemed to very clearly

indicate that for a school to be effective there must be an effective leader present. As stated in

Chapter 1, of the major characteristics that distinguish successful organizations from

unsuccessful organizations is the presence of effective leadership (Hager, and Scarr, 1983;

Valentine and Bowman 1989; Smith, Maehr, Martin, Midgley, 1992; Hersey, Blanchard,

Johnson, 1996; Williams, 2000; Barnett, 2004; Kelly, et. al., 2005). With the results of this study

indicating a contradiction to the logical assumption that National Blue Ribbon School award

recipients have more effective leadership then non-blue ribbon school, additional questions

appear to this researcher.

When looking at the criteria for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award, it is noted that

there is an application process that a school must complete and submit by a predetermined time

to be eligible for selection. Additionally, there is a selection process for the Nation Blue Ribbon

School Award; schools are not awarded for simply crossing a quantifiable threshold established

by the Department of Education. When examining the criteria for selection as a National Blue

Ribbon School, there are limits on the number and type of schools that may be selected each

year. Schools must first be nominated by the "Chief State School Officer" to apply for the

award. The nomination is reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education and the Secretary of

Education then invites schools that fit the predetermined criteria to submit applications. The

following excerpt is taken from the National Blue Ribbon Schools application,

> To reward successful schools, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) established the No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program to honor those elementary and secondary schools in the United States that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. The program recognizes and presents as models both public and private elementary and secondary schools that meet either of two assessment criteria.
>
> First, it recognizes schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and have dramatically improved student performance to high levels in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics on state assessments or assessments referenced against national norms in at least the highest grade tested in the last year tested. Second, it recognizes schools, regardless of their demographics, that are in the top 10 percent of schools as measured by state tests in both reading (language arts or English) and mathematics or that score in the top 10 percent on assessments referenced against national norms in at least the highest grade tested in the last year tested.
>
> At least one-third of the schools nominated by each state must have in the year the school applies 40 percent of the students from disadvantaged backgrounds, whether the schools show dramatic improvement in closing the achievement gap or are high performing (in the top 10 percent). For example, if a state nominates seven schools, at least three must be high poverty schools. States may only submit schools that have made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years (www.ed.gov, 10/24/09).

This information clearly shows that not all schools can earn the National Blue Ribbon Award. In

fact, some schools that are shown to be effective and are led by effective principals may not be

selected to receive recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Setting out to determine what the results would be if teachers' perceptions of their principals' effectiveness in National Blue Ribbon Schools were compared to teachers' perceptions of their principals' effectiveness in selected matched-sets of non-blue ribbon schools, this researcher's initial predictions for the outcome were weighted heavily in the assumption that the principals in Blue Ribbon Schools would be seen as far more effective then those principals in non-blue ribbon schools. This assumption was rooted in the interpretation of the literature review on the development of leadership theory through history and its relationship to school leadership. Many authors have noted that effective schools, in fact, have effective leaders, ones that influence the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation (Hersey, 1996). With the criteria for the National Blue Ribbon School Award clearly indicating the goal and the achievement levels of schools; schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance in accordance with state assessment systems; or Schools that score in the top 10 percent on state assessments (www.nces.ed.gov), it was determined that this would be the metric from which a comparison would be drawn.

Selecting the Blue Ribbon Schools was just a matter of obtaining the list from the Department of Education via their website. The 12 schools selected in Pennsylvania in 2008 are listed. A quick search of a school directory online provided the address of the school and the name of the principal. Selection of the matched-set school took place in cooperation with the principal of each Blue Ribbon School. Considering the size of each Blue Ribbon School and the demographics of its student population, the Blue Ribbon School principal provided the name of a nearby school that would be used for comparison. The online school directory was again

consulted to obtain the school information and principal's name and that principal was contacted and invited to participate in the study.

When connecting the findings of this study to leadership theory, a clear connection to situational leadership theory emerges. Four factors contributed significantly to a high overall rating of a principal. These factors were Organizational Direction, Organizational, Linkage, Organizational Procedures, and Teacher Relations. Of these, Teacher Relations is the most important, followed by Organizational Procedures, Organizational Direction, and Organizational Linkage. The relationship that a principal has with a teacher significantly contributes to that teacher's overall feeling that the principal is effective, meaning that they have a positive opinion of the principal. During an interview in 2002, when discussing situational leadership, Paul Hersey stated, "I often call relationship behavior, supportive behavior. You are supporting the employee through inter-personal relationships." This quote is one of three in the literature that are key to the understanding of this study and its relationship to educational leadership practice. Shapiro and Gross note, "Create trust through social and professional relationships, identifying and reconstructing commonly held assumptions to create new ways of working" (2007). Trust and relationships are synonymous and necessary for effective functioning. Without trust there can not be an effective relationship and the development of relationships are essential to build trust among individuals. Finally, being certain that one's intentions are being clearly communicated and are having the desired results is important. In an effective and positive relationship the feedback loop should be constant to minimize misunderstandings. Boleman and Deal state that, "Even if a leader says he or she is exhibiting a particular behavior does not mean that followers perceive that behavior the same way the leader intended" (2003). By creating and maintaining effective and supportive relationships, administrators and teachers can avoid

miscommunications that may lead to a school climate where ineffective practice and misperceptions cause instructional and systematic problems.

This study is conducted in schools across Pennsylvania. The sample consisted of teachers at varying levels of experience who are currently teaching within schools that are recognized either as a National Blue Ribbon School or a non-blue ribbon school. The study permits generalization to like populations with caution. The sample used in this study is similar to other studies on organizational change and school leadership, (see: Barnett, 2004; Coulon, Quaglia, 1989; Kelly, et. al., 2005; Smith, et. al., 1992; Valentine, Bowman, 1989; Williams, 2000). The location and sample vary from other studies in that this sample is comprised of practitioners within National Blue Ribbon Schools and matched sets of selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania.

Delimitations of this study included the location and size of the sample. The schools in Pennsylvania were selected by the researcher to allow for ease of access when contacting individuals. The logistical concerns were considered by the researcher to allow for a more in-depth look at the effective practices of principals the impact on school performance. This sample allows for a valid study because it examines the responses of teachers through an abundance of data collection using the Audit of Principal Effectiveness which is a proven instrument for data collection (Valentine, Bowman, 1989; Williams, 2000). This sample provides a valid answer to the research questions as it examines data reflecting teachers' perceptions of effective practices of principals. The efficacy of practice is examined relative to the responses by the teachers in their characterization of the effective practices of principals.

The limitations of this study included researcher bias, time and finance, and a solitary researcher. The research proposed was not influenced by the researcher with any significance. The researcher is currently serving as an elementary school Principal. Insights and emotions felt by the researcher guided the study to reveal aspects of the topic that are not readily available through a surface evaluation. The researcher admits to holding certain biases regarding leadership in schools. Additionally, the researcher has worked with a number of principals and teacher leaders that were examples of both effective and ineffective leaders. These biases were addressed and appropriately categorized and accounted. Individual bias on the part of the researcher was kept in perspective and tempered as the research of teacher perceptions of the effective practices of principals was studied.

A second limitation of this study is time and finance. The researcher admits to purposefully limiting this study to include only schools in Pennsylvania. This knowingly limits the generalizability of the study. Limited generalizability does not mitigate the significance of the study with respect to identifying the effective practices of principals in schools, the primary goal of this study, it limits the validity of one to use the term 'all' when referring to perceptions of effective practices of principals in National Blue Ribbon Schools. Additionally, face-to-face interactions were not possible as the time and cost involved to travel to each location to administer the data collection instruments was prohibitive. The effects of this limitation will not impact the outcome of the study significantly, as other similar studies were conducted the same way, (see: Barnett, 2004; Coulon, Quaglia, 1989; Kelly, et. al., 2005; Smith, et. al., 1992; Valentine, Bowman, 1989; Williams, 2000). Finally, one minor limitation of this study is the fact that the researcher was working on the study independent of other researchers. This is a minor limitation as this study was conducted under the direction of Temple University and

oversight of the researcher and the research is ongoing. Future research on this topic may include multiple researchers to aid in data interpretation and analysis.

Analysis

Once the survey instrument was distributed to the teachers of each school and results were collected, data analysis of the results began. It became evident during the data input that there were marked differences in the responses of Blue Ribbon School teachers and non-blue ribbon school teachers. The amount of "very effective" responses from the non-blue ribbon schools were occurring more frequently than the Blue Ribbon Schools. The formal analysis confirmed that there were significant differences in the responses of the two groups. Most notably the teachers in the non-blue ribbon schools rated their principals to be more effective in seven of the nine factors and two of the three domains in the Audit of Principal Effectiveness survey.

Among the results of the data analysis were the identification most and least effective areas for each principal. In the Blue Ribbon Schools, principals were rated highest in Student Relations and Organizational Direction. According to Valentine and Bowman's descriptions of these factors, this indicates that these principals , "enjoy working with students and finds time to interact with them…the principal is highly visible" and "The principal has high expectations for self, faculty, and school…envisions future goals…encourages changes that lead to a better school" (1987). The matched-set schools' results showed that principals were rated highest in instructional improvement and curriculum improvement. The principal's in these schools, "actively and regularly participates in the observation and assessment of classroom instruction…provides suggestions for improvement…is committed to instructional improvement" and "participates in instructional improvement activities…promotes the

development of educational goals and objectives…promotes the diagnosis of individual and group learning needs of students and application of appropriate instruction to meet those needs" (Valentine and Bowman, 1987).

Conversely, Blue Ribbon School principals were rated lowest in the area of interactive processes, that is, they are perceived to be least effective at using, "effective communication skills to keep teachers informed about school operations…set[ting] the overall tone for discipline in the school" (Valentine & Bowman, 1987). Matched-set school principals were perceived to be least effective at student relations. According to Valentine & Bowman's description, teachers perceive the principal is least effective in the area including, "working with students and find[ing] time to interact with them…encourag[ing] student leadership… [being] highly visible to the student body" (1987).

Further, question 80 in the survey asks teachers to rate their principal's overall effectiveness on a scale of one to nine, with nine being very effective. No significant difference was found in the overall rating of principals in each type of school by the teachers. This indicates that both teachers in Blue Ribbon Schools and non-blue ribbon schools in this study view their principals as being equally effective in a global sense. When looking at which factors in the survey influence this decision, a full-scale multiple regression was conducted. The result of the multiple regressions indicates that only four factors contribute significantly to the teachers' overall perceptions of their principals' effectiveness. In order of importance to the overall rating, the factors are, Teacher Relations, Organizational Procedures, Organizational Direction, and Organizational Linkage. Therefore, according to this study, teachers' perceive their principals' as effective if the principal has good relations with them, employs and evaluates

staff effectively, has high expectations for himself of herself, as well as for the faculty and the school, and if the principal does not exceedingly involve the community in the life of the school.

Therefore, the significance of this study may lay in the demonstration that while there is prestige and distinction in being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School, recognition does not necessarily indicate a high level of effectiveness according to teachers' perceptions. National Blue Ribbon School criteria do require achievement and growth in student performance, but that does not necessarily translate into a measure of principal effectiveness. While having a school honored as a National Blue Ribbon School may be a significant note to be placed into a principal's career vitae, it is neither necessary nor sufficient.

The process and procedures for application and selection may be the true limiting factor for this study. Consideration for selection as a National Blue Ribbon School requires an application. Someone must complete and submit the application within the time frame specified being sure to note the criteria by which the specific school qualifies for the award. Applications are submitted to the state department of education to be reviewed by the office of the Secretary of Education in that particular state. Of the schools submitted by each state, at least one-third must meet the first criterion of having 40 percent of the students from disadvantaged backgrounds (www.ed.gov, Sept. 9, 2008). Those applications that have successfully passed the screening process at the state level are then forwarded to the National level. At this level the applications are reviewed and an assessment panel conducts site visits to the schools that meet the criteria prior to selection by the Secretary of Education. The expenses of these site visits must be paid by the school applying for recognition.

Recommendations

As the results of this study indicate, there are significant factors that influence teachers' perceptions of their principals' effectiveness. Most significantly is the relationship that the principal has with his or her teachers. When generalizing these results, one must proceed cautiously noting the limitations and delimitations of this study. While the findings were significant with respect to teachers' perceptions of their principals' effectiveness, this study was conducted using schools within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania only. The Blue Ribbon Schools award is awarded nationally, but to say that these results are valid for *all* Blue Ribbon Schools may not be accurate.

Principals can, however, begin to examine their own leadership style and compare it to the findings of this study. By reflecting on their own practice, asking questions, and listening to the responses of their teachers, principals may begin to become more effective in the eyes of their teachers. Principal preparation programs should focus on the impact that the relationship a principal has with his/her teachers has on the over all climate of the building. Additionally, the leadership preparation programs should include components related to the development of interpersonal and relational skills in leaders. The development of these skills can prove valuable as they build a bank of good will between the teacher and the administrator. When a situation arises where there is increased stress or turbulence, the administrator may need to call upon this bank of good will and ask more of the teacher than typical. If there is not a pre-existing positive relationship between these people, the situation may not be resolved as effectively as it should. The interactions between the principal and the teachers is vital to organizational growth and development. Cooperation and collaboration is essential in the overall effectiveness of a school.

While recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School may be coveted by some and seen as an outward sign of school achievement, it is not an indication of the effectiveness of a school Principal. The application and selection process that must be navigated to receive recognition may preclude some schools from applying and some from being recognized, despite their successes in student achievement. Perhaps the criteria for selection for recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School should be examined and an overall award of excellence that is more objective and not dependent on the judgment of others.

It is evident, through this study that behavior linked to perception changes as a result of the relationships that are formed within a school. It is critical to note that the relationship connecting the principal and the teachers within the school is of paramount importance for the perceived effectiveness within that school. Principals who are too authoritarian or too laissez-faire in their leadership are not perceived to be effective by their teachers. A good working relationship must be established between the teacher and the principal for the school to move forward in an effective way.

The findings of this study were surprising to the researcher. They served to generate more questions in the area of leadership, specifically effective school leadership. Through the examination of the data and the formulation of questions left unanswered, implications for future research on this topic emerge.

The premise of this study was to determine what teachers perceived to be effective practices of principals. Contributing to the body of school effectiveness and leadership research, this study has demonstrated significant findings. With the limitations and delimitations of this study, however, generalizability is limited. As noted, the sample for this study was among schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Blue Ribbon Schools Award is available to

schools across the Nation. A natural and logical extension of this study would be to replicate it

at the National level and strive to include all Blue Ribbon Schools of a particular year.

Additionally, an expansion of the qualitative survey to include a question asking

respondents to list three words they would use to describe an effective principal. The responses

to this question could be easily quantifiable and ranked to show what, if any, discrepancy exists

between Blue Ribbon and Matched-Set schools. The question could be further refined to include

a bank of words or statements, from which respondents would select those that they feel most

closely, represent their perceptions of their school principal.

Expanding on the finding that there is a significant correlation between the relationship of

the principals and the teacher in the overall perception of the principals' effectiveness, future

research into the effect relationships have on behavior may be warranted. This could be

connected to research on the effect that the relationship a teacher has with his or her students has

on the students overall performance in the classroom, or it's effect on student discipline in the

school. The relationship aspect of this study could be further expanded to include the

relationships between parents and various positions within the school, teachers, administrators,

or other parents. The connection between parental involvement in school sports, or other after-

school activities like parent-teacher organizations could also be included.

Looking at this study through another lens, future study on the effects of negative

relationships between principals and teachers may provide interesting data. This study shows

that when the teachers perceive a positive relationship with the principal the teacher's overall

perception of the principal's effectiveness is high. Is the opposite true, if so to what degree?

This could begin to incorporate Turbulence Theory in the school setting, looking particularly at

persistently dangerous schools or schools that have fallen into poor status under No Child Left Behind.

Future research may include seeking to understand the motivation behind a school leader's desire to complete and submit an application for the Blue Ribbon School award versus choosing not to submit the application. Could it be that the reason a matched-set school was not recognized as a Blue Ribbon school was because the application was never completed or sent?

Perhaps the future research could be focused on the Blue Ribbon Award itself or the process a school must follow in order to be considered for the award. How is the screen process conducted at the State and National level? Does the way in which an application is written have an impact on the acceptance or denial of the award? Should the criteria for the award be examined for bias?

Overall, the implications for further study resulting from "A Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Principal Effectiveness in National Blue Ribbon Schools and Matched Sets of Selected Non-Blue Ribbon Schools in Pennsylvania" will serve to promote educational leadership and continue to refine and connect leadership theory to practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCHER DEVELOPED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. For how long and in what capacities have you known the Principal of this school?

2. What is the leadership history of this school? This school District?

3. Certainly there are things that have taken place in this school or school District that were unpopular. How has the Principal attempted to overcome this and move the school forward?

4. What do you think are the most important things a Principal can do to enhance a school and promote student and teacher growth?

5. If you were the Principal of this school, how would you address the promotion of student and teacher growth?

6. Would you, or have you, taken on a leadership role in this school? Please elaborate.

7. What are your plans for your future in education?

8. Are there any other factors specific to this school, school District, or Principal that would help inform this study? If yes, please elaborate.

APPENDIX B

PENNSYLVANIA 2008 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

Chadds Ford Elementary School
3 Baltimore Pike
Chadds Ford, PA 19317-9441

George Washington Carver High School of
Engineering & Science
1600 West Norris Street
Philadelphia, PA 19121-3324

Homer-Center Junior/Senior High School
70 Wildcat Lane
Homer City, PA 15748-1602

Manchester Academic Charter School
Robinson Learning Center
1214 Liverpool Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15233-1304

Seventh Street Elementary School
310 7th Street
Franklin, PA 16323-1162

St. Aloysius Academy
401 South Bryn Mawr Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-2299

George A. Ferrell Elementary School
34 Court St.
Picture Rocks, PA 17762-0345

Harriet Child Elementary School
PO Box 38
Church Street
East Smithfield, PA 18817-0038

Kingwood Elementary School
5957 Kingwood Road
Markleton, PA 15551-8215

Russell Conwell Middle School
1849 East Clearfield Street
Philadelphia, PA 19134-3156

South Abington Elementary School

640 Northern Boulevard
Chinchilla, PA 18410-0163

St. John the Evangelist School
728 Big Oak Road
Morrisville, PA 19067-4728

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL'S DESCRIPTIONS

Blue Ribbon School	Matched Non-Blue Ribbon School
A1	**B1**
Length of school day: 7.5	Length of school day: 6.15
Number of instructional days: 178	Number of instructional days: 180
Community type: RURAL	Community type: RURAL
School Enrollment: 510	School Enrollment: 537
Low income: 41.4%	Low income: 37.9%
Attendance rate: 94.39%	Attendance rate: 91.63%
7th grade enrollment : 83	7th grade enrollment : 86
8th grade enrollment : 83	8th grade enrollment : 94
9th grade enrollment : 79	9th grade enrollment : 86
10th grade enrollment : 85	10th grade enrollment : 95
11th grade enrollment : 93	11th grade enrollment : 93
12th grade enrollment : 87	12th grade enrollment : 83
Grade 11 Scaled math score: 1330	Grade 11
	Scaled math score: 1300
Grade 11 Scaled reading score: 1300	
	Grade 11 Scaled reading score: 1310
Grade 8 Scaled math score: 1310	
	Grade 8 Scaled math score: 1310
Grade 8 Scaled reading score: 1310	
	Grade 8 Scaled reading score: 1320
A2	**B2**
Length of school day: 7.5	Length of school day: 6.5
Number of instructional days: 180	Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 140	School Enrollment: 261
Low income: 45.7%	Low income: 73.6%
Attendance rate: 95.08%	Attendance rate: 90.16%
Kindergarten enrollment : 15	Kindergarten enrollment : 38
1st grade enrollment : 19	1st grade enrollment : 36
2nd grade enrollment : 24	2nd grade enrollment : 35
3rd grade enrollment : 14	3rd grade enrollment : 43
4th grade enrollment : 25	4th grade enrollment : 34
5th grade enrollment : 13	5th grade enrollment : 29

6th grade enrollment : 30
Grade 5   Scaled math score: 1290

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1360

6th grade enrollment : 46
Grade   Scaled math score: 1300

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1280

A3

Length of school day: 5.58
Number of instructional days: 177
School Enrollment: 387

Low income: 40.5%
Attendance rate: 96.26%

Kindergarten enrollment : 59
1st grade enrollment : 77
2nd grade enrollment : 56
3rd grade enrollment : 57
4th grade enrollment : 72
5th grade enrollment : 66

Grade 5   Scaled math score: 1300

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1300

B3
Length of school day: 6.5
Number of instructional days: 179
School Enrollment: 468

Low income: 35.6%
Attendance rate: 96.15%

Kindergarten enrollment : 69
1st grade enrollment : 70
2nd grade enrollment : 87
3rd grade enrollment : 77
4th grade enrollment : 83
5th grade enrollment : 82

Grade 5   Scaled math score: 1340

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1310

A4
Length of school day: 7
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 138

Low income: 14.5%
Attendance rate: 96.32%

Kindergarten enrollment : 17
1st grade enrollment : 11
2nd grade enrollment : 20
3rd grade enrollment : 24
4th grade enrollment : 22
5th grade enrollment : 19
6th grade enrollment : 25

Grade 5   Scaled math score: 1360

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1350

B4
Length of school day: 5.35
Number of instructional days: 178
School Enrollment: 298

Low income: 17.7%
Attendance rate: 95.97%

Kindergarten enrollment : 58
1st grade enrollment : 45
2nd grade enrollment : 65
3rd grade enrollment : 54
4th grade enrollment : 76

A5
Length of school day: 7.5
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 802

Low income: 17.0%
Attendance rate: 95.53%

Kindergarten enrollment : 114
1st grade enrollment : 117
2nd grade enrollment : 140
3rd grade enrollment : 151
4th grade enrollment : 155
5th grade enrollment : 125

Grade 5   Scaled math score: 1330

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1340

A6

Length of school day: 5.35
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 108

Low income: 41.7%
Attendance rate: 96.36%

Kindergarten enrollment : 12
1st grade enrollment : 20
2nd grade enrollment : 16
3rd grade enrollment : 13
4th grade enrollment : 17
5th grade enrollment : 19
6th grade enrollment : 11

Grade 5   Scaled math score: 1330

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1330

A7
Length of school day: 7.25
Number of instructional days: 182
School Enrollment: 312

B5
Length of school day: 5.416
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 214

Low income: 28.2%
Attendance rate: 95.35%

Kindergarten enrollment : 44
1st grade enrollment : 42
2nd grade enrollment : 44
3rd grade enrollment : 48
4th grade enrollment : 36

B6

Length of school day: 5.416
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 214

Low income: 28.2%
Attendance rate: 95.35%

Kindergarten enrollment : 44
1st grade enrollment : 42
2nd grade enrollment : 44
3rd grade enrollment : 48
4th grade enrollment : 36

B7
Length of school day: 6.5
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 759

Low income: 12.8%
Attendance rate: 95.85%
Kindergarten enrollment : 54
1st grade enrollment : 74
2nd grade enrollment : 59
3rd grade enrollment : 69
4th grade enrollment : 56

Low income: 33.8%
Attendance rate: 95.40%
2nd grade enrollment : 174
3rd grade enrollment : 190
4th grade enrollment : 192
5th grade enrollment : 203

Grade 5   Scaled math score: 1300

Grade 5   Scaled reading score: 1330

A8
Length of school day: 6.5
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 368

Low income: 4.9%
Attendance rate: 96.27%

Kindergarten enrollment : 63
1st grade enrollment : 71
2nd grade enrollment : 79
3rd grade enrollment : 69
4th grade enrollment : 86

B8
Length of school day: 6
Number of instructional days: 180
School Enrollment: 327

Low income: 4.8%
Attendance rate: 96.12%

Kindergarten enrollment : 62
1st grade enrollment : 70
2nd grade enrollment : 68
3rd grade enrollment : 63
4th grade enrollment : 64