A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEACHER MORALE

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to determine which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects teachers and paraprofessionals identified as contributions or hindrances to morale. Participants included willing administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals from a small school district in the southeastern United States. The measurement tools utilized included the *Leadership Practices Inventory* and the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.* Additionally, some participants were willing to share specifics regarding the characteristics and behaviors they felt contributed to effective leadership. Qualitative data was examined in detail for this study, and the findings established a significant relationship between leadership practices and teacher morale. Additionally, other aspects including the rapport one shared with his/her school leader, one's satisfaction with teaching, the rapport one shared with his/her colleagues, teacher salary, teacher workload, curriculum issues, teacher status, community support of education, facilities and services, and community pressures were also identified as being influential on morale. In summary, there are many leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects teachers and paraprofessionals identified as being impactful on morale.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Educational leaders are tasked with a multitude of responsibilities on a daily basis (Sheninger, 2011). In addition to routine administrative duties including ongoing observations, addressing parental and teacher concerns, handling discipline issues, and the like, effective school leaders recognize their leadership style has a direct correlation with their school's culture and climate (Whitaker, 2012). Additionally, much research has demonstrated that the morale among the teachers, faculty, and staff members of a school is impacted by leadership style (Mason, 2007).

Heightened morale is beneficial to teachers, administrators, and students alike (Mooney, n.d.); thus, it is imperative for administrators to remain well informed regarding which leadership styles and behaviors are most effective in boosting and maintaining healthy levels of morale within their schools. According to Kouzes and Posner (2013), leadership behaviors can be organized by practice including: modeling the way (i.e., setting personal examples), inspiring a shared vision (i.e., talking about future goals), challenging the process (i.e., willing to try innovative techniques), enabling others to act (i.e., allowing people to make choices), and encouraging the heart (i.e., praising people for a job well done).

Bentley and Rempel (1980) asserted that in addition to leadership styles, other aspects influence teacher morale. Morale is also impacted by these factors: teacher rapport with the principal, satisfaction with teaching, rapport among teachers, teacher salary, teacher workload, curriculum issues, teacher status, community support, school facilities, and community pressures (Bentley & Rempel, 1980). As school leaders are

unable to control many of the aspects named by Bentley and Rempel, it is essential for administrators to be knowledgeable concerning how their leadership impacts morale.

Research has indicated that when leaders are trustworthy (Meador, 2016), empathetic (Pressley, 2012), and effective at communicating with others (Fullan, 2011), morale is increased. Additionally, morale is intensified when administrators regularly praise and recognize employees for their efforts (Hodges, 2005). Likewise, when teachers are provided with frequent opportunities to collaborate (Meador, 2016) and attend meaningful professional development courses with one another (Fiore, 2009), morale is heightened. Other leadership characteristics including being supportive (Hodges, 2005), respectful (Wilson, 2012), and effective at handling school discipline issues (Whitaker, 2012), have been linked to amplified morale.

Even though there is much research available indicating that leadership styles and behaviors are linked to morale, there is still a need to determine the specific ways in which teacher morale was impacted by the practices of administrators.

Background of the Study

In the current era of reform, a career in education has new and significant challenges. In the last several decades, many district, state, and federal mandates have increased the pressure teachers feel on a day-to-day basis. In 1983, former president Ronald Reagan released the report entitled *A Nation at Risk*. "*A Nation at Risk* lambasted the state of America's schools and called for a host of much-needed reforms to right the alarming direction that public education was seen to be headed" (Graham, 2013, para. 3). In 2001, George W. Bush signed the controversial *No Child Left Behind Act*, which was designed to "close the achievement gap between poor and minority students and their

more advantaged peers" (Klein, 2015, para. 2). Most recently, in 2012, the Obama administration launched *Race to the Top*, an education reform designed to increase students' abilities to become college and career ready. As an incentive for school districts to adopt *Race to the Top*, school districts received substantial funding (Miller & Hanna, 2014).

While each of these education reforms was designed to improve America's educational system, along with them came new obligations and mandates for educators including requiring school districts to adopt more rigorous standards and modify evaluation policies. These new mandates took a toll on the morale of many educators and continue to do so today.

Research Problem

Many exceptional educators leave the teaching profession prior to retirement age in search of alternate careers (Harvey, 2014), and the majority of them exit the profession because of ineffective administrations (Powell, 2016). Deruy (2016) reported that the most frequently cited reason for leaving the teaching profession is a lack of administrative support. Therefore, to encourage highly qualified educators to remain in the teaching profession, there was a need to obtain empirical evidence regarding the leadership styles, traits, and other influential factors that teachers perceived as contributions to positive morale.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the leadership styles, traits, and other factors that school personnel perceived as contributions to heightened morale. These findings proved to be valuable for educators and administrators alike. In order to be most

effective, school leaders must be knowledgeable regarding best practices. Furthermore, when administrators are well informed, they can utilize their knowledge and abilities to recruit, hire, and retain quality educators.

Research Questions

The previous findings led to the following research questions for this study:

1) Do educational leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, have a relationship with teacher morale within their schools? If so, what leadership characteristics and traits did teachers identify, and what was their perceived impact?

2) What additional factors do current educators identify as contributions or hindrances to teacher morale?

Rationale for the Study

Being an effective leader means having the ability to look beyond daily happenings and visualize a brighter future. Successful leaders work closely with those they lead and through this collaboration, they are able to influence others to pursue common goals and achievements for the good of the group (Fullan, 2007). By establishing trustworthy relationships, effective leaders are successful at convincing others to follow and pursue a shared mission and vision (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

In addition to working closely with those they lead, school administrators have a plethora of added responsibilities including handling parental and teacher concerns, completing ongoing classroom observations, and dealing with discipline issues. Effective school leaders find a way to balance their obligations while simultaneously setting the

focus, culture, and direction of the school (Sigford, 2005). Needless to say, being a school leader is a challenging profession (Sheninger, 2011).

A school's culture is something that must be regularly nourished, as it is directly related to the success of a school. As stated by Kelley, Thornton, and Daugherty (2005), "School climate, leadership, and quality instruction are frequently associated with effective schools" (p. 18). Additionally, a school's climate has a significant impact on the overall morale within the building. Effective administrators understand and acknowledge the relationship between school climate and morale. Additionally, they realize heightened morale leads to job satisfaction and the retention of quality educators; thus, they work diligently to ensure their leadership fosters both a positive school climate and teacher morale (Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2009).

While the correlation between leadership styles, school culture, and faculty morale may seem to be common knowledge, recent statistics regarding teacher recruitment, satisfaction, and retention are unsettling.

As reported by Erdley (2016), there has been a significant decline in the number of college students who choose to pursue education as their field of study. Likewise, Strauss (2015) informed readers that "today's college students, including those currently marching on campus, are significantly less likely than their parents to see teaching as a viable way to become agents of social change" (para. 16).

Furthermore, according to Fullan (2014), teacher satisfaction has demonstrated a twenty-four percent decline since 2008. Specifically, sixty-two percent of teachers reported feeling "very satisfied" in 2008; however, only five years later, thirty-eight percent of teachers reported feeling the same way. Additionally, job satisfaction among

school administrators has demonstrated a decline. Since 2008, the percentage of principals who said they were satisfied with their jobs has dropped from sixty-eight to fifty-nine percent (Fullan, 2014). These statistics are disturbing, and a solution to improve these indicators must be sought. Therefore, in order to recruit, hire, and retain quality educators, there was a fundamental need to determine which leadership styles, traits, and other factors educators perceived as contributions to intensified morale.

Fostering morale can be intimidating to school leaders; however, much research has determined that subtle changes can positively impact the way one feels about his or her place of employment (Whitaker et al., 2009). As reported by Kessler and Snodgrass (2014), boosting morale can be achieved through effective communication. School leaders who take the time to regularly communicate information through written memos or newsletters are successful in heightening the morale among their teachers, faculty, and staff members. Likewise, Fullan (2011) reported that part of being an effective communicator requires actively listening to and addressing the needs and concerns of others.

Additionally, praise and recognition have been linked to enhancing morale; therefore, Hodges (2005) advised administrators to make it a habit to regularly honor and celebrate the hard work and efforts of those they lead. White (2014) advised school leaders to take specific measures to ensure praise is received as authentic appreciation. Specifically, praise should mention the person's name, what honorable contribution they made, and why it was appreciated (White, 2014).

Heightened morale has also been linked to collaboration (Meador, 2016) and valuable professional development opportunities (Friedman & Reynolds, 2011). When

teachers are provided with regularly scheduled opportunities to engage in collaboration, relationships are strengthened and a sense of community is fostered (Meador, 2016). When one feels a part of a close-knit community, undoubtedly, morale is nurtured.

Likewise, when teachers are given opportunities to engage in meaningful professional development sessions, they sharpen their teaching abilities (Seyfarth, 2007). "Professional development is essential to your employees' success. It's also essential to high employee morale because people who know how to deal effectively with workplace challenges are happier, less stressed, and more productive" (Meyerson, 2013, para. 1).

School leaders who demonstrate qualities such as being supportive (Whitaker, 2012), trustworthy (Meador, 2016), respectful (Wilson, 2012), and empathetic (Weissbourd & Jones, 2014) also are effective in boosting employee satisfaction and morale. Likewise, administrators who take teachers' concerns regarding disciplinary issues seriously and handle inappropriate behaviors efficiently are effective in nurturing morale (Rebore & Walmsley, 2007).

Numerous motivational theories have been linked to improving the overall morale of an organization as well. Specifically, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's ERG Theory, and Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory have all been associated with successfully enhancing the levels of employee motivation within an organization (Fiore, 2009).

Additionally, one's leadership style has an influence on how optimistically people feel about their place of work. Leadership styles including laissez-faire, democratic, instructional, transformational, situational, and servant have been linked to heightened morale (Fiore, 2009; Kelchner, 2016; Raza, 2011; Robinson, n.d.; Root, 2016).

Conversely, leadership styles including authoritarian (also known as autocratic) and transactional are often associated with lower levels of morale (Fiore, 2009; Spahr, 2015).

Finally, in addition to the monumental tasks of fulfilling daily obligations and nurturing morale, it is imperative that school administrators also uphold the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). These 10 Standards include 1) Mission, Vision, and Core Values; 2) Ethics and Professional Norms; 3) Equity and Cultural Responsiveness; 4) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; 5) Community of Care and Support for Students; 6) Professional Capacity of School Personnel; 7) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff; 8) Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community; 9) Operations and Management; and 10) School Improvement.

Researcher

At the time of this study, the researcher was employed by a small school district in the southeastern United States. Specifically, she taught at an intermediate school that served approximately 650 fifth- and sixth-grade students. She had more than sixteen years of teaching experience and proudly served as an interventionist working with students who struggled in areas of math and/or reading. At the time this study was completed, the researcher had spent her entire career at the same intermediate school; however, there had been numerous changes in administration during her tenure. Five lead principal changes, as well as three assistant principal changes, had taken place over the course of the previous sixteen years at the researcher's place of employment. Additionally, other schools in the district had experienced significant changes in administration.

Each time a school acquires a new leader, along with that new administrator comes a unique leadership style (Glanz, 2002). The frequent changes in administrative teams within the researcher's district had, unquestionably, altered the overall teacher morale. In some cases, the new leadership had heightened morale; however, in other cases, morale had been reduced. The researcher deemed it important to gather evidence to determine which leadership styles and traits best cultivated teacher morale, as well as any additional factors that contributed to heightened or diminished teacher morale.

Definition of Terms

The terms used throughout this study are common in the field of education; however, in order to ensure complete understanding, several definitions follow:

School leader: a principal, assistant principal, or another individual who is an employee or officer of an elementary school or secondary school, local educational agency, or other entity operating an elementary school or secondary school; and responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations in the elementary school or secondary school building. (National Association of Elementary School Principals, n.d., para. 1)

Leadership style: the manner and approach of supplying direction, implementing plans, and inspiring people. As seen by the employees, leadership style includes the total pattern of actions presented by their leader (Newstrom & Davis, 1993).

Leadership: "The process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers" (Fullan, 2007, p. 17).

Morale: The feelings of enthusiasm and loyalty that a person or group has about a task or job (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Administrator: a person whose job is to manage a company, school, or other organization (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Teacher: a person whose job is to teach students about certain subjects (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Paraprofessional: a person whose job is to help a professional person (such as a teacher) (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Collaboration: to work with another person or group in order to achieve or do something (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Professional Development: Process of improving and increasing capabilities of staff through access to education and training opportunities in the workplace, through outside organization, or through watching others perform the job (Business Dictionary, n.d.).

School Climate: School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents', and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Center, 2016).

Summary

The introduction to this chapter included an overview of the numerous responsibilities required of educational leaders. In addition to routine administrative duties, educational leaders are responsible for ensuring teacher morale is consistently

nurtured. Information regarding recent mandates influencing the teaching profession

(e.g., *A Nation at Risk, No Child Left Behind,* and *Race to the Top*) was included for the

background of the study. While each of these educational reforms was designed to

improve teaching and learning, many of the mandates and obligations included within

them have been damaging to teacher morale. Thus, the purpose of this study was to

determine the leadership styles, traits and other factors that contributed to heightened

morale among school employees. The research questions, as well as the rationale for the

study, were also included in this chapter. Additionally, a description of the researcher and

definitions of terms that may be required for absolute understanding were included. The

following chapter includes a comprehensive literature review relating to the topic of

study.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

Introduction

As defined by Fullan (2007), leadership is "the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers" (p. 17). Effective leaders realize that in order to persuade others to follow, they must cultivate trustworthy relationships. "Leaders establish an atmosphere of trust by their daily actions" (Marzano, et al., 2005, p. 16). Rebore and Walmsley (2007) described leadership as "a way of life of dedication to the academic community and profession" (p. 22). Similarly, Owens and Valesky (2015) declared that leadership is more than simply how one behaves towards people or what one does; it is how one works through other people to achieve goals.

Being a leader in education is a challenging profession (Sheninger, 2011), and administrators are bombarded with a multitude of tasks every day. "Administrators must create a system where all parts interact and run smoothly from transportation to food service, to special education to regular instruction" (Sigford, 2005, p. 3). According to Glickman (2002), it is not unusual for administrators to be faced with disciplinary issues, parental and teacher concerns, substitute shortages, and numerous meetings on a daily basis.

Additionally, administrators must regularly complete ongoing teacher observations where they are required to 1) conduct pre-conferences with teachers, 2) observe classroom instruction, 3) analyze and interpret the observation, 4) hold post-conferences with teachers, and 5) critique the previous four steps. Following observations, there is a significant amount of paperwork involved in the teacher

observation process while district and state mandates are ever changing (Glickman, 2002).

With the myriad of responsibilities administrators are faced with on a day-to-day basis, it is not surprising to learn that "leadership is considered vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school," (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 4) and "it is the principal who will set the tone for the school" (Mason, 2007, p. 13). The actions of an administrator are highly influential, as they play an essential role in the success of a school (Whitaker et al., 2009). Effective school leaders make their decisions based on what is in the best interest of their students and teachers (Houston, Blankstein, & Cole, 2008).

According to Sigford (2005), one of the most fundamental responsibilities of a school leader is to set the focus and direction of a school. Additionally, as reported by Fiore (2009), "school administrators must regularly exhibit positive leadership characteristics," (p. 7) while they "make literally dozens of decisions daily on a multitude of issues" (Mason, 2007, p. 43).

In addition to the tremendous amount of everyday leadership duties, effective administrators realize the significant relationship between their leadership style and teacher morale (Whitaker et al., 2009). "The top management should be conscious of keeping their workers satisfied, because their leadership has great impact on morale" (Mooney, n.d., para. 1). The most operational and competent administrators recognize the morale within their school directly correlates with employee satisfaction (Schaefer, 2016). Furthermore, the quality of a school's leadership directly influences teacher decisions regarding remaining in or leaving the teaching profession (Long, 2015).

According to Weale (2015), four out of ten teachers quit within a year of teaching; twenty percent of all new hires leave the classroom within three years; in urban districts, the percentages are even higher (National Education Association, n.d.). As reported by Phillips (2015), while thousands of new teachers enter the profession annually, nearly half of them will either transfer to a new school or leave the profession altogether within the first five years.

Furthermore, as reported by Harvey (2014), "surveys indicate that teacher satisfaction has declined dramatically in the last five years, on some measures to the lowest level in the last 25 years" (p. 24). Therefore, in order to recruit, hire, and retain quality educators, there was a need to discover what aspects educators who were currently teaching attributed to heightened morale as well as which leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, best fostered morale.

Teacher Morale

As defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.), morale is "the feelings of enthusiasm and loyalty that a person or group has about a task or job." Similarly, Your Dictionary (n.d.) defined morale as, "the general mood of a person and whether he is confident, motivated and willing to perform tasks." Lastly, and most specifically, Business Dictionary (n.d.) depicted morale as follows:

Description of the emotions, attitude, satisfaction, and overall outlook of employees during their time in a workplace environment. Part of effective productivity is thought to be directly related to the morale of the employees. Employees that are happy and positive at work are said to have positive or high employee morale. Companies that maintain employees who are

dissatisfied and negative about their work environment are said to have negative

or low employee morale. (para. 1)

While there are many ways to define morale, heightened morale is,

unquestionably, essential to the success of a school. Unfortunately, with many of the

current trends in education, teacher morale is much lower than desired. With the stress of

high-stakes testing and unreasonable demands, many educators are doubtlessly feeling

strained and stressed on a daily basis. According to Noddings (2014):

Teachers are often blamed for low student test scores, although it seems obvious

that many of the factors affecting student achievement are beyond their control.

Teachers are also threatened with new systems of evaluation, some of which are

scientifically questionable—even bizarre—in the inconsistent results they

produce. Some of our brightest, most dedicated teachers are unhappy because

policymakers don't trust them to choose curriculum content or instructional

methods. It's hard for teachers to maintain high morale when they feel neither

respected nor trusted. (p. 14)

Morale can be nurtured in a plethora of ways (Whitaker et al., 2009), and

effective principals recognize one of the essential functions of efficient school leadership

is to build and sustain teacher morale (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

"Great principals know that putting others in an upbeat frame of mind comes back to

brighten their own day as well" (Whitaker, 2012, p. 37). Additionally, according to

research completed by Perumal (2011), "strong leadership, coupled with clear guidelines,

rules, consequences and loving support, are key considerations for raising teacher morale

and improving school climate" (pp. 3-4).

Freidman and Reynolds (2011) reported, "The first task of leadership is to provide the supports teachers need" (p. 16). Successful school leaders recognize teachers need support and by providing these necessary supports, morale is boosted.

According to Whitaker and others (2009):

Consistently taking a positive approach is a central element in establishing and enhancing the morale of those we work with. Looking for, acknowledging, and reinforcing the many positive things that occur in our organization may be the single most essential factor in cultivating positive morale. (p. 41)

Perumal (2011) stated, "Teacher morale impacts directly on delivery of lessons, teacher effectiveness and leadership, student attitudes, behavior and discipline, as well as student performance" (p. 4). Additionally, "A school with high teacher morale and positive school spirit has a more positive atmosphere" (Rebore & Walmsley, 2007, p. 194).

Morale can be heightened or diminished in a variety of ways; however, there is much research that demonstrates elevated morale is essential to the success of a school. "Efforts to raise teacher morale are certainly needed and important" (Noddings, 2014, p.14). Many researchers and previous studies have determined the following factors are significantly instrumental in influencing morale.

Communication

Effective communication, unsurprisingly, cultivates higher morale (Kessler & Snodgrass, 2014). An effective principal "establishes strong lines of communication with and between teachers and students" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 46). Likewise, Fullan (2011), advised leaders to communicate and listen to teachers every day. Rebore and

Walmsley (2007) reported that effectual administrators make themselves available to regularly communicate with teachers in order to serve their needs. Skilled leaders are privy to the results of research completed by the previously mentioned authors and, in order to be continuously effective, they utilize their knowledge to ensure that regular and clear communication is the norm.

Regularly written memos and/or newsletters are effective forms of communication utilized by operative administrators. These memos/newsletters are not only effectual ways to communicate with faculty and staff members, but they also boost morale (Whitaker et al., 2009). Hodges (2005) reported, "Developing and distributing staff newsletters is an effective tool to acknowledge and show appreciation for the staff" (p. 21). Likewise, Knuth (2006) suggested written memos be distributed weekly to all faculty and staff members. Specifically, he stated:

> The Monday Memo is an easy way to establish lines of communication in a school to foster professional relationships and morale. Both first level communication—such as announcements—and second level communication— such as messages that motivate and sustain vision—can be accomplished in a short regular missive. One hour a week dedicated to written communication can result in great benefits in better relationships and informed staff members. (p. 33)

Praise/Recognition

All people like to be acknowledged for the hard work they put forth on a regular basis. "Being recognized and appreciated by those in the 'head shed' is a nice bonus for staff members" (Hodges, 2005, p. 7). Praise is best received when the recognition is personal, individualized, and authentic. According to White (2014), people want to be

recognized for exceeding expectations (e.g., staying late after the parent meetings, coming in early to provide extra instruction to a struggling student, monitoring the hallways, etc.). According to White (2014), in order to effectively offer words of affirmation, one should use the person's name, specifically name what the person did, and tell the person why the action is important.

Effective administrators are creative in the ways they praise their faculty and staff members; this regular recognition, without a doubt, boosts morale. "The daily actions of the school leader play an integral role in staff morale" (Whitaker et al., 2009, p. 105). "The most valuable gift a principal can give teachers is confidence. Helping build their skills, and then encouraging and praising when appropriate, can go a long way toward cultivating this self-worth" (Whitaker, 2012, p. 17).

While praising teachers indeed increases morale, it has been advised for administrators to carefully evaluate when it is appropriate to praise publicly versus privately (Whitaker et al., 2009). If administrators praise specific teachers publicly too frequently, it can lead to resentment among the other faculty members. This resentment can have a negative impact on the overall morale of the majority.

Collaboration

As advised by Meador (2016), effective principals recognize:

Teachers should be given time to work together in a collaborative effort. This collaboration will strengthen relationships amongst your faculty, provide new or struggling teachers with an outlet to gain valuable insight and advice, and allows teachers to share best practices and success stories. (para. 4)

According to Behrstock-Sherratt and Rizzolo (2014), "Collaborating and taking on new roles and responsibilities can boost teacher morale and also improve teacher retention" (para. 10). Effective leaders recognize the importance of teacher collaboration; thus, they make it a priority to make schedules that allow teachers opportunities to collaborate. "The first task of leadership is to provide the supports teachers need to engage collaboratively" (Friedman & Reynolds, 2011, p. 16).

Fullan (2014) stated, "a principal's main role is to build the social capital of teachers working together" (p. 79). Likewise, Bieler (2012) stated, "When leaders set aside regular common planning time for faculty members to collaborate, such as through the professional learning community model, teachers often feel much more efficient and autonomous in their use of time" (p. 46).

As teaching is typically a very isolated job, collaboration is something educators naturally crave. Additionally, "A growing body of research shows that collaboration between teachers and administrators—not confrontation—improves student outcomes" (Anrig, 2015, p. 30). Effective school leaders recognize the importance of regular, ongoing collaboration; thus, they work diligently to ensure teachers have regularly scheduled times set aside to plan lessons together, share successes, and determine opportunities for student growth.

Professional Development

As advised by Friedman and Reynolds (2011), effective administrators realize teachers appreciate being able to choose what they feel are meaningful and engaging professional development opportunities. "Mandated professional development activities – in which administrators select the topics and teachers are a captive audience for a half or

whole day – are notoriously unproductive" (p. 126). Likewise, Fiore (2009) reported, "in order for staff development to be effective, the program must be designed with the needs and desires of the staff members' consideration" (p. 77).

Seyfarth (2007) described the following eight characteristics of effective professional development:

1) Relevance – Professional development must be relevant to a teacher's daily classroom responsibilities.

2) Clear Objectives – The objectives of the professional development should be clear to those participating in the course.

3) Attractive Incentives – Professional development should incentivize teachers either intrinsically or extrinsically.

4) Application – Professional development should be applicable to participants.

5) Maintenance – Professional development opportunities should not be one-and-done seminars; teachers must have an opportunity to put their new knowledge into practice and have follow-up instruction for support if needed.

6) Instructor Knowledge – The professional development instructor should have in-depth knowledge of the material that is being presented.

7) Classroom Fit – Professional development should appropriately fit teachers' responsibilities, and implementation of acquired skills should require only minimal effort.

8) Duration – Professional development that is ongoing provides teachers with opportunities to implement new techniques and bring questions to follow-up sessions.

Support

"As principals, we have a responsibility to support our teachers... teachers do not just want to *be* supported, they want to *feel* supported" (Whitaker, 2012, p. 133). Effective administrators recognize being a good listener demonstrates support for their teachers; without a doubt, when teachers feel supported, morale is heightened.

"Having a supportive principal can make all the difference for a teacher. Teachers want to know that their principal has their best interests in mind" (Meador, 2016, para. 1). Likewise, Hodges (2005) reported, "One of the easiest ways you can recognize staff and show that they're valued is to listen to what they have to say" (p. 29).

Trust

Meador (2016) stated, "The relationship between a teacher and a principal has to be built on a foundation of trust. This type of relationship takes a lot of time to build" (para. 1). Likewise, Fullan (2007) reported that trust is an essential link between a leader and those he/she leads. Trust is vital to followership and to one's job satisfaction. When teachers trust their administrators, morale is boosted; however, if one has been lied to, deceived, or let down too often, the ensuing distrust is detrimental to morale.

According to Fullan (2014), effective principals develop and nurture trusting relationship through their day-to-day actions and behaviors. Operative administrators understand they are responsible for ensuring trust is valued and the norm; thus, they work diligently to establish and support trustworthy relationships with their colleagues. "Leaders establish an atmosphere of trust by their daily actions" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 16).

Discipline

As advised by Rebore and Walmsley (2007), effective schools have a solid school discipline plan that is understood and adhered to by all. "A discipline code is necessary for all students and staff so that everyone knows, as they enter school, what is expected regarding behavior and conduct" (p. 194).

Furthermore, when a child neglects to follow discipline policies and is sent to the office, it is usually because teachers have been pushed to the limit and are seeking administrative support. Advised by Whitaker (2012), when teachers send students to the office, it's a big deal; therefore, successful administrators make sure their teachers feel supported by letting them know inappropriate behavior will be dealt with. Additionally, Whitaker (2012) advised principals to decide disciplinary consequences after not only speaking with the child but also after speaking to the teacher(s) who referred the student to the office. "This sound practice should be a habit. It is part of making teachers feel supported" (p. 118) and when teachers feel supported morale is boosted (Whitaker, 2012).

School Climate

Much research has been done regarding how leadership affects a school's climate and, undoubtedly, a positive climate is essential to the success of a school. "A positive school climate can enhance staff performance, promote higher morale, and improve student achievement" (Kelley et al., 2005, p. 19). Effectual school leaders recognize this, and they realize their school's climate is directly linked to their leadership; thus, they work diligently to ensure the school's culture is inviting.

As noted by Whitaker (2012), "Effective principals know that positive change in their schools is up to them" (p. 22). Administrators are responsible for creating a positive atmosphere throughout the school (Sigford, 2005). Operative administrators understand they have a significant responsibility to identify innovative strategies and ensure an optimistic atmosphere is present within their schools.

"An effective leader builds a culture that positively influences teachers, who, in turn, positively influence students" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 47). When teachers are comfortable with the culture and climate of their school, they are better equipped to help their students succeed. "Positive staff morale has a high correlation with a positive school climate. If the climate of a building is upbeat, enthusiastic, and productive, then the staff within the building finds it an honest pleasure to come to work" (Whitaker et al., 2009, p. 106).

Indisputably, effective leadership is directly linked to a school's culture and climate. When the principal sets an optimistic tone, the actions of everyone at school are positively influenced (Whitaker, 2012).

Empathy

Being empathetic is demonstrating the ability to understand and share another's feelings. "Empathy is not just a skill; it's a broad and deep sense of care and humanity" (Weissbourd & Jones, 2014, p. 42). When people are struggling, showing empathy, which costs nothing, can be a valuable instrument in boosting morale. "An empathic leadership style can make everyone feel like a team and increase productivity, morale and loyalty" (Pressley, 2012, para. 3).

According to Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2014):

It's particularly powerful when school leaders express empathy to teachers and staff members who are frustrated by, discouraged about, and distressed over circumstances they cannot fully control. When school leaders express empathy in this way, they create a positive sense of connection, foster cooperation, and evoke the willingness as well as the courage to try new things. (para. 12)

Likewise, as reported by Mooney (n.d.), "Effective leaders who challenge, motivate, empathize and appreciate their staff will have positive results" (para. 1).

Respect

"Great teachers will walk away from a school where the leadership does not respect or trust them" (Wilson, 2012, para. 3). Effective leaders recognize that people must not only *be* respected but also *feel* respected; therefore, cultivating an atmosphere where everyone feels respected is important to successful school leaders.

"School morale begins at the top, and when school leaders respect and believe in their teachers, everyone wins" (Esquith, 2014, para. 11). According to Whitaker (2012), "Effective principals... aim to treat people with respect ten days out of ten" (p. 113). Tamang (2013) reported, "Leadership and respect go together. As a leader... it is important that you respect those around you. Most people greatly desire the respect of their leaders. And when leaders give it freely, it creates a very positive environment" (para. 12).

A former city superintendent, as reported by Strasser (2014) stated:

Teacher morale, in my experience, is not a function of practices designed to maintain or create it. It's a by-product of being treated as leaders and being

treated with respect. Teacher morale is the end product of empowering teachers to make decisions that affect their lives. (p.13)

Morale is essential for the success of a school. "Most people would agree that school morale is important. People are more effective at work when they feel good. And if the professionals on campus feel good, the students are certain to feel better as well" (Esquith, 2014, para. 6).

Much research has determined that morale is indeed necessary for a school's productivity, and a school's leader directly influences the "mood" of the overall school; thus, there was a significant need to determine which aspects educators who are currently teaching attributed to heightened morale as well as which leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, had a relationship upon teacher morale. A thorough review of leadership styles is essential; however, the subsequent section examines some of the theories that impact motivation and morale.

<div align="center">**Theoretical Framework**</div>

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory is "the most widely studied and understood content theory of motivation" (Fiore, 2009, p. 69), and it is well known among educators. According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (1996), Maslow identified five basic levels of human needs that emerge in a specific sequence; however, in order to progress through the sequence, lower-level needs must be met prior to progressing through the succession.

The following, arranged lowest to highest, depict Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Fiore, 2009):

1) Physiological needs include the need for food, water, shelter, and health.

2) Safety needs include a desire for protection from dangers, attacks, anxiety, and threat.

3) Social needs include a desire for belonging and the establishment of friendships and relationships.

4) Esteem needs include a desire for respect, appreciation, and self-esteem.

5) Self-actualization needs include an individual's desire to reach his/her full potential.

Maslow's theory of needs is essential to consider when discussing leadership styles and teacher morale (Whitaker et al., 2009). If one's physiological and safety needs are not met, he/she will never be able to progress to attaining social, esteem, and self-actualization needs – all of which are directly correlated to morale. Effective school leaders recognize that people's most basic needs must be met. They recognize that people need to not only *be* safe; they need to *feel* safe while they are at school. Furthermore, they work diligently to foster an environment that provides opportunities for individuals to progress through the Maslow's hierarchy (Whitaker et al., 2009).

ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer developed the ERG theory in 1972. ERG "is an extension of Maslow's Need Hierarchy in that it too is based on the assumption that needs are important determinants of an individual's motivation. The acronym ERG stands for *existence*, *relatedness*, and *growth*" (Fiore, 2009, p. 72).

1) Existence – safety needs of food, drink, and shelter (e.g., job security, working conditions, etc.).

2) Relatedness – this need includes interpersonal relationships with colleagues, superiors, subordinates, family, friends, etc.

3) Growth – intrinsic desires to maximize working potential.

Similar to Maslow's five categories, the three groups (existence, relatedness, and growth) can be arranged in a hierarchy; however, unlike Maslow's theory, Alderfer theorized the levels are fluid. That is, people can move past "existence" prior to that need being completely satisfied. Additionally, Alderfer argued that if/when people are unsatisfied, they can regress from higher-level needs back to lower-level needs (Fiore, 2009). "Alderfer's ERG theory ... suggests that all human needs can be accessed and satisfied simultaneously, rather than from the bottom up. Either way, as needs are satisfied, employees are motivated to strive to satisfy a new need" (Kadian-Baumeyer, 2016, para. 1).

According to Management Study Guide (n.d.), it is imperative for leaders to recognize the needs of the people they lead. Specifically, "Managers must understand that an employee has various needs that must be satisfied at the same time. According to the ERG theory, if the manager concentrates solely on one need at a time, this will not effectively motivate the employee" (Management Study Guide, n.d., para. 9).

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

"Also known as two-factor theory and dual-factor theory, Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory distinguishes between those factors that motivate people and lead to job satisfaction (motivation factors) and those that lead to job dissatisfaction

(hygiene factors)" (Fiore, 2009, p. 74). As a psychologist, Herzberg was interested in understanding how one's attitude affects motivation and employee satisfaction; thus, he completed extensive research from numerous employees at nine different companies (Fiore, 2009).

Herzberg interviewed his participants and asked them to describe times when they felt both good and bad about their jobs. He then asked the participants to describe what was taking place that made them feel that way. Many people explained they felt good at work when they were recognized for hard work they had completed, when they received advancements or growth in the company, or when they accomplished a goal. "These, factors, or job satisfiers, were called motivation factors" (Fiore, 2009, p. 75).

Additionally, many of the subjects reported feeling bad about work when conditions were unsatisfactory, work relationships were strained, they were unhappy with their supervisors, or new company policies were mandated. "These factors, or job dissatisfiers, were called hygiene factors" (Fiore, 2009, p. 75). "Hygiene factors are all about making an employee feel comfortable, secure, and happy. When hygiene factors are not fulfilled, it feels like something is missing or not quite right" (Hartzell, 2016, para. 4).

Interestingly, Herzberg came to the conclusion that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposites. Instead, he claimed the opposite of satisfaction is not being satisfied, and the opposite of dissatisfied is not being dissatisfied. In other words, if something causing dissatisfaction at work is remedied (e.g., unfit working conditions being repaired), employees will no longer be dissatisfied; however, satisfaction will not

necessarily be the outcome either. In order to create satisfaction, motivation factors must be present (Hartzell, 2016).

As reported by Mind Tools (2016):

Remedying the causes of dissatisfaction will not create satisfaction. Nor will adding the factors of job satisfaction eliminate job dissatisfaction. If you have a hostile work environment, giving someone a promotion will not make him or her satisfied. If you create a healthy work environment but do not provide members of your team with any of the satisfaction factors, the work they're doing will still not be satisfying. (para. 6)

Effective school leaders understand Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, and they recognize the importance of ensuring motivation factors are present while hygiene factors are fulfilled. Undoubtedly, when both of these factors are satisfactorily met, morale is boosted. "A manager must be sure to provide sufficient hygiene factors while at the same time building satisfiers or motivators into employee jobs" (Hartzell, 2016, para. 8).

According to Fiore (2009), no single theory can provide leaders with specific ways to determine how people are best motivated; however, effective leaders realize that theory can help provide insight into what individuals find motivating. "The three theories can help school administrators determine what has the greatest likelihood of being motivating to their employees and other school stakeholders" (Fiore, 2009, p. 77).

In addition to being informed regarding theories that impact morale, effectual educational leaders are knowledgeable regarding which leadership styles are most

impactful on morale. The following section defines, describes, and provides examples of a variety of leadership styles.

Leadership Styles

Authoritarian/Autocratic Leadership

Authoritarian, also known as autocratic, is a leadership style in which one dictates and controls all tasks and group decisions. According to Fiore (2009), when faced with decision making, an authoritarian leader may display some of the following characteristics: taking full authority and responsibility for task completion; maintaining high structure, efficiency, and discipline; commanding all operations through directives; and seeking little input from subordinates.

"Autocracy implies a high degree of control by the leaders without much freedom or participation of members in group decisions" (Choi, 2007, p. 245). Additionally, Fiore (2009) declared, autocratic leaders are very specific in what actions and interactions are permissible. While authoritarian leaders are strict and tend to exhibit a "my way or the highway" attitude, exemplary productivity often requires their continuous monitoring presence. Nevertheless, this style of leadership is very common in many work environments today.

While authoritarian leadership is prevalent in many work environments, it is not, however, a leadership style typically observed in the educational profession. Not surprisingly, as autocratic leaders do not seek input from their employees, low morale is often associated with this leadership style. "Autocratic leaders … tend to alienate their staff and diminish the employee feeling of involvement. When the staff feels alienated, morale and productivity suffer" (Root, 2016, para. 4).

Although he was not a teacher, educators can gain much valuable knowledge from President Abraham Lincoln's leadership style. Even though Lincoln did not exhibit many of the usual character traits of an authoritarian leader, he made many independent decisions during the Civil War and is often categorized as an autocratic leader (Gill, 2014a). Effective school leaders emulate some of Lincoln's leadership styles both at school and in the community. These leadership styles include being predictable, maintaining a public presence, and having the ability to demonstrate restraint while building trust (Hirsch, 2016).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership is often viewed as the extreme opposite of authoritarian leadership; it is not governed by strict policies or procedures nor does a single leader make all the decisions. Laissez-faire leadership is much more relaxed and is based on a leader's confidence in others' abilities. Unsurprisingly, laissez-faire leadership has been linked to high morale, as leaders take a very hands-off approach and leave much of the decision-making processes up to subordinates (Robinson, n.d.).

According to Gill (2015), laissez-faire leaders often maintain the attitude of "do what you want as long as you get the job done right." These leaders believe the key to success stems from building a strong team; once the foundation of team players has been well established, the leader can step aside and let success blossom while things fall into place. While laissez-faire leadership is clearly not the best choice for every organization, some places of work flourish under this leadership style.

Some amazing, innovative developments would not have been achievable without the involvement of laissez-faire leadership. Gill (2015) listed the following game-

changing accomplishments as projects completed under a laissez-faire leadership style: The Transcontinental Railroad – No single person can be credited for the building of this railway system; The Panama Canal – Although Theodore Roosevelt headed this project, it would not have been completed without the expertise of engineers involved in the design; The Hoover Dam – Hundreds of leaders assisted in creating this marvel; Interstate Highway System – Headed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the building of the highway system involved thousands of engineers, contractors, and other specialized workers.

Effective school leaders recognize the positive impact laissez-faire leadership has on teacher morale, as "this type of leader offers incredible autonomy" (Robinson, n.d., para. 9).

Democratic Leadership

Unlike authoritarian leadership, democratic leadership (also known as participative leadership) is based on reciprocal appreciation and collaboration. Gill (2014b), informed his readers that democratic leaders are willing to distribute responsibilities among team members. Moreover, input from all stakeholders is encouraged and valued for decision-making processes. "A manager that involves employees in the company's operations builds morale and improves productivity" (Root, 2016, para. 4). "A democratic leader is very active in stimulating group discussion and group decisions" (Choi, 2007, p. 245).

In addition to seeking the input from those he/she leads, a democratic leader entrusts his/her employees to successfully complete tasks at hand without constant

observation. Naturally, democratic leadership is often associated with heightened morale (Robinson, n.d.).

Research findings by Harris and Chapman (2002) demonstrated that many effective educational leaders utilize democratic leadership. Specifically, when faced with challenging situations, effectual leaders "combine a moral purpose with a willingness to be collaborative and to promote collaboration amongst colleagues, whether through teamwork, or extending the boundaries of participation in leadership and decision-making" (para. 7). Predictably, democratic leadership has been linked directly with heightened morale. "Democratic leadership is associated with higher morale in most situations" (Choi, 2007, p. 246).

While democratic leaders may share administrative processes and managerial tasks with others, their jobs still consist of many responsibilities. Gill (2014b) recommended democratic leaders take extreme caution to avoid becoming overly influenced by the thoughts and ideas of others.

Although it was not always the case, Steve Jobs of Apple could have been considered to be a democratic leader. Jobs originally began his career with Apple as a laissez-faire leader and the company did quite well. Ironically, he then switched leadership styles to become an authoritative leader, and the board of directors called for his letter of resignation. After 10 years, Jobs returned to Apple with a combination of leadership styles including democratic. Up until the time of his death, he hired many qualified employees with whom he collaborated closely, and the company continues to flourish with high morale today (Gill, 2014b).

Effective school leaders recognize the value of democratic leadership, and they realize how impactful it is to collaborate and share ideas among the group. Furthermore, when leaders involve people in the decision-making processes and encourage creativity in problem solving, morale is enhanced (Choi, 2007).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership, although often not a well-defined concept, is perhaps one of the most popular leadership styles in education today (Marzano et al., 2005). Instructional leaders provide their educators with necessary resources, as they ensure teachers have adequate materials and facilities to successfully educate the students they serve. Additionally, instructional leaders actively support teaching and learning by modeling desired behaviors and actively participating in professional learning. The ability to communicate effectively is another trait instructional leaders possess; these leaders promote a positive school climate and boost morale by ensuring their presence is visible throughout the school and in classrooms on an ongoing basis (Marzano et al., 2005).

According to the Center for Educational Leadership (2015), the following five core concepts are indicative of effective instructional leadership:

1) Instructional leadership is learning-focused, learning for both students and adults, and learning which is measured by improvement in instruction and in the quality of student learning.

2) Instructional leadership must reside with a team of leaders for which the principal serves as the "leader of leaders."

3) A culture of public practice and reflective practice is essential for effective instructional leadership and the improvement of instructional practice.

4) Instructional leadership addresses the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and learning diversity in the school community.

5) Instructional leadership focuses on the effective management of resources and of people — recruiting, hiring, developing, evaluating — particularly in changing environments. (para. 3)

Instructional leaders are active participants in student learning and instructional practice; they actively address the diversity needs within their school; and they focus their efforts on effective recruiting, hiring, and developing quality teachers. These efforts do not go unrecognized, and they have a positive influence on teacher morale.

Transactional Leadership

A transactional, or managerial leader is one who appreciates direction and organization. According to Spahr (2015), these leaders are very result-oriented; they are likely to command military operations, manage large establishments, or lead projects. Projects led by transactional leaders often demand complete adherence to precise rules and regulations, and achievement is based on performance reviews. Transactional leaders have a great respect for routine, deadlines, and punctuality. People who work well in systematized, focused environments thrive under transactional leadership. However, those who enjoy being creative and innovative struggle when working under this style of leadership.

According to Raza (2011), transactional leadership is often focused on rewards or penalties. When one accomplishes a goal, a reward (e.g., recognition, advancement, etc.)

is received. However, if employees fail to meet expectations, they are disciplined or penalized for poor performance. "Since transactional leadership is based on a system of rewards and penalties, it does not offer much in terms of inspiration, to motivate people to go beyond the basics" (Raza, 2011, para. 8). Undoubtedly, transactional leadership can take a toll on teacher morale.

As stated by Spahr (2015), many military members, CEOs of large companies, and NFL coaches are often recognized as transactional leaders. Specifically, the late General Norman Schwarzkopf; the former Green Bay Packers coach, Vince Lombardi; and the co-founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates, can all be categorized as transactional leaders.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders are exceptional role models, and they inspire others to go above and beyond job responsibilities ("What is Transformational Leadership," 2014). These leaders increase expectations for their employees through intense motivation; thus, achievement of extraordinary results is the norm.

Transformational leaders are highly influential in motivating others to work for the good of the group, and they are extremely effective at convincing their subordinates to adopt a team vision. Additionally, transformational leaders possess characteristics including empathy, integrity, and honesty (Raza, 2011).

Under transformational leadership, individual contributions and "performance beyond expectations" are celebrated frequently ("What is Transformational Leadership," 2014). According to Raza (2011), those working for transformational leaders often exhibit increased levels of morale and are highly motivated.

Perhaps the greatest example of a transformational leader would be Jesus Christ. "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28-29 New International Version). While Christ was living, His leadership inspired people to achieve the unimaginable and, more than 2,000 years later, His disciples still seek to follow in His footsteps.

Situational Leadership

"The basic principle underlying situational leadership is that the leader adapts her leadership behavior to followers' 'maturity,' based on their willingness and ability to perform a specific task" (Whitaker et al., 2009, p. 17). More specifically, Marzano and others (2005) stated:

1) When followers are unable and unwilling to perform a given task, the leader directs the followers' actions without much concern for personal relationships (i.e., "telling" style).

2) When followers are unable but willing to perform the task, the leader interacts with followers in a friendly manner but still provides concrete direction and guidance (i.e., "participating" style).

3) When followers are able but unwilling to perform the task, the leader does not have to provide much direction or guidance but must persuade followers to engage in the task (i.e., "selling" style).

4) When followers are able and willing to perform the task, the leader leaves the execution of the task to the followers with little or no interference, basically

trusting followers to accomplish the task on their own (i.e., "delegating" style). (pp. 17-18)

Evidently, situational leaders believe there is not a single best leadership style ("What is Situational Leadership," 2014). Certain situations require different handling and, given various scenarios, individual personalities respond uniquely; therefore, one cannot rely on a specific leadership style to be maximally effective at all times.

Blanchard and Johnson (2015) described situational leaders as those who "manage themselves and the people they work with so that both the people and the organization profit from their presence" (p. 5). According to Kelchner (2016), situational leadership is effective, as it allows employees to receive the unique coaching and support essential to complete their responsibilities, which in turn builds morale.

Many sports team coaches can be considered to be situational leaders, as their rosters are ever changing. Team success is often attributed to adopting a leadership style to fit the uniqueness of each player. Former UCLA basketball coaching legend, John Wooden, considered himself more of a teacher and a leader than a coach. His situational leadership style was almost always evident. Specifically, he stated "Over the years I made lots of changes, but the basics of how I brought teams together in pursuit of success didn't change much at all" (Wooden & Jamison, 2009, p. 14).

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is "a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world" according to the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (n.d.). Servant leaders consider the needs of others first, and they have a compelling sense of compassion for

humanity. "Effective administrators… commit themselves to serving, caring for, and protecting their schools and their stakeholders" (Fiore, 2009, p. 93).

Additionally, servant leaders are committed to providing their employees with effectual professional development opportunities to increase know-how and proficiency. These leaders also make it a priority to ensure their organizations are consistently making a positive impact on society ("What is Servant Leadership," 2014).

According to Schwantes (2016), servant leadership is a highly successful leadership style for school leaders, specifically because they

1) treat themselves as human beings, and they are not afraid to be transparent with those they lead;

2) listen to understand instead of replying;

3) lead with their heads and their hearts;

4) praise their employees;

5) approach conflict with great awareness;

6) admit to their mistakes, recognize when they are wrong, and persevere with an alternate strategy;

7) look at difficult situations from a variety of angles;

8) practice empathy and seek to understand how others want to be treated;

9) provide others with opportunities to flourish; and

10) speak the truth with honesty and integrity.

Likewise, critical skills of servant leaders include being an effective listener, understanding the personal needs of others, and healing wounds caused by conflict within the organization. Developing the skills of those within the organization and being a

steward of resources are other essential skills displayed by servant leaders (Marzano et all, 2005).

Inarguably, Stephen R. Covey proved to be an excellent servant leader. Covey wrote numerous best-selling books (e.g., *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,* 1989; *Principle-Centered Leadership,* 1991; *First Things First,* 1994) during his lifetime and received an abundance of awards honoring his influential accomplishments. One of his famous quotes, "To touch the soul of another human being is to walk on holy ground," is, undoubtedly, a testimony of his servant mindset.

While there are a plethora of leadership styles, and administrators are able to choose which style best matches their personalities, all educational leaders are required to uphold the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, formerly known as Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, apply to all levels of educational leadership (i.e., principals, assistant principals, district leaders, etc.). However, the Standards are most applicable to school-level leadership, as district leaders have additional responsibilities not mentioned (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). "The Standards reflect a positive approach to leadership that is optimistic, emphasizes development and strengths, and focuses on human potential" (p. 3). The following is a list of the Standards:

1) Mission, Vision, and Core Values: "Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student" (p. 9).

2) Ethics and Professional Norms: "Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p.10).

3) Equity and Cultural Responsiveness: "Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 11).

4) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: "Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p 12).

5) Community of Care and Support for Students: "Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student" (p. 13).

6) Professional Capacity of School Personnel: "Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 14).

7) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff: "Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 15).

8) Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community: "Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 16).

9) Operations and Management: "Effective educational leaders manage school operation and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 17).

10) School Improvement: "Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 18).

Impact of Leadership Styles

Research completed by Liverman (2006) involved analyzing how leadership styles affect the success of an organization. Many professions, including physicians, nurses, counselors, statisticians, architects, computer specialists, and attorneys took part in the research study. Liverman's research depicted effective leaders as those who can effectively influence employee satisfaction and heighten morale by:

1) ensuring a well-structured reward system is in place and employees are regularly recognized for their accomplishments and achievements;

2) providing their employees with ongoing, applicable professional development opportunities;

3) maintaining a clear mission and vision;

4) inviting and encouraging others to participate in decision-making processes;

5) not only recognizing individual contributions but team performances as well; and

6) having the ability to get all employees involved in working toward a common goal.

Machumu and Kaitila (2014) reported how leadership styles influence teacher job satisfaction. Specifically, their findings noted that democratic leadership boosts employee morale and reduces isolation; thus, it has been linked to heightened employee

satisfaction. Additionally, by providing teachers with opportunities to collaborate and plan together, teacher confidence, employee satisfaction, and morale are all increased. On the contrary, autocratic leadership is typically linked to employee dissatisfaction (Machumu & Kaitila, 2014).

Houchard (2005) conducted a study at seven schools in North Carolina to determine if a relationship exists between leadership practices and teacher morale. By utilizing the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (Kouzes & Posner, 2013), Houchard determined that morale is heightened when: 1) school leaders set an example of what they expect of others, 2) administrators envision a positive future, 3) teachers are encouraged to try innovative teaching strategies, 4) principals treat everyone with respect and dignity, and 5) teachers are praised for a job well done.

Effective Leaders

A principal's role is multifaceted and includes maintaining a safe environment, completing evaluations, providing discipline, etc. Being effective at this myriad of tasks requires balance, and this undertaking often seems overwhelming (Sigford, 2005).

In order to boost morale, skilled principals realize they need to be effective disciplinarians (Rebore & Walmsley, 2007; Whitaker, 2012) and communicators (Fullan, 2011; Hodges, 2005; Kessler & Snodgrass, 2014; Knuth, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005; Rebore & Walmsley, 2007; Whitaker et al., 2009). Furthermore, administrators should proactively seek opportunities to praise and recognize their teachers' efforts (Hodges, 2005; Whitaker, 2012; Whitaker et al., 2009; White, 2014). Administrators should also provide teachers with meaningful professional development opportunities (Fiore, 2009; Friedman & Reynolds, 2011; Seyfarth, 2007) and regularly scheduled times for

collaboration (Anrigh, 2015; Behrstock-Sherratt & Rizzolo, 2014; Bieler, 2012; Friedman & Reynolds, 2011; Fullan, 2014). Likewise, effective principals support their teachers (Hodges, 2005; Whitaker, 2012) and conscientiously work to be respectful (Esquith, 2014; Strassar, 2014; Tamang, 2013; Wilson, 2012) and empathetic (Mooney, n.d.; Pressley, 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weissbourd & Jones, 2014) while developing trustworthy relationships (Fullan, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005; Meador, 2016).

Additionally, many motivational theories including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, ERG Theory, and Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory provide leaders with significant information regarding how to motivate people and boost morale. Effective leaders understand the valuable information provided by theorists including Abraham Maslow, Clayton Alderfer, and Frederick Herzberg, and they consider their findings when choosing their leadership styles.

While there was a plethora of information regarding morale, motivational theories, and leadership styles available, there was still a need to further examine which leadership characteristics, traits, and any additional aspects were most conducive to heightened morale. As reported by Long (2015), a principal's leadership style directly influences a teacher's decision regarding staying in or exiting the profession of teaching. While this may seem like common knowledge for educational leaders, there are still numerous qualified educators leaving the teaching profession prior to retirement age (Harvey, 2014; National Education Association, n.d.; Phillips, 2015; Weale, 2015). Therefore, an unresolved issue remains at hand—can this exodus be prevented and if so,

how? Which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects are most effective in boosting morale and retaining quality educators?

Morale is Essential

Most recent studies still demonstrate that teachers are leaving the profession at an ever-increasing rate. According to Powell (2016), there is not only a need to attract quality teachers to the profession but also a need to retain them. Specifically, she stated, "For the first time since 1990, educators and policymakers are concerned about teacher shortages" (para. 1). Moreover, about 55 percent of the teachers that do leave the profession attribute their resignation to professional frustrations, including unproductive administrators (Powell, 2016).

As reported by Deruy (2016), "According to the National Center for Education Statistics, eight percent of the men and women teaching in public schools during the 2011-12 school year left the profession the next year" (para. 1). Additionally, interviews completed by Deruy (2016) reported that a lack of administrative support was the most influential reason behind exiting the teaching profession.

There was a need to obtain empirical evidence regarding which leadership characteristic, traits, and other aspects were most successful in recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality educators. As stated by Nieto (2003), "recruiting and retaining excellent teachers who are excited about and committed to teaching students…is more urgent than ever" (p. 14).

While a link between heightened morale and teacher retention was likely, there were other factors including inadequate compensation, high-stakes testing, district and state mandates, and simply being overworked (Deruy, 2016) that influenced a teacher's

decision when he/she decided to leave the profession. However, researchers and school leaders alike would, undoubtedly, benefit from more information regarding which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects were most effective in boosting morale, as the level of morale within a school directly correlated with employee satisfaction and retention (Schaefer, 2016).

Summary

Operative educational leaders recognize the significant relationship between leadership and employee morale; thus, they work persistently to ensure a healthy morale is the norm among their employees (Mooney, n.d.; Schaefer, 2016; Whitaker et al., 2009). By providing teachers with support (Hodges, 2005; Whitaker, 2012), frequent and ongoing communication (Kessler & Snodgrass, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005), recognition (Hodges, 2005; White, 2014), and opportunities for collaboration (Behrstock-Sherratt & Rizzolo, 2014; Friedman & Reynolds, 2011), successful administrators are able to boost morale.

Additionally, efficacious principals seek to provide their teachers with meaningful professional development opportunities (Fiore, 2009; Friedman & Reynolds, 2011) and supportive student disciplinary practices (Rebore & Walmsley, 2007; Whitaker, 2012). By demonstrating empathy (Pressley, 2012; Weissbourd & Jones, 2014) and respect (Esquith, 2014; Tamang, 2013; Wilson, 2012), administrators cultivate trustworthy relationships (Fullan, 2007; Meador, 2016) and positive school climates (Kelley et al., 2005; Sigford, 2005).

With the myriad of responsibilities required of administrators, educational leadership is a complex profession, and one should not hastily choose to enter the career.

Administrators have a mulititude of responsibilities and, in order to be effective, they must have the capability to successfully balance the requirements of the job. As one's leadership is directly influential on teacher morale, and quality educators continue to leave the teaching profession due to a lack of administrative support, there was a need for further research to determine which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects positively impacted teacher morale.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology

Qualitative Research

A qualitative research study typically begins with an interest, problem, or question the researcher has regarding a specific topic (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), and the topics chosen for qualitative research are often very personal and important to the researchers themselves (Patton, 2015). "Qualitative researchers seek to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variables. The goal is a holistic picture and depth of understanding rather than a numeric analysis of data" (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2014, p. 32). As qualitative researchers seek to understand the happenings around them, studies are regularly completed in the environment in which they occur naturally.

Qualitative research is useful as the findings can provide valuable data about behavior patterns, describe the qualities or characteristics of something, and help determine needs and desires (Madrigal & McClain, 2012). This type of research focuses on examining variables as they occur naturally. As qualitative research is conducted in natural settings, it does not require the researcher to establish set experimental conditions.

The overall purpose of qualitative research is to achieve an in-depth understanding of how people make sense of the happenings around them. Comprehensive data is often gathered by asking open-ended questions (Occupy Therapy, 2014). A qualitative researcher's ultimate goal is to understand the viewpoints and perspectives of the participants. "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdall, 2015, p. 6).

Yin (2016) advised qualitative researchers to consider three important objectives: transparency, methodic-ness, and adherence to evidence. Specifically, transparency requires a qualitative researcher to thoroughly document research procedures so others can review, understand, and benefit from the findings; methodic-ness requires a researcher to follow an orderly set of procedures to ensure data is recorded accurately; and adherence to evidence refers to reporting the findings with validity (i.e., data reported is based solely on participant responses).

As described at Atlasti Qualitative Data Analysis (2016), qualitative research is not research that is completed behind a desk or in an office behind closed doors. With the desire to understand what is important to people and how individuals perceive their environments, qualitative researchers go out into the field and seek to observe and interact with people. As an educator, the researcher spent much of her time "in the field" and was, therefore, able to observe and interact with her colleagues and administrators on a regular basis.

This qualitative study pursued an understanding of the following questions:

1) Do educational leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, have a relationship with teacher morale within their schools? If so, what leadership characteristics and traits did teachers identify, and what was their perceived impact?

2) What additional factors do current educators identify as contributions or hindrances to teacher morale?

Since these research questions sought to gain a thorough understanding of the factors that contributed to teacher morale, qualitative research was utilized for this study.

Research Approach

In order to adequately answer the research questions presented in this study, the researcher utilized a non-experimental qualitative grounded theory research design. "Grounded theory research is designed to develop a theory of social phenomena based on the field data collected in a study" (Ary et al., 2014, p. 33). As described by Gibbs (2010), grounded theory analyzes data that has been gathered to generate a theory regarding a phenomenon; thus, the theory is grounded in the data. Likewise, Campbell (2011) explained that grounded theory research designs initially obtain data and then utilize the findings to discover and produce a theory.

The researcher gathered data from the participants in the study by utilizing both the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* (Appendix A) as well as the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (Appendix B). The data was then coded to assist the researcher in developing a theory regarding which leadership styles and other aspects contributed to heightened or diminished teacher morale. Grounded theory involves the "use of an intensive, open-ended, and iterative process that simultaneously involves data collection, coding (data analysis), and memo-writing (theory building)" (Groat & Wang, 2002, p. 181).

From the results gathered by the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*, the researcher analyzed the data and sought to develop a theory regarding the following morale-influencing factors: a teacher's rapport with the school's principal, a teacher's level of satisfaction with teaching, a teacher's rapport with other teachers, a teacher's salary, a teacher's workload, curriculum issues, community support of education, school facilities and services and, community pressures.

From the results gathered from the *Leadership Practices Inventory*, the researcher analyzed the data and sought to develop a theory regarding how leadership behaviors impacted morale. Specifically, the categories included: "models the way" (e.g., follows through on promises, asks for feedback, is clear about his/her leadership philosophy, etc.); "inspires a shared vision" (e.g., describes a compelling future, appeals to others to share the future, etc.); "challenges the process" (e.g., seeks out challenging opportunities, sets achievable yet challenging goals, etc.); "enables others to act" (e.g., develops cooperative relationships, gives people freedom, actively listens to diverse viewpoints, etc.); and "encourages the heart" (e.g., praises people for a job well done, publicly recognizes exemplary commitment, etc.).

Study Participants and Setting

The participants for this study consisted of willing administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals from a small school district in the southeastern United States. The school district was a K-8 school system with approximately 3,850 students enrolled. Students were served at eight schools: four elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, and a K-8 school. The four elementary schools each had two principals, the intermediate and middle schools both had three principals, and the K-8 school had two principals for the elementary campus and two for the middle school campus. Additionally, there was an average of forty teachers and thirteen paraprofessionals at each of the eight schools.

In order to achieve an adequate sample size, the researcher sought to obtain as many participants as possible from the accessible population of teachers and paraprofessionals within the district.

Data Collection Procedures

A request for permission was initially sought from the director of schools (Appendix C). Once permission was granted by the director of schools, the researcher planned on attending a district leadership meeting with all administrators. During this meeting, the researcher planned to explain the nature of the study, its purpose, and worth. Additionally, during this time, the researcher planned to gain permission from school administrators to conduct research at each of the eight campuses. However, due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts, the researcher was unable to attend a leadership meeting. Therefore, the researcher drafted an email and sent it to all eight of the principals within the district seeking permission to conduct the research at each of the campuses (Appendix D).

Once permission was granted from the director of schools and the principals at each school, the researcher planned to attend a faculty meeting at each of the eight schools. During these meetings, the researcher planned to explain the nature of the study, its purpose, and significance. Again, due to time constraints and schedule conflicts, the researcher was unable to attend a faculty meeting at each of the eight schools within the district; thus, she emailed all teachers and paraprofessionals explaining the nature of the study, its purpose, and significance (Appendix G). Those who were willing to participate in this study completed complete consent forms (Appendix E). Following completion of consent forms, participants were asked to electronically complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* (Appendix A) and/or manually complete the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (Appendix B).

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire

The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* (Bentley & Rempel, 1980) was used with all willing participants. In order to adequately assess which aspects of the *Opinionaire* teachers felt contribute to heightened or diminished teacher morale, the following 10 specific dimensions were evaluated:

1) Teacher Rapport with Principal: Dimension One focused on how teachers felt about the principal's level of competency, his/her interests in teachers' work, his/her ability to effectively communicate, and his/her skills in human relations.

2) Satisfaction with Teaching: Dimension Two pertained to the relationships teachers had with their students. Teachers with "high" morale loved teaching, felt competent in their teaching abilities, enjoyed their students, and viewed teaching as a permanent career choice.

3) Rapport among Teachers: Dimension Three focused on the relationships teachers had with their colleagues (i.e., did teachers cooperate, plan together, share personal ethics and interests with one another, etc.).

4) Teacher Salary: Dimension Four pertained to how teachers felt about their monetary compensation packages (i.e., were teacher salaries comparable to other educators in similar school systems, were teachers paid based on competency, etc.).

5) Teacher Load: Dimension Five focused on how teachers felt regarding their workloads (e.g., bookkeeping, secretarial work, "red tape," extra-curricular and professional development requirements, etc.).

6) Curriculum Issues: Dimension Six sought to understand teacher opinions regarding the adequacy of the school curriculum and how well it was meeting students' needs.

7) Teacher Status: Dimension Seven focused on how teachers felt they were accepted and respected by the community.

8) Community Support of Education: Dimension Eight sought to understand how well teachers felt they were supported and understood by the community.

9) School Facilities and Services: Dimension Nine sought to understand how teachers felt regarding their school facilities and the equipment/supplies they had access to.

10) Community Pressures: Dimension Ten sought to attain information regarding how teachers perceived community expectations (e.g., were teachers expected to be actively involved in outside-of-school activities, were teachers able to discuss controversial issues with their students, etc.).

The directions for the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* are as follows: Read each statement carefully, and indicate whether you (1) Disagree, (2) Probably Disagree, (3) Probably Agree, (4) Agree with each statement. As shown in Appendix A, the statements are randomized throughout the *Opinionaire*. The data from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* was collected electronically through Google Forms.

Leadership Practices Inventory

To determine if educational leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, had a relationship upon teacher morale within their schools, the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (Kouzes & Posner, 2013) was used with all teachers and paraprofessionals who were

willing to participate in this research. The *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI) divides

leadership behaviors into five categories. The categories include: Model the Way, Inspire

a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Each of the five categories has six specific statements that were rated using a 10-point

scale. To ensure reliability and validity, "the six statements pertaining to each leadership

practice are highly correlated with one another" (Kouzes & Posner, 2013, p. 2).

The directions for the LPI are "Choose the number that best applies to each

statement." The rating scale was as follows: (1) Almost Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Seldom,

(4) Once in a While, (5) Occasionally, (6) Sometimes, (7) Fairly Often, (8) Usually, (9)

Very Frequently, and (10) Almost Always. As shown in Appendix B, the statements are

randomized throughout the inventory. The data from the *Leadership Practices Inventory*

was collected at each school's campus after teachers and paraprofessionals manually

completed the inventory.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher advised all willing participants which instruments would be used

for gathering the data (i.e., the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* and the *Leadership Practices*

Inventory) as well as how the data would be collected (i.e., electronically and manually).

According to the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech (2016) research studies

should not collect identifying information of research participants unless it is vital to a

study's procedure.

As defined by Merriam-Webster, anonymity is "the quality or state of being

unknown to most people: the quality or state of being anonymous" (n.d.). Likewise,

Trochim (2006) described the principle of anonymity, "which essentially means that the

participant will remain anonymous throughout the study – even to the researchers themselves" (para. 4). All data that was gathered either electronically or manually did not have any identifiable information available to the researcher; thus, participants' anonymity was protected.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in grounded theory involves a systematic coding process to assist in finding categories or themes. "Themes are a level of abstraction beyond categories" (Ary, et al., 2014, p. 518). Grounded theory requires an intense amount of interpretation and transformation of data (Cho & Lee, 2014). As qualitative researchers looked for trends in the data they have collected, coding the data is essential. "In a brief explanation, the analysis process in grounded theory involves concept labeling, categorizing, identifying core categories, finding relations among categories, and generating a theory from such relationship" (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 7).

The researcher sought to find trends from the information obtained from both the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* and the *Leadership Practices Inventory*. The data from each of the eight schools was sorted, coded, and analyzed. "When it comes to identifying trends, researchers look for statements that are identical across different research participants" (Madrigal & McClain, 2012, para. 13).

Google Forms was utilized to assist in the coding processes for the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*. Coding is "the core of qualitative analysis and includes the identification of categories and themes and their refinement" (Ary et al., 2014). Concepts with similarities can be grouped into categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Coding has also been described as a method of labeling and categorizing concepts. Specifically, the

concept of coding has been explained as a "basic unit of analysis" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7).

Coding is "the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p.46). Through coding, the researcher sought to understand the data, sort the data into categories, and finally acquire a theory (Ary et al., 2014).

The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* was coded according to the 10 specific dimensions (i.e., Teacher Rapport with Principal, Satisfaction with Teaching, Rapport Among Teachers, Teacher Salary, Teacher Load, Curriculum Issues, Teacher Status, Community Support of Education, School Facilities and Services, and Community Pressures) it measured. The researcher sought to determine if there were any commonalities or themes among teacher responses within the 10 specific dimensions. Specifically, a theory was sought regarding the following aspects: a teacher's rapport with the principal, a teacher's satisfaction with teaching, the rapport teachers have with one another, a teacher's salary, curriculum issues, a teacher's status, community support of education, school facilities and services and, community pressures.

The *Leadership Practices Inventory* was manually coded according to the five specific behaviors (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart) it measured (see Appendix F for further clarification regarding how the items were sorted for analytical purposes). The researcher sought to determine if there were any commonalities or themes among teacher responses within the five specific leadership behaviors. Specifically, a theory was sought regarding the following: a leader's ability to "model the way," a leader's ability to "inspire a shared

vision," a leader's ability to "challenge the process," a leader's ability to "enable others to act," and, a leader's ability to "encourage the heart."

With the desire to understand which aspects contributed to heightened or diminished teacher morale and if leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, had a relationship upon teacher morale, the data was analyzed to determine if there were reoccurring themes or commonalities at each of the campuses. When commonalities and themes were present among the responses, the researcher sought to develop a theory according to the findings.

Summary

This chapter included a description of qualitative research, the research approach, the study's participants and setting, the data collection procedures (i.e., the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* and the *Leadership Practices Inventory*), ethical considerations, a description of how the data was analyzed, as well as a summary.

CHAPTER FOUR: Presentation of the Findings

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to develop a theory regarding which leadership characteristics, traits, and additional factors current educators identified as contributions or hindrances to teacher morale. The two research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1) Do educational leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, have a relationship with teacher morale within their schools? If so, what leadership characteristics and traits did teachers identify, and what was their perceived impact?

2) What additional factors do current educators identify as contributions or hindrances to teacher morale?

Participants

Willing participants included administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals from a small school district in the southeastern United States. The school district utilized for this study was a K-8 school system serving approximately 3,850 students. There were eight schools within the district, including four elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school and a K-8 school. In order to ensure absolute anonymity, pseudonyms were used for each of the eight schools.

Initially, the researcher planned on attending a faculty meeting at each of the eight schools to explain the nature of this study and its significance to all teachers and paraprofessionals; however, due to scheduling conflicts and time constraints, attending a meeting at all eight campuses was not feasible. Therefore, the researcher drafted an email (Appendix G) and sent it to each of the principals within the district. Principals were

asked to forward the email to all teachers and paraprofessionals, and all eight of the administrators assured the researcher they would honor this request.

Teachers and paraprofessionals who were willing to participate in this research project were asked to complete consent forms (Appendix E) and then complete either one or both of two inventories entitled the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* (Appendix A) and the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (Appendix B). Copies of the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI) were made available to all teachers and paraprofessionals at each of the campuses, and the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* was sent to willing participants via Google Forms. Upon completion of the LPI, participants were asked to place their inventories in an envelope for the researcher to collect after a two-week period. Data from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* was collected digitally for two weeks as well.

Leadership Practices Inventory

The *Leadership Practices Inventory* (Kouzes & Posner, 2013) is a measurement tool utilized to gauge how others perceive their leader's effectiveness in five individual categories. Specifically, the categories include "Model the Way" (i.e., the school leader sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others); "Inspire a Shared Vision" (i.e., the school leader talks about future trends); "Challenge the Process" (i.e., the school leader seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills); "Enable Others to Act" (i.e., the school leader challenges people to try out new and innovative techniques); and "Encourage the Heart" (i.e., the school leader praises people for a job well done). Each of the five categories includes six specific statements that are rated using a 10-point scale.

The directions for the LPI are "Choose the number that best applies to each statement." The rating scale is as follows: (1) Almost Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Seldom, (4) Once in a While, (5) Occasionally, (6) Sometimes, (7) Fairly Often, (8) Usually, (9) Very Frequently, and (10) Almost Always. District-wide, a total of ninety-five participants including eighteen paraprofessionals and seventy-seven teachers completed the LPI. Additionally, some participants, including administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals, were willing to provide specifics regarding each of the five categories named in the LPI. The results from individual campuses, as well as a district average, follow.

Leadership Practices Inventory Results

Kenyon School

A total of fifteen participants, including fourteen teachers and one paraprofessional at Kenyon, were willing to complete the LPI, and it is noteworthy to mention this school leader had previously earned a doctoral degree in learning organizations and strategic change. Additionally, at the time this research took place, this school leader had a total of twenty years of administrative experience. More specifically, this administrator had been the lead principal at Kenyon for the past fifteen years and, prior to that, served as the assistant principal at this same campus for five years.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the fourteen teachers and one paraprofessional at Kenyon ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table One. Interestingly, as shown in the table, the paraprofessional ranked the school leader at Kenyon significantly higher than the teachers did in all areas.

Table 1
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Kenyon School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	8	7.7	7.7	8.2	7.6	14
Paraprofessional Responses	9.3	9	9	9	8.8	1

Note. *n* = number of participants

In addition, the administrator at Kenyon provided the following additional information to explain how he/she:

1) Models the Way: "I try to be a servant leader in all I do. I never ask anyone to do something I would not do myself. When we have faculty meetings, I always start with a review of the norms, share what we will do, and seek feedback. I practice 'coaching methods' in hopes that teachers will do this with their students in the classroom."

2) Inspires a Shared Vision: "To inspire others, you must be inspired yourself and show this outwardly with enthusiasm and a positive, can-do attitude. My best example of a vision I have had for over five years was the 1:1 Chromebook initiative. I have been very outspoken with our teachers that we do our students a great disservice if we do not prepare them, technologically speaking, for the future they will face when they complete high school. Our administrators have embraced this concept with the use of Google in so many aspects of our everyday communication. We no longer print out items, but rather share these through Google Docs. We do surveys, spreadsheets, etc. through the use of Google products. Most of our teachers were completely

ready for the 1:1 program, and it has most definitely 'leveled the playing field' for those students who do not have these devices at home. The sense of pride and accomplishment is very noticeable. The future is theirs to face with confidence."

3) Challenges the Process: "I am an advocate of challenge—after all, I finished my doctorate at the age of 56! I live my life with the premise that you never grow if you do not challenge yourself. We all have areas of strength and areas to strengthen—this never ends. When I feel that staff members are too comfortable, I suggest they think 'outside the box,' and I nudge them in that direction. I follow up to see if they are making progress, encourage them to continue in their endeavor, and support them when they become frustrated with suggestions and conviction that they can do anything they want to do if they will persevere."

4) Enables Others to Act: "When a staff member is particularly good at something, I encourage him/her to present and share what they are doing. Many of our staff [members] have presented at local, state, and national professional development events. When a staff member needs to grow in an area, I often make specific suggestions to assist in his/her growth. This could be observing another individual who excels in the area or attending a professional learning event led by a person with expertise in the area of need. Additionally, I hope I lead them to grow through my own actions of learning new skills and developing myself."

5) Encourages the Heart: "Public praise and acknowledgment that shares their successes, kind deeds, and servant actions. A quick personal note thanking them… and, of course, Tweets!"

Tacoma School

A total of three willing participants at Tacoma, all of whom were teachers, completed the LPI, and it is noteworthy to mention, at the time this research took place this school leader had a total of ten years of administrative experience. More specifically, this administrator had been the lead principal at Tacoma for the previous five years and, prior to that, served as the assistant principal at this same campus for five years.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the three teachers at Tacoma ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table Two.

Table 2
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Tacoma School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	6.1	5.7	5.9	7.9	5.4	3

Note. *n* = number of participants

Creekwood School

A total of three participants, including two teachers and one paraprofessional at Creekwood, were willing to complete the LPI. It is noteworthy to mention this school leader had previously obtained a master's degree in education leadership and, at the time this research took place, had a total of nine years of administrative experience. Although this principal had several years of administrative experience, this school leader had been the lead administrator at Creekwood for only the previous nine months. Prior to this

administrative assignment, this school leader was employed within another school district.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the two teachers and one paraprofessional at Creekwood ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table Three. Interestingly, as shown in the table, the paraprofessional ranked the school leader at Creekwood significantly higher than the teachers did in all areas.

Table 3
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Creekwood School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	n
Teacher Responses	8.7	9.1	8.8	9.4	9.2	2
Paraprofessional Responses	10	10	9.8	9.8	10	1

Note. n = number of participants

Downers School

A total of eight participants at Downers, including six teachers and two paraprofessionals, were willing to complete the LPI. It is noteworthy to mention this school leader had previously earned a doctoral degree in instructional leadership and professional practice and, at the time this research took place, had a total of twenty years of administrative experience. More specifically, this administrator had been the lead principal at Downers for the past nine years and, prior to that, this school leader served as the assistant principal at a different campus within the district for eleven years.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the six teachers and two paraprofessionals at Downers ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table

Four. Interestingly, as shown in the table, the paraprofessionals ranked the school leader

at Downers significantly higher than the teachers did in all areas.

Table 4
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Downers School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	8.3	7.5	7.5	8	6.9	6
Paraprofessional Responses	9.4	9.3	9.3	9.4	8.7	2

Note. *n* = number of participants

Agnes School

A total of ten participants at Agnes, including nine teachers and one

paraprofessional, were willing to complete the LPI. It is noteworthy to mention, at the

time this research took place, this school leader had a master's degree in curriculum and

instruction as well as a master's degree in education leadership. Additionally, this

principal had a total of six years of administrative experience and had been the lead

principal at Agnes for the previous four years.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the nine teachers and one

paraprofessional at Agnes ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table Five.

As shown in the table, the paraprofessional ranked the school leader at Agnes higher in

the areas of "inspire a shared vision" and "encourage the heart."

Table 5
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Agnes School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	9.1	8.5	8.9	9.4	9.3	9
Paraprofessional Responses	8.3	9.7	8.2	8.5	10	1

Note. *n* = number of participants

The administrator at Agnes provided the following additional information to explain how he/she:

1) Models the Way: "I engage with students regularly, speak positively, never hesitate to say thank you, say sorry, and I continuously learn."

2) Inspires a Shared Vision: "I communicate, communicate, communicate. Then I ask how do you see this is looking in your classroom."

3) Challenges the Process: "I willingly engage with them during challenges. I am currently working on my doctorate, and I share professional books and articles I read. Oh, and at lunch and learns, I also share openly areas where I need more learning."

4) Enables Others to Act: "[I] motivate regularly and highlight resources for them."

5) Encourages the Heart: "[I send] weekly newsletters, delivered notes to their rooms and faculty meeting shout outs, [and provide] a monthly treat trolley."

Lisle School

A total of five participants at Lisle, all of whom were teachers, completed the LPI. It is noteworthy to mention, at the time this research took place, this school leader had a master's degree in education leadership and a total of fourteen years of administrative experience. Additionally, this administrator had been the lead principal at Lisle for the previous five years.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the five teachers at Lisle ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table Six.

Table 6
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Lisle School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	9.2	9	9	9.5	9.8	5

Note. *n* = number of participants

The administrator at Lisle provided the following additional information to explain which leadership characteristics he/she felt were essential.

1) "Get to know your employees personally (e.g., children, hobbies, interests, etc.)."

2) "Celebrate and honor hard work and accomplishments (every week in my Monday Message, I recognize staff)."

3) "Be a good listener and have an open-door policy."

4) "Value the staff insight on issues."

5) "Be a continual learner and value that in staff members too."

Jamestown School

Jamestown had a total of fifteen willing participants, including twelve teachers and three paraprofessionals. It is noteworthy to mention, at the time this study took place, this school leader had a doctoral degree in learning organizations and strategic change and a total of six years of administrative experience. Although this administrator had several years of administrative experience, this leader had been the lead principal at Jamestown for only the past nine months. For two years prior to this administrative assignment, this school leader was an assistant principal at another school within the district.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the twelve teachers and three paraprofessionals at Jamestown ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table Seven. Interestingly, as shown in the table, the paraprofessionals ranked the school leader at Jamestown significantly higher than the teachers did in all areas.

Table 7
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Jamestown School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	5.1	5.1	4.9	5.9	5.9	12
Paraprofessional Responses	8.8	8.7	8.2	9	8.9	3

Note. *n* = number of participants

Carmelle School

Carmelle had a total of thirty-six willing participants, including twenty-six teachers and ten paraprofessionals. It is noteworthy to mention, at the time this research took place, this school leader had a doctoral degree in education leadership and a total of

eleven years of administrative experience. Additionally, this administrator had been employed as the lead principal at Carmelle for the previous six years.

For each of the five categories measured by the LPI, the twenty-six teachers and ten paraprofessionals at Carmelle ranked their school leader with the scores listed in Table Eight. Interestingly, as shown in the table, the paraprofessionals ranked the school leader at Carmelle higher than the teachers did in all areas.

Table 8

Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (Carmelle School)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	7.9	7.7	7.7	8.3	8.1	26
Paraprofessional Responses	8.4	7.8	7.8	8.4	8.3	10

Note. *n* = number of participants

District Average

As previously stated, district-wide, a total of ninety-five participants, including eighteen paraprofessionals and seventy-seven teachers, participated in completing the LPI. For each of the five categories the LPI measures, the ninety-five participants ranked the eight school leaders with the average scores listed in Table Nine. Interestingly, as shown in the table, the paraprofessionals ranked their leaders significantly higher in all areas measured by the LPI.

Table 9
Responses for Leadership Practices Inventory (District Average)

	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart	*n*
Teacher Responses	7.8	7.5	7.6	8.3	7.8	77
Paraprofessional Responses	9.0	9.1	8.7	9.0	9.1	18

Note. *n* = number of participants

Additionally, some teachers and paraprofessionals were willing to provide the following contributory information regarding their leader's ability to…

1) Model the Way:

"[Our leader] would not ask us to do anything that [he/she] would not be willing to do."

"[My leader] is always professional. [He/she] sets the tone by being on time and prepared."

"My leader sets a very high standard for [himself/herself]. [He/she] obviously works very hard and goes above and beyond requirements. [He/she] conveys a personal interest in staff and students, placing an importance on relationships. [He/she] believes in working hard to meet standards of expectation and conveys [his/her] expectations for top-notch performance."

"[Our leader] sets a personal example by being positive, present, and open to staff opinions and ideas."

"Our principal models, on a daily basis, the following leadership qualities: respectfulness, confidentiality, excellence, perseverance, diligence, genuine love for students and staff. In addition, nothing but excellence is expected

from all employees. Excellence is honored and recognized as the standard at
[our school].”

“[Our leader] models professionalism by arriving to work on time and ready
to do whatever it takes to get the day started. [He/she] is always professional
in conversations and is always prepared.”

“[Our leader] is prepared, on time, and engaged in all facets. [He/she] brings
[his/her] A-game every day, and expects this of us, while offering
understanding and compassion for those days we may work through a head
cold or have family struggles taking place simultaneously. [He/she] arrives at
school early and/or stays late for many of the same reasons teachers do. This
is one of the first times in my career it has been hard to outwork my principal.
[He/she] is positive, professional, and direct. While not at all confrontational,
[he/she] is unafraid of necessary confrontation. One of [his/her] favorite
mottos is ‘if you have a problem, take it to the source (when possible).’
[He/she] is willing to slaughter sacred cows to promote growth and
effectiveness. [He/she] is transparent with expectations. While [he/she]
usually leads with a desired outcome in mind, [our leader] is flexible. While
[he/she] is firm in [his/her] convictions, [he/she] is the first to admit a mistake
or being wrong.”

2) Inspire a Shared Vision:

“[Our school] operates on a shared leadership model, which I believe is very
important. Decisions on spending, in particular, are made by a group of

teachers and parent representatives. This, of course, encourages buy-in by all affected entities."

"[Our leader] is always positive. [He/she] truly believes in the vision of our school. [He/she] challenges us to push our students to do their best."

"Whenever [our leader] has an opportunity, [he/she] reminds staff and students that we are working together for the good of the students. [Our leader] recites 'Personal Best + Collaborative Effort = Excellence for All.'"

"Our principal uses the weekly employee newsletter. In the newsletter, employees demonstrating instructional or work-related excellence are highlighted by name each week. We look for our names. We want to be identified as meeting the high level of excellence set (and expected) by our administrator."

"[Our leader] appeals to others by using motivating statements and ideas, and by showing enthusiasm for creative methods that teachers are using in their classrooms."

"[Our leader] has a vision of school as a community that grows the whole child and supports families. [He/she] values teachers as multifunctioning caretakers and nurturers of our future in addition to being its educators. [Our leader] encourages us they are all 'our students,' not just those assigned to our class. [He/she] upholds our responsibility to drive our data onward and upward while having compassion for the struggles that impact the numbers. However, the struggles guide and inform our Plan Bs and Cs and Ds rather than serve as excuses."

3) Challenge the Process:

"During a recent faculty meeting, as we were looking at data, we had an area where we went down significantly. [Our leader] explained that the team had tried something new and it didn't work out. [He/she] said this was okay because we had to try to improve our teaching. [He/she] encourages us to try new things and not to let setbacks stop us. Permission to fail is just one example of what I consider to be good leadership."

"Because [our leader] works so hard and gives more than 100 percent, [he/she] shares an expectation of maximum effort from staff and students. [Our leader] is delighted to see new classroom strategies and opportunities for students to participate in 'out of the box' thinking."

"[Our leader] seeks opportunities to challenge by encouraging others to meet in professional learning communities."

"[Our leader] challenges us by encouraging us to always meet the needs of our students, and [he/she] challenges us to be better educators by learning and observing others. [He/she] encourages us to look at our data and learn how to improve."

"[Our leader] does detective work to determine individual strengths and assigns leadership opportunities that utilize everyone's talents. Paraprofessionals are treated with as much respect and expectation as our doctorate-level teachers. [Our leader] creates stakeholders of every staff member by investing us in outcomes."

"[Our leader recognizes] all grade-level data [as] 'our' data. Nothing is hidden. When we do well, all employees and parents know; when we are not meeting the goals, everyone knows. This way, those employees meeting (or exceeding) the goal are publicly recognized and honored; those not meeting the goal are publicly identified and motivated to 'get their act together' and meet the goal – no excuses accepted."

4) Enable Others to Act:

"[Our leader] listens to new ideas we have for our students and is not afraid to let us try something new to help our students learn. We get to think outside of the box."

"[Our leader] is very encouraging to staff [members] who seek new challenges, whether it be pursuing National Board Certification, advanced degrees, or opportunities for leadership or conducting professional development."

"[Our leader] encourages employees to try new strategies, tweak current strategies, and find what works for them… as long as results lead to goals being met. If goals are not met, employees are encouraged to try a different strategy. Bottom line: Do what works!"

"[Our leader] encourages teachers and paraprofessionals to attend professional development opportunities."

"[Our leader] states unequivocally we are the professionals – resources are just our tools, not our masters. When areas of need for professional growth are identified, opportunities for learning are supported through professional

development and/or peer relationships. When parents complain, [our leader]
directs them to the teacher first and offers support in reaching a win-win
outcome. We are supported."

5) Encourage the Heart:

"[Our leader] recognizes five or so staff members each week in a newsletter
that comes out on Fridays."

"[My leader] is always giving kudos to our staff – make us feel good about
working at my school."

"As a school, we recognize six students each month for their efforts in being
'star students' (not necessarily academic achievement, but attitude, effort, and
general citizenship); monthly a teacher and a staff member are recognized as
being outstanding; and we always have a time for 'kudos and accolades' in
our monthly staff meeting."

"The weekly staff newsletter encourages the heart, and the monthly treat cart
uplifts our spirits. When the principal speaks to us at meetings, our PLC, or at
lunch, [he/she] provides encouragement."

"[Our leader] sends out a weekly newsletter highlighting different teachers for
a variety of different things, [he/she] provides lunch for us, has a monthly
treat trolley, and is always smiling and listening to us with compassion."

"[Our leader] publishes a Friday Focus weekly to highlight school news and
spotlight five or six teachers with specific, relevant praise that uplifts their
strengths and contributions in ways that both celebrate success and clarify
expectations for others." "[Our leader] knows the value of a free jeans day and

awards them generously for timely submissions or participating in surveys,

etc. [He/she] routinely camps out in the teacher eating area to break bread

with as many staff members as possible. [He/she] strives to be accessible to

and encouraging of everyone. When we have family tragedies or celebrations,

[our leader] communicates them personally with great warmth. Personal

connection is a tremendous strength for [our leader]."

"[Our leader] provides recognition of others' achievements through verbal

praise, and communications to staff (e.g., e-mails, Friday Focus, etc.)."

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire

The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* (Bentley & Rempel, 1980) was also used as a

measurement tool with all willing teachers and paraprofessionals. The *Purdue Teacher*

Opinionaire gauges how teachers and paraprofessionals feel regarding ten different

dimensions. Specifically, the ten dimensions include 1) Teacher Rapport with Principal

(i.e., teachers feel appreciated and supported by their principal); 2) Satisfaction with

Teaching (i.e., teachers feel personally satisfied with their occupation); 3) Rapport among

Teachers (i.e., teachers feel they have healthy relationships with their colleagues); 4)

Teacher Salary (i.e., teachers feel they are adequately compensated monetarily); 5)

Teacher Load (i.e., teachers are satisfied with the amount of work that is required of

them); 6) Curriculum Issues (i.e., teachers feel the curriculum is reasonable and

adequately meets the needs of their students); 7) Teacher Status (i.e., teachers feel their

occupation gives them the social status they desire); 8) Community Support of Education

(i.e., teachers feel the members of the community in which they work are supportive); 9)

School Facilities and Services (i.e., teachers are satisfied with the amount of supplies and

equipment available for them and their students); and 10) Community Pressures (i.e., teachers feel there is an excessive amount of pressure from the members of the community in which they teach).

The directions for the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* are as follows: Read each statement carefully, and indicate whether you (1) Disagree, (2) Probably Disagree, (3) Probably Agree, (4) Agree with each statement. The data from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* was collected electronically through Google Forms. District-wide, a total of 53 participants were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.*

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***Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* Results**

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Kenyon School

A total of six participants at Kenyon were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.* As shown in Table Ten, 89.2 percent of participants from at Kenyon "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with teaching. District-wide, this was the third highest percentage reported for this category.

Table Ten depicts the results for all measured categories at Kenyon School.

Table 10
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Kenyon School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	31.7	37.5	8.3	22.5
Satisfaction with Teaching	57.5	31.7	4.1	6.7
Rapport Among Teachers	42.9	41.6	6	9.5
Teacher Salary	31	38	14.3	16.7
Teacher Load	28.8	42.4	9.1	19.7
Curriculum Issues	36.7	40	10	13.3
Teacher Status	20.8	56.2	4.2	18.8
Community Support	50	30	3.3	16.7
Facilities and Services	40	36.7	0	23.3
Community Pressures	6.6	26.7	36.7	30

Tacoma School

Three participants at Tacoma were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.* As shown in Table Eleven, 91.7 percent of participants, "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with teaching. This was the highest percentage reported for this category, district-wide. Additionally, 95.3 percent of participants from this campus indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport among teachers. District-wide, this was the second highest percentage reported for this category. Finally, 100 percent of participants at Tacoma "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the community support they receive as well as the facilities and services available to them.

Table Eleven depicts the results for all measured categories at Tacoma School.

Table 11
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Tacoma School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	30	38.3	5	26.7
Satisfaction with Teaching	65	26.7	3.3	5
Rapport Among Teachers	52.4	42.9	0	4.7
Teacher Salary	45	40	0	15
Teacher Load	33.3	51.5	3.1	12.1
Curriculum Issues	26.7	60	0	13.3
Teacher Status	25	50	4.2	20.8
Community Support	46.7	53.3	0	0
Facilities and Services	86.7	13.3	0	0
Community Pressures	0	13.3	46.7	40

Creekwood School

Two participants at Creekwood were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*. As shown in Table Twelve, 45 percent of individuals indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport they shared with their principal, 72.5 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with teaching, 50 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the curriculum, and 70 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the facilities and services available to them. These were the lowest reported percentages for these four categories, district-wide.

Table Twelve depicts the results for all measured categories at Creekwood

School.

Table 12
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Creekwood School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	5	40	37.5	17.5
Satisfaction with Teaching	22.5	50	10	17.5
Rapport Among Teachers	28.6	57.1	0	14.3
Teacher Salary	50	21.4	0	28.6
Teacher Load	22.7	31.8	4.6	40.9
Curriculum Issues	0	50	0	50
Teacher Status	37.5	43.7	6.3	12.5
Community Support	90	10	0	0
Facilities and Services	60	10	0	30
Community Pressures	0	30	40	30

Downers School

  Five participants at Downers were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*. As shown in Table Thirteen, 96 percent of individuals indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport they shared with their principals, 95.7 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport among teachers, and 87.3 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their teacher load. These were the highest reported percentages for these three categories, district-wide. Additionally, 100 percent of participants "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the support they received from the community as well as the facilities and services available to them.

Table Thirteen depicts the results for all measured categories at Downers School.

Table 13
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Downers School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	60	36	1	3
Satisfaction with Teaching	67	23	4	6
Rapport Among Teachers	65.7	30	0	4.3
Teacher Salary	62.9	25.7	8.6	2.8
Teacher Load	60	27.3	5.4	7.3
Curriculum Issues	68	8	8	16
Teacher Status	32.5	47.5	12.5	7.5
Community Support	68	32	0	0
Facilities and Services	80	20	0	0
Community Pressures	0	12	60	28

Agnes School

Nine participants at Agnes were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*. As shown in Table Fourteen, 91.1 percent of individuals indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport they shared with their principal. This was the second highest reporting, district-wide, for this category. Additionally, 88.9 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the curriculum. This was the highest reporting for this category, district-wide.

Table Fourteen depicts the results for all measured categories at Agnes School.

Table 14

Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Agnes School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	66.1	25	0	8.9
Satisfaction with Teaching	63.9	24.4	5.6	6.1
Rapport Among Teachers	61.1	31.7	2.4	4.8
Teacher Salary	33.3	49.2	6.4	11.1
Teacher Load	44.4	31.3	7.1	17.2
Curriculum Issues	37.8	51.1	4.4	6.7
Teacher Status	30.6	33.3	12.5	23.6
Community Support	61.4	29.5	0	9.1
Facilities and Services	46.7	33.3	6.7	13.3
Community Pressures	8.9	17.8	51.1	22.2

Lisle School

Five participants at Lisle were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.* As shown in Table Fifteen, 89 percent of individuals indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport they shared with their principals. This was the third highest reported percentage, district-wide, for this category. Interestingly, district-wide, the participants at Lisle reported the lowest levels of satisfaction regarding their salaries (only 60 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their salary), and teacher status (only 57.5 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their status as a teacher).

Table Fifteen depicts the results for all measured categories at Lisle School.

Table 15
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Lisle School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	55	34	1	10
Satisfaction with Teaching	44	33	9	14
Rapport Among Teachers	50	41.4	2.9	5.7
Teacher Salary	28.6	31.4	17.1	22.9
Teacher Load	25.5	32.6	16.4	25.5
Curriculum Issues	36	52	4	8
Teacher Status	17.5	40	22.5	20
Community Support	44	40	4	12
Facilities and Services	64	24	0	12
Community Pressures	8	28	20	44

Jamestown School

  A total of 20 participants at Jamestown were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.* As shown in Table Sixteen, only 55 percent of individuals indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport they shared with their principal. This was the second lowest reported percentage, district-wide, for this category. Additionally, only 74.6 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the rapport among teachers, and 32.3 percent of individuals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the teacher load. These were the lowest reported percentages, district-wide, for these two categories.

Table Sixteen depicts the results for all measured categories at Jamestown School.

Table 16
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Jamestown School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	15.7	39.3	27	18
Satisfaction with Teaching	47.5	31.5	8.5	12.5
Rapport Among Teachers	35.3	39.3	8.6	16.8
Teacher Salary	27.8	38.6	15	18.6
Teacher Load	10	22.3	37.7	30
Curriculum Issues	25	31	13	31
Teacher Status	22.4	41.3	16.9	19.4
Community Support	40	49	2	9
Facilities and Services	40	33	10	17
Community Pressures	14	15	34	37

Carmelle School

Three participants at Carmelle were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.* Interestingly, 90.5 percent of participants indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their salaries, and 87.5 percent of participants "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their status as teachers. These were the highest reported percentages for these two categories, district-wide. Additionally, 100 percent of participants at Carmelle "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the support they received from their community as well as the facilities and services available to them. The results for all measured categories from Carmelle School can be seen in Table Seventeen.

Table Seventeen depicts the results for all measured categories at Carmelle

School.

Table 17
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Carmelle School)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	21.7	43.3	10	25
Satisfaction with Teaching	73.3	13.3	3.4	10
Rapport Among Teachers	45.2	42.9	2.4	9.5
Teacher Salary	47.6	42.9	0	9.5
Teacher Load	21.2	48.5	9.1	21.2
Curriculum Issues	60	6.7	0	33.3
Teacher Status	45.8	41.7	4.2	8.3
Community Support	53.3	46.7	0	0
Facilities and Services	73.3	26.7	0	0
Community Pressures	13.4	13.3	40	33.3

District Average

As previously stated, a total of 53 participants, district-wide, were willing to complete the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*.

Table Eighteen depicts the average results for all measured categories.

Table 18
Responses for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (District Average)

	Agree	Probably Agree	Disagree	Probably Disagree
Teacher Rapport with Principal	35.7	36.7	11.2	16.4
Satisfaction with Teaching	55.1	29.2	6	9.7
Rapport Among Teachers	47.7	40.9	2.8	8.6
Teacher Salary	40.8	35.9	7.7	15.6
Teacher Load	30.7	36	11.6	21.7
Curriculum Issues	36.3	37.4	4.9	21.4
Teacher Status	29	44.2	10.4	16.4
Community Support	56.7	36.3	1.2	5.8
Facilities and Services	61.3	24.6	2.1	12
Community Pressures	6.4	19.5	41.1	33

Summary

This chapter offered a thorough presentation of the findings. A description of the setting in which this study occurred as well as the participants and schools were named (pseudonyms were used). Each of the measurement tools (i.e., *Leadership Practices Inventory* and *Purdue Teacher* Opinionaire) were defined and described. The results from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* were described in-depth for each of the eight schools within the district. Additionally, some administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals were willing to share specifics regarding leadership practices, and these were shared as well. Finally, the results from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* were displayed in tables and described in detail for each of the eight schools, and a district average was presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to develop a theory regarding which leadership characteristics, traits, and additional factors current educators identified as contributions or hindrances to teacher morale. The two research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1) Do educational leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, have a relationship with teacher morale within their schools? If so, what leadership characteristics and traits did teachers identify, and what was their perceived impact?

2) What additional factors do current educators identify as contributions or hindrances to teacher morale?

Participants for this study included willing administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals from a small school district in the southeastern United States. The measurement tools for this study included the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (Kouzes & Posner, 2013) and the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* (Bentley & Rempel, 1980). Additionally, some participants were willing to provide specifics regarding which leadership practices and other aspects they felt contributed to satisfaction with teaching.

Overview of Literature

While much research can be found demonstrating that the levels of morale among teachers and paraprofessionals are impacted by leadership style (Bentley & Rempel, 1980; Mason, 2007; and Whitaker, 2013), the findings from this study, undoubtedly, contributed to the body of literature. Specifically, this research study examined which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects teachers and paraprofessionals perceived as contributions or hindrances to morale. It is noteworthy to mention the school

leaders in the district in which this research took place as well as the researcher, a potential future school administrator, have already benefited from the findings.

While school administrators have a significant amount of daily responsibilities (Sigford, 2005), maintaining a healthy level of morale among teachers and paraprofessionals is something they must make a priority as well. Heightened morale is directly linked to employee satisfaction (Schaefer, 2016), and employee contentment is highly influential in retaining quality educators (Harvey, 2014). Therefore, it is essential for school leaders to be aware of which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects encourage healthy levels of morale.

The actions of a school leader are significant, as they play an instrumental role in the overall morale and success of a school (Whitaker et al., 2009). Therefore, school administrators must regularly exhibit positive leadership characteristics (Fiore, 2009) and ensure they are present and visible throughout the school while demonstrating professionalism at all times (Marzano et al., 2005). Additionally, according to research completed by Perumal (2011), when strong leadership is coupled with well-defined guidelines, loving support, and clear expectations, morale is heightened. Moreover, morale is amplified when consistent and effective communication is the norm (Kessler & Snodgrass, 2014).

When school leaders proactively work to boost others by putting them in an optimistic frame of mind, they not only enhance the overall morale but brighten their own day as well (Whitaker, 2012). These effectual administrators motivate, collaborate, and seek input from all stakeholders (Gill, 2014b). They actively stimulate group discussions

and encourage collaborative decision making as they seek to inspire a team vision (Choi, 2007).

As advised by Meador (2016), successful principals recognize teachers need time to work together in collaborative settings. When school leaders allow educators time to collaborate, share ideas, and plan with one another, morale is heightened (Bieler, 2012). Additionally, when teachers are given opportunities to engage in quality professional development, teaching abilities are enhanced (Seyfarth, 2007). Meyerson (2013) declared that not only does effective professional development improve teaching skills, it heightens morale as well.

Hodges (2005) reported that praise and recognition have been linked to heightened morale. Additionally, as advised by White (2014), school leaders should take specific measures to ensure praise is authentic. When leaders are effective at praising and recognizing the efforts of those he/she leads, a positive rapport is more easily established. Additionally, effective principals nurture a positive rapport with those they lead by being supportive (Whitaker, 2012), trustworthy (Fullan, 2007), empathetic (Pressley, 2012), and respectful (Wilson, 2012). Correspondingly, many of the findings from this research project supported the literature regarding which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects influence teacher morale.

Leadership Practices Inventory

The researcher thoroughly examined the results of the LPI. An interesting finding was that on average, and in all areas measured by the LPI, paraprofessionals typically rated their leaders higher than teachers did. Due to the difference in job requirement strain, the researcher theorized that teachers felt more pressure from their administrators

than paraprofessionals did; therefore, this strain led teachers to score their school leaders lower in all measured areas. Additionally, some commonly mentioned characteristics, traits, and other aspects emerged. The following depicts the findings and provided insight to the researcher's first question:

1) Do educational leadership styles, as perceived by teachers, have a relationship with teacher morale within their schools? If so, what leadership characteristics and traits did teachers identify, and what was their perceived impact?

Model the Way

According to individual responses and the results from the LPI, an effective leader "modeled the way" by being professional, prepared, and punctual. These efficient leaders continuously sought opportunities to learn and grow, proactively worked to build positive personal relationships, expected excellence of all, and were consistently engaged while remaining positive and respectful of all stakeholders.

Inspire a Shared Vision

Evidence from individual responses and the LPI indicated that effectual leaders "inspired a shared" vision by encouraging others and demonstrating compassion. By sending regular emails and weekly newsletters, operative administrators ensured communication was consistent.

Challenge the Process

Individual responses and results from the LPI suggested than an operative leader "challenged the process" by having high expectations and encouraging others to learn from one another through observation. These leaders readily engaged in continued education and supported professional learning communities.

Enable Others to Act

According to individual responses and findings from the LPI, an effective leader "enabled others to act" by being encouraging and supportive. These leaders highlighted resources for individuals, made specific suggestions and encouraged ongoing professional development.

Encourage the Heart

The results from the LPI and individual responses suggested that school leaders were effective at "encouraging the heart" when they publicly praised people, celebrated accomplishments and successes, and acknowledged efforts. These leaders were compassionate and went above and beyond by sending personal notes and weekly newsletters highlighting individual achievements.

<div align="center">

Leadership Practices Inventory **Conclusions**

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The following summarizes the results gathered from the *Leadership Practices Inventory*, and the researcher theorized:

1) Effective administrators "modeled the way" by being professional, punctual, and prepared. These leaders worked diligently to build positive relationships with those they led, and in turn, were successful at heightening morale.

2) Operative school leaders "inspired a shared vision" by encouraging others through weekly memos, newsletters, and regular communication. These leaders attentively worked to ensure those they led were inspired; consequently, morale was heightened.

3) Effectual administrators "challenged the process" by maintaining high expectations for themselves as well as for those they led. These leaders did not

shy away from an opportunity to gain expertise, and their contagious desire for continuous learning increased morale.

4) By being supportive and encouraging, successful school leaders "enabled others to act." These leaders shared relevant resources, encouraged continuous learning, and their reassurance heightened morale.

5) Exemplary school leaders "encouraged the heart" by publicly praising people and regularly recognizing accomplishments. These leaders went above and beyond by sending personalized notes and through these positive interactions, they increased morale.

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire

The researcher thoroughly examined the results from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*. Some commonalities regarding each of the categories the *Purdue Opinionaire* measures emerged. The following sections depict the findings, and provided insight to the researcher's second question:

2) What additional factors do current educators identify as contributions or hindrances to teacher morale?

Teacher Rapport with Principal

According to the Oxford Dictionary (n.d.), rapport is defined as, "A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well." As advised by Fullan (2011) "leaders must build relationships" (p. 64). Building friendly relationships require time and effort; thus, an extended amount of time may be necessary in order for one to feel as if they have a positive rapport with their school leader.

Two of the schools in the district (Creekwood and Jamestown) both had new administrators on campus during the school year when this research took place. While each of these principals had prior administrative experience, they both had only been at their current school for the previous nine months. Unsurprisingly, they both scored significantly lower in the area of teacher rapport with the principal. The researcher theorized an ample amount of time is required before one feels they share a positive rapport with their leader. "Every relationship, personal or professional, requires significant investment. The investment includes our time…" (Seaver, 2017, para. 1).

Satisfaction with Teaching

According to a study completed by the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), when teachers feel they are supported by their administrators, they are more satisfied with their jobs and the work required of them. More specifically, "Among teachers who felt that the administration in their schools was supportive, 95 percent were satisfied with their jobs. This was 30 percentage points higher than the percentage of teachers did not feel the administration was supportive" (Musu-Gillette, 2016, para. 3).

Likewise, the teachers and paraprofessionals from Creekwood reported the lowest levels of satisfaction regarding the rapport with their principal as well as the lowest levels of satisfaction with teaching. Consequently, the researcher theorized the relationship one shares with their school leader, directly impacts the level of satisfaction one feels regarding their teaching position.

Rapport among Teachers

According to Catapano (2017), building positive relationships among teachers and paraprofessionals not only improves teaching, it creates a more effective environment for

student learning. "The principal who sets a positive tone can influence the interactions of everyone in the school" (Whitaker, 2012, p. 31).

Correspondingly, Downers, the school with the highest reported levels of satisfaction in regards to teacher rapport with the principal, also reported the highest levels of satisfaction in regards to the rapport among teachers. Consequently, the researcher theorized the rapport one shares with their administrator, is impactful on the rapport one shares with his/her colleagues.

Teacher Salary

The school district in which this study took place provided teachers with a competitive salary. More specifically, at the time this research took place, the school district's salary was among the top eight highest paid districts in the state. Predictably, 76.7 percent of teachers and paraprofessionals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their salaries.

Interestingly, though, according to the results from the *Purdue Opinionaire,* on average, elementary teachers and paraprofessionals employed in the district were more satisfied with their salaries. Specifically, 81.3 percent of elementary school teachers and paraprofessionals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their salaries; however, only 68.9 percent of middle school teachers and paraprofessionals reported feeling the same way.

Furthermore, according to Gootman (2007), teaching middle school can pose additional challenges for educators. More specifically, "Part of the challenge of middle school is the breathtaking range of student ability, more pronounced than in elementary schools, where one can only fall so far behind" (Gootman, 2007, para. 20). As there may

be additional challenges for educators who teach higher grade levels, the researcher theorized the satisfaction one feels regarding his/her salary may be directly related to unique job requirements.

Teacher Load

"Despite what some assume, teachers are overworked and underpaid… Despite what some believe, teachers have arguably one of the most rewarding yet draining occupations there is" (Long, 2016, para. 3 & 5).

Once again, according to the results from the *Purdue Opinionaire*, on average, elementary teachers and paraprofessionals employed in the district appeared to be more satisfied with their workload. Specifically, 75.1 percent of elementary teachers and paraprofessionals "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the amount of work required of them; however, only 53 percent of middle school teachers and paraprofessionals reported feeling the same way.

What's more, the two schools where teachers and paraprofessionals depicted they were the least satisfied with the relationships they share with their principals (Creekwood and Jamestown), also portrayed the lowest levels of satisfaction with teacher load. Therefore, the researcher theorized the rapport one feels they share with their school leader, job requirements, and the grade level taught may all be impactful on the level of satisfaction one feels regarding teacher workload.

Curriculum Issues

According to Gatens (2015), in elementary classrooms, it is the students who are doing the majority of the work. "Rather than the teacher being the hardest-working person in the classroom, the children are carrying the majority of the intellectual load"

(para. 3). On the contrary, the challenges of teaching middle school "go far beyond understanding the content and teaching classes on a daily basis" (Gatens, 2015, para. 12).

Likewise, according to the results of the *Purdue Opinionaire*, teachers and paraprofessionals in elementary schools reported being more satisfied with the curriculum. More specifically, 81.3 percent of elementary school teachers and paraprofessionals "Agreed" or "Probably Agree" they were satisfied with curriculum issues; however, only 60.9 percent of middle school teachers reported feeling the same way. The researcher theorized curriculum issues and the grade level taught may be influential on teacher morale.

Teacher Status

Results of a survey shared by Smith (2014) depicted teaching as one of the top ten prestigious jobs one can have. According to the results of the *Purdue Opinionaire,* district-wide, 73.2 percent of participants "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their status as an educator. However, the participants at Lisle reported significantly lower levels of satisfaction regarding their status as educators. Specifically, only 57.5 percent of the participants at this campus "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with their status as a teacher. What's more, these participants also reported being the least satisfied with their salaries as well. The researcher theorized the satisfaction one feels regarding their status as a teacher is impacted by the satisfaction they feel regarding their salaries.

Community Support

The school district in which this study took place was located in one of the wealthiest counties in the state; thus, many of the community members were very active participants and enthusiastically supported teaching and learning. Predictably, district-wide, 93 percent of participants "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they felt supported by the community in which they taught. The researcher theorized teacher morale is impacted by the levels of community support.

Facilities and Services

District-wide, 85.9 percent of participants "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the facilities and services provided by their school. Interestingly, though, the two schools where participants reported being the least satisfied with the rapport they shared with their administrator (Creekwood and Jamestown), also reported being the least satisfied with the facilities and services offered at their campuses. Once again, the researcher theorized building positive relationships with those individuals one leads is essential to teacher satisfaction.

Community Pressure

As previously stated, many of the community members within the school district where this study took place were very involved participants and actively supported teaching and learning. Unsurprisingly, very few participants, 25.9 percent district-wide, expressed they felt overly pressured by the demands made by the community members. The researcher theorized the amount of pressure one feels from the community members is influential on the overall morale.

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire **Conclusions**

The following summarizes the results gathered from the *Purdue Teacher*

Opinionaire, and the researcher theorized

1) The rapport one felt they shared with administration appeared to be directly

   related to the amount of time he/she had spent under a principal's leadership.

   Significant differences in those who indicated they "Agreed" or "Probably

   Agreed" they shared a satisfying rapport with their principal, were evident at

   those campuses where administrators had been employed for longer periods of

   time. When one is satisfied with the relationship he/she shares with his/her

   administrator, morale is likely positively influenced; however, when one is not

   satisfied with the relationship he/she shares with his/her administrator, morale is

   likely adversely affected.

2) Satisfaction with teaching appeared to be directly related to the rapport one felt

   they shared with their administrator. The participants from Creekwood reported

   the lowest levels of satisfaction in regards to the rapport shared with the principal.

   These participants also reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with teaching.

   When one is satisfied with teaching, morale is likely heightened; however, when

   one is not satisfied with teaching, morale is likely negatively impacted.

3) The rapport one shared with fellow teachers may be directly related to the rapport

   they shared with their principal, as the school with the highest reported levels of

   satisfaction with the relationships they had with the principal (Downers), also

   reported the highest levels of satisfaction in regards to the rapport among

   teachers. When one shares a satisfying rapport among those he/she teaches with,

morale is likely heightened; however, when one is not satisfied with the rapport among those he/she teaches with, morale is likely diminished.

4) Competitive salaries appeared to increase teacher satisfaction and morale; however, elementary school teachers may be more satisfied with their salaries than middle school teachers. This could be related to the satisfaction one feels regarding teacher load.

5) Elementary school teachers may be more satisfied than middle school teachers with the amount of work required of them (i.e., Teacher Load). This satisfaction with teacher load may be related to the satisfaction one feels regarding teacher salary. When one is satisfied with job requirements, morale is likely increased; however, when one feels as if too much is expected of him/her, morale is likely reduced.

6) Elementary school teachers may be more satisfied than middle school teachers in regards to curriculum issues. When one is satisfied with the curriculum requirements, morale is likely positively impacted; however, if one is not satisfied with curriculum mandates, morale is likely decreased.

7) The majority of participants in this study indicated they were satisfied with their status as an educator. Satisfaction with teaching status, likely increases morale.

8) The community in which this research took place appeared to be a favorable place to live and work, and this may lead to higher levels of satisfaction and heightened morale.

9) The facilities and services provided by this district proved to be satisfactory, and this may lead to higher levels of teacher satisfaction and heightened morale.

10) The community members in which this research took place did not appear to put an undue amount of pressure on educators, and this may lead to amplified levels of morale.

Implications for School Leaders

As the findings from this research project and the literature suggested that leadership indeed impacts teacher morale (Whitaker et al., 2009), school administrators must be appropriately educated to ensure they are practicing effective leadership strategies (Fiore, 2009). The following depicts characteristics, traits, and other aspects school leaders should be mindful of to ensure morale is adequately nurtured.

According to the results from this research study, effective school leaders are those who are consistently professional and prepared. These leaders "model the way" as they conscientiously work to build positive personal relationships, expect excellence of all, and are continuously engaged. Additionally, participants identified effective school leaders as those who "inspire a shared vision" by encouraging others while demonstrating compassion. Communication was the norm for these operative administrators, as they regularly connected with all stakeholders through email, weekly newsletters, and memos. Current school leaders should be aware of these findings.

Participants also indicated that school leaders who are effective at "challenging the process" are those who maintain high expectations and encourage others to learn from one another. These leaders readily engage in professional learning communities and support collaboration. Additionally, teachers and paraprofessionals reported that school leaders are effective at "enabling others to act" when they highlight relevant resources for

them, make specific suggestions, and encourage ongoing professional development.
Administrators should be knowledgeable regarding this information.

Moreover, participants indicated that school leaders who are effective at
"encouraging the heart," are also effective at boosting morale. Specifically, the findings
indicated that morale is heightened when school leaders publicly praise people, celebrate
successes and achievements, and acknowledge efforts. In addition, by sending personal
notes and highlighting accomplishments through weekly memos, school leaders are
successful in boosting morale. Principals who are actively striving to boost the overall
morale among their educators should work diligently to implement these strategies.

Lastly, school leaders should be knowledgeable and mindful of the rapport they
share with those they lead, as this relationship appears to be influential in other aspects
including satisfaction with teaching and work requirements (i.e., teacher load),
satisfaction with facilities and services, and the rapport among other teachers.

Limitations

This research took place in a small K-8 school district with only eight schools.
District-wide, there was a total of 452 teachers and paraprofessionals available for the
researcher to recruit; however, participation was limited. Only 152 of the 452 educators
(approximately 34 percent) were willing to participate in completing either one or both of
the measurement tools utilized. What's more, there was no way for the researcher to
determine if participants completed only one or both of the surveys. Perhaps some
individuals were willing to voice their opinion regarding their administrator's leadership
style; however, they were not willing to share their feelings regarding how personally
satisfied they were with other aspects associated with teaching. Additionally, the level of

participation would likely vary significantly in a school district of a different size. Moreover, as 9-12 grade educators did not take part in this study, this limited the amount of data available for the researcher regarding satisfaction with teaching, workload, and curriculum issues.

Due to time constraints, the timeframe in which the data collection took place for this project was limited. Furthermore, due to scheduling conflicts, the researcher was unable to personally meet with all potential participants. Therefore, with the desire to recruit participants, the researcher drafted an email (Appendix G) and sent it to all principals. Administrators were asked to then forward the recruiting email to all teachers and paraprofessionals. While each of the eight principals assured the researcher they would honor this request, there was no absolute way of knowing when the email was forwarded and if it did actually reach all potential participants. Additionally, some potential participants could have been intimidated by an email coming from administration regarding teacher morale; thus, participation may have been limited.

Finally, the school district in which this research took place provided educators with a competitive salary. Specifically, at the time this study took place, the salary schedule provided by this district was among the top eight highest-paying districts in the state. Unsurprisingly, the majority of participants indicated they were satisfied with their salaries; however, these results may not be indicative of how the majority of educators feel regarding their monetary compensation. As educators in districts where the salary schedule is less competitive were not included in this study, the levels of satisfaction for these individuals, regarding salary, may indicate very different findings.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Participation

With the desire to recruit willing participants, the researcher originally planned to attend a faculty meeting at all eight schools in the district in which this study took place; however, due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts, this was not feasible. Therefore, the researcher recruited willing participants via email. In order to encourage a larger number of participants, if possible, the researcher recommended a personal meeting with all potential participants for future studies. Additionally, the level of participation would likely vary significantly in a school district of a different size; therefore, for further research, the researcher recommended including additional school districts and/or more schools.

Teacher Salary

As previously stated, the school district in which this research took place provided educators with a competitive salary. Pay increases for experience as well as for advanced degrees were provided. Specifically, pay increases were granted when: one completed 10 hours of graduate-level coursework beyond a bachelor's degree, one completed 20 hours of graduate-level coursework beyond a bachelor's degree, one completed a master's degree, one completed 10 hours of graduate-level coursework beyond a master's degree, one completed 20 hours of graduate-level coursework beyond a master's degree, one completed 30 hours of graduate-level coursework beyond a master's degree, one completed and educational specialist degree, and one completed a doctoral degree.

For further research, the researcher deemed it appropriate and beneficial to determine the years of experience as well as levels of education of participants (e.g., no

college degree, some college completion, B.S., B.S.+, M.Ed., M.Ed.+, Ed.S., or Ed.D.),

as individuals with more years of experience and/or advanced degrees would likely be

more satisfied with their salaries. Additionally, it may prove to be beneficial to examine

the satisfaction levels of educators in districts where the salary schedule is less

competitive, as the results may indicate very different levels of satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Teaching

For further research and in regards to satisfaction with teaching, the researcher

deemed it appropriate and beneficial to determine the positions of participants (e.g.,

teacher aid, classroom teacher, related arts teacher, etc.). While 84.3 percent of

participants "Agreed" or "Probably Agree" they were satisfied with teaching, 15.7

percent of people did not. The researcher theorized those individuals who teach subjects

in which state testing is mandated, may be the participants who reported they were less

satisfied with teaching; thus, it would have been beneficial to know the positions of

individual participants. Additionally, as this research took place in a small school district

where only K-8 schools were represented, the levels of satisfaction with teaching may

vary significantly if 9-12 schools were included in the study. For further studies similar to

this one, the researcher also recommended including educators who teach grades 9-12.

Teacher Load

For further research and in regards to teacher load, the researcher deemed it

appropriate and beneficial to determine the positions of participants (e.g., teacher aid,

classroom teacher, related arts teacher, etc.). While 66.7 percent of participants "Agreed"

or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the amount of work required of them, 33.3

percent of people did not. The researcher theorized those required who teach courses

where the subject matter is assessed on state-mandated tests may be the individuals who reported being less satisfied with the amount of work required of them; therefore, it would have been beneficial to determine the teaching positions of individual participants.

Additionally, as this research took place in a small school district where only K-8 schools were represented, the levels of satisfaction with workload may vary significantly if participants teaching grades 9-12 were included in the study. For future studies, and to better understand satisfaction with teacher workload requirements, the researcher also deemed it appropriate to include educators who teach higher grade levels.

Curriculum Issues

For further research and in regards to curriculum issues, the researcher deemed it appropriate and beneficial to determine the positions and grade levels taught of participants (e.g., teacher aid, classroom teacher, related arts teacher, etc.). While 73.7 percent of participants "Agreed" or "Probably Agreed" they were satisfied with the curriculum requirements, 26.3 percent did not. The researcher theorized those individuals who teach grade levels where standardized testing is mandated, may be the participants who indicated they were less satisfied with the curriculum mandates.

Additionally, as this research took place in a small school district where only K-8 schools were represented, the levels of satisfaction with the curriculum load may vary significantly if participants from 9-12 schools were also included in the study. For future research, and to better understand teacher satisfaction with curriculum issues, the researcher also recommended including participants who teach grades 9-12.

Leadership Practices Inventory

The LPI consists of thirty randomized questions, and each of the five categories named has six specific questions. The researcher made front and back copies of the LPI where questions 1-19 were on the front, and items 20-30 were on the back. While there was a total of ninety-five participants willing to complete the LPI, ten of them failed to complete the last eleven questions listed on the back of the inventory. For future studies similar to this one, the researcher recommended adding a note at the bottom of the page to ensure participants realize the inventory continues on the back.

Additionally, for similar studies, the researcher deemed it would also be beneficial to add a section to the LPI where participants could indicate their job title (i.e., classroom teacher, related arts teacher, school counselor, etc.), as responsibilities may impact how one perceives their leader's ability to "model the way," "inspire a shared vision," "challenge the process," "enable others to act," and "encourage the heart."

Closing

This qualitative study was designed to determine which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects teachers and paraprofessionals identified as contributions or hindrances to morale. Participants included willing administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals from a small school district in the southeastern United States, and the researcher utilized both the *Leadership Practices Inventory* and the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* as measurement tools. Additionally, some participants shared specifics regarding the characteristics and behaviors they felt were contributory to successful leadership. The data gathered established a noteworthy relationship between leadership practices and teacher morale. Additionally, other aspects including the rapport one shared

with his/her school leader, one's satisfaction with teaching, the rapport one shared with his/her colleagues, teacher salary, teacher workload, curriculum issues, teacher status, community support of education, facilities and services, and community pressures were also identified as being influential on morale. In conclusion, there were a significant amount of leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects teachers and paraprofessionals specified as being impactful on morale.

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Appendix A

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire

The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire
Prepared by Ralph R. Bentley and Averno M. Rempel (1980)

This instrument is designed to provide the opportunity to express your opinions about your work as a teacher and various school problems in your particular school situation. There are no right or wrong responses, so do not hesitate to mark the statements frankly.

Please **do not** record your name on this document.

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate whether you (1) disagree, (2) probably disagree, (3) probably agree, (4) agree with each statement. Circle your answers using the following scale:

1= Disagree   2=Probably Disagree   3=Probably Agree   4=Agree

1)	Details, "red tape," and required reports absorb too much of my time.	1	2	3	4
2)	The work of individual faculty members is appreciated and commended by our principal.	1	2	3	4
3)	Teachers feel free to criticize administrative policy at faculty meetings called by our principal.	1	2	3	4
4)	The faculty feels that their suggestions pertaining to salaries are adequately transmitted by the administration to the appropriate personnel within your state (i.e., school board, department of education, etc.).	1	2	3	4
5)	Our principal shows favoritism in his/her relations with teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
6)	Teachers in this school are expected to do an unreasonable amount of record keeping and clerical work.	1	2	3	4
7)	My principal makes a real effort to maintain close contact with the faculty.	1	2	3	4
8)	Community demands upon the teacher's time are unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
9)	I am satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are granted.	1	2	3	4
10)	My teaching load is greater than that of most of the other teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
11)	The extra-curricular load of the teachers in our school is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
12)	Our principal's leadership in faculty meetings challenges and stimulates our professional growth.	1	2	3	4
13)	My teaching position gives me the social status in the community that I desire.	1	2	3	4
14)	The number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
15)	Teaching enables me to enjoy many of the material and cultural things I like.	1	2	3	4

16)	My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment.	1	2	3	4
17)	Our school has a well-balanced curriculum.	1	2	3	4
18)	There is a great deal of griping, arguing, taking sides, and feuding among our teachers.	1	2	3	4
19)	Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.	1	2	3	4
20)	The curriculum of our school makes reasonable provision for student individual differences.	1	2	3	4
21)	The procedures for obtaining materials and services are well defined and efficient.	1	2	3	4
22)	Generally, teachers in our school do not take advantage of one another.	1	2	3	4
23)	The teachers in our school cooperate with each other to achieve common, personal, and professional objectives.	1	2	3	4
24)	Teaching enables me to make my greatest contribution to society.	1	2	3	4
25)	The curriculum of our school is in need of major revisions.	1	2	3	4
26)	I love to teach.	1	2	3	4
27)	If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.	1	2	3	4
28)	Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues.	1	2	3	4
29)	I would recommend teaching as an occupation to students of high scholastic ability.	1	2	3	4
30)	If I could earn as much money in another occupation, I would stop teaching.	1	2	3	4
31)	The school schedule places my classes at a disadvantage.	1	2	3	4
32)	Within the limits of financial resources, the school tries to follow a generous policy regarding fringe benefits, professional travel, professional study, etc.	1	2	3	4
33)	My principal makes my work easier and more pleasant.	1	2	3	4
34)	Keeping up professionally is too much of a burden.	1	2	3	4
35)	Our community makes its teachers feel as though they are a real part of the community.	1	2	3	4
36)	Salary policies are administered with fairness and justice.	1	2	3	4
37)	Teaching affords me the security I want in an occupation.	1	2	3	4
38)	My school principal understands and recognizes good teaching procedures.	1	2	3	4
39)	Teachers clearly understand the policies governing salary increases.	1	2	3	4
40)	My classes are used as "dumping grounds" for problem students.	1	2	3	4
41)	The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained.	1	2	3	4
42)	My teaching load in this school is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
43)	My principal shows a real interest in my department.	1	2	3	4
44)	Our principal promotes a sense of belonging among the teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
45)	My teaching load unduly restricts my nonprofessional activities.	1	2	3	4

46)	I find my contacts with students, for the most part, highly satisfying and rewarding.	1	2	3	4
47)	I feel that I am an important part of this school.	1	2	3	4
48)	The competency of the teachers in our school compares favorably with that of teachers in other schools with which I am familiar.	1	2	3	4
49)	My school provides the teachers with adequate audio-visual aids and projection equipment.	1	2	3	4
50)	I feel successful and competent in my present position.	1	2	3	4
51)	I enjoy working with student organizations, clubs, and societies.	1	2	3	4
52)	Our teaching staff is congenial to work with.	1	2	3	4
53)	My teaching associates are well prepared for their jobs.	1	2	3	4
54)	Our school faculty has a tendency to form into cliques.	1	2	3	4
55)	The teachers in our school work well together.	1	2	3	4
56)	I am at a disadvantage professionally because other teachers are better prepared to teach than I am.	1	2	3	4
57)	Our school provides adequate clerical services for the teachers.	1	2	3	4
58)	As far as I know, the other teachers think I am a good teacher.	1	2	3	4
59)	Library facilities and resources are adequate for the grade or subject area which I teach.	1	2	3	4
60)	The "stress and strain" resulting from teaching makes teaching undesirable for me.	1	2	3	4
61)	My principal is concerned with the problems of the faculty and handles these problems sympathetically.	1	2	3	4
62)	I do not hesitate to discuss any school problem with my principal.	1	2	3	4
63)	Teaching gives me the prestige I desire.	1	2	3	4
64)	My teaching job enables me to provide a satisfactory standard of living for my family.	1	2	3	4
65)	The salary schedule in our school adequately recognizes teacher competency.	1	2	3	4
66)	Most of the people in this community understand and appreciate good education.	1	2	3	4
67)	In my judgment, this community is a good place to raise a family.	1	2	3	4
68)	This community respects its teachers and treats them like professional persons.	1	2	3	4
69)	My principal acts interested in me and my problems.	1	2	3	4
70)	My school principal supervises rather than "snoopervises" the teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
71)	It is difficult for teachers to gain acceptance by the people in this community.	1	2	3	4
72)	Teachers' meetings as now conducted by our principal waste the time and energy of the staff.	1	2	3	4
73)	My principal has a reasonable understanding of the problems connected with my teaching assignment.	1	2	3	4
74)	I feel that my work is judged fairly by my principal.	1	2	3	4

75)	Salaries paid in this school compare favorably with salaries in other schools with which I am familiar.	1	2	3	4
76)	Most of the actions of students irritate me.	1	2	3	4
77)	The cooperativeness of teachers in our school helps make our work more enjoyable.	1	2	3	4
78)	My students regard me with respect and seem to have confidence in my professional ability.	1	2	3	4
79)	The purposes and objectives cannot be achieved by the present curriculum.	1	2	3	4
80)	The teachers in our school have a desirable influence on the values and attitudes of their students.	1	2	3	4
81)	This community expects its teachers to meet unreasonable personal standards.	1	2	3	4
82)	My students appreciate the help I give them with their schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
83)	To me, there is no more challenging work than teaching.	1	2	3	4
84)	Other teachers in our school are appreciative of my work.	1	2	3	4
85)	As a teacher in this community, my nonprofessional activities outside of school are unduly restricted.	1	2	3	4
86)	As a teacher, I think I am as competent as most other teachers.	1	2	3	4
87)	The teachers with whom I work have high professional ethics.	1	2	3	4
88)	Our school curriculum does a good job of preparing students to become enlightened and competent citizens.	1	2	3	4
89)	I really enjoy working with my students.	1	2	3	4
90)	The teachers in our school show a great deal of initiative and creativity in their teaching assignments.	1	2	3	4
91)	Teachers in our community feel free to discuss controversial issues in their classes.	1	2	3	4
92)	My principal tries to make me feel comfortable when visiting my classes.	1	2	3	4
93)	My principal makes effective use of the individual teacher's capacity and talent.	1	2	3	4
94)	The people in this community, generally, have a sincere and wholehearted interest in the school.	1	2	3	4
95)	Teachers feel free to go to the principal about problems of personal and group welfare.	1	2	3	4
96)	This community supports ethical procedures regarding the appointment and reappointment of members of the teaching staff.	1	2	3	4
97)	This community is willing to support a good program of education.	1	2	3	4
98)	This community expects the teachers to participate in too many social activities.	1	2	3	4
99)	Community pressures prevent me from doing my best as a teacher.	1	2	3	4
100)	I am well satisfied with my present teaching profession.	1	2	3	4

Appendix B

Leadership Practices Inventory

I am a (Check one): _____ teacher _____ paraprofessional

My place of employment is (Check one):

Rating scale:
1- Almost Never	3- Seldom	5- Occasionally	7- Fairly Often	9- Very Frequently
2- Rarely	4- Once in a while	6- Sometimes	8- Usually	10- Almost Always

Choose the response number (1-10) that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement. He or She:

1)	Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.	
2)	Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	
3)	Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.	
4)	Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.	
5)	Praises people for a job well done.	
6)	Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards that we have agreed on.	
7)	Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.	
8)	Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	
9)	Actively listens to diverse points of view.	
10)	Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.	
11)	Follows through on the promises and commitments he/she makes.	
12)	Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	
13)	Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.	
14)	Treats others with dignity and respect.	
15)	Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.	
16)	Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.	
17)	Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	
18)	Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.	

19)	Supports the decisions that people make on their own.	
20)	Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	
21)	Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	
22)	Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	
23)	Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.	
24)	Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	
25)	Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.	
26)	Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.	
27)	Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	
28)	Experiments and takes risks, even when there is a chance of failure.	
29)	Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	
30)	Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.	

Appendix C

Permission letter to Director of Schools

Dear Dr. Director of Schools,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at the
_____ School District. I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, TN, and I am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled <u>School Leadership and Teacher Morale</u>. More specifically, I am seeking to determine which leadership characteristics, traits, or other aspects directly influence heightened teacher morale.

I hope that you will approve this research project and allow me to recruit willing administrators at each of the eight campuses within the district. If administrators are willing to participate, I will then seek to recruit both teachers and paraprofessionals from their individual schools. I plan on utilizing both the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* as well as the *Leadership Practices Inventory*. (copies enclosed) as the measurement tools for this project. Willing participants will be asked to complete either one or both of these tools. More specifically, the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* will be sent via Google Forms and completed online. The *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be completed using the traditional paper/pencil method. The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* takes approximately seven minutes to complete, and the *Leadership Practices Inventory* takes approximately three minutes to complete.

No identifiable information will be gathered from either measurement tool; thus, teacher and paraprofessional anonymity will be assured. The inventory results from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* will be gathered via Google Forms. The only person who will have access to the data will be me, the researcher, as Google Forms is password protected. Additionally, the inventory results from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be gathered manually by me, the researcher. All data gathered from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be kept absolutely confidential and locked in my classroom filing cabinet with only my access.

Upon completion of this study, the data will then be sorted and coded by individual campuses with the desire to develop a theory regarding which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects are influential to heightened teacher morale. The data will be retained for one year in a locked filing cabinet where only I can access it. If administrators would like to view the data, they will only be permitted access to the results gathered from their campuses after it has been coded. Additionally, as part of the *Leadership Practices Inventory* research permission process, the researcher will be required to share the findings with The Leadership Challenge to be published publicly on leadershipchallenge.com. However, the school district and/or schools will not be named or identifiable to this third party.

Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. No costs will be incurred by either the school district or individual participants. Additionally, there are no anticipated risks to any of the participants in this study.

If your permission is granted, interested administrators who volunteer to participate will be given an approval letter to be signed (copy enclosed) and returned to me, the primary researcher, prior to any information being gathered. If administrative permission is granted, interested teachers and paraprofessionals who are willing to participate, will then be given a consent form to be signed (copy enclosed) and returned to me at the beginning of the survey process.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Karie Hickman

Enclosures

Approved by:

Signature: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Permission letter to Principals

Dear Dr. Principal,

I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, TN, and I am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled School Leadership and Teacher Morale. More specifically, I am seeking to determine which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects are directly influential in heightened teacher morale.

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your school. I am hopeful all eight schools will participate in this project. The director of schools has granted my approval to conduct this study in the district. Each principal is being given the opportunity to choose to participate or decline the opportunity.

I hope you will allow me to recruit willing teachers and paraprofessionals from your campus to participate in my research. I would appreciate the opportunity to attend a faculty meeting at your school to explain the nature of my study, its significance, and worth to your teachers and paraprofessionals.

As measurement tools, I plan on utilizing both the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* as well as the *Leadership Practices Inventory*. (copies enclosed). Willing participants will be asked to complete either one or both of the measurement tools. The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* will be sent via Google Forms, and the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be completed manually. The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* takes approximately seven minutes to complete, and the *Leadership Practices Inventory* takes approximately three minutes to complete.

No identifiable information will be gathered from either measurement tool; thus, teacher and paraprofessional anonymity will be assured. The inventory results from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* will be gathered via Google Forms. The only person who will have access to the data will be me, the researcher, as Google Forms is password protected. Additionally, the inventory results from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be gathered manually and collected by me, the researcher. All data gathered from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be kept absolutely confidential and locked in my classroom filing cabinet with only my access.

Upon completion of this study, the data will then be sorted and coded with the desire to develop a theory regarding which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects are influential to heightened teacher morale. The data will be retained for one year in a locked filing cabinet where only I can access it. If you would like to view the data, you will only be permitted access to the results gathered from your campus after it has been coded. Additionally, as part of the *Leadership Practices Inventory* research permission process, the researcher will be required to share the findings with The Leadership

Challenge to be published publicly on leadershipchallenge.com. However, the school's name nor district will be named or identifiable to this third party.

Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. No costs will be incurred by individual schools or participants. Additionally, there are no anticipated risks to any of the participants in this study.

If your permission is granted, interested teachers and paraprofessionals who are willing to participate will be given a consent form to be signed (copy enclosed) and returned to me at the beginning of the survey process.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Karie Hickman

Enclosures

Approved by:

Signature: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

Participant Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, TN, and I am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled <u>School Leadership and Teacher Morale</u>. More specifically, I am seeking to determine which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects are directly influential in heightened teacher morale. I am hopeful you will participate in this research study that I am conducting at your school.

As measurement tools, I plan on utilizing both the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* as well as the *Leadership Practices Inventory*. (copies enclosed). Willing participants will be asked to complete either one or both of the measurement tools. The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* will be sent via Google Forms, and the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be completed manually. The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* takes approximately seven minutes to complete, and the *Leadership Practices Inventory* takes approximately three minutes to complete.

No identifiable information will be gathered from either measurement tool; thus, your anonymity will be assured. The inventory results from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* will be gathered via Google Forms. The only person who will have access to the data will be me, the researcher, as Google Forms is password protected. Additionally, the inventory results from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be gathered manually and collected by me, the researcher. All data gathered from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be kept absolutely confidential and locked in my classroom filing cabinet with only my access.

Upon completion of this study, the data will then be sorted and coded with the desire to develop a theory regarding which leadership characteristics, traits, and other aspects are influential to heightened teacher morale. The data will be retained for one year in a locked filing cabinet where only I can access it. If your administrator would like to view the data, he/she will only be permitted access to the results gathered from your campus after it has been coded. Additionally, as part of the *Leadership Practices Inventory* research permission process, the researcher will be required to share the findings with The Leadership Challenge to be published publicly on leadershipchallenge.com. However, the school's name nor district will be named or identifiable to this third party.

Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. No costs will be incurred by individual participants. Additionally, there are no anticipated risks to any of the participants in this study.

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether, choose to only complete one of the measurement tools, or choose to complete both inventories. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time

and without giving any reason. Finally, if you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questions on the questionnaires to the best of your ability. Choosing not to participate or withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher.

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix F

Leadership Practices Inventory **Item Break Down**

Item numbers sorted by leadership practices

Leadership Practice	Item #	Statement
Model the Way	1	Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.
	6	Spends time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principals and standards we have agreed upon.
	11	Follows through on the promises and commitments he/she makes.
	16	Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.
	21	Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
	26	Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.
Inspire a Shared Vision	2	Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.
	7	Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.
	12	Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.
	17	Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.
	22	Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.
	27	Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
Challenge the Process	3	Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.
	8	Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.
	13	Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.

	18	Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.
Challenge the Process (cont.)	23	Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans and establish measureable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.
	28	Experiments and takes risks, even when there is a chance of failure.
Enable Others to Act	4	Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.
	9	Actively listens to diverse points of view.
	14	Treats others with dignity and respect.
	19	Supports the decision that people make on their own.
	24	Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
	29	Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.
Encourage the Heart	5	Praises people for a job well done.
	10	Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confident in their abilities.
	15	Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.
	20	Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.
	25	Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.
	30	Give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.

Appendix G

Recruiting Email

Hello all teachers and paraprofessionals!

While I do know many of you, I have not formally met all of you. My name is Karie Hickman, and I am the 5th/6th grade intervention teacher at XXXXXXXXX School. I have been with the district since 2000, and I truly love my career.

I am very excited, as I am currently working to finish my doctoral degree at Carson-Newman University! The director of schools and your principal have granted me permission to recruit willing participants from your school to help me finish my research regarding school leadership and teacher morale. Specifically, my goal is to determine which leadership characteristics, traits, and other factors are impactful on teacher morale. The measurement tools I am using include both the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* and the *Leadership Practices Inventory*.

The *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* consists of 100 questions, and it addresses a plethora of topics (e.g., teacher rapport with the principal, satisfaction with teaching, rapport among teachers, teacher salary, etc.). While this inventory does have 100 questions, it actually only took me about 10 minutes to complete. If you are willing to complete this inventory, it will be sent to you via Google Forms.

The *Leadership Practices Inventory* consists of 30 questions, and it specifically addresses your principal's leadership style (e.g., My principal sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others, My principal talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done, etc.). This inventory took me less than five minutes to complete. If you would be willing to complete this inventory, it will be completed using paper and pencil and will be made available to you at your school.

Please know that if you choose to participate in my study, no identifiable data will be collected from either of the inventories; thus, your anonymity will be assured. As previously stated, the results from the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* will be gathered via Google Forms. The only person that will have access to the data will be me, as Google Forms is password protected. Additionally, the data gathered from the *Leadership Practices Inventory* will be gathered manually by me and kept absolutely confidential and locked in my classroom and only accessible to me. Once all data is gathered, if your principal would like to see the results, only pooled results will be made available to him/her.

Willing participants can choose to complete either one or both of the inventories, and it is perfectly okay if individuals choose to not take part in this research. Data will be collected beginning today, January 19, 2017 through February 2, 2017. As an incentive,

the school with the most participation will be provided with coffee and pastries for breakfast on February 3, 2017.

Thank you in advance for your consideration! If you are willing to assist me in this journey, please email me. Initially, I will need for you to sign a consent form, and then I will be sure you receive the necessary inventories. Please do not hesitate to email me or call me with any questions or concerns.

Thanks so much,
Karie Hickman

Appendix H

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire **Permission Request**

PURDUE
U N I V E R S I T Y

OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

PERMISSION TO USE

Date: November 9, 2016
Requester:
Karie Hickman
2337 Lewisburg Pike
Franklin, TN 37064
615-533-3061

Carson-Newman University
Jefferson City, TN 37760

Work requested for usage ("Materials"): Purdue Teacher Opinionaire 2nd edition

Permission Granted: Purdue University gives the requester permission to use the Materials solely for academic and research purposes as described in the request, dated November 3, 2016 and attached hereto.

Purdue University believes that Ms. Hickman's proposed purpose is consistent with Purdue's instructional objective and its overall mission as a non-profit educational institution.

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The Requester will include an acknowledgement of the source of the Material.

The authorization provided is valid only to the extent that all of the activities undertaken are consistent with the understanding and conditions stated herein.

Sincerely,

Abby K. Daniels
University Records Administrator and Staff Counsel

Hovde Hall of Administration. Room 216
610 Purdue Mall West Lafayette, IN 47907-2040 (765) 496·1506

Appendix I

***Leadership Practices Inventory* Permission Request**

WILEY

November 15, 2016

Karie Hickman
237 Lewisburg Pike
Franklin, TN 37064

Dear Ms. Hickman:

Thank you for your request to use the LPI®: Leadership Practices Inventory® in your dissertation. This letter grants you permission to use either the print or electronic LPI [Self/Observer/Self and Observer] instrument[s] in your research. You may *reproduce* the instrument in printed form at no charge beyond the discounted one-time cost of purchasing a copy; however, you may not distribute any photocopies except for specific research purposes. If you prefer to use the electronic distribution of the LPI you will need to separately contact Joshua Carter (jocarter@wiley.com) directly for further details regarding product access and payment. Please be sure to review the product information resources before reaching out with pricing questions.

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3) One (1) **electronic** copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data must be sent **promptly** to my attention at the address below; and,
4) We have the right to include the results of your research in publication, promotion, distribution and sale of the LPI and all related products.

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Best wishes for every success with your research project.
Cordially,

Ellen Peterson Permissions Editor Epeterson4@gmail.com