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# Leadership Practices: Perceptions of Principals and Teachers of a Small Rural School District in Western North Carolina

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Leadership Practices: Perceptions of Principals and Teachers of a Small Rural School  
District in Western North Carolina

By  
Randy Mann

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Gardner-Webb University School of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University  
2014

## Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Randy Mann under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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## Abstract

Leadership Practices: Perceptions of Principals and Teachers in a Rural Public School District in Western North Carolina. Mann, Randy, 2014: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Leadership/Leadership Practices/Principals/Teachers/Leadership Styles

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences of the teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions of the principals' leadership practices in public schools of a small rural county in western North Carolina. The participants in this study included 207 certified teachers and 11 building-level principals. The researcher used the survey method of data collection in which the teacher participation was 70% and the principal participation was 92%.

The instruments used to collect data included a demographic survey and the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) (Kouzes & Posner, 2003a). The demographic survey was used to obtain teacher demographic characteristics. The LPI was used to record the teachers' perceptions and the principals' perceptions of the principals' leadership practices within the school setting.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential procedures. At the elementary level, teachers evaluated their principals lower in all five leadership practices than their principals evaluated themselves. At the high school level, the principals evaluated their leadership practices lower than their teachers in all five leadership practices. For the five leadership practices, the principals of elementary, K-8, and middle levels evaluated themselves significantly higher than the high school level. Among the teachers, the K-8 level evaluated their principals' leadership practices higher in all five leadership practices than all other levels. In all five leadership practices, the male principals evaluated their self-observed leadership practices lower than their teachers.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction to the Problem**

Educational accountability has changed nearly everything. Superintendents and local school boards no longer can be satisfied with principals who simply place teachers in the classroom, provide textbooks, and get students to attend school. Increasingly, schools and school leaders are being judged on their progress in teaching most students to the standards that only the “best students” were expected to meet in the past. This means that future school leaders must have in-depth knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. (Bottoms, 1991, p. 1)

Today, there are many issues impacting education in the United States, such as job security, teacher turnover, teacher salary, working conditions, and principal leadership. There are several factors which should be considered when examining the condition of schools, such as teachers’ and principals’ perceptions of principals’ leadership practices. Education sets the foundation for students’ success rates; therefore, education should be a priority for this nation. Furthermore, there have been many changes, movements, and acts in education throughout the years which include the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001).

Since the induction of NCLB (2001), many of the nation’s principals and teachers are struggling to meet the requirements set forth in the act. NCLB is based on schools ensuring that each student is afforded the opportunity to learn. NCLB goals include closing the achievement gap and ensuring that highly qualified teachers are employed. According to Johnson and Maloney (2006), a highly qualified teacher has “earned a bachelor’s degree, holds full certification, and has demonstrated subject matter

knowledge and teaching skill in each core academic subject in which the teacher is assigned to teach” (p. 1). In addition, schools are held accountable for student achievement (Owens & Valesky, 2007). If principals wish to close the gap, highly qualified teachers should feel satisfied, appreciated, and want to remain within those educational settings. Schools where there are high teacher dissatisfaction rates can ultimately have concerns in many areas, such as teacher morale, teacher turnover, and student achievement.

Schools must now function in a world that is changing at accelerated rates; therefore, educational leaders have to operate in situations that are “increasingly complex and constrained” (Fullan, 1992, p. 19). In other words, the leadership practices of yesterday are not adequate to meet tomorrow’s needs. Educators now face the challenges of determining how to create leadership to effectively and ethically meet the needs of today’s students. Educational leaders who do not adapt to this change remain equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

The principal of a school is the most visible, most vulnerable, and, potentially, the most influential member of the educational organization. To be an effective leader, one must have the ability to diagnose his/her environment and adapt his/her leadership style to fit the demands of the environment (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Principals must convey that teachers can improve student performance and that students themselves are capable of learning. Obviously, principals are direct extensions of the superintendent of schools; therefore, both must have the same vision.

The responsibility for attaining organization goals is the responsibility of the principal. Bennis (1991), Glickman (1990), and Reitzug (1994) maintained that some of the best and brightest teachers have left public schools because administrators denied

them a voice in the decision-making process. The nationwide demand to improve student performance and the cries for school accountability grow louder across the country as many states now have mandated curriculum standards. The principal must lead this charge on a daily basis. Although a variety of educators are all critically involved in the quest for accountability and the accomplishment of higher standards, it is the building principal who has the responsibility for results placed squarely on his/her shoulders. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2002) stated that one of the guiding principles in the development of their position paper on *Principal Shortage* was,

Principals are dealing with increased job related stress, heightened accountability, new curriculum standards, educating an increasingly diverse student population, addressing social issues that once belonged at home or in the community while facing possible termination if their schools don't show instant results. (p. 1)

Within a positive school community, the principal must develop a community of trust and respect (Gresso & Robertson, 1992). To do so, he/she needs to articulate a clear vision, inspire, collaborate, become involved in evolutionary planning, and empower others (Barth, 1988). A principal's leadership skills and, more specifically, his/her leadership practices and behavior may play an important role in how well he/she handles responsibility.

The results of an Educational Research Service survey conducted for the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Holland, 1997) indicated that many teachers were unwilling to accept more responsibilities, work more hours, and in some cases, take a pay cut or accept a small pay differential from teaching to enter administration. Other reasons given ranged from stressful conditions to lack of resources. Teachers' perceptions are related to one of the growing concerns principals are faced

with today. Fullan (2008) contended, “Effective leaderships inspires more than it empowers; it connects more than it controls; it demonstrates more than it decides” (p. 16).

An effective principal can assist in creating an environment which promotes positive teacher perceptions and positive learning environments for all students. According to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (1996), “Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth” (p. 13). Thus, teachers’ perceptions are relevant to the success of schools, so one must understand his/her own perceptions of how his/her leadership practices can affect the teachers he/she leads.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is not known to what extent a difference exists between principals’ perceptions of their own leadership practices and kindergarten through twelfth-grade teachers’ observed perceptions of their principals’ leadership practices of a small rural school district in western North Carolina. The problem in this study addressed factors that affected teacher perceptions, that is, their satisfaction, morale, and principals’ leadership practices in the workplace. In addition to principals’ leadership practices affecting the overall perceptions of teachers, it could also affect highly qualified teachers staying within an educational organization. Researchers have expressed that leaders and followers relate in ways that allow the leader to trigger motivation, obtain individual commitment, establish a functional working environment, and facilitate the necessary work needed in the workplace (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Principals’ perceptions and

teachers' perceptions continue to be a concern that should be addressed by principals as a way of improving the success of teachers and ultimately the learning environment for students in their educational organization.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference between principals' perceptions of their leadership practices and teachers' perceptions and to what extent the principals' leadership practices affected teachers' perceptions in a small rural school district in western North Carolina. Principals could benefit by examining their leadership practices in order to address these pertinent issues affecting schools today. Further, this study explored the attitudes, practices, and barriers of the following leadership styles: transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational.

The attitudes of principals could affect the overall perceptions of their teachers. In fact, whether or not a principal is perceived as a positive and supportive influence could determine how teachers feel in that particular work setting. Therefore, this study was designed to examine principals' perceptions and teachers' perceptions of the leadership practices in the public schools of a small rural school district in western North Carolina.

As indicated by the New York State Education Department (NYSED, 2005), "Research indicates that administrative leadership is the most important factor in determining the climate of a school, and there are specific leader activities that allow all teachers to feel supported in their work" (p. 6). The practices of transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational leaders are different and each will have a different effect on teachers and school climate. Each principal has very specific ways of interacting with teachers in his/her individual school.

According to The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (2007), "The problem is not finding enough teachers to do the job; the problem is keeping them in our schools" (p. 2). Principals should become more aware of possible barriers affecting highly qualified teachers in classrooms, which may include making adjustments to their leadership practices. The results of this study might help to illuminate the degree to which a principal's leadership practices impact teachers' perceptions and might aid principals in choosing a leadership style that successfully promotes the learning process.

### **Background of the Study**

Since the implementation of NCLB (2001), educators have been held accountable for the academic achievement of students in many areas, such as standards, testing, teacher qualifications, student attendance, as well as leadership. Park and Datnow (2009) expressed, "Educational leaders are now required to analyze, interpret and use data to make informed decisions in all areas of education, ranging from professional development to student learning" (p. 477). Principals are not automatically bestowed with the skills required to be effective administrators by virtue of having been teachers. Drucker (2001, as cited in Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Beckhard, 1996) pointed out that it does not matter what kind of organization a person works in; one can find opportunities to learn about leadership from all organizations—public, private, and nonprofit.

Educational organizations must begin to examine principal leadership in their organization as a means to make positive improvements to teachers' perceptions that may contribute to building successful learning environments. Gorton, Alston, and Snowden (2007) expressed, "Stogdills's definition emphasizes that leadership need not be limited to one individual, such as the school administrator, and that the focus of leadership

activities should be on increasing the performance effectiveness of the group” (p. 5). In order for an educational organization to be successful, all stakeholders play a role in the success; however, it begins with the principal. As cited in Viadero (2003), three researchers, Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), found that “For an average school, having an effective leader can mean the difference between scoring at the 50th percentile on a given achievement test and achieving a score 10 percentile points higher” (p. 7). As reported by Viadero, the variable making the most difference on a school’s test scores was the extent to which the leader understood the details and the undercurrents of running a school and used this knowledge successfully.

According to Reilly (2005),

Whether you are a superintendent, technology director, principal, or classroom teacher, developing your leadership skills is fundamental to your success.

Educational technologists have been spending far too much time, energy, and money on bits and bytes. We need to shift the focus from systems to people and begin real leadership. When we begin to put people first, we finally realize the fruits of our investments. (p. 20)

Principals lead in different ways, and obviously some principals are more effective than others. The foundation for a principal’s leadership must begin with his/her beliefs in particular leadership theories. As cited in Wagner (2009), during Lewin, Lippitt, and White’s (1939) study, leadership styles were identified as authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic), and delegative (laissez-fair). Throughout the years, researchers added on additional theories that are linked to leadership styles, which include (a) Great Man theory, (b) Trait theory, (c) Contingency theory, (d) Situational theory, (e) Behavioral theory, (f) Participative theory, (g) Management theory, and (h)



Relationship theory (Wagner). Principals' leadership practices may relate to one or more of the identified leadership theories.

Additionally, through an analysis of leadership theories, several theories have been identified which affect the overall perception of leadership practices. According to Fullan (2008), "The Theory of Action envisioned principals as the most critical resources in the professional guidance and instruction direction of the school" (p. 7). The Theory of Action consists of the following areas: (a) participation of low achieving schools, (b) networking of schools, (c) mentoring programs, (d) conferences, (e) strategy building, and funding (Fullan). Based on the focus areas, schools are allowed an opportunity to collaborate within their own school as well as collaborate with other schools in their area in order to make improvements.

Principals have very crucial positions, which include being a communicator, negotiator, mediator, administrator, and manager. "One major source of influence on the internal content and on the work circumstances that individuals experience in an organizational setting is the manager's leadership style" (Nir & Kranot, 2006, p. 207). Principals are compelled to examine their particular leadership style and how specific practices may affect their followers. Past research on principals' leadership styles categorized them as initiators, managers, or responders (Gorton et al., 2007). According to Gorton et al. (2007), "The initiator's style was most successful, followed by the manager's, while the responder's style was least successful" (p. 180).

The main principal leadership styles explored within this study consist of the transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational leadership styles. Each leadership style can have a different effect on teachers within educational organizations. According to Owens and Valesky (2007), "Transactional educational leaders can and do

offer jobs, security, tenure, favorable ratings, and more in exchange for the support, cooperation, and compliance of followers” (p. 281). Further, Owens and Valesky indicated, “The transformational leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 281). Principals who wish to ensure a high morale for their followers, which is a very important element in a school setting, will follow the transformational leadership style. Further, the instructional leadership style will be explored, which is based on classroom instruction. Hallinger (2003) concluded, “Instructional leadership focuses predominantly on the role of the school principal coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school” (p. 331). The final leadership theory to be explored is the situational leader. The situational leadership model is incorporated by four leadership styles (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005). These leadership styles include autocratic (telling), democratic (selling), encouraging and social (participating), and the laissez-fair style (delegating) (Kelley et al., 2005, p. 18). The situational leader executes many roles and must have a high level of flexibility with his/her followers.

As a principal, one of the most challenging roles is to find ways to understand teachers’ perceptions as well as keep those highly qualified teachers satisfied within their educational organization. With students seeking stability in learning, teacher satisfaction along with teacher retention affects the whole school. Hirsch and Emerick (2006) contended, “Unfortunately, many schools across the country face persistent teacher working condition challenges that are closely related to high teacher turnover rates and chronic difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers” (p. 1). Principals may need to sustain an environment where teachers have positive perceptions of their principal and want to remain in those organizations.

Additionally, classroom instruction is also a factor which may be affected by the perceptions of those teachers and should be examined with its connection to principal leadership. “If anyone can influence teachers on a day-to-day basis, it is the principal, both directly and indirectly” (Fullan, 2008, p. 25). It seems that a leader can affect a teacher’s ability to perform, which in turn, affects a student’s ability to learn. Kelley et al. (2005) referred to research conducted by Blake and Mouton (1985) which indicated, “Leaders who fully understand leadership theory can improve their ability to lead and are able to reduce employee frustration and negative attitudes in the work environment” (p. 18). When principals openly acknowledge the impact of positive teacher perceptions, both the principal and teachers will benefit and, as a result, students will benefit.

Further, effective leaders have the ability to provide comfortable, positive, and trusting work environments from which teachers could benefit. “An essential priority for an administrator in working with most groups, especially newly formed ones, is the development of cohesiveness and trust” (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 17). The formation of trust among principals and teachers can build positive, lasting relationships. In fact, trust can build mutual respect among individuals in the educational setting.

Although principals’ leadership practices and teachers’ perceptions are the focus of this study, it is very important to understand the impact of NCLB with respect to overall school improvements. Reaching the goals as outlined in NCLB has been very challenging for many schools across the United States. Principals and teachers must continue to work together, which may include building better working relationships. In addition, those working relationships could begin to improve the quality of education provided to this nation’s children.

Moreover, Hoff (2008) stated with respect to NCLB, “The law’s goal is all

students will be proficient in reading and math by the end of the 2013-14 school year” (p. 5). Many schools are still considered *need improvement* schools and many students still are not meeting standards as required by the act. As a result of students not meeting standards, principals and teachers are being held accountable. “NCLB has significantly increased the pressure to improve student achievement” (Kelley et al., 2005, p. 18). In order to meet standards, principals must analyze their schools’ data, teachers’ abilities, instructional practices, and students’ needs, as well as their own leadership practices.

Furthermore, principals must understand all factors that directly and indirectly affect teachers within educational organizations. According to Harris (2002), “Effective leadership is widely accepted as being a key constituent in achieving school improvements” (p. 15). When the school environment nurtures support and cooperation, it is possible that teachers can do their best to provide a meaningful learning environment for their students.

Teacher morale, classroom instruction, school environment, and leadership practices are examples of factors that may affect student learning, which could possibly stem from a teacher’s perception of his/her leader. Principals affect how well the overall environment is conducive to teaching and learning. In addition, Ouyang and Paprock (2006) expressed, “Teacher job satisfaction contributes not only to teachers’ motivation and improvement, but also to students’ learning and development” (p. 341). Further, if educational organizations are able to improve teacher perceptions, then it is possible that other areas will improve as well. For instance, there could be significant improvements to students learning to enjoy school and respond positively to instructional practices as a result of positive teacher perceptions in schools.

Consequently, there are many issues facing the United States today; however, one

of the most important issues that must be addressed is the need to improve factors affecting education. Education is a critical factor in this nation, due to the impact it will have on an individual's future. Further, poverty is a factor and a major concern for this nation, which can be directly linked to education. Wells, Griffith, and Kritsonis (2007) concluded,

In schools with 25% of the student body living in poverty, all students, whether poor, affluent, or in between, tend to achieve less than students from schools in affluent communities. Furthermore, even after a family has achieved higher income levels, the effects of poverty can linger. (p. 4)

In fact, concerns of poverty suggest a possibility of a higher need for government assistance in the area of education. According to Lips (2008), "Each year, the United States spends more than \$550 billion on K-12 public schools, more than 4 percent of the nation's gross domestic product" (p. 1). With the achievement gap growing among students, the greater the need to provide services to those students and schools with the goal of closing the achievement gap. Education is no longer an isolated issue for the poor. Communities will ultimately have to deal with issues surrounding education and the achievement gap by paying more taxes to support education. As indicated by Lips, "Many Americans' lives are affected by their lack of quality education. Moreover, taxpayers must shoulder the burden of costs caused by the uneducated population. Widespread failure in America's public schools imposes great personal and societal costs" (p. 1).

The nation's future depends significantly on the quality of education which is provided to students. A sound, quality education can advance students to become productive citizens within this nation. Along with becoming productive citizens, the

quality of education will also lessen the burden on this nation as it applies to the government. “The commission reported that American students were at risk of falling behind students from around the world and that this imperiled our national security and future prosperity” (Lips, 2008, p. 1). In fact, this nation will have a harder time recovering from the many issues arising from the lack of and/or improper education if more students continue to fail. Ongoing support and services for failing schools must continue if this nation is unable to improve the educational system. Possibly, there will be more individuals requiring government assistance in the future. Additionally, this means more funds will be needed to supplement the cost of additional resources needed for educating students who are not achieving in school.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study examined the attitudes, practices, perceptions, and barriers of principals’ leadership practices and those practices on teachers’ perceptions in a small rural school district in western North Carolina. The data presented in this study could assist principals in making positive improvements regarding teachers’ perceptions in their schools. ISLLC (1996) Standard 2 identified that one of the major duties of a principal is to maintain the school’s learning environment; therefore, under Standard 2, the principal is obligated to ensure there is a positive instructional learning environment for not only the students but teachers as well. In addition, ISLLC Standard 3 stated, “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (p. 5). Furthermore, there is an impact with the manner in which teachers perceive their leaders in educational organizations, which will ultimately have a significant impact on student academic success.

Researchers found, “A report from the Wallace Foundation (2004) revealed that

leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school and that leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most” (Hirsch & Emerick, 2006, p. 17). Each factor can directly affect teacher retention and, in turn, these factors may ultimately affect student achievement. Furthermore, this study provided data that will influence faculty and staff morale, shared decision making, team building, and ultimately promote student achievement. Finally, this study could assist principals in acknowledging the status of their school climate, whether positive or negative. Further, principals may become more aware of leadership practices that can improve overall teachers’ perceptions in their schools and district.

### **Rationale**

The condition of teachers’ perceptions in education is an imperative topic that educators must address. “Research has consistently demonstrated that teachers make a greater difference in student achievement than any other single school factor” (Hirsh & Emerick, 2006, p. 5). The importance of conducting such a study was to improve teachers’ perceptions of their leaders and shed light on the principals’ perceptions of their leadership in the public school setting. Hirsch and Emerick (2006) concluded, “One of the most extensive examinations of working conditions data revealed a clear lesson: if we want to improve the quality of our teachers and schools, we need to improve the quality of the teaching jobs” (p. 1).

The NCLB Act indicated that highly qualified teachers must be employed (Owens & Valesky, 2007). When principals examine their leadership practices, as well as specific work conditions impacting teacher perceptions and overall teacher morale, they will begin to understand their roles in meeting the requirements of the NCLB Act, which

include keeping highly qualified teachers in the classroom. Schools, as well as the school districts, must address those conditions and the reasons behind those conditions with relation to keeping highly qualified teachers in those schools.

The effect on teachers' perceptions from a principal's leadership practice is a significant topic worth investigating due to the vital need in securing stable school communities, especially in low-income areas. The previous research conducted by Hirsch and Emerick (2006) identified a connection between leadership, teachers' perceptions, teacher satisfaction, and teacher retention. "When asked to select which of the working conditions most influenced retention decisions, leader was the most important" (Hirsch & Emerick, p. 9).

Although there are current studies on teacher perceptions, teacher satisfaction, leadership practices, leadership perceptions, leadership personalities, and leadership satisfaction, information devoted to the principals and teachers of a small rural school district in western North Carolina is absent. The results from this study might begin to fill the gap. Perhaps one way to improve education and teaching positions in a small rural school system is to examine the effects and perceptions of principals' leadership practices on teachers' perceptions within this school system.

### **Research Questions**

1. What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as measured by Kouzes-Posner norms of the Leadership Practices Inventory?
2. What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between elementary school, K-8 schools, middle school, and high school principals and teachers as a function of school level?



3. What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as a function of the principals' gender?

### **Assumptions**

- There was an assumption that each participant fully understood the purpose of this research as explained by the researcher.
- There was an assumption that each participant used honesty and integrity when answering the survey questions to the best of his/her ability.
- There was an assumption that the instruments used in the study measure perceptions of leadership practices.
- There was an assumption that the data collected were interpreted to reflect the perceptions of the principals and teachers surveyed.
- There was an assumption that all respondents were qualified to provide accurate responses.
- There was an assumption that each participant understood that this study was strictly voluntary as explained by the researcher.

### **Limitations**

- The sample was restricted to public schools in one school system of North Carolina and did not represent all of North Carolina.
- This study was limited by the accuracy of the information obtained exclusively from teachers and principals who volunteered to participate. There is the possibility that the perceptions of those who volunteered to participate may differ from the perceptions of nonparticipants.

## **Delimitations**

- This study was delimited to the perceptions of principals and teachers in a small rural school district in western North Carolina.
- The study was delimited to the Leadership Practices Inventory.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are provided to ensure uniformity and understanding of these terms throughout the study. The following terms are also used operationally in this study. The various authors that have been quoted had numerous definitions of the term *leadership*; therefore, I have included a wide variety of definitions.

**Effective school leaders.** “Effective school leaders are strong educators, anchoring their work on central issues of learning and teaching and school improvements” (ISLLC, 1996, p. 5).

**Empowerment.** The ability to give followers the opportunity to share thoughts and feel a sense of involvement without giving up authority (Allen & Crosby, 2000).

**Highly qualified teachers.** “Under the law, ‘highly qualified’ refers to school teachers who passed a test covering reading, math, and other areas of the curriculum” (Berry, 2002, p. 1).

**Influence.** “Influence can be defined as the ability of an {administrator} without recourse to force or legitimation, to affect another’s behavior” (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 76).

**Initiators.** A leader who takes a proactive approach to ensuring that the expectations and goals of the school are being met (Gorton et al., 2007).

**Instructional leadership.** A leadership style which focuses on the principal as

highly involved in the instructional and curriculum practices in a school (Hallinger, 2003).

**Leader.** Gorton et al. (2007) cited Cowley (1931), “The leader is the one who succeeds in getting others to follow him or her” (p. 5).

**Leadership.** Leadership is the ability to make what one believes happen (Barth, 1988).

**Leadership.** Bass (1990) asserted that leadership in schools is often the factor that determines whether there is success or failure in the institution.

**Leadership.** “Leaders manage the dream. All leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision, one that takes people to a new place and the ability to translate that vision into reality” (Bennis, 1999, p. 5).

**Leadership.** Individuals, who display high levels of persistence, overcome significant obstacles, attract dedicated people, influence groups of people toward the achievement of goals, and play key roles in guiding their companies through crucial episodes in their history (Collins & Porras, 1997).

**Leadership.** Drucker (as cited in Hesselbein et al., 1996) stated, “The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers. Some people are thinkers. Some are prophets. Both roles are important and badly needed. But without followers, there can be no leaders” (p. xii).

**Leadership.** The process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

**Leadership.** “Leadership is the development of vision and strategies, the alignment of relevant people behind those strategies, and the empowerment of individuals to make the vision happen despite the obstacles. Leadership works through people and

culture. It is soft and hot” (Kotter, 1999, p. 14).

**Leadership.** The role of an individual that ensures duties are carried out by the followers as well as makes the necessary decisions of what must take place in a school (Kowalski, 2008).

**Leadership.** Leadership focuses predominantly on purpose and systemic structure. Leaders teach people through the organization to do likewise (Senge, 1990).

**Leadership.** Example is leadership (Schweitzer, as cited in Kaiser, Mundry, Stiles, & Loucks-Horsley, 2002).

**Leadership.** The function of leadership is to cope with change (Shotogren, 1999).

**Leadership.** Strategic leaders must have a sense of vision and ability to set broad, lofty goals and steer a course toward them but with the insight and flexibility to adjust both the course and the goals as the horizon becomes clearer (Vicere & Fulmer, 1997).

**Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI).** The Self and Observer LPI was developed by Kouzes and Posner (2003a) with over 18 years of research that has included 4,000 cases and over 200,000 surveys. Kouzes and Posner translated the actions that make up the five practices of exemplary leadership into behavioral statements so that managers and nonmanagers across both private and public organizations could assess their skills and use the feedback to improve their leadership abilities. The LPI Self and Observer is a 30-item instrument.

**Management.** The facilitation and overseeing of how the duties of followers should be carried out by the followers (Kowalski, 2008).

**Managers.** These individuals are a combination between an initiator and a

responder (Gorton et al., 2007) “They initiate action in support of changes but also demonstrate responsive behavior” (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 180).

**No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).** “Requires schools to demonstrate that all children are on the route to proficiency in the core subjects by 2014” (Wells et al., 2007, p. 1). NCLB goals include closing the achievement gap, ensuring that highly qualified teachers are employed, and focusing on accountability (Owens & Valesky, 2007).

**Perception.** The process, act, or faculty of perceiving (Morris, 2004).

**Perceive.** To become aware of directly through any of the senses; especially to see or hear, to take notice of, observe, detect, become aware of one’s mind, achieve understanding of, apprehend (Morris, 2004).

**Responders.** “Rely on teachers and others to act as change agents while they proceed with administrative tasks” (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 180).

**School principal.** The chief building administrator who is qualified according to the State Board of Education and certificated by the Department of Education for the State of North Carolina.

**Situational leadership.** A leadership style in which the leader must be flexible and apply the most appropriate skill to a given situation (Kelly et al., 2005).

**Teacher.** One who teaches; especially one whose occupation is to instruct, to impart knowledge or skill, to give instructions to, to cause to learn by example or experience (Morris, 2004).

**Teacher job satisfaction.** The overall way a teacher feels about his/her current work setting as which is connected to job performance (Ouyang & Paprock, 2006).

**Teacher retention.** The ability to keep teachers in classrooms in a school setting (Reichardt, 2001).

**Transactional leadership.** A leader who obtains follower support by offering something in return to the follower, which may include job security (Owens & Valesky, 2007).

**Transformational leadership.** A leader who is concerned with activity initiating participation of followers by maintaining a level of satisfaction (Owen & Valesky, 2007).

### **Nature of the Study**

This study was a quantitative study which used a comparative research design. The data source consisted of descriptive and inferential procedures. In addition, the data were used to analyze the effects of leadership practices on teacher perceptions which included teacher satisfaction. The results were reported through the use of tables. Data were collected through the use of surveys which included a demographic survey and the LPI. The population studied was principals and teachers from public schools in a small rural school system in western North Carolina. The sample consisted of principals and teachers from three high schools, two middle schools, three K-8 schools, and four elementary schools. Data collection took place during the academic school year 2012-2013.

### **Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction. Chapter 2 includes a review of the related literature. Chapter 3 consists of the selected research methodology and instrumentation used in the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings and the analysis of the data. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study with conclusions and recommendations.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

### Introduction

In a review of leadership, Stogdill (1974) wrote that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it. According to Stogdill (1950), the process of leadership influences group activities toward goal setting and goal achievement. Hollander (1978) observed, “Leadership is a process of influence between a leader and those who are followers” (p. 1). You must become someone others can trust to take them where they want to go (Maxwell, 2001).

Fullan (1992) discussed a study commissioned by the Toronto, Canada, Board of Education in which 137 principals were surveyed about their perceptions of their effectiveness as leaders over a period. The following results were found:

1. A decrease in principal effectiveness over time was reported by 61% of the participants.
2. Of the principals, 72% said they felt there had been a decrease in the trust levels of their leadership.
3. In response to whether the principals felt they could effectively fulfill all the responsibilities assigned to them, 71% responded no.

Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, and Foleno (2001) found in a survey funded by Wallace-Reader’s Digest as part of LEADERS COUNT that 57% of the principals surveyed stated that even good administrators were being overwhelmed by the ongoing management part of doing their jobs and that it was halting the principals’ opportunities to provide the vision and leadership they would like.

As Kouzes and Posner (1999) examined the principals’ positions, they said it was safe to say that principals wear many hats. An administrator who does not understand

with complete clarity the extent of the responsibility of his/her position and the expectations that occur with and among students, teachers, and parents will help contribute to an unhealthy environment. However, with increased preparedness and over-learning are ways of helping the individual to cope with the everyday stresses of the principalship. Stanley Thompson said of the principalship, "It's a demanding job that requires you to do the impossible" (as cited in Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 16).

Educational organizations must also begin to examine ways of improving teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices in the field of education. Also, those same educational organizations must examine other factors affecting teaching and instruction in the classroom, such as teacher satisfaction, teacher morale, and teacher retention. It takes a special leader to aid teachers in understanding his/her vision and goal within an educational organization. Educational organizations need competent leaders with the necessary skills to lead successful teachers and schools. In fact, Harris (2002) concluded, "Effective leadership is widely accepted as being a key constituent in achieving school improvements" (p. 15).

John Maxwell (1998) contended, "Leadership is influence-nothing more, nothing less" (p. 17). This quote is ideal for understanding the role that leadership has on individuals. For example, due to a specific leadership quality that a leader may exhibit, an individual may decide to follow a particular leader. Each leader has unique methods of influencing his/her followers.

### **Leadership Background**

The Book of Romans in *The Maxwell Leadership Bible* (Maxwell, 2002) provides a comprehensive summary of the human condition. This book provides leaders with an in-depth assessment of who they are in the face of a Holy God and how they must



respond to His word. Romans 12:6-8 records,

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophesy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Maxwell, 2002, p. 679)

Covey's (1989) book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* is a synergistic product of many minds because it was a result of reviewing 200 years of literature about success as a part of his doctoral program. Interestingly, Covey responded that he was able to determine that the success literature of the past 50 years had been superficial and had dealt with "social image consciousness, techniques, and quick-fixes" (p. 18). That was in sharp contrast to the first 150 years of the literature of success that he determined dealt with such character issues as integrity, humility, temperance, courage, justice, and simplicity. He said that the emphasis in success had shifted from what he called the *character ethic* to what he termed the *personality ethic*. Because of things that Covey was experiencing in his family, his study of perception, and his study of success literature, he experienced what he described as one of those "Aha!" experiences in life where suddenly things click into place. In the subtle discrepancies of his own life, he was able to suddenly see the powerful impact of the personality ethic.

Covey (1989) concluded that some of the elements of the personality ethic were essential for success; however, he suggested that they were secondary traits and not primary. Essential for success or effectiveness were those character traits that established trust. Without trust, which the character ethic produces, Covey said that long-term relationships could not be established and that people could not experience effectiveness

and long-term success. Covey did not call the results of his work leadership; instead, he focused on the habits of effective people.

According to research conducted by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), different forms of leadership are described in the literature using adjectives such as *instructional*, *democratic*, *transformational*, *moral*, and *strategic*. However, according to the authors, no matter which descriptor is used, there are two essential objectives critical to any organization's effectiveness: helping the organization set a secure set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions. The more important thought is that educators and the public need to be skeptical about leadership as an adjective. Sometimes these adjectives have a real meaning, but sometimes they mask the more important underlying themes common to successful leadership regardless of the style being advocated.

When trying to *get a handle* on a definition of leadership, it is apparent that there is not a standard definition agreed upon by the various organizational writers, researchers, and scholars. In fact, Bennis (1989) compared leadership to beauty when he stated that leadership is hard to define but, "like beauty, you know it when you see it" (p. 34). While it may be true that there are disputes over the definition of leadership, Bass (1990) asserted that leadership in schools is often the factor that determines whether there is success or failure in the institution. The principals, as leaders of the school, must help teachers become believers in the job they perform and in their potential to facilitate change. According to Bolman and Deal (2001), stories of how hard it was for teachers to keep faith and press on in the environment of lukewarm public support were numerous. The principal helps teachers to appreciate their significance and the importance they play in the lives of young people.

Burns (1978) observed that while leadership was constantly studied, it remained a hard-to-understand phenomena. Leadership, according to Burns, is performed in order to meet goals that are held by both leaders and followers. Burns explained, “All leaders are actual or potential power holders, but not all power holders are leaders” (p. 18).

Peters and Waterman (1982) questioned the importance of leadership, stating, We must admit that our bias at the beginning was to discount the role of leadership heavily if for no other reason than everybody’s answer to what’s “wrong” or “right” with whatever organization is its leader. Our strong belief was that the excellent companies had gotten to be the way they were because of a unique set of cultural attributes that distinguish them from the rest, and if we understand those attributes well enough, we could no more than just mutter “leadership” in response to questions like “Why is J and J so good?”

Unfortunately, what we found was that associated with almost every excellent company was a strong leader (or two) who seemed to have had a lot to do with making the company excellent in the first place. (p. 26)

Throughout the years, numerous leadership books have been published, articles on leadership have flourished, and leadership helpful hints are available in print as well as on the internet. Leaders and principals now have a steady diet of *how to* become a successful leader; nonetheless, have the number of successful leaders increased at the same rate as the publications?

### **Leadership**

McLane wrote in the forward section of the book *The 5 Pillars of Leadership* (Meyer & Slechta, 2002),

Leadership is a timeless river flowing endlessly toward the great vast tomorrow.

Equally timeless is the need to shape and mold the river's channels. The effort to continually remanufacture leadership continues as men and women seek new ways to guide, manage, and motivate others. All organizations build upon three key strengths: an intimate knowledge of where the group intends to go and how it will get there, the ability of both leaders and team members to focus on a productive contribution to themselves and others, and the common desire to do whatever is necessary to achieve a positive outcome. A leadership gap is created whenever one or more of these elements are neglected or underdeveloped. (p. 13)

Meyer and Slechta (2002) emphasized that at no other time in history has there been such a demand for effective leadership. The challenge and essence was for effective leadership to accentuate the good decisions and then find a way to reshape the bad.

Stated by Meyer and Slechta, "Part of the universal challenge of leadership is defining it in a way that will apply to virtually everyone" (p. 19). Possession of certain skills, style, personality, position, or title does not define leadership. While the aforesaid showed up externally, both authors agreed they were not the essence of leadership. Meyer and Slechta contended that the causes of success were trust, commitment, and loyalty. In their writings, Meyer and Slechta defined three foundational elements of success: (a) leaders had integrity, (b) leaders possessed a servant's heart, and (c) leaders were cognizant of the concept of stewardship.

Integrity dealt with understanding the long-term consequences and whether what one was doing as a leader created benefits. A leader who has a servant's heart is always eager to be of service to others and who genuinely cared about those he/she led. As noted by Meyers and Slechta (2002), a leader who honors stewardship believes in and acknowledges that the most important thermostat in an organization is human potential.

As the terrain of organizational life grows increasingly rocky and demands upon principals as educational leaders increase, more and more educators are seeking assistance in ways to handle the additional pressures (Krone & Dougherty, 1999). Cronin (1984) (as cited in Bass, 1990) declared leadership as the ability to make things happen that would not have happened if the leader's influence was not present. Bass (1990) cited others as agreeing that leadership was about consensus and commitment to a common set of objectives. During their work in investigating separate definitions for the term management as opposed to leadership, Montana and Charnov (2000) offered this definition of leadership: "[It is] working with and through people to accomplish the objectives of both the organization and its members" (p. 1). Kotter (1999) said, "Institutionalizing a leadership-centered culture is the ultimate art of leadership" (p. 65).

According to Drucker (2001), one does not manage people; one leads them. The goal of leadership is to "make productive specific strengths and knowledge of each individual" (Drucker, p. 81). Drucker also noted that the only real definition of a leader is someone who has followers. As stated by Drucker, the real question becomes: leadership to what end? Leadership is a means, not an end, and by itself is neither good nor desirable. Drucker listed the requirements of leadership:

1. A leader must set and have goals, a vision, and a mission.
2. A leader must realize that leadership is a responsibility not a rank or privilege.
3. The leader sees others' successes for what they are and works to develop strong associations.
4. The leader earns the trust of others.
5. The leader understands that the ultimate task of leadership is to support human energies and human vision. (p. 271)

Waldman, Bass, and Yammarino (1990) pointed out that transformational leadership did not replace transactional leadership but actually added to it. Bass (1990) stated, “Transformational leadership contributes to effective leadership under stress” (p. 652). The charisma of a transformational leader helps others to feel a better system of support and identity. The transformational leader was able to convert crisis into a development challenge (Bass). Yukl (1998) said transformational leaders worked to build commitment to the objectives of the organization and then worked to empower followers to achieve the objectives.

Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) suggested that the real source of transformational leadership was based in the personal beliefs and values of the leader. The leader’s job was to reach higher levels of performance than was thought possible by uniting followers and to change goals and/or beliefs. Silins’s (1992) and Leithwood’s (1994) research led them to conclude that transformational leadership was of significant value when it came to the restructuring of schools and that it was the transformational leaders who had positive effects on schools.

According to Lontos (1992), transformational leaders inspired higher levels of commitment and capacity among staff. They generated greater effort and productivity to develop a more skilled practice. They increased the capacity of the organization to continuously improve. Lontos stated that transformational leaders had the following qualities:

1. An idealized vision.
2. A shared perspective and vision making him/her likeable to lead.
3. A strong articulation of future vision and motivation to lead.
4. A personal power based on expertise, respect, and admiration of a unique

hero.

5. The ability to transform people to share the radical changes advocated. (pp. 1-5)

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) concluded that school leadership had significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teacher instruction. Leaders influenced student learning by helping to promote a vision and goal and by ensuring that resources and processes were in place to enable teachers to teach well. They also contended that the effects of leadership appeared to be mostly indirect.

Fullan (2008) explored Leithwood's idea of how leaders impact student learning. Fullan stated, "Leithwood, et al. (2004) concluded that principals influence student learning by: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization" (p. 18). Therefore, leaders must set standards to assist followers in understanding those expectations. Once standards and expectations are understood, the leader allows opportunities for student learning.

The primary goal of any educational organization should be student learning which can be directly impacted by the principals' leadership practices. Furthermore, there have been many reforms and acts implemented to ensure that schools are implementing strategies to improve education for their students. Leaders are in fact held accountable for ensuring the success of their school, resulting in the overall academic achievement for students. Researchers have found that there is in fact a correlation between leadership and academic achievement (Waters et al., 2003).

Waters et al. (2003) concluded, "Just as leaders can have a positive impact on achievement, they also can have a marginal, or worse, a negative impact on achievement"

(p. 5). Furthermore, Leithwood, Patton, and Jantzi (2010) contended, “The new conception is premised on assumptions about leadership as the exercise of influence and the indirect nature of its effects on students” (p. 673). Principals could ensure that students have the opportunity to succeed in their schools by first examining the impact of their leadership styles and practices on student learning.

Hoyle (2007) concluded, “The leadership style is the primary reason for high performing schools at all levels” (p. 155). Therefore, it is necessary to analyze those high-performing schools and the particular principals’ leadership styles implemented in high-performing schools. For example, McNeil (2000, as cited by Hoyle, 2007) contended, “In administrator ‘controlled’ schools it is very unlikely that student performance will improve much because teachers are placed in a position of obedience and only teach what they are told to teach” (p. 155). Hence, it appears that *shared strategy* is more likely to result in student mastery, simply because it allows for more alternative approaches (Hoyle, 2007).

### **Leadership Theories**

Leadership theories are related to how principals’ leadership practices affect teachers’ perceptions in schools. A principal’s personal beliefs about specific leadership theories often govern the way he/she can and will relate to his/her teachers. The idea of what it means to lead has definitely changed (Gorton et al., 2007). For instance, “Stogdill’s definition emphasizes that leadership need not to be limited to one individual, such as the school administrator, and that the focus of leadership activities should be on increasing the performance effectiveness of the group” (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 5). However, leadership will differ from one person to another, but there is a need to understand how one’s leadership style will affect an individual’s performance.



In addition to understanding the definition provided by Stogdill, (1974), Gorton et al. (2007) explored Thomas Carlyle's (1888) *Great Man* theory. In addition, "Bennis writes that leadership is dispersed among Great Groups, not necessarily by formal rotation rules but by different group members assuming different types of leadership roles at different times and in different situations according to their individual abilities" (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 5). Understanding different theories could assist in examining how principals' leadership practices could ultimately affect teachers' perceptions in the rural public school district in western North Carolina.

According to recent research, Wagner (2009) indicated that Lewin et al.'s (1939) study identified leadership styles as authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic), and delegative (laissez-fair). Throughout the years, researchers added on additional theories that are linked to leadership styles which included (a) Great Man theory, (b) Trait theory, (c) Contingency theory, (d) Situational theory, (e) Behavioral theory, (f) Participative theory, (g) Management theory, and (h) Relationship theory (Wagner). Table 1 displays the researcher's connection of the eight major leadership theories as it is related to four currently widely practiced leadership styles: transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational.

Table 1

*Major Leadership Theories Connection to Leadership Styles*

Theory	Description	Related Leadership Style
Great Man	This theory focuses on the belief that a leader's characteristics are limited.	
Trait	This theory focuses on the belief that characteristics are also inherited.	
Contingency	This theory is related to the leader's personality and behavior. That behavior depends on the style needed for a particular situation.	Situational Leadership Style
Behavioral	The behavioral theory focuses on the belief that a leader's characteristics can be learned.	
Participative	The participative theory include the characteristics of sharing power during the decision-making process.	Instructional Leadership Style
Situational	This theory entails addressing a situation according to the needs of that situation.	Situational Leadership Style
Relational	Characteristics of this theory consist of the relationship of the follower and the leader. The leader wants to motivate their followers.	Transformational Leadership Style
Management	Characteristics of this particular theory include addressing the performance of individuals. Good performances lead to rewards and negative Performances lead to consequences.	Transactional Leadership Style

*Note.* The data from this table was constructed using information from Wagner (2009).

In addition, Table 1 identified the eight major leadership theories as described by Wagner (2009). Each of the theories has specific characteristics that describe the leaders in that specific category. Examining each leadership theory will show that several can be directly linked to the leadership practices focused in this research. Many of these theories are very similar to the transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational leadership styles.

The management leadership theory as described by Wagner (2009) is similar to

the transactional leadership style. Additionally, the management leadership style and the transactional leadership style are very similar; that is, the leader maintains control of his/her organization. Here, the leaders express specific expectations and the followers carry out those expectations. The overall goal is job performance. These leaders use the expectations provided to examine how well their followers are performing.

The relational leadership theory is similar to the transformational leadership style. The expected goals of the leader are the similarities between the relational leadership theory and the transformational leadership style. These leaders wish to ensure that their followers are comfortable and feel supported in their educational setting. In addition, these leaders constantly look for motivators to keep their followers enthused about working, which is essential. As evidence, prominent researchers indicated, “Such acknowledgement of teacher perspectives and experiences by school administration proved to be the most powerful force in bolstering teacher resiliency throughout the year: improved lived relationships; improved lived bodily experiences; heightened sense of overall teacher satisfaction” (Margolis & Nagel, 2006, p. 143). In fact, when leaders allow their teachers to feel inspired and excited about learning, they possess the ability to motivate their students to learn.

The instructional leadership style and the participative leadership theory have similar characteristics as discussed in this study. These leaders wish to provide their followers with the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process as it applies to the educational setting as well as they wish to participate in the classroom when possible. Additionally, these leadership styles focus on the idea that everyone can provide input during the decision-making process and that everyone can work together.

Finally, the situational and contingency leadership theories are related to the

situational leadership style with regard to principals' leadership practices effect on teachers' perceptions in public schools. In addition, situational and contingency leaders are similar due to the nature of the leader displaying flexibility. The leaders must be able to assess different issues and act accordingly. This leader must be able to continue to self-evaluate in order to meet the needs of his/her teachers.

According to Fullan (2008), "The Theory of Action envisions principals as the most critical resources in the professional guidance and instruction direction of the school" (p. 7). It seems that Fullan's Theory of Action expresses the overall importance of leadership in the educational setting. The foundation and the success of a school could possibly rely on the type of leadership support provided within the school setting.

The Theory of Action includes the following areas: (a) participation of low achieving schools, (b) networking in schools, (c) mentoring programs, (d) conferences, (e) strategy building, and (f) funding (Fullan, 2008). Furthermore, the idea of the Theory of Action appears to be focused on providing a support system for leaders and their schools. Under this theory, schools have the opportunity to work together and participate in forums that allow for additional professional development in numerous areas.

After examining several perspectives on leadership theories, Kowalski (2008) summarized principals as a mixture between being "leaders and managers" (p. 125). "Leadership primarily entails making or facilitating decisions focusing on what should be done to improve schools; collaborative visioning and strategic planning" (Kowalski, p. 125). On the other hand, Kowalski stated, "Management primarily entails making or facilitating decisions about how to implement improving initiatives; controlling and deploying human and material resources" (p. 125). Kowalski's idea of leadership as it applies to the teaching field would more likely be connected to the principal setting

expectations while ensuring teachers are meeting those expectations within the educational setting.

There are a vast number of theories surrounding leadership styles, of which many outline very specific characteristics of leadership. These theories can assist in understanding leadership in an educational organization. Further, this section explored several leadership theories, such as (a) Great Man theory, (b) Trait theory, (c) Contingency theory, (d) situational theory, (e) Behavioral theory, (f) Participative theory, (g) Management theory, and (h) Relationship theory. These leadership theories were connected to the following leadership styles: transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational. In addition to identifying leadership theories and their connection to specific leadership styles, the Theory of Action was also explored.

Research suggested a distinction between understanding principals as a mixture between being “leaders and managers” (Kowalski, 2008, p. 125). The main goal of a leader is deciding what needs to be done, whereas a manager’s main focus is on how to get those things done. In fact, a principal’s specific leadership style will depend on how much the principal emphasizes the leader aspect as well as the manager aspect.

Leadership styles will be examined further in the next section as it applies to the educational setting.

### **Application of Different Leadership Styles**

Nir and Kranot (2006) expressed, “One major source of influence on the internal content and on the work circumstances that individuals experience in organizational settings is the manager’s leadership style” (p. 207). Leadership styles demonstrate how well or effective leaders will be when relating to teachers. “In the educational realm, empirical evidence suggests that principals significantly influence teachers’ experiences

on the job, and their efforts through their leadership style” (Nir & Kranot, p. 207).

Hall and Hord (1987) identified three styles associated with principals as initiators, managers, or responders. Each leadership style expressed specific goals and expectations of their followers. “The initiator’s style was most successful, followed by the manager’s, while the responder’s style was least successful” (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 207). Gorton et al. (2007) further concluded that the initiator wants to ensure that everyone understands the given task and his/her expectations are high for everyone involved in the school. The manager wants to be clear on assisting in change as well as responding to individuals as needed. The responder is highly dependent on others within the school setting.

An examination of a principal’s influence on teacher perceptions in this study included the transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational leadership styles. Issues relating to leadership practices relating to teacher perceptions were also examined. In fact, in order to begin the process of understanding teacher perception and its relation to leadership practices, the characteristics of each leadership style was examined. Furthermore, the primary goal of each style was explored as well as the identification of the benefits and drawbacks of each of those leadership styles.

### **Transactional Leaders**

The first leadership style to be explored is the transactional leader. According to Stone and Patterson (2005), “In the late 1970’s, leadership theory research moved beyond focusing on various types of situational supervision as a way to incrementally improve organization performance” (p. 1). The focus was to examine leadership and how that leadership style would assist teachers within the educational organization. Moreover, Stone and Patterson indicated, “Research has shown that many leaders turned to a

transactional leadership theory, the most prevalent method of leadership still observed in today's organizations" (p. 1). In previous years, in order to meet the needs of the schools, leaders found that transactional leadership worked.

Today's researchers indicated, "Transactional educational leaders can and do offer jobs, security, tenure, favorable ratings, and more in exchange for the support, cooperation, and compliance of followers" (Owens & Valesky, 2007, p. 281). Judge and Piccolo's (2004) definition is very similar to Owens and Valesky's; that is, "Transactional leaders focus on the proper exchange of resources" (Piccolo, p. 755). In both definitions the recurring theme is the exchange of services for needs.

**Benefits of transactional leaders.** A benefit of the transactional leadership style is that the followers are fully aware of their leader's expectations. Bass, Avlio, Jung, and Berson (2003) contended, "Transactional contingent reward leadership clarifies expectations and offers recognition when goals are achieved" (p. 208). Therefore, clear expectations allow individuals to work towards those expectations. Thus, the benefit is having teachers knowingly act towards goals expected by their principals. In essence, teachers want to work; however, they also want to be acknowledged for that work.

In addition to the benefit of a leader having clear expectations, the transactional leader has the necessary skills to ensure his/her followers comply with expectations by offering something in return. Lontos (1992) reported, "Transactional leadership is sometimes called bartering" (p. 2). This leader provides incentive for a job well done by either praise or some other form.

**Drawbacks of transactional leadership.** Research suggested that in order for a transactional leader to be effective, there is a need for everyone to be fully aware of the goals and to accept those goals (Lontos, 1992). Thus, if a leader chooses to use the

transactional leadership style, he/she must be sure to take the time to educate all teachers; that is, his/her expectations must be clear and specific. Lontos's (1992) explanation of the transactional leader is very similar to Bass et al.'s (2003), which include the understanding and awareness of expectations. In addition, Lontos and Bass et al. suggested that followers must know, understand, and agree with the leader in order for transactional leadership to be effective.

All leaders must consider the motivational factor as another drawback of the transactional leader. According to Lontos (1992), "transactional leaders care about the subordinates following orders and getting the job done" (p. 2). A leader may have to find alternative strategies in order to relate to his/her followers if his/her primary concern is only that the followers are following orders. It is important that principals use a strategy that will create a positive working environment.

### **Transformational Leaders**

Along with understanding the transactional leader, the second leadership style to be explored is the transformational leader. First, it is important to understand the history behind the transformational model as it applies to leadership. Hallinger (2003) concluded, "Transformational leadership was first elucidated as a theory in the general leadership literature during the 1970's and 1980's" (p. 335). Transformational leadership started to become very accepted during the 1990s by educators (Hallinger). Lontos (1992) expressed, "The idea of transformational leadership was first developed by James McGregor Burns in 1978 and later extended by Bernard Bass as well as others" (p. 1).

Owens and Valesky (2007) indicated, "The transformational leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower" (p. 281). The transformational leader initially wants the followers to be



comfortable in the working environment unlike the transactional leader who uses a system where the rewards are contingent upon behavior; therefore, it appears the transformational leader's main goal in leading individuals is to strategize ways that increase satisfaction among those individuals. If followers are happy with their leader and work environment, they may be more likely to be motivated to do a better job.

Another perspective identified by Judge and Piccolo (2004) stated that "Transformational leaders offer a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses on higher order intrinsic needs" (p. 755). Leaders must ensure their followers understand their goals and how those goals will affect their job performance; therefore, if followers have a clear understanding with reasons, they are more likely to comply with those leaders' expectations.

**Benefits of transformational leaders.** A benefit of a transformational leader as expressed by Bass et al. (2003) stated, "They build personal and social identification among followers with the mission and goals of the leader and organization" (p. 209). There is a need to understand how transformation leaders relate with their followers. The transformational leader seems to be motivated by what the leader ultimately wants and needs from his/her followers. Thus, the transformational leader seems to want to connect with his/her followers. As a result, this type of leader keeps the end results in mind when working with his/her followers (Bass et al.).

Bass et al. (2003) found, "The followers' feelings of involvement, cohesiveness, commitment, potency, and performance are enhanced" (p. 209). This study identified several benefits of transformational leadership. One, the members feel a belonging to the group. Two, the nurturing of the idea that followers want to be in a specific work environment and are willing to work together to get the job done is fostered by this type

of leader. Therefore, if teachers have the opportunity to be heard or if teachers feel they are indeed part of a cooperating group, there is a possibility those teachers will want to perform better within their educational organization. Three, research suggested the transformational leader also promotes collaboration, professional growth, and often promotes problem-solving skills among the teachers (Liontos, 1992). Four, a transformational leader appears to be an ideal leader for first-year school teachers. According to these characteristics, Liontos (1992) further advocated collaboration is important in helping new teachers understand the curriculum and expectations. In addition, professional growth can also assist in providing new teachers with training and support needed in providing the opportunity for teacher growth and student achievement.

**Drawbacks of transformational leadership.** The transformational leader has drawbacks that should be explored as it pertains to the relationship of leaders and their followers. “Transformational leaders often have large amounts of enthusiasm which, if relentlessly applied, can wear out their followers” (Liontos, 1992, p. 3). Additionally, in this instance, the leader must learn to balance goals in order to avoid overwhelming his/her followers. If a leader is able to balance the wants and needs, the teachers will be able to follow with confidence.

Details of situations are sometimes overlooked by the transformational leader, partly due to this leader often focusing on the overall picture (Liontos, 1992). When details of situations are not fully examined by this leader, it may sometimes cause his/her followers not to fully understand the goals and expectations of this leader (Liontos, 1992). Furthermore, it is important that this leader, if he/she wants to be successful, assess his/her goals and expectations to ensure they are logical before presenting goals to the teachers.

## **Instructional Leaders**

According to Hallinger (2003), the “instructional leadership models emerged in the early 1980’s from early research on effective schools” (p. 329). The instructional model was based on curriculum and instruction (Hallinger). During the 1980s and 1990s, many began to think about effective leadership in schools (Hallinger). Curriculum and instruction are high focus areas for the instructional leader. “Instructional leadership focuses predominantly on the role of the school principal coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school” (Hallinger, p. 331). The instructional leader understands and works accordingly to meet the goals of academic standards. This leader can also identify with the needs of the teachers within the classroom setting.

Thus, the instructional leader can be explained as a leader who often focuses on ways to improve academic achievement for the students (Hallinger, 2003). The primary focus of this leader seems to be instruction and academic achievement; therefore, it appears leaders and teachers must work towards the same goals with regard to instruction under the instructional leadership style. In fact, the instructional leader fully understands the daily routine with respect to teachers and the classroom environment.

**Benefits of instructional leaders.** When examining the possible benefits of the instructional leadership style, one might advocate that this style allows leaders to understand the needs of the students from a curriculum standpoint. Hence, the instructional leader focuses on student academic achievement (Liontos, 1992). Academic achievement is a topic in which many educators are working towards improving within schools today; therefore, leaders must assist in ensuring the academic success of students. In addition, in order to ensure that students are being properly and academically prepared,

leaders can provide the necessary support and resources for teachers.

The ability to work with teachers as needed is another benefit of the instructional leader. The instructional leader has an in-depth understanding of the curriculum and instruction and enjoys working closely with his/her teacher (Hallinger, 2003). Thus, this leader understands teachers' abilities with regard to instruction (Hallinger, 2003).

**Drawbacks of instructional leadership.** Although the instructional leader focuses on the curriculum and academic needs of students, this leader sometimes fails to look at the total needs of teachers (Liontos, 1992). In order for a school to be successful, great effort must be placed on the needs of the teachers, students, and the educational organization as a whole. The leader must also look at other areas needing attention and not only assess the instructional aspect of education. For example, to effectively instruct their students, teachers need guidance, support, resources, and professional development.

An additional perspective on drawbacks of an instructional leader was identified by Hallinger (2003). Hallinger concluded, "The emergence of these leadership models indicated a broader dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model, which many believed focused too much on the principal as the center of expertise, power and authority" (p. 330). Due to the nature of the leader's role, teachers may not feel empowered. For instance, the leader facilitates the organization of the building, delegates tasks, and is also fully aware of instructional practices. Within the school setting, teachers must have an area that allows them to feel confident and competent. Consequently, the instructional leader may take away from those areas where a teacher needs to feel confident and empowered.

### **Situational Leaders**

According to Wagner (2009), the original leadership styles were identified by

Lewin et al. (1939). Wagner stated, “In 1939, a group of researchers led by psychologist Kurt Lewin set out to identify different styles of leadership. While further research has identified more specific types of leadership, this early study was very influential and established three major leadership styles” (p. 1). As previously stated, Lewin et al.’s (1939) study identified leadership styles as authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic), and delegative (laissez-fair) (Wagner). When dealing with the delegation of tasks, teacher interactions, and expectations, each leadership style interacts differently with followers. Graeff (1983) concluded, “Hersey and Blanchard (1969) developed a life cycle theory of leadership, which they later renamed the situational leadership theory” (p. 285).

One significant leadership style discussed in Lewin et al.’s (1939) research is currently associated with the situational leader as the authoritarian (autocratic) leader. The authoritarian-style leader focuses on decision making by indicating specific tasks that must be completed and identifies a deadline to complete those tasks (Wagner, 2009, p. 1). It appears that teachers must simply follow the guidelines set by this leader under the authoritarian style. Consequently, there does not appear to be much shared decision making under this type of leader.

Furthermore, the situational leader could be linked to the participative (democratic) leader. According to Wagner (2009), “Participative leaders encourage group members to participate, but retain the final say over the decision-making process” (p. 1). Teachers can feel a sense of value under the participative leader. The participative leader allows his/her teachers to be a part of the decision-making process, which provides teachers with an opportunity to be heard. “Lewin’s (1939) study found that participative (democratic) leadership is generally the most effective leadership style”

(Wagner, p. 1).

As indicated by Wagner (2009), Lewin et al.'s (1939) research also identified the delegative (laissez-fair) leader. Wagner concluded, "Delegative leaders offer little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to group members" (p. 1). Consequently, it appears that teachers under this leadership style are isolated. "While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, it often leads to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation" (Wagner, p. 1). In fact, ultimately this can lead to school-wide concerns for the leader, the teachers, the students, and the overall educational organization because there does not appear to be much support.

Although the delegative leader is an important component, the main component of the situational leadership theory is "the task-relevant maturity" (Graeff, 1983, p. 285). Graeff (1983) stated, "Subordinate task-relevant maturity is argued to consist of two factors-job maturity and psychological maturity" (p. 285). The first factor of subordinate task-relevant maturity includes job maturity, which is the degree to which a person can complete a job (Graeff). The second factor, psychological maturity, is identified as how much motivation an individual has that will assist in completing a job, while taking into consideration the individual's self-assurance about that job (Graeff).

Today, the situational leadership model is incorporated by four leadership styles (Kelley et al., 2005). The four leadership styles include "autocratic (telling), democratic (selling), encouraging and social (participating), laissez-fair style (delegating)" (Kelley, et al., 2005, p. 18). The difference between Lewin et al.'s (1939) original model and today's model indicates that the democratic style and participating style have been separated. Originally, the democratic leader and the participative leader were considered

one style, which was the participative (democratic) style according to Wagner (2009).

When examining the benefits and drawbacks of the situational-style leader, the characteristic of being flexible must be included. Kelley et al. (2005) contended, “Situational leaders must analyze the various skills, needs, and strengths of their faculty and respond to many divergent situations-appropriate response depends on the situation and circumstance” (p. 18). It appears a situational leader must adjust to the different issues accordingly within an educational setting. The role of the situational leader can appear complicated; however, this leader has the ability to properly assist in many circumstances during the workday.

**Benefits of situational leaders.** A situational leader has the ability to be flexible with his/her teachers. “A flexible leader uses a variety of different styles to solve situations; by contrast, the less flexible leader uses a limited number of styles to resolve most problems” (Kelley et al., 2005, p. 19). Within the educational setting, flexibility is a very important trait to have as a leader. A leader should be able to use different methods for approaching different situations because each school day is different.

A principal being able to relate to one or more of the following leadership styles is another benefit of the situational leader. This leader uses a variety of skills when working with different people and their personalities. Consequently, this leader may be considered a very personable leader. Fidler (1997) indicated, “One major breakthrough in conceptualizations of leadership has been the recognition that a contingent or situational approach is necessary. What is appropriate and likely to work will depend on a number of factors” (p. 23). As indicated, many of those factors will include the given situation as well as the individual’s personality. Each situation and individual must be able to be approached as needed by the situational leader.

**Drawbacks of situational leadership.** While the situational leader has the benefit of being flexible, this can also act as a drawback for this leader. The leader must be able to adjust to situations constantly during the day and must know when to implement a specific skill. Schermerhorn (1997) stated, “Yet, the evidence from research clearly indicates that there is no single all-purpose leadership style. Successful leaders are those who can adapt their behavior to meet the demands of their own unique situation” (p. 5). Problems within the educational setting can appear if a leader is unable to apply the appropriate skill. Thus, a leader must learn to be flexible and adjust accordingly to different circumstances which may occur.

The situational leader must also be comfortable with making those adjustments on a daily basis that include securing an identity as a leader. A leader may have a difficult time conveying his/her role to his/her followers if he/she is unable to secure an identity. If this leader does not understand who he/she is as a leader, neither will his/her followers. In addition, another drawback includes this leader becoming overwhelmed with all of the different situations, skills, and personalities without understanding his/her role and identity as a leader.

In reviewing the transactional, transformational, instructional, and situational leadership styles, the characteristics and history of each have been identified. Additionally, the benefits and drawbacks of each leadership style were explored. In essence, leadership styles differ in many aspects that involve the interactions between the leader and followers. Leadership styles influence a teacher’s overall outlook on his/her environment (Nir & Kranot, 2006). Goleman (1998, as cited in Kowalski, 2008) stated, “leadership styles reflect deeply held personal or organizational values” (p. 63). As a result, leaders must make significant efforts in understanding their beliefs and how those



beliefs will ultimately affect their teachers.

Table 2

*Summary of Leadership Styles*

Theory	Description
Transformational	Motivates followers Seeks to satisfy followers' needs Strategizes ways that increase satisfaction
Transactional	Offers jobs, security, and tenure Favorable ratings in exchange for the support, cooperation, and compliance of followers
Instructional	Focuses on ways to improve academic achievement, curriculum and instruction
Situational	Incorporates four leadership styles Autocratic (telling) Democratic (selling) Encouraging and social (participating) Laissez-fair (delegating) Must be flexible and analyze various needs of faculty

*Note.* Data from this table was obtained from the following: Hallinger (2003); Kelley et al. (2005); Owens and Valesky (2007).

### **The Leadership Practices Model**

Kouzes and Posner (2002) developed an outstanding model for leadership. Based on studies beginning in 1983, Kouzes and Posner (1995) developed the five practices of exemplary leadership. Within each practice, there are two commitments woven into a core theme. The premise was that, ultimately, leadership development was about the development of self; therefore, meeting the challenge of leadership was personal.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) built on their work from 1987 and published a second edition of *The Leadership Challenge* that was designed as a guide for leaders. The first edition, published in 1987, was a book based on survey research of more than 550 responses from middle-level and senior-level managers from public- and private-sector

organizations. For their new study, Kouzes and Posner condensed the survey to a two-page document and obtained responses from 780 managers. Furthermore, they conducted research involving 42 in-depth interviews with managers and nonmanagers from a variety of occupations.

After examining these *personal-best* experiences, Kouzes and Posner (1995) developed a quantitative instrument called “*The Leadership Practices Inventory*” (p. xxii). Initially, they surveyed over 3,000 leaders and their constituents to determine the extent to which these leaders exhibited these practices. The authors claimed to have expanded their database to over 10,000 leaders and 50,000 constituents.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) stated, “Leaders do exhibit certain distinct practices when they’re doing their best” (p. xxiii). They also contended that leadership behavior varied little from one discipline, profession, industry, community, and country to another; thus, “Good leadership is an understandable and a universal process” (Kouzes & Posner, p. xxiii). Kouzes and Posner began their initial research and surveys with business organizations. They then expanded their research to include a much broader base of leaders. Based on Kouzes’s and Posner’s research, if a leader wanted to get extraordinary results accomplished in his/her organization, then the leader was engaged in the five practices of exemplary leadership:

1. Model a way
2. Inspire a shared vision
3. Challenge the process
4. Enable others to act
5. Encourage the heart (p. 13)

**Model a way.** According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), to be an authentic leader

requires one to find his/her own voice. If a leader does not identify his/her own voice, they end up with a vocabulary belonging to another leader. For the leader to find his/her unique and individual voice, the leader engages in two essential practices: clarifying his/her values and expressing one's self (Kouzes & Posner).

**Commitment one.** Commitment one is to find one's voice by clarifying one's personal values. Jacoby (2004) stated that as key players in educating youth, leaders must not only strive for excellence in their work, but must also pursue that excellence in the character of their leadership. The terms morals, virtues, and ethics often are considered synonymous. People are looking every day at the leaders around them and noting how those leaders are affecting each person they contact, according to Jacoby.

**Commitment two.** Commitment two consists of modeling in a way to set an example for others in the organizations by aligning actions to shared visions. Basically, it is leaders doing what they say they will do (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Reilly (2005) stated 10 specific behaviors to help leaders practice *walking the talk*:

1. Practice acting with intention.
2. Practice grounding yourself by stating your vision and in a second sentence, practice aligning that vision with personal beliefs and values.
3. Practice surfacing your own beliefs by listening to the belief statement of others.
4. Practice connecting with others by giving your full attention to the speaker.
5. Practice your listening skills by observing what is not being verbalized.
6. Practice speaking with authenticity, a requisite for inspiring others, by taking time before important presentations or meetings to center yourself around your vision, values, and beliefs, as well as those of your audience. Remind

yourself that a leader comes from the heart, not just the head.

7. Practice connecting to the needs of your key constituents by making a list of what you think they value and prioritizing what you think is most important to them.
8. Practice maintaining integrity in your vision, values, and beliefs by periodically doing a self-audit. Ask yourself what actions have I taken to support my vision?
9. Practice courage by asking that some requests be put in writing.
10. Practice courage by negotiating time frames and conditions of satisfaction for completion of tasks. (pp. 20-27)

**Inspire a shared vision. Commitment three.** Commitment three is to envision the future and imagine the possibilities. Kouzes and Posner (1995) suggested that a leader use the technique of affirmations. According to the authors, this technique of a positive declaration is seeing the desired state as already existing. It is about being a futurist.

**Commitment four.** Commitment four includes bringing others on board with the common vision by appealing to what the leader and others aspire to have in common. This commitment involves the leader building relationships with followers and then drafting a common vision statement. Truby and Truby (2000, as cited by Kouzes & Posner, 2002) found in a study of the leadership characteristics of administrators in Christian schools that their LPI scores were similar to the norms except that the Inspire a Shared Vision scores were higher for Christian-school administrators than the norms reported by Kouzes and Posner (1995) in public schools.

**Challenge the process. Commitment five.** Commitment five is to search for

opportunities to change, grow, and improve in innovative ways. This involves creating meaningful challenges for others as the leader seeks out meaningful challenges for himself or herself (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). When there is positive rapport, trust, and respect between teachers and the principal, the likelihood of improved pedagogy and increased student achievement is almost assured (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

**Commitment six.** Commitment six urges leaders to become experimental. In a risk-free and safe environment, the leader also allows others to experiment. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), the leader should not be afraid to admit that he/she has made a mistake.

**Enable others to act. Commitment seven.** This commitment urges a fostering of collaboration through the building of trust and through the promotion of cooperative goals. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), the word *we* needs to be on the lips of the leader. It is about collaboration through trust with a leader being first to trust.

**Commitment eight.** Commitment eight involves strengthening those around the leader by the sharing of power and discretion. The leader should look for ways to bring enrichment to the jobs of those in the organization and also should be ready to offer visible support for others. The leader must be sure he/she allows the workplace to be a learning climate where people are better educated in order to enrich others' jobs. Kouzes and Posner (1995) explained, "Without education and coaching, people are reluctant to exercise their authority, in part out of fear of being punished for making mistakes" (pp. 307-308).

Evans (1996) coined the term *binary leadership* as a source of energy that emerged from the obligations and commitments that define teachers' and administrators' reciprocal role relationships. Evans said, "Principals and other designated leaders are

essential to schools working well” (p. 242). Evans elaborated,

There is always a powerful principal, someone with passion and presence (that is, someone with conviction and confidence, not necessarily flamboyance), someone who seems competent enough to make any system of governance work. In most cases, this principal was one of the co-creators of the school’s shared-decision-making and collaborative efforts. Some are more charismatic than others, some are better organized, and some hold more firmly a “first among equals” status. But I have never known, and cannot imagine, a school in which empowerment and participation flourish over time without a strong principal. (p. 242)

According to Evans, leadership that bubbles up and leadership that trickles down are both critical. Evans pointed out that leadership that maintains and sustains must have both; one or the other works for a time but does not endure.

Stevenson High School (2004) went through a reforming process that resulted in four principles that the students, faculty, and administration maintained were necessary to gain both smarter schools and smarter students. The principles were cooperation, responsibility, accountability, and empowerment. Empowering teachers contributed to increased motivation to work, ownership, and increased commitment. Teachers reported that when they felt like pawns rather than players who controlled their own behavior, they were likely to respond with reduced commitment, mechanical behavior, indifference, and even dissatisfaction and alienation. Collaborative cultures are designed to enhance empowerment among teachers; however, empowerment does not leave teachers or anyone else free to do whatever they please. Empowerment refers to obligation, duty, and accountability (Stevenson High School).

**Encourage the heart. Commitment nine.** Commitment nine embraces having

the leader recognize the contribution of others by sharing appreciation. Realizing that people rise to a leader's expectations, Kouzes and Posner (1995) pointed out that the leader needs to be a supporter of the Pygmalion concept. When people perform at exemplary levels, they need to receive public and creative recognition. A leader should demonstrate thanks and appreciation at every possible chance.

**Commitment ten.** Commitment ten is the leader leading the way in creating a spirit of community. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), he/she is a cheerleader and should find multiple ways to celebrate and reward exemplary actions of those in the organization. Claidia Byrd, director of Bristol Speedway Charities, took a lesson directly from Kouzes and Posner when she said, "I have a different yardstick to assess the impact we have made, I simply look into the faces of the thousands of children our organization has assisted rather than measuring by way of market share or bottom line profitability" (as cited by Bailey, 2005, p. 14).

Sergiovanni (2005) stated, "Strengthening the heartbeat of the organization is key to building a culture of leadership and learning" (p. 2). Kouzes and Posner (2003a) reported little significance in LPI scores between male and female respondents. All five practices were self-reported at approximately the same frequency. *Encourage the Heart*, a book about leadership practices, was reportedly read significantly more often by female managers than their male counter parts. Long's (1994) research (as cited by Kouzes and Posner, 2002) established that the LPI scores for female elementary school principals were self-reported as being higher than the scores of male elementary school principals. However, no significant relationships were found between the LPI scores and gender by other researchers using the LPI as reported by Kouzes and Posner (2002). In 1999, Randall found that females reported higher scores than did males (as cited by Kouzes &

Posner, 2002).

### **Summary**

Meyer and Slechta (2002) asked leaders to acknowledge that the most important asset in any organization was the people; therefore, leaders must put people first. Drucker (2001) agreed when he implied that management was about people and that a leader's task was to create performance by playing effectively on a person's strengths so that the weaknesses were irrelevant. Recent research concluded that teachers felt satisfied when their leader was positive and supportive (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Also, teachers desired to participate in the decision-making process and wished to be valued as worthy individuals within their educational organization. In addition, the leadership style often dictates the type of relationship developed between the principal and the teacher. Furthermore, trust between leaders and teachers are factors in determining if the relationship is positive or negative (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Teachers need to be comfortable in their workplace and desire the necessary tools and resources to effectively teach.

Amundson (1993) portrayed school principals as having tremendous responsibility for educating future leaders and described this as a daunting task. The review of literature showed that as public pressures continue to grow, educators are asked to function with fewer and fewer resources, and principals are faced with more responsibility to educate an increasingly diverse student population while at the same time are expected to solve the ills of society within the school walls. It was clear that the level of stress continues to increase for the principals of the 21st century from the review of literature. Most local school districts and principals are aware of the stress of leading a



school unit and the need to take proactive action to reduce the possible negative effects of stress. As Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggested, it is important for future educational leaders to develop self-knowledge so as to be the effective leaders that children need and deserve.

In addition, literature reviewed in this chapter explored several leadership theories that described characteristics associated with leaders. Furthermore, the literature in this study examined theorists Lewin et al. (1939) and their classification of the authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic), and delegative (laissez-fair) theories (Wagner, 2009). Also, the eight major leadership theories were identified as the following: (a) Great Man theory, (b) Trait theory, (c) Contingency theory, (d) Situational theory, (e) Behavioral theory, (f) Participative theory, (g) Management theory, and (h) Relationship theory. Moreover, the characteristics of each of these theories were explored and connected to the transactional, transformation, instructional, and situational leadership styles.

As previously indicated, John Maxwell (1998) stated, “Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less” (p. 17). A very important factor in understanding the goals of specific leadership practices is influence. A principal’s influence can have either a positive or negative impact on followers. Teachers’ perceptions, as well as principals’ perceptions, are key factors in the success of schools which should be addressed. In addition to a principal’s influence on his/her followers, a principal’s influence impacts students. Fullan (2008) found that student learning is impacted by the leader’s ability to foster supportive conditions, effective instruction, and learning. Further, Nettles and Herrington (2007) concluded, “Effective educational leadership makes a difference in improving learning; there is nothing new or especially controversial about this idea” (p.

275). Thus, student learning can be achieved through effective leadership; however, it will take hard work, dedication, and ongoing communication between school principals and teachers.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to investigate K-12 teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices and the principals' perceptions of their leadership practices in a small rural school district in western North Carolina. A principal's perceptions of his/her leadership practices, as well as the teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices, is one of the growing issues principals are faced with today in the field of education. These perceptions could impact all involved individuals and could be a dilemma for the principals, teachers, and students. It is vital that these perceptions are addressed in order to ensure the success of today's educational organizations. One of the primary factors affecting this small rural public school district may include the leadership practices of the principals. In addition, principals must address the requirements of NCLB, which indicates teachers must be considered highly qualified and all students must be proficient in reading and math by the school year 2013-2014; therefore, perceptions of leadership practices are relevant to the success of schools, and principals must begin to understand how their specific leadership practices affect the schools they lead.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research hypotheses, research methodology, and research design. In addition, Chapter 3 identifies the population, sampling procedure, and instrumentation used in this study. Finally, this section discusses the validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, and ethical considerations of this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is not known to what extent a difference exists between principals' perceptions

of their own leadership practices and kindergarten through twelfth-grade teachers' observed perceptions of their principals' leadership practices of a small rural school district in western North Carolina. The problem in this study addressed factors that affected teacher perceptions, that is, their satisfaction, morale, and principals' leadership practices in the workplace. In addition to principals' leadership practices affecting the overall perceptions of teachers, they could also affect highly qualified teachers staying within an educational organization. Researchers have expressed that leaders and followers relate in ways that allow the leader to trigger motivation, obtain individual commitment, establish a functional working environment, and facilitate the necessary work needed at the workplace (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Principals' perceptions and teachers' perceptions continue to be a concern that should be addressed by principals as a way of improving the success of teachers and ultimately the learning environment for students in their educational organization.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as measured by Kouzes-Posner norms of the Leadership Practices Inventory?
2. What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between elementary school, K-8 schools, middle school, and high school principals and teachers as a function of school level?
3. What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as a function of the principals' gender?

## **Research Methodology**

A quantitative study was chosen to examine teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices and the principals' perceptions of their leadership practices. A quantitative study was chosen to allow for a large sampled population to be studied using statistical analysis. According to Creswell (2008), "In statistics, quantitative research has emerged from 19th century ideas of correlating and relating two or more ideas" (p. 47). Williams (2007) stated, "Researchers typically select the quantitative approach to respond to research questions requiring numerical data" (p. 65). The relating themes in this study included principals' perceptions of their leadership practices and the teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices. Similarly, Lowe (2010) conducted a quantitative study to determine teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership practices in high-poverty Title I schools. In Lowe's study, he found teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership practices were more directive than supportive, which resulted in a closed school climate. The use of a quantitative research study also allowed for an analysis of many teachers as well as the examination of several leaders. In fact, Creswell concluded,

In quantitative research, describing a trend means that the research problem can be answered best by a study in which the researcher seeks to establish the overall tendency of responses from individuals and to note how this tendency varies among people. (p. 51)

Among the 12 research sites, it was important to analyze how principals perceived their own leadership practices as well as how the principals are perceived by their teachers. These research sites were selected for their accessibility and teacher and principal diversity; therefore, a quantitative research study was the most appropriate for

this study.

### **Research Design**

This research incorporated a comparative research design. With the need to examine the possible association between different variables, a comparative research design was selected as the most appropriate design. Creswell (2008) concluded, “In comparative research designs, investigators measure the degree of association between two or more variables or set of scores” (p. 356). This study examined the associations that existed between the demographic survey and the Self and Observer LPI scores. According to Creswell, there are “procedures in quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of a large group of people” (p. 61). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) added,

The purpose of a survey is to use questionnaires to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the general findings of the data analysis can be generalized. This emphasis on population generalization is characteristic of quantitative research. (p. 222)

In order to obtain the data needed, surveys were used to examine the perceptions of teachers and principals in a rural public school district in western North Carolina.

Additionally, another study proven to have been successful in implementing comparative research design included Waters et al. (2003), *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tell Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement*. This particular study examined data on leadership practices and the association with student achievement. As a result, it was most appropriate to use a comparative research design for this study. Specifically, this study examined the association of teachers’

perceptions of their principals' leadership practices and the principals' perceptions of their leadership practices in a rural public school district in western North Carolina for the academic school year 2012-2013.

### **Population**

The population studied was certified teachers and principals from traditional public schools of the school district. The sample consisted of teachers from three high schools, two middle schools, three K-8 schools, and four elementary schools in a small rural school system in western North Carolina. Those who participated included 207 teachers along with 11 building head principals.

### **Instrumentation**

The survey instruments used for gathering the data for the research consisted of the following: a demographic survey and the LPI Self and Observer developed by James Kouzes and Barry Posner. As indicated by Simon and Francis (2001), "Questionnaires or surveys are perhaps the most frequently used instruments for gathering data on population variables" (p. 54). With over 18 years of research that has included 4,000 cases and over 200,000 surveys, the 2003 LPI is based upon the latest findings of Kouzes and Posner (2003a).

**Demographic survey.** The demographic survey was a brief paper-based survey used to obtain background information about the participants (see Appendices A and B). The survey collected data on each participant's gender, age, educational/degree level, and years at school/position. The demographic survey took less than 2 minutes to complete.

**Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI).** The LPI is a paper-based survey which was used to measure leadership behaviors within schools. Data were collected from all willing teachers and principals to determine the leadership practices of the principals in

the rural public school district in western North Carolina. An analysis was made using the LPI (Self and Observer) instrument. The purpose of the LPI was to allow the teachers and principals to identify specific behaviors exhibited in the areas related to the five practices of exemplary leadership. The five leadership practices are (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage the Heart.

“The Leadership Practices Inventory was developed through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods and studies” (Wiley, 2002, p. 1). In addition, Wiley (2002) indicated:

The LPI was created by developing a set of statements describing each of the various leadership actions and behaviors. Each statement was originally cast on a five-point Likert scale and reformulated in 1999 into a more robust and sensitive ten-point Likert scale. (p. 3)

The LPI was designed to give participants an opportunity to describe their leader’s practices and behavior, as well as to allow leaders to identify their own leadership practices in an organization.

**LPI response coding.** The LPI is a 30-item instrument. Each statement in the LPI is scored on a 10-point scale as follows (Kouzes & Posner, 2003b): (1) almost never do what is described in the statement, (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 do what is described in the statement. The LPI takes an average of 10 minutes to complete. As elaborated on the Observer Form of the LPI, the items on the survey that measure each of the five leadership practices are shown in Table 3.



Table 3

*Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Dimensions and Related Statements*

Dimension	Statement Item and Description
Model the Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others</li> <li>6. Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards they have agreed on</li> <li>11. Follows through on the promises and commitments that he/she makes</li> <li>16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance</li> <li>21. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization</li> <li>26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership</li> </ul>
Inspire a Shared Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done</li> <li>7. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like</li> <li>12. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future</li> <li>17. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision</li> <li>22. Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish</li> <li>27. Speaks with a genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work</li> </ul>
Challenge the Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Seeks out challenging opportunities that tests his/her own skills and abilities</li> <li>8. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work</li> <li>13. Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do</li> <li>18. Asks, "what can we learn?" when things don't go as expected</li> <li>23. Makes certain that we set achievable goals, makes concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on</li> <li>28. Experiments and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure</li> </ul>
Enable Others to Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with</li> <li>9. Actively listens to diverse points of view</li> <li>14. Treats others with dignity and respect</li> <li>19. Supports the decisions that people make on their own</li> <li>24. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work</li> <li>29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves</li> </ul>
Encourage the Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Praises people for a job well done</li> </ul>

(continued)

Dimension	Statement Item and Description
	10. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities 15. Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects 20. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values 25. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments 30. Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions

Self and Observer forms of the LPI were used in this study. Each leadership practice has a potential scoring range of 6-60.

### **Validity**

**LPI validity.** When selecting an instrument to use in this study, it was important to select an instrument that would properly measure teachers' perceptions as well as the leaderships' perceptions of behaviors and practices. "Given that the items on the LPI are related to the statements that workshop participants generally make about their own or others' personal-best leadership experiences, respondents have found the LPI to have excellent face validity" (Wiley, 2002, p. 14). The LPI is a valid instrument to use in this study on the perceptions of principals' leadership practices in a rural public school district in western North Carolina. The LPI has been used to measure behaviors and practices of leaders within several areas where leadership is present and has been used extensively in academic settings (Wiley, 2002). Extensive research has been conducted on the LPI. Prominent researchers who have used the LPI to collect data on perceived leadership practices are as follows: Leech and Fulton (2008); Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson, and Jinks (2007); and Stout-Stewart (2005).

The validity of an instrument should measure what the researcher intends to

measure. According to Wiley (2002), “Validation studies that we, as well as other researchers, have conducted over a fifteen-year period consistently confirm the reliability and validity of the Leadership Practices Inventory and the Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders model” (p. 2). Simon and Francis (2001) stated, “Validity refers to the extent to which measurements achieve the purpose for which they are designed” (p. 58). The LPI allows teachers and principals to identify the principals’ leadership practices, which was the goal of this study. The LPI has been established in many different types of studies that represent ongoing examples of construct and concurrent validity (Wiley). Therefore, the LPI is an excellent instrument to measure how leadership practices are perceived by teachers and principals within the small rural school district in western North Carolina.

### **Reliability**

**LPI reliability.** Reliability of the LPI consisted of using test-retest reliability and is highly correlated within each scale in the LPI (Wiley, 2002). As shown in Table 4, both the Self and Observer forms of the LPI show good internal reliability with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from .75 to .92. The means and standard deviations for each of the five leadership practices from the Kouzes-Posner study are shown in Table 5.

Table 4

*Kouzes and Posner Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the Self and Observer Forms*

Leadership Practices	Self	Observer
Model the Way	.77	.88
Inspire a Shared Vision	.87	.92
Challenge the Process	.80	.89
Enable Others to Act	.75	.88
Encourage the Heart	.87	.92

Table 5

*Kouzes and Posner Means and Standard Deviations for the Self and Observer Forms*

Leadership Practices	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the Way		
Self	47.02	7.10
Observer	47.53	8.54
Inspire a Shared Vision		
Self	44.34	8.79
Observer	42.06	10.61
Challenge the Process		
Self	46.12	7.22
Observer	44.41	9.18
Enable Others to Act		
Self	49.40	6.42
Observer	47.87	8.47
Encourage the Heart		
Self	47.06	8.20
Observer	44.94	10.21

According to Wiley (2002), "There is a tendency for the reliability coefficients

from the LPI-Self (between .75 and .87) to be somewhat lower than those for the LPI-Observer (ranging between .88 and .92)” (p. 6). As indicated by Simon and Francis (2001), “Reliability provides an estimate of how well measurement reflect true (non-random) differences” (p. 58). The LPI contains items, each of which describes a specific way in which a leader may behave. The participant indicates the frequency with which he/she perceives engagement in those behaviors with relation to his/her organization. The goal of this study was to investigate teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ leadership practices and the principals’ perceptions of their leadership practices in a small rural school district in western North Carolina, which was accomplished through the use of the LPI.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Upon receipt of approval from Gardner-Webb University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and written consent from the local school district superintendent where this study took place, a research site request letter was sent to each of the principals in the participating schools: School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, School F, School G, School H, School I, School J, School K, and School L. This letter requested site approval as well as informed each principal of the intent and purpose of this study. Once the researcher received site approvals to conduct research, the researcher sent a research packet to the school via district courier. The research packet included a cover letter (see Appendices C and D) that explained the research purpose, assured the participants that their participation was voluntary, and assured the participants complete anonymity; participation consent form (see Appendix E); demographic surveys (see Appendices A and B); and the LPI (Self and Observer form) (see Appendices F and G). In addition, the principals had the opportunity to distribute information about the study

and research procedures to potential participants. The researcher then scheduled time to report to the local schools, which did not interfere with instructional time such as afterschool, staff meetings, and lunch time. During the scheduled reporting time to the local schools, the researcher provided volunteer participants the opportunity to participate in this study as well as obtained the proper written consent. Participants read and signed the informed consent forms. In addition, the researcher answered questions pertaining to this study.

The researcher asked the participants to complete a demographic survey and the LPI during this time. Data collection took place in the 12 selected schools over a period of 3 weeks. The first week of data collection was dedicated to informing participants about the study via research announcements, signing up, informed consents forms, and distribution of the surveys to teachers who wished to participate in this study. The second week of data collection was dedicated to additional time needed for completion of surveys and scheduling of an additional time to return to specific research sites as needed. The third week of data collection was dedicated to concluding the data collection period by answering additional participants' questions.

During the entire research process, the researcher used strict confidentiality. All identifying information was removed from any materials with individual participants' information. Furthermore, the researcher maintained privacy and confidentiality by removing the names of individuals and schools. The researcher identified the research sites as School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, School F, School G, School H, School I, School J, School K, and School L. This study respected the research sites by following the guidelines as outlined with the respect of conducting research in public schools.

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis procedures for this study consisted of descriptive and inferential procedures. Descriptive statistics allow a researcher to examine and compile data using several participants in a study. Inferential procedures allow a researcher to conduct comparisons and tests of data gathered from an unknown population (Creswell, 2008). Furthermore, “We assess whether the difference of groups (their means) or the relationship among variables is much greater or less than what we would expect for the total population, if we could study the entire population” (Creswell, 2008, p. 190).

**Descriptive procedures.** For this study, Univariate descriptive statistics were used. For continuous variables, means and standard deviations were calculated. For categorical/nominal variables, frequencies and percentages were calculated.

**Inferential procedures.** The type of inferential statistics used was based on the research question. Research Question 1 was analyzed using t tests for independent means. Research Question 2 was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA. In the event the ANOVA was statistically significant, the Tukey HSD post hoc test was used to determine which means were different. Research Question 3 was analyzed with a t test for independent means.

## **Ethical Considerations**

This study respected the rights of participants by making clear that participation was strictly voluntarily. All participants were required to read and sign informed consent forms. The data collected for this study were used for the sole purpose in which they were intended, which was to examine the perception of leadership practices of the principals of a small rural school district in western North Carolina. This study respected the research sites by following the guidelines as outlined with respect of conducting

research in public schools. In addition to maintaining confidentiality, the data obtained in this study was reported in an honest and ethical manner as outlined by Gardner-Webb University.

### **Summary**

This quantitative study addressed teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices and the principals' perceptions of their leadership practices in a rural public school district in western North Carolina. The population consisted of 11 building lead principals and 207 certified teachers from 12 public schools in a small rural school system in western North Carolina. This study used the following instruments: a demographic survey and the LPI (Self and Observer). A letter was sent to the principals and teachers to inform participants of the intent and purpose of this study. The proper informed consent forms were obtained and participants were educated on their rights regarding this study. The data source consisted of descriptive and inferential procedures that reported on the perceptions of the teachers and principals on principals' leadership practices in rural public schools in a district in western North Carolina.



## Chapter 4: Data Collection and Analysis

### Introduction

“There are no mistakes, only lessons. Growth is a process of experimentation, a series of trials, errors, and occasional victories. The failed experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiments that work” (Carter-Scott, 1998, p. 33).

The purpose of this study was to compare the differences of teachers’ perceptions and principals’ perceptions of principals’ leadership practices. The five exemplary leadership practices and 10 commitments of exemplary leadership of a principal that this study focused on were:

1. Model the Way
  - a. Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.
  - b. Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.
2. Inspire a Shared Vision
  - a. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.
  - b. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
3. Challenge the Process
  - a. Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve.
  - b. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes.
4. Enable Others to Act
  - a. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.
  - b. Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.
5. Encourage the Heart
  - a. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
  - b. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

Kouzes and Posner (2003a) translated the actions that make up the five practices of exemplary leadership into behavioral statements so that managers and nonmanagers across both private and public organizations could assess their skills and use this

feedback to improve their leadership abilities (Kouzes & Posner). This translation turned into the LPI, which has been called “the most reliable leadership development instrument available today” (Kouzes & Posner).

A total of 207 certified public school teachers and 11 certified public school principals participated in this study. The objective of Chapter 4 is to analyze the data and address the research questions through the use of the following surveys: demographic survey and LPI. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What perceived differences of the principals’ leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as measured by Kouzes-Posner norms of the Leadership Practices Inventory?

2. What perceived differences of the principals’ leadership practices exist between elementary school, K-8 schools, middle school, and high school principals and teachers as a function of school level?

3. What perceived differences of the principals’ leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as a function of the principals’ gender?

A comparative study was selected as the most appropriate research methodology to examine the differences between teachers’ perceptions and principals’ perceptions of the principals’ leadership practices in a small rural school district in western North Carolina. The results of this study are presented using an explanation of the descriptive data. The next section depicts the data analysis, followed by the results section. The final section presents the summary of Chapter 4.

### **Descriptive Data**

A form to gather demographics was completed by each principal and teacher who volunteered to participate in the study (see Appendices A and B). Demographic data

were reported concerning each respondent's gender, age, highest educational level, and year highest degree was earned, whether the respondent was currently working on a higher degree and, if so, which degree, total years of experience, and number of years in current position.

There are 12 elementary, K-8, middle, and high schools within the small rural school district located in western North Carolina. The populations consisted of 290 teachers and 12 principals. From the pool of teachers, 207 responses were received along with 11 responses from principals. The overall response rate for teachers was 70% and the principals' response rate was 92%.

Table 6 shows the number and percentage of each type of school included in the study.

Table 6

*Type of School*

Type of School	<i>N</i>	%
Elementary School	4	33.33
K-8 School	3	25.0
Middle School	2	16.67
High School	3	25.0
Total	12	100.0

Table 7 shows gender by percentage of the principals and teachers participating in the study.

Table 7

*Principal and Teacher Gender*

Gender	Principals		Teachers	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Male	7	63.6	36	17.4
Female	4	36.4	171	82.6

As indicated in Table 7, 63.6% of the principals were male, whereas 17.4% of teachers were male; 36.4% of the principals were female, whereas 82.6% of teachers were female.

The number and percentages for the highest degree earned for both principals and teachers are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

*Principal and Teacher Highest Degree Earned*

Degree	Principals		Teachers	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Bachelor's	0	0.0	111	53.6
Master's	8	72.7	89	42.9
Ed Specialist	3	27.3	5	2.5
Doctorate	0	0.0	2	1.0
Total	11	100.0	207	100.0

No principals indicated they were currently working on a graduate degree in

education. Almost 11% ( $N = 22$ ) of teachers indicated they were currently working on a graduate degree in education. Of these 22 teachers, 17 (77.3%) stated they were currently working on a master's degree, while one (4.5%) was working on a specialist degree, and four (18.2%) were working on a doctorate.

Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics for principals' and teachers' age, number of years in current position, and the total number of years in position.

Table 9

*Principal and Teacher Age and Years of Experience*

	Principals			Teachers		
	Category	<i>N</i>	%	Category	<i>N</i>	%
Age	21-25	0	0.0	21-25	10	4.9
	26-30	0	0.0	26-30	23	11.4
	31-35	0	0.0	31-35	26	12.9
	36-40	1	9.0	36-40	35	17.3
	41-45	2	18.2	41-45	28	13.9
	46-50	4	36.5	46-50	29	14.4
	51-55	3	27.3	51-55	22	10.9
	56-60	1	9.0	56-60	20	9.9
	60+	0	0.0	60+	9	4.4
Years in Current Position	<1-5	10	91.0	<1-5	107	51.7
	6-10	1	9.0	6-10	48	23.2
	11-15	0	0.0	11-15	19	9.2
	16-20	0	0.0	16-20	15	7.2
	21-25	0	0.0	21-25	12	5.8
	26-30	0	0.0	26-30	5	2.4
	30+	0	0.0	30+	1	0.5
Years Total in Position	<1-5	7	63.7	<1-5	43	20.8
	6-10	4	36.3	6-10	46	22.2
	11-15	0	0.0	11-15	37	17.9
	16-20	0	0.0	16-20	33	16.0
	21-25	0	0.0	21-25	21	10.1
	26-30	0	0.0	26-30	17	8.2
	30+	0	0.0	30+	10	4.8

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for principals' self-reported leadership practices (Self) and their teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices

(Observer) are shown in Table 10. The reliability coefficients were all within an acceptable range, ranging from .70 to .97.

Table 10

*Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients for Principals and Teachers*

Leadership Practice	Principals	Teachers
Model the Way	.92	.92
Inspire a Shared Vision	.95	.92
Challenge the Process	.97	.93
Enable Others to Act	.70	.91
Encourage the Heart	.95	.93

**Research Question 1**

What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as measured by Kouzes-Posner norms of the Leadership Practices Inventory?

Table 11 shows the descriptive statistics for the principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study and the Kouzes-Posner norms for these five leadership practices.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and the Kouzes-Posner Norms*

Leadership Practice	Principals		Kouzes and Posner Norms	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the Way	48.18	10.28	47.02	7.10
Inspire a Shared Vision	44.92	12.17	44.34	8.79
Challenge the Process	42.82	13.70	46.12	7.22
Enable Others to Act	50.19	8.27	49.40	6.42
Encourage the Heart	45.36	13.23	47.06	8.20

Table 12 shows the descriptive statistics for the teachers' observer-reported leadership practices of the principals in the current study and the Kouzes-Posner norms for these five leadership practices.

Table 12

*Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices and the Kouzes-Posner Norms*

Leadership Practice	Teachers		Kouzes and Posner Norms	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the Way	47.12	11.79	47.53	8.54
Inspire a Shared Vision	46.55	11.15	42.06	10.61
Challenge the Process	45.74	11.31	44.41	9.18
Enable Others to Act	49.98	10.36	47.87	8.47
Encourage the Heart	48.57	11.55	44.94	10.21

Table 13 shows the one sample t-test results for principals' self-reported leadership practices and the Kouzes-Posner norms.

Table 13

*t Tests for Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and the Kouzes-Posner Norms*

Leadership Practice	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Model the Way	.37	.358
Inspire a Shared Vision	.16	.439
Challenge the Process	-.80	.221
Enable Others to Act	.32	.379
Encourage the Heart	-.43	.340

The one sample t-test results in Table 13 show that there was no significant difference between the principals in the current study and the Kouzes and Posner norms for all five leadership practices. Table 14 shows the one sample t-test results for the teachers observer-reported leadership practices and the Kouzes-Posner norms.

Table 14

*t Tests for Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices and the Kouzes-Posner Norms*

Leadership Practice	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Model the Way	-.50	.309
Inspire a Shared Vision	5.83	1.275
Challenge the Process	1.68	.046*
Enable Others to Act	2.93	.002*
Encourage the Heart	4.54	5.171

*Note.* \* significant at the .05 level.

The one sample t-test results in Table 14 show that there was no significant difference between teachers in the current study and the Kouzes and Posner norms for the leadership practice of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, and Encourage the Heart;



however, there was a significant difference for Challenge the Process and a significant difference for the leadership practice Enable Others to Act.

Table 15 shows the descriptive statistics for school level principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 15

*Descriptive Statistics for School Level Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Principals				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>M</i>	53.00	55.00	53.00	50.00	59.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B	<i>M</i>	52.00	52.00	51.00	52.00	51.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
C	<i>M</i>	48.00	52.00	48.00	51.00	39.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
D	<i>M</i>	51.00	46.00	46.00	52.00	50.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
E	<i>M</i>	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	57.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	<i>M</i>	49.00	39.00	33.00	48.00	46.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
G*	<i>M</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	<i>SD</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
H	<i>M</i>	42.00	40.00	35.00	47.00	30.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
I	<i>M</i>	55.00	49.00	51.00	54.00	54.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
J	<i>M</i>	44.00	43.00	39.00	45.00	40.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
K	<i>M</i>	25.00	19.00	13.00	39.00	20.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
L	<i>M</i>	51.00	39.00	42.00	52.00	53.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

*Note.* \* The principal from School G chose not to participate in the study.

Table 16 shows the descriptive statistics for school level teachers' observer-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 16

*Descriptive Statistics for School Level Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Model the Way	Teachers			
			Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>M</i>	41.90	45.63	44.22	46.80	49.96
	<i>SD</i>	12.59	11.85	11.68	11.58	10.48
B	<i>M</i>	50.28	54.29	50.99	53.72	52.43
	<i>SD</i>	9.05	6.74	10.04	7.44	8.60
C	<i>M</i>	41.00	40.91	41.09	45.82	45.53
	<i>SD</i>	12.43	11.33	10.15	10.02	11.89
D	<i>M</i>	55.51	55.02	53.90	56.89	52.88
	<i>SD</i>	5.58	6.05	7.09	4.35	11.56
E	<i>M</i>	52.81	49.44	47.31	51.43	50.26
	<i>SD</i>	8.57	10.79	12.82	9.42	10.36
F	<i>M</i>	51.90	48.71	49.95	52.00	52.24
	<i>SD</i>	7.52	7.46	7.54	9.07	7.58
G	<i>M</i>	55.84	52.43	51.86	55.86	54.43
	<i>SD</i>	5.70	6.80	7.13	5.51	7.46
H	<i>M</i>	44.77	45.06	42.77	49.00	43.95
	<i>SD</i>	9.53	10.44	10.16	8.78	11.43
I	<i>M</i>	48.57	48.38	47.51	52.32	53.39
	<i>SD</i>	12.37	11.15	11.36	9.11	8.61
J	<i>M</i>	42.39	44.13	42.79	45.22	44.38
	<i>SD</i>	13.29	10.97	11.97	12.35	12.66
K	<i>M</i>	48.68	46.01	45.45	52.44	51.11
	<i>SD</i>	9.15	9.43	8.55	5.72	8.02
L	<i>M</i>	49.63	45.53	45.53	52.26	47.93
	<i>SD</i>	10.08	11.96	11.70	9.39	13.09

Table 17 shows the one sample t-test results for school level principals' self-reported leadership practices and the teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 17

*t* Tests for School Level Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and the Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices

School		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>t</i>	-4.83	-4.33	-4.12	-1.51	-4.72
	<i>p</i>	2.04	8.09	1.45	0.07	2.73
B	<i>t</i>	-0.50	0.90	-0.00	0.61	0.44
	<i>p</i>	0.32	0.20	0.50	0.28	0.38
C	<i>t</i>	-2.64	-4.59	-3.19	-2.42	2.58
	<i>p</i>	0.01*	7.91	0.00*	0.01*	0.01*
D	<i>t</i>	2.27	4.22	3.15	3.18	0.70
	<i>p</i>	0.03*	0.00*	0.01*	0.01*	0.25
E	<i>t</i>	-3.36	-3.91	-3.96	-3.64	-2.60
	<i>p</i>	0.00*	6.90	6.30	0.00*	0.01*
F	<i>t</i>	1.59	5.37	9.27	1.85	3.39
	<i>p</i>	0.07	3.15	3.91	0.04*	0.00*
G**	<i>t</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	<i>p</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
H	<i>t</i>	1.20	2.00	3.15	0.94	5.03
	<i>p</i>	0.12	0.03*	0.00*	0.18	6.13
I	<i>t</i>	-2.08	-0.22	-1.23	-0.74	-0.28
	<i>p</i>	0.03*	0.41	0.12	0.24	0.39
J	<i>t</i>	-0.59	0.50	1.55	0.09	1.69
	<i>p</i>	0.28	0.31	0.07	0.47	0.05*
K	<i>t</i>	7.76	8.59	11.39	7.05	11.64
	<i>p</i>	2.71	1.30	1.60	5.36	1.35
L	<i>t</i>	-0.79	3.18	1.76	0.16	-2.26
	<i>p</i>	0.22	0.00*	0.04*	0.44	0.02*

Note. \* significant at the .05 level; \*\* The principal of School G chose not to participate in the study.

The one sample t-test results in Table 17 show that there was no significant difference between principals and teachers in the current study for the five leadership practices for Schools A, B, and K. Schools C and D both have a significant difference in

four of the five leadership practices, with School C having no significant difference for the leadership practice Inspire a Shared Vision and School D having no significant difference for the leadership practice of Encourage the Heart.

Schools E and L both had a significant difference in three of the five leadership practices. School E showed a significant difference for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. School L showed a significant difference for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

Schools F and H both had a significant difference in only two leadership practices. The two leadership practices that had a significant difference for School F were Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart. Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process are the two leadership practices that showed a significant difference for School H.

Schools I and J showed a significant difference in one leadership practice. Model the Way and Encourage the Heart are the two leadership practices, respectively.

## **Research Question 2**

What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between elementary school, K-8 schools, middle school, and high school principals and teachers as a function of school level?

Table 18 shows the descriptive statistics for elementary, K-8, middle, and high school principals' self-reported leadership practices.

Table 18

*Descriptive Statistics for Elementary, K-8, Middle, and High School Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

Leadership Practice	Principal Level	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the Way	Elementary	3	51.00	3.73
	K-8	3	54.50	7.77
	Middle	2	48.50	9.19
	High	3	40.00	14.24
Inspire a Shared Vision	Elementary	3	51.25	8.00
	K-8	3	49.50	14.86
	Middle	2	44.50	6.37
	High	3	33.66	13.16
Challenge the Process	Elementary	3	49.50	5.32
	K-8	3	46.50	19.11
	Middle	2	43.00	11.31
	High	3	31.34	16.59
Enable Others to Act	Elementary	3	51.25	3.54
	K-8	3	54.00	8.48
	Middle	2	50.50	9.20
	High	3	45.33	9.04
Encourage the Heart	Elementary	3	49.75	9.45
	K-8	3	51.70	7.79
	Middle	2	42.00	16.97
	High	3	37.66	16.97

Table 19 shows that there was no statistical difference among elementary, K-8, middle, and high school principals for the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act; however, there was a statistical difference for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

Table 19

*ANOVA for Elementary, K-8, Middle, and High School Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

Leadership Practice	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model the Way	3, 20	6.107	.004*
Inspire a Shared Vision	3, 20	13.159	.000*
Challenge the Process	3, 20	29.491	.000*
Enable Others to Act	3, 20	1.760	.187
Encourage the Heart	3, 20	10.774	.000*

*Note.* \* significant at the .05 level.

A significant probability for ANOVA indicates only that at least one pair of means is different. To determine which pair of means was different, the Tukey HSD post hoc test was used. The results of the Tukey HSD tests for the leadership practice of Model the Way showed that there was a difference between elementary principals and high school principals and K-8 principals and high school principals.

The post hoc test for the leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision showed that there was a significant difference between elementary principals and high school principals, as well as K-8 principals and high school principals and middle school principals and high school principals. The leadership practice of Challenge the Process showed that there was a significant difference between elementary principals and middle school principals, as well as high school principals. There was also a significant difference between K-8 principals and high school principals and middle school principals and high school principals.

The Tukey HSD post hoc test showed no significant difference between any of

the principals for the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act. In the post hoc test for the leadership practice of Encourage the Heart, there was a difference between elementary principals and high school principals. There was also a difference between K-8 principals and middle school and high school principals.

Table 20 shows the descriptive statistics for elementary, K-8, middle, and high school teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 20

*Descriptive Statistics for Elementary, K-8, Middle, and High School Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

Leadership Practice	Principal Level	N	M	SD
Model the Way	Elementary	67	44.10	12.71
	K-8	40	52.96	7.83
	Middle	33	46.62	10.87
	High	67	46.89	11.89
Inspire a Shared Vision	Elementary	67	46.20	11.80
	K-8	40	49.66	9.08
	Middle	33	46.67	10.87
	High	67	45.09	11.34
Challenge the Process	Elementary	67	45.06	11.39
	K-8	40	49.54	10.07
	Middle	33	45.05	11.20
	High	67	44.54	11.43
Enable Others to Act	Elementary	67	48.41	10.87
	K-8	40	52.49	8.87
	Middle	33	50.60	9.13
	High	67	49.78	10.75
Encourage the Heart	Elementary	67	48.14	11.90
	K-8	40	51.84	8.93
	Middle	33	48.51	11.21
	High	67	47.09	12.62

Table 21 shows that there was no statistical difference among elementary, K-8, middle, and high school teachers for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision and Enable Others to Act; however, there was a statistical difference for the leadership



practices of Model the Way, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

Table 21

*ANOVA for Elementary, K-8, Middle, and High School Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

Leadership Practice	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model the Way	3, 20	6.753	.003*
Inspire a Shared Vision	3, 20	1.701	.199
Challenge the Process	3, 20	7.180	.002*
Enable Others to Act	3, 20	2.657	.076
Encourage the Heart	3, 20	7.079	.002*

*Note.* \* significant at the .05 level.

The results of the Tukey HSD post hoc test for teachers' observer-reported leadership practices showed that there was no significant difference for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision and Enable Others to Act. For the leadership practices of Model the Way, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart, the post hoc test results showed there was a significant difference between K-8 teachers and all other levels: elementary, middle, and high school.

Table 22 shows the descriptive statistics for the elementary school level principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 22

*Descriptive Statistics for Elementary Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Elementary Principals				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>M</i>	53.00	55.00	53.00	50.00	59.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B	<i>M</i>	52.00	52.00	51.00	52.00	51.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
C	<i>M</i>	48.00	52.00	48.00	51.00	39.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
D	<i>M</i>	51.00	46.00	46.00	52.00	50.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 23 shows the descriptive statistics for the elementary school level teachers' observer-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 23

*Descriptive Statistics for Elementary Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Elementary Teachers				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>M</i>	41.90	45.63	44.22	46.80	49.96
	<i>SD</i>	12.59	11.85	11.68	11.58	10.48
B	<i>M</i>	50.28	54.29	50.99	53.72	52.43
	<i>SD</i>	9.05	6.74	10.04	7.44	8.60
C	<i>M</i>	41.00	40.91	41.09	45.82	45.53
	<i>SD</i>	12.43	11.33	10.15	10.02	11.89
D	<i>M</i>	55.51	55.02	53.90	56.89	52.88
	<i>SD</i>	5.58	6.05	7.09	4.35	11.56

Table 24 shows the one sample t-test results for the elementary school level principals' self-reported leadership practices and the teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 24

*t Tests for Elementary Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and Elementary Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>t</i>	-4.83	-4.33	-4.12	-1.51	-4.72
	<i>p</i>	2.04	8.09	1.45	0.07	2.73
B	<i>t</i>	-0.50	0.90	-0.00	0.61	0.44
	<i>p</i>	0.32	0.20	0.50	0.28	0.38
C	<i>t</i>	-2.64	-4.59	-3.19	-2.42	2.58
	<i>p</i>	0.01*	7.91	0.00*	0.01*	0.01*
D	<i>t</i>	2.27	4.22	3.15	3.18	0.70
	<i>p</i>	0.03*	0.00*	0.01*	0.01*	0.25

*Note.* \* significant at the .05 level.

The one sample t-test results in Table 24 show that there was no significant difference between principals and teachers in the current study for the five leadership practices for Schools A and B. Schools C and D both had a significant difference in four of the five leadership practices, with School C having no significant difference for the leadership practice Inspire a Shared Vision and School D having no significant difference for the leadership practice of Encourage the Heart.

Table 25 shows the descriptive statistics for the K-8 school level principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 25

*Descriptive Statistics for K-8 Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		K-8 Principals				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
E	<i>M</i>	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	57.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	<i>M</i>	49.00	39.00	33.00	48.00	46.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
G	<i>M</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	<i>SD</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Table 26 shows the descriptive statistics for the K-8 school level teachers' observer-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 26

*Descriptive Statistics for K-8 Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		K-8 Teachers				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
E	<i>M</i>	52.81	49.44	47.31	51.43	50.26
	<i>SD</i>	8.57	10.79	12.82	9.42	10.36
F	<i>M</i>	51.90	48.71	49.95	52.00	52.24
	<i>SD</i>	7.52	7.46	7.54	9.07	7.58
G	<i>M</i>	55.84	52.43	51.86	55.86	54.43
	<i>SD</i>	5.70	6.80	7.13	5.51	7.46

Table 27 shows the one sample t-test results for the K-8 school level principals' self-reported leadership practices and the teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 27

*t* Tests for K-8 Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and K-8 Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices

School		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
E	<i>t</i>	-3.36	-3.91	-3.96	-3.64	-2.60
	<i>p</i>	0.00*	6.90	6.30	0.00*	0.01*
F	<i>t</i>	1.59	5.37	9.27	1.85	3.39
	<i>p</i>	0.07	3.15	3.91	0.04*	0.00*
G	<i>t</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	<i>p</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Note. \* significant at the .05 level.

School E had a significant difference in three of the five leadership practices.

School E showed a significant difference for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

School F had a significant difference in only two leadership practices. The two leadership practices that had a significant difference for School F were Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart.

Table 28 shows the descriptive statistics for the middle school level principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 28

*Descriptive Statistics for Middle School Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Model the Way	Middle School Principals			Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
			Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process			
H	<i>M</i>	42.00	40.00	35.00	47.00	30.00	
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
I	<i>M</i>	55.00	49.00	51.00	54.00	54.00	
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Table 29 shows the descriptive statistics for the middle school level teachers' observer-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 29

*Descriptive Statistics for Middle School Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Model the Way	Middle School Teachers			Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
			Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process			
H	<i>M</i>	44.77	45.06	42.77	49.00	43.95	
	<i>SD</i>	9.53	10.44	10.16	8.78	11.43	
I	<i>M</i>	48.57	48.38	47.51	52.32	53.39	
	<i>SD</i>	12.37	11.15	11.36	9.11	8.61	

Table 30 shows the one sample t-test results for the middle school level principals' self-reported leadership practices and the teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 30

*t* Tests for Middle School Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and Middle School Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices

School		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
H	<i>t</i>	1.20	2.00	3.15	0.94	5.03
	<i>p</i>	0.12	0.03*	0.00*	0.18	6.13
I	<i>t</i>	-2.08	-0.22	-1.23	-0.74	-0.28
	<i>p</i>	0.03*	0.41	0.12	0.24	0.39

Note. \* significant at the .05 level.

School H had a significant difference in only two leadership practices: Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process. School I showed a significant difference in one leadership practice: Model the Way.

Table 31 shows the descriptive statistics for the high school level principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 31

*Descriptive Statistics for High School Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		High School Principals				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
J	<i>M</i>	44.00	43.00	39.00	45.00	40.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
K	<i>M</i>	25.00	19.00	13.00	39.00	20.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
L	<i>M</i>	51.00	39.00	42.00	52.00	53.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 32 shows the descriptive statistics for the high school level teachers' observer-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership

practices.

Table 32

*Descriptive Statistics for High School Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		High School Teachers				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
J	<i>M</i>	42.39	44.13	42.79	45.22	44.38
	<i>SD</i>	13.29	10.97	11.97	12.35	12.66
K	<i>M</i>	48.68	46.01	45.45	52.44	51.11
	<i>SD</i>	9.15	9.43	8.55	5.72	8.02
L	<i>M</i>	49.63	45.53	45.53	52.26	47.93
	<i>SD</i>	10.08	11.96	11.70	9.39	13.09

Table 33 shows the one sample t-test results for the high school level principals' self-reported leadership practices and the teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 33

*t Tests for High School Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and High School Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		High School Teachers				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
J	<i>t</i>	-0.59	0.50	1.55	0.09	1.69
	<i>p</i>	0.28	0.31	0.07	0.47	0.05*
K	<i>t</i>	7.76	8.59	11.39	7.05	11.64
	<i>p</i>	2.71	1.30	1.60	5.36	1.35
L	<i>t</i>	-0.79	3.18	1.76	0.16	-2.26
	<i>p</i>	0.22	0.00*	0.04*	0.44	0.02*

Note. \* significant at the .05 level.

The one sample t-test results in Table 33 show that School J showed a significant difference in one leadership practice: Encourage the Heart. There was no significant



difference between principals and teachers in the current study for the five leadership practices for School K. School L had a significant difference in three of the five leadership practices: Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

### Research Question 3

What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as a function of the principals' gender?

This question was analyzed using two one sample t tests. The first one sample t test was used to determine if there was a difference of teachers' perceptions of their male principals' leadership practices. A second one sample t test was used to determine if there was a difference of teachers' perceptions of their female principals' leadership practices. Table 34 shows the descriptive statistics of male principals and their teachers.

Table 34

#### *Descriptive Statistics for Male Principals and their Teachers*

Leadership Practice	Position	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the Way	Principal	7	45.99	11.35
	Teacher	122	47.54	10.99
Inspire a Shared Vision	Principal	7	41.42	13.11
	Teacher	122	45.98	11.01
Challenge the Process	Principal	7	39.03	14.54
	Teacher	122	45.52	10.82
Enable Others to Act	Principal	7	49.01	8.14
	Teacher	122	50.74	9.50
Encourage the Heart	Principal	7	41.85	13.99
	Teacher	122	48.21	11.54

Table 35 shows that among teachers who had male principals, there was not a

significant difference for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart; however, there was a significant difference for the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act.

Table 35

*t Tests for Male Principals and their Teachers*

Leadership Practice	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Model the Way	1.56	.061
Inspire a Shared Vision	4.57	5.183
Challenge the Process	6.63	5.066
Enable Others to Act	2.01	.023*
Encourage the Heart	6.09	6.970

*Note.* \* significant at the .05 level.

Table 36 shows the descriptive statistics for school level male principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 36

*Descriptive Statistics for School Level Male Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Male Principals				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
B	<i>M</i>	52.00	52.00	51.00	52.00	51.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
C	<i>M</i>	48.00	52.00	48.00	51.00	39.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	<i>M</i>	49.00	39.00	33.00	48.00	46.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
H	<i>M</i>	42.00	40.00	35.00	47.00	30.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
I	<i>M</i>	55.00	49.00	51.00	54.00	54.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
K	<i>M</i>	25.00	19.00	13.00	39.00	20.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
L	<i>M</i>	51.00	39.00	42.00	52.00	53.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 37 shows the descriptive statistics for school level male-led teachers' observer-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 37

*Descriptive Statistics for School Level Male-Led Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Male-Led Teachers				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
B	<i>M</i>	50.28	54.29	50.99	53.72	52.43
	<i>SD</i>	9.05	6.74	10.04	7.44	8.60
C	<i>M</i>	41.00	40.91	41.09	45.82	45.53
	<i>SD</i>	12.43	11.33	10.15	10.02	11.89
F	<i>M</i>	51.90	48.71	49.95	52.00	52.24
	<i>SD</i>	7.52	7.46	7.54	9.07	7.58
H	<i>M</i>	44.77	45.06	42.77	49.00	43.95
	<i>SD</i>	9.53	10.44	10.16	8.78	11.43
I	<i>M</i>	48.57	48.38	47.51	52.32	53.39
	<i>SD</i>	12.37	11.15	11.36	9.11	8.61
K	<i>M</i>	48.68	46.01	45.45	52.44	51.11
	<i>SD</i>	9.15	9.43	8.55	5.72	8.02
L	<i>M</i>	49.63	45.53	45.53	52.26	47.93
	<i>SD</i>	10.08	11.96	11.70	9.39	13.09

Table 38 shows the one sample t-test results for school level male principals' self-reported leadership practices and the male-led teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 38

*t* Tests for School Level Male Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and the Male-Led Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices

School		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
B	<i>t</i>	-0.50	0.90	-0.00	0.61	0.44
	<i>p</i>	0.32	0.20	0.50	0.28	0.38
C	<i>t</i>	-2.64	-4.59	-3.19	-2.42	2.58
	<i>p</i>	0.01*	7.91	0.00*	0.01*	0.01*
F	<i>t</i>	1.59	5.37	9.27	1.85	3.39
	<i>p</i>	0.07	3.15	3.91	0.04*	0.00*
H	<i>t</i>	1.20	2.00	3.15	0.94	5.03
	<i>p</i>	0.12	0.03*	0.00*	0.18	6.13
I	<i>t</i>	-2.08	-0.22	-1.23	-0.74	-0.28
	<i>p</i>	0.03*	0.41	0.12	0.24	0.39
K	<i>t</i>	7.76	8.59	11.39	7.05	11.64
	<i>p</i>	2.71	1.30	1.60	5.36	1.35
L	<i>t</i>	-0.79	3.18	1.76	0.16	-2.26
	<i>p</i>	0.22	0.00*	0.04*	0.44	0.02*

Note. \* significant at the .05 level.

The one sample t-test results in Table 38 show that there was no significant difference between male principals and male-led teachers in the current study for the five leadership practices for Schools B and K. School C had a significant difference in four of the five leadership practices, with School C having no significant difference for the leadership practice Inspire a Shared Vision.

Schools F and H both had a significant difference in only two leadership practices. The two leadership practices that had a significant difference for School F were Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart. Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process were the two leadership practices that showed a significant difference for School H.

School I showed a significant difference in one leadership practice: Model the Way. School L had a significant difference in three of the five leadership practices: Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

Table 39 shows the descriptive statistics of female principals and their teachers.

Table 39

*Descriptive Statistics for Female Principals and their Teachers*

Leadership Practice	Position	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the Way	Principal	5	52.00	7.60
	Teacher	85	46.51	12.85
Inspire a Shared Vision	Principal	5	51.00	8.18
	Teacher	85	47.35	11.47
Challenge the Process	Principal	5	49.50	9.89
	Teacher	85	46.09	12.01
Enable Others to Act	Principal	5	51.75	8.20
	Teacher	85	48.93	11.32
Encourage the Heart	Principal	5	51.50	9.69
	Teacher	85	49.09	11.48

Table 40 shows that among teachers who had female principals, there was not a significant difference for the leadership practice of Model the Way; however, there was a significant difference for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Table 40

*t Tests for Female Principals and their Teachers*

Leadership Practice	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Model the Way	-3.94	8.422
Inspire a Shared Vision	-2.93	.002*
Challenge the Process	-2.62	.005*
Enable Others to Act	-2.30	.012*
Encourage the Heart	-1.94	.028*

*Note.* \* significant at the .05 level.

Table 41 shows the descriptive statistics for school level female principals' self-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.

Table 41

*Descriptive Statistics for School Level Female Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Female Principals				
		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>M</i>	53.00	55.00	53.00	50.00	59.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
D	<i>M</i>	51.00	46.00	46.00	52.00	50.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
E	<i>M</i>	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	57.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
G*	<i>M</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	<i>SD</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
J	<i>M</i>	44.00	43.00	39.00	45.00	40.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

*Note.* \* The principal from School G chose not to participate in the study.

Table 42 shows the descriptive statistics for school level female-led teachers' observer-reported leadership practices in the current study for the five leadership practices.



Table 42

*Descriptive Statistics for School Level Female-Led Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices*

School		Model the Way	Female-Led Teachers			Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
			Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process			
A	<i>M</i>	41.90	45.63	44.22	46.80	49.96	
	<i>SD</i>	12.59	11.85	11.68	11.58	10.48	
D	<i>M</i>	55.51	55.02	53.90	56.89	52.88	
	<i>SD</i>	5.58	6.05	7.09	4.35	11.56	
E	<i>M</i>	52.81	49.44	47.31	51.43	50.26	
	<i>SD</i>	8.57	10.79	12.82	9.42	10.36	
G	<i>M</i>	55.84	52.43	51.86	55.86	54.43	
	<i>SD</i>	5.70	6.80	7.13	5.51	7.46	
J	<i>M</i>	42.39	44.13	42.79	45.22	44.38	
	<i>SD</i>	13.29	10.97	11.97	12.35	12.66	

Table 43 shows the one sample t-test results for school level female principals' self-reported leadership practices and the female-led teachers' observer-reported leadership practices.

Table 43

*t* Tests for School Level Female Principals' Self-Reported Leadership Practices and the Female-Led Teachers' Observer-Reported Leadership Practices

School		Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
A	<i>t</i>	-4.83	-4.33	-4.12	-1.51	-4.72
	<i>p</i>	2.04	8.09	1.45	0.07	2.73
D	<i>t</i>	2.27	4.22	3.15	3.18	0.70
	<i>p</i>	0.03*	0.00*	0.01*	0.01*	0.25
E	<i>t</i>	-3.36	-3.91	-3.96	-3.64	-2.60
	<i>p</i>	0.00*	6.90	6.30	0.00*	0.01*
G**	<i>t</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	<i>p</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
J	<i>t</i>	-0.59	0.50	1.55	0.09	1.69
	<i>p</i>	0.28	0.31	0.07	0.47	0.05*

*Note.* \* significant at the .05 level; \*\* The principal of School G chose not to participate in the study.

The one sample t-test results in Table 43 show that there was no significant difference between female principals and teachers in the current study for the five leadership practices for School A. School D had a significant difference in four of the five leadership practices, with School D having no significant difference for the leadership practice of Encourage the Heart.

School E had a significant difference in three of the five leadership practices: Model the Way, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. School J showed a significant difference in one leadership practice: Encourage the Heart.

### Summary

The findings of this study were that principals reported higher perception scores for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, and Enable Others to Act than reported in the Kouzes-Posner norms and higher than their teachers'

perceptions of their principals' leadership practices on Model the Way and Enable Others to Act. Teachers reported higher perception scores for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart than reported in the Kouzes-Posner norms. They also reported higher than their principals' perceptions of their leadership practices for Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

In addition, there was a significant difference found among elementary, K-8, middle, and high school principals and their leadership practices for Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart. Among elementary, K-8, middle, and high school teachers and their perceptions of their principals' leadership practices, there was a significant difference for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

At the elementary level, teachers had lower perception scores for their principals in all five leadership practices than their principals evaluated themselves. The K-8 level had the principals evaluating themselves lower than their teachers in the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart. Among the middle school level, the principals evaluated their leadership practices lower than their teachers in Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. At the high school level, the principals evaluated their leadership practices lower than their teachers in all five leadership practices.

For the five leadership practices, the principals of elementary, K-8, and middle levels evaluated themselves significantly higher than the high school level. The K-8 principals evaluated themselves higher in Model the Way, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The elementary principals led the other two leadership practices of

Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process. Among the teachers, the K-8 level evaluated their principals' leadership practices higher in all five leadership practices than all other levels.

With regard to the gender of the principals, there was a significant difference between male principals and their teachers for the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act. In all five leadership practices, the male principals had lower perception scores for their self-observed leadership practices than their teachers. In addition, there was a significant difference between female principals and their teachers for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Female principals evaluated their self-observed leadership practices higher than their teachers for Model the Way and Enable Others to Act.

## **Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

Chapter 5 provides the summary of this study, findings, and conclusions. The summary provides a brief overview of this study. Further, the findings and conclusions discuss the outcome of each research question which guided this study. In addition, this chapter presents recommendations for future research on the topic of teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions of principals' leadership practices in a public school district in western North Carolina.

“Nobody has all the answers. Knowing that you do not know everything is far wiser than thinking that you know a lot when you really don't” (Heider, 1986, p. 141).

### **Summary**

Principals of our nation's public schools occupy a critical position as leaders. Principals are measured by the degree to which they are successful in managing and leading their schools effectively. For many years, many educators and this nation have discussed the issue of school improvements. The focus across the United States has been on strategizing ways to improve the condition of today's public schools. The United States has many issues surrounding education which include schools meeting educational standards. Furthermore, if one wishes to improve the condition of public schools, the factors which should be examined include teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions of principals' leadership practices and the relationship that may exist between those factors within the educational system.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perceptions, similarities, and differences in leadership practices of school principals by comparing the perceptions of leadership practices of the principals to the findings of the teachers. This study focused

on the overall teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions and principals' leadership practices in the workplace. Amundson (1993) indicated that principal leaders will often adopt specific leadership practices based on a specific leadership theory. In addition, the diligence of principals' leadership practices may include using one of the following styles: transactional, transformational, instructional, or situational. Furthermore, factors such as NCLB and student learning must be addressed if principals wish to improve their educational organizations.

This study used a quantitative approach that examined teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions on the effects of principals' leadership practices. A comparative research design was used and the data source consisted of descriptive and inferential procedures. The results were reported through the use of tables.

The data for this study were collected through the use of surveys which included a demographic portion and the LPI for Self and Observer. The LPI was used to gather information regarding the perceived principals' leadership practices. The LPI was developed by Kouzes and Posner (1999) "to empirically measure the conceptual framework developed in the case studies of managers' personal best experiences as leaders--times when they had accomplished something extraordinary in an organization" (p. 495). Kouzes and Posner developed the LPI using quantitative and qualitative research. The results of their initial work revealed:

The fundamental pattern of leadership behavior that emerges when people are accomplishing extraordinary things in an organization is best described by the following five practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. (Kouzes & Posner, p. 30)

The five practices and 10 commitments of exemplary leadership that this study addressed are as follows:

1. Model the Way: Credibility of leadership and setting examples
  - a. Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.
  - b. Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.
2. Inspire a Shared Vision: The leaders ability to “envision the future,” to enlist others, to make a difference, and to create a common vision.
  - a. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.
  - b. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
3. Challenge the Process: Focuses on the leaders’ ability to search for opportunity by seeking innovative ways to change, to grow, to innovate, and to improve.
  - a. Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve.
  - b. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes.
4. Enable Others to Act: Gives attention to the leaders’ ability to “strengthen others” by sharing power and providing choice and by making each person feel competent and confident.
  - a. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.
  - b. Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.
5. Encourage the Heart: Pertains to the leaders’ actions regarding creating a spirit of community celebrating victories, recognizing contributions, showing appreciation, and demonstrating genuine acts of caring.
  - a. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
  - b. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

Kouzes and Posner (2003a) translated the actions that make up the five practices of exemplary leadership into behavioral statements so that managers and nonmanagers across both private and public organizations could assess their skills and use this feedback to improve their leadership abilities. This translation turned into the LPI that has been called “the most reliable leadership development instrument available today” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003b, p. 9). Both educational and business leaders oftentimes fail because of their poor interpersonal skills; poor decision-making skills; and/or ineffective

management of time, tasks, and people. However, leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence are more successful (Davis, 1998). Cacioppe (1997) summed up the relationship of emotional intelligence and leadership with the following statement:

While concepts, rules, and ideas may help guide a person in training, a true leader carries his/her mission in his/her heart; it is not external rules that make the person. The leader models the way not by following outer form but by seeing their work as their way of being. (p. 335)

Demographic data were also gathered concerning respondents' gender; age; highest educational level and year highest degree was earned; whether the respondent was currently working on a graduate degree and, if so, which degree; total years of experience; and number of years in current position.

The participants of this study were comprised of principals and teachers in the school district of western North Carolina. The sample consisted of principals and teachers from four elementary schools, three K-8 schools, 2 middle schools, and three high schools within a small rural school system. From the teachers, 207 responses were received. The overall response rate for teachers was 70%, whereas the 12 principals' response rate was 92%. Data collection took place during 2012-2013 academic school year. Statistical results were generated using SPSS with a statistical significance set at the .05 level.

## **Findings**

The percentage of each type of school that participated in the study was elementary schools, 33%; K-8 schools, 25%; middle schools, 17%; and high schools, 25%. Concerning gender of those responding, 63.6% of the principals were male, whereas 17.4% of the teachers were male. No principals indicated they were currently



working on a graduate degree in education. Almost 11% ( $N = 22$ ) of teachers indicated they were currently working on a graduate degree in education. Of these 22 teachers, 17 (77.3%) stated they were currently working on a master's degree, while one (4.5%) was working on a specialist degree, and four (18.2%) were working on a doctorate. The data analysis for this study used descriptive and inferential procedures to address the research questions for this study. The findings are organized by the following: Research Question 1, Research Question 2, and Research Question 3.

**Research Question 1.** Research Question 1 asked, “What perceived differences of the principals’ leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as measured by Kouzes-Posner norms of the Leadership Practices Inventory?” The findings for the conducted t test for principals’ self-reported leadership practices and the Kouzes-Posner norms revealed that leadership ratings for the LPI norms reported in Table 11 were higher than the current sample of 11 principal respondents in two of five leadership practices. For the principals’ self-reported leadership practices, there were no significant differences at the  $p < .05$  level for the five leadership practices reported in Table 12.

The findings for the conducted t test for teachers’ observer-reported leadership practices and the Kouzes-Posner norms reported in Table 12 revealed that leadership ratings for the LPI norms were higher than the current sample of 207 teacher respondents in one of five leadership practices. For the teachers’ observer-reported leadership practices reported in Table 14, there were significant differences at the  $p < .05$  level for two of the leadership practices: Challenge the Process and Enable Others to Act.

The findings for the conducted t test for principals’ self-reported leadership practices and the teachers’ observer-reported leadership practices reported in Table 17 revealed a significant difference between principals and teachers in the current study for

the five leadership practices in all except Schools A, B, and K.

**Research Question 2.** Research Question 2 asked, “What perceived differences of the principals’ leadership practices exist between elementary school, K-8 schools, middle school, and high school principals and teachers as a function of school level?” As reported in Table 19, there was a significant difference found among elementary, K-8, middle, and high school principals and their leadership practices for Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart. Among elementary, K-8, middle, and high school teachers and their perceptions of their principals’ leadership practices, there was a significant difference for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart as reported in Table 21.

At the elementary level, teachers evaluated their principals lower in all five leadership practices than their principals evaluated themselves. The K-8 level found principals evaluating themselves lower than their teachers in the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart. Among the middle school level, the principals evaluated their leadership practices lower than their teachers in Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. At the high school level, the principals evaluated their leadership practices lower than their teachers in all five leadership practices.

For the five leadership practices, the principals of elementary, K-8, and middle levels evaluated themselves significantly higher than the high school level. The K-8 principals evaluated themselves higher in Model the Way, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The elementary principals led the other two leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process. Among the teachers, the K-8 level

evaluated their principals' leadership practices higher in all five leadership practices than all other levels.

Among the elementary schools, as reported in Table 24, Schools C and D both showed a significant difference between the principals and the teachers in Model the Way, Challenge the Process, and Enable Others to Act. School C showed no significant difference for Inspire a Shared Vision and School D showed no significant difference for Encourage the Heart.

At the K-8 level, principals and teachers of School E had a significant difference in three of the five leadership practices as reported in Table 27. School E showed a significant difference for the leadership practices of Model the Way, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Principals and teachers of School F had a significant difference in only two leadership practices as reported in Table 27: Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart.

Among the middle school principals and teachers, as reported in Table 30, School H had a significant difference in only two leadership practices: Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process. School I showed a significant difference in one leadership practice: Model the Way.

Among the principals and teachers of high schools, as reported in Table 33, School J showed a significant difference in one leadership practice: Encourage the Heart. School L had a significant difference in three of the five leadership practices: Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

**Research Question 3.** Research Question 3 asked, "What perceived differences of the principals' leadership practices exist between principals and teachers as a function of the principals' gender?" With regard to the gender of the principals, as reported in

Table 35, there was a significant difference between male principals and their teachers for the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act. In all five leadership practices, the male principals evaluated their self-observed leadership practices lower than their teachers as reported in Table 34.

In regard to each school led by a male principal, as reported in Table 38, School C had no significant difference for the leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision; however, there was a significant difference for the other four leadership practices. Schools F and H both showed a significant difference in two leadership practices: Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process. School I showed a significant difference in only one leadership practice: Model the Way. School L had a significant difference at  $p < .05$  in three of the five leadership practices, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, and Encourage the Heart.

In addition, as reported in Table 40, there was a significant difference between female principals and their teachers for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Female principals evaluated their self-observed leadership practices higher than their teachers for Model the Way and Enable Others to Act as reported in Table 41.

In regard to each school led by a female principal, as reported in Table 43, School D had a significant difference at  $p < .05$  for four of the five leadership practices. School E showed a significant difference for three of the five leadership practices. Encourage the Heart was the only leadership practice where School J showed a significant difference.

The findings from the study supported some previous research on leadership styles. Fullan (1997) emphasized that in the last decade, the role of the school leader has

become increasingly complex, constrained, and ambiguous. Every day, principals undertake numerous duties related to various venues and they are expected to satisfy people at all times in ways that will foster good relationships in the future.

### **Conclusions**

The findings show that the leadership practices in the school district confirm the majority of the literature reviewed for this study. It can be concluded that the local sample should begin to examine factors in their public schools which are causing their principals and teachers to rate the sampled principals lower than the norm. Furthermore, the data indicate that of the five exemplary leadership practices, Challenge the Process had the largest difference between the current sample of principals and the norm sample. In regards to the teachers, Inspire a Shared Vision had the largest difference between the current sample and the norm sample.

It appears that one of the main concerns with the current sample of principals is that they are looking for guidance in the commitments for Challenge the Process. They must look for new and innovative ways to change, grow, and improve and must be willing to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Furthermore, the teachers' main concerns of their principals are that they need to better envision the future and be able to articulate that vision to their staff. Teachers will follow if the principals will show the path to follow.

According to Abrams and Madaus (2003), "The 2001 reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, also known as *No Child Left Behind*, carries testing and accountability requirements that will substantially increase student testing and hold all schools accountable for student performance" (p. 32). This, accordingly, holds principals responsible for their schools.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

More so than at any time in history, it is of utmost importance for today's schools to have great leadership. The literature indicated that the principalship continues to be increasingly stressful at a time when society is expecting greater accountability from public schools and from the leadership of those schools.

The following recommendations for research are proposed.

1. Additional research in the area of principal leadership needs to be conducted. The limitations of the population in this study hinder the ability of prediction outside of this one school system.

2. There is a need to collect systematic data at all levels of education on leadership. We need further research on the various reasons some principals are successful and other principals are not as successful.

3. A qualitative study is recommended for future research. School districts could benefit by having an in-depth examination of principals' perceptions and teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership practices through the use of interviews and observations.

### **Recommendations for Future Practice**

The following recommendations for practice are proposed.

1. We need to offer more professional development to principals at the local, regional, and state levels and then track and study these principals and the effects of their training. Principals and teachers could benefit from this professional development, which would improve the overall school climate.

2. It is recommended that principals and teachers begin working together to understand the impact of perceptions of principals' leadership practices in public schools.

3. In addition, principals could to begin to communicate more effectively with their teachers for future practice. Communication is a key element to any successful relationship, whether personal or professional. Educational organizations, where there are effective communication practices among members, could produce effective working relationships.

4. There are teacher leaders in every school, and we need to look for future principals. These teachers should be recognized early and encouraged and supported to seek roles as principals who will practice the Kouzes and Posner Five Leadership Practices.

In closing, this research has added to the body of knowledge in the area of school leadership. The research should be beneficial to the superintendent as he prepares for professional growth of the principals of the school district. Much more will need to be done in order to help continue the rising aspirations for the principalship over the next few years.

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Appendix A  
Principal Demographic Sheet

Be assured that all responses will be considered confidential and will be totally anonymous. After the data have been collected, all questionnaires will be destroyed and only group summary data will be reported. No individual employee will be identified in the research study. Anonymity is guaranteed to the principals who participate in this study. Confidentiality is guaranteed to all study participants.

1. Name of school \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your highest degree earned?  
Bachelor's \_\_\_\_\_  
Master's \_\_\_\_\_  
Specialist \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_
5. In what year did you earn your highest degree? \_\_\_\_\_ (year degree conferred)
6. Are you currently working on a graduate degree in education?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, what degree are you working on?  
Master's \_\_\_\_\_  
Specialist \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of years in current position as principal, including this year \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Total years you have been a principal, including this year \_\_\_\_\_.

Appendix B  
Teacher Demographic Sheet

Be assured that all responses will be considered confidential and will be totally anonymous. After the data have been collected, all questionnaires will be destroyed and only group summary data will be reported. No individual employee will be identified in the research study. Anonymity is guaranteed to the teachers who participate in this study. Confidentiality is guaranteed to all study participants.

1. Name of school \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your highest degree earned?
  - Bachelor's \_\_\_\_\_
  - Master's \_\_\_\_\_
  - Specialist \_\_\_\_\_
  - Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_
5. In what year did you earn your highest degree? \_\_\_\_\_ (year degree conferred)
6. Are you currently working on a graduate degree in education?
  - Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what degree are you working on?

  - Master's \_\_\_\_\_
  - Specialist \_\_\_\_\_
  - Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of years in your current position, including this year \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Total number of years you have taught, including this year \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Where you hired by the principal you are assessing?
  - Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix C

Cover Letter to Principals

Dear Principals,

I am the assistant principal at Andrews High School, and a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. The purpose of this correspondence is to request your assistance with a research project I am completing. The goal of my research is to determine whether Cherokee County teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices are consistent with the principals own perceptions of his/her leadership practices. Surveys have also been given to Cherokee County teachers in order to gain comparative data. Dr. Stephen Lane, our Superintendent, has approved this research.

This survey should take approximately five minutes to complete. Your input is essential to the success of my study. All responses will be confidential. After collection of the data, all questionnaires will be destroyed and only group summary data will be reported. Before you answer these questions you should be aware that even though it's unlikely you could be identified; when my research is published, it is possibly you might be identifiable and for this reason you may omit answering any question you do not feel comfortable with.

Your help with my research project is greatly appreciated. If you would please take the time to complete the survey and return it to the designated teacher in your building, I would be most grateful.

Sincerely,

Randy Mann

Appendix D

Cover Letter to Teachers

Dear Teachers,

I am the assistant principal at Andrews High School, and a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. The purpose of this correspondence is to request your assistance with a research project I am completing. The goal of my research is to determine whether Cherokee County teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership practices are consistent with the principals own perceptions of his/her leadership practices. Surveys have also been given to Cherokee County principals in order to gain comparative data. Dr. Stephen Lane, our Superintendent, has approved this research.

This survey should take approximately five minutes to complete. Your input is essential to the success of my study. All responses will be confidential. After collection of the data, all questionnaires will be destroyed and only group summary data will be reported. Before you answer these questions you should be aware that even though it's unlikely you could be identified; when my research is published, it is possibly you might be identifiable and for this reason you may omit answering any question you do not feel comfortable with.

Your help with my research project is greatly appreciated. If you would please take the time to complete the survey and return it to the designated teacher in your building, I would be most grateful.

Sincerely,

Randy Mann



Appendix E  
Consent Form

You are being invited to participate in a research study about the differences between principals and teachers perceptions of leadership practices in public schools of Cherokee County. This research project is being conducted by Randy Mann, Assistant Principal at Andrews High School. The objective of this research project is to determine if there is a difference between principals' perceptions of their leadership practices and teachers' perceptions and to what extent the principals' leadership practices affects teachers' perceptions of the principals' leadership practices and how any discrepancies in perceptions affects teacher performance in Cherokee County public schools. It is being conducted in 12 schools of Cherokee County. The survey is being given to principals and teachers.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. The information you provide will help principals benefit by examining their leadership practices in order to address pertinent issues affecting schools. The information collected may or may not benefit you directly, but what I learn from this study should provide general benefits to all teachers and principals.

The surveys are anonymous. If you choose to participate, do not write your name on the questionnaires. No one will be able to identify you, nor will anyone be able to determine which school you work for. No one will know whether you participated in this study. Nothing you say on the questionnaires will in any way influence your present or future employment with Cherokee County.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, please return your completed questionnaires to the lead teacher at your school.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaires or about being in this study, you may contact me at XXXXXXXXX or at XXXXXXXXX.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

---

 Participant's Name

---

 Date

---

 Participant's Signature

---

 Researcher's Signature

---

 Date

Appendix F

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)-Self

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Below are thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully. Then look at the rating scale and decide how frequently you engage in the behavior described.

In selecting each response, please be realistic about the extent to which you actually engage in the behavior. Do not answer in terms of how you would like to behave or in terms of how you think you should behave. Answer in terms of how you typically behave on most days, on most projects, and with most people. For each statement, decide on a rating and record it in the blank to the left of the statement. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Here's the rating scale to be used:

<b>1 = Almost Never</b>	<b>6 = Sometimes</b>
<b>2 = Rarely</b>	<b>7 = Fairly Often</b>
<b>3 = Seldom</b>	<b>8 = Usually</b>
<b>4 = Once in a While</b>	<b>9 = Very Frequently</b>
<b>5 = Occasionally</b>	<b>10 = Almost Always</b>

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I praise people for a job well done.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principals and standards we have agreed on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I challenge people to try out new innovative ways to do their work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I actively listen to diverse points of view.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I treat others with dignity and respect.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I ask "what can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I support the decisions that people make on their own.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I speak with a genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contribution.

Appendix G

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)-Observer

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Below are thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully. Then look at the rating scale and decide how frequently you engage in the behavior described.

In selecting each response, please be realistic about the extent to which the leader actually engages in the behavior. Do not answer in terms of how you would like to see this person behave or in terms of how you think he/she should behave. Answer in terms of how the leader typically behaves on most days, on most projects, and with most people. For each statement, decide on a rating and record it in the blank to the left of the statement. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Here's the rating scale to be used:

<b>1 = Almost Never</b>	<b>6 = Sometimes</b>
<b>2 = Rarely</b>	<b>7 = Fairly Often</b>
<b>3 = Seldom</b>	<b>8 = Usually</b>
<b>4 = Once in a While</b>	<b>9 = Very Frequently</b>
<b>5 = Occasionally</b>	<b>10 = Almost Always</b>

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expect 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 work 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 principals and standards we have agreed on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Challenges people to try out new 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 that 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 our 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 recognize 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 a genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Experiments and take 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 contribution.