THE EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS' SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON TEACHER MORALE AND WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE INITIATIVE

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unspoken leadership and friendship is why I mention him specifically by name, as while I

wish he were here, I know his name and legacy will never cease.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between specific principal management practices (as defined in this study as: informal visits to the classroom, face-to-face communication, written communication, visibility throughout the school campus, and a presence at extracurricular activities) and teacher morale. The study attempted to investigate further whether there was a relationship between morale, and teacher willingness to embrace new building initiatives. The study also attempted to ascertain if there was a relationship between morale and teacher willingness to embrace building initiatives, and school designation as a high or low performing school.

This quantitative study was conducted using voluntary participation of elementary faculty throughout the Capital District Region of New York State. The survey was distributed via email to over 500 prospective participants, of which 171 responded. Survey data was collected using SurveyMonkey online survey software and analyzed via SPSS v. 20. Pearson's correlation, Chi-square analysis, and one-way ANOVA were used in the analysis of the data. A statistically significant relationship existed between the frequency principals employ specific management practices, and teacher perception of morale. A statistically significant relationship also existed between teachers' value of principals' management practices and morale. There was no statistical relationship between the value teachers place upon principal management practices and voluntary teacher participation in building initiatives and activities. The study also revealed that high and low performing school status was not a factor that influenced morale or teacher initiative participation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background

There has been very little significant documentation attempting to capture the greater importance of school morale, and how morale relates to a teacher's willingness to voluntarily embrace District-supported curriculum, instruction, and social initiatives. "After comprehensively reviewing the research carried out over a period of 25 years in teacher morale or job satisfaction, the investigators concluded that the administrator was still the key figure" (Thomas, 1997, p. 27). Black (2001) also stated that "principals who effectively define their school's instructional program well, promote a positive climate for student learning, and invite teachers to collaborate on important decisions have the greatest impact on teacher morale" (Black, 2001, p. 43).   Morale, value of principal practices, and motivation for teachers to embrace new ideas are certainly valuable to the system leader. The school system leader, unlike a leader in the private for-profit sector, cannot motivate his/her employees via monetary means or through other means of compensation. The school system leader is left to motivate through his/her leadership, with the hopes that this leadership will translate to positive morale, and in turn, a greater willingness of teacher to participate in new initiatives and activities.   "Teacher morale is related to the behavior of the principal…the teacher's self-image is constantly reinforced, positively or negatively, by the principal's behavior- or the teacher's perception of the principal's behavior" (Magoon & Linkous, 1979, p. 23).

It should also be noted that those schools placed in situations such as School in Need of Improvement status may have extrinsic motivation to adopt best practices, and participate in new initiatives. Participation may be driven by the fear of school closing, or at least the recognition that current practices have resulted in poor student progress to the point of drawing outside attention to the school's performance. The high performing school districts, in contrast, have

1

very little extrinsic motivation to change, as external pressures are not criticizing, but typically applauding the successes of these institutions. It should be noted that the socio-economic status of the District's demographics plays a prominent role in this success. Anderson, Leithwood, Louis, & Wahlstrom (2010) stated that "a family and community's socio-economic status is strongly related to student learning and behavior" (Anderson, Leithwood, Louis, & Wahlstrom, 2010, p. 2). School system leaders have no control over the socio-economic status of a school district, yet socio-economic status is integral to school performance (Anderson et al., 2010). While this uncontrollable factor has a significant influence upon school success, school district progress reports continue to showcase and promote the achievement scores of high performing school districts, who tend to consistently perform at the top of most data lists, which range from college acceptance rates to standardized testing performance. This success is not necessarily attributed to effective curriculum and instructional practices, but could be a result of the demographic make-up of the system.

Positive practices and programming in high performing schools should be noticed, but such recognition has the potential to create a sentiment among faculty that change and embracing new ideas are not an inherent necessity, if the data and recognition continue to showcase the success of a high performing institution. The noted success of high performing schools allows instructional practices and teacher participation to continue as it has in the past, without motivation to change derived from outside pressure as a result of poor test scores and data-supported poor student performance. As indicated in their study (Anderson et al., 2010), while the success of these high performing districts can be linked to the high socioeconomic status associated with these communities and not necessarily the instructional practices, the influence of socioeconomic status is not taken into account when ranking schools based upon achievement

scores. Those schools possessing a low socioeconomic status are thus burdened with a difficult hurdle of trying to raising student achievement in a community where the economic status is an uncontrollable factor to the school district.

The success of high performing school districts does not present an immediate need for building faculty to voluntarily participate in building initiatives and experiment with new instructional practices. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of principal management practices, and how such practices influence teachers in both high and low performing schools to embrace change via participation in building initiatives and activities. The study of affecting change in all school systems is very valuable, especially as it pertains to the role a building or system-level leader can play in affecting the morale of the school community.

Problem Statement

The issue of teacher morale has certainly been frequently researched, especially as it pertains to the role of the building or system leader. Morale, as defined by Fineman, is the "distinct emotional overtones: the feelings of attachment or belonging that a person has to a workgroup and his or her sense of commitment to the group task and spirit….morale influences the sense of belonging that an individual has, but also the relationship between and individuals and the organization" (Fineman, p. 290, 1999). In addition to being charged with managing and leading a building to academic and social excellence, the school system or building leader is typically the individual responsible for motivating staff, and establishing a sense of morale within the school community. Poor morale on behalf of the staff within a building has the potential to pervade into student academic and social experiences. The examination of the literature regarding the management practices of the system leader highlight that there are certain practices that are inherently important in this role. Practices that are valued include: visibility

throughout the building and during extracurricular activities, frequent verbal and written communication, and informal classroom visits are often recommended as positive practices for a building or system administrator.

"Principals are key participants in the school reform process. Although the research has demonstrated repeatedly the importance of the principal in shaping the quality of education, the voice of principals is largely excluded from discussions of school reform" (Osterman, 1993, p. 60). Regardless of whether a school is designated as high or low performing, the role of the building leader is to not only to manage the day-to-day operational aspects of the plant, but also to move the building forward in its curriculum and instructional practices. Leithwood, Louis, and Wahlstrom (2004) stated in a report through the Wallace Foundation that "a widely shared sense of morale and collegiality between both faculty and students is important in engaging students in the learning process, but also the antidote for unstable school and home conditions" (Leithwood, Louis, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 5). Morale, both in high and low performing buildings, can strengthen a teacher's relationship and connection with the school, and in turn, creates the potential for students to authentically invest in the learning process.

Reform is an unavoidable necessity for low buildings not performing to standard. Those buildings that are high performing desire to maintain this status, which cannot occur through complacency or stagnation. The building principal, by the nature of overseeing the leadership of his/her respective building, has significant responsibility and effect upon the system's progress.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of the frequency that building principals employ specific management practices, and the degree to which these practices have an effect on the individual and collective faculty's morale. The study also compared the responses of teachers from both high and low performing school districts. Furthermore, the study investigated whether there was a relationship between elementary administrator management practices and an effect on morale, which in turn would then increase the building faculty's willingness to experiment with new instructional practices, or experience a greater level of participation and involvement in building activities or initiatives.

It was the purpose of this study to determine whether there was a relationship between the presence of identified principal practices and a better sense of morale among the building faculty. Through this study, it was hoped to ascertain whether specifically defined principal management practices have an impact on the morale of building staff, and if this increased sense of morale as a result of these practices translates to greater participation in new initiatives and better instructional practices, particularly those endorsed by the building leader and district. This study also attempted to investigate whether the performance status of a school building (schools designated as "high performing" versus those designated with School in Need of Improvement Status, as determined by the New York State Education Department) related to principal practices, teacher morale, and a willingness to embrace new programming and initiatives.

Research Questions

This research study is guided by the following four research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the frequency that principals employ specific management practices and teacher perception of morale within that particular building?

2. Is there a relationship between specific principals' management practices and the value placed upon these practices by the teachers within the building?

3. Is there a relationship between the value teachers place on principal management practices and their willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities?

4. Is there any difference between high and low performing elementary schools in teacher morale and their willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities as it relates to principal management practices?

Definitions

M*orale*: "distinct emotional overtones: the feelings of attachment or belonging that a person has to a workgroup and his or her sense of commitment to the group task and spirit….morale influences the sense of belonging that an individual has, but also the relationship between and individuals and the organization" (Fineman, p. 290, 1999).

High Performing Elementary Schools: Schools designated in Good Standing as per the New York State Education Department, as measured through performance and growth on standardized testing by all ethnic and demographic sub-groups (New York State Department of Education, 2012).

Low Performing Elementary Schools: Schools designated with *SINI,* or School in Need of

Improvement status, as per the New York State Education Department, as measured

through performance and growth on standardized testing by all ethnic and demographic

sub-groups (New York State Department of Education, 2012).

Principal Management Practices: The elementary principal's overall visibility throughout the

building campus, weekly informal visits to classrooms, written and face-to-face

communication regarding building issues, and a physical presence at extracurricular and

school community events.

Significance of the Study

Principal management practices can affect morale and teacher motivation. Warren

Bennis stated that the leader "is responsible for…the organization's goals, aspirations, and

working conditions" (Bennis, 2009, p. 5). Morale certainly is a product of the overall work

environment. It is the goal of this research to determine whether principal practices will have a

greater effect upon those high performing buildings with less external need to change than lower

performing school districts where change is mandatory in order to shed the designation of a

School In Need of Improvement. The principal as the leader of the institution has the

responsibility to affect morale.   Affecting morale is especially important in a current economic

climate where those in the public and private sector have not been supportive or sympathetic to

the working conditions and salaries of the public school teacher.   Poor current economic

conditions, coupled with the rhetoric some politicians have used to portray the public educator as

overpaid, underworked, and unsuccessful in educating students to compete in a global economy have the potential to adversely affect the morale of a faculty, who may feel as if society at large is not appreciative of the teaching profession. Research and attention should be placed upon the role of the building principal, and how he/she can affect morale despite growing external negative sentiment.

This research also has the potential to inform the practice and prioritization of building and system administrators' management tasks. The new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluation mechanisms as implemented by the New York State Education Department require that a significant investment of a principal's time and energy be spent in the formal evaluation and rating of all teachers, regardless of their tenure status. A process previously reserved for the new and untenured teachers will now include all building staff, and must occur each year. This new evaluation legislation, coupled with the loss of many levels of building-level administration (assistant principals, department chairs) due to school budgetary constraints will result in the need for school building administrators to prioritize their time. The length of the school day limits the time that administrators have to accomplish their work. This research will assist in understanding whether specified management practices have a true impact on teacher morale, and whether such morale will lead to a teacher taking a more proactive approach in the implementation of the most highly effective instructional practices that illicit the greatest learning outcomes for students.

Limitations

Throughout the research, a number of limitations were encountered. The survey was limited to elementary principal practices and elementary faculty, thus excluding the influence or input from the environment of secondary schools. Surveys were anonymously distributed via email to 500 elementary faculty members in elementary schools throughout the New York State Capital District. The majority of survey respondents were from Good Standing schools, with 147 surveys coming from good standing schools, and 22 respondents from SINI schools. Some respondents neglected to answer this question. The reason for this imbalance could be a result of the overall building dynamics and working conditions in these institutions, which could cause faculty in these buildings not to respond to a voluntary, confidential survey, due to tasks of greater priority that need to be accomplished.

The response rate for this study was relatively low (34%). This relatively low percentage of returns could be a result of the research saturation occurring in the Capital District as a result of numerous colleges utilizing the pool of survey respondents for the various undergraduate and graduate research studies that are consistently occurring in a variety of institutions.

Summary

This study is a quantitative study that used an online survey instrument developed by the researcher to explore teacher perception of their principal's management practices, and how such practices relate to teacher morale. The study also determined if those individuals working in buildings where the administrator exhibited specified management practices had a greater likelihood of displaying involvement in building level activities, and an increased level of interest and enthusiasm in the implementation of different instructional practices.

The instrument used in this study was designed by the researcher, and consisted of questions that attempted to ascertain the frequency of the administrator in exhibiting these practices, and questions that pertained to teacher morale. The survey also established the participant's level of involvement in building committees, initiatives, and willingness to experiment or implement different instructional practices with the purpose of improving student achievement.

Organization

Chapter One described the four major questions driving the research study, the definitions, limitations, and purpose of this study. Chapter Two provides a review of literature pertaining to components of this study. Chapter Three explains the detailed design of this study as well as the population, sample, instrument details and data collection procedures. Chapter Four provides complete data analysis of the survey, and the statistical analyses used to answer each research question. An overview of the entire study, its findings, and future recommendations for system leaders are provided in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following literature review depicts the relevant research regarding principal practices, teacher morale, and how these variables influence school progress and achievement. Though rich research is available on principal practices and the importance of teacher morale, significant gaps exist regarding the specific principal practices that influence morale in relation to teacher willingness to participate and be involved in building activities or initiatives. The following subsections (Principal Management Practices, Teacher Morale, Principal Practices, Morale, and Teacher Motivation, Principal Influence on Teacher Willingness to Embrace Initiative, and Effective Principal Management in High and Low Performing Schools) present a review of relevant literature regarding specific principal practices, teacher morale, teacher motivation, and principal influence on teacher willingness to embrace initiative, both in high and low performing school environments.

Principal Management Practices

Substantial quantitative and qualitative research has been conducted in which the management practices of principals have been examined with an effort to determine what practices affect the short and long-term successful functioning of a school system. Wentworth (1990) compiled a list of traits, having surveyed numerous school systems nationwide to determine which practices are essential to an administrator seeking to build morale. Though technique can vary between the specifics of each school community, Wentworth (1990) recognized that "good communication is essential. Calendars, newsletters, and bulletin boards are basic, and must be tailored to the needs of a faculty….not knowing what is going on can wreak havoc on staff morale" (Wentworth, 1990, p. 4). Though the modalities of

communication can vary depending upon the needs and structure of a building, it is evident that the author recognizes that, poor communication has the potential to have a negative impact upon staff morale.

A qualitative study conducted by Osterman (1993) regarding the principal's perspective of their own position in facilitating change recognized that, while principals are key leaders and participants in the school reform process, over 40 elementary and secondary principals involved in this study felt that the principalship was "frustrating and lonely" (Osterman, 1993, p. 62). The responses recorded during the qualitative interviews also indicated that the administrator experienced significant frustration as a result of "administrative powerlessness engendered by communication and decision-making policies and practices that preclude prevention and resolution of problems" (p. 62). Osterman's study suggested the "need for further exploration of the communication process within schools; to examine communication patterns between groups and to explore the educational, experimental, and organizational factors which impact the nature and quality of communication" (p. 70).

Communication has a strong impact on the perception and behaviors of those immediately involved in the school community. Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) define *communication* as the "extent to which the school leader establishes strong lines of communication with and between teachers and students…it is the glue that holds together all the other responsibilities of leadership" (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 47). Osterman's (1993) research recognized, from the principal's perspective, the frustration of being unable to communicate authentically and accurately to staff their own vision for the building. Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) noted that the effective school leader must take responsibility for communication within the building, be it through "informal, after school discussions…or a

monthly newsletter distributed to all faculty members describing the significant decisions s(he) has made or is considering" (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 47). The authors clearly stated that, in order for school change and progress to occur, "two-way communication must occur to and from faculty members as well as among faculty members" (p. 119). The establishment of a school community (specifically, faculty) in which ideas, visions, and mandates can be accurately shared, with the ability for all participants involved to vocalize their concerns, questions, and support certainly contributes to the overall school climate. Plentiful communication, in turn, will affect staff morale. A primary charge of a principal is to establish solid, two-way lines for the travel of information.

Effective, meaningful communication must go beyond the constraints of large group faculty and staff meetings. Arlestig (2008), in a quantitative study that surveyed Swedish faculty regarding the number of formal (faculty/staff meetings) and informal meetings (hallway conversations, classroom visitations, small group meetings) taking place in a variety of elementary and secondary schools stated that "one-way communication is often not enough if the aim is to make communication meaningful" (Arlestig, 2008, p. 190). The author is referring to the standard form of faculty meetings, in which one person serves as the primary means of conveying logistical and visionary information for the building. Such means of communication, in which only one individual is speaking, serve only to convey one point-of-view, thus isolating and minimizing the participation of those involved in the school community. Arlestig (2008) stated, "The interpersonal communication between principals and teachers are one important dimension of effective leadership" (p. 190). The study concluded that those schools deemed as successful (using standardized assessments as a measure of achievement) were those in which the building principal used communication in a multidimensional fashion, thus encouraging two

13

way communication using a variety of forms other than simply conducting principal-driven staff meetings. Multi-dimensional communication was crucial to the success of these buildings.

In addition to the principal as the facilitator and purveyor of communication, the principal's visibility within and throughout the building also plays a significant role in affecting the school community. Huntington (1995), referenced an earlier piece he wrote in which he defined the term "management by mingling." In this simple statement, the author underscored the importance of the administrator spending a small portion of each day paying each classroom informal visits. Huntington recognized that the simple presence of the administrator in the classroom is certainly important, but not enough. "Principals are expected to be instructional leaders now, and that means having a deeper understanding of what's going on in the classroom and recommending how to improve instruction" (Huntington, 1995 p. 30). The author recommended that the administrator, within these informal classroom visits, take into account the behavior of students, the demeanor of the teacher, and the overall interactions within the classroom. This provides teachers with both encouragement and formative feedback to further improve the academic and social environment (Huntington, 1995). Huntington's research noted the mutual respect and openness among faculty and administration develops as a result of a principal who makes a concerted effort to frequently appear within classrooms.

Ruder (2006) succinctly stated that the visibility of the principal is equally important. A principal cannot be visible behind an office door. "Visibility ensures students and staff that there is someone they can go to who is in charge…being less than highly visible erodes a school climate" (Ruder, 2006, p. 41). A principal's regular presence in classrooms provides a sense of comfort and stability.

In both primary and secondary educational settings, the principal is required to do a specified number of observations for both tenured and non-tenured teachers. These observations usually take on a more formal tone, including pre and post observational meetings to debrief the teacher on the quality and effectiveness of the lesson. The administrator's visit to the classroom can certainly serve to provide the teacher with feedback regarding her/his instructional practices; such visits "serve to motivate teachers and to make principals accessible and visible to students and teachers" (Ing, 2010, p. 339). A study conducted by Ing (2010) focused almost exclusively upon the principal's informal visitations as a means of providing the teacher with formative feedback for their instructional practices. Upon the conclusion of this quantitative study which surveyed principals regarding the frequency in which the principal visited classrooms, the study determined that there was:

> no significant correlation between the frequency or duration of informal classroom observations and the instructional climate of the school. In addition, principal reports of the frequency and duration of informal classroom observations are not significant predictors of the instructional climate after controlling for school principal and school characteristics. (Ing, 2010, p. 351)

The purpose of Ing's (2010) study was to determine if there is a relationship between administrative visibility in classrooms and the effect, if any, upon school morale. Ing's study did not conclude that there was a correlation between principal visits and instructional climate of the school. The study was limited, however, in its analysis of other potential benefits of administrative presence.

Though the analysis of principal visibility and school climate was not the focal point of Ing's (2010) study, there is an immediate effect on the classroom behavior and the need for

discipline and administrative visibility in the classroom. A quantitative study conducted by

Keesor (2005) collected data regarding the frequency of administrative presence in classrooms,

and the number of behavior referrals and detentions. The study concluded that there was a

"significant reduction in the number of discipline detentions and referrals in classrooms when

administrative visibility increased" (Keesor, 2005, p. 69). Building administrative presence lead

to a decrease in the number of building referrals and suspensions (Kessor, 2005). Keesor's

study, however, does not speak to whether the lack of referrals would have an impact upon

building morale.

A lack of administrative visibility, regardless of specific reasons for the principal's

inability to circulate throughout the building can lead to a negative perception of the

administrator. The appearance of the administrator as a professional working behind a "closed

door" creates the perception that administrators don't understand or care about the inner-

workings of a classroom, and thus feeds an "us versus them mentality" (Jorgenson & Peal, 2008,

p. 54). According to Jogenson & Peal (2008), "perceptions of principal visibility profoundly

impact the working environment by creating a sense of isolation among the faculty. A sense of

being left alone in the classroom frequently resulted in a loss of respect for the principal and

subpar performance by teachers" (p. 54). Deliberately structuring time to visits classrooms

enhances a leader's credibility.

Blase & Blase (1999) referenced the role of the principal as facilitating better

instructional practices. Blase & Blase's model referenced a three-tiered approach for principals

to instill leadership, including: Talking with teachers, Promoting Professional Growth, and

Fostering Teacher Reflection (Blase & Blase, 1999, p. 18). The research from this study

accentuated this model as a means of promoting effective principal practices, recognizing that,

within this research, those administrators who did not exhibit the aforementioned practices yielded "negative effects including less respect for and trust in the principal, resistant, rebellion, frustration, fearfulness, avoidance, anger, and even quitting the job" (p. 20). An absence of these principal practices also resulted in teachers engaging in a reduced job reflection, distraction from teaching responsibilities, and disinterest in instructional planning and innovation" (p. 20). Blase & Blase's (1999) research, though aiming to support a model for principal instructional leadership, recognized that an absence of instructional leadership practices does lead to teacher disengagement, which in turn affects positive teacher morale and creates an unwillingness to engage in reflective and innovative instructional practices.

The current fiscal climate for schools underscores the need for principals to do more with less. The Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) mandates require that teachers and school districts show quantifiable growth, typically measured through performance on standardized assessments. Riddile (2010) stated that, regardless of one's status as a high or low performing school, "schools are about so much more than the walls that define the building. They are about what goes on inside those walls, the culture of a school, the students and staff members and their relationships" (Riddile, 2010, p.66). Riddile's research reinforces the importance of the principal in cultivating positive morale within his/her building.

There is a responsibility upon the building principal to facilitate positive school morale and culture through his/her management practices. Vail (2005) stated "teacher's attitude- whether good or bad- trickles down to the students" (Vail, 2005, p. 4). The building principal has great responsibility in his/her practices, both in keeping lines of communication open, and remaining a visible entity within the building. "People are happiest when they have some control over their work environment. Autocratic, top-down leadership tends to squash teacher and

17

employee morale" (p.7). The building principal, in turn, is responsible for facilitating open

dialog and comfortable communication through their frequent, authentic visibility throughout the

building, and their ability to utilize multiple modes of communication so that a message is

received by all members of the school community.

Teacher Morale

Though research supports that the school administrator plays a role in the morale of an

individual teacher and building, significant research has not been conducted to isolate specific

administrative behaviors and their direct effect upon morale. Thomas' (1997) Informational

Analysis of the literature regarding teacher morale captured various modes and styles of

leadership theory. "After comprehensively reviewing the research carried out over a period of

25 years in teacher morale or job satisfaction, the investigators concluded that the administrator

was still the key figure" (Thomas, 1997, p. 27). Research is still needed in the area of isolating

specific practices as they relate to teacher morale. Black (2001) recognized that teachers and

collaborative faculties possessing a high level of morale will promote student achievement.

> Where teacher morale is high, students typically show high achievement…when teacher
>
> morale sinks, other problems begin to surface such as an indifference towards others;
>
> cynical attitudes towards students; little initiative in lesson preparation, and a
>
> preoccupation with leaving teaching for a better job. (Black, 2001, p. 40)

 Black (2001) recognized various schools throughout the country that work, using a

variety of specific morale lifting measures (teacher appreciation breakfasts, after school stress

reduction workshops) to maintain a positive school morale. The specific formula for a leader

who sustains morale through their management style has yet to be defined, but the principal's

role in fostering morale is extremely important. "Principals who effectively define their school's

instructional program well, promote a positive climate for student learning, and invite teachers to collaborate on important decisions have the greatest impact on teacher morale" (Black, 2001, p. 43). While this is a solid definition of an effective principal, the definition does not isolate specific practices that can contribute to creating and maintaining a positive morale. The concluding line of the article stated that "the lesson for school board members and superintendents is this: don't blame teachers if their morale is low. First look to your principals" (p.43). It is evident that, though specific practices are not identified, the principal can serve as the ultimate stakeholder in determining morale.

For several decades, studies have repeatedly tied teacher morale to building-level leadership. Bhella (1982) attempted to ascertain if there was a parallel between the managerial style of the supervisor (principal), as it relates to teacher morale. The researcher was determined to isolate the factors of a school leader that contribute greatly to a positive school morale and culture. With significant research having been conducted in the private sector regarding productivity, Bhella (1982) used the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire developed by Bently and Rempel. The instrument which was distributed to teachers in high and low performing high schools, and asked participants to quantify ratings according to a ten-part categorical survey. The categories ranged from Curriculum Issues to Community Support of Education. The majority of teachers surveyed recognized that the first category within the survey, Teacher Rapport with the Principal, was crucial in assessing and determining morale (Bhella, 1982, p. 371). The survey served to strengthen the premise mentioned in previous literature about the importance the administrator plays in setting the tone of the building through his/her management practices.

"Teacher morale is related to the behavior of the principal…the teacher's self-image is constantly reinforced, positively or negatively, by the principal's behavior- or the teacher's perception of the principal's behavior" (Magoon & Linkous, 1979, p. 23). Magoon & Linkous (1979) reinforced the principal's role in establishing morale. Magoon & Linkous (1979) began their article with a recognition that while the concept of morale is "greatly discussed, it is little understood, and difficult to define" (p. 20). The article further proceeded to encourage administrators to build a collaborative environment between all factions of the school community via encouraging a shared-decision making approach to policies and procedures. Though crucial in establishing the link between the administrator and the building morale, concrete, tangible behaviors are not referenced in the article.

Blase & Roberts (1994) administered an open-ended questionnaire (The Inventory of Strategies Used by Principals to Influence Teachers- ISUPIT) to 800 teachers. The survey participant was given the opportunity to reflect upon what administrative practices led to an increase or maintenance of a high level of morale within the building. The questionnaire asked participants to reflect upon ten factors pertaining to morale, including: rewards, formal authority, support, communication of expectations, visibility, modeling, suggestion, contrived requests for advice, coercion, and authoritarianism. This quantitative study yielded that rewards, communication of expectations, and visibility were among the top ranked in the inventory returned by respondents as being influential factors among the teaching staff (Blase & Roberts, 1994, p. 76). Blase and Roberts (1994) research begins to authentically recognize that there are some administrative practices that have much more of an impact on morale than others. Coercion, authoritarianism, and contrived request for advice (asking for advice when a decision has already been made) were ranked among the lowest in boosting or maintaining good morale.

Principal Practices, Morale, and Teacher Motivation

"The visible principal has the opportunity to model his or her beliefs and to promote a positive instructional climate….principals who create an exciting and reinforcing learning environment will find that students and teachers will want to do what needs to be done" (Halawah, 2005, p. 337). This study was conducted in the United Arab Emirates and examined the relationship between effective communication by high school principals and school climate. This study captured the value in examining specific principal practices, and their effects upon teacher willingness to promote student achievement. The study recognized that, while a principal does not have direct student contact, the principal can have an overarching effect upon the morale and achievement of a school community.

Hughes & The West Virginia Education Fund (1995) conducted a study under the guidance of the Education Policy Research Institute of 33 high performing elementary schools. Specific school traits were determined to be in place within effective West Virginia Elementary Schools, when compared to those schools considered "Less Effective" using a variety of social and academic data. The research illustrated that the majority of the high performing elementary schools in the study, the majority possessed a "high staff morale, job satisfaction, and strong teacher accountability" (Hughes, 1995, p. 7). The report also specifically mentioned that these high performing buildings possessed "a principal with an open communication style, who is supportive of the teachers and the academic program" (p. 7). Such traits were in addition to a proactive approach to curriculum and instruction tailored to the needs of their students.

Positive morale allows a staff member to feel positive about their work environment. However, if positive morale does not have a positive effect upon motivation result in increased opportunities for success for students, morale as it relates to student achievement would be

irrelevant. DuFour (1985), using previous research conducted in the private sector, identified that morale and productivity are not mutually exclusive. Referencing a study conducted by Peters and Waterman, DuFour (1985) stated that "the best-run companies were outstanding not because they were able to recruit and hire extraordinary people, but because they were able to motivate average employees to extraordinary dedication and performance" (Dufour, 1985, p. 34). DuFour further identified that high morale and student achievement can be derived through "visualizing strong, dynamic, aggressive principals who roam their schools with a clear vision of what they want to achieve" (p. 35). DuFour recognized that an effective building leader not only has a clear, articulated vision, but also is as an active member of the building, not simply sitting behind a closed door, unreachable to the school community at large.

MacNel, Prater, & Busch (2009) found a relationship between school culture and climate and the levels of student achievement within that educational realm. The researchers made reference to work completed by Freiberg and Stein (1999), who described school climate and morale as "the heart and soul of the school and the essence of the school that draws teachers and students to love the school and want to be a part of it" (MacNel, Prater, & Busch, 2009, p. 75). Conversely, research by Hoy & Tarter (1997) recognized that "unhealthy schools are deterred in their mission and goals…neither teachers nor students are academically motivated…healthy schools innately promote high academic standards, and are more conducive to student success and achievement" (p. 75). Hoy & Tarter (1997) revealed that, despite their study overall, very little formal research has been studied regarding teacher morale, teacher motivation, and their subsequent relationship to student achievement, thus further underscoring the need for further study.

John Rodgers (2010) explored various research questions pertaining to the interrelationships between leadership practices, teacher morale and motivation, and student outcomes in his dissertation. He posed the following research question as a means of completing a quantitative study among principals in high performing Illinois schools:

What are the correlations between the staff morale and the leadership practices of defining mission, managing curriculum, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting a positive instructional environment?

Using a survey instrument among principals in Illinois *Spotlight* schools (schools recognized for showing exemplary progress on their standardized test scores), data were collected from over 100 practicing principals via an online survey. The results demonstrated that there was a "reciprocal relationship between the leadership behaviors of a principal and the conditions of staff and school climate" (Rodgers, 2010, p. 121). Rodgers' study validated that teacher morale and satisfaction with their work environment not only affects the practices of an administrator and how the principal decides to implement his/her leadership practices, but most importantly, the administrator's implementation of such practices have a clear connection to building morale, and in turn, the promotion of a positive instructional environment that will foster student achievement.

Covington (2010) conducted a mixed methods study that attempted to validate her hypothesis that teacher morale is influenced by: working conditions, level of belongingness, work load, student discipline, relationships with employees and employer, decision making procedures, and administrators' dispositions. The researcher also hypothesized that, there is no correlation between teacher morale and student standardized test scores. After interviewing over 30 teachers from a high performing middle school who also participated in completing a survey

instrument, this study concluded that there is no relationship between teacher morale and student success on standardized test scores. Though a limited study (a small group of middle school teachers from one selected building), the research illustrated contradictory messages regarding the role a principal can play in building morale, and in turn, if positive morale translates to greater teacher involvement in fostering student achievement (Covington, 2010).

White and Stevens (1988) found that "teacher attitudes towards classroom evaluation systems as well as their perceptions of the principal were strong predictors of students' achievement in reading" (White & Stevens, 1988, p. 232). The study contained over 1500 responses from teachers throughout school districts in the Southwest United States. Participants completed the quantitative *Survey of Teacher Attitudes (STA)*, along with an *Observation Climate Description* instrument. The researchers attempted to ascertain if there was a relationship between teacher morale and student achievement on standardized test scores. The study concluded that there is "sufficient evidence to generate hypotheses about and teacher morale in relation to student learning, generalizations regarding these variables should not be made" (p. 232). The research in this study validated a connection between principal practices, morale, and student achievement. The researchers in this study however were reticent to draw any firm conclusions, thus indicating a need for further research in the area of specific administrative practices as they pertain to the influence of teacher morale and teacher motivation to embrace new initiatives that will in turn affect student experiences.

A research study conducted by Mendel, Watson, & MacGregor (2002) recognized the evolution of the role of the elementary principalship, transitioning from more of a business managerial role to that of an instructional leadership. The results of the study indicated that the collaborative principals had the highest correlation to staff morale, while those principals who

operated in a more directive fashion tended to score the lowest in regards to staff morale. The authors utilized quantitative means to determine whether the leadership behavior of Missouri elementary principals (when compared to teacher responses associated with that particular administrator) correlated to school climate. Three styles of leadership were measured, characterizing leaders as either directive (the administrator is the ultimate authority), non-directive (the administrator takes a back seat to most issues, allowing teachers to collectively make decisions and solve problems), and collaborative. The collaborative leader "routinely works together to promote effective teaching and learning…the principal facilitates the process of teachers working together and teaching each other the practice of teaching" (Mendel, Watson, & MacGregor, 2002, p. 2). The collaborative leader, unlike the directive leader, must be visible, proactive in his/her communication, and able to form a positive, trusting relationship with his/her faculty, in order to facilitate school-wide communication and a willingness to participate in collaborate efforts.

Conversely, Michael Zigarelli's 2001 study entitled *An Empirical Test of Conclusions From Effective Schools Research* used data available from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 to do a quantitative analysis to assess effective school variables. Though the researcher hypothesized that the school administration and leadership would have an effect upon school success, analysis of these data using a multiple regression analysis indicated that, "the effect of principal influences is less clear. The data presented no evidence that principal involvement in school policy, in the distribution of funds, in purchasing, or in the improvement of teaching contributes to student achievement" (Zigarelli, 1996, p. 106). Though this study is contradictory to previously presented research in this literature review, the lack of consistency

further supports a need for further exploration into the true effect of principal practices upon morale and student achievement.

Principal Influence on Teacher Willingness to Embrace Initiative

The principal not only has great potential to influence morale, but also in affecting the motivation of his/her faculty to embrace the initiatives and vision of a building. In a comparative study using data available from United Kingdom schools, Evans (2001) stated, "school teacher morale, job satisfaction, and motivation to try new things are influenced less by externally initiated factors such as salary and conditions of service, but by the school's leadership" (Evans, 2001, p. 292). Evans worked illustrated that, while compensation and educational legislation are influential, the role of the principal is valuable in the influence of teacher morale, and willingness to experiment with new curriculum and instruction ideas. "Leaders, I have argued, are capable of filling teachers with enthusiasm or making them dread going to work every morning…they may buffer teachers against the imposition of required policy, or exacerbate the problems that go along with mandates" (Evans, 2001, p. 294). The principal cannot control the mandates and legislation set forth by State and National Education Deparments, but the principal can, through his/her practices, serve to insulate faculty from the cynicism and stress that accompanies such requirements, and create an environment in which teachers are excited to come to work, and through experimenting with new instructional techniques and initiatives, positively affect the student experience.

In an excerpt from a book by Blase & Kirby (1992), the importance of principal contact and communication with teachers is underscored through faculty interviews. "Principals use communication and praise as a strategy for influencing teachers' attitudes and behavior…recognition of teacher strengths was viewed as a means of… developing teachers'

26

skills while promoting teachers' confidence" (Blase & Kirby, 1992, p. 71). Communicating with teachers and, through communication recognizing teachers for their positive contributions to the classrooms serves to increase teacher morale, and in turn, creates a confidence that allows the teacher to experiment and embrace new instructional initiatives. Teachers who had frequent communication with their principal, and received compliments and praise were "inspired…enthusiastic…and were more apt to volunteer for projects (the principal) needs help on" (p. 72). Positive, principal communication can inspire teacher enthusiasm, and result in the teacher's willingness to support the initiatives of the building.

A quantitative study conducted by Rosenholtz & Carl (1990) administered over 1,200 surveys to elementary faculty in Tennessee public school systems, in an effort to determine the effects of administrative support on teacher commitment. The study concluded that "teachers who feel competent and valued for that competence by their administrator are more apt to try even harder to improve their performance" (Rosenholtz & Carl, 1990, p. 254). The principal, through his/her management practices pertaining to morale and promoting a positive work environment, influence faculty using positivity and support as a means of encouraging teachers to take a risks in experimenting with new ideas.

Effective Principal Management in High and Low Performing Schools

Research pertaining to principal leadership in high and low performing schools has attempted to determine commonalities in schools that are successful in either maintaining high performance, or schools who have successfully raised their performance status. In a case study analysis of Chicago Public Schools placed classified as low-performing building, Finnigan & Stewart (2009) interviewed faculty and administrators from ten low performing buildings, which included buildings that moved off probationary lists during a two-year period. A teacher from a

school that moved from the low performing school list to a school in good academic standing stated, in an interview, that "the principal was viewed as someone who took the time to communicate and listen to the complaints of parents and teachers, and in turn, identified solutions to their problems" (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009, p. 598). Conversely, schools who were low performing and remained as such indicated that the principal "was not capable or willing to listen to teachers, or have good relations with teachers, parents, or kids" (p. 599). Two-way communication between the principal and teacher was a trait present in low performing schools that displayed performance progress, and was absent in those school buildings that remained on the low performing list.

> The principals in schools that quickly moved off probation created a collective sense of responsibility for the performance of students and a sense of urgency, not just because of the pressures of accountability, but because the administrator created a collective sense that they were 'all in this together' attitude." (p. 610).

The principal's cultivation of morale and collegiality in buildings that required significant performance changes were more successful than those that did not invest in creating a positive, collective sense of morale for the faculty and staff.

A mixed-methods study pertaining to high performing schools in high poverty communities conducted by Mulford, Kendall, Ewington, Edmunds, Kendall, & Sillins (2008) revealed that "successful principals of schools in high poverty communities invest primary in relationship building despite systematic pressures" (Mulford et al., 2008, p. 465). The study also illustrated successful principals in high performing schools "spent less time away from the school campus…and indicated that it is more important to communicate all aspects of the school to the staff" (p. 471). The research recognized the importance of campus visibility and frequent

communication with staff as important ingredients to successful schools despite uncontrollable socioeconomic conditions.

Summary

This chapter presented the most valuable literature pertaining to teacher morale, principal management practices, the effects of principal practices upon teacher morale and motivation, principal influence on teacher willingness to embrace initiative, and effective principal management in high and low performing schools.   Chapter Three will present the methodology used to answer the four research hypothesis questions associated with this study. Chapter Three will also describe the quantitative survey instrument used to derive data, means of data collection to answer the research hypothesis questions, and the plan for the analysis of the data collected to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Background

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study to explore the relationship between principal management practices, teacher morale, and a willingness to embrace participation in initiatives and activities. The study also explains the methodology used to determine if there is any difference in responses to survey questions between high and low performing schools. The following sections comprise this chapter: a restatement of the purpose of this research, individual research questions, design, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection, variables of the study, data analysis techniques, and summary.

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of the frequency that building principals employ specific management practices, and to the degree to which these practices have an effect on the individual and collective faculty's morale. The study was also designed to compare the responses of teachers to survey questions from both high and low performing school districts. The study aims at investigating whether there was a relationship between elementary administrator management practices and their effect on morale. The study was also designed to determine if an increase in morale resulted in an increase in the building faculty's willingness to experiment with new instructional practices, or experience a greater level of participation and involvement in building activities or initiatives.

Through the examination of the research study purpose statement, four research questions were developed. Questions were developed for the survey instrument to match the needs of each research question, so that data could be compiled and analyzed.

Research Questions

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the frequency that principals employ specific management practices and teacher perception of morale within that particular building?

2. Is there a relationship between specific principals' management practices and the value placed upon these practices by the teachers within the building?

3. Is there a relationship between the value teachers place on principal management practices and their willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities?

4. Is there any difference between high and low performing elementary schools in teacher morale and their willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities as it relates to principal management practices?

Design

This quantitative study used a survey instrument designed by the researcher to explore principal's management practices, and how such practices relate to teacher morale, and willingness to embrace initiative. The survey instrument also attempted to determine if there was a difference in responses between high and low performing schools. Creswell stated that "quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, using instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures" (Creswell, 2008, p. 4). Because each research question contained clear independent and dependent variables, quantitative research was the desired means of deriving data for analysis and conclusion purposes.

Population and Sampling Procedures

The sample of this study was limited to purposefully selected New York State Capital District Elementary schools that were in "good standing," and schools that were designated as having SINI status (School in Need of Improvement). Purposefully selected participants, according to Creswell, are those that are "chosen by the researcher that will best assist the researcher in understanding the problem and the research question" (Creswell, 2008, p. 178). The study used data from an alphabetical list of Capital Region School Districts and Buildings, and purposefully selected 12 school buildings possessing SINI status, and 12 school buildings that were in good standing, beginning on the first page of the alphabetical document. School name and initial contact information was taken from the New York State Department of Education website. The survey was distributed to 500 elementary teachers via email. Specific email and teacher contact information were taken from school district websites, which contained the email addresses of building faculty members. The survey was distributed via email to 250 faculty from each category of SINI and Non-SINI schools. The study aimed to obtain a sample size that permitted appropriate statistical analysis. An over-sampling strategy, meaning that more surveys were distributed than required for a significant sample for appropriate research analysis, was used to ensure an appropriate sample size was obtained for statistical analysis.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument contained questions that asked the participant to report the frequency the administrator exhibited specified management practices and the degree to which these practices had an effect on the participant's morale. The questions in the survey pertaining to frequency used the following words to quantify the five-point Likert Scale: 5 (5 or more times per week), 4 (3-4 times per week), 3 (2 times per week), 2 (1 time per week), 1 (none). The questions pertaining to the principal's administrative practices and the overall effects on building morale used following words to quantify the four-point Likert Scale : 4 (Strongly Agree), 3 (Somewhat Agree), 2 (Somewhat Disagree), and 1 (Strongly Disagree). Ten survey questions were asked in multiple choice format, requiring the participant to answer using one of the provided choices. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. The survey was distributed directly to the teachers via email and, because the survey was anonymous and confidential, the researcher informed building and district administration that surveys were being administered. District permission was not required since there was no involvement of administration in distributing this survey, and the responses were completely anonymous, voluntary, and confidential. Appendices B and C contain the communication used to describe the survey and its purpose.

Data Collection

The survey was distributed through the web-based SurveyMonkey survey collection software. Survey participants were provided with two reminders over a four week period via email to take the survey, if they had not already participated. At the close of the survey period, 171 respondents had participated in the survey, making the response rate 34 percent. One hundred and seventy one respondents provided ample data for statistical analysis. The link to

this survey was administered directly to the elementary teachers via email. District-level

administration was made aware of the research study via an explanatory letter at the same time

the survey was distributed to faculty participants. The introductory letter and header of the

survey accentuated the voluntary nature of participation, and the fact that the survey and its

contents would remain completely anonymous. The participant had the option to cease taking

the survey at any point throughout the study. Upon taking the survey, participants were asked to

provide demographic data regarding gender, tenure status, the number of years they had been

teaching, and whether they are in a SINI or non-SINI school. Such information was designed to

further assist the study in determining if there were any relationships between gender,

experience, and school performance as they related to the original research questions. All data

were collected through the SurveyMonkey web-based survey software, and remained secure on

the researcher's laptop computer. All data collected remained completely anonymous. Data

were collected and analyzed in aggregate form. The results of this study were not shared with

participants in the study nor the administration of each building and district, as the data were

aggregate, and not specific to any particular building or system.

Variables of the Study

For research question one, the dependent variable was teacher perception of morale, and

the independent variable was the frequency in which principals employed specified management

practices. In research question two, the dependent variable was the value teachers placed upon

specified management practices, and the independent variables were the specified management

practices. For research question three, the dependent variables were teacher participation in

building initiatives and activities, and the independent variables were the value teachers placed

upon specified management practices. For research question four, the dependent variables were

teacher participation in building initiatives and activities, and the independent variable was school performance.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained through SurveyMonkey were entered into a computer and analyzed using SPSS v. 20 software. Survey questions relating to the relationship of principal practices, value of these practices and overall morale were analyzed using Frequency Distribution and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient analysis was applied to research questions one and two. "A Pearson's Correlation reflects the dynamic quality of the relationship between variables. In doing so, it allows us to understand whether variables change in the same direction….the opposite direction, or, whether the variables have any relationship" (Salkind, 2008, p. 77). Research questions one and two attempted to establish whether a relationship existed between an independent and dependent variable, hence why a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was the appropriate means of statistical analysis. Chi Square analysis was used to examine the patterns of responses regarding the value placed on principal management practices by the teacher and his/her participation in building initiatives. Research question three attempted to explore whether there was a relationship between the way respondents answered questions on the survey pertaining to value, and questions pertaining to participation in building initiatives and activities. "Chi-square is a…non-parametric test that allows you to determine if what you observe in a distribution of frequencies would be what you would expect to occur by chance…or if there really was a pattern of preference" (Salkind, 2008, p. 263). This method of analysis was ideal in determining whether there was a connection

between the value of principal practices and teacher participation in building initiatives and activities, or whether responses were ultimately unrelated.

One-way ANOVA was used to determine if there was any difference between high and low performing schools, when compared to morale and participation in building initiatives. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze data associated with research question four, which attempted to determine if there was any difference in respondent answers to morale and participation in building initiatives in activities, depending upon whether participants were from a SINI or non-SINI School. "A simple analysis of variance (or ANOVA) has only one independent variable, and is a test for the difference between two or more means" (Salkind, 2008, p. 388). SINI and non-SINI school status serves as the one independent variable in this analysis. This is why the one-way ANOVA statistical analysis was appropriate for this research question.

Summary

This chapter covered the research design and methodology used by the study to examine the relationship between principal management practices, teacher morale, and teacher willingness to embrace new initiatives and activities. This chapter explained the process of creating, distributing, collecting, and analyzing the data yielded through quantitatively surveying elementary faculty. Chapter Four contains the results of the data analysis which answer each of the four research questions.

CHAPTER IV:

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

      The purpose of this quantitative research study was to examine the frequency that building principals employ specific management practices, and the degree to which these practices have an effect on teacher morale, and willingness to participate in building initiatives. The study also compared the responses of teachers from both high and low performing school districts. The study investigated whether there was a relationship between elementary administrator management practices and morale, and whether such independent variables had an effect upon a building faculty's willingness to experiment with new instructional practices, or experience a greater level of participation and involvement in building activities or initiatives.

      Data analysis is this chapter is presented in four sections relating separately to each of this study's research questions. Specific statistical analysis was used to answer each question and is explained and presented using both tables and descriptive analysis of the data. The following research questions guided this study and served as the foundation for all data analysis:

1. Is there a relationship between the frequency that principals employ specific management practices and teacher perception of morale within that particular building?

2. Is there a relationship between specific principals' management practices and the value placed upon these practices by the teachers within the building?

3. Is there a relationship between the value teachers place on principal management practices and their willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities?

4. Is there any difference between high and low performing elementary schools in teacher morale and their willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities as it relates to principal management practices?

Background of Participants

The following section provides information regarding the demographic background of survey respondents. The quantitative survey designed by the researcher was distributed to elementary faculty in 24 buildings throughout school districts in the New York State Capital District. Over 500 surveys were distributed to elementary educators, and 171 were returned, constituting a return rate of 34 percent. The survey consisted of 16 questions, with the first four questions pertaining to the participant's gender, tenure status, number of years as a classroom teacher, and the performance designation of his/her school (school in good standing or a School in Need of Improvement, or SINI).

Table 1 presents the demographic background of the participants. It displays the frequency distribution of the participants' gender, tenure status, years teaching, and school performance status. Out of 171 participants, 144 were female, constituting 84%. Twenty-six males participated in the survey, which accounted for the remaining 16%.   The high percentage of female response rate could be attributed to the general demographics of elementary schools, which tend to have a significantly higher percentage of female faculty members. The teachers were asked to indicate their tenure status. Eighty six percent respondents indicated that they had received tenure. The remaining 24 respondents or 14% indicated they were untenured. Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of years experience respondents had acquired as a classroom teacher. Using increments of five years, the question allowed the

respondent to indicate their level of service through 25 years and over. As illustrated in the table, the greatest percentage of participants in the survey had teaching experience of 11-15 years, which represented 24% of the sample. The second largest group of respondents is represented in the 6-10 years of experience population, or 22% of the sample. Those teaching 0-5 years and over 25 years represented the smallest subsets, constituting 11% and 12% of the sample size, respectively. The high response rate from those tenured and teaching for longer periods of time could be a result of subsequent years of budget cuts, which have forced districts to lay off untenured, newer teachers, due to seniority lists. The byproduct of tight budget years may explain why remaining faculty not affected by budget constraints are those higher on seniority lists, and most likely tenured.

Finally, the survey participant was asked to indicate if he/she was working in a high or low performing school, using the New York State designation of School in Need of Improvement as a means of qualifying whether a school is considered low performing. While surveys were evenly distributed to schools with both designations, 86% of respondents worked in high performing schools, or schools in "good standing." Twenty-two respondents or 13% indicated that they worked in low performing schools, or *Schools in Need of Improvement.* Two of the 171 total sample population did not answer this question. The low response rate from school faculty working in SINI schools could be a result of the level of responsibility and stress associated with these work environments. These factors could have been limited the time faculty could provide for a non-mandatory research study.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Demographics for Survey Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percent
Gender:Male	27	15.8
Female	144	84.2
Tenure Status: Tenured	147	86.0
Untenured	24	14.0
Teaching Experience:		
0-5 Years in the Classroom	19	11.1
6-10 Years in the Classroom	38	22.2
11-15 Years in the Classroom	41	24.0
16-20 Years in the Classroom	25	14.6
21-25 Years in the Classroom	27	15.8
Over 25 Years in the Classroom	21	12.3
School Status: SINI School	22	12.9
Non-SINI School	147	86.0

Some of the collected demographic data, such as gender, tenure status, and years of teaching experience did not relate specifically to the research questions. This information was used as a means of gathering demographic data regarding the demographics of elementary school faculty, but was not relevant to the four research questions this study attempted to answer. This information was gathered so that the study could determine if a relationship existed between this demographic information and the established research hypothesis. Statistical analysis showed

that despite not being included in the original research questions, there were no statistically significant relationships between morale, value of principal management practices, and teacher initiative when compared to demographic data.

Research Question One: Is There a Relationship between the frequency that principals employ specific management practices and teacher perception of morale within that particular building?

The data analysis for the first research question is presented in this section. Research question one attempted to determine if there was a relationship between the principal's visibility in the building, written communication, face-to-face communication, informal visits to classrooms and presence at extracurricular activities and events, and teacher's perception of morale within their building. The study used questions five, seven, and eight from the survey instrument to examine this relationship. Table two below provides a description of the frequency distribution of principal effect on morale, when the respondents were asked to indicate whether the building principal has an effect upon the morale in his/her building. The results of this table corresponded to question eight in the survey. Seventy one percent of respondents strongly agreed that the building principal had an effect upon their perception of morale in the building. Twenty six percent of respondents somewhat agreed that the principal does influence morale.

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents Regarding Principal Effect on Morale

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	122	71.3
Somewhat Agree	45	26.3
Somewhat Disagree	4	2.3

Table 3 illustrates how the participants responded to a statement in which they were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the following statement: the frequency of which your principal is visible within the building and in your classroom has an effect upon building morale. Sixty four percent of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and approximately thirty percent indicated that they somewhat agreed. Five percent indicated that they somewhat disagreed, and less than 1% stated that they strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Survey Responses of Principal Visibility and Effect on Building Morale

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Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	109	63.7
Somewhat Agree	52	30.4
Somewhat Disagree	8	4.7
Strongly Disagree	1	0.6

Table 4 illustrates the distribution of the participants who responded to the statement in which they were asked to indicate their agreement with the following statement*: the frequency in which my principal communicates has an effect upon the building morale.* Of the 170 respondents who answered this question, 71% indicated they strongly agreed with this statement, and 27% indicated that they somewhat agreed with this statement. Two percent indicated that they somewhat or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Survey Reponses of Communication and Effect on Morale

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	121	70.8
Somewhat Agree	45	26.3
Somewhat Disagree	3	1.8
Strongly Disagree	1	0.6

Pearson's correlations were calculated using SPSS v. 20 to study the relationship between the frequency of specified principal management practices, and teacher perception of morale in the building. The definition of morale, as defined by Fineman (1999), was provided to survey participants within the survey as a part of the survey question. Questions five and seven from the survey were used in this analysis, shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Between Frequency of Specific Principal Management Practices and Morale of Survey Respondents

Management Practices	Morale
Visibility Around School	
Pearson Correlation	.376**
Visits to Your Classroom	
Pearson Correlation	.375**
Face to Face Communication	
Pearson Correlation	.434**
Written Communication	
Pearson Correlation	.158*
Extracurricular Attendance	
Pearson Correlation	.215**

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between the frequency of the five management practices and morale indicated a statistically significant relationship between all five practices and morale, as indicated via SPSS.

Correlation, as defined through Salkind (2008), indicated that if a "correlation between two variables is .5, you could safely conclude that the relationship is a moderate one- not strong, but certainly not weak enough to say that the variables in question don't share anything in common" (Salkind, 2008, p. 85). While a positive correlation existed between all five management practices and teacher perception of morale, the greatest correlation existed between face-to-face communication (r= .434) at the p<.01 level. This illustrates a moderately positive

relationship with morale, according to Salkind (2008). Visibility (r=.376) and visits to classroom also indicated a slightly weaker positive correlation with morale (r=.375), at the p<.01 level indicating a statistically significant relationship with morale. Attendance at extracurricular events outside of school (r=.215) indicated a statistically significant but weak positive correlation at the p<.01 level. While statistically significant, the correlation coefficient between face-to-face communication, visibility and visits to the classroom was greater than the correlation coefficient between morale and attendance at extracurricular events outside of school and visibility throughout the campus. Written communication had a statistically significant relationship (r=.158) at the p<0.05 level. Salkind (2008) defined the specific correlation coefficients required in order to classify the strength of a correlation (strong to weak). All relationships in this research were statistically significant, but only the face-to-face communication, visibility throughout the campus, and visits to the classroom possessed statistically significant, moderate to weak correlations. A weaker correlation existed between attendance at extracurricular activities and morale, followed by almost no correlation between written communication and morale (Salkind, 2008, p. 85). Overall, face-to-face communication, visibility around the school campus and visits to the teachers' classroom other than during formal observations showed the highest relationship to teacher morale. Written communication and attendance at extracurricular activities showed less of a relationship to overall staff morale.

Research Question Two: Is There a Relationship between principals' management practices and the value placed upon these practices by the teachers within the building?

The second research question of this study attempted to determine if there was a relationship between the specific principal management practices and whether teachers valued such practices. Specific principal management practices were limited to: visibility around the school campus, informal visits to the classroom, written communication, face-to-face communication, and attendance at extracurricular activities. The survey isolated each of the five principal management practices identified earlier in the study, and asked the respondents to indicate whether they agreed that such a practice was personally valued. Table 6 illustrates the frequency distribution of the value of principal visibility around the school campus, showing that 87% of respondents strongly agreed, and 12% somewhat agreed that principal visibility around the school campus was valued. Two percent somewhat or strongly disagreed regarding the value of principal visibility around the school campus.

Table 6

Frequency Distribution of Survey Responses Regarding the Teacher Value of Principal Visibility Around School Campus

_____

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	148	86.5
Somewhat Agree	20	11.7
Somewhat Disagree	2	1.2
Strongly Disagree	1	0.6

Table 7 displays the respondents' answers to question six in the survey instrument, which pertained to whether or not the principal's visit to the classroom (other than for formal observations or mandatory meetings) was valued. Seventy four percent of survey respondents indicated that they strongly agreed, and 20% somewhat agreed with this statement. Six percent of respondents indicated that they somewhat or strongly disagreed with this value statement.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents Regarding the Teacher Value of Non-Formal Principal Visits to Classrooms

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	126	73.7
Somewhat Agree	34	19.9
Somewhat Disagree	8	4.7
Strongly Disagree	3	1.8

Table 8 illustrates the opinion of respondents regarding the value of face-to-face communication outside of the classroom. Eighty percent strongly agreed, and 18% somewhat agreed that the principal's face-to-face communication was valued. Less than 2% indicated that they somewhat or strongly disagreed that he/she valued non-formal principal visits to the classroom.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents Regarding Teacher Value of Principal Face-to-Face Communication Outside of the Classroom

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	136	79.5
Somewhat Agree	31	18.1
Somewhat Disagree	3	1.8

Table 9 displays the results to the portion of question six on the survey instrument, which pertained to the respondent's value of principal written communication. Written communication was defined as: email/paper memos, direction correspondence to the teacher, newsletters, and web postings. Results illustrated that 71% of respondents strongly agreed, with 27% of respondents somewhat agreed that he/she valued face-to-face communication.

Table 9

Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents Regarding Teacher Value of Written Communication

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	122	71.3
Somewhat Agree	46	26.9
Somewhat Disagree	3	1.8

Table 10 illustrates the value teachers completing the survey placed on the principal's presence at extracurricular activities and events. Seventy six percent of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement, and 23% indicated that they somewhat agreed. Less than 2% indicated that they somewhat disagreed. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed with the value of the principal's presence at extracurricular activities.

Table 10

Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents Regarding Teacher Value of Principal Presence at Extracurricular Activities

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	127	74.3
Somewhat Agree	38	22.2
Somewhat Disagree	3	1.8

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were computed using SPSS v. 20 to investigate the relationship between principal management practices and the value placed upon these practices by building faculty members. Table 11 contains the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients computed between question five in the survey instrument which asked respondents to indicate the frequency the principal exhibited specified management practices, and question six, which asked respondents to indicate their value of each of the individual identified management practices in this survey.

Table 11

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients of Survey Respondents Comparing Principal Management Practices and Faculty Value of Practices

Description	I value Principal Visibility	I value Classroom Visits	I value Face-to- Face Communication	I value Written Communication	I value Extra- Curr. Presence
Visibility Around School					
Pearson Correlation	.243**	.221**	.295**	.240**	.204**
Visits to Your Classroom					
Pearson Correlation	.265**	.355**	.278**	.179*	.253**
Face-to-Face Communication					
Pearson Correlation	.260**	.218**	.301**	.167*	.248**
Written Communication					
Pearson Correlation	.132	.090	.128	.179*	.100
Extracurricular Attendance					
Pearson Correlation	.068	.043	.101	.237**	.219**

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

All correlation values were quite weak (r=.355 or less) for all value statements, as illustrated in Table 11. A statistically significant relationship at the p<.01 and the p<.05 level existed between the principal management practice of visibility and the value placed by faculty on this practice. A high level of statistical significance existed between the management practice of visibility and the value of face-to-face communication (r=.295).

The largest statistically significant relationship and correlation (r=.355) existed between the practice of principal visits to classrooms other than during formal observations and value of principal visits to classrooms. Statistically significant relationships at the p<.01 level existed between the value of visibility, communication, and presence at extracurricular activities.

Though statistically significant, a weak correlation coefficient existed between administrative visits and value of written communication (r=.179) at the p<.05 level.

The administrative practice of face-to-face communication resulted in statistically significant relationships at the p<.01 in the correlation between this practice and the value placed upon visibility (r=.26), visits to the classroom (r=.218), and presence at extracurricular activities (r=.248). A statistically significant relationship and correlation occurred between the practice and value placed upon face-to-face communication (r=.301) at the p<.01 level. The smallest statistically significant relationship existed between the practice of face-to-face communication and the value of written communication (r=.167) at the p<.05 level.

According to Salkind's (2008) informational table regarding correlation strength, a correlation between .4 and .6 is considered to be moderate, .2 and .4 weak, 0 and .2 weak or no relationship (Salkind, 2008, p. 85). The principal practice of using written communication and the value faculty placed upon this practice produced a statistically significant value correlation (r=.179) at the p<.05 level. A Pearson's Correlation Coefficient value of r=.179 is statistically significant, but a weak correlation.

The principal's attendance at extracurricular activities produced a statistically significant relationship between this practice and its value to teachers (r=.219) at the p<.01 level. A statistically significant relationship also existed between administrator attendance at extracurricular activities and faculty value of written communication (r=.237) at the p<.01 level. The remaining value statements when compared to this practice were statistically insignificant.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient analysis revealed that visits to the classroom, visibility throughout the school campus, and face-to-face communication were most valued by faculty, with less value placed on attendance at extracurricular activities and written communication.

Research Question Three: Is there a relationship between the value teachers place on principal management practices and their participation in building initiatives and activities?

The third research question inquired whether the value placed upon principal management practices by faculty has an effect upon the teacher's willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities. Specific principal management practices were limited to: visibility around the school campus, informal visits to the classroom, written communication, face-to-face communication, and attendance at extracurricular activities. Table 12 provides a frequency distribution of responses to the survey question which asked the respondent to indicate whether principal management practices had an effect upon the teacher's willingness to voluntary participate in building social or curricular initiatives. Forty five percent indicated that they strongly agreed, and 47% indicated that they somewhat agreed that the value he/she places upon principal management practices affected his/her participation in building initiatives and activities. Nine percent of respondents indicated that they somewhat or strongly disagreed with this statement, thus indicating that they felt the principal's management practices did not affect their willingness to voluntarily participate in building initiatives or activities.

Table 12

Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents Regarding Principal Management Practices and Effect on Voluntary Participation in Building Initiatives

_____

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	76	44.4
Somewhat Agree	79	46.2
Somewhat Disagree	7	4.1
Strongly Disagree	8	4.7

Table 13 addresses whether a change in principal management practices would directly affect the role the teacher played in his/her school community. Specific principal management practices were limited to: visibility around the school campus, informal visits to the classroom, written communication, face-to-face communication, and attendance at extracurricular activities. Thirty eight percent indicated that they strongly agreed, with 42% indicating that they somewhat agreed with this statement. Twenty one percent indicated that they somewhat or strongly disagreed with this statement, thus illustrating the sentiment that the principal's management practices would not influence their participation in the school community.

Table 13

Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents of the Effect of Change in Principal Management Practices and the Role of the Teacher in the School Community

_____

Description	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	64	37.4
Somewhat Agree	71	41.5
Somewhat Disagree	23	13.5
Strongly Disagree	12	7.0

Pearson's Chi Square Analyses were calculated using SPSS v.20 between the value statements regarding principal management practices and the questions within the survey instrument pertaining to faculty participation in building curriculum and social initiatives, as well as participation in conferences and in non-mandated professional development opportunities. The results can be found in Table 14.

Table 14

Chi Square Analysis of Survey Respondents Regarding Value of Principal Practices as Compared to Participation in Building Initiatives

Description	Curriculum Participation	Social/ Emotional Participation	Attendance at Workshop	New Instr. Practice
Value of Campus Visibility				
Chi-Square	2.757	2.334	0.539	0.244
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.252	.506	.910	.970
Value of Principal Classroom Visits				
Chi-Square	5.736	1.647	0.581	0.995
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.125	.649	.901	.802
Value of Face-to-Face Communication				
Chi-Square	1.610	0.375	0.719	1.008
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.447	.829	.698	.604
Value of Written Communication				
Chi-Square	0.986	1.124	1.304	0.243
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.611	.570	.521	.886
Value of Extracurricular Attendance				
Chi-Square	1.250	1.557	.483	0.124
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.535	.459	.786	.940

Using Chi-Square analysis, statistically significant values are indicated with the SPSS software data. Statistically significant relationships would be displayed with an asterisk, and through Asymptotic Significance (Asymp. Sig) values that are closest to zero. Table 14, which matches the initial analysis of the frequency distribution data illustrate that none of the Chi-Square analysis computations between value and participation concluded anything of statistically significant value. The statement closest to possessing statistical significance was the value of the

principal's visits to the classroom and curriculum participation (r=.125). While the value was

not statistically significant, the Asymptotic Significance value was much closer to zero than the

other value statements. It is evident through frequency distribution and Chi-Square analysis that,

in isolation, the value of the identified principal management practices as indicated by the

respondents did not have a significant impact upon teacher willingness to participate in building

initiatives and activities. However, the principal's visits to classrooms, though not statistically

significant, continues to resonate throughout the first three research questions, thus illustrating

that while not statistically significant, such a practice is valued and noticed by faculty.

Research Question Four: Is there a difference between high and low performing

elementary schools in teacher morale and their willingness to participate in building

initiatives and activities as it relates to principal management practices?

A one-way ANOVA was computed using SPSS v.20, which compared the survey

participants' indication of whether or not they were working in a SINI or Non-SINI school

affected his/her answers to their perception of morale and their willingness to participate in

building initiatives and activities. It should be noted that of the 171 respondents, 22

respondents, or 13% indicated they were working in a School in Need of Improvement, with the

remaining respondents working in schools possessing Good Standing Status. The limited

number of respondents from those working in SINI Schools certainly poses limitations when

making gross assumptions. Within this sample, the results of the ANOVA analysis can be found

in Table 15.

Table 15

ANOVA Analysis of High and Low Performing Schools, Morale , and Initiative Participation of Survey Respondents

Description	Mean	F	Sig.
Building Morale		1.537	.217
SINI	2.59		
Non-SINI	2.35		
Curriculum Participation		0.315	.575
SINI	1.18		
Non-SINI	1.23		
Social/Emotional Participation		0.004	.947
SINI	1.23		
Non-SINI	1.24		
Workshop Attendance		0.220	.640
SINI	1.09		
Non-SINI	1.13		
New Instructional Practice		0.069	.793
SINI	1.05		
Non-SINI	1.03		

In an ANOVA analysis, statistical significance is recognized in numerical values that are close to zero. Table 15 illustrates no statistically significant relationship between school designation, and how respondents assessed their morale and participation in building initiatives and activities. As observed in the table of the ANOVA analysis, morale and participation in building initiatives showed no statistically significant relationship to school performance. As illustrated through the mean average responses between the two school groups, there are negligible differences in the values. However, it should be noted that, the building morale in SINI schools, using mean average, was greater than those in high performing schools. Also, the implementation of a new instructional practice, although a slight difference, was more embraced

in SINI schools versus those in high performing schools. The higher mean for SINI schools for these two categories is inconsistent with the remaining three dependent variables.

The negligible differences further underscore the conclusion that there was not a statistical significant relationship between of morale of faculty and faculty initiative participation when compared between high and low performing schools. While the small sample size of *SINI School* participants should be taken into consideration, conclusions from this research study cannot be drawn regarding the relationship of school designation, principal management practices, and their influence upon teacher perception of morale and willingness to participate in building initiative and activities.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of the frequency that building principals employ specific management practices, and the degree to which these practices have an effect on faculty morale. Specific principal management practices were limited to: visibility around the school campus, informal visits to the classroom, written communication, face-to-face communication, and attendance at extracurricular activities. The study also compared the responses of teachers from both 12 high and 12 low performing elementary schools. The study also investigated whether there was a relationship between elementary administrator management practices and an effect on morale, which in turn would then increase the building faculty's willingness to experiment with new instructional practices, or experience a greater level of participation and involvement in building activities or initiatives. A survey instrument was used to quantitatively explore teacher perception of their principal's management practices and how such practices relate to teacher morale. The survey consisted of 16 questions, using a four or five-point Likert scale and multiple choice questions.

The target population of this study was limited to elementary teachers working in elementary schools in the Capital Region of New York State Elementary schools, selecting schools that were in "good standing" and schools that were designated as having SINI status (School in Need of Improvement). School name and initial contact information were derived from the New York State Department of Education website. The survey was distributed to 500 elementary teachers via email using SurveyMonkey web-based survey software. The survey was

available to participants for approximately eight weeks, with two reminders sent to all solicited participants. At the close of the survey period, 170 respondents had participated in the survey, making the response rate 34%.

Summary of Findings

Research question one asked whether a relationship existed between the frequency principals employ specific management practices and teacher perception of morale within school buildings for respondents in this study. To address this question Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were computed using SPSS v. 20 software comparing survey questions and responses pertaining to the frequency of identified principal management practices and a question on the survey pertaining to teacher perception of building morale. Specific principal management practices were limited to: visibility around the school campus, informal visits to the classroom, written communication, face-to-face communication, and attendance at extracurricular activities. The major findings for this question resulted in a statistically significant positive relationship between principal practices identified for this study and teacher morale.

Research question two investigated if there was a relationship between principal management practices and the value placed upon these practices by the teachers working within the building. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were computed utilizing SPSS v. 20 software comparing questions answered by respondents on the survey pertaining to the value placed on identified principal management practices and the frequency of which the principal implemented these practices. A statistically significant relationship existed between the frequency and value of campus visibility, classroom visits other than during formal observations, and face-to-face

communication. Written communication and attendance at extracurricular events did not show a statistically significant relationship or a strong correlation.

Research question three attempted to determine whether the value teachers placed on principal management practices affected teacher participation in building initiatives and activities. Pearson's Chi-Square analyses were calculated using SPSS v.20 between the responses to value statements in the survey regarding principal management practices and questions within the survey pertaining to faculty participation in building curriculum and social initiatives, as well as participation in conferences and in non-mandated professional development opportunities. Value statements pertaining to the value of campus visibility and curriculum participation, and the value of principal's visits to the classroom and curriculum participation were the closest to exhibiting statistically significant results, as answered on the survey by respondents. Pearson's Chi-square analysis yielded that, in isolation, the value of principal management practices did not have a relationship to teacher willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities for participants in this study.

Finally, research question four asked if there was a difference between high and low performing schools in teacher morale and teacher willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities as related to principal management practices. A one-way ANOVA was calculated using SPSS v.20 comparing the survey participant's indication of whether or not they were working in a *SINI* school, as compared to the questions regarding morale and participation in building academic and social initiatives. Morale and participation in building initiatives showed no statistically significant relationship to school performance in this study.

Conclusions

This research study illustrated the principal's influence through his/her practices on staff morale. While this study did not illustrate a statistically significant relationship between specific principal management practices and teachers experimenting with new initiatives and activities, the study did not indicate that such practices would detract from teacher involvement. Morale and effective management practices are extremely important as they relate to the successful functioning of a school building or system. The translation of morale and principal management practices into teacher willingness to embrace new instructional techniques and building initiatives is of utmost importance for school improvement. Good morale and a leader that is a visible presence and effective communicator are valuable attributes. After all, such management behaviors translate to better teacher productivity and experimentation with new practices.

While there has been significant research regarding teacher morale and effective leadership and management practices, there has been very little research that has attempted to determine if a relationship existed between specific principal management practices, teacher morale, and the willingness of the teacher to embrace new building initiatives and activities. It is supported through research that the management practices of a principal are certainly influential in establishing building morale. Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) recognized that strong communication was "the glue that holds together all the other responsibilities of leadership" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 47). Research conducted by Arlestig (2008) validated that the leader's who employed multi-dimensional communication and encouraged two-way conversation showed greater success on standardized test scores. The visibility factor of the leader has also been supported via Huntington's (1995) research, recommending the importance of classroom visitations and "management by mingling" as a means of providing instructional leadership

through formal and informal communication with building staff. Besides the role the leader can play in supporting instructional leadership, Kessor's (2005) research showed a decrease in discipline referrals in those instructional environments where the principal has a frequent and visible presence. A decrease in the number of discipline referrals can assist in providing a more focused learning environment. "Teacher morale is related to the behavior of the principal…the teacher's self image is constantly reinforced, positively or negatively, by the principal's behavior- or the teacher's perception of the principal's behavior" (Magoon & Linkous, 1979, p. 23). As evidenced through prior research, the link between the behaviors and practices of the principal and morale is certainly validated.

The results of this study suggested that the specific management practices of the principal have a statistically significant impact upon teacher morale, and that teachers do value in varying degrees a principal's visibility, presence in the classroom and extracurricular activities, and written and face-to-face communication. The value and appreciation of principal management practices in this study, while translating to a greater sense of morale, did not display a statistically significant relationship to a teacher's willingness to embrace new initiatives or participate in building activities. The study also concluded that a school's status as a high or low performing school did not affect teacher value of principal practices, morale, or willingness to participate in building initiatives or activities.

DuFour (1985) referenced a research study that examined the practices of successful companies in private industry. The study stated that the "best-run companies were outstanding not because they were able to recruit and hire extraordinary people, but because they were able to motivate average employees to extraordinary dedication and performance" (DuFour, 1985). This research supports that positive morale can have an effect upon employees, resulting in a

greater level of success than those working in environments that lack positive morale. While

establishing positive morale would not appear to detract from a positive school morale and

student success, a research study conducted by Covington (2010) ascertained that there was no

correlation between positive teacher morale and student success on standardized assessments,

which serves as a quantifiable means of increased student achievement. Zigarelli's (2001)

research concluded that there is "no evidence that principal involvement in school policy, in the

distribution of funds, in purchasing, or in the improvement of teaching contributes to student

achievement" (Zigarelli, 1996, p. 106). Though previous research investigated the practices of

the leader in establishing morale, research has been contradictory as to whether the concept of

morale has a true impact upon student achievement, or does not simply remain an isolated aspect

of a school's affective domain.

The building principal, unlike the classroom teacher, is not in the position to impact

achievement by daily direct student contact. This study was very important in determining

whether a principal's daily management practices could directly affect teacher morale and, in

turn, affect teacher participation in new instructional initiatives and activities.

Recommendations

From this study, several recommendations can made to the building principal regarding

his/her effective implementation of management practices, which, in turn, can affect teacher

morale and willingness to embrace initiative. The principal should invest effort to communicate

using multiple modes and remain visible despite the overwhelming demands of the position that

could sequester the principal within his/her office.   This research study supported the role of the

principal in affecting building morale through his/her management practices. Specific principal

management practices were limited to: visibility around the school campus, informal visits to the

classroom, written communication, face-to-face communication, and attendance at extracurricular activities. Frequent face-to-face communication, written communication, visibility throughout the campus, in classrooms, and at extracurricular activities is recognized as important to the morale of the building by the respondents in this study. However, face-to-face communication unquestionably is the mode of communication that had the greatest effect upon teacher morale. The principal should make an effort to develop an authentic relationship with his/her staff through taking the time to have frequent, individual, and authentic conversations. Effective communication and visibility have an effect upon teacher morale, and are valued by the faculty who participated in this study. While a statistically significant relationship did not exist in this study between the value teachers place upon principal management practices and their willingness to participate in new curriculum, instructional, or programmatic practices, the lack of relationship does not indicate that such practices have a negative impact upon instruction, and in turn, student achievement. The research from this study, however, does suggest that an absence of such practices could lead to a decrease in staff morale, which, in turn, could affect overall student achievement and classroom output.

To positively impact teacher morale, and subsequently student achievement, the principal should remain visible to the students and teacher other than during evaluative observations, and be proactive in their communication. Recent policy changes regarding school accountability, particularly through legislation in New York State that now requires all teachers to be evaluated using a rigorous Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) instrument that takes into account observed instructional practices and student performance on standardized assessments certainly serves to alter the dynamics of a school environment and morale. The addition of this new legislation requires a significant increase in the number of observations teachers will

receive, which in turn, affects the overall construct of the building principal's workday. In addition, significant record keeping, portfolio review, and monitoring of data by both the teacher and administration certainly increase the workload and responsibilities of both the teacher and principal. New initiatives, especially those that can lead to job loss or discipline of the teacher have a tendency to breed a sense of negativity, cynicism, and mistrust of the system, and those responsible for overseeing the evaluation process. Despite these obstacles, it is a worthwhile investment of the principal's time to spend time in classrooms daily, and take the time to engage in face-to-face conversations with staff regarding instructional practices, and also provide the staff member with the opportunity to share his/her own insights regarding the educational programming. Frequent two-way communication, as validated in the literature review, has great potential for maintaining a positive sense of morale in a building.

Remaining proactive in communication and visible throughout the campus and in classrooms other than during formal observations can assist in assuaging the feelings of those uncomfortable with the accountability requirements. Furthermore, it can support the maintenance of a positive morale despite conditions that can detract from a teacher's sense of apprehension regarding the building principal and accountability requirements. Depending upon the size of the building and the administrator-teacher ratio, remaining visible and proactive in communication will require significant planning and time management practices on the part of the building administrators, who must ensure that they can take the time to invest in maintaining a sense of positive morale despite the increased workload required for principals to complete the APPR process in a timely fashion. Written communication, in addition to face-to-face communication, can have a strong influence upon morale. When a physical presence is not

possible in a classroom, the administrator should take the time to communicate with his/her staffs using personal notes, and informative memos that possess an authentic, positive voice.

The building administrator should make an active investment and commitment to maintain communication with visibility, so that morale can be preserved despite the aforementioned imposed mandates. The workday of the building administrator is ever-changing, depending upon the managerial and instructional needs of the building at any given moment. The infusion of new accountability requirements will certainly add to the rigor and length of the administrator's school day. The economic downturn has left many school districts with a reduction in force and diminished resources. This charges schools across the state with doing more with less and makes improved morale essential now more than ever. Building and system leaders must recognize that morale has the potential to change as a result of new legislation, and the investment in maintaining and promoting positive morale could sustain the momentum of building and system progress.

The principal should foster a positive morale within their building, so that staff will authentically embrace new initiatives. The building and system leader should also recognize that, while a statistically significant relationship did not exist in this study between the value of teachers regarding administrative practices and teacher willingness to embrace new initiatives, the study did not investigate whether an absence of previously defined management practices in this research study would result in a teacher's rejection of a new instructional practice or voluntary participation in a new initiative or committee. Though the results of this study indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between morale and teacher willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities, the presence of poor morale and a principal who elects to remain isolated in his/her office would not stand to promote positive

instructional practices. While the purpose of accountability legislation is to ensure teachers are effective in promoting student success, poor morale, faculty negativity and cynicism only serve to slow this process.

The building administrator should instill positive morale, through engaging in effective management practices, and encourage involvement in new building initiatives and activities. The results of this study illustrated the active role a principal must assume if he/she is to have an influence upon teacher morale. The study attempted to determine if positive morale would lead to a teacher's willingness to embrace new instructional practices and initiatives. The lack of statistical significance in this study between the relationship of teacher value of identified principal management practices and willingness to participate in new initiatives and activities indicates that the administrator should actively cultivate positive morale, and approach faculty member involvement in new initiatives with this same zeal, using visibility, communication, and presence at extracurricular events as a vehicle to promote enthusiasm. The principal has a role to foster, using these same effective management practices, the involvement of teachers in new instructional practices, trainings, workshops, and building level committees.

The building administrator that is committed to promoting teacher involvement and the embracement of new activities should apply the management techniques referenced in this study when attempting to cultivate voluntary support for new initiatives. Informal, authentic visits to the classroom, frequent, proactive communication, and a true investment in the school community can be used to harvest teacher involvement. Administrators should promote authentic teacher involvement and actively encourage teachers to embrace new initiatives, using positive morale as a means of exciting teachers to embrace new ideas. It is not simply enough for the administrator to physically appear in classrooms, or written communication. The study

shows that the principal must engage in dialog, communicate individually with faculty members, and appear at extracurricular events not simply as a bystander, but as an engaged participant in the school community.

The study also found that morale, and teacher willingness to embrace new initiatives is independent of a school's performance status. The building and system leaders should embrace their role as a strong influence of morale, and foster voluntary authentic involvement of their respective faculty in embracing instructional improvement, regardless of school demographic or performance status. The role administrative management practices play in affecting morale in high and low performing schools is independent of school status. Rather than compartmentalizing collaboration and sharing of ideas between schools of like demographic and performance status, system leaders should recognize the universality of morale and the importance of sharing effective administrative practices, which in turn should foster the collaboration of all school buildings and systems. School administrators need to recognize that school demographics and socio-economic status cannot be presented as excuses for school success and student achievement. All school environments stand to benefit from the principal who is proactive in his/her communication, visibility, and presence throughout the school campus. A principal has the potential to increase morale, and in turn, student achievement, if he/she acknowledges the value of visibility, communication, and displaying a vested interest in the school community.

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Elementary Principal Practices

Greetings! The purpose of this survey is to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of the frequency that building principals employ specific management practices, and the degree to which these practices have an effect on the individual and collective faculty's morale. This survey is completely voluntary, and the results will remain entirely anonymous. The survey data will only be viewed by the researcher, and will not be shared except in aggregate form as reported in my dissertation. If you are not comfortable completing this survey, you may exit at any time. The survey should take approximately 7-10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions at any time, please email me at reardt@sage.edu

*1. Please indicate your gender.

◯ Male

◯ Female

*2. Please indicate if you are tenured or un-tenured.

◯ Tenured

◯ Untenured

3. Please indicate the number of years you have been teaching (count the current year as one full year).

◯ 0-5 years

◯ 6-10 years

◯ 11-15 years

◯ 16-20 years

◯ 21-25 years

◯ Over 25 years

4. Please indicate if your school is currently identified as a School in Need of Improvement (SINI).

◯ Yes, my school has been named as a School in Need of Improvement by the New York State Department of Education.

◯ No, my school has not been named as a School in Need of Improvement by the New York State Department of Education.

5. Please indicate how frequently your elementary principal:

	5 or more times per week	3-4 times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	none
is visible around your school campus (in the hallways, in the cafeteria, visiting classrooms, etc.).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
visits your classroom, other than during formal lesson observations.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
communicates with you face-to-face outside of your classroom.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
communicates using print form (email/paper memos, direct correspondence to you as a teacher, newsletters, web postings, etc.).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
attends extracurricular activities and events (events outside of the school day such as school productions, sporting events, and community sponsored activities that occur on nights and weekends).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

6. Please indicate the level of your agreement with the following statements related to your principal's management practices.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I value the visibility of my principal around my school campus (in the hallways, in the cafeteria, visiting classrooms, etc.).	○	○	○	○
I value my principal's visits to my classroom, other than during formal lesson observations.	○	○	○	○
I value my principal's face-to-face communication outside of the classroom.	○	○	○	○
I value my principal's communication via print form (email/paper memos, direct correspondence to you as a teacher, newsletters, web postings, etc.).	○	○	○	○
I value my principal's presence at extracurricular activities and events (events outside of the school day such as school productions, sporting events, and community-sponsored activities that occur on nights and weekends).	○	○	○	○

7. How would you rate the morale in your building? (Morale, for the purposes of this study, is defined as the "distinct emotional overtones: the feelings of attachment or belonging that a person has to a workgroup and his or her sense of commitment to the group task and collective group").

○ Very High

○ Somewhat High

○ Somewhat Low

○ Very Low

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements as they pertain to your own feelings about your work.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My principal has an effect upon the morale of your building.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I enjoy coming to work each day.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel a sense of belonging to my building.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a vested interest in my colleagues and the success of my building.	◯	◯	◯	◯

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:
The frequency of which your principal is visible within the building and in your classroom has an effect upon building morale.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Strongly Agree

10. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:
The frequency of which your principal communicates has an effect upon building morale.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

11. Within the past two school years (beginning in September, 2010), have you participated in a non-mandatory building-level committee pertaining to curriculum and instruction (curriculum committee, subject-level cabinet, etc.)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

12. Within the past two school years (beginning in September, 2010), have you participated in a non-mandatory building-level committee pertaining to the social or emotional component of your building (spirit or character committee, wellness committee, assembly planning, extracurricular planning, etc.)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

13. Within the past two school years (beginning in September, 2010), have you attended a non-mandated workshop pertaining to improving your instructional practices (balanced literacy strategies, guided math, differentiated instruction, common core learning standards, etc.)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

14. Within the past two school years (beginning in September, 2010), have you implemented a new instructional practice in your classroom that aligns with your building principal or District's academic and instructional goals?

◯ Yes

◯ No

15. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:
The administrative practices of my principal have a personal effect upon my willingness to participate in a building-level activity, attend a non-mandatory conference, or independently implement a new instructional practice.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

16. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:
A change in my building administrator's management practices would have an effect upon the role I play in my classroom and in my school community.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

(sent to teachers with link to the survey)

November, 2011

Dear Educator:

I am a doctoral student in the Education Leadership program at Sage College in Albany New York. I am doing a quantitative research study to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of the frequency that building principals employ specific management practices, and the degree to which these practices have an effect on the individual and collective faculty's morale. The study will also compare the responses of teachers from both high and low performing school districts. I am also investigating whether elementary administrator management practices lead to an increase in morale, which in turn will then increase the building faculty's willingness to experiment with new instructional practices, or experience a greater level of participation and involvement in building activities or initiatives. The survey link can be found below, and should take approximately 7-10 minutes to complete. All responses will be collected anonymously via SurveyMonkey. Please follow the directions at the top of the page. Once you submit the survey, all results will be tabulated by the researcher, and kept confidential. Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. When taking the survey, participants may skip questions, or can withdraw from participating in the survey at any time.

It is important for teachers to be able to share their perceptions regarding morale as affected by principal management practices, and the effects of morale and principal practices in teacher willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities. Data from this study will be analyzed and reported in aggregate form in my dissertation. If

you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me via email:

reardt@sage.edu

Thank you for participating.

Sincerely,

Thomas B. Reardon

Appendix C

(sent to District Level Administration of Selected School Districts)

November, 2011

Dear Superintendent **(insert name)**:

I am a doctoral student in the Education Leadership program at Sage College in Albany New York. I am doing a quantitative research study to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of the frequency that building principals employ specific management practices, and the degree to which these practices have an effect on the individual and collective faculty's morale. The study will also compare the responses of teachers from both high and low performing school districts. I am also investigating whether elementary administrator management practices lead to an increase in morale, which in turn will then increase the building faculty's willingness to experiment with new instructional practices, or experience a greater level of participation and involvement in building activities or initiatives. I will be sending the attached description and survey link via email to the elementary teachers at **(insert building name)** The survey should take approximately 7-10 minutes to complete. All responses will be collected anonymously via SurveyMonkey. Data will be reported in aggregate form only, and will remain completely anonymous. Participants will receive no remuneration for their participation. . Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. When taking the survey, participants may skip questions, or can withdraw from participating in the survey at any time.

It is important for teachers to be able to share their perceptions regarding morale as affected by principal management practices, and the effects of morale and principal

practices in teacher willingness to participate in building initiatives and activities. Data

from this study will be analyzed and reported in aggregate form in my dissertation. If

you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me via email:

reardt@sage.edu

Thank you in advance for assisting in the research process.

Sincerely,

Thomas B. Reardon

This research has received the approval of The Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board, which functions to insure the protection of the rights of human participants. If you have any complaints about this study, please contact: Dr. Esther Haskvitz, Dean Sage Graduate SchoolsSchool of Health Sciences 65 First Street Troy, New York 12180 518-244-2264 haskve@sage.edu