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Principal and Teacher Perceptions of How Principal Motivational Leadership Practices Influence School Climate

Emily Harber Williams
Walden University

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Emily Williams

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Principal and Teacher Perceptions of How Principal Motivational Leadership Practices

Influence School Climate

by

Emily Harber Williams

MPhil, Walden University, 2020

MEd, University of Southern Mississippi, 2015

BSGS, Delta State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Policy, Leadership & Management

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

Research indicates that school leadership influences the success of student outcomes through school climate. However, little is known about how principals and teachers perceive principals' motivational leadership practices and how these leadership practices influence school climate. The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a better understanding of seventh and eighth grade principal and teacher perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices influence on school climate. This study was based upon Sullivan's motivational language theory and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory by way of the utilization of the conceptual framework on charismatic leadership. The research questions focused on principal and teacher perceptions of principals' leadership practices, as well as principal and teacher experiences of how principal motivational leadership practices influenced school climate. A narrative approach utilizing a single-case study of 6 participants in one school district in a southern state was conducted through interviews and a focus group, and through a cross-analysis of the qualitative and secondary data. Results indicated that motivational leadership practices modeled and implemented from the top-down were perceived as vital, as well as the use of self-reflection in order to provide positive social change by way of influencing positive school climate. Implications for positive social change include increased understanding of how principal motivational leadership practices influence school climate, resulting in opportunities to improve leadership practices by layering them with other leadership practices, ultimately further enhancing school climate.

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Dedication

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my guys: my husband and my boys. I am grateful for the support you have given from day one. This has been a long journey and lots of obstacles to overcome along the way; however, you all never questioned the work and time that was needed to get this done and to make this happen. Thank you!

To my parents, you both have instilled determination, courage, inspiration, and dedication to finish what you start no matter the how hard it might be to complete the task. Without that model of pure drive, passion and faith from each of you, I would not be able to accomplish what I have accomplished during this journey. I am grateful for all that you have modeled and taught me even now in adulthood. Thank you!

To my family, friends, and colleagues who listened endlessly to my research talk. Thank you!

In addition, I would like to dedicate this study in memory to one of my students. Along this journey, she demonstrated great strength and courage through her battle with a brain tumor. She challenged me to continue to rely solely on God in every way. She wanted to graduate and work side by side with me, this is a way she will always remind me to always be strong and courageous through the leadership and faith she demonstrated.

To complete this journey, it takes so much faith, strength, and courage, in that order. Dedicating this to all of you is the least I could do. I am grateful for all of you! Love you 10,000! All the way, with my entire being!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Education has evolved nationally and internationally over the years by way of educational policies, leadership, and the management of these organizations. Day and Sammons (2016) explained how school self-evaluation can play a vital role within a building; therefore, focusing on perceptions and school climate within the principal self-evaluations could benefit the schools as well. In addition, these direct or indirect effects on student outcomes can derive from the type of leadership through which a principal might demonstrate (Day & Sammons, 2016). Furthermore, school leadership seems to matter in relation to success of student outcomes through school climate (Day & Sammons, 2016).

Effective school leadership matters and principals tend to have quite a few tasks during the school day, as well as the school year, that will determine the type of leadership practice they implement in the buildings they serve. Whether a principal is utilizing a specific leadership practice or layering these practices, researchers have considered several leadership practices which include transformational, instructional, distributed or shared leadership successful practices. In addition, researchers have noted, with social justice in mind, culturally responsive leadership is a practice that principals could utilize when leading their schools. Therefore, principals choosing the appropriate leadership practice could impact the school climate, whether positively or negatively.

Urick and Bowers (2014) explained through their research background that transformational and instructional leaderships are different; however, each work towards an impact on school climate. Transformational leadership tends to impact school climate through the building of the school community; while, instructional leadership impacts school climate by creating this climate through positivity (Urick & Bowers, 2014). According to Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016), transformational leadership focused on building the community by setting the direction of the school through vision and mission; and, instructional leadership focuses on the instruction in which the teachers and students are given for successful outcomes.

In addition, distributed leadership, which is interchangeable with shared leadership, is prone to distribute and share leadership roles among administration and teachers throughout the building. According to Day et al. (2016),

A recent empirical study of distributed leadership practice suggests that distributed leadership is best understood as ‘practice distributed over leaders, followers and their situation [which] incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals’. It implies a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is ‘stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders. (Day & Sammons, 2016, p.51-52)

Therefore, distributed leadership provides accountability to those within these leadership roles towards positive school improvements and change through the relationships built during the distribution of leadership (Day & Sammons, 2016).

Whether a principal is transforming a school or implementing instructional planning through distributed leadership, a sense of social justice through culturally responsive practices could be implemented through the layering process in order for all students to thrive and increase positive school climate. According to Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016) “culturally responsive leaders develop and support the school staff and promote a climate that makes the whole school welcoming, inclusive, and accepting of minority students” (p. 1275). This means, culturally responsive leaders create a climate that includes all students within every aspect of the school environment and when these dynamics of the school shift, then the environment shifts in order to sustain a level of positive school climate (Khalifa et al., 2016). This acknowledgement of acceptance and compassion leads to students being able to succeed no matter the circumstance they might be in personally or academically which in turn increases the school climate positively.

There seem to be many factors of school improvement that contribute a positive or negative school climate. McCarley, Peters, and Decman (2016) defined school climate as an environment where student achievement is increase, teacher retention is fostered, and relationships between teachers and students are connected through collaboration. To go even further, McCarley et al. (2016) explained that principal leadership could

encourage a positive school climate through the increase with school improvement, but focusing on teacher perceptions of principal transformational leadership in relation to school climate was the basis for their study. Therefore, gaining a better insight, qualitatively, to differences in teacher and principal perceptions of principals' chosen leadership practice could allow for a better understanding of school climate. In Chapter 1, I provide the background, problem, purpose, framework with research questions through the nature of this study, as well as definitions, assumptions, limitations and significance.

Background

In 2015, the United States Congress made a motion to begin the process of implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) within each of the public schools across each state (Mississippi Department of Education, 2012). Because a southern state seemed to have lower school ratings than other states in most areas, the question arises of what should be done differently. In March 2018, an executive summary and ESSA consolidation plan was implemented. This summary and plan addressed each area that needs improvement and those areas that could improve from “good” to “great” for a more well-rounded sense of success for the entire state (Mississippi Department of Education, 2017, 2018).

Through this level of accountability set before the state, districts, and schools, principals and teachers seemed to have an increase in expectations from the southern state Department of Education driven from the implementation of the ESSA. One factor to meet these expectations is meeting the qualifications for certification with each

principal and teacher. In addition, the rigor through which these qualifications were considered met over the years was re-evaluated. This re-evaluation led to a recommended increase in rigor for those obtaining administration certifications (Mississippi Department of Education, 2017).

In one southern state, some of the colleges began to implement educational leadership programs for principals and teachers. For instance, one college offers educational leadership for three levels of certification including Master of Education, Education Specialist, and Doctorate in Educational Leadership (Mississippi College, 2018). These students go through the program in a cohort which provides six dimensions of leadership (Mississippi College, 2018). These six dimensions of leadership include personal/interpretational, instructional, organizational, resource, political, and informational (Mississippi College, 2018). In addition, this southern state Department of Education provides continuing education through professional development for principals and teachers (Mississippi Department of Education, 2017).

It may appear that after continuing education, whether through advanced degrees or professional development, that principals and teachers are completely prepared to step into leadership positions and generate positive outcomes. Therefore, increasing educational opportunities for principals and teachers could positively impact the districts and schools in which these educators serve. In fact, if the number of uncertified teachers could decrease in the state of Mississippi, then an increase in leadership could occur within the buildings for an overall positive impact on school ratings. Consequently,

gaining a better understanding of the types of leadership that teachers and principals deem important could allow for insight on how these schools are being led.

The findings of recent research indicated the need to further gain insight on perceptions of principals and teachers when focusing on principal motivational leadership practices and how these practices are conducive to school climate (Alqahtani, 2015; McCarley et al., 2016). Whether a principal impacts the students directly or indirectly, the need for adequate leadership from principals is vital for students to be prepared for future opportunities educationally (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Day & Sammons, 2016; DeMatthews, Edwards, & Rincones, 2016; Dolph, 2016; Romero & Krichesky, 2017). Therefore, gaining a better understanding of principal leadership practices teacher and principal perceptions of those practices, and exploring how these perceptions compare to school climate, could add to the existing knowledge in the field of education.

Problem Statement

The problem was that little is known about principal perceptions through self-reflection regarding the implementation of motivational leadership practices in comparison to teacher perceptions of the implemented practices, and the influence these practices have on school climate. Therefore, gaining a better understanding about how principals and teachers perceive principal motivational leadership practices and how these leadership practices influence school climate would expand upon the current research (McCarley et al., 2016). Consequently, in the area of school leadership, principals have a variety of ways in which they may choose to lead the school in

which they serve. Some principals may choose transformational, instructional, shared or distributed, and culturally responsive leadership practices by implementing singly or layering by utilizing more than one these practices at a time. In addition, principals are not the sole source of leadership within the buildings anymore (Urlick & Bowers, 2014). Therefore, principals are inclined to disperse different leadership tasks among staff, teachers, and, in some instances, students take on leadership roles (Franco, Petrie, Ready, & Donegan, 2014; Urlick & Bowers, 2014).

The choice of which leadership practice a principal chooses to implement seems to be a factor leading to the notion of how principals are different (Urlick & Bowers, 2014). In the study from Urlick and Bowers (2014), it was noted the difference between transitional, instructional, and shared leadership practices singly and in combination, as well as, what little data is known of principal implementation of these practices. The findings indicated that principals do not follow a particular pattern when implementing these leadership practices, these leadership styles are prone to be multidimensional, and school factors help stakeholders foresee how a principal might be leading within the building (Urlick & Bowers, 2014). Even though there were quite a few recommendations for further research, Urlick and Bowers (2014) summarized by stating “since principal perception is understudied, yet self-reported, we need more evidence to better understand how these principal types might have changed if teacher perception was also included in the model” (p. 124).

In Pakistan, Niqab, Sharma, Ali, and Mubarik (2015) studied the difference in perceptions of principals and teachers regarding principal leadership practices. In this study, the researchers found that there is a distinct difference between principal and teacher perceptions (Niqab et al., 2015). However, it was noted that these teachers might not have the knowledge about principal leadership; therefore, the teacher's judgement might be more biased (Niqab et al., 2015). In addition, this study acknowledged the intuition in which a principal must acquire current leadership skills through continuing education (Niqab et al., 2015). In order to develop more effective leadership outcomes, Niqab et al. (2015) recommended that principals acquire the capability to motivate the teachers within their buildings in order to change the opinions the teachers might have about the principal's leadership.

In Kuwait, little rapport between principals and teachers was absent when evaluating the school climate (Alqahtani, 2015). Therefore, the schools in Kuwait decided to utilize a motivational language theory (MLT) to provide more effective leadership (Alqahtani, 2015). Through this quantitative study, teachers' perceptions of principals' motivating language in regard to school climate was evaluated (Alqahtani, 2015). Findings indicated that principals utilizing motivating language could have a positive effect on all aspects of the school (Alqahtani, 2015). There were a few recommendations for further study; however, the researchers noted that school climate is not a one-dimensional model (Alqahtani, 2015). Next, utilizing motivational language is

vital to a positive school climate (Alqahtani, 2015). Last, a case study would give more detail in Kuwait and other places (Alqahtani, 2015).

Motivational theories could be intertwined within the education allowing principals to utilize motivational interventions. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are the types of motivation that could lead a student or teacher to success. A meta-analysis study from Lazowski and Hulleman (2016) explored the different types of motivation theories and motivational interventions focusing on education in regard to student outcomes. One motivational theory is self-determination which seems to focus on intrinsic motivation through choices and a voice within the student learning (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016). With this in mind, could self-determination impact teachers the way in which Lazowski and Hulleman (2016) indicated self-determination theory impacts students? Lazowski and Hulleman (2016) noted that teachers might have a difficult time implementing motivational interventions; however, if the principal is modeled these motivational interventions, then could motivational interventions be easier for teachers to implement with students for success? Lazowski and Hulleman (2016) recommended to further studies by conducting a meta-analysis within a laboratory.

When exploring the idea of combining leadership practices in order to meet the needs of all students, as well as all aspects of education, incorporating a level of social justice seemed to be an important practice. School leaders who intentionally seek social justice prefer to see strength within the differences within their health, educational and economic opportunities, as well as self-determination (DeMatthews et al., 2016).

DeMatthews et al. (2016) utilized a qualitative study to gain a better understanding of how one school in Mexico was able to adapt to the student demographics in order to provide social justice and increase the positive school climate. Findings indicated that teaching the whole child led to successful educational outcomes which were contingent upon how this community utilized teamwork through social justice leadership inside and outside the school modeled by the principal and founder of the school (DeMatthews et al., 2016). Recommendations for further studies should focus on greater insights between schools and the amount of family engagement in order to go beyond the school's social justice leadership into the communities (DeMatthews et al., 2016).

Some states which are not ranked high within the educational settings seem to be re-evaluating leadership from the top down for overall school improvement through school climate. In 2015, southern state was ranked the lowest in educational performance in the United States (Kieffer, 2015). This southern states' Department of Education began a 5-year strategic plan to improve the educational system which seemed to move this southern state from the last position (Kieffer, 2015). However, in 2017, this southern state was ranked within the bottom six states (Pan, 2017). In addition, with this slow rise in educational performance ranking, this southern state has increased the state scoring from an F to a D since 2003 (Associated Press, 2016). Even though school climate is not singly ranked here, school performance is a factor which can impact school climate negatively or positively. Furthermore, this Department of Education has implemented a school improvement plan which includes accountability, assessment, and school

improvement in order to evaluate school climate and culture for an acceptable increase with the overall statewide school rating of a C (Mississippi Department of Education, 2017).

Principal leadership practices are an important factor to consider when focusing on school climate. In addition, having a clear understanding of how teachers perceive these leadership practices are deemed quite important. Nevertheless, there is little known about how principals perceive themselves in comparison to how teachers perceive principals' motivational leadership practices and the influence these motivational leadership practices have on school climate. Because most studies have been done across the world, focusing on schools in the southern states could add a new location in the current research. As a result, a study that provides a better understanding of principal and teacher perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices by a qualitative method could provide, through experiences, a better understanding of the influence these perceptions and motivational leadership practices have on school climate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a better understanding of seventh and eighth grade principal and teacher perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices' influence on school climate. This was explored by examining the perceptions of the teachers and the principal by way of interviews and a focus group. Although the failure of a school could stem from the lack of collaboration of all stakeholders, this study focused on the leadership of the principal and how the perceptions of the principal and

teacher compare in a lower rated school district. Because the definition of leadership could be described as influence, a goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of the perceptions that principals and teachers might have regarding principal leadership practices and school climate (see McCarley et al., 2016). In order for principals to promote a positive school climate, the principal role seems to indicate the need for managerial and leadership practices to demonstrate a positive school climate (Hallinger, 2017). Therefore, through this qualitative study, adding to the existing research, I explored how the foundation of perceptions, leadership practices, and school climate are perceived by comparing principal and teacher perceptions (see McCarley et al., 2016).

Research Questions

RQ1: What are principal and teacher perceptions of implemented principal motivational leadership practices?

RQ2: What are the principal and teacher experiences of how principal motivational leadership practices influence school climate?

Conceptual Framework

Motivational theories, including Sullivan's MLT (Alqahtani, 2015), intrinsic motivators, and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT), seem to improve overall well-being for a person and a sustained behavioral change (Flannery, 2017). In addition, this motivational theory factored with a conceptual framework including charismatic leadership (envisioning, empowering, and empathy) benefited this study as the three key factors by establishing a firm framework foundation (Choi, 2006). With this

in mind, exploring the perceptions of principals' and teachers' of principal motivational leadership practices could reveal, through their experiences, whether this conceptual framework and theories are utilized by the principals. Likewise, these perceptions could disclose whether the principals are implementing motivational leadership practices for the most effective strategies in order to establish a more meaningful school climate. This in turn would allow the principals to focus on their personal level of effectiveness within their building by gaining a better understanding through self-evaluation and continued professional growth of their implementation of motivational leadership practices for increase in positive school climate. In Chapter 2, I provide a more detailed examination of how this conceptual framework will guide this study through a qualitative approach.

Perceptions

Perceptions can vary depending on the knowledge and experience a person obtains. In many cases, principals and teachers differ because principals' rate themselves higher than teachers (Hallinger et al., 2017; Ham, Duyer, & Gumus, 2015). On the contrary, some studies indicated that principals and teachers perceive the principal's leadership as being not exactly the same, but closely related (Mehinezhad & Sardarzahi, 2015). Because the research seemed to be inconsistent about perceptions of principals and teachers, gaining a better understanding through comparison of these perceptions would be quite beneficial.

Motivational Leadership Practices

Teacher turnover rates seem to rise where teachers experience a lack of leadership (Kraft, Marinell, & Yee 2016). Building rapport within a school building could be a difficult task for principals without a sense of motivation or motivational language (Alqahtani, 2015). However, utilizing motivational language could increase positive perceptions and attitudes within the schools creating a positive school climate (Alqahtani, 2015). In addition to utilizing motivational language, principals could implement motivational leadership practices by creating intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for effective outcomes, such as student achievement and school climate (Kocabas, 2009).

Social Justice

Creating an environment conducive for all students can be quite a task; however, when leadership provides the opportunity for a sense of social justice through leadership practices, then all students can benefit and show growth academically and socially. This opportunity to learn about acquiring a better quality of life could begin with the principal's leadership when implementing culturally responsive leadership for a multicultural education (Sanataria, 2014; Theoharis, 2007). By providing an accepting and multicultural environment for all students, principals are leading by way of social justice through creating a diverse environment within the schools (Sanataria, 2014). Naturally, principals demonstrating culturally responsive leadership would model compassion through acceptance, which would allow the opportunity to positively affect the students' and teachers' everyday lives (Sanataria, 2014; Theoharis, 2007).

Nature of the Study

Naturalistic paradigm consists of ideals in which this study was based upon. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained fourteen characteristics, which are explained in more detail in Appendix F, that this study embodied. The nature of this study was a qualitative methodology single case study in a single school district. Case study research has been defined by Sagadin (as cited in Starman, 2013) as when a person is analyzed and described individually (for example, his or her activity, a life situation, life history), or a group of people (for example, a school department, a group of students, teaching staff, etc.), individual institutions (for example, a school or university), or a problem (or several problems), process, phenomenon or event in a particular institution. The research indicated the need for a qualitative study to gain a better understanding of principal and teacher perceptions focused on principals' self-reflection, motivational leadership practices, and the influence these have on school climate. Therefore, a case study allowed for an analysis from experiences. Data collection was utilized using face to face interviews, a focus group, and reflective journals. Additionally, a naturalistic inquiry approach (within a natural setting) with a narrative analysis (reflective perceptions and experiences) for this case study compared the participants' perceptions and experiences with a cross-case analysis of the school ratings provided by the secondary archival data collection for constant comparison of themes and patterns. Through the comparison of this data and the utilization of a conceptual framework, this study focused on gaining a better understanding of principal and teacher perceptions through their experiences,

foundation of principal motivational leadership practices, and school climate ratings within various seventh- and eighth-grade schools in a southern state.

Definitions

Culturally responsive leadership (CRL): Influences the students, teachers, staff, and parents by providing an inclusive, multicultural climate (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Distributed leadership: A leadership practice where the principal distributes leadership tasks to other leaders within the building in order to improve school outcomes (Klar, Huggins, Hammonds, & Buskey, 2016).

Instructional leadership: A leadership practice where the principal focuses on goals, planning, curriculum, teaching, and evaluations (Day et al., 2016).

Motivational interventions: Intrinsic or extrinsic motivators (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016).

Motivational leadership theory (MLT): “Conceptualized the dimensions of speech supporting effective leadership” (Alqahtani, 2015, p. 125).

Narrative approach: An approach which “best known through reflective studies of teachers’ experiences”, as well as the perspectives within these studies (McAlpine, 2016, p. 34).

Naturalistic inquiry: Naturalistic paradigm within a naturalistic setting which provides a detailed understanding of the phenomena of interest (McInnis, Peters, Bonney, & Holcomb, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

School climate: A factor in which a school encourages positive leadership, increase in student achievement, lower teacher turnover rates, positive school improvement, and positive relationships (McCarley et al., 2016).

Self-determination theory (SDT): “An organismic worldview understands individuals as active organisms with goals of mastering and integrating new experiences” (Flannery, 2017, p. 155).

Social justice leadership: A leadership that “seeks to empower, advocate, and bring quality education to marginalized communities” (DeMatthews et al., 2016, p. 756).

Transformational leadership: A leadership practice where the principal focuses on transforming the structures and culture by creating an inspiring vision (Day et al., 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions result in inferencing the concept of being true without necessarily tangible proof. One of the greatest assumptions of this study lies with the principals. Granted that, during the self-evaluations, each principal rated themselves without bias that they are perfectly leading their schools and there is no room for them to grow professionally. While it may be true that they may or may not be demonstrating good leadership in the building, rating themselves the highest possible rating through the self-evaluation could affect the overall assessment of this study. I assumed that the principals would rate themselves honestly and without bias.

Another assumption is that all principals are motivating leaders. However, this assumption might not be true. I assumed that the teachers and assistant principals would answer honestly about the motivation in which their principal implements. Therefore, it is most critical that the principals self-evaluate themselves without bias and assistant principals and teacher answer honestly for this feedback to be able to give assistance to improving the leadership and school climate. If there is a better understanding of these perceptions, then the overall outcome of the schools could increase positively.

Scope and Delimitations

The research problem indicated the need to gain a better understanding of principal and teacher perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices with a comparison of these perceptions with school climate ratings. Because one of the southern states was considered a failing state at one point, the southern state Department of Education implemented a school improvement plan in order to improve these ratings by way of improving student achievement. These school improvement plans are considered a method for school turnaround. According to the School Turnaround Rubrics, there are indicators that are evaluated. These indicators acknowledge leadership, effective teaching, alignment of instruction, utilization of data, school climate, family and community engagement, and technical assistance (Mississippi Department of Education, 2012).

This current study could be utilized to gain a better understanding of how and if some of these indicators are being addressed. Also, this current study explored how

strong of a leader the principal is through the perceptions in which the principal and teacher have experienced by focusing on the conceptual framework key leadership factors: envisioning, empowering, and empathy. These perceptions were based around the implementation of the principals' leadership practices. Considering that transformational, instructional, and distributed leaderships have been researched and proven to be effective leadership practices, exploring whether principals are motivating the teachers and students could further this understanding of how effective motivating leadership is. After understanding these perceptions and how they compare, an additional comparison of these perceptions with school climate could give a greater insight as well.

Given these points, extrinsic motivators were not implemented in this current study due to the fact that the focus was on intrinsic motivators. Uniquely, the current study gained a better understanding of principal and teacher perceptions and comparisons of these perceptions, leadership practices, and school climate within various junior high schools, grades seven and eight, in a southern state.

Limitations

Limitations within this study exist since only one population, seventh and eighth grade principals and teachers, was explored. This limitation is due to the number of districts and private schools in which my husband, parents, and I have taught within one southern state. Therefore, choosing where I implement this study was limited to this population. Furthermore, only focusing on one population could impact the probability of credibility which in turn could impact the dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, this study is limited due to the amount of time in which this study was implemented. It was noted that a naturalistic narrative approach is mostly utilized within a longitudinal study (McAlpine, 2016). Since this study was for dissertation purposes, I did not conduct a longitudinal study. Furthermore, this timeframe also limited the amount of data collected.

Significance

Leadership in education seemed to play an important role as the foundation within the field of education. As a result, one southern state began focusing on the leadership in which each district and school might or might not have. There are several ways in which this southern state has documented the level of leadership districts and schools might have. One way, superintendents evaluate the leadership in the buildings, as well as the principals' self-evaluations, through utilizing the Administrator Growth Rubric (Mississippi Department of Education, 2016). In addition, the superintendent evaluates while the building principals self-evaluate utilizing the Principal Performance Standards (Mississippi Department of Education, 2016). Even though other states do not require these types of evaluations, this southern state has implemented these since beginning the idea of turning around the state's school and district ratings.

Considering the fact that there is little known about how principals perceive themselves in comparison to how teachers perceive principals' motivational leadership practices and the influence these motivational leadership practices have on school climate, this qualitative study would allow for a comparison of perceptions among

principals and teachers of whether or not principals are providing the level of leadership that is needed to meet school improvement. Moreover, this research could allow educational leadership programs to expand or adjust when referring to leadership practices and for principals to consider where they might need further professional development in order to increase a positive school climate and increase the school rating.

Implications for Social Change

Social change is imbedded in this study. First, the current study implied social change by the exploration of perceptions of the principals and teachers. This exploration could discover the type of relationship the principals and teachers might have. Next, through the comparison of these perceptions, the level of leadership was explored. Hence, gaining a better understanding whether motivational leadership is reaching all stakeholders in the buildings. Lastly, implication of social change is indicated in the comparisons the perceptions of leadership practices with school climate; therefore, gaining insight on the amount of influence these motivational leadership practices have on school climate.

Summary

Educational leadership is a term which has been utilized over the past years whether through discussions of administrators or teachers. These discussions have led to the educational leadership becoming advanced degree emphasis. These advanced degrees can provide extrinsic motivators, such as a promotion and an increase in pay.

Concurrently, the research stated that principals can directly and indirectly impact school

improvement which includes school climate and student success (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Day & Sammons, 2016; Dolph, 2016; Romero & Krchesky, 2017). Chapter 1 discussed the theoretical and conceptual foundations of this study. Effective leadership traits of (a) self-evaluation, (b) leadership practices, (c) perceptions, (d) motivation, (e) social justice, (f) and school climate. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of how principals are leading their buildings could benefit the educational leadership programs and professional development. Chapter 2 revealed a more in-depth explanation of these effective leadership traits.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the qualitative study was to gain a better understanding of seventh and eighth grade principal and teacher perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices by exploring these perceptions through experiences and foundations of leadership practices with a comparison of the school climate ratings. School administrators tend to impact the overall school climate in many ways; directly, indirectly, negatively, and positively (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Day & Sammons, 2016; Dolph, 2016; Romero & Krichesky, 2017). Depending on the level of interaction with teachers, principals could both directly affect school climate which could also impact school improvement (Dolph, 2016) and indirectly affect school climate through the teachers which impact the students' overall success (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Day & Sammons, 2016; Romero & Krichesky, 2017). In addition, a principal attaining a certain level of leadership could impact school climate positively (Dolph, 2016). Even though motivational practices have been established within other settings, there is little known about how principals and teachers perceive principal motivational leadership practices and how these leadership practices influence school climate. Therefore, gaining a better understanding these perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices and the impact these leadership practices have on school climate would enhance knowledge within the field of education. In this literature review, I explore the research for a better

understanding of perceptions of principals and teachers regarding principal motivational leadership practices.

Literature Search Strategy

This literature review included books and peer-reviewed journal articles. These resources were retrieved from Walden Library databases including the following: ERIC, SAGE Journals, Education Source, ProQuest Central, SAGE Premier, Taylor and Francis Online, and PsycINFO. Terms used in research included *leadership styles, school leadership, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, shared leadership, motivational leadership, charismatic leadership, intrinsic motivation, perceptions, principals, teachers, self-reflection, self-determination, school climate, student achievement, teacher attitudes, job satisfaction, trust, respect, emotional and behavioral problems, leadership characteristics, motivational leadership theory, narrative approach, naturalistic inquiry, narrative inquiry, naturalistic paradigm, and narrative analysis.*

Conceptual Framework

Throughout the years, motivation has not been at the forefront when educating students; however, research indicated that students' learning increases when they are motivated (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016). Given these points, providing principals and teachers motivational interventions within the schools and classrooms could allow for better student outcomes (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016). There were 16 theories and frameworks, including self-determination and self-efficacy, which were analyzed

within this meta-analysis (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016). Research confirmed these motivational interventions were overall successful and effective towards student outcomes (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016).

A motivational mindset could stem from different motivational theories. Utilizing a motivational theory that is grounded with charismatic leadership could establish positive outcomes for those experiencing this type of leadership (Choi, 2006). Choi (2006) gained a better understanding of charismatic leadership years ago by focusing on “envisioning, empathy, empowerment” (pp. 26-27). Utilizing these three characteristics, the researchers noted how excitement, perspectives of emotions, how valuable one feels, understanding a persons’ motives, and self-efficacy perspectives positively impacted the followers of the leaders implementing these concepts. (Choi, 2006).

Self-determination theory seems to focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. However, for this study, intrinsic motivation within the self-determination theory was focused on through autonomy, competence, and relatedness (see Hang, Kaur & Nur, 2017). In other words, self-determination theory focused on self-initiated behaviors with the confidence of being efficient while feeling a part of a group or individuals (Hang et al., 2017). Within this research, Hang et al. (2017) explained that intrinsic motivation stems from the internal locus of control. Even though this article’s focus was about drop-out rates, Hang et al. (2017) noted that there was a significance between autonomy of teacher and administration support which the model predicted motivation, perceived

competence, and the school environment played a vital role with the increase or decrease of the drop-out rates.

While implementing charismatic leadership strategies, considering the intrinsic motivational theory could lead to positive outcomes within the organization implemented (Shao, Feng, & Wang, 2017). Charismatic leadership has a tendency to be one of the most influential leadership styles in relation to individual behaviors (Shao et al., 2017). Therefore, making the connection of a persons' inner needs while utilizing charismatic leadership could change the overall outcome of the organization's success (Shao et al., 2017). Furthermore, Shao et al. (2017) explained how charismatic leadership positively connects with the climate which in turn stems from the positive impact of intrinsic motivation and tactic knowledge sharing of the followers.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

A principal's effectiveness seems to stem from the leadership capabilities that have been learned through experience (Mombourquette & Bedard, 2014). Niqab et al. (2015) explained that some principals begin with one leadership practice, then progress into another leadership practice to increase the level of success within the school overall. In addition, principal characteristics influence and attribute to this level of leadership in which each principal attains (Niqab et al., 2015). The research indicated that leadership practices, such as transformational, distributed, shared, culturally responsive, instructional leadership practices, work best as individual practices. However,

establishing trust from principal to all stakeholders increases the probability these leadership practices will lead to success (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2016).

A principal's success as a leader can vary depending on behaviors and ideologies which are perceived by the persons evaluating the data within a school. Mehinezhad and Sardarzahi (2015) explained that between principal and teachers, perceptions can vary when evaluating principal behaviors implementing leadership practices. Additionally, principals establishing trust with the faculty and staff could lead to more positive perceptions and overall positive school climate for the students and teachers within the school (Tschannen-Moran, & Gareis, 2016). Exploring this idea of optimism through leadership, principals utilizing a social justice mindset could also increase capability, capacity, and sustainability of the school which would impact the overall school climate (DeMatthews et al., 2016).

Leadership Practices

Transitional leadership. The research indicated that transformational leadership impacts many aspects of the school climate. Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015) explained that quantitative research indicates transformational leadership could have indirect and direct effects within the building, depending on the school factor that is being evaluated. In addition, if principals transform schools positively, then the overall school climate could be a motivating climate (Allen et al., 2015). Allen et al. (2015) noted the impact in which transformational leadership has within a school; however, the researchers seemed to find that there is no significant difference between transformational leadership and

school climate, as well as student achievement. Therefore, suggesting to alternating the variables when focusing on school climate to a more detailed study (Allen et al., 2015).

When implementing transformational leadership, some leaders are apt to implement transformation strategies within the organization in which they are chosen to lead. Mehdinezhad and Nouri (2016) defined transformational leadership as “a process of moral and spiritual conscience that creates the same patterns of power relations between leaders and followers to achieve a collective goal or real change” (p. 46). Therefore, a quantitative study was conducted, utilizing a correlation strategy, the relationship between transformational and spiritual leadership. Even though the findings proved there was a significant difference between these variables, Mehdinezhad and Nouri (2016) explained that organizations cannot become successful without transformational leadership.

Due to the overwhelming acceptance of transformational leadership over the past twenty-five years, transformational leadership has had the time to prove whether or not this leadership style continues to be needed within organizations making transformations (Berkovich, 2016). Berkovich (2016) chose to quantitatively focus on whether transformational leadership had done the job in which was intended, even though transformational leadership has received criticism. In addition, Berkovich (2016) noted the shared variance in which transformational leadership and other leadership practices tend to have. It was found that transformational leaders do not try to fit this leadership practice with other practices (Berkovich, 2016).

Instructional leadership. For many years, instructional leadership practices have been researched and established as positive practices which principals might utilize with teachers and students. According to Romero and Krichesky (2017), instructional leadership is a practice in which principals indirectly impact students by directly teaching teachers to increase their knowledge of subject areas within Professional Learning Communities (PLC). This quantitative study incorporated how instructional leadership could impact positively school climate (Romero & Krichesky, 2017). In addition, findings indicated there is a difference among the private and public schools with the distribution of principals' time, frequency of classroom observations, and school absenteeism, principal perceptions of overall school climate in Argentina (Romero & Krichesky, 2017).

Even though instructional leadership practices have been established in the United States for at least thirty years, Asia has not quite established this leadership practice within their schools (Harris & Jones, 2017). Harris and Jones (2017) explained this qualitative study utilized Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model in order to understand the level of leadership in which these principals are managing their schools. The findings indicated that the Malaysian principals were implementing instructional leadership practices, but not all of the dimensions and functions associated with instructional leadership practices. All in all, positive impacts in schools have been noted by the researchers with the implementation of these few instructional leadership practices from the principals (Harris & Jones, 2017).

Distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is a practice in which principals have the option to create collaborative leadership within their buildings by distributing leadership throughout the school with teachers and students (Klar et al., 2016). Klar et al. (2016) examined how distributed leadership could foster capacity within schools. Through this mixed methods design, a conceptual framework is utilized which focuses on a “principal leadership capacity builder” (p. 117) model which lead to “principal’s capacity-building action” (p. 129) model (Klar, et al., 2016). These models allowed the principal to determine who meets the appropriate guidelines for the leadership roles that would be distributed throughout the school. Even though distributed leadership practices are fairly new, these leadership practices enable principals an increase of capacity in order to focus on other management needs to meet federal, state, and district regulations (Klar, et al., 2016).

Franco et al. (2014) described how a principal was able determine how distributing leadership was not only for listening and supporting teachers, but to give the tools needed for leadership, as well as, gaining trust for the success in which the teachers and students would be set up for. Equally important, the researchers noted the importance of the change in thinking not only the teachers would experience, but the change of thinking must begin with the administration (Franco et al., 2014). Franco et al. (2014) discovered that utilizing PLCs would be the key, for this particular school, to positively experience of school improvement. In addition, focusing these PLCs around “collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creativity” seemed to reach every

student, even those who seemed to be lost within this particular school (Franco et al., 2014, p. 40). As a result of implementing distributed leadership, a confidence in the staff occurred which lead to the mentality of strong leadership (Franco et al., 2014).

Culturally responsive leadership. Khalifa et al. (2016) explained, from the literature collected, how school leadership could be crucial for the success of many aspects of the school itself including school climate. The researchers noted that teachers are the first when addressing student achievement, but principals have their own part in this area due to developing and improving these teachers' skills (Khalifa et al., 2016). Improving these skills include implementing transformational and instructional leadership practice with social justice factors (Khalifa et al., 2016). With this in mind, culturally responsive leaders could be developed within the staff and school; therefore, leading to a positive school climate (Khalifa et al., 2016). There are many layers which culturally responsive leadership could be beneficial for all aspects of the school environment.

Layering leadership practices. Many leadership practices have been researched singly over the past thirty or more years. However, within the past five years, researchers have begun to question whether these leadership practices could and should be utilized together instead of singly (Day et al., 2016). According to Day et al. (2016), transformational and instructional leadership practices have established and seem to demonstrate positive results. This type of layering can depend on the level of leadership in which the principal deems appropriate for the school as a whole (Day et al., 2016).

Meaning, depending on where the phase of development with school might be and to whether these layering strategies could be beneficial (Day et al., 2016). In this mixed methods design, Day et al. (2016) utilized Impact of School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes (IMPACT) to better understand what level the schools were in order to justify whether layering would be an appropriate strategy for a positive school climate. For this reason, the researchers indicated the need for further researcher of the dual-paradigm instead of the single-paradigm model (Day et al., 2016).

Continuing with the idea that layering leadership practices could lead to success within the schools, principals could benefit from combining two or more of these successful leadership practices to implement. For instance, Bellibas and Liu (2018) quantitative study indicated the need to examine “the effects of principals’ perceived instructional and distributed leadership practices on their perceptions on mutual respect among staff and school safety” (p. 227). Findings indicated that for success of the students, these leadership practices are important for positive mutual respect and school safety (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). Also, these leadership practices are successful when principals tend to empower the staff through instructional effectiveness (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). However, additional findings established there was no relationship between the leadership practices and school violence (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). School violence seemed to occur in school where the socioeconomic status was lower (Bellibas & Liu, 2018).

Although it may seem that principals could benefit from these leadership practices being layered, Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, and Brown (2014) discussed how completely

different transformational and instructional leadership practices with the effects on student achievement. Consequently, in this mixed methods study, the researchers noted that transformational leadership practices seem to share a vision; however, the researchers noted that shared instructional practices could be more beneficial (Shatzer et al., 2014). Therefore, Shatzer et al. (2014) expressed their concern with exploring more than one leadership practice, and further indicating a need to continue researching these leadership practices with implementation.

Obviously, principals play an important role within the schools they serve. Because of this, Adams, Olsen, and Ware (2017) furthered their research within this quantitative research design by questioning to what capacity do the students need to in order to learn and succeed. Understanding that in order for students to reach their capacity within learning, principals must not only foster their academic needs, but also their social and psychological needs (Adams et al., 2017). Adams, et al. (2017) noted that the students did not specifically need a particular learning practice; however, the students needed a positive school climate that is cooperative and nurtures the need for self-awareness.

Motivational Practices

Leadership seems to be a focus in which principals have when forming the different levels of leadership with their schools, whether between the teachers or the students (Sigurðardóttir & Sigþórsson, 2016). According to Sigurðardóttir, and Sigþórsson (2016), these levels of leadership could vary; however, focusing on formal

leadership teams with the idea of increasing the overall leadership capacity within the schools has demonstrated the highest level of success. Reason being, these leadership skills are at a higher level than those without formal leadership teams (Sigurðardo'ttir & Sigþó'rsson, 2016). The researchers noted this qualitative study, with a few changes in order, coincided with the conceptual framework targeted these skills: “(1) creating and realizing the vision; (2) inquiry and reflection; (3) students’ views and progress; (4) leadership” (Sigurðardo'ttir & Sigþó'rsson, 2016, p. 605). Obviously, with the implementation of these levels of leadership, a principal could have a motivational mindset for these skills to be positively achieved.

Teacher turnover is a problem in many schools, districts, and states (Kraft et al., 2016). Kraft, et al. (2016) noted, within this quantitative study, there are many organizational factors which could derive from the teacher turnover rate that inadvertently affects student achievement. Throughout the review of this article, the researchers mentioned the importance of the role in which the principal plays within the problem of teacher turnover. Teachers who prefer to leave seem to experience a lack of leadership (Kraft et al., 2016). After analyzing the data with the organizational context, there seems to be a lack of notation of motivation demonstrated by the principals when implementing in this organizational context; therefore, leading to an increase of teacher turnover and a decrease of student achievement (Kraft et al., 2016).

Motivation can be demonstrated in many different ways; however, principals seem to impact, whether positively or negatively, but the language in which they may use

when speaking to their teachers, staff, students, or parents is influential towards perceptions and attitudes within the schools (Alqahtani, 2015). This quantitative study explained that principals' motivational language contributes by creating a positive school climate (Alqahtani, 2015). Even though the schools in Kuwait were mediocre and lacked the rapport needed for positive student achievement and school climate, principals who were committed to the schools and utilizing motivational language seemed to increase both of these which led to an increase of success for the school (Alqahtani, 2015). Furthermore, the researchers have recommended further study on principal motivational language focusing on training and experience in Kuwait and other societies (Alqahtani, 2015).

There are many motivators, intrinsic and extrinsic, which could guide teachers' bias towards a positive or negative point of view when considering the leadership of their principal. According to Mikkelsen, Jacobsen, and Andersen (2017), there is an expected relationship between perceptions of managers and employees especially when Deci and Ryan's determination theory with intrinsic motivation (Mikkelsen et al., 2017). Principals utilizing soft actions with intrinsic motivators seem to demonstrate support for the teachers (Mikkelsen et al., 2017). This quantitative study utilized an empirical model for multiple Danish schools. Findings indicated there is a strong relationship with principals implementing intrinsic motivators with student success (Mikkelsen et al., 2017).

School Climate

The principal role seems to have quite a few categories in the whole job description that must be considered within schools, including leadership and management. Hallinger (2017) utilized a conceptual framework which actually explored whether principals are only utilizing one of these or utilizing both of these categories in unison. The research indicated that the school outcomes were impacted positively when these categories were utilized together and not separately (Hallinger, 2017). The school outcome seems to be of great importance, not only for Africa, but for the world due to the quality and accountability this demonstrated for overall positive school climate (Hallinger, 2017).

There are many factors that define what a positive school climate should encompass. Romero and Krichesky (2017) explained how leadership can indirectly impact school climate. Principals choosing to impact school climate within their buildings could target experiences from all stakeholders which encompasses not only academics, but socially, emotionally, civically, and ethically. Historical research indicated how important principal leadership can impact school climate which in turn impacts student achievement (Romero & Krichesky, 2017).

Although it is true that transformational leadership contributes by allotting the principal a way to transform the school which might be needing a transformation school climate is also competing factor for enhancing the performance of a school (McCarley et al., 2016). Acknowledging the feelings, attitudes, behaviors of principals, teachers, and

students is a crucial key to a successful and positive school climate (McCarley et al., 2016). School climate influences the impact of collaboration, teacher turnover, and contentment of stakeholders (McCarley et al., 2016). According to McCarley et al. (2016), to further research for a better understanding of the difference between principal perceptions of themselves and teacher perceptions the principals' leadership practices, a qualitative study would contribute to the research already established.

Perceptions

Principals are apt to form their own perceptions of themselves and the task at hand, as well as developing their ideologies based on the knowledge they have gained through coursework and experience; however, these perceptions might not always align from principal to teacher when referring to efficiency, leadership, and commitment (Hallinger, Hosseingholizadeh, Hashemi, & Kouhsari, 2017). Utilizing a conceptual model, Hallinger et al. (2017) analyzed "principal self-efficiency, principal instructional leadership, teacher collective efficiency, and teacher commitment" (p. 1). The quantitative research indicated that principals tend to rate themselves higher than the teachers rate the principals (Hallinger et al., 2017). Even though there was a difference in ratings, Hallinger et al. (2017) noted there are significant relationships between principals and teachers which leads to the impact these relationships have on school improvement and the way in which the students learn.

Teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership and efficiency skills has been explored for many reasons, such as the impact on teacher efficiency and turnover (Ham et

al., 2015). However, the idea of self-awareness and self-reflection has been questioned when referring to whether principals are conscious of their own leadership practices (Ham et al., 2015). Principals having this level of awareness of themselves could lead to more positive teacher efficiency which in turn could increase a positive school climate (Ham et al., 2015). Consequently, Ham et al. (2015) discovered, through this quantitative study, principals and teachers have different perspectives about how principals lead which indicated a negative effect on teacher self-efficiency.

When analyzing perceptions of self or others, principals and teachers tend to focus on the behaviors in which they might perceive as accurate. Gurley, Anast-May, O'Neal, Lee, and Shores (2015) explored and compared teacher and principal perceptions of principal instructional leadership practices including a self-evaluation of the principal. This quantitative study's findings indicated there were slight differences in perceptions; however, no significant difference in ratings between the teachers and the principals (Gurley, et al., 2015). Therefore, to further this study the researchers recommended a follow-up utilizing qualitative methodology in order to explore the reasons in which these slight differences exist (Gurley, et al., 2015).

Even though principal and teachers' point of views can vary, all data does not indicate principals and teachers are always on the opposing ends when evaluating principal behaviors and leadership practices. On the contrary, Mehinezhad and Sardarzahi (2015) examined the leadership and managerial practices of principals. In addition, principals' and teachers' perceptions were not exact, but principals' self-reflection was

noted to being very good; while, teachers' perception of the principals' leadership and management practices were rated relatively good (Mehinezhad & Sardarzahi, 2015). An overall view of the quantitative study indicated how the results exhibited the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding leadership behaviors seem to be the closely related, as well as the relationship between leadership behaviors and management experience (Mehinezhad & Sardarzahi, 2015). Furthermore, there does seem to be a difference between leadership behaviors reported by principals with those observed by teachers (Mehinezhad & Sardarzahi, 2015).

Social Justice

Within education, social justice leadership seems to be a positive component for students encountering a multicultural education environment. Sanataria (2014) described an approach in which principals could expand their knowledge through educational leaderships practices by maximizing multicultural perspective through meeting the needs of diversity within the schools. In order to maximize this multicultural atmosphere, principals could utilize culturally responsive leadership practices in addition to the preferred educational leadership practices (Sanataria, 2014). This culturally responsive case study utilized a Critical Race Theory lens when analyzing the data (Sanataria, 2014). According to this data analysis, there were some differences, especially with which educational leadership practice the principal chose to use, but there were not enough differences to separate the data across the population (Sanataria, 2014). Consequently, the

principals seemed to demonstrate compassion through the acceptance of diversity throughout their schools leading to a strong sense of social justice (Sanataria, 2014).

Naturalistic Narrative

Over the course of this literature review, it has been established through the research that a qualitative study could add to the knowledge that has already been explored and explained. Building upon that reflection, utilizing a naturalistic narrative approach could contribute to this research by adding to the current research. McInnes et al. (2017) explained Lincoln and Guba (1985) Five Axioms within the Naturalistic Paradigm which in turn coincided with the Fourteen Characteristics of Naturalistic Inquiry that are explained in more detail in Appendix E.

-	Axiom	Naturalist paradigm
1	The nature of reality (ontology).	Realities are multiple.
2	The relationship of knower to known.	Each is inseparable.
3	Generalisation.	Statements are bound by time and context.
4	Causal linkages.	It is not possible to distinguish cause from effect.
5	The role of values in enquiry.	The enquiry is value-bound.

Figure 1. Five axioms of naturalistic inquiry. Adapted from “An Exemplar of Naturalistic Inquiry in General Practice Research,” by S. McInnes, K. Peters, A. Bonney, & E. Halcomb, 2017, *Nurse Researcher*, 24(3), pp.36-41.

Narratives tend to be an explanation of a persons’ experience through reflection (McAlpine, 2016). Also, narratives can be utilized within a case study to meet the criteria for a qualitative study. A narrative approach could provide a naturalistic point of view. McAlpine (2017) explained a naturalistic stance describes people’s experiences in a

detailed format by utilizing interviews, diaries, semi-structured logs, and perceptions as a longitudinal case study. Utilizing this naturalistic narrative approach increased transferability, dependability, confirmability that are all within trustworthiness (McAlpine, 2017; McInnes et al., 2017).

Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, principals can have a positive, indirect effect when creating a building led with collaboration and trust which in turn leads to a positive school climate and motivation (Day et al., 2016; Romero & Krichesky, 2017). Since principals are considered linchpins within the buildings they lead, planning effectively the type of practice through communication and vision can lead to successful planning for implementation and sustainability (Peters-Hawkins, Reed, & Kingsberry, 2017). According to Hallinger et al. (2017), when communicating a vision, the principal builds a positive school climate that motivates students to achieve positive academic outcomes. Since principal leadership is an important factor for sustaining education reform, comparing these perceptions of principals and teachers can make an influence on school improvement (Shoupe & Pate, 2010). Therefore, further examination of the balance between self-other perceptions between principals and teachers is vital to the improvement of school leadership (Ham et al., 2015). To further this examination, an explanation has been developed within the research methods in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a better understanding of seventh and eighth grade school principal and teacher perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices and to explore the foundation of perceptions, leadership practices, and school climate. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology and all components that were utilized in this study. This single case study with a naturalistic narrative approach is explained by way of a research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, instrumentation, issues of trustworthiness, and a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

RQ1: What are principal and teacher perceptions of implemented principal motivational leadership practices?

RQ2: What are the principal and teacher experiences of how principal motivational leadership practices influence school climate?

The qualitative tradition appropriated for this study included a single case study that explored perceptions of principals and teachers regarding principal motivational leadership practices and a cross-analysis with school climate ratings for constant comparison of the themes and patterns through reflections and experiences. Case studies are cases that can be explored singly or in multiples. Also, a case study, "...is more adapted to a description of multiple realities encountered at any given site..." (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985, p. 41). Because case studies seem to provide a strong, compelling study, I planned to utilize this method by focusing in-depth holistically with “real-world perspectives” (see Yin, 2018, p. 5). By selecting two to three schools within the same district with seventh and eighth graders, this single case study increased the chances of a good study utilizing a theoretical replication with a naturalistic narrative approach (see McApline, 2016; Yin, 2018). This study was conducted within the natural setting while collecting others’ perceptions and experiences through this single case.

In a single case study, a researcher has the option of utilizing a holistic or embedded case (Yin, 2018). For this study, I utilized holistic cases that allowed me to focus on the parts of the whole which, as well as the whole itself. Finally, I compared these case reports in a cross-case report for the final cross-analysis.

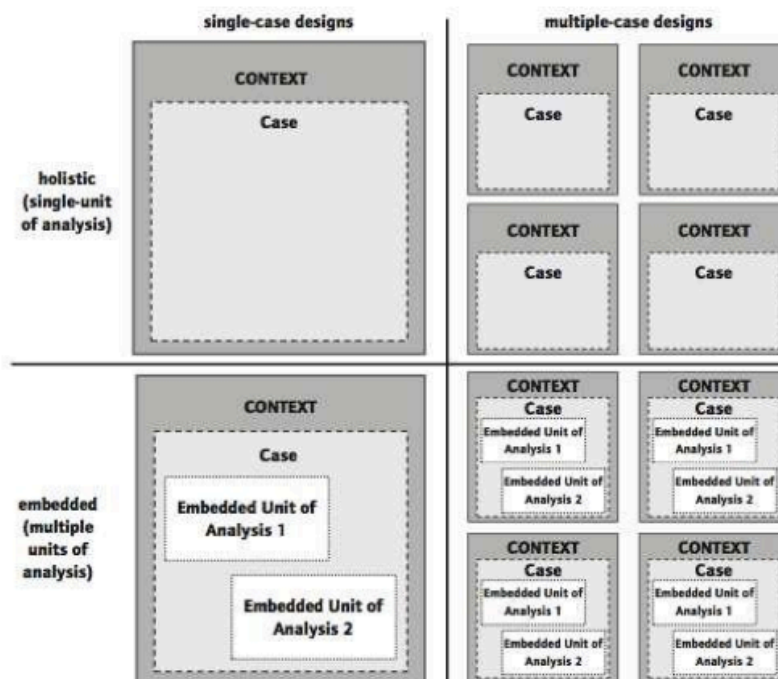


Figure 2. Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies. Adapted from “Chapter 2: Designing Case Studies” by Robert K. Yin, 2018, Case Study Research and Applications Design and Method, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, p.48.

Yin (2018) explained that case study questions can be formed utilizing “who,” “what,” “where,” “how,” and “why” questions; however, for the most appropriate case study question should begin with “how” and “why.” It is also imperative to clearly state the nature of your study within your questions (Yin, 2018). To do this, I found similar studies to refer back to in order to make clearly appropriate research questions (see Yin, 2018). Taking these steps, I removed any bias which allowed me to remain open-minded to focus on the experiences and perceptions of the principals and teachers. McCarley et al. (2016) discussed the need for a qualitative study that focuses on perceptions of principals and teachers in comparison with the school climate; therefore, utilizing charismatic leadership would provide an in-depth constant comparison of reflections and experiences.

Choi (2006) explored motivational effects of charismatic leadership while focusing on envisioning, empathy, and empowerment. The motivational theory of charismatic leadership within Choi (2006) explained, “that a charismatic leader generally generates positive individual and organizational outcomes by displaying behaviors that stimulates followers’ needs” (p. 25). Because Choi (2006) utilized the conceptual framework focusing on motivational effects of charismatic leadership, then perceptions of principals and teachers along with a comparison of these perspectives and the impact

on school climate would make the connection of key concepts with envisioning, empathy, and empowerment for this study and conceptual framework.

Shao et al. (2017) explored charismatic leadership, motivational theories, and intrinsic motivation which refers to Choi (2006) through consideration of the Motivational Effects of Charismatic Leadership Model. Through a quantitative study, Shao et al. (2017) noted that charismatic leadership focuses on the relationships between the leader and followers. Some charismatic leaders are inclined to motivate their followers by inspiring them to create positive outcomes (Shao et al., 2017). In addition to the charismatic leadership, Shao et al. (2017) utilized a research model with all hypothesis and variables, including psychological safety climate, intrinsic motivation and tacit knowledge sharing. Shao et al. (2017) found the following:

Charismatic leadership is positively associated with psychological safety climate, which in turn has a positive impact on intrinsic motivation and tacit knowledge sharing intention. Specifically, we found that psychological safety climate fully mediates the relationship between charismatic leadership and intrinsic motivation, while intrinsic motivation partially mediates the relationship between psychological safety climate and tacit knowledge sharing. (Shao et al., 2017, p. 205)

There were several recommendations for further study; however, there was one recommendation for further research that explores leadership traits and the multidimensional constructs that could be established (Shao et al., 2017). Considering

Choi (2006) utilized a conceptual model, which looks intently into envisioning, empathy, and empowerment, I believe that this study was based upon this historic model to allow this study to build upon the current research.

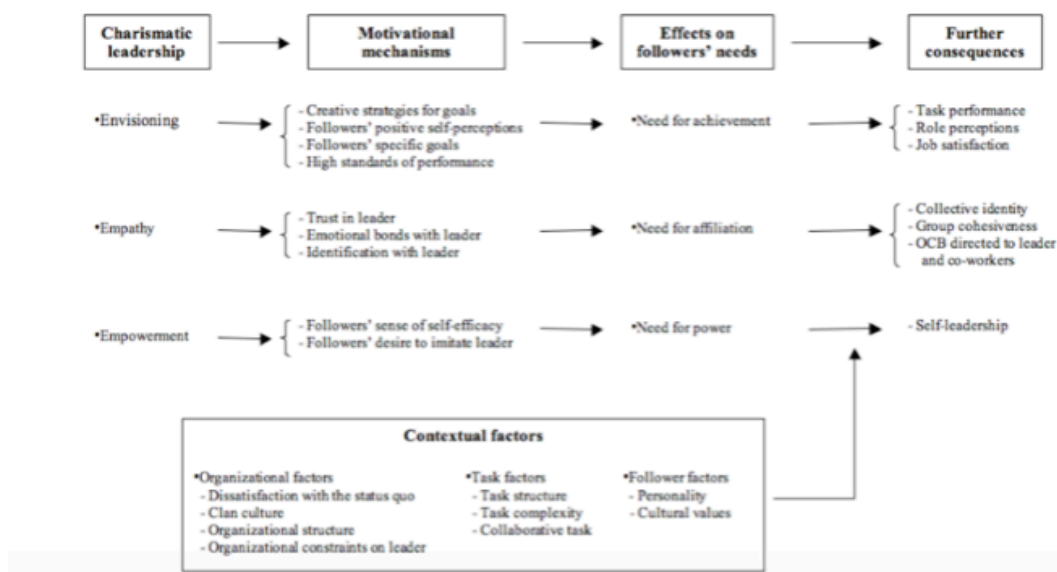


Figure 3. The Motivational Effects of Charismatic Leadership. Adapted from Choi, J. (2006). A motivational theory of charismatic leadership: Envisioning, empowering, and empowerment. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 13(1).

When coding the data that were collected, a pattern-matching analytical technique was utilized. This pattern-matching logic is one of the most preferable techniques (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) stated, “if the empirical and predicted patterns appear to be similar, the results can help a case study to strengthen its internal validity” (p. 175).

Role of the Researcher

As role of the researcher, I was the collector, interviewer, and facilitator for the current single case study. First, I distributed reflective journals to the head principals for the self-evaluation. Next, since I utilized a narrative approach with holistic thinking, I not

only capture the stories and experiences of these head principals, assistant principals and teachers, but I provided a system for these perspectives (Patton, 2015). By not knowing the participants in the study I reduced bias; however, I collected these experiences and perspectives through interviews and reflective journals with principals and focus groups with teachers by utilizing open-ended questions for all data collection.

The three locations of seventh and eighth grade schools that have been chosen removed personal and professional bias. These locations I have not worked there and neither have my family members who are within the educational field as certified staff. Therefore, there are no relationships that I would power over that would skew the results. I also provided an additional rater through a member checking process (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, there was no plan needed for addressing any ethical issues that were foreseen.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Through this current study, triangulation of data was utilized to strengthen the validity of the study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that the utilization of triangulation is an enhancement of the validity of the study. Therefore, there were three processes of triangulation I utilized. I utilized methodological triangulation by having a triangulation of the data collection. This perspective triangulation included three head principals, three assistant principals, and six teachers. All participants were recruited via email once permission was granted from the superintendent of the district. When those

were collected and coded, I took the secondary data of school climate indicators to make the comparison with the triangulation of data.

Keeping in mind this study was a single case study, I narrowed down the population at multiple schools where my husband, other family members and I had not taught. In order to decrease bias, the population for this study was chosen from seventh and eighth grade schools. I called to confirm whether the superintendent of the district prefers a face-to-face meeting or an email invitation in order to receive for approval of this study. I was directed to the administrator who is over dissertation research study approval requests via phone, then email invitation was sent per administrator's request.

Instrumentation

The data collection instruments that were utilized included an interview and focus group research questions, reflective journals, and secondary data. There was no monetary compensation provided through this current study for any participant, school, or district.

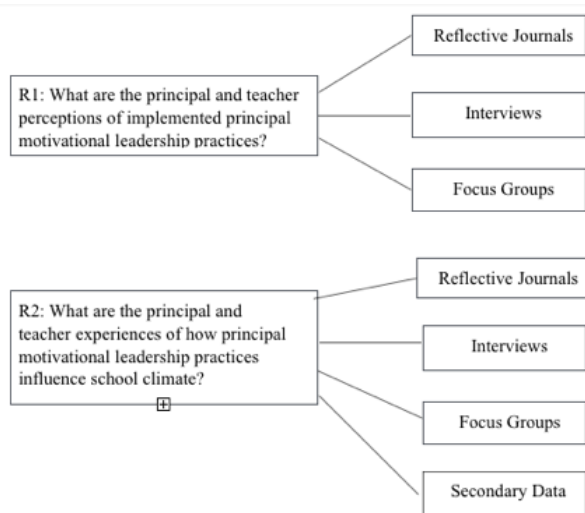


Figure 4. Alignment of Research Questions and Instruments.

Reflective journals. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained how useful reflective journaling can contribute to qualitative research on the researcher's end; therefore, I wonder if reflective journaling would also be as useful for principals and their self-reflection throughout this current study. Before any data was collected in interviews and focus groups, I met with the head principals to provide instructions about the reflective journals, as well as distribute these reflective journals. The reflective journals were distributed for the head principals to self-reflect and explore the motivational leadership characteristics and practices they are utilizing and implementing in the schools. These questions came from both research questions which are found in Appendix B. Before proceeding to the interviews, I collected these reflective journals.

Interviews. Next, the head principals and assistant principals were interviewed individually and face to face. Both research questions which focus on the principal perceptions of the principals implemented motivational leadership practices and the influence these motivational leadership practices have on school climate was asked during the interview. An example of the conversational guide is within Appendix C. During the interviews, I utilized a recording device for a more precise data collection. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained how the utilization of the recording device can create a better transcription for a more reliable data collection.

Focus groups. I structured the focus groups similarly to the interviews. Within the focus groups, the teachers were asked the similar questions the head and principals

are asked from both research questions. An example of the focus group questions can be found in Appendix D. In addition, I planned on recording the interview within this focus group for a more reliable and precise data collection (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Secondary data. This secondary data is a set of data produced through the school climate indicators. This data collection increased the validity of the study, as well as, provide answers to RQ2. Utilizing the triangulation of data in this current study allowed me to capture the different perceptions of the principals and teachers, then comparing these perceptions to the school climate outcomes to gain a better understanding if these perceptions were consistent (Patton, 2015).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Before beginning the data collection process, I, as the researcher, provided a consent form that allowed the access I needed to implement this current study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) provided a consent form template that I utilized as a guide for the consent form I distributed to and collected from participants.

Prior to the interviews and focus group, I requested secondary data from each head principal focusing on school climate indicators and ratings for each school. In addition, I explained and distributed the reflective journals to the head principals. Upon entering the one-on-one interviews, I collected the data from the reflective journals. When these interviews were completed, I coded these reflective journals to target the themes. Afterwards, I conducted the focus group with the teachers.

During the one-on-one interviews of the principals and assistant principals, I was the interviewer. With permission from each participant, I recorded each session. Likewise, during the focus group, I was the facilitator of the group. I recorded the session with permission of the participants. Like stated above, I collected the reflective journals from the head principals during their one-on-one interview.

Essentially, I was the sole researcher; therefore meaning, I collected the data, transcribed, coded and compared the results myself. However, during the coding and comparing process, I had a second rater for member checking to increase the validity of this study. This process was a 2-week data collection timeframe. The first day was an introduction, as well as, the day for consent for those participants who agreed to be a part of the current study. The next four days consisted of head principals reflecting within their journals and scheduling the interviews and focus group. Day six through eight, I conducted the one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews with a maximum duration of thirty minutes. The collection of the secondary data took place on day eight. Also, day eight consisted of follow-up interviews if necessary. I closed the data collection on day ten. I debriefed with all participants after each session. During this debriefing time, I reaffirmed the confidentiality and the consent in which each participant signed at the beginning of the study. I discussed whether after the data is transcribed, coded, and compared to when we would gather again, if they preferred, for me to present the data.

Data Analysis Plan

Reflective journal. The reflective journals were for head principals. This reflection was a self-reflection through perceptions of the head principal focusing on the daily ways the head principal implements motivational leadership practices which connect with RQ1 and RQ2.

Interviews. During the interviews, the questions from the reflective journals were reiterated for validity; however, these questions were asked more in-depth. Furthermore, each interview consisted of RQ1 and RQ2.

Focus group. Correspondingly, the focus group questions began like the interviews. The group of participants were given a list of motivational characteristics, then asked to explain characteristics of motivational leadership and practices which they have experienced. Also, the participants were asked to give their perceptions of the connections between motivational leadership practices and school climate. Moreover, this focus group consisted of RQ1 and RQ2.

Secondary data. There were three groups broken down into the three schools with the four participants from each school. The head principal reflective journals were considered secondary data sources, which is explained in greater detail above. Collection of the school climate indicators was compared to the codes and themes from the reflective journals, interviews, and focus group. This data stems from R2. This allowed for all of the data collected above to be compared with this set of data which will answer R2.

Each of these data sources will be analyzed using NVivo Data Analysis Software or MAXQDA that could allow me to code the qualitative data. These data collections were coded by concepts, categories, examples and themes while keeping in mind the first phase was descriptive (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Therefore, there was a first cycle of coding, then a second cycle of coding. This allowed for the analysis to better explain the findings through the process of linking these codes together (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This explanation was provided by the method of constant comparison, since “constant comparison provides an excellent fit with our earlier account of continuous and simultaneous collection and processing of data” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 335). In case through this process of data collection there seems to be a discrepancy, I set three days within the allotted duration of the collection of this data. Furthermore, this was where follow-up interviews would be if necessary.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness and validity could be considered interchanging terms in qualitative research. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained how some researchers might not consider these terms interchanging; however, in relation to credibility and rigor, trustworthiness and validity seem to be interchangeable. The naturalistic and conventional inquirer pose the questions around truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The current study has a foundation of trustworthiness and validity by providing a triangulation of data, utilizing strategic sequencing, and maintaining fidelity through gaining a better understanding of the

participants' perspectives (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained the characteristics in which I utilized with through a naturalistic paradigm that provided the level of expected trustworthiness.

Credibility

Establishing credibility will stem from the triangulation of data that is being collected, as well as the member checks, saturation, reflexivity, and debriefing. I continued to establish credibility by utilizing field notes and audio recordings within interviews and the focus group. This increased the confidence of the study, therefore increasing the credibility which follows naturalistic inquiry fundamentals that I utilized within this study (see McInnes et al., 2017).

Transferability

The third axiom of Lincoln and Guba (1985) naturalistic inquiry, transferability is noted by "presenting a thick description of the research setting and participants so the reader can determine transferability between situations" (McInnes et al., 2017). Since this study utilized naturalistic inquiry, a thick description was established. In addition, a variation of participant selection is established in order to transfer among other settings.

Dependability

Concurrently, the dependability of the study was also strengthened through the strategic sequencing that had been implemented in a variety of ways. There are three types of validity that the current study utilized. These types include: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and evaluate validity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). First, during the

interviews and focus group, I recorded and transcribed these interviews verbatim (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In doing this, I met the criteria for descriptive validity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Next, through this transcription, I used the participants' words and concepts verbatim in order to capture the participants' perceptions exactly (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Therefore, I utilized interpretive validity as my second strategy. Last, keeping my personal and professional bias out of this study, I was able to see the criteria for evaluate validity by describing and understanding the participants' experiences without judgement (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Confirmability

Confirmability was established two ways within this current study. First, utilizing the reflective journaling provided by the head principals extended insight from their perspective which contributed to the triangulation of data that was collected (McInnes et al., 2017). Second, I utilized an additional rater for member checking to establish reflexivity (McInnes et al., 2017).

All in all, to generate trustworthiness and confidence, I am establishing credibility, dependability, and confirmability by creating stability, reliability, and objectivity with validity of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Likewise, I had a variation in the participant selection including a thick description for the other sites to establish transferability within this cases study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). McInnes et al. (2017) discussed Lincoln and Guba (1985) explanations about establishing trustworthiness through field notes (credibility), thick descriptions (transferability),

alignment of the study (dependability), and triangulation and perspectives (confirmability). All of these characteristics of trustworthiness embody naturalistic inquiry, which was incorporated within this current study.

Ethical Procedures

To ensure the upmost safety of the participants, I honored the ethical procedures outlined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) upon approval. First, I requested a face-to-face or email contact with the superintendent in order to gain permission for this study to be implemented. Next, after gaining permission from the district, I contacted potential participants for the study through an email. I utilized to gain access to participants and data that meets the expectations of the IRB by way of a consent form.

Likewise, the expectations of the treatment of human participants laid out by the IRB will be fulfilled. During the interviews and focus groups, the participants knew I am an open-minded party without judgement. The participants had the opportunity during any part of this process to ask questions or express concerns without bias. Additionally, I established a comfortable setting for all participants. This setting was within a conference room at a neutral location.

During the interviews and focus groups, I asked for permission to record in order to uphold the upmost integrity for transcription. These transcriptions and recordings are kept in locked laptop and cabinet by which only I have the password information. With these transcriptions, I utilized member checking, so the participant or responder to

increase validity and integrity of the study. The information they check is in these secured areas where only I have the password information.

Protection of the participants extends after the data is collected and compiled. Even though I am willing to provide the information I found, I have kept the district and participants anonymous by me only having access to the information. I have to plan in case participants refuse to participate or withdraw from the study; however, with the number of participants I invited, I had enough participants to replace if any participants refused or withdrew. This information will be destroyed after five years. Even though this current research was not federally funded, I followed the guidelines set out before me by the IRB (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Approval granted with the distribution of my approval # is 07-16-19-0651496. Therefore, at this time, there are no conflicts of interest and there was no monetary compensation as incentives.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided a detailed view of the research design that was implemented in the current study. This detailed view included the method, instrumentation, and implementation process. This single case study provided a naturalistic inquiry with a narrative approach providing a cross-analysis of triangulated data utilizing a conceptual framework. In order to establish validity, triangulation of data, strategic sequencing, and maintaining fidelity has been determined and ready for implementation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). With that being stated, Chapter 4 will provide an

explanation of how this study was implemented and the results that were connected from the triangulation of data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a better understanding of principals' and teachers' perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices influence on school climate in seventh and eighth grade. Through the process of exploring this purpose, the research questions allowed for experiences and perceptions to be collected in order to gain a better understanding of these relationships. The exploration of any type of case study is essential when providing evidence from a group of participants with different perspectives that will in turn provide a strong increase in trustworthiness within that study (Yin, 2018). In addition, Yin (2018) explained that “an exemplary case study – one that is ‘significant’ and ‘complete’...” (p. 218).

Research questions that were explored are as follows:

RQ1: What are principal and teacher perceptions of implemented principal motivational leadership practices?

RQ2: What are the principal and teacher experiences of how principal motivational leadership practices influence school climate?

There are many ways in which a researcher can relay the data that is collected. Yin (2018) explained that “a single text is used to showcase and analyze the case” (p. 226). Therefore, I provided this route by explaining in Chapter 4 the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, then a

summary of what was discussed. The goal of this chapter is to provide a significant, complete, exemplary study that augments the existing research.

Setting

The setting that was offered and agreed upon was a neutral location where participants would meet in order for participants to remain anonymous. A change in a location could be considered an organizational condition. Therefore, during the focus group and interviews, there were two participants that requested to be interviewed at an alternate location that was not neutral. This location was their office within their school setting. It was noted that this change in location for these participants did not seem to change the level of comfort or willingness to participate just as the other participants in within the neutral location had. Throughout the data collection time frame, there were no major personal or organizational conditions that were reported that would influence or skew the results.

Demographics

The demographics of this study consisted of a range of participants with different races, genders, and positions. A total of six participants agreed to either an interview or a focus group interview. There was one African American and five Caucasian individuals. The participants' genders included three males and three females. The positions these participants attained were as follows: two head principals, two assistant principals, and two teachers within three seventh and eighth grade schools. One teacher was a general education teacher; while the other teacher was a special education teacher (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics

Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6
Race	Caucasian	Caucasian	African American	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male
Position	Teacher	Teacher	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal	Head Principal	Head Principal

Each participant seemed to encompass a type of leadership practices that expressed relevant characteristics they referred to, whether singly, or layered. These references were discovered during the interviews and focus group. Table 2 demonstrates the type or types of leadership practices noted of each participant.

Table 2

Leadership Characteristics of Participants

Participants	Transitional Leadership	Instructional Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Culturally Responsive Leadership	Motivational Practices
Teacher 1		X			
Teacher 2				X	
Assist Principal 1		X			X
Assistant Principal 2		X		X	
Head Principal 1	X	X	X	X	
Head Principal 2		X	X	X	

Data Collection

Throughout the data collection process, I referred to the principles defined in Chapter 3 in order to stay as accurate to the plan and process that was established. The participants in this study included six participants within three seventh and eighth grade

schools in one district; however, the number of participants varied from the 12 participants planned in Chapter 3. In addition, I had a neutral location for these participants to come and go as anonymous as they chose. Four of the six participants met with me at the neutral location, but two of the participants requested I come to their workspace for the interview. Each interview and focus group stayed within the time that was allotted with 30 minutes maximum and one session. Once the interviews and focus group were scheduled, the timeframe of two weeks was all that was needed. All of the data collected is in a folder on my laptop and a USB drive in a filing cabinet at my home.

During this two-week timeframe, I requested the secondary data from the two head principal participants. They were not sure of the school climate indicators I was referring to. So, during this time, I was able to find the public documents from the Department of Education website that records the school climate indicators for these schools. However, the school climate indicators are under a different title, so that explained why the two head principals did not know to what I was referring to. When looking through the school climate indicators, I did find that one of the three school's data were distributed to the other schools due to their appointed home school. Meaning, these schools are different types of schools. Two are considered regular schools, while one is a specialized school. The specialized schools' data are reported back to the student's home school or school they would attend if they were unenrolled from the specialized school. This data has only been recorded for the past two school years.

In addition to requesting the secondary data, I distributed the reflective journals to the head principals. I explained what was being collected and left the journals with the head principals. Both principals requested to bring when they came for their interview. I granted this request. However, when I held one interview, the head principal had another entry to make and requested I collect a few days after. I granted this request in order to have the complete data that I had planned before the data analysis began.

The focus group and interviews were recorded when permission was granted from the participants. After this focus group and interviews were held, the recordings were transcribed with first cycle: description, first cycle: concept, second cycle: patterns, and memo space for notes. In correlation, the reflective journals were transcribed with the exact same process. As noted in Chapter 3, the use of NVivo or MAXQDA was the coding software that was mentioned, but after coding, no software was needed. After all the data were collected, there was no need to schedule any follow-up interviews. Member checking was completed via email with all of the participants. After transcripts were completed, I emailed to the participants and each had the opportunity to review and check for validity. The two-week timeframe was all that was needed in order to collect the data for this study.

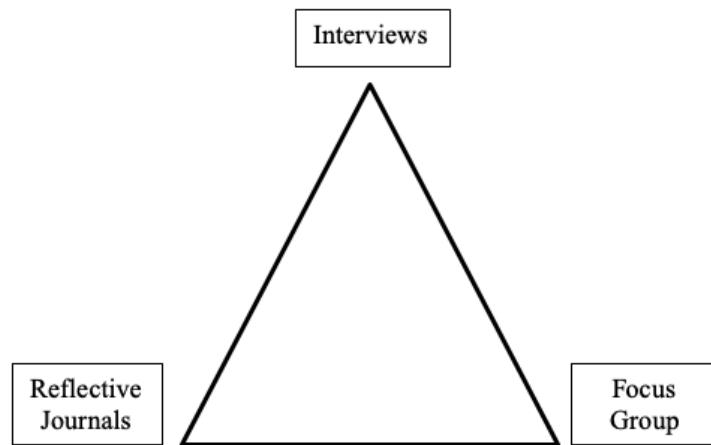


Figure 5. Triangulation of data.

Data Analysis

This data analysis included descriptions, concepts and patterns when focusing on the reflective journals and meetings during the focus group and interviews. Yin (2018) indicates that if a researcher is utilizing descriptions, then this pattern-matching analytical technique is appropriate; however, the researcher must first have predicted and defined descriptions before the data is collected. With that note, this study predicted and defined the descriptions from Choi (2006) focusing on The Motivational Effects of Charismatic Leadership Model and intrinsic motivators (Shao et al., 2017).

For the purpose of analysis, a pattern-matching technique began this coding cycle by keeping the three characteristics of the Charismatic Leadership Model as the foundation (Choi, 2006). During the Focus Group and Interviews with collection of the Reflective Journals, the transcriptions were documented verbatim of what was recorded, then the responses were coded utilizing three different cycles. So, working from the top

down, the terms envisioning, empowering and empathy were important terms to keep in mind when coding. Therefore, highlighting key phrases within the participant responses allowed for an easier depiction of the themes and patterns. An explanation of the triangulation of the data will depict the information provided in Figure 6 (see Yin, 2018).

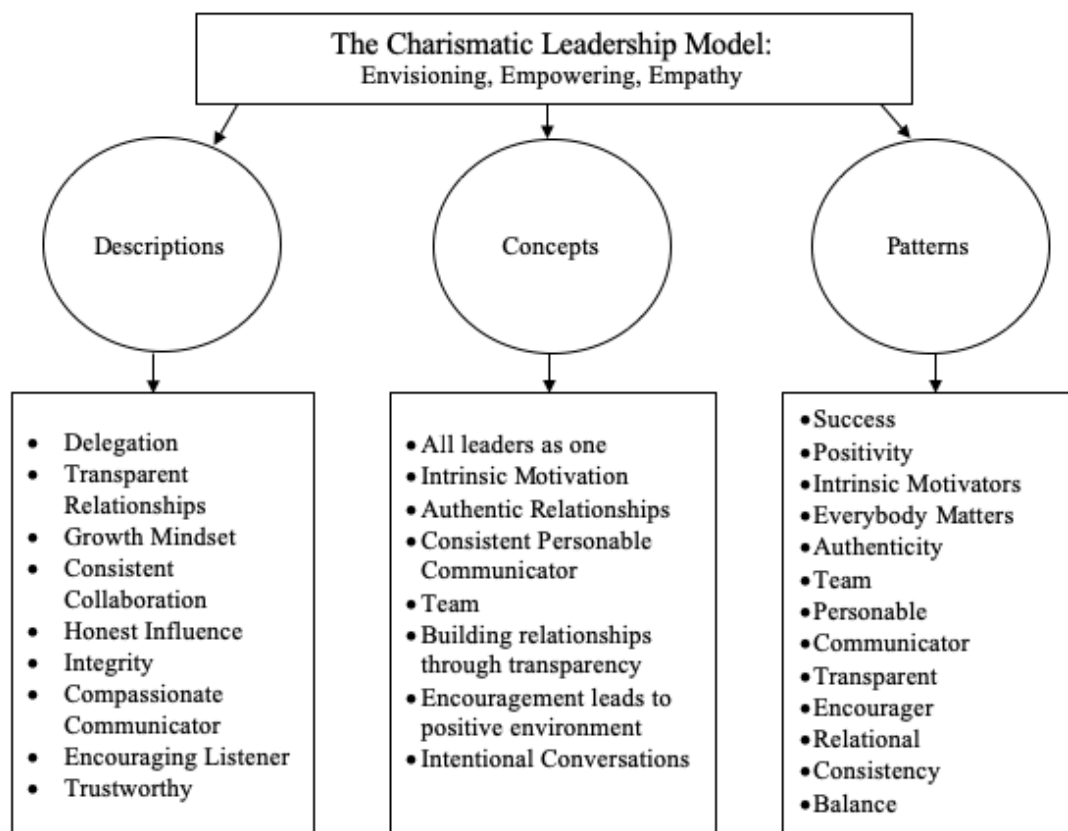


Figure 6. Pattern-Matching Analysis The figure demonstrates are the overall codes and patterns form all participants. Coding representing the 1st cycle: descriptive, 1st cycle: concepts, and 2nd cycle: pattern. The progression of the coding begins left and flows to right.

1st Cycle Coding: Descriptive

Within the first level of coding, I targeted the descriptive terms that seemed to fulfill this descriptive theme. These descriptive codes consisted of the following: positive, builds relationships, consistent, communication, authenticity, trust, growth mindset, transparent, persistence.

Reflective journal. The reflective journals had a plethora of information. Each participant recorded for five days. Head Principal 1 described “the characteristics of a motivational leader include many aspects, some involve being positive, compassionate, a good listener, and persistence”. In addition, Head Principal 2 described Research Question 1 with a list of characteristics which include: “optimistic, sense of humor, integrity, builds relationships, delegating, does not micromanage”.

These two head principals described their experiences throughout the five days of recording. There were experiences with teachers, as well as students and parents. Some experiences dealt with problem – solution situations; others included, holding intentional conversations where the head principal had to listen in order to encourage. Head Principal 2 described his experience in this way

Today a teacher's child got in trouble. Discussed the situation with the Assistant Principal. We worked really hard to make sure we were very fair and I did not let the fact that it was a teacher's child sway our decision. I was very transparent with the teacher and it all went very well.

After a day that was difficult, Head Principal 1 experienced a situation where he utilized a motivational leadership practice of persistence with consistency made a positive impact even with a hard decision. He stated “I was reminded that motivational leadership is not just about making people feel good, but it includes staying consistent”. Alqahtani (2015) found in a study that motivational language is vital in building rapport for the school and student achievement; therefore, this practice of self-reflection allowed these two head principals the intentional thought process of whether or not they implemented motivational leadership practices. If they were implementing these practices, then they were able to target what actions they put into play within their daily experiences.

Interviews. During the four interviews with the head and assistant principals, the participants expressed how they each view characteristics of motivational leadership and what experiences they have had in the position they hold. In addition, these experiences describe how these practices are implemented. Assistant Principal 1 noted that “leader that knows how to motivate their team to get the job done no matter what that job is”. The description codes across these participants varied, but all in all they made theme connections with the reflective journal entries.

Transparency and consistency were of the two terms expressed as vital when implementing motivational leadership practices. These two terms in turn allows for the building of relationships which makes connections with the reflective journal entries as well. Assistant Principal 2 explained “I feel like we are very open, they are open, with an

open-door policy”. Having relationships with communication seems to be a positive outcome for these participants.

With the two head principals, their experiences indicated authenticity was a description that when demonstrated from the top down, then the overall building environment is much more pleasant. Head Principal 2 explained “If the administrator is bubbly and having a good time, then we will see y’all later. The teachers roll out with the same kind of attitude and that shows in their classroom. I think when most people want to be here, then that makes a big difference”. Even with tough discussions and conversations, this will also continue that authenticity. Head Principal 1 stated “They know where you stand”. Like indicated in the Reflective Journal entries, communication connects with the authenticity, transparency, consistency, and relationships. Therefore, as Kraft et al. (2016) has noted, when there is an increase in the leadership, expectation and safety, then there is a decrease in teacher turnover. Furthermore, indicating that “leadership emerges as having a strong relationship...” (Kraft et al., 2016, p. 1428).

Focus group. Teachers within the Focus Group described the need for trust and the opportunity to take the model the leaders above them demonstrate and incorporate into their everyday lives. Therefore, the descriptors embodied feeling equally valuable, creative, support, trustworthy that allows a growth mindset. Teacher 1 explained his idea of motivational leadership is described this way “role that views others as equally valuable while guiding followers to grow professionally for the benefit of those whom the followers lead”. In addition, the idea of the teacher being given the expectations of

their position with the understanding that the teacher is an expert, as well. Teacher 2 stated “they expect you to be an expert in what you are doing and trust that you are doing what is in the best interest of the children you are dealing with. And I feel the same way about them”. Therefore, when referring back to the Reflective Journals of the head principals and Interviews of the assistant principals and head principals, the teachers within this Focus Group described what they need out of their leader which connects what the assistant and head principals deem vital descriptors for effective leadership. Mehdinezhad and Sardarzahi (2015) explained that effective leaders empower by way of engaging others in decisions, respect, and trust which increases teacher morale and student achievement.

1st Cycle Coding: Concepts

During the first cycle of coding, I went back through the responses with a concept lens. There is a very much a relationship between the codes of description and concepts. These participants were able to explain how these concepts were indicated through their personal feelings of these experiences. Feelings of gratitude, connection, accomplishment, intrinsic motivation, accountability, preparation, authenticity, creativity, team, encouragement.

Reflective journal. With the day to day schedule of the two head principals, the Reflective Journals indicated important notes within the theme of concepts. These concepts intertwine with their experiences. Head Principal 1 reported throughout the five days that he was able to see where providing consistency was his key to the increase of

implementing motivational leadership practices. A couple of examples came into play when he is challenged daily to leave his comfort zone of being an introvert for his teachers and students in order to make him a better leader. He acknowledged that his position will take him from the building, sometimes weeks at a time, but providing a consistency of motivation is the key in his absence. When he returned, he builds the relationships through being visible for those teachers and students. Day 1 he recorded that “Today was one of those days where I just visited classrooms. I believe being intentional just to spend time with the people has a lasting impression”. Sigurðardo’ttir, and Sigþó’rsson (2016) noted that schools are everchanging. With this change, building leadership capacity will allow students to continue to succeed even if the principal is absent from the building or leaves altogether (Sigurðardo’ttir & Sigþó’rsson, 2016).

Through the concept of building relationships, the Head Principal 2 explained how through his five days of documentation he was optimistic, collaborator and delegated in order to problem solve within his building. He was intentional about being transparent and positive even during the difficult conversations he had to have. One example, “During conversation with a teacher who was being very negative about a situation that occurred, I stayed optimistic and guided the conversation towards a solution. It went well. Conversation turned from negative to solution oriented”. These experiences shared here are similar to what Sigurðardo’ttir, and Sigþó’rsson (2016) found within their study, which included building the capability of demonstrating leadership capacity.

Interviews. The idea of building relationships is a concept that the Head Principal 2 referred to in the Reflective Journals; in addition, Assistant Principal 1 connected these relationships with the term “team” which includes incentives. She stated, when talking about another assistant principal, “Thing about it is, even though she had a very difficult time with those teachers, they always came together and would forget about all the discord for that day and they would get along”.

Assistant Principal 2 discussed the team concept, but through building relationships with a balance of business and family. She explained that her strength was being the communicator between she and her head principal. Also, she kept this concept of building relationships when joining in with the students during their events where they have earned to attend. This inclusion seems to extend to the teachers, because she talked about how they are comfortable with the office staff, her and the head principal due to the fact that they will have conversations during their off times. “It’s crazy how people want to come hang-out on their planning period here in the office. They either want to hang out with the secretary or me or him, all of us.” This experience connects with the concept of authentic relationships that is noted within the interview with Head Principal 2.

Head Principal 2 expressed the importance of having transparent authentic relationships. With that in mind, Head Principal 1 discussed the importance of implementing intrinsic motivational opportunities for the teachers to encourage the team concept by giving the teachers a voice and having intentional conversations. Mikkelsen et al. (2017) stated within their study that “teachers experience ‘hard’ or ‘mixed’

enforcement actions thus have lower levels of intrinsic motivation compare to teachers experiencing ‘soft’ enforcement actions...” (p. 195). Which in turn resulted in the perception of the teachers explain the relationship depending on the “hard” or “soft” enforcement and the difference of intrinsic motivation (Mikkelsen et al., 2017, p. 195)

Focus group. The appreciation the two teachers have for their leadership, not necessarily the building principal, correspond with the concepts of “all leaders as one and intrinsic motivation”. Teacher 2 expressed that she does see where motivational leadership practices are modeled for her, but more from the central office than the building she is in teaching. She, also, seemed to believe that teachers, as well as herself, in her building demonstrate leadership daily within their classrooms.

Comparatively, Teacher 1 noted that leaders and followers do have the same characteristics, but leaders teach the followers how to perfect what they are wanting to accomplish and grow. Therefore, through authentic relationships and encouragement, the teachers are able to not be micromanaged and grow as leaders themselves. Teacher 1 seemed to take the model of motivational leadership his head principal implements and implements with his students. While giving an experience that demonstrated this motivational leadership, Teacher 1 explained how he was able to motivate and guide a student through one leadership task which led to this student led a student-led event for the entire school. Sigurðardo ttir, and Sigþó rsson (2016) noted that teachers were more likely to take their initiative with leadership in their own classrooms when their confidence and skills are improved and success is gained. So, this level of confidence

stemmed from the concept of intrinsic motivation that seems to be implemented in various authoritative positions throughout the school. Therefore, the triangulation of data indicated that these concepts all seem to align and intertwine whether from building principal or leadership from central office.

2nd Cycle Coding: Patterns

The patterns within this data analysis connect through the triangulation of data, just as the first cycles of coding have. As noted in the Reflective Journal with one of the head principals, the pattern with scope of influence can be vital when in a leadership role. This scope of influence tends to be the motivational leadership practices these participants deem vital, as well, with those in the leadership roles.

Reflective journal. With the position of a head principal, meeting in or out of the building is part of the position of an educational leader. So, noted in the data, Head Principal 1 scope of influence was relatable to consistency and accessibility patterns. He stated on Day 2 “Today was a fulfilling day because I was able to contribute something to the emotional bank account of our students and teachers”. With these patterns in mind, Head Principal 2 seemed to utilize quite a bit of balance by communicating, collaborating, listening, being positive, being transparent and allowing everybody within the experience he documented that they mattered. Hallinger et al. (2017) suggested that through this self-reflection, principals have “strong beliefs and determination to make a difference in their schools” (p .9); therefore, their perceptions of themselves are higher

than those perceptions from teachers. Furthermore, the principals seem to indicate their importance through their perceptions of their scope of influence they demonstrate.

Interviews. Throughout the interview process and depicting through the themes and codes, it seems that the patterns were easier to target when looking at the interviews. Assistant Principal 1 longed to have leadership back in her building. She referred, mostly throughout the data collection, to when she felt like she had motivational leadership practices being displayed within the school. She longed for team, connection and personable communication. Hallinger et al. (2017) explained that with principal preparation, principal's vision, management with instruction and a positive school climate can be enhanced; therefore, decreasing the longing for a leader to be within the building.

Transparency was the most documented pattern when reviewing Assistant Principal 2's interview. I noted that building relationships, family and growth mindset were the codes within the pattern category. Likewise, the two Head Principals patterns were fewer. Consistency was the continued pattern with Head Principal 1. He has stayed true to this motivational leadership practice that aligns with the Reflective Journal. Head Principal 2 pattern referred mostly to encouragement. All in all, there seems to be fewer patterns, but these patterns include a broad range of characteristics and practices that these participants have noted through their experiences.

Focus group. Reviewing the teachers' codes within this Focus Group revealed patterns, but not any overlapping like with the interviews. However, these patterns did

dovetail with positivity, growth mindset, and to matter. These patterns pull together and correspond with the other data collections to meet triangulation (Yin, 2018). This level of triangulation allows this data collection, along with the other data collections, to provide a strong, quality study (Yin, 2018).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To maintain trustworthiness, triangulation of the data was maintained. Head principal participants documented in a reflective journal for five days within the data collection time frame. Then, assistant principal participants and head principal participants engaged in interviews. Next, the teacher participants cooperated within a focus group. Lastly, to determine whether the results within the triangulation of data that was collected would influence school climate, I collected secondary data with the school climate indicators for two schools (“Report Card,” 2020).

Credibility

When establishing credibility, I took notes while recording each Interview and Focus Group. After I transcribed the audio recordings, I emailed each participant their transcription for member checking. In addition, there was no cause for any further debriefing. Through every point within data collection, I intentionally self-evaluated through reflection to achieve reflexivity. Saturation seemed to be of been met after data was analyzed. Therefore, overall credibility was established through the rich documentation collected (McInnes et al., 2017).

Transferability

Transferability across this study was determined. When analyzing Teacher 2's responses during the focus group, she noted that she felt disconnected from the building and building principal. However, she confirmed the motivational leadership characteristics and practices that were prompted with the research questions were accurate for the leadership she experienced from Central Office. Central Office is the setting in which she feels most connected with her colleagues in her same elective department. Therefore, transferability across settings and situations has been met. As a result, this thick description has provided and established the transferability between all the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McInnes et al., 2017).

Dependability

In order to meet dependability, I utilized the three types of validity: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and evaluate validity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). First, I transcribed the audio recordings verbatim which was noted within the data analysis section. Next, I interpreted the participants' perceptions by utilizing their words and concepts verbatim. Lastly, I kept the personal and professional bias out of this study by not using judgement to form a bias of their responses. Furthermore, dependability was achieved throughout this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability was established in the two ways that were mentioned in Chapter 3. The two head principals were given reflective journals with a guide that was organized

with questions and prompts for five days. The participants' perspectives were documented through self-reflection during this time frame. In addition, opportunity for member checking via email was provided. Therefore, reflexivity was established through reflective journals and member checking during this data collection timeframe (McInnes et al., 2017).

Results

There were six participants: two head principals, two assistant principals, and two teachers. When looking at these numbers, the administrative positions outweigh the teacher positions. In addition, one teacher and one assistant principal did not feel as if they had the type of leadership in their building at this time. Teacher 2 stated "I have a different perspective, because I don't get involved in a lot of that with my position in the school. Like I said, most of my leadership comes from the Central Office". When asked about the implementation of motivational leadership practices, Assistant Principal 1 stated "Umm, I'll say this if we are speaking this year, it's not. It's not. If we are speaking the past two years, it was". Therefore, both of these participants will refer to these motivational leadership practices in different ways. Meaning, Teacher 2 referred to the motivational leadership practices she experiences in and out of the building; while, Assistant Principal 1 referred to experiences she has had under past principals implementing these practices and those who currently have not, as well as her own motivational leadership practices in her position. Even though these participants have

different experiences, these experiences have led them to like descriptors, concepts, and patterns which have led to like themes.

Table 3

Triangulation of Data with Themes

Participants	Instrument	Themes
Teachers	Focus Group	Positive Everybody Matters Growth Mindset
Assistant Principals	Interviews	Transparency Balance Relational Growth Mindset Positive
Head Principals	Reflective Journals and Interviews	Scope of Influence Consistency Accessibility Transparency Encourager Positive
Secondary Data	Public Record: School Climate Indicators	School Grade Chronic Absenteeism Suspensions Expulsions Graduation Rate

When reviewing the results from the data collected, I took the 1st cycle coding of descriptors and concepts, then I was able to form the 2nd cycle of coding through the patterns. In turn, I took these patterns and distributed into themes which connect with the research questions proposed demonstrated in Figures 7 and 8.

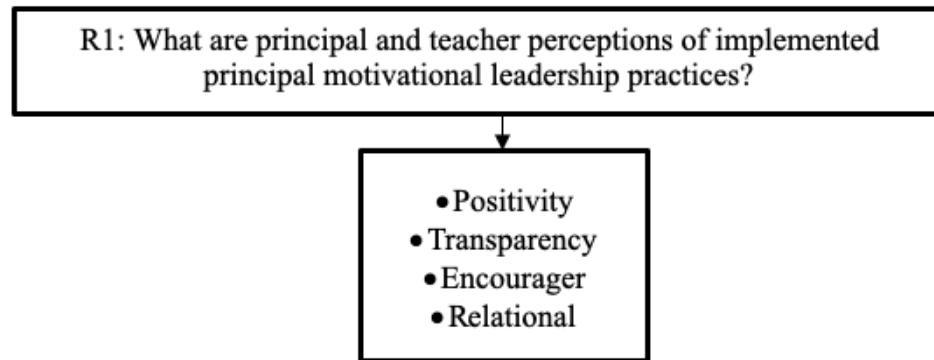


Figure 7. Research Question 1 Theme Results.

Research Question 1

The first research question required perceptions of the characteristics with motivational leadership practices, as well as the implementation of those practices. The results indicated that positivity, transparency, encouragement, and relationships across the triangulation of data as a whole from the participants; however, these terms have been condensed from the codes into these themes.

Positivity. Positivity is perceived theme in which five out of the six participants deemed important as a character trait for principals through the explanation of their personal experiences. Head Principal 1 stated,

We always talk about the positives of what they are doing. We always try to bring out a win for these kids. That is part of our narrative that our teachers are presenting. It talks about the success for these kids and building upon that. So, we focus on growth, umm, we honor that and give free dress for that. We focus on growth. We focus on kids meeting goals for AR. We have celebrations and we

post their names and stuff like that. So, it's about building on that success and really emphasize that.

Another way a participant indicated that positivity is displayed in their building was noted by the Head Principal 2:

Going to the 7 Habits, being proactive and one of the things under there is carry your own weather. Umm, so, I always try to be in a super good mood. My assistant might say otherwise, because she hears somethings I don't hear. She is my right hand and she gets all my vents. But, out there in the hallway, out there in bus rider, cafeteria, I always try to be super upbeat with people. Some have made comments through the years that they appreciate a super good morning, you know, at seven o'clock and it's raining and you don't want to be at school for whatever, but I try to keep it super upbeat. Umm, and I think that can be motivational. I can tell you if I come in hum-dragging around, then people can feel that and they can tell. I try to make it where they can't tell if I feel that way, but my assistant might can tell and my secretary. That's because they really know me. We have a different feel here.

Positivity seems to not only be the attitude of the students, but the attitude in which the teachers and principals should demonstrate in order to create a theme of positive atmosphere in the building which in turn builds an optimistic outlook (Johnson, Sanfilippo, Ohlson, & Swanson, 2019).

Transparency. Being transparent and open to all aspects within a building seemed to be another important character trait for principals to have implemented within their school. Six out of six participants noted, whether their opinion or experience, how transparency is considered a motivational leadership practice. Each teacher shared the expectations that are they feel are important a leader should have for their followers. These expectations could create that transparent leadership characteristic. Teacher 1 explained he "...view followers as experts in their field, expects followers to be professional like on time, consistently present, fully engaged, interdependent learners, motivational leaders themselves, and inspirational or student growth". Next, Teacher 2 stated "I do agree that the organization and they expect you to be an expert in what you are doing and trust that you are doing what is in the best interest of the children you are dealing with".

In addition, Assistant Principal 2 explained "Umm, how to word it. I think of somebody transparent. You always know where you stand with them. I think that is somebody who has great leadership. Somebody else who is willing to do the work, not just saying you do this, you do that. It's more of we are going to do this". According to Farrell (2016), transparency has many aspects including trust, communication, employee engagement, and the decision-making process which makes the clear connection with the participants' responses.

Encourager. Being an encourager has been perceived by four of the six participants as a vital aspect of a motivational leadership practice.

Teacher 1 “I have seen them and even talked to them in private to hold us accountable and they show caring and respect when they do it.”.

Head Principal 2 “working under people who are encouraging is more of a pleasure than working under somebody who is ‘go do this because I said so or here is your list of duties go do it’ or whatever. I try to do the encouraging and motivating to my faculty to treat them how I would want to be treated if roles were reversed or when I was in a building and answering to a principal”.

Relational. In addition to the themes noted above, being relational by building relationships is quite important to four of the six participants; which, ironically enough was all of the assistant principals and head principals that saw value in being relational. However, the teachers insinuated throughout the interview whether there was a relationship with their principals or not. Assistant Principal 2 stated “building relationships is what I think, too! We tell teachers all the time to build relationships with students, but I definitely believe that principals have to build relationships with their teachers”.

Assistant Principal 1 expressed how her experience being relational began with forming a team with the staff:

The team practice. Now, and this would sound strange, but for me... the other teachers would say... you actually like each other, y’all seem like y’all like each other, you seem like you like your teachers. But one practice I had in place was we had team meetings, weekly team meetings. In that meeting, we didn’t discuss

data, we didn't discuss what needed to be done, I allowed them to pour out and tell me how they felt, what they needed, how could I better serve them. And most of the time it was going to be around discipline, because most of the teachers are mostly concerned about discipline. Every week would have the team meeting and they could get their grievances in, so they are able to cleanse, take the weight off, they are able to tell me this is how we feel and what can we do about it. It helped bond us and we do feel like a family. And that is what I would do with my team.

Being relational with the teachers was noted as important, however, building the relationships with the students seemed just as important. Head Principal 1 stated "kids, these 12-, 13-, 14-year old kids, they like contact, fist bumps, side hug, hand shake things like that. It amazes me how once you start that, it becomes a norm for them". The language and approach in which a leader utilizes every day seems to frame their relationships that have been established (Wood & Dibben, 2015).

Research Question 2

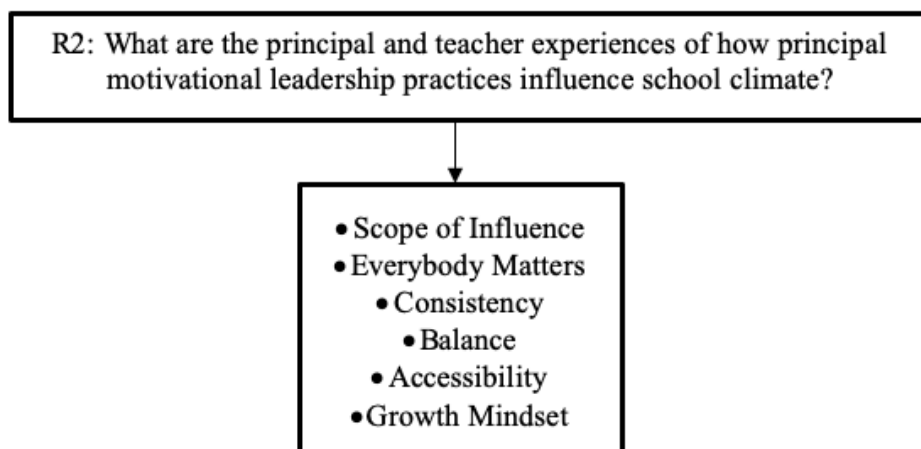


Figure 8. Research Question 2 Theme Results.

Scope of Influence. The six out of six of the participants gave examples through their experiences of how a leader’s scope of influence is vital, which seems to be the number one theme that embodies most codes and patterns, to these motivational leadership practices being implemented by way of all of the themes in Figure 8. Head Principal 1 stated the importance of characteristic like this “It is when the influence and actions still motivate when I am not around”. Both teachers explain that being creative, no micromanaging, and documenting practices are ways in which a leader’s scope of influence has on teachers in order for them to guide the students to be successful.

On another note, Assistant Principal 1 explained the difference in gender of the head principals can change the scope of influence through her experience.

I notice is that I have been under 2 females and 2 males and both females were both better motivational leaders than the 2 males. Because I believe saw that...

the males were only interested in the students to do well. Their focus was on the students, as it should be, but what the females understood was that for me to get great results from the student, I have to get great results from the teachers that's who is teaching the students. So, I need to keep them motivated and incentives... the females saw that. The atmosphere was much more motivational with females, than males.

The scope of influence that seemed to derive from the influence in which a leader imposes on his or her staff positively or negatively, as well as the students (Johnson et al., 2019).

Everybody matters. Creating an environment where everybody matters seemed important to six out of the six participants. The teachers noted that when leaders believe in their staff, then it helps to know that their position is important. This allows the teachers to meet the expectations and become the leaders within their classrooms and the buildings. Teacher 2 seemed to feel that a teacher's classroom leadership is the most important leadership in the building, not necessarily the principal. From the position of the two head principals, Head Principal 1 explained how he began looking at the entire staff positions and the expectations for each of them. He created a schedule where all teachers could get the allotted time they needed in order to meet all the students' needs, no matter a disability or not. Examples were Focus Fridays for interventions and mastery and Individual Education Plan (IEP) paperwork hour for Special Education Teachers. In addition, the Assistant Principal 2 and Head Principal 2 talked about how teachers and

other staff are comfortable during their planning periods having all kinds of conversations with them in the office.

On the other hand, Assistant Principal 1 explained how the current leadership changed from years past through her experiences.

The teachers used to sit and eat together in the cafeteria. Now, each person is in their own room. They don't sit together like they did last year. It was nothing to catch the teachers in the hall last year talking for another 20-30 minutes or even an hour after school. Now, when the buses leave, everybody is in their car and gone. Nobody hangs out after school to talk or debrief or talk about the day.

Everybody seems disconnected, disconnected. There is a difference. You hear more people talking about, I don't want to be here next year, looking for another job, and having no qualms about telling you that they are looking to go somewhere else. There is a disconnect there, it is and it's effecting.

Utilizing the idea of incorporating strategies where the teachers and students feel successful even when there are weaknesses that need to be strengthened is vital to demonstrating that everybody matters which also means everybody is valuable (Johnson et al., 2019).

Consistency. The influence in which consistency has on school climate is noted with three out of six participants. Teacher 1 explained "Some students get to step up and take on that leadership. You see that is really what you want in the school climate. They

have taken ownership”. Head Principal 1 explained how consistency not only influences students, but teachers as well.

The most effective way, especially in education, is to simply be a "people person". This characterization demands that one must be a lot of different things, and sometimes this must be done at the same time. Learning to be aggressive or tough, or consoling and meek is a tightrope act that is performed daily. I believe the key is consistency. If the leader is consistent, then everyone know where he or she stands at all times. As a head principal, time is one thing that I cannot have enough of for my employees. This hurts because my influence has a far greater impact than anyone else. So, my consistency has to make up for the absence of my time.

Consistency seems to be not only what is modeled, but what is implemented for teachers and students to continue to be successful even when the principals are not visible within the buildings. Accountability is established in those demonstrating this level of consistency the participants are describing.

Balance. When confirming balance as a characteristic that influences school climate, teachers seemed to be intrinsically motivated. With that intrinsic motivation, collaboration, teachers and student attendance was noted higher, increase in student outcomes, a sense of joy and teachers increasing their creativity by thinking outside the box to engage students were a few examples that allowed a theme of balance. Six out of the six participants discuss through their experiences how balance is an underlying theme

when influencing the school climate. Head Principal 1 stated “You know, we are trying to build that intrinsic accountability. Where if somebody isn’t doing what they are supposed to do, then others are stepping up for that”. Additionally, Head Principal 2 explained “Attendance is high. We are a junior high and we are always above 96%, you know. Most students want to come. You know, you have a few here and there or whatever, but most want to come. Teachers want classes to be interesting and relevant”.

Growth mindset. When exploring a growth mindset, there are different ways that this can be separated. Moreover, the teachers seem to want ways to grow with their skills that might be weaknesses and not strengths. Some look at a growth mindset being where the teachers utilize their creativity to expand the knowledge of the students. Four out of the six participants agreed that a growth mindset, whether teacher, student, or school, was important when influencing school climate. While, some principals focus on student growth with the standards being taught. Head Principal 1 explained,

I just got through writing letters to every kid that met their iReady goal and CASE21 goal. I wrote 150 and I only have a little over 300 on our campus. So, they met their growth goal. Now, on CASE219 weeks standards we are right at 70-75% of meeting the growth and the bottom 25. If we can keep our areas, we will be close to a C we are projecting outcome.

Assistant Principal 2 expressed curiosity about having the staff, teachers and head principal, evaluate her so she can improve as an assistant principal. She indicated a strong need to continue a growth mindset no matter her job position.

Secondary Data

Two years ago, the southern state Department of Education began reporting upon many factors within each public school in this southern state. These factors included the school climate indicators: school grade, chronic absenteeism, suspension, expulsion, and graduation rate. I discovered that only two schools were rated. The third school is considered a specialty school and due to the fact that there are only two zones within the district, this specialty school has to send all of its data to the home school of each student. Since these are seventh and eighth grade schools, there are no percentages for graduation rate; therefore, the graduation rate was noted for the district. When depicting the school climate indicators, I refer to Table 4.

Table 4

Report Card

School Climate Indicators	School A		School B	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
School Grade	D	D	F	F
Chronic Absenteeism	<5%	22.68	26.42	23.25
Suspension				
In School	100	5%	100	5%
Out of School	<5%	<5%	<5%	<5%
Expulsions	<5%	<5%	<5%	<5%
Incidents of Violence	<5%	<10	<5%	<10
Referred to Law Enforcement	<10	<5%	22	<5%
School-Based Arrests	<5%	<5%	<5%	<5%
Graduation Rate – For the District	72.4%	72.2%	72.4%	72.2%

Note. School Climate Indicators with two years of reporting. Adapted from Report Card. (2020). Retrieved from <https://msrc.mdek12.org>

When studying between the two years, it is noted that the school grade did not change, but there was a change in leadership at the principal level with two of the three schools were made during those years. The chronic absenteeism did decrease for School B. Since there was not an actual number for school A, it is not clear whether there was a change with chronic absenteeism for School A. In school and out of school suspension seemed to stay steady without any major increase or decrease. Likewise, Expulsions were steady, but I did note that Referred to Law Enforcement in 2018 School B decreased quite a bit from 2017. All in all, there was little change between the calendar years and school climate indicators. However, the results indicated that the two years these head principals were in the administrative positions, the school climate indicators were either maintained or there was a slight decrease. With the constant comparison of the triangulation of data, these head principals seem to be targeting these school climate indicators through their leadership practices which is demonstrated by either maintaining or slightly decreasing these points.

Summary

The facts of this chapter have determined that teachers and different levels of principals have similar insight on what type of motivational leadership practices are influential. Even though a few of the participants do not feel as if they are experiencing these practices from their current head principals. These characteristic themes include positivity, transparency, encourager, and relational. Likewise, when focusing on how these practices influence school climate, the consensus of participants was similar with

experiences including scope of influence, everybody matters, consistency, balance, accessibility, growth mindset. Furthermore, scope of influence seemed to be the overall characteristic that can influence school climate negatively or positively. In Chapter 5, I take these results and make the connections with the research in order to have a better understanding of how these practices add to the existing research. Implications and recommendations for further research is added to the interpretation of the findings while concluding this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a better understanding of seventh and eighth grade principal and teacher perceptions of principal motivational leadership practices influence on school climate. There is little known about how principals and teachers perceive principal motivational leadership practices and how these leadership practices influence school climate. In order to add to the existing research, this study was a single case study utilized a conceptual framework with a naturalistic narrative approach. Choi's (2006) Charismatic Leadership Model was the conceptual framework utilized. In addition, Deci and Ryan's SDT focusing on intrinsic motivation was also utilized in this single case study (Mikkelsen et al., 2017). Furthermore, a pattern-matching analysis was established by way of the Charismatic Leadership Model. This created the holistic view with a constant comparison of the school climate indicators.

Interpretation of the Findings

Throughout reading and re-reading of the research, a qualitative study was needed in order to close parts of the gap in research when referring to the perceptions of teachers and principals when discussing principal leadership practices. It was noted that principals establishing trust with the students and teachers, as well as, being optimistic while could affect the school climate through the social justice realm (Mehinezhad & Sardarzahi, 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2016). In Chapter 4, Table 2 demonstrates the progression of the layering of leadership practices. The two teachers seemed to

demonstrate only one leadership practice a piece; while, the two assistant principals demonstrated two leadership practices. In addition, the two head principals demonstrated between three and four leadership practices by layering. Therefore, indicating that the higher level of position, the more layering of leadership practices occurred.

When focusing on school climate, the secondary data did indicate, in Chapter 4 Table 2, that every indicator stayed the same or decreased from the 2017 to 2018 school year. In school suspension and those referred to law enforcement had the largest decrease. This seems to contradict what Bellibas and Liu (2018) noted. They stated that they found no relationship between leadership practices and school violence (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). School B was the school that decreased the most, and that was after the first year of the full implementation that one of the head principals had begun administering. Therefore, there does seem to be a relationship in these practices with school violence which in turn affects school climate.

Throughout the interviews, the participants all noted the different ways in which they would meet with their leaders. From Professional Learning Community (PLC) to Lighthouse Team Meetings to student-led activities, these participants noted how motivational these meetings can be. Additionally, as noted in Chapter 2, Sigurðardo'ttir and Sigþórsson (2016) explained the importance of these points “(1) creating and realizing the vision; (2) inquiry and reflection; (3) students’ views and progress; (4) leadership” (p. 605). With that being said, these participants have experienced, whether in their building now or in the past, these motivational practices through team meetings.

However, not all participants experienced these within their building as of this year; even though, some of the participants are within the same building.

Through the reflective journal data, the self-reflections were interesting. There was additional information given from the interviews. All aligned, but it was interesting how the Head Principal 1 noted in the interview that his perspective changed as he wrote in the reflective journal. Taking this step to reflect while journaling seemed to have allowed the head principals the intentional time needed to note whether they were implementing these motivational leadership practices during their experiences throughout the day.

With all things considered, I chose to begin the foundation of this study with the conceptual framework of Choi (2006). The Charismatic Leadership Model characteristics consists of envisioning, empowering, and empathy (Choi, 2006). Each characteristic of The Charismatic Leadership Model are the themes that align with the coding cycles utilized during the data analysis in which this study was explored that is demonstrated in Figure 9. The quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research with the existing literature indicated that the teachers and principals would have different views of how the principals implement the motivational leadership practices and how these practices influence school climate; however, the qualitative data collected in this study indicated the participants might or might be experiencing this implementation of these practices within their buildings, but their views of what practices need to be implemented are consistent among the participants.

Envisioning

Description: Motivational mechanisms. The motivational mechanism that was noted for envisioning is growth mindset. Growth mindset was not the actual term used during the data collection for all participants; however, this was the overall theme that was described. Teachers explained how they wanted to demonstrate growth individually or how they actually demonstrated growth this past year. In addition, Assistant Principal 1 longed to have an evaluation from teachers, as well as the head principal for her professional growth. All discussed the need to student growth and the experiences in which they were all motivated to help the students grow.

Concepts: Effects on followers' needs. The effects on the followers needs when looking at the overall concept of envisioning, intentional conversations were deemed important. These conversations could be within the team meetings or during their off time with the notion the head principal has an open-door policy. These intentional conversations could be work related or could be personal related. These intentional conversations varied, but this concept led to the understanding of the growth mindset.

Patterns: Further consequences. The progression of growth mindset and intentional conversations to this point are the balance in understanding the need and intentionally providing the balance to continue by leading with a growth mindset throughout the building. No matter the level of your position, a balance with growth mindset seems to set the tone for the vision the leaders have for their schools. All in all, a

balance was described by all in their own way of how important growth within every position is vital to foresee the vision set before them.

Empowering

Description: Motivational mechanisms. In order to empower those within the building, it was described that a leader could utilize these motivational mechanisms: consistent, communication, positive, and authenticity. This empowerment seemed to begin from the top down. The teachers seemed to incorporate these within their classrooms, not just the expectation of the assistant principals and head principals; however, the assistant principals and head principals deemed these important characteristics in order for them to lead efficiently in their positions in their schools.

Concepts: Effects on followers' needs. For the teachers to feel this empowerment, they noted that experiencing a level of equal leadership coupled with intrinsic motivation provides that authentic relationship. With this authentic relationship comes positive consistency through a team-like approach. Not only was this demonstrated as important with the interviews, but with the teacher focus group as well. The teachers noted how these were important to be demonstrated within their classroom for student growth.

Patterns: Further consequences. Likewise, the scope of influence a leader provides can create an atmosphere negatively or positively. It seems that the participants within this study required a positive scope of influence with consistency and accessibility of their leaders within their buildings. Also, it seems that the teachers worked hard to

demonstrate these patterns within their classrooms, as well. Furthermore, with a positive scope of influence creates an atmosphere these participants expected with consistency and accessibility for the feeling of empowerment for all in the buildings.

Empathy

Description: Motivational mechanisms. Like noted above within the research, trust is a characteristic that was deemed important for principals to have. Having that trust allows for there to be transparency while building these professional relationships. Having those descriptive mechanisms in place provides empathy for all the participants. In addition, if the teachers decide to demonstrate this type of leadership in the classroom, then an increase in school climate could be possible.

Concepts: Effects on followers' needs. Building these relationships by way of transparency and communication, a leader will have provided consistency that will positively affect the needs of the followers. Consistency seemed to be a key within the data collected and analyzed. In the same way, leaders providing this consistency will allow those professional relationships to grow through the transparency and communication it requires to have an environment where teachers want to stay, students want to continue to be a part of, assistant principals want to continue to grow professionally, and head principals self-reflect upon their experiences.

Patterns: Further consequences. While continuing to be transparent and relational, leaders encourage others by way of expressing how they matter. It was noted that teachers feeling as if they matter makes a difference in how they approach the

leadership provided. One teacher felt disconnected and possibly not so important due to her position as a special education teacher; in contrast, one head principal made a point to create a schedule that included the special education teachers and what they needed to feel they mattered. No matter the position, either great or small, providing empathy through being relational can benefit the entire school atmosphere.

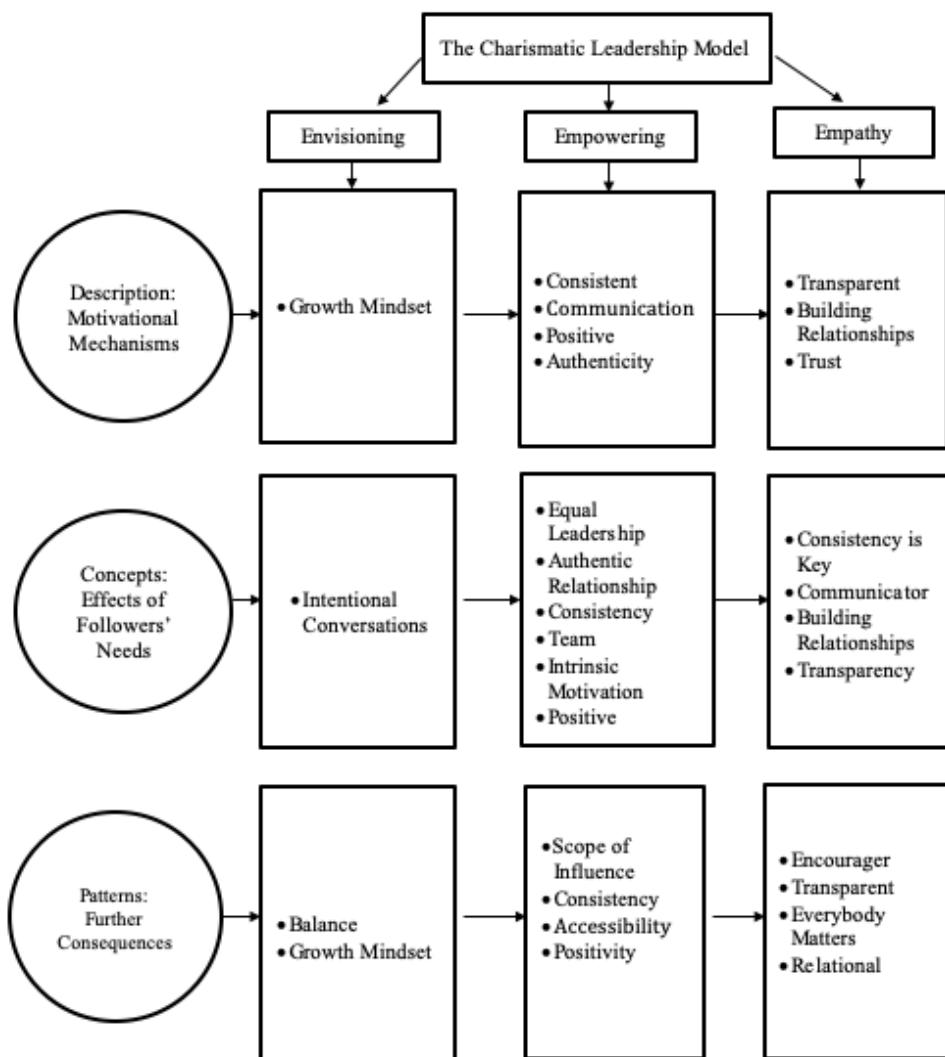


Figure 9. Pattern-Matching Analysis Findings.

Limitations of the Study

When referring back to the limitations within Chapter 1, those points continue to be limitations. Those points consist of only focusing on one population which was seventh and eighth grade schools and this naturalistic narrative approach not being a longitudinal study. Due to the time constraint of this being a dissertation, a longitudinal study was not appropriate. During the study a few more limitations came to light. First, there were more participants in the principal position, whether assistant or head principal, than there were teachers. Second, between the teachers, there was one general education teacher and one special education teacher. Third, even though I provided a neutral location for autonomy, two of the participants asked for me to come to their location for the interview. Fourth, when administering the interviews and focus group, the variations in which I stated the questions could be considered a limitation. I did not state verbatim every question the exact way for every person or group; however, they were all asked according to how the participant or participants answered the question prior. Fifth, the secondary data was only noted for two of the three schools, due to the fact that the third school is a specialty school. It is required that those within each school must be connected with a certain zone where they live to attend either the city or county schools. This specialty school does not have a particular zone; therefore, the scores and ratings of these students must be counted within their home school designated by which zone they live in. Lastly, I focused on the broader picture of the study instead of the more in-depth

experiences that were noted as important; however, further research could provide better insight with those in-depth experiences.

Recommendations

This current study provided a broader outlook based upon the research questions provided; however, through this broader outlook, some of the in-depth experiences and perceptions were not able to be explored. This broader outlook also seemed to be a limitation. Therefore, to explore this limitation, a recommendation would to focus on the different positions with the teachers. When exploring teacher perceptions, explore from the different points of view from the general education and special education stances. There seemed to be a difference within this study of the two perceptions of principal leadership.

Next, a recommendation for future research stems from the experience that Assistant Principal 1 noted the difference between how women head principals and men head principals approach the implementation of their leadership practices. This difference categorized as the women head principals focus on the teachers because the teachers focus on the students; while, the men head principals focus on the student growth numbers. Furthermore, exploring this recommendation could add to existing research.

Implications

The implications of social change have been established throughout the progression of this study. This study provided information that will guide principals in ways that better their leadership position by self-reflecting and implementing as one

school, one team, one staff these ideologies of envisioning, empowering, and empathy. Both teachers were from the same school and had different views. One teacher perceived great leadership from his principal; while, the other teacher felt completely disconnected from the principals. The assistant principal, in the same school, perceived her head principal was implementing all that he could implement for a positive working environment for students and teachers. In addition, their head principal reflected on how he was implementing these ideologies, although implementing culturally responsive leadership practices did not seem to be demonstrated. Nevertheless, through these ideologies, a culturally responsive leadership practice would be easier to implement for a positive school climate.

Khalifa et al. (2016) explained how layering the culturally responsive leadership practice with transitional and instructional leadership practices allows for an increase in a positive school climate. There was only one participant that seemed to be implementing a culturally responsive leadership practice which was indicated in Table 2. She was not the head principal, but an assistant principal. However, an increase in a culturally responsive leadership practice could decrease the suspensions and expulsion within the school climate indicators noted in Table 3. Likewise, a decrease in chronic absenteeism could occur, as well as the letter grade of the school could increase. This could possibly motivate teachers to move from the provisional certification to a certified certification. Therefore, noting that head principals implementing these culturally responsive leadership practices with the layering of other leadership practices could create a top

down effect of motivational leadership practices within the school with a positive effect on school climate.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the perceptions of principals and teachers when focusing on principals' motivational leadership practices and the influence these practices have on school climate. During this exploration, I found that the teachers', assistant principals', and head principals' ideologies of motivational leadership practices were similar in theme. I also found that not all participants were currently experiencing these motivational leadership practices from their head principals; however, they were experiencing them from other leadership within or outside of the building. It was noted how self-reflection was a helpful instrument for the head principals to establish how they were implementing these motivational leadership practices in their buildings. In addition, the perception of what the teachers expected the head principals to implement were the same practices in which they, the teachers, work to implement within their classrooms. Therefore, if the head principals are implementing these motivational leadership practices by layering them with other leadership practices, such as culturally responsive leadership practice, then the influence on school climate can model positive social change. Furthermore, with this idea of positive social change and motivational leadership practices could in turn allow all students, teachers, and assistant principals to not feel a disconnect with their head principals.

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Appendix A: Sample Organizational Leader Practices

Mid/Upper-Level Manager, Organizational Leader

Leadership/Motivation

- Makes a compelling case for his/her point of view
- Effectively persuades others in order to build commitment for ideas
- Communicates an inspiring vision
- Helps people develop passion for their work
- Recognizes employee contributions and ideas
- Sensitive to satisfaction and morale in the group
- Generates urgency in others
- Recognizes and rewards high performers
- Provides a positive example; “walks the talk”
- Creates an atmosphere that inspires others to achieve at a higher level
- Helps staff define clear objectives
- Regularly reviews objectives with staff
- Involves employees in decisions
- Delegates enough work
- Delegates authority; encourages independence
- Sets clear deadlines
- Facilitates rather than dominates
- Manages costs without alienating work force
- Communicates reasons for changes and decisions
- Conducts effective meetings

Non-Manager, Individual Contributor

Motivation

- Makes a compelling case for his/her point of view
- Effectively persuades others in order to build commitment for ideas
- Sensitive to satisfaction and morale in the group
- Provides a positive example; “walks the talk”
- Tolerates honest mistakes as learning experiences

Appendix B: Guide for Reflective Journals

Day One

1. What are characteristics of a motivational leader?
2. What characteristics do you meet as a motivational leader?

Day One Through Four

1. Through self-reflection, have you implemented motivational leadership practices today?
 - A. How would you describe your experience with this implementation?

Appendix C: Conversational Guide for Interviewing

1. Let's begin by you telling me your definition of motivational leadership.
2. What are a few characteristics of motivational leadership?
3. How is motivational leadership implemented within your school?
 - A. How would you describe your experience by giving an example?
4. What are the motivational leadership practices being implemented within your school?
 - A. How would you describe your experience by giving an example?
5. How do you believe the motivational leadership practices are influencing the school climate?

From: Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3 ed.). Retrieved from Vital Source

Appendix D: Conversational Guide for Focus Group

1. Let's begin by you choosing which motivational leadership characteristics are being implemented in the building.
2. What are the characteristics you believe are being implemented?
 - A. How would you describe your experience by giving an example?
3. How do you believe these motivational leadership practices are influencing the school climate?
 - A. How would you describe your experience by giving an example

Appendix E: Fourteen Characteristics of Naturalistic Inquiry

1. Natural Setting
2. Human Instrument
3. Utilization of Tacit Knowledge
4. Qualitative Methods
5. Purposive Sampling
6. Inductive Data Analysis
7. Grounded Theory
8. Emergent Design
9. Negotiated Outcomes
10. Case Study Reporting Mode
11. Idiographic Interpretation
12. Tentative Application
13. Focus-determined Boundaries
14. Special Criteria for Trustworthiness

From: Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.