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Principals' Leadership Style as a Predictor of School Climate in Urban High Schools in Baltimore

Kelly Alicia Watson
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kelly A. Watson

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Review Committee
Dr. Michelle Ross, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Susan Marcus, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Richard Thompson, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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MA, Towson University, 2006

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

To improve student achievement in urban public schools with high poverty, it is important to address specific leadership styles (i.e., transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles) in relationship to their school climate. The purpose of this multivariate correlational study, framed by leadership theory, was to investigate the relationship between principals' leadership and school climate as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district. The relationship between three predictor variables (average class size, years of experience of the teacher, and leadership style) and one criterion variable (school climate) was examined. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was used to measure leadership style, and the School Climate Inventory was used to measure school climate. Total population included 260 full-time equivalent teachers. The sample consisted of 86 full-time teachers employed in five of the largest high schools in the Baltimore City public school system. Data were collected online, and data analysis was conducted with a hierarchical linear regression. Average class size and years of experience were used as control variables. Results indicated that after controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles of the principals were predictive of school climate. This study provides effective leadership behaviors that improves education reform and school performance in the urban community that could result in positive social change. It provides specific leadership constructs that educational leaders may need for evaluation purposes.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents Rudolph Levi Watson and Alicia Bernadette Brooks. My father always told me that no matter how many people you want to help, I had to take care of myself first and then go and change lives and make a difference. Alicia Bernadette Brooks reminded me to embrace independence, work smart, and create a network of positivity, remembering that when you evaluate people in your space you must eliminate liabilities. Both parents taught me through their own personal experiences that there will be times when you must walk alone unapologetic, Finally, to my best friend Efrem Vernon Gilliam, you taught me to focus on what I can control and always know your place, find your place and stay in your place and let your work speak for itself. The greater the pain, the greater the reward. V. Angel Foster taught me laughter, patience, grace, and that every storm will pass with God on your side. You must know Him for yourself. She reminds me to not break your system, continue to walk in silence, and the sun will shine at the end of every tunnel.

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Also, a special and heart warm thanks to the Baltimore city public school system's commitment to assisting me with creating social change. To my ancestors. It is an honor, and privilege to know the sacrifice you made paved the way for me to take this journey with great humility. To the Freedom Riders 1961, The Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Lives Matter Movement, thank you.

To President Barack and Michelle Obama, thank you first family for creating history and showing me that Yes, we can unite for equality to serve for a specific purpose to create social change. You said "Yes" and so I did, and it is so.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In the United States, urban public schools with high levels of poverty have repeatedly shown poor academic achievement (Johnson et al., 2014). Usually, minority students are enrolled in these schools with specific academic learning needs that must be met (Rivera-McCutchen, 2019). These schools also typically have a high staff turnover rate, with inexperienced teachers who have never worked with a high-poverty population (Johnson et al., 2014). Thus, educators are under growing pressure to increase school effectiveness to improve student performance (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015). One of the most important and widely researched characteristics of effective schools is effective school leadership (Shouppe, 2010).

Effective school principals consistently provide positive feedback to improve morale and set appropriate expectations conducive to a successful learning climate (Allen et al., 2015). American scholars have shown interest in school climate as a factor in improving social, academic, and behavior performance outcomes for students (Gage, Larson, Sugai, & Chafouleas, 2016). Researchers have examined significant variations within and between schools, exemplifying the importance of a multilevel approach (Eugene, 2020). A growing body of evidence has indicated that a positive school climate is associated with school leadership, self-esteem, motivation, altruistic behavior, and other positive outcomes (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Johnson, 2014). But reform efforts since the 1980s have not improved student performance because the schools did not address the issue of school climate (Bradshaw et al., 2014).

The current study was designed to investigate the relationship between the leadership qualities of school principals and school climate as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district. Specific leadership styles (in particular, transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles) had not been examined in relationship to school climate in urban districts with high levels of poverty. Such an investigation was needed to support social efforts to improve school climate in low-performing schools, ultimately improving student achievement.

In this chapter, the background of the study is discussed, followed by a presentation of the problem statement, purpose, and research questions. Next, the theoretical framework of the study is presented. Terms are defined; the significance of the research is discussed; and assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are presented.

Background

Long-term principals who receive additional support from the community typically have an indirect but positive effect on student learning. This effect is mediated by interactions between staff and faculty members, organizational climate, and situational events within the school (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). But leaders who do not demonstrate effective leadership lack staying power and often introduce unacceptable behavior and mismanagement into their schools.

Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001, a continued focus on student achievement has caused a sense of urgency in the U.S. educational system (Allen et al., 2015). In particular, urban public schools with high poverty have shown poor academic achievement (Johnson et al., 2014). High-poverty schools can be

defined as schools in which 75% of the student population is eligible for free and reduced-price meals (FARMs; McFarland et al., 2017).

School improvement must be understood in the context of the school environment (VanLone et al., 2019). Because a positive school climate is associated with school leadership, self-esteem, motivation, altruistic behavior, and other positive outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2014), school climate has become a target for school improvement initiatives. Examples include the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program and the Safe and Supportive Schools Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (Riojas, 2014). The high school principal is the most important component in creating a positive school environment and, thus, education reform. The principal's leadership behaviors can influence the teachers' work lives and their experience in the school environment (Baptiste, 2019).

Effective principals can improve the school climate, creating a better learning environment and producing higher academic achievement. The results include higher attendance rates, lower dropout rates, and fewer incidents of inappropriate student behavior (Allen et al., 2015). Therefore, there has been a greater need for principals' leadership in education reform based on continual trends worldwide (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). The principal can set the tone for the high school environment while building trust with staff and faculty members.

Several different styles of leadership have been identified, including transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2004). A transformational leader is a leader who attempts to move the follower to a higher level

of performance and organizational engagement through encouraging respect and ongoing participation (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders provide inspiration while encouraging followers to work beyond their own individual expectations (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). A transformational leader concentrates on the product, which connects to the leader's vision. Transactional leadership refers to leadership behavior associated with a constructive exchange (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The transactional leader identifies what the follower can do to accomplish the organizational goal (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). Passive-avoidant leadership refers to a leadership style in which leaders avoid making decisions (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

School Climate

The school climate is the heart and soul of the school (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). School climate refers to the beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, values, and behaviors that shape relationships within a school (Voight & Nation, 2016). These relationships define how the principal, staff members, and students feel about the school and about each other (Allen et al., 2015). The school climate is critical to the social, emotional, and academic success of the students and the administrators (Bradshaw et al., 2014). In the United States, and around the world, there is an increased interest in school environment and an appreciation for data-driven school improvement interventions that promote a more safe and healthy school (Thapa et al., 2013).

Since the 1990s, scholars have recognized the importance of school climate in K-12 public high schools. School climate is correlated with academic progress in a school setting (Davis & Warner, 2018). Strategies incorporated to manage the school setting

were found to influence the teachers' experience and the school environment (Vos, Van der Westhuizen, Mentz, & Ellis, 2012). Further, researchers have suggested that the principal's leadership is one of the most influential factors in the quality and character of the school environment (Allen et al., 2015). Principals can enhance the quality of the school climate by including teachers in decision-making processes and removing obstacles that interfere with concentration on instruction and learning (Rhodes, Camic, Milburn, & Lowe, 2009). School climate and the teachers' perceptions of the leader are two pathways by which the principal's behavior influences students (Baptiste, 2019).

Researchers have also addressed the interaction between class size reduction and other variables (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017). The size of the classroom can influence school climate (Harfitt, 2013). In Western society, smaller class sizes are more effective, and autonomy is valued and promoted (Hattie, 2013); however, in Eastern cultures, collectiveness is appreciated (Harfitt, 2015). But several studies have provided empirical evidence of a benefit of small classes for children who are experiencing challenges and need additional educational support (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017; Bosworth, 2014; Krassel & Heinesen, 2014). However, others have stated that smaller classrooms benefited all children equally (Cho, Glewwe, & Whitler, 2012). The effect of class size may depend on the culture (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017).

The combined effect of principals' leadership, the school environment, and the social ecology helps to shape the organizational setting of the school (Bradshaw et al., 2014). If the school climate is not hospitable, the organization can suffer. The leadership qualities of the principal are paramount in the creation of a positive school climate and

the improvement of student performance (Eval & Roth, 2011; MacNeil et al., 2009). Before implementing change, a principal must first understand the interactions within the climate and how the school functions (MacNeil et al., 2009). Although the climate of a school can be complex, with idiosyncratic ways of working, principals who have successful schools understand the critical role that leadership and school climate play in the organizational structure (Shouppe & Pate, 2010).

In investigating the relationship between principal leadership and school climate, important factors to weigh include class size and the years of experience of the teacher (Cho et al., 2012). Reducing class size may provide long-term benefits for disadvantaged or minority-group students but can be expensive (Mathis, 2016). However, class size has generally been measured in terms of teacher-student ratio, rather than the actual number of children in a class (Galton & Pell, 2012). High schools may be vulnerable to class size variation because high schools have become more complex and the students require additional support from their teachers. Because the behavior of the principal is associated with the school climate, researchers also need to understand how to strengthen the leadership of the principal to increase effectiveness and performance in schools (Baptiste, 2019). A deeper understanding of leadership styles in schools may benefit the school climate and lead to an improvement in student achievement. In particular, there was a need to investigate these issues in larger urban public school districts with a high proportion of students of low socioeconomic status, where school performance has been consistently difficult to improve (Sanchez, Paul, & Thornton, 2020).

Positive school outcomes have been associated with many different leadership approaches. However, no studies were located in which transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles were examined in relationship to school climate in urban districts of low socioeconomic status. Including average class size and years of experience of the teacher as control variables will help to clarify this relationship in schools with greater barriers to educating students.

Problem Statement

Researchers have investigated the associations among leadership, school climate, teacher dedication, commitment, and effective schools (Khan, 2019). The principal's influence in education is associated with the school environment (Leithwood & Sun, 2019). The principal should first have a clear understanding of the school climate before implementing or attempting to change the organizational system (MacNeil et al., 2009). The organizational health of a school is an important factor in the ability to create positive change within the school. Transformational leadership has been positively related to how teachers perceived their school environment (Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010). The problem addressed in this study was that specific leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles) had not been examined in relationship to school climate in urban districts of low socioeconomic status. This investigation was needed to provide a deeper understanding of how to improve school climate through principals' leadership in urban schools (Baptist, 2019).

When evaluating the relationship between the leadership styles of the principal and the school environment, the years of experience of the teacher and the class size are

important factors to include (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017). The current investigation has several implications for current education reform. The desired outcomes are increased commitment; improvements in teaching and learning; and more job stability, job satisfaction, and willingness to innovate. Schools with effective leadership approaches are more likely to have more empowered staff and faculty members. Principals who focus on providing a sustainable, positive school climate help students to become productive in the community and to be in a better position to compete in a global market.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this multivariate correlational study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership qualities of school principals and school climate as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district. Data were collected in the form of an online survey of teachers in five large high schools in Baltimore City. Only schools in which more than 75% of the student body was eligible for FARMs were included in the study. Class size and years of experience of the teacher were measured as control variables. All participants were required to have a direct reporting function to their high school principal and to have maintained a working relationship with the current school principal for at least 1 year. All participants had Internet access. The predictor variable was perceived leadership style, as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Avolio & Bass, 2004; see Appendix A). Three types of leadership styles were measured: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive-avoidant leadership. Each of these leadership styles was measured in a separate research question by means of a distinct subscale of the MLQ.

School climate, as measured by the School Climate Inventory-Revised (SCI-R; Gibson, 1979; see Appendix B), was the criterion variable. Average class size and years of experience of the teacher were self-reported by the participants. Data analysis was conducted with a multiple linear regression. A minimum of 81 full-time teachers was needed for the study, as determined by a power analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), assuming a multiple linear regression with three predictor variables, a medium effect size of .15, and 80% power. This minimum was exceeded, with a total of 86 participants.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses were presented to address the purpose of this study.

Research Question 1: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, to what extent does the perceived transformational leadership style of the principal predict school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City?

$H_0$1: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived transformational leadership style of the principal does not predict school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City.

H_a1: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived transformational leadership style of the principal predicts school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City.

Research Question 2: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, to what extent does the perceived transactional leadership style of the principal predict school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City?

$H_0$2: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived transactional leadership style of the principal does not predict school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City.

H_a2: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived transactional leadership style of the principal predicts school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City.

Research Question 3: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, to what extent does the perceived passive-avoidant leadership style of the principal predict school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City?

$H_0$3: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived passive-avoidant leadership style of the principal does not predict school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City.

H_a3: After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived passive-avoidant leadership style of the principal predicts school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in Baltimore City.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was leadership theory, which explains the development and application of leadership as well as its nature and consequences (Bass, 2008). In the late 1960s, contingency and situational theories of leadership were first developed (Velasco, Edmonson, & Slate, 2012). These theories were trait theories of leadership, emphasizing where leadership occurred and what traits were found among successful leaders. However, leadership theory began to gain increased attention in the 1980s when behavioral theories were first developed. Attention was given to inspirational forms of leadership, particularly transformational leadership (Bass, 2008).

Contingency theory, situational theory, and other humanistic models of leadership suggest that leaders adjust their behavior based on the current situation (Velasco et al., 2012). Thus, as the circumstances change, so does the leader. Behavioral theory, in contrast, does not focus on cultural context or situational factors. Behavioral theories have numerous variables and allow for the possibility that other factors, such as class size, the complexities of the school, and the level of maturity of the employee, can affect leadership.

Transformational Leadership

According to Bass (2008), transformational leadership is a form of leadership based on inspiration. This leadership style is one of the newest leadership approaches formally introduced by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), according to Salari and Nastiezaie (2020). Transformational leadership focuses on the relationship that the leader has with followers (Velasco et al., 2012). Transformational leadership has ideological and

emotional appeal. The leader exhibits exceptional behavior and confidence, taking responsibility to inspire and motivate workers by first having them understand the importance of the task. The goal is to focus on the follower's performance as a way of maximizing the full potential of the subordinate (Balyer, 2012).

Transformational leaders have a high moral and ethical standard, focusing their leadership on becoming a change agent. Burns (1978), considered to be the founder of modern leadership theory, defined transformational leadership as the attempt to satisfy the follower's needs with the goal of moving the follower to a higher level of performance and organizational engagement. This goal was to be accomplished by encouraging respect and ongoing participation. In addition, according to Burns, a transformational leader must concentrate on the product, which connects to the leader's vision.

Transformational leadership theory is the most modern theory of leadership and has a commitment to trust, acceptance, and any needed change to increase performance (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). Transformational leadership is evident in high-performing schools and has been the most effective style of leadership in educational settings (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). But measurable gaps have been found between principals' perception of their own leadership characteristics and the teacher's perception (Goff, Goldring, & Bickman, 2014). However, when principals clearly understood the importance of empowering teachers, the teachers' motivation increased, and their continued commitment toward completing their goals became a high priority (Allen et al., 2015). Transformational leadership is about persuading people to want to improve

professionally and personally while exceeding their level of expectation (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). A transformational leader can increase the organizational member's commitment and capacity for meeting certain goals (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020).

Transactional Leadership

The transactional approach to leadership is based on a reinforcement approach to management, in which clear rewards are exchanged contingent upon the employee's productivity (Smith, 2015). For example, a company may provide a fixed increase in salary to employees who demonstrate higher productivity. The transactional leader is reactive and focuses on the contingency management approach, with the leader's self-interest driving decisions. Transactional leaders make efforts to reduce variability (Smith, 2015). They define their expectations and promote performance to achieve each level. The leader provides monetary compensation for the follower's performance (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020).

The main behaviors connected with management functions in transactional leadership are contingent reward and management by exception (active; Avolio & Bass, 2004). Contingent reward means that the leader provides others with assistance in exchange for their efforts, meaning an arrangement involving work in exchange for pay (Balyer, 2012).The leader discusses in specific terms who is responsible for what functions and when, and the leader expresses satisfaction when the subordinate meets the objective. Management by exception (active) means that the leaders focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, and deviations (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Mehmood & Arif, 2011).

Passive-Avoidant Leadership

Passive-avoidant leadership is generally regarded as an ineffective form of leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The two main forms of passive-avoidant leadership are management by exception (passive) and laissez-faire. In management by exception (passive) leadership, the leader fails to intervene until the problem becomes out of control or critical. The manager waits for things to go wrong before acting. The leader's response is a sanction or punishment for unacceptable performance (Mehmood & Arif, 2011). Laissez-faire leadership is a form of passive-avoidant leadership in which the manager avoids becoming involved in important issues and delays responding to urgent questions. In most cases, the laissez-faire leader is absent when needed (Smith & Bell, 2011). Laissez-faire leadership is leadership in which the leader is less likely to exercise control over subordinates and more likely to allow subordinates a sense of freedom to perform their assigned tasks with a lack of direct supervision (Mehmood & Arif, 2011).

Nature of the Study

In the current study, a quantitative method was used with a cross-sectional, correlational design. This method was used because statistical analyses were needed to show precise relationships between variables. A correlational design was necessary to determine how well a set of variables predicted an outcome.

A school was considered eligible for the study if it was a Baltimore City public high school in which more than 75% of the students were eligible for FARMs. Of the 25 Baltimore City public high schools, five high schools met this eligibility criterion for the

2019-2020 school year. The high schools initially selected for the study were the five traditional high schools in this set of schools with the largest student population.

A minimum of 81 full-time teachers were needed for the study, as determined by a power analysis (Faul et al., 2009), assuming a multiple linear regression with three predictor variables, a medium effect size of .15, and 80% power. This minimum was exceeded, with a total of 86 participants. To determine teacher eligibility, all participants had to have a direct reporting function to their high school principal and had to have maintained a working relationship with the current school principal for at least 1 year. All participants had Internet access. To maximize participation, the initial sample was a nonrandom opt-in sample including all eligible teachers in the selected schools who volunteered for the study. Prospective participants for this study were recruited through a prenotification letter of invitation and a survey launch letter. The letter of invitation included a brief description of the study. The survey launch letter included a statement of informed consent for all participants to sign.

In this study, an online survey was used to collect self-reported data from the participants. Three leadership styles were investigated: transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant. These leadership styles were measured by the respective subscales of the MLQ (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Each leadership style was evaluated in a distinct regression analysis. The criterion variable for each regression was school climate, as measured by the SCI-R (Gibson, 1979). The two control variables were average class size and years of experience of the teacher. The values of these variables were based on the self-report of the participant.

Definition of Terms

To avoid ambiguity, the following definitions for key terms and phrases used in this study are provided:

Idealized influence: Idealized influence refers to the follower's ability to identify with a leader and the goals within the organization. Idealized influence is a facet of transformational leadership (Balyer, 2012).

Individualized consideration: Individualized consideration refers to the ability of the leader to understand the needs of each follower. Individualized consideration is a facet of transformational leadership (Balyer, 2012).

Inspirational motivation: Inspirational motivation refers to the motivation enabled by leaders to help followers experience passion to fulfill the goals of the company. Inspirational motivation is a facet of transformational leadership (Balyer, 2012).

Intellectual stimulation: Intellectual stimulation refers to the encouragement received by subordinates to reconstruct old problems in a new, creative way. By thinking more broadly, subordinates are more able to create productive solutions. Intellectual stimulation is a facet of transformational leadership (Balyer, 2012).

Leader: A leader is a person who guides or directs a group (Yukl, 2006).

Leadership behavior: Leadership behavior refers to the actions of the leaders who foster relationships within the organization (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

School climate: School climate refers to the shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape the interactions between students, teachers, and administrators and set the parameters of acceptable behavior and norms for the school (Bradshaw et al., 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made for conducting this study. It was assumed that the MLQ and the SCI-R, the two instruments used for gathering data, were psychometrically sound and appropriate for measuring the constructs indicated. It was also assumed that the answers to the questionnaire provided by the participants were honest, accurate, and without bias and that the participants had sufficient opportunity to observe both the principal's leadership behavior and the school climate. Additionally, it was assumed that the participants understood each question in its entirety. Finally, it was assumed that the participants in this study were representative of the broader population to which the findings were generalized.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The study was cross-sectional, correlational, and nonexperimental. Cause and effect were not demonstrated. It was not possible to know if a principal's leadership qualities caused a school climate or if a given school climate influenced a principal's leadership qualities. In addition, the study was limited by the absence of in-depth, qualitative data. Participants did not have a way to explain their reasons for answering a survey question in a certain way.

Participants in this study included full-time secondary-school teachers in a large Baltimore City public high school setting. To be eligible for consideration for this study, selected high schools had to have a student body in which more than 75% of the student were eligible for FARMs. Of the 25 Baltimore City public high schools, five high schools

were chosen to meet this criterion. The high schools selected from the study were traditional high schools with the largest student population. The findings are not generalizable beyond Title I schools within Baltimore City or to schools in rural or more affluent communities.

The timeframe of the study may limit the value of the findings for years not covered during data collection. This limitation may have affected the generalizability of the results. In addition, only teachers were surveyed. The opinions of other school staff members were not included. Perceptions of principal leadership and school climate may have varied depending upon the subject the participants were teaching. Charter schools, separate public day schools, and alternative schools were not included. All these factors may have limited the generalizability of the results.

The study was also limited by the lack of a random sampling method. The sample consisted of teachers who volunteered for the study within a purposefully selected group of schools. Therefore, all attempts to generalize the results beyond the selected sample must be interpreted with caution.

Finally, responses from the participants were self-reported. Principal leadership and school climate were reported entirely based on the teachers' perceptions. Average class size of the teacher was also based only on self-report. For these reasons, the results of the study relied heavily on the assumed truthfulness of the answers.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to the boundaries of the study set by the researcher. The scope of this study included only schools within Baltimore City, a depressed economic area.

Only high school teachers were surveyed. One year of experience was required for participation in the study. Neither elementary schools nor middle schools were included. The study did not include custodians, paraprofessionals, interns, or other staff members. No in-depth opinions of participants were solicited.

Significance of the Study

This study was an examination of transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2004) in urban high schools, which have been understudied. The results of the study were designed to inform school educators and policymakers of ways to improve leadership styles to create positive school climates and increase student performance. If urban school teachers perceive their educational leaders as effective, they can begin to model themselves after the leader. The result will be the creation of a new environment that empowers staff members to take good care of the student population (Rhoden, 2012). The findings will also allow executives to realize the importance of providing a more just and democratic schooling for urban public education (Scott & Quinn, 2014).

In relation to practice, this study may give challenged educational leaders a new perspective for working with schools in the urban community. This study provides knowledge helpful for promoting effective leadership and improving overall school performance and education reform. The study also points to specific leadership elements that educational leaders may need for evaluation purposes.

Relating to policy, the findings from this study provide educational leaders with information useful for professional development training, both for new hires and for

experienced teachers and leaders. This study can also guide the understanding of a practical framework for effective leadership in an urban educational setting. The result may be an increase in the overall performance of a school and an increase in morale and motivation for both teachers and students.

The data from this study may give insight into the leader's potential and motivate teachers, staff members, and students to go beyond their levels of expectation. The surveys provided a comfortable process in which the teachers could complete and communicate their perspectives in a positive way regarding the principal's leadership style and the school climate where they were employed. The results may lead to some restructuring in educational policy and may be used for training and development throughout the United States, both for business and for the educational industry.

Summary and Transition

The quality of a school is based largely on its leadership (Shouppe, 2010). The most effective school principals are those with strong beliefs and value systems (Tajasom & Ahmad, 2011). School climate is influenced by how teachers perceive the leadership style of their principals (Allen et al., 2015; Bradshaw et al., 2014; Tajasom & Ahmad, 2011). The school climate is critical to the social, emotional, and academic success of the students and the administrators (Bradshaw et al., 2014). The influence of the school principal is mediated through the school climate (MacNeil et al., 2009). If the school climate is not hospitable, the organization can suffer (McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2016).

Specific leadership styles (in particular, transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles) have not been examined in relationship to school climate in urban districts of low socioeconomic status. Such an investigation was needed to provide a deeper understanding of how to improve school climate by addressing the leadership role of the principal in urban schools. The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership qualities of school principals and school climate, as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district, after correcting for class size and years of experience of the teacher. Three types of leadership styles were measured: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive-avoidant leadership. Each of these leadership styles was measured in a separate research question by means of a distinct subscale of the MLQ. School climate, as measured by the SCI-R (Gibson, 1979), was the criterion variable. Data analysis was conducted with a multiple linear regression.

This study provides knowledge that can help promote effective leadership and improve overall school performance and education reform. The findings from this study can provide educational leaders with information useful for professional development training, both for new hires and for experienced teachers and leaders. This study may also guide the understanding of a practical framework for effective leadership in an urban educational setting. The result may be an increase in the overall performance of a school and an increase in morale and motivation for both teachers and students.

The remainder of this manuscript provides details regarding the current study. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature on principal leadership style

and school climate within secondary educational settings and the potential effect of these factors on student performance. Research is reviewed regarding the relationships between leadership styles, school climate, and student achievement. In Chapter 3, the procedures used in the current study are presented, including the instruments used; the population and sample selected; and the methods for collecting, analyzing, and managing the data. Chapter 4 provides the results, descriptive statistics, and detailed analysis. Chapter 5 provides the interpretation of the findings, comparisons with literature on school climate, limitations, recommendations for further research, and implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Since the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, major reform efforts have been introduced into public schools to ensure accountability (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Many of these reform efforts have focused on the ability, knowledge, and skill of the school principal to lead staff members, faculty members, and students. Apart from teaching, the leadership of the principal is the most important school-related factor that influences student learning and the character of the school (Allen et al., 2015; Lingam & Lingam, 2015). The quality of school performance is based largely on the effectiveness of the leaders (Akan, 2013).

Principals in high schools directly shape the school climate (Price, 2012; Shouppe & Pate, 2010). The principal is the catalyst for transforming the organizational climate of a school in a positive and progressive way to increase learning (McKinney, Labat, & Labat, 2015). As leaders, principals are obligated to set goals and create a vision for their school and for themselves (McKinney et al., 2015). Principals have the power to build trust and communication, to create cooperative relationships, and to create an open environment where staff and faculty members are welcome. In addition, principals have important responsibilities for the implementation of school policies and mandates (Mosley, Boscardin, & Wells, 2014). Scholars have therefore paid close attention to developing ways to determine the effectiveness of a school principal (Okoji, 2015).

In the current study, the relationship of the leadership style to school climate was addressed in the setting of large urban high schools with a high proportion of

economically disadvantaged students. The findings have implications for school leadership, principal accountability, and educational reform.

Literature Search Strategy

Information on leadership style in educational organizations was obtained from library resources at Walden University and the Enoch Pratt Central Library in Baltimore, Maryland. Searches were conducted in the PsycINFO, Education Source, ERIC, Taylor and Francis Online, Thoreau Multi-Database, Sage Research Methods Online, Sage, Academic Complete, ProQuest Central, Education Theory Guide, and ProQuest databases. Search terms used included *leadership style, transformational leadership, socioeconomic status, passive-avoidant leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, school size, poverty, high-level poverty, school climate, school environment, class size, school size, school leadership, successful school leadership, elements of school leadership, principal leadership in urban high schools, leadership in public high schools, school climate in urban high schools, effective leadership, principal leadership styles, principals in high schools, principal leadership* and *instruction, effective principals, principal strategies, principal leadership* and *academic achievement, school organizational climate, school organizational environment, principal leadership on school climate, principal leadership on school environment, principal leadership scope, principal role, instructional leadership, high schools, educational leadership,* and *principal leadership*.

Theoretical Foundation

Transformational, Transactional, and Passive-Avoidant Leadership

Since the introduction of federal educational accountability initiatives at the beginning of the 21st century, the practice of leadership by school principals has gained increasing attention (Mosley et al., 2014). The focus of this attention has been on transformational and transactional leadership. These forms of leadership are widely believed to communicate and enact the comprehensive educational vision. Each of these forms of leadership has its own distinctions and a different effect on the follower's perspective (Mosley et al., 2014).

Transformational leadership. The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). Transformational leadership has been the most frequently studied leadership style in the leadership field (Balyer, 2012). Transformational leadership is characterized by loyalty, respect, honesty, and a sense of commitment of shared responsibilities, with the leader's behaviors modeled by subordinates (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). A transformational leader has also often been characterized as being charismatic, with the ability to inspire subordinates and link the organizational vision and goals to create an organizational culture with a solid foundation (Balyer, 2012). Transformational leaders encourage a vision that focuses on collaboration and inspires subordinates by acknowledging their values and coaching them to be future leaders, which can create a new path for the organization (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). In doing so, the leader helps the subordinates to understand the role of their efforts in accomplishing the goals within the organization. Transformational leadership provides an

opportunity for a higher level of tolerance, motivation, and self-fulfillment among followers (Quin et al., 2015).

A transformational leader focuses on the career development of subordinates while directing a team or individuals toward working on a common objective (Allen et al., 2015). Transformational leaders are known to inspire workers to go beyond the call of duty and to exceed their initial performance (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). When leaders model transformational leadership behaviors, they encourage autonomy and promote responsibility among subordinates (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). The transformational leadership style also provides followers with opportunities to focus on building capacity for organizational change (Balyer, 2012). Transformational leaders are more likely to broaden the employees' interest while generating awareness of the need to accept the mission and vision of the organization (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Under transformational leadership, the leader and the follower come together around a goal or outcome designed such that everyone can benefit from suggested ideas (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership stimulates the expectation of high-level needs and provides followers with opportunities to focus on building capacity for organizational change (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). The focus of transformational leadership is the ability to change the organization and the thought process of its subordinates (Quin et al., 2015).

School principals who can embrace a transformational leadership style are more often able to retain teachers who were considering leaving the profession (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). For example, Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) showed that successful leaders directly and indirectly achieved and sustained school improvement over time

using transformational and instructional leadership strategies. The ability to sustain effectiveness over time was found to result from the ability of the leader to articulate the needs and the organizational values of the school through a combination of strategies incorporated into the school environment (Day et al., 2016). Additionally, Kim and Park (2017) suggested that there were direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership on the organizational climate, knowledge sharing, and organizational learning. Another study on the relationship between the principal's leadership styles, school climate, and teachers' sense of self efficacy showed that these relationships were positive and significant (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). A principal's success is based on setting clear direction, solving problems strategically, developing talent, and improving teaching and learning (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010), which is consistent with transformational leadership. Therefore, the quality of leadership and positive school climate are critical for success (McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2016).

Transformational leadership is about the leader's persuading followers to want to change, to be led in a purposeful direction, and to improve professionally as individuals (Balyer, 2012). Transformational leadership is a way of satisfying the needs of followers while moving them to a higher order of organizational involvement, without ever failing to display respect or to encourage involvement (Burns, 1978; Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Thus, transformational leadership has been positively associated with school climate, inspiring staff to do far beyond the assigned task (Wang, 2019). Transformational leadership has also gained much attention for its positive dimensions and its effect on the positive relationship between employee morale, employee satisfaction, employee

commitment, and increased performance outcomes (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). When a school principal is a transformational leader, the school climate may be less rigid while continuing to support change. The leader, instead of empowering only individuals, can empower the entire school as a unit (Balyer, 2012). Compared to transactional leadership, transformational leadership is predicted to have a more favorable outcome for long-term results because they motivate and engage followers or subordinates (Wang, 2019). The style of transformational leadership behavior is quantifiable and noticeable (Ustun, 2018).

Dimensions of transformational leadership. Measuring the ability of educational leaders to affect staff perceptions and school climate is essential for continual improvement (Singh & Townsley, 2020). Researchers have identified six main dimensions of transformational leadership: (a) articulating a vision, (b) fostering acceptance of group goals, (c) providing support, (d) stimulating the intellect, (e) providing an appropriate model, and (f) promoting high performance expectations (Balyer, 2012).

In the educational setting, transformational leadership has also been explained in terms of four constructs: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) individualized consideration, and (d) intellectual stimulation (Wang, 2019). Idealized influence means that the leader considers the needs of others before his or her self-interest, setting goals and demonstrating moral and ethical standards (Wang, 2019). Inspirational motivation means that the leader motivates the follower, encourages individuals, and demonstrates a positive climate with enthusiasm and optimism, while communicating a higher level of expectations (Wang, 2019). Individualized consideration

means that the leader steps into a coaching or a mentoring role to assist with developing the subordinate's potential (Wang, 2019). Finally, intellectual stimulation means that the leader stimulates the subordinates to be as creative as they would like to be. Intellectual stimulation drives innovation. Together, these components create an additive effect that can lead to a higher level of performance, beyond what is expected from the leader (Ustun, 2018). The leader's ability to implement all four dimensions of transformational leadership have increased empowerment among the followers when the followers were performing organizational tasks (Ismail et al., 2013).

When a leader implements transformational leadership in an organizational setting, the performance outcomes of the followers may be strong, especially when the subordinates are committed to the organization (Balyer, 2012). This style of leadership is designed to promote innovation (Ustun, 2018). Transformational leadership also increases followers' level of maturity and their desire for successful achievement at a higher level (Ustun, 2018). An educational leader who demonstrates transformational leadership has one goal in mind: to change the follower's perspectives in a positive way by changing beliefs, culture, behavior, and how the follower thinks (Singh & Townsley, 2020). Transformational leaders in the field of education focus on improving the culture and climate of an organization and work to enhance professional development while promoting self-esteem, consistency, and achievement (Singh & Townsley, 2020). The transformational leadership model has been shown to be a powerful stimulant for school improvement (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Positive relationships have been found

between transformational leadership and several organizational conditions related to schools and teachers (Anderson, 2008).

Transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is a form of leadership in which the leader provides a benefit to the subordinate consisting of a reward once a task is completed in a timely manner (Saeed & Mughal, 2019). Transactional leadership is connected with two related theories: leader-member exchange and path-goal theory (Bian et al., 2019). In contrast to transformational leaders, transactional leaders form their organizational culture according to the current rules, policies, and procedures within the organization (Bian et al., 2019). The transactional leadership model relies on a system of contingency and reward, which may consist of economic, political, or psychological incentives (Mosley et al., 2014). Transactional leadership appeals only to an individual's self-interest and consists of an exchange process. But the transactional leader provides a clear and comprehensive directive on the requirements of the job and the subordinates' role (Bian et al., 2019).

To establish order in the organization, transactional leaders use active management by exception as a way of addressing unanticipated situations and events (Mosley et al., 2014). This style of leadership focuses on enforcing policies and addressing followers' mistakes. Contingent reward means that transactional leaders use reward systems to augment organizational operations, improving instructional progress. The transactional leader thereby gains control by providing the incentive reward for completing the task. Individuals who are not successful are punished, or their rewards are withheld, based on a failure to perform (Mosley et al., 2014).

When school principals exhibit transactional leadership behaviors, they are using their power to reward subordinates by providing money or other incentives to make the followers put more effort into the task (Saeed & Mughal, 2019). In schools, the role of a transactional leader is to define the subordinate's job functions and develop policies that mirror the role and positions of the school personnel (Mosley et al., 2014). Principals' leadership styles have significantly influenced the performance of the teacher (Emu & Nwannunu, 2018).

Researchers have suggested that transactional leadership is limited in its potential for success (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). However, transactional leaders have been able to please their subordinates by understanding the subordinates' desires (Mahdinezhad & Suandi, 2013), and it helps address unplanned situations (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). Further, though having a value-based initiative does not always contribute to a sense of fulfillment (Nicolson & Patricia, 2002), findings have shown that transactional leadership, along with sharing knowledge, were positively related to creativity, with knowledge sharing mediating the relationship between transactional leadership and creativity within the organization (Hussain et al., 2017)

Passive-avoidant leadership. In addition to transformational and transactional leadership, Avolio and Bass (2004) identified a third type of leadership style: passive-avoidant. Passive-avoidant leadership has two forms: passive management by exception and laissez-faire (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Passive-avoidant leaders have a hands-off approach to leadership. Leaders who practice passive management by exception assume that the follower is intrinsically motivated and needs to be alone to achieve a task

(Mosley et al., 2014). Laissez-faire leaders demonstrate behaviors such as failing to respond and follow up on request, being absent when needed, delaying responses to urgent questions, avoiding responsibility, and failing to defend and discuss critical issues when the organization is facing challenges (Mosley et al., 2014). A passive-avoidant leader responds to the follower only after the follower has demonstrated noncompliance or errors (Nordmo et al., 2018). When the leader demonstrates laissez-faire leadership, the follower feels the absence of leadership (Nordmo et al., 2018). Employees have rated passive-avoidant leadership lower than they rated transformational leadership (Grill, Nielsen, Grytnes, Pousette, & Torner, 2019).

The full-range leadership model. According to the full-range model of leadership (Mahdinezhad et al., 2013), the transactional and transformational leadership styles do not exist as opposite ends of a continuum. The same leader can exhibit each behavior partially, in varying situations and degrees. The full-range leadership model was therefore introduced (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Although Bass (1985) indicated that visionary leadership was more effective than transactional leadership, other scholars have argued that no single style of leadership is the most effective. Leaders must decide to implement the style of leadership appropriate for the setting in which the followers and leaders interact (Mahdinezhad et al., 2013). But more research in this area is needed (Mahdinezhad et al., 2013).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables

The Need for School Reform

The fundamental purpose of ensuring educational accountability is to create an environment in which all children have an opportunity to create their own future based on their choosing (Stosich, Snyder, & Wilczak, 2018). Many of these reform efforts have focused on the ability, knowledge, and skill of the school principal to lead staff members, faculty members, and students (Louis et al., 2010). Continual investment has been made in education reform. One of the main determinants of the effectiveness of school reform is the way in which it is implemented (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019). The goal is to create a labor force that is highly skilled, competent, competitive, and employable (Mestry, 2017). However, school leaders sometimes perceive educational reform as a barrage that imposes external demands, forcing principals to determine if they will go along with implementing the change or if they will decide to work around the reform and continue with implementing existing practices (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019).

There is worldwide concern that public schools are not functioning at their best. Public school performance outcomes are at an all-time low (Mestry, 2017). There have been many educational reforms focusing on instruction, data, and professional development, with the intent to help principals work through balancing work and life (Bush, 2005; Russell & Cranston, 2012). The increased work, rapid changes, and socioeconomic cultural disparities have created complexities that have put principals under significant pressure. For the results of education reform to be effective, high schools must become institutions that focus not only on the conceptual foundation of the

school design but also on building principals who are successful in leading educational reform (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019). Principals' leadership in high schools' shapes school climate (Sanchez et al., 2020).

The Evolution of School Leadership

During the 1950s, school principals were responsible for their own assigned job function, which consisted of meeting with parents; developing healthy, safe relationships with parents; reconciling the school budget; and providing school performance evaluations (Mosley et al., 2014). Principals were considered legal leaders. Principals were also responsible for defining the school's vision and ensuring that the vision was maintained through the organizational climate and culture (Balyer, 2014).

Since the middle of the 20th century, the principal's position in the school has evolved considerably. During the 1970s, principals were considered human resource managers. During the late 1980s, they were perceived as managers and instructional leaders, and in the 1990s, they were considered change experts (Balyer, 2014).

With the beginning of the 21st century, school principals were called accountable headship leaders. This evolution was based solely on the way that the educational system was managed (Balyer, 2014). The basis of this transformation was a paradigmatic change of the old public-school system. Although educational reform is created to close the achievement gap, the school culture and climate are continually changing and becoming more complex. Globally, school leadership plays a vital role in improving performance outcomes (Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017).

The scope of the principal's leadership goes beyond administrative work and enforcement of discipline (Mestry, 2017). In the existing school environment, the climate in which the leadership style of school principals develops has become more complex (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). The scope of the principal's leadership is based on how the leaders can manage the school while being in the middle of different currents of demands. Principals must be able to handle stakeholders, work with maintaining the physical infrastructure, respond to mandated statewide reforms, manage staff members and students, and create an environment conducive for teaching and learning, all under challenging circumstances (Milley & Arnot, 2016). Educational leaders face many shifting priorities, and their ability to balance their daily work consists in being able to mediate, establish a workable environment, compromise when needed, and negotiate when necessary (Owings & Kaplan, 2015). Principals must be able to build and create teams, mold and shape the school vision for student success, cultivate leadership, use data as a tool to increase school improvement, and help teachers upgrade their current skills (Mendel & Mitgang, 2013).

In an era of educational reform, effective leadership through role modeling can become a motivational tool for the entire school (Grissom, Bartanen, & Mitani, 2019). Educational reform has led to increasing attention to the accountability of school principals. Principals are considered responsible for the academic achievement of the students (Cruickshank, 2017). Principals who understand the needs of the students and translate these needs into a leadership practice enable the student and their families to

explore the student's potential (Montecinos, Sisto, & Ahumada, 2010; Sallee & Boske, 2013).

The principal's leadership sets the tone for the daily interaction with staff and students (Leithwood et al., 2017). In this way, school leaders demonstrate their committed values and beliefs (Lingam & Lingam, 2015). Effective principals focus on being change agents through teaching and learning behaviors that work within the infrastructure of the school, with the goal of increasing performance outcomes. In high schools, the focus of the principal can differ across departments, grade levels, and the types of programs being provided (Grissom et al., 2019). The high school principal can use a specific approach with a few teachers to affect teaching and learning or use a broader approach to influence the entire faculty (Grissom et al., 2019). To influence faculty and staff members and maintain a healthy school climate, principals can use approaches based on many contextual factors, including the size of the school, classroom size, and the socioeconomic level of the school (May & Supovitz, 2011).

The approach of each school principal is unique and distinctive (Mestry, 2017). In large urban high schools, principals can be more effective with some teachers than with others, but the overall effect of these differences may be small (May & Supovitz, 2011). Therefore, the performance outcomes of educational leaders may be based not only on specific aspects of the leaders' behavior but also on how the principals distribute their leadership throughout the entire school and in relationship to the larger school district.

Elements of Successful Leadership

Successful leadership involves four core leadership practices: (a) developing individuals according to their skills, (b) restructuring the organization, (c) setting goals, and (d) giving clear direction and managing the entire organization (Day et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 2007; Louis et al., 2010). However, these practices alone do not create effective leadership. Successful leadership means that the leader understands the individuals whom they are leading (Welby, 2018). Leaders in any organization must be able to build a strong professional foundation with an improved working culture and climate (Welby, 2018). How principals demonstrate these practices in the high school environment determines how the principal affects the school environment and student learning (Leithwood & Sun, 2018). Leaders must have service, courage, trust, and integrity, which constitute the core values of successful leadership (Saphier, 2017).

Trust is needed for building strong, sustainable cultures (Welby, 2018). Subordinate trust in the leader facilitates necessary change (Saphier, 2017). These core practices provide additional support for student academic performance (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013). However, the change process in organizations can be difficult to accomplish (Welby, 2018). Because most people fear the change process, some scholars have recommended removing the word *change* and replacing it with the term *improvement process* (Saphier, 2017).

According to Saphier (2017), change should happen not for its own sake, but for improvement purposes. When implementing a plan of action, the leader must be credible, clear and concise, prepared and ready to assess readiness, able to listen, willing and ready

to earn trust of followers, and prepared to identify the needs of individuals in the company (Saphier, 2017). Effective leaders assess followers' requirements before implementing and promoting their own needs. The change process will become less frightening and instead will be welcomed with limited resistance from followers. Scholars (e.g., Klar & Brewer, 2013; Klar et al., 2013; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020; Lindle et al., 2012) have examined how effective school principals implemented comprehensive school reform efforts. There is a need to understand what effective principals do to increase learning and improve the school environment not only in the classroom but also throughout the entire organization, especially in schools that are failing (Mendels, 2012). There is a deeper interest in gaining knowledge on effective principals who have the innate ability to transform a school (Hallinger, 2016).

Successful leadership is responsive, and effective school leaders can manage diverse contextual peremptory requests daily (Leithwood et al., 2020). The school context consists of the economic and sociocultural factors that play a vital role in school productivity and student achievement, thereby shaping school improvement (Hallinger & Liu, 2016). Contextual factors guide principals' practices and leadership behaviors (Hallinger & Walker, 2015; Harris & Jones, 2018; Lee & Hallinger, 2012). These findings have been confirmed globally (Hallinger, 2018; Harris, Jones, & Huffman, 2017; Walker & Hallinger, 2016).

Representatives of the Wallace Foundation (2012) have provided support in 24 different states for projects designed to examine gaps in educational leadership (Mendels, 2012). The investigation resulted in more than 70 different reports. A comprehensive

review of the Minnesota/Toronto research (Mendels, 2012) distilled five leadership practices considered essential for effective school leadership. First, the principal must be able to shape a vision for academic success focused on high standards. Second, the principal must be able to create a culture and climate that serves the teachers and students. This culture and climate must be driven by customer service and must be hospitable to education. The result must be a safe and secure environment with healthy interaction between staff members, administrators, and students. Third, the principal must fertilize leadership practices in others, including staff members, administrators, and students. Fourth, principals must allow teachers to teach with minimal disruption, thereby enhancing instruction and enabling growth so that students can learn at their highest level of potential. Fifth, the principal must use data to increase student performance and to manage administrators, staff members, and students. In this way, principals foster support for improved outcomes on every level (Mendels, 2012). Other researchers have argued leadership comes second to classroom instruction in its effect on student achievement (Gordon & Fefer, 2019).

A comprehensive review of leadership (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008) demonstrated a set of "strong claims." These claims included the following: (a) School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning; (b) almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices; (c) the ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices, not the practices themselves, demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the context in which they work; (d) school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most

powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment, and working conditions; (e) school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed; (f) some patterns of distribution are more effective than others; and (g) a small handful of personal traits explains a high proportion of the variations in leadership effectiveness. To refine these claims, Leithwood et al. (2020) reexamined them in light of more recent empirical evidence. The original claims were said to limit the effect of influences on student learning to certain factors that occurred within the school organizational environment. The more recent finding suggested that school leadership has a significant effect on features of the school organization, which positively influenced the quality of teaching and learning. The scholars reported that this effect was moderate in size but was vital to the success of school improvement efforts.

Leadership in Schools with High Levels of Poverty

According to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2018), although the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized, the educational school districts that serve the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations are not providing a top-quality educational experience when compared to that provided to wealthy, White counterparts. In the United States, urban public schools with high levels of poverty have repeatedly shown poor academic achievement. The national school lunch program provides a measure to indicate the number of low-income students in a school.

Public and charter schools are divided into categories by FARMs eligibility. Schools are defined as high-poverty schools when 75% of the student population is eligible for FARMs (McFarland et al., 2017). Schools are considered middle-level

poverty with 50.1% to 75% of the student population eligible for FARMs. Schools with 25% or less of the student population eligible for FARMs are considered low-poverty schools (McFarland et al., 2017). In 2016, students who attended high-poverty public schools showed a higher percentage for FARMs compared to low-poverty schools (24% vs. 21%). However, the percentage differed according to ethnicity and the students' race (McFarland et al., 2017). The students who attended high-poverty schools were Hispanic (45%), African American (44%), Native American (38%), Pacific Islander (24%), Asian (14%), and White students (8%). However, the students who attended schools considered low poverty showed higher percentages for Asian students (39%), White students (31%), biracial or multiracial students (24%), Pacific Islander students (12%), Hispanic students (8%), and African American students (7%; McFarland et al., 2017). In 2016, 40% of the students who attended city schools were in high-poverty schools. In contrast, 20% of the attendance was found in town schools, 18% in suburban schools, and 15% in rural schools (McFarland et al., 2017). Enrollment projections indicate that there will be an increase in FARMs eligibility through the fall of 2028. However, for Grades 9 through 12, this number is expected to increase by 5% between 2016 and 2023 and then decline by 3% (McFarland et al., 2017).

Sanchez (2020) examined the relationship between teachers' perception and principals' leadership on school climate in an urban district. Two different surveys and five demographic questions were administered across nine high schools. The findings indicated that, in schools with higher levels of FARMs eligibility, higher levels of a

positive school environment were perceived from teachers in higher-performing schools (Sanchez, 2020).

Usually, schools with higher levels of FARMs eligibility have many minority-group students enrolled, and many of these students have specific learning needs that must be met (Johnson et al., 2014). African American students who come from low-income, high poverty schools are more likely to attend schools that provide minimal resources and support (Rivera-McCutchen, 2019). These students do not have equitable access to their assigned teachers when needed, their instructional materials are outdated, the inner and outer appearance of their school facilities appear dilapidated with a lack of physical upkeep, and principals are fighting for access to technology and technical support (Rivera-McCutchen, 2019).

One of the most difficult challenges for principals is leading schools with these issues and preparing the students to become productive citizens (Jacobson et al., 2005). Many of these students and their families cope with racism, suffer based on limited resources, and live in dangerous neighborhoods (Jacobson et al., 2005). These problems create significant obstacles to the students' academic performance within the school (Johnson et al., 2014). Most schools with high levels of poverty face challenges and struggles on many fronts. Typically, these schools have a high staff turnover rate, teachers are inexperienced and have never worked with a high-poverty population, and the curriculum is not aligned with the professional development plan of the school (Johnson et al., 2014). Staff members labor under legislation mandating educational reforms that test the effectiveness of the principal, the school environment, and student

performance. Many states have mandated educational reforms to regulate the process of how the educational system will work (Rhee, 2013). A low socioeconomic status has been persistently associated with low levels of student achievement (Moore & Kochan, 2013). However, some schools with large minority-group populations and high levels of poverty have good performance levels. In many states, educators have been addressing concerns of "antiquated systems" and educational bureaucracies preventing or limiting progress (Rhee, 2013, p. 21).

Professional development programs to prepare new principals for the task of school leadership have been increasing. According to Rivera-McCutchen (2019), principals should be guiding their teachers in their leadership practices to provide a higher quality of educational leadership. For principals to shape a vision within their schools, they must start by ensuring that staff members and students are committed to demonstrating high standards for school progress. These high standards are necessary for closing the academic achievement gap between disadvantaged and advantaged students (Porter et al., 2008). This vision can never be compromised (Mendels, 2012). District leaders are not satisfied with the quality of principal preparation programs that have been implemented and understand that there is much needed room for restructure (Mendels, 2016). According to the findings of the Minnesota/Toronto research team, high ratings given by teachers to describe principals were based on the existence of an instructional climate that was safe for the teachers, administrators, and students (Mendels, 2012).

For principals to be able to create a healthy climate driven by customer service, the principal must ensure that the school building is safe, neat, and clean. The building

must provide an atmosphere in which the staff members and students are comfortable and feel physically and academically supported. Support for the teachers should be nonbureaucratic so that the teachers can focus on the specific goals within the school that will advance the academic learning environment (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2007). Teachers should collaborate with one another and help their peers to improve academic instruction, rather than simply working alone (Louis et al., 2010; Mendels, 2012). The creation of strong, effective, high-quality partnerships is needed (Mendels, 2016). At the University of Washington, researchers investigating urban schools found that for principals to improve the environment and culture of the school, the climate must be hospitable to instructional learning (Mendels, 2012).

In a healthy school climate, all members within the school must have a level of respect for one another, the school should be warm and welcoming, people should not blame others, the school should maintain a professional atmosphere, and staff members need opportunities to be involved in school activities (Mendels, 2012). The course work for the principals' preparation programs does not always reflect the work that principals do in the school setting. Practical application needs to be included in an understanding of the principal's role (Mendels, 2016). Although policy and organizational procedures can play a role in hindering effective change, the state needs to exercise an active role in improving the preparation of principal leadership (Mendels, 2016). For effective principals to fertilize leadership practices among staff members, administrators, and students, teamwork and collaboration are necessary.

Leadership challenges in urban schools with high levels of poverty. One of the most difficult leadership challenges for principals is leading urban schools with high levels of poverty. There are often significant barriers and limited resources while educators attempt to prepare the students to become productive citizens (Sleeter, Montecinos, & Jimenez, 2016). Researchers have argued that self-discipline and endurance are key contributors to student achievement, along with talent and intelligence (Jimenez, 2018). However, when leading and examining high-poverty urban public schools, attempting to provide support through coaching and development through this perspective have been met with both advocacy and derision (Jimenez, 2018).

Individuals have argued that nurturing noncognitive traits, such as grit, is effective for student achievement (Jimenez, 2018). However, skeptics oppose the promotion of grit because of the belief that it encourages and fosters an environment of misdirection, involving attempts to fix a child rather than handling inequitable disparities within teaching and learning (Jimenez, 2018). Many of these students and their families cope with racism, suffer based on limited resources, and live in dangerous neighborhoods. All these problems create significant obstacles to the students' academic performance within the school (Jimenez, 2018). On a larger scale, superintendents nationwide are leading school districts with difficulties in staffing; retaining high-quality teachers; finding teachers who are well-trained and who understand the population they are serving; and finding district leaders, along with qualified principals, who understand business, networking, and the importance of effective leadership (Fusarelli, Fusarelli, & Riddick, 2018).

For the most part, large urban communities have a high level of poverty for all generations, and few jobs are available (Fusarelli et al., 2018). District leaders are consistently engaged in a cycle of continual hiring for new talent for district leaders, administrators, and executives (Fusarelli et al., 2018). Most schools with high levels of poverty face challenges and struggles on many fronts. On the school front, these schools typically have a high staff turnover rate, teachers are inexperienced and have never worked with a high-poverty population, and the curriculum is not aligned with the professional development plan of the school (Jimenez, 2018). Staff members labor under legislation mandating educational reforms that test the effectiveness of the principal, the school environment, and student performance. Many states have mandated educational reforms to regulate the process of how the educational system will work (Fusarelli et al., 2018).

The Leadership of School Principals

Globally, there has been an increase in the need for the leadership of school principals in education reform (Hallinger & Huber, 2012; Mulford, 2008). A qualitative study (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019) was conducted to examine principals' leadership behaviors and the performance of schools that were high- and low-performing. The findings indicated that transformational leadership and democratic leadership, combined, contributed to higher performance outcomes.

Many different countries have experienced similar challenges based on globalization, the innovation of technology, and what the consumer is now requesting from principals. This change in educational reform and leadership plays a role that shapes

how people live. These changes also affect the expectations of the principals and how they lead and shape their schools (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). The leadership of school principals' behaviors can influence teachers' job satisfaction, teachers' work performance, and student performance outcomes (Ch et al., 2017; Kars & Inandi, 2018; Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016; Rana et al., 2016).

Although there has been a demand for principals to provide effective school leadership, reduced school funding has required principals to be financially skilled to conduct their duties (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). Financial literacy is a component of improved school performance (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). Principals must be able to implement strategic resource management to succeed in the teaching and learning strategies that have been associated with an increase in student academic achievement (Robinson, 2007). Principals can create a workplace environment to improve student achievement, but they cannot do so alone. The student's ability to achieve high-level productivity is linked to the effectiveness of principal's leadership (Baptiste, 2019).

The leadership of the principals contributes to teaching and learning (Bello et al., 2016). Leadership is not an inherent quality of a person, but a skill that an individual can learn (Lingam & Lingam, 2015). Leadership is a series of behaviors and practices applicable regardless of profession or organization (Lingam & Lingam, 2015). Leadership consists of three interactive dynamics: a leader, the subordinate, and the current situation (Okoji, 2015). The leadership of the school principal is based on the ability to affect events within the group to accomplish a goal (Okoji, 2015). As the principal is responsible for guiding the academic climate of the school, the principal's

leadership is necessary for improving high school performance (Sabastian & Allensworth, 2012). The principal's leadership behavior enhances the follower's interest and commitment within the organization (Okoji, 2015).

McKinney et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between leadership behavior and job performance. Simple random sampling was used in an examination of 250 teachers and 50 school principals. The instruments used were the Principals' Leadership Assessment Inventory and the Teachers' Job Performance Assessment Scale. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between democratic leadership behavior and teachers' job performance (r =.12, p < .05). There was also a significant negative relationship between autocratic leadership behavior and the teachers job performance (r = -.31, p < .01). Leadership is also about being able to, and knowing how to, accomplish a task (McKinney et al., 2015).

For a high level of school performance, there must be a balance between accomplishing the task at hand and ensuring the integrity of human relationships within the school (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Many principals may not have the skills to facilitate ideas, expectations, and human relationships needed in widely diverse situations. Many variables are important for the success of a school, but real change happens at the school level only when the principal focuses on creating social change (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). The leadership style of the principal can be important to the school administrator and can affect both the organizational climate of the school and the student's ultimate success (Akan, 2013).

School leadership behaviors are key determinants of the school's performance (Grissom, Bartanen, & Mitani, 2019). The school principal guides educational reform efforts to help improve academic achievement. According to the former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, "There's no such thing as a high-performing school without a great principal. You simply can't overstate their importance in driving student achievement, in attracting and retaining extraordinary talent to the school" (Connelly, 2010, p. 34).

Effective Leadership and the Quality of Instruction

Many principals do not sufficiently understand how to incorporate leadership and management training into the school climate after they are promoted to the level of principal (Heystek, 2016). Many teachers who become principals are not trained or prepared to inherit the responsibilities of being a principal in an urban community. Therefore, new principals depend solely on their own experience and common-sense practice to make informed decisions (Mestry, 2017).

U.S. researchers have indicated that principals who are entering their positions lack relevant knowledge and skillsets to lead effectively, resulting in significant problems with student performance outcomes (Mestry, 2017). Principals need resources and support so that they can lead schools effectively. Effective principals understand the importance of using the skills of staff members and administrators and of encouraging teachers and administrators to exercise leadership (Mendels, 2012). In this way, it is possible to advance the school vision for the greater good (Mendels, 2016). The Minnesota/Toronto researchers discovered that effective leadership practices were

associated with increased performance outcomes (Mendels, 2012). Access to resources, like teachers' knowledge, is linked to higher student performance (McCutchen, 2019). Higher student performance was based on increased student access to "collective knowledge and wisdom" (Louis et al., 2010, p. 35).

Effective principals emphasize the quality of instruction and the way in which instruction is delivered in the organizational school setting (Shelton, 2011). Principals who believe that the quality of instruction is necessary for school success use research and specific strategies that increase instructional learning (Mendels, 2016). Principals who become effective leaders focus on selecting good-quality staff members and on managing talent. In every school, ensuring the retention of high-performing teachers is necessary for ensuring school success (Grissom et al., 2019). High-quality leadership is necessary for high schools to succeed in urban communities. However, teacher quality is not distributed equitably within urban school districts (Grissom et al., 2019).

An important factor in teacher retention is the quality of the support the teachers receive and the knowledge that the school principal is assuming responsibility to ensure that this support occurs within the organization (Mendels, 2012). The focus of effective leadership must go beyond external factors. The internal states of the staff members are important for staff performance and for how the staff members handle the classroom. Because federal and state agencies have included accountability mandates in school reform, analyzing data has been an important factor in monitoring the success of each school. Effective principals know the importance of using data and making data work for the best interest of the school. Strong principals create school effectiveness by knowing

how to implement change and to advocate for the school to ensure success (Mendels, 2012). To ensure educational reform, good policy, and professional development, change should be implemented for organizational leadership effectiveness (Leithwood & Azah, 2016).

Empirical Research on School Leadership

The role of the principal in the success of teaching and learning has been the subject of many empirical studies (Li, Hallinger, & Ko, 2016). In a quantitative cross-sectional study of principals' leadership, teachers' perceptions, and the school environment in a sample of 970 teachers, the findings indicated several factors in the principals' leadership style that made significant contributions to the teachers' professional learning and the school environment. Trust, being able to communicate effectively, student support, and the structure within a school setting all played an important role in the teachers' professional learning (Li, Hallinger & Ko, 2016). The leadership of school principals affects the school environment, student learning, staff motivation, and morale (Klar & Brewer, 2013). Although empirical data have largely indicated a connection between academic progress and school leadership (Mendels, 2012), this association may be indirect.

According to Leithwood et al. (2017), considerable evidence supports the idea that school leaders can make significant contributions to the success of the school organization culture and climate. The primary influence on student learning and academic performance is thought to be classroom instruction. Some studies have shown that leadership is less important than classroom instruction in its effect on student

achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004, as cited in Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Gordon and Fefer (2019) argued that leadership was second to classroom instruction in its effect on student academic performance. A comprehensive review of leadership led to "seven strong claims" (Leithwood et al., 2008). These claims included the following:

(1) School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning.

(2) Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices.

(3) The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices, not the practices themselves, demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the context in which they work.

(4) School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment, and working conditions.

(5) School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed.

(6) Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others.

(7) A small handful of personal traits explain a high proportion of the variations in leadership effectiveness.

Leithwood et al. (2020) revisited the *Seven Strong Claims About Successful School Leadership,* published in 2008 by the National College for School Leadership in England, and reexamined these statements considering recent empirical evidence. The

purpose of refinement was based upon the original claim, which limited the effects of influences on student learning to certain factors that occurred within the school environment. The findings suggested that school leadership had a significant effect on features of the school organization that positively influenced the quality of teaching and learning. Although moderate in size, this leadership effect is vital to the success of most school improvement efforts.

The principal's leadership may operate through a series of organizational factors in the school (Louis et al., 2010; Sebatian & Allensworth, 2012). A core program in a school setting is only as good as the instructors who teach it (Milley & Arnot, 2016; Owings & Kaplan, 2015). The most significant role for a principal is leading. Principals can use several different methods to shape and influence change, including persuasion, contingent rewards, recognition, and facilitation (Milley & Arnot, 2016).

In many countries, educational policy undergoes ongoing change, and the profile of a principal's leadership in a school setting often changes as well (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008, 2013). Nevertheless, there has been a stable international consensus that "effective school autonomy depends on effective leaders" (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012, p. 14). Internationally, research has shown that principals' leadership can have both negative and positive influences on school culture and climate and thereby on the quality of teaching, learning, and academic achievement (Bruggencate, Luyten, Scheerens, & Sleeger, 2012; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Gu & Johnson, 2013). There has been much research on factors that affect teachers' commitment, educational equity, and

the quality of the school (Li, Hallinger, & Walker, 2016). In Hong Kong, a study was conducted to examine trust between the principal's leadership and teachers' professional learning. A sample of 970 teachers from 32 schools was used. The study incorporated Baron and Kenny's four-step casual process to investigate the principal's leadership and Sobel's test and bootstrapping method to mediate trust. The findings from the study indicated that faculty trust mediated between the leadership style of the principals and the professional learning of the teacher (Li, Hallinger, & Walker, 2016).

An examination of over 30 years of empirical research pertaining to school leadership (Hallinger, 2010) suggested that the role of educational leaders had a positive mediating effect on student achievement. Positive leadership was effective through developing staff members, providing leadership within the community, providing a consistent structure, and creating a healthy school environment. These benefits provide students with increased motivation to do more and to become engaged in the classroom process, all of which lead to increased academic achievement (Day et al., 2016).

Much of the research on the leadership of the school principal has been completed in the elementary school setting. There is a need for more studies on leadership in high schools (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Although measurements of academic achievement and student progress are used to identify school effectiveness, such measurements are not sufficient for defining school success. Successful schools promote values centered on consistency, fairness, and integrity and provide social as well as academic benefits (Day et al., 2016). The social outcomes of a school are as important for leadership success and student performance as are the academic outcomes. According to

empirical data provided by the 20-country International Successful School Principals Project, leadership values and strategies are important in explaining variations in student performance between schools (Moos, Johannson, & Day, 2012; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2011).

In a study involving 180 schools in 43 school districts in North America (Louis et al., 2010), the leadership of the principal was associated with student academic success. The study showed that the principal's success was based on setting clear direction, strategic problem solving, developing talent, and improving teaching and learning for staff members. Principals also had high expectations that are reasonable and constantly reinforced. For the successful principals, the distribution of leadership is a critical factor. Principals indicated that their school success was due to the support received from teachers, students, and parents (Louis et al., 2010). The researchers agreed that school leaders had an important influence on student academic performance and on the organizational culture and climate of the school (Louis et al., 2010).

The leadership models most associated with school success are transformational leadership and instructional leadership. Transformational leadership involves inspiring followers to go beyond what they could imagine while establishing an environment that provides high-quality teaching and learning. Transformational leaders develop skills, setting clear and concrete goals and redesigning the organizational structure (Baptiste, 2019). Instructional leaders emphasize educational goals, with planning around the curriculum and teacher evaluations. In the model of instructional leadership, the leader promotes measurable student performance outcomes while emphasizing the importance

of classroom teaching and learning. Transformational leadership can be used in many different situations and affects the teacher's attitudes to their jobs and their commitment to the school organization (Baptiste, 2019).

According to the findings of a meta-analysis of quantitative, empirical studies (Day et al., 2016), transformational leadership practices are less likely to have strong effects on student achievement compared to instructional leadership practices. The focus of the transformational leadership model in the settings examined was on building staff relationships, whereas the focus of the instructional leadership model was on enhancing teaching and learning. Earlier researchers such as Marks and Printy (2003) claimed that instructional leadership practices had limited value because these practices were based primarily on accountability and on policy-driven external demands. However, while acknowledging that earlier understandings of instructional leadership were antiquated, the researchers acknowledged the importance of collaboration between administrators and staff members regarding teaching and learning. When both transformational and instructional leadership models are integrated, school performance is greatly strengthened in terms of teaching quality and student performance (Marks & Printy, 2003). According to the results of a meta-analysis, transformational leadership added value to the school conditions in all schools with principals who demonstrated this form of leadership (Hilt & Tucker, 2016).

A 3-year empirical mixed-methods study in England (Day et al., 2016) was conducted in primary and secondary schools to examine student performance outcomes. The findings indicated that principals directly and indirectly shaped and improved school

leadership over time using both transformational and instructional leadership practices. The study also showed how principals were able to sustain these practices for long periods and have a clear understanding of their school organizational needs (Day et al., 2016). The results demonstrated the need for leaders to implement a wide range of leadership practices (Day et al., 2016).

The positive effects of transformational leadership are well indicated in current literature (Sun & Henderson, 2017). A successful school leadership model goes beyond a practice-specific concept and instead is based on several different strategies, values, tasks, and goal-oriented actions (Day et al., 2011). These diverse requirements for effective school leadership have led to gaps in research and a need to understand the many factors involved in what makes leaders most effective in fostering a positive school environment and a high level of student achievement (Hallinger, 2016). This research is particularly needed in high schools. Most existing research on school leadership and the school environment has been conducted in elementary schools. Researchers have recommended including principals as participants in future studies, under the assumption that the leadership of the principal is important for high schools as well as for elementary schools.

School Climate

School climate refers to people's shared beliefs, values, and attitudes within the school (Bradshaw et al., 2014). School climate consists of the values that shape the interactions between principals, teachers, administrators, students, and the community

(Voight & Nation, 2016). School climate creates the parameters of behaviors acceptable within the school environment (Peguero & Bracy, 2015).

School climate has gained a significant amount of attention regarding research, policy, and practical application (Voight & Nation, 2016). Researchers, administrators, and legislators are consistently seeking to understand what makes a positive school climate (Baptiste, 2019). However, there has been neither a comprehensive synthesis nor empirical research that provides an overview of what works best when implementing school climate (Voight & Nation, 2016). In secondary education, school climate consists of the values that shape the interactions between principals, teachers, administrators, students, and the community (Voight & Nation, 2016). The principal's leadership creates the experience for teachers, students, and the overall school climate (Baptiste, 2019).

For schools to have a safe environment and equitable access, principals must understand their stakeholders' perceptions of school climate (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). The goal is to create and execute a plan for effective school-wide improvements (VanLone et al., 2019). Improving school climate allows schools to address problematic issues and concerns and provide resources and support to minimize barriers, thereby providing schools a safe, healthy, and meaningful environment (Jones & Shindler, 2016). A study in New York City high schools showed a relationship between school climate and academic student achievement (Davis & Warner, 2018). After controlling for the family's socioeconomic status, academic rigor, trust between teachers, and an expected higher level of student performance predicted student achievement (Davis & Warner, 2018).

The benefits of an effective and healthy school environment include cooperative learning, student development processes, academic achievement, respect for self and others, and the development of mutual trust among staff members and peers (Peguero & Bracy, 2015). At the high school level, student performance is important not only for an effective school, but also for the future of young people worldwide (Day et al., 2016). Principals who are effective in their schools (a) attend team meetings consistently, (b) shadow and complete classroom visits, and (c) know exactly what is needed to increase student performance at the school. To implement a positive school climate, a principal can concentrate on leadership relating to instruction, focusing on specific instructional elements within the school environment (McKinney et al., 2015). A positive school environment is important to the success of any school (Davis & Warner, 2018).

By definition, the school climate affects the personal experiences of teachers, staff members, students, and parents within the life of the school (Cohen, 2012). There is a strong relationship of principals' leadership styles and school climate to the success of an organization (Baptiste, 2019). The principal's leadership creates the experience for teachers, students, and the overall school climate (Baptiste, 2019). The goal is to create and execute an effective plan for schoolwide improvements (VanLone et al., 2019).

Perceived school climate predicts the attitudes of staff members, faculty members, students, and administrators (Davis & Warner, 2018; DeNobile, McCormick, & Hoekman, 2013). School climate research has focused on the atmosphere, culture, resources, and social networks within the school. School climate reform is an evidence-based school improvement strategy designed to provide a safer and healthier school that

will benefit everyone in the school setting (Thapa et al., 2013). Schools, as agents of socialization, are usually one of the first places where a student learns about the norms, culture, and values within society (Peguero & Bracy, 2015).

At the high school level, student performance is important not only for an effective school but also for the future of young people worldwide (Babatunde & Olanrewaju, 2014). School climate affects the mental and physical wellness of the students (Thapa et al., 2013). The school environment is linked to safety, to the ability to create healthy relationships in the school, and to engagement with learning and school improvement efforts. Improving school climate promotes increased success in schools from kindergarten through Grade 12 (Thapa, Cohen, & D'Alessandro, 2012). For students to thrive, a positive school climate must be the norm and not the exception.

The benefits of an effective and healthy school environment include cooperative learning, student development processes, academic achievement, respect for self and others, and the development of mutual trust among staff members and peers (Peguero & Bracy, 2015). School climate also influences the social, emotional, civic, and academic life of a person over time (Cohen, 2012). The effect of the school environment on education includes not only academic achievement but also student development and adjustment, student behavior, absenteeism, and suspension rates (Cohen et al., 2013; Peguero & Bracy, 2015). In any school, students differ in how they learn based on their perceptions of prior experiences and the social support they experience in school. Student performance is affected by the extent to which teachers, administrators, and parents empower students while encouraging them to learn. Students need this support to access

resources necessary for learning (Babatunde & Olanrewaju, 2014). A sound social and emotional climate in a school has been associated with a reduced incidence of poor psychological health among students (Faster & Lopez, 2013).

In every school and on every grade level, the perception of the school's climate is positively associated with academic achievement (Goddard, Goddard, & Kim, 2015; Jones & Shindler, 2016). School climate is also associated with improvements in behavioral and social outcomes among students. Although there have been few studies of multiple domains of school climate, a study was conducted (Kim & Park, 2020) to examine transformational leadership in relationship to the employee's knowledge-sharing behavior, how the organizations learn, and the organizational climate. The study, conducted in South Korea, involved 282 participants from several companies. Structural equation modeling was used to test the model comparisons. The findings suggested that there were direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership on the organizational climate, knowledge sharing, and organizational learning.

In another study (Peguero & Bracy, 2015), students with decreased levels of school engagement were found to be at a higher risk of dropping out. An improved school climate has been associated with better student academic outcomes and more desirable emotional outcomes (O'Malley et al., 2014). Positive perceptions of school climate have been found to moderate many different positive outcomes such as academic performance, increased morale, and increased attendance in students and staff (O'Malley et al., 2014). To implement a positive school climate, a principal can concentrate on

leadership relating to instruction, focusing on specific instructional elements within the school environment (McKinney et al., 2015).

Although school climate has been examined largely as an independent predictor of the school process and performance, researchers have not yet understood how distinct leadership styles on the part of the school principal shape the school environment and affect the school climate in high schools (Thapa et al., 2013). For every high school, principals must find a way to incorporate each strategy and identify programs that provide assistance with implementing practice into the school's framework (Voight & Nation, 2016). The field of education will benefit from further research regarding the relationship between school leadership and school climate.

School climate and school improvement initiatives. School improvement initiatives must be understood in the context of the school environment (VanLone et al., 2019). The School Climate Transformation Grant was provided in 2014 to all educational school districts and the Department of Education to provide resources and support with the intention to improve the social, academic and behavioral environment and to create a safe and healthy workplace for teachers (VanLone et al., 2019). In 2015, legislators passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, indicating that school climate not only plays an important role in education but also is necessary for the success of school leadership (VanLone et al., 2019). The Every Student Succeeds Act also requires school climate data to be implemented in school report cards on an annual basis.

The school climate model has three domains and 13 subtopics, including bullying/cyberbullying, safe environment, cleanliness, emergency management, school

readiness, participation, engagements, relationships, substance abuse, cultural competencies, physical and mental health, discipline, and instruction (Snyder, De Brey, & Dillow, 2016). An individual's belief system has the power to shape a person's experiences and the level of the person's relationships and expectations (Jones & Shindler, 2016). Research-based school improvement initiatives have been used to promote a healthy and safe school environment (Voight & Nation, 2016). Since 2006, the U.S. Department of Education has provided over $70 million solely to improve school climate measurements and for the improvement of high schools (Voight & Nation, 2016).

There are several school-wide strategies to improve school climate. The first strategy consists of the school-wide prevention approach (Voight & Nation, 2016). With this approach, school staff members use a multitiered behavior management system that focuses on positive behavior for every student in the school, using data to review and analyze the school's progress (Voight & Nation, 2016). The second strategy is the social-emotional learning approach, which focuses on instruction in the classroom and the student's social skills and interaction in the school setting (Voight & Nation, 2016).

The U.S. Department of Education has conducted studies to investigate school climate as an organized data-driven concept for the development of prosocial efforts (Cohen et al., 2013). Research-based prosocial educational efforts include, but are not limited to, character education, mental health, civic engagement, service, and social and emotional learning (Corrigan et al., 2013). School climate involves supporting students, teachers, and parents and showing the importance of effective prosocial educational efforts while strengthening instructional and intervention efforts (Ganon-Shilon &

Schechter, 2019). The school climate is one of the most important factors in educational development (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019).

Teachers' perceptions of the school atmosphere can influence their ability to incorporate programs and enforce school-based character-education programs (Shindler et al., 2016). In some cases, many educators perceive school climate and the student's academic performance as two separate entities (Shindler et al., 2016). With educators under increased pressure to produce high student performance gains and preparing students for high-stake assessments, focusing on school climate may appear to be a luxury, with academic performance on high-stakes tests taking precedence (Shindler et al., 2016).

Although few principals will completely ignore their school's climate, a small subgroup of urban high schools have a strategic approach to fostering and sustaining their environmental climate. When administrators, teachers, and principals perceive school climate as constricted, the variable then appears to be an impartial factor. However, when the school climate is perceived as a contextual factor it then becomes obvious that school climate is related to other factors (Shindler et al., 2016). Part of the job of a teacher is to exercise a positive influence on students, not just teaching a child how to read, but also helping the child develop on every other level (Chowdhury, 2016). The purpose of democracy-based, liberal education is for students to learn how to be innovative, to think critically, to use imaginative thinking, and to learn how to be rational. These objectives are accomplished by ensuring the promotion of a healthy and positive school climate (Daily et al., 2019). A strong school climate can enhance the civic, social, and emotional

behavior of an individual student. The result is not only increased school success, but also increased benefits that can follow the individual throughout life.

From a theoretical perspective, improved school climate efforts are grounded in the ecological systems of an individual's development. The ecological system includes a person's individual characteristics, the family, the school, and any other factors that may affect the individual's learning and behavior. Schools that have a high level of trust and maintain positive social relationships are more likely to foster improvements to the systems within the school (Baptiste, 2019; Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). Through different leadership behaviors, principals can drive expectations and motivations to influence the climate within their school (Singh & Townsley, 2020).

There are several different constructive ways to exercise this influence. First, the educational leader can influence the classroom by steering the curriculum. Second, the principal can manage and control the disciplinary environment and student affairs within the school. Third, the principal can organize specific resources and support from external sources such as the district office and the school board (Jimenez, 2018).

Principals can structure the climate of the school to influence student achievement. Several leadership behaviors have had an indirect but significant influence on student performance (Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Saphier, 2017). These behaviors, which have included planning, strategic resourcing, coordinating, goal setting, expectations, evaluating the teacher and the curriculum, and maintaining an natural environment conducive for learning, were found to be effective for improving the school environment as well.

To foster student achievement, principals and teachers need to believe in the students. Studies of school climate have often included contextual variables such as the effectiveness of the teacher and the students' academic performance (Bear et al., 2017). School climate is measurable with the use of reliable and valid surveys and observational measures designed to assess school life in all major areas (Singh & Townsley, 2020). However, the lack of consensus regarding what should be measured impedes the contributions that school-climate research can make to school improvement. More work is needed to examine school climate from multiple perspectives (Hallinger, 2016).

Class Size

Students' academic performance outcomes affect the supply of skilled workers and thereby affect the U.S. economy (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017). Scholars have shifted their attention from examining academic outcomes to taking a deeper look into school climate and its process (Parsons et al., 2017). An important variable affecting academic outcomes is class size. Reducing class size in urban public high schools has received increasing attention and support (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017). According to the results of a survey of educational leaders (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017), 77% of the participants agreed that leaders had a financial responsibility to allocate funds to minimize class size A large majority of the teachers (81%) preferred to improve work conditions by reducing class size rather than receiving an increase in their salaries (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017).

Class size is an important contextual variable of the classroom environment because class size affects the individualization of teaching and classroom engagement (Alharbi & Stoet, 2017). The idea of having a smaller class size has become popular (Han

& Ryu, 2017). The class size has a significant effect on classroom interaction and student behavior (Gordon & Fefer, 2019). Because class size influences how students learn, legislative actions have mandated a maximum size for a student/teacher ratio (Babatunde & Olanrewaju, 2014).

In the United States, 30 states have mandated a maximum class size. Class-size maximums have been legally instituted and enforced in Hong Kong, Korea, Macau, and Shanghai (Babatunde & Olanrewaju, 2014). Several countries put caps on class size or work with a subsidy program that will keep class size at a minimum. Although reducing class size can be a large investment, community members widely believe that the investment is worthwhile (Han & Ryu, 2017). Educational leaders and researchers have generally agreed that student performance declines as class size increases (Mathis, 2016).

Research related to class size has focused on the relationship between class size, classroom processes, and student performance outcomes (Baptiste, 2019). A meta-examination including 300 reports of approximately 900,000 students showed that when the class size decreased to approximately 15 students, academic performance improved (Mathis, 2016). One of the most known studies of class size was the Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio experiment. This study was a 4-year longitudinal, experimental study performed throughout the state of Tennessee. Students within the same school were randomly assigned into one of three categories: (a) classes with one teacher per 13 to 15 students, (b) classes with one teacher per 22 to 25 students and a teacher's aide, and (c) classes of 25 or more without a teacher's aide. Among students through Grade 3, smaller class sizes substantially increased academic performance, with

minimal disciplinary referrals. In addition, students who had been in smaller classes were more likely to graduate from high school; attend college; and earn a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. The effect was twice as large for minority-group and disadvantaged students. These results demonstrated that smaller class sizes had the potential to reduce the achievement gap (Mathis, 2016).

The Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio results were reexamined in a quasi-experiment (Mathis, 2016). A series of five annual evaluations of the Wisconsin Student Achievement Guarantee in Education showed a strong benefit to having a class size of no more than 15 students, demonstrating the importance of minimizing class size to achieve school effectiveness. The increases in benefit were higher for African American students. Teachers indicated that classrooms with smaller class sizes had healthier environments, with minimal disciplinary challenges. Extending small class sizes into the higher grades increased the effects of the change. Based on 277 studies, Mathis (2016) suggested that teaching quality was more important than the class size. However, a reanalysis of the Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio results showed that class size reduction had economic benefits and that a smaller class size improved the quality of teaching as much as it improved student performance (Mathis, 2016).

Reducing class size benefited disadvantaged African American students and narrowed the student's achievement gap by one third of a percentage point. Smaller class sizes in early grades had economic gains in a proportion of 2:1. Few experimental studies exist to evaluate the role of class size in middle and high school grades. However, several controlled studies and longitudinal studies have shown benefits to smaller class size in

student self-esteem, particularly in inner-city urban schools. In a study completed for the U.S. Department of Education (Mathis, 2016), achievement levels were examined in 2,561 schools, with measurements of performance from students who completed the national examinations of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The finding indicated that the only objective factor positively correlated to student performance was the class size (Mathis, 2016).

The effects of finance reform were examined in 28 states following the infusion of money into schools (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico, 2015). The results showed that from 1970 to 2010, gains were achieved primarily by lower student-to-teacher ratios. The gains were strongest for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. According to Barrett & Toma (2013), these findings are not entirely consistent and have been contradicted in some studies. However, evidence has suggested that the reduction of the class size increases student performance on standardized examinations. Reducing class size to approximately 10 students was associated with an increase in gains in student performance equivalent to what could have been accomplished through the development of teacher quality, within 1 standard deviation (Barrett & Toma, 2013).

The class size in elementary schools affects students' test scores, especially for students whose parents have a low socioeconomic status (Han & Ryu, 2017). A smaller class size in elementary schools affects students' noncognitive skill formation, thereby providing a positive, long-term, lasting effect in lower grade levels (Han & Ryu, 2017). However, whether class size in high schools strongly affects student achievement remains unclear. For high schools, class size may decrease students' performance outcomes, but

empirical data in this area are lacking. Identifying the effects of school size based on the academic opportunities at the high school level is challenging (Han & Ryu, 2017).

Overall, the literature on class size reduction has indicated clear and positive benefits to smaller classes. Most scholars have found conclusive evidence indicating that class size reduction can be an effective strategy for reforming educational leadership. However, class size has not yet been examined in conjunction with principal leadership as a predictor of school climate in large urban high schools.

Summary

The school is the architectural foundation of the educational system. School performance and school effectiveness depend primarily on school leaders. Whereas transactional leadership focuses on the status quo, transformational leadership focuses on motivating, influencing, and stimulating followers to go beyond what they could even imagine (Salari & Nastiezaie, 2020). The leadership type for one school may differ from that of another school, depending on the school atmosphere and the profiles of the teachers and students.

Scholars have increasingly focused on the effects of educational leadership and school climate on teachers and students (Hallinger, 2018; Harris et al., 2017; Walker & Hallinger, 2016). However, there has been no comprehensive blend of empirical data to determine how to improve school climate (Voight & Nation, 2016). In the current study, predictors of school climate were examined in large urban high schools with more than 75% of the student body at economic disadvantage, defined by eligibility for FARMs. The predictors examined were leadership style, years of experience of the teacher, and

class size. The leadership styles examined were transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The results of the study have implications regarding the role of principal leadership and class size in predicting school climate as well as regarding educational leadership generally.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this multivariate correlational study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership qualities of school principals and school climate as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district. Data were collected through an online survey of teachers in three large high schools in Baltimore City. Only schools in which more than 75% of the student body was eligible for FARMs were included in the study. Class size and years of experience of the teacher were measured as control variables. In this chapter, the research design is presented, followed by a discussion of the population and sample, the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, data management, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

A quantitative method was used for this study because the data were numerical and were used to estimate the statistical relationships between several variables. In the current study, the primary predictor variable was leadership style, as measured by the MLQ-5X (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Likert-type subscales of the MLQ-5X were used to assess three types of leadership styles: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive-avoidant leadership, with each leadership style assessed in a distinct research question. School climate, as measured by the SCI-R (Gibson, 1979), was the criterion variable. The predictors measured as control variables included average class size and years of experience of the teacher, as reported by the participants.

The sample used for this study was an opt-in sample rather than a true random sample; therefore, the meaning of the results for the target population was interpreted with caution. The study was nonexperimental, cross-sectional, and correlational in design. All predictor variables were attributes and therefore could not be manipulated by a researcher. The design was correlational because the intent was to examine relationships between variables rather than to compare groups. The findings provided information regarding the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. Data were analyzed using a hierarchical linear regression (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). A hierarchical approach enabled an analysis of the relationship between leadership style and school climate when the effects of class size and years of experience of the teacher were removed.

Setting

The Baltimore City public school system is the fourth-largest school district in Maryland, with a total student enrollment in the 2019-2020 school year of 79,187 students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019-2020). Of these students, 21,074 students were enrolled in Grades 9 through 12. About 76.6% of high school students in the Baltimore City public schools were African American, 7.6% were Caucasian, and 13.5% were identified as Hispanic or Latino/a. English-language learners constituted 9.2% of the total, and 14.6% were students with disabilities. All schools in the district were in an urban area. In the 2019 school year district profile, total student enrollment in 2017 was reported to be 82,354; in 2018, 80,592; and in 2019, 79,297.

There were 25 public high schools in the Baltimore City school district, with 21,074 students and 1,006.5 full-time equivalent teachers.

Of the five traditional Title 1 high schools examined, 75% or more of the students were eligible for FARMs. There were 260 full-time equivalent teachers and 4,573 students. Of these five schools, populations were 1,196 students, 1,049 students, 881 students, 850 students, and 597 students, respectively, representing 4,573 students. These numbers represented all students in Baltimore city schools with at least 75% of students eligible for FARMs in the district.

Population

The target population for the current study included full-time high school teachers employed in large high schools the Baltimore City public school system. There were five high schools with student bodies in which 75% or more of the students were eligible for FARMs. The five largest schools were selected for the study, with 73.0, 72.0, 37.0, 45.0, and 33.0 full-time equivalent teachers respectively, for a total of 260 full-time equivalent teachers. These numbers represented all full-time equivalent teachers in FARMs-eligible schools in the district.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The sample for this study consisted of 86 full-time secondary-school teachers employed in the Baltimore City public school system. All participants must have had a direct reporting function to their high school principal and must have maintained a working relationship with the current school principal for at least 1 year. All participants

had Internet access. Participants were selected by a nonrandom opt-in sampling process to maximize the number of individuals who completed the survey.

To determine response rates for each school, the number of participating teachers was divided by the total number of teachers in the school. The choice of a minimum sample size for the study was determined from a convergence of two sources. First, a power analysis (Faul et al., 2009), assuming a multiple linear regression with three predictor variables, a medium effect size of .15, and 80% power, produced an estimate of 81 participants. Effect sizes reported in research on academic leadership styles vary widely, from .01 to .309 (Allen et al., 2015; Tajasom & Ahmad, 2011), if they are reported at all. A medium effect size is recommended for regression analyses unless there is a compelling reason to use a small or a large effect size (Cohen, 1992; Green, 1991). No such compelling reason existed for the current analysis. Additionally, the optimal sample size involves using a "rule of thumb" of 20 subjects per predictor variable to conduct a multiple regression analysis (see Green, 1991; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013; see also Austin & Steyerberg, 2015). As there were three predictor variables in the current study, the minimal sample size according to this method was 60. In the current study, the larger number of 81 was used as the proposed minimum sample size. The achieved number of participants was 86, exceeding the required minimum.

Data Collection Procedures

Before data collection began, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Walden University College of Behavioral Sciences granted permission to conduct the study (approval no. 10-24-18-0062518). Permission was then obtained through the Office of

Student Assessment and Accountability of the Baltimore City School District to contact the principals. Next, the principals of the selected schools received an e-mail explaining the type of research and nature of the study conducted in their school. After the principals agreed to have the study conducted in their schools, the school secretary was contacted via e-mail to send a prenotification invitation letter on my behalf to notify all full-time employed teachers in the school of the study. The invitation letter formally introduced me as the researcher, explained the type of study that was being conducted, and discussed the importance of staff participation. The letter explained the questions about leadership style and school climate as well as protections and confidentiality for the participants. Participants were given the opportunity to indicate their informed consent. All participants were also told that they were free to decline to participate in the survey and to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Next, survey launch letters were sent via e-mail to the secretary, which also included a statement of informed consent, to send on my behalf notifying all participants that the survey would begin. Participants were then invited to click on a link that would direct them to an anonymous survey, hosted by Mind Garden, a third-party provider of online survey software. Participants were asked to provide informed consent for participation. The informed consent statement included an explanation of the study, a presentation of participant rights, assurances of privacy and confidentiality, and assurances of protection from harm. Participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Clicking on the link was considered an indication of informed consent.

The customized questionnaire presented copies of the MLQ-5X (Bass & Avolio, 2004; see Appendix A) and the SCI-R (Gibson, 1979; see Appendix B). The survey continued with questions regarding years of experience as a teacher and average class size (see Appendix C). Both items were control variables for the study. After 1 week, follow-up e-mails and telephone calls to the secretary were completed, and the secretary forwarded reminder e-mails to the teachers on my behalf to maximize the number of teachers who responded to the survey. Additionally, the recruitment flyer was included in the school's newsletter and placed on the bulletin boards throughout the school to increase participant recruitment. The survey was open for 5 months. All information collected from participants was completely confidential and anonymous. No personal identifying information was collected or used. All data were collected into a spreadsheet and transmitted for analysis using SPSS (Version 22) statistical software.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

Two validated instruments were used for this study: the MLQ-5X (Avolio & Bass, 2004) and the SCI-R (Butler & Alberg, 1991). The MLQ-5X measured the predictor variables of principal's leadership style (transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant), and the SCI-R (Butler & Alberg, 1991) measured the criterion variable of school climate. Following is a discussion of each of these instruments.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The MLQ-5X (Avolio & Bass, 2004) was used to gather data regarding transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership. The MLQ-5X provides an in-depth summary of how participants perceive their individual leaders regarding the

exhibition of specific behaviors associated with leadership (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). The questionnaire also assesses leadership behaviors that motivate subordinates and staff members to achieve higher levels of performance (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Mind Garden provided permission and a license for the use of this questionnaire for the current study (see Appendix C).

Background. Interest in testing a new paradigm of transformational and transactional leadership began in the 1980s (Bass, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Since the first version of the MLQ was published (Avolio et al., 1995), there have been several revisions to measure the component factors and at the same time address concerns regarding the psychometric properties of the instrument (Avolio, 1999; Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass, 1998a). The MLQ-5X has been used successfully by researchers and practitioners worldwide (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The MLQ-5X is made available from Mind Garden, which hosted the survey for the current study.

Description. The MLQ-5X, the form of the MLQ used in the current study, consists of 45 items that measure leadership and effectiveness behaviors connected to organizational issues (Avolio & Bass, 2004; see Appendix A). On average, the questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to complete. Three leadership styles were evaluated: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive-avoidant leadership. Transformational leadership includes the dimensions of idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transactional leadership includes the dimensions of contingent reward and

management by exception (active). Passive-avoidant leadership includes the dimensions of management by exception (passive) and laissez-faire.

Instrument history. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted in 1999 on the MLQ to confirm its power and robustness and its readiness to be useful in any leadership investigation (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The initial model included seven leadership factors. Since 1985, several additional factors were uncovered, leading to revised versions of the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994). Several scholars (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998; House, Spangler, & Woyke, 1991) questioned the high correlations among some subscales, leading to possible mingling of the behaviors and a failure to distinguish between behavioral-based charismatic leadership and idealized influence. Transformational leadership was then changed to distinguish between idealized charismatic behaviors and attributes of transformational leadership behavior. For transactional leadership, management by exception was separated into management by exception (active) and management by exception (passive). Management by exception (passive) was categorized as a passive-avoidant behavior. Finally, from the six factors used in the MLQ-5R, nine factor scores were attained for the MLQ-5X. The modifications of the MLQ did not invalidate the relevance or the meaning of the original six-factor model, but they provided a more complete model, referred to as the full range of leadership.

Previous research. The MLQ has been used extensively in published research. An early study (Koh, Terborg, & Steers, 1991) showed a greater organizational commitment on the part of school teachers and students if the leadership style of their

principals was rated transformational. In the Philippines, schools equipped their students with better professional skills when educational leaders had high scores on the MLQ for transformational leadership (Catanyag, 1995). In Spain, Molero and Morales (1994) examined transformational leadership on the part of the center coordinators in 40 primary health care centers. The findings indicated that a perception of having a transformational leader was associated with less role conflict, improved interpersonal relations, and a greater feeling of autonomy (Molero & Morales, 1994). The MLQ-5X is the most popular version of the MLQ and has been used in several research studies (e.g., Afolabi, Obude, Okediji, & Ezeh, 2008; Eyal & Roth, 2011; Khan, Ramzan, Ahmed, & Nawaz, 2011; Madlock, 2008).

Scoring. The MLQ-5X consists of 45 items. Each statement is evaluated on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale, with possible answers ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*frequently, if not always*). Higher scores represent stronger indications of each leadership style. No variables in the instrument are reverse coded. Transformational leadership is measured by the Transformational Leadership subscale of the MLQ, which includes Items 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29 through 32, 34, and 36 of the scale. Transactional leadership is measured by the Transactional Leadership subscale of the MLQ, which includes Items 1, 4, 11, 16, 22, 24, 27, and 35 of the scale. Passive-avoidant leadership is measured by the Passive-Avoidant Leadership subscale of the MLQ, which includes Items 3, 5, 7, 12, 17, 20, 28, and 33 of the scale. For all subscales, the mean score was used in the current study.

Reliability and validity. A confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the robustness of the MLQ-5X for use in the investigation of leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). In a study (Avolio & Bass, 2004) in which a sample of 2,279 males and 1,089 females rated leaders of their own gender, the nine-factor leadership model of the MLQ was supported. In another study (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003), involving 6,525 raters and 18 independent samples, the leadership questionnaire was found to be stable. A study involving the use of the MLQ (Avolio et al., 1999) was conducted with 3,786 respondents in 14 independent samples drawn from firms and agencies. The sample sizes ranged from 4 to 549. Initially, six factors were identified, but after several factor analyses were completed, nine factors were found to exhibit the best convergent and discriminant validities (Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994; Howell & Avolio, 1993). The reliability coefficients for the final version ranged from .74 to .94, exceeding standard cutoff points for internal consistency. The reliability of the individual MLQ subscales ranged from moderate to respectable (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

School Climate Inventory

The SCI-R (Butler & Alberg, 1991; Center for Research in Educational Policy [CREP], 2002; Gibson, 1979; see Appendix B) was used in this study to measure school climate. Created in 1989 at the University of Memphis, the SCI-R grew from the Tennessee SCI (Butler & Alberg, 1991). The SCI-R was designed to help educational leaders to assess the perception of the school climate and improve the school environment. Permission was granted to use the survey (see Appendix B).

Description. The SCI-R (Butler & Alberg, 1991) is a 49-item survey that measures seven constructs: (a) leadership, (b) order, (c) involvement with the parents and the community, (d) instruction, (e) expectation, (f) collaboration, and (g) environment (Butler & Alberg, 1991). The instrument takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Previous research. Several studies have been published involving the use of the SCI-R. Ross and Nunnery (2005) examined the effects of a school renaissance on student achievement in two Mississippi school districts. The goal was to compare student achievement in the implementation of a school renaissance. Students attending 14 schools in Pascagoula were matched with an equal number of students attending nine schools in Biloxi. The school climate was measured on the commitment to improve student achievement data and on the overall level of commitment to the staff members and students. The results were compared by means of a one-way MANOVA. Higher scores were found among schools in which the school renaissance was implemented.

In a nonexperimental, ex post facto study of secondary school principals (Rhoden, 2012), the relationship between leadership behaviors, school climate, and student achievement was examined. Principals were found to be the key to successful school reform and student achievement. Educational leaders from Florida school districts completed three surveys: The Leadership Practices Inventory, the SCI-R, and a demographic questionnaire. Student achievement was measured using mathematics and reading score assessments derived from the Florida Comprehensive Tests. Seven constructs were examined: (a) leadership, (b) order, (c) involvement with the parents and the community, (d) instruction, (e) expectation, (f) collaboration, and (g) environment

(Butler & Alberg, 1991). An ANOVA was used to examine between-group differences on leadership behavior, school climate, and student achievement. Results indicated partial positive correlations between leadership, school climate, and student achievement (Rhoden, 2012).

Scoring. The SCI-R (see Appendix B) is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with values ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Leadership is measured with Items 8, 20, 34, 36, 42, 45, and 47. Order is measured with Items 13, 23, 25, 30, 39, 44, and 46. Involvement with the parents and the community is measured with Items 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 32, and 37. Instruction is measured with Items 4, 15, 24, 33, 35, 41, and 48. Expectation is measured with Items 2, 3, 17, 21, 22, 27, and 43. Collaboration is measured with Items 1, 6, 16, 26, 28, 31, and 40. Environment is measured with Items 7, 9, 10, 14, 29, 38, and 49 (CREP, 2002). However, the composite score of the seven subscales has been validated as a single measure of school climate (Butler & Alberg, 1991). The mean composite score of the SCI-R was used as the criterion variable for all research questions in this study. Higher scores indicate a more positive school climate. No variables in the instrument are reverse coded.

Reliability and validity. The SCI-R demonstrated discriminatory power on all seven constructs, with reliability coefficients ranging from .75 to .86 (Butler & Alberg, 1991; CREP, 2002). The constructs consist of logical ordering based on the initial development of the inventory. Face validity was also demonstrated.

Demographic Questionnaire

In addition to validated instruments, individual demographic questions were presented to participants. Participants were asked about average class size and years of teaching experience. Each of these answers was used as a control variable in the regression equations. Average class size was selected from a list of whole numbers. Years of teaching experience was selected from the following list: less than 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, 16 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years, 26 to 30 years, 31 to 35 years, more than 35 years.

Data Analysis and Management

Data for this study will be analyzed using SPSS (Version 22) statistical software. Descriptive statistics were computed for demographic variables, the MLQ, and the SCI-R. Hierarchical linear regression analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which each leadership style (transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant) predicts school climate after controlling for class size and years of experience of the teacher. A multiple linear regression is the statistical method of choice to examine the extent to which predictor variables predict a single criterion variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The hierarchical form of multiple regression was used to examine the extent to which each leadership style predicts school climate independently, before adding the control variables. Entering the control variables then demonstrated the extent to which the control variables affected the results of the overall model.

The assumptions of a multiple linear regression were then examined. Linearity was examined by visual inspection of scatterplots mapping the criterion variable against

each predictor variable. Equality of variances was examined by visual inspection of scatterplots of the residuals. Normal distribution was examined by visual inspection of P-P plots, which mapped the residuals of the criterion variable against the residuals of the predictor variables. Normal distribution was also verified by means of a histogram. Multicollinearity was examined by means of the variance inflation factors (VIFs). VIFs below 10 ruled out multicollinearity for the variables in the regression analysis.

All data were stored on my computer in password-protected files and backed onto flash drives for safekeeping. Print materials generated during data analysis, including statistical computations, will be shredded and destroyed after the publication of the results. Electronic files will be stored for 5 years from the year of the publication of the study, as required by Walden University, and then destroyed.

Threats to Validity

Threats to internal validity of a hierarchical linear regression include biases related to omitted variables, such as demographic data. Issues such as history, maturation, and experimental mortality apply to studies in which data are collected at more than one point in time and were therefore not threats to validity in this study. Threats to external validity included a nonrandom sample selection, which may compromise the generalizability of the study. It is possible that the final sample was not representative of the population. Construct validity was verified by means of using previously validated instruments. The validity of the statistical conclusions was based on the assumptions of a multiple linear regression: linearity, equality of variances, normal distribution, and the lack of substantial multicollinearity.

Ethical Procedures

Before data collection begins, the IRB of the Walden University College of Behavioral Sciences received a description of the study methods and procedures and granted permission to conduct the study. Participants indicated their informed consent for the study by clicking on the link they received from the school secretaries. The informed consent form clarified to potential participants that their rights were protected, including anonymity, confidentiality, and protection from harm (Creswell, 2009). Participants were told how the study would be conducted, and the value of the study in advancing educational research was explained. The informed consent form explained to participants that they had an option to decline to participate or to withdraw at any time from the survey without experiencing any harmful consequences. All answers were strictly confidential and anonymous. No personal identifying information was collected from the participants. Respondents who declined to participate were rerouted to the thank-you page.

The role of the researcher. As the researcher, I was responsible for collecting all data for this study. I was also fully responsible for ensuring that participant confidentiality was maintained and that the data remain locked and stored for 5 years after publication. I was responsible for ensuring that no personal identifying information for any participant appeared on any medium. After 5 years from the publication of this study, I will be responsible to take appropriate measures to erase all electronic data.

Summary

The purpose of this multivariate correlational study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership qualities of school principals and school climate as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district. Class size and the years of experience of the teacher were measured as control variables. A minimum of 81 high school teachers were selected from the five largest public high schools in Baltimore City in which at least 75% of the students are of low socioeconomic status, defined as FARMs eligibility. All full-time teacher participants taught in Baltimore City public high schools for at least 1 year. Participants completed an online questionnaire including Likert-type subscales of the MLQ-5X (Bass & Avolio, 2004; see Appendix A) to assess three types of perceived leadership styles of the school principal: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive-avoidant leadership. Each of these leadership styles was measured in a separate research question by means of a distinct subscale of the MLQ. The predictors measured as control variables included average class size and years of experience of the teacher. School climate, as measured by the SCI-R (CREP, 2002; Gibson, 1979; see Appendix B), was the criterion variable. Average class size and years of experience of the teacher were self-reported by the participants.

Data collection was hosted by Mind Garden, Inc. The data host transmitted all data in SPSS spreadsheets. Descriptive statistics were computed for demographic information, the MLQ, and the SCI-R. A hierarchical linear regression was then conducted to determine the extent to which each leadership style (transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant) predicted school climate after controlling for class

size and the years of experience of the teacher. Each leadership style was evaluated in a distinct research question.

Participants were informed of their rights as research subjects. These rights included privacy, anonymity, protection from harm, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Participants were also free to decline to answer any question they chose. Participants indicated their informed consent after they had been fully informed of these protections and of the purpose of the study. All data were stored and filed in a locked cabinet, accessible only by me. These files will be stored in a locked office for 5 years from the year of the publication of the study. The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4 and discussed further in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this multivariate correlational study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership qualities of school principals and school climate as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district. In this chapter, the data collection findings are presented. Descriptive data are provided regarding the demographics of participants and the variables of interest. In addition, Cronbach alpha test of reliability was utilized to assess the internal consistency of the scales. Hierarchical linear regressions were utilized to assess the research questions related to the extent that perceived transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership style of the principal predicts school climate.

Data Collection

Before data collection began, the Walden's IRB granted permission to conduct the study. Permission was then obtained through the Office of Student Assessment and Accountability of the Baltimore City School District to contact the principals. Data collection began with the principals of the selected schools received an e-mail explaining the type of research and nature of the study conducted in their school. After the principals agreed to have the study conducted in their schools, the school secretary was contacted via e-mail with a prenotification invitation letter that was addressed to all 260 teacher participants to send on my behalf. The letter explained the questions about leadership style and school climate as well as protections and confidentiality for participants. Next,

survey launch letters, which included informed consent, were sent via e-mail to the secretaries to notify all participants on my behalf that the survey would begin.

The survey was sent the first week when school opened. Participants were then invited to click on a link that directed then to an anonymous survey, hosted by Mind Garden, a third-party provider of online survey software. Participants were asked to provide informed consent for participation. The informed consent statement included an explanation of the study, a presentation of participant rights, assurances of privacy and confidentiality, and assurances of protection from harm. Participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Clicking on the link was considered an indication of informed consent. The customized questionnaire presented copies of the MLQ-5X (Bass & Avolio, 2004; see Appendix A) and the SCI-R (Gibson, 1979; see Appendix B). The survey continued with questions regarding years of experience as a teacher and average class size (see Appendix C). Both items were control variables for the study.

After 1 week, follow-up e-mails and telephone calls to the secretary were completed, and the secretary forwarded reminder e-mails to the teachers on my behalf to maximize the number of teachers who responded to the survey. The recruitment flyer was also included in the school's newsletter and placed on the bulletin boards throughout the school to increase participant recruitment. The survey was open for 5 months and the survey was available to the teachers for 17 weeks. A total of 86 full-time employed teachers completed the surveys. All information collected from participants was completely confidential and anonymous. No personal identifying information was

collected or used. All data were collected into a spreadsheet and transmitted for analysis using SPSS (Version 22) statistical software.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Frequencies and percentages were used to examine the trends of the nominal-level variables. Most teachers (n = 42, 48.8%) had an average class size of 21-30 students. Experience of teachers ranged from less than 1 year up to more than 35 years. Most teachers had between 1 and 20 years of teaching experience. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the nominal-level variables.

Table 1

Frequency Table for Nominal Variables

Variable	*n*	*%*
Average class size		
0-10	9	10.5
11-20	14	16.3
21-30	42	48.8
31-40	19	22.1
41-50	2	2.3
Years of teaching experience		
Less than 1 year	7	8.1
1-5 years	18	20.9
6-10 years	12	14.0
11-15 years	16	18.6
16-20 years	19	22.1
21-25 years	7	8.1
26-30 years	2	2.3
31-35 years	2	2.3
More than 35 years	3	3.5
School name		
School 1	29	33.7
School 2	26	30.2
School 3	24	27.9
School 4	1	1.2
School 5	6	7.0

The MLQ-5X (Avolio & Bass, 2004) was utilized to operationalize transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive-avoidant leadership. The SCI-R (Butler & Alberg, 1991) was utilized to operationalize school climate. All four variables were continuous measurements and were calculated through an average of a series of Likert-scaled items comprising the scales. Transformational leadership scores ranged from 0.50 to 4.00, with $M = 2.98$ and $SD = 0.85$. Transactional leadership scores ranged from 0.63 to 4.00, with $M = 2.46$ and $SD = 0.69$. Passive-avoidant scores ranged from 0.00 to 3.25, with $M = 0.86$ and $SD = 0.77$. School climate scores ranged from 0.00 to 3.25, with $M = 0.86$ and $SD = 0.77$. Through use of standardized values, the presence of outliers was checked (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). None of the leadership or school climate scores had *z*-scores exceeding $\pm$ 3.29 standard deviations from the mean; thus, there were no outliers in the data.

Cronbach's alpha test of internal consistency was calculated and interpreted for the subscales. The strength of the alpha values was evaluated and interpreted through guidelines identified by George and Mallery (2016), in which $\alpha \geq .9$ Excellent, $\alpha \geq .8$ Good, $\alpha \geq .7$ Acceptable, $\alpha \geq .6$ Questionable, $\alpha \geq .5$ Poor, $\alpha < .5$ Unacceptable. All four scales met the acceptable threshold for internal consistency. Table 2 presents the findings of the descriptive statistics for the four scales.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Scales

Variable	*n*	Min	Max	M	*SD*	Number of items	*α*
Transformational leadership	86	0.50	4.00	2.98	0.85	20	.96
Transactional leadership	86	0.63	4.00	2.46	0.69	8	.70
Passive-avoidant leadership	86	0.00	3.25	0.86	0.77	8	.82
School climate	86	2.00	4.84	3.52	0.70	49	.97

A series of Pearson correlations were conducted to examine the two-way association between the variables of interest. There was a significant association between years of teaching and school climate ($r = .24$, $p = .026$). There was a significant association between transformational leadership on transactional leadership ($r = .74$, $p < .001$), passive-avoidant leadership ($r = -.53$, $p < .001$), and school climate ($r = .54$, $p < .001$). There was a significant association between transactional leadership on passive-avoidant leadership ($r = -.38$, $p < .001$) and school climate ($r = .34$, $p = .001$). Finally, there was a significant association between passive-avoidant leadership and school climate ($r = -.47$, $p < .001$). All the associations with passive-avoidant were inverse relationships. Table 3 presents the findings of the Pearson correlation matrix.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix

Variable	Average class size	Years of teaching experience	Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership	Passive-avoidant leadership	School climate
Average class size	1.00					
Years of teaching experience	-.02	1.00				
Transformational leadership	-.06	.04	1.00			
Transactional leadership	-.03	-.02	.74**	1.00		
Passive-avoidant leadership	-.01	-.07	-.53**	-.38**	1.00	
School climate	-.08	.24*	.54**	.34**	-.47**	1.00

Note. *Denotes correlation is significant at .05 level. **Denotes correlation is significant at .01 level.

Detailed Analysis

Research Question 1. To address Research Question 1, a hierarchical linear regression was used to examine whether transformational leadership style of principals predicts school climate, while controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher. A hierarchical linear regression is appropriate when assessing for the predictive relationship between a predictor on a continuous criterion variable while controlling for additional variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In the first step of the hierarchical regression model, average class size and years of experience were entered into the model. In the second step of the regression model, transformational leadership was entered into the model. The continuous criterion variable corresponded to school climate.

Prior to analysis, the assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were tested. Linearity was tested with a scatterplot between transformational leadership and school climate. The scatterplot indicated a positive trend between the two variables (see Figure 1). Normality was visually examined through a P-P scatterplot and a residuals histogram. The P-P scatterplot closely followed the normality trend line, indicating that the assumption of normality was met (see Figure 2). The residuals histogram closely followed a bell-shaped distribution, providing further evidence for normality (see Figure 3). A residuals scatterplot was utilized to assess the assumption of homoscedasticity, and the assumption was met due to a non-recurring pattern in the data (see Figure 4). Absence of multicollinearity was tested through VIFs. The assumption was met due to all the VIFs being lower than 10.0 (see Table 3).

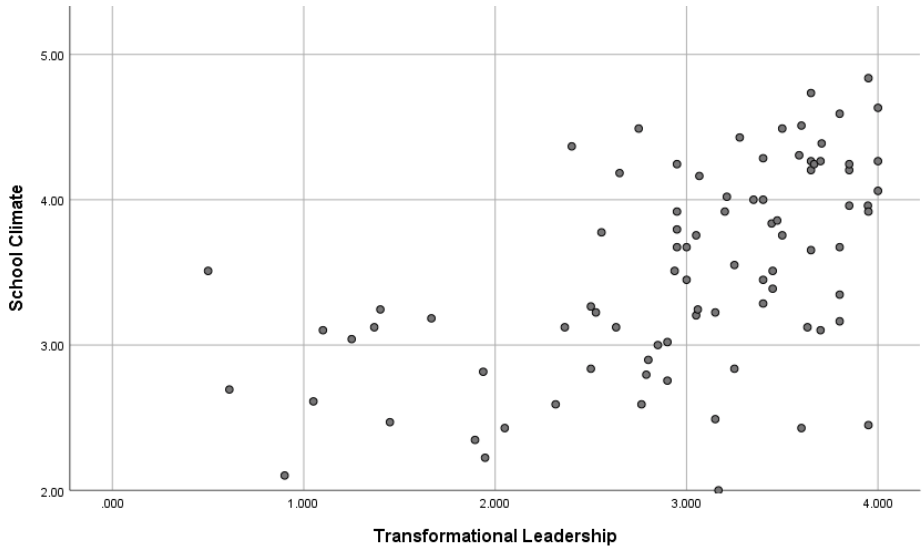

Figure 1. Scatterplot between transformational leadership and school climate.

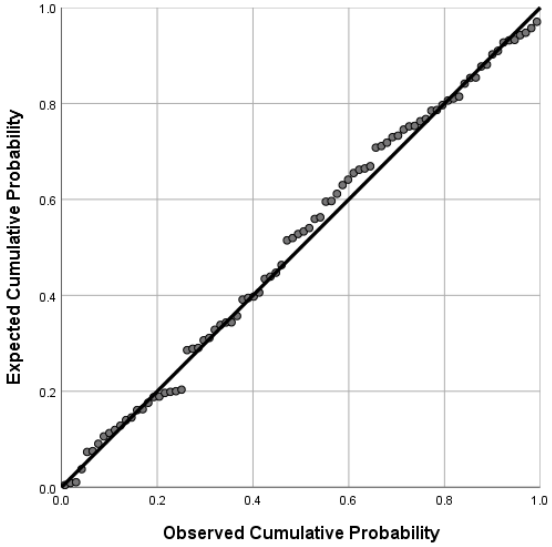

Figure 2. Normal P-P plot with average class size, years of teaching experience, and transformational leadership predicting school climate.

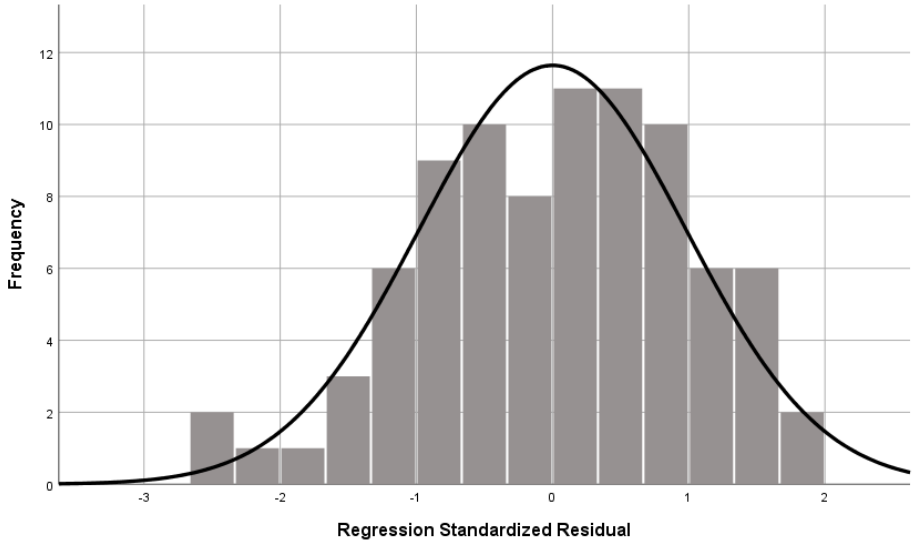

Figure 3. Residuals histogram with average class size, years of teaching experience, and transformational leadership predicting school climate.

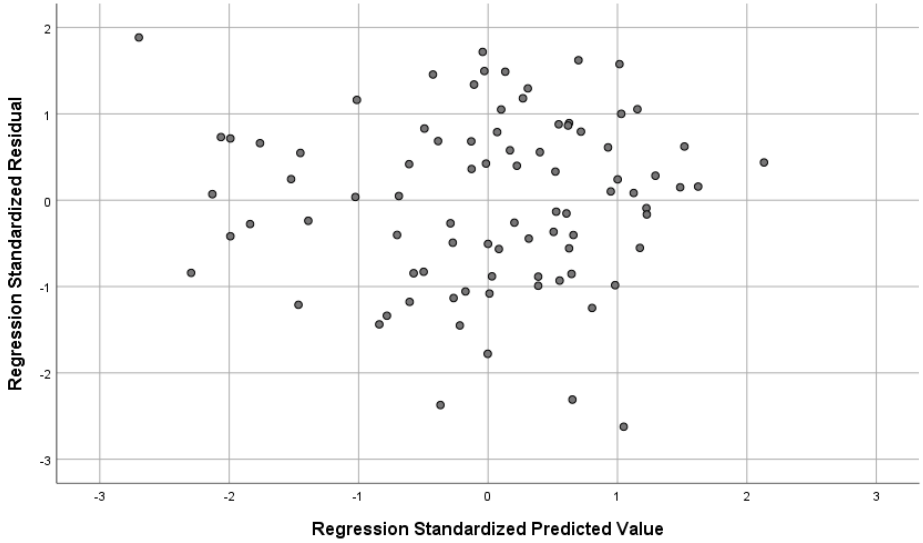

Figure 4. Residuals scatterplot with average class size, years of teaching experience, and transformational leadership predicting school climate.

The results of the first step of the hierarchical regression were not statistically significant, $F(2, 83) = 2.82$, $p = .065$, $R^2 = 0.06$, indicating that there was not a collectively significant relationship between average class size, years of teaching experience, and school climate. The results of the second step of the hierarchical regression were statistically significant, $F(3, 82) = 13.99$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.34$, suggesting that transformational leadership significantly improved the model's predictive ability on school climate. The coefficient of determination improved by 28%, suggesting that the addition of transformational leadership contributed an additional 28% of variance beyond what could be explained by average class size and years of teaching experience. Transformational leadership ($B = 0.43$, $t = 5.84$, $p < .001$) was a significant predictor in the model, indicating with every one-unit increase in transformational leadership scores, class climate also increased by approximately 0.43 units. The null hypothesis for research question one ($H_0 1$) was rejected. Table 4 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 4

Hierarchical Linear Regression with Transformational Leadership Predicting School Climate While Controlling for Average Class Size and Years of Teaching Experience

Variable	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*	*p*	VIF
STEP 1:						
Average class size	-0.06	0.08	-.08	-0.72	.472	1.00
Years of teaching experience	0.09	0.04	.24	2.24	.028	1.00
STEP 2:						
Average class size	-0.04	0.07	-.05	-0.53	.599	1.00
Years of teaching experience	0.08	0.03	.22	2.40	.019	1.00
Transformational leadership	0.43	0.07	.53	5.84	<.001	1.01

Note. Step 1: $F(2, 83) = 2.82$, $p = .065$, $R^2 = 0.06$
Step 2: $F(3, 82) = 13.99$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.34$

Research Question 2. To address research question two, a hierarchical linear regression was used to examine whether transactional leadership style of principals predicts school climate, while controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher. In the first step of the hierarchical regression model, average class size and years of experience were entered into the model. In the second step of the regression model, transactional leadership was entered into the model. The continuous criterion variable corresponded to school climate.

Prior to analysis, the assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were tested. Linearity was tested with a scatterplot between transactional leadership and school climate. The scatterplot indicated a positive trend between the two variables (see Figure 5). Normality was visually examined through a P-P scatterplot and a residuals histogram. The P-P scatterplot closely followed the normality

trend line, indicating that the assumption of normality was met (see Figure 6). The residuals histogram closely followed a bell-shaped distribution, providing further evidence for normality (see Figure 7). A residuals scatterplot was utilized to assess the assumption of homoscedasticity, and the assumption was met due to a non-recurring pattern in the data (see Figure 8). Absence of multicollinearity was tested through VIFs. The assumption was met due to all the VIFs being lower than 10.0 (see Table 3).

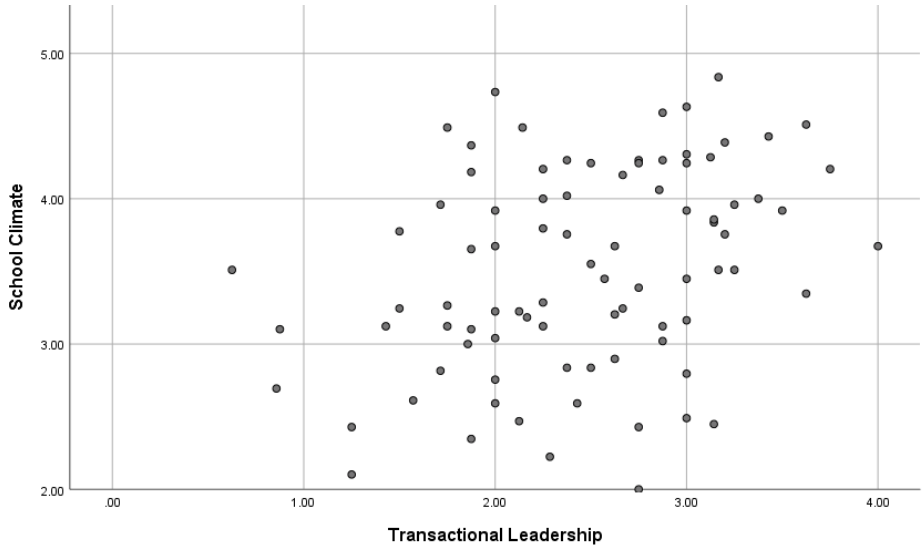

Figure 5. Scatterplot between transactional leadership and school climate.

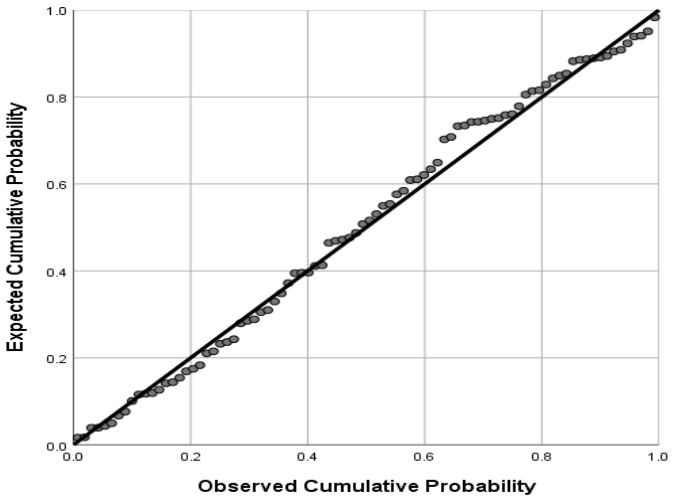

Figure 6. Normal P-P plot with average class size, years of teaching experience, and transactional leadership predicting school climate.

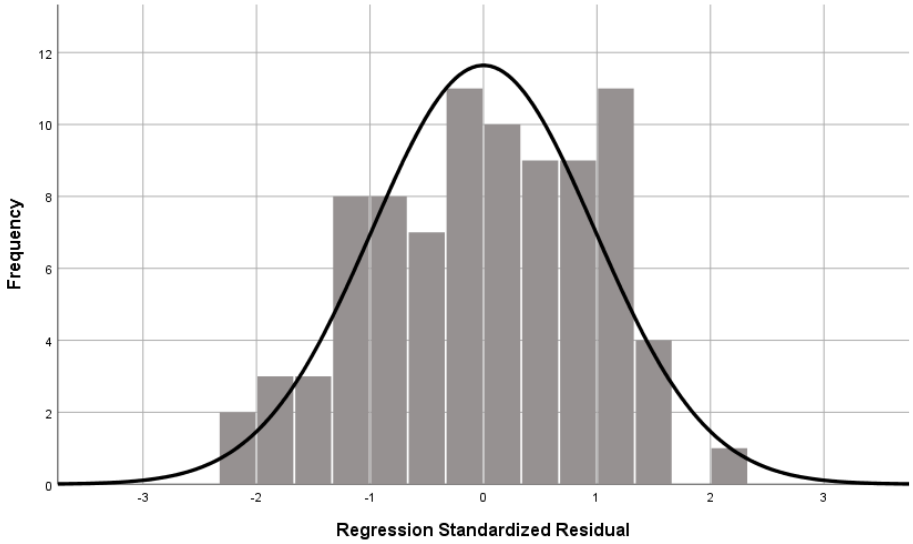

Figure 7. Residuals histogram with average class size, years of teaching experience, and transactional leadership predicting school climate.

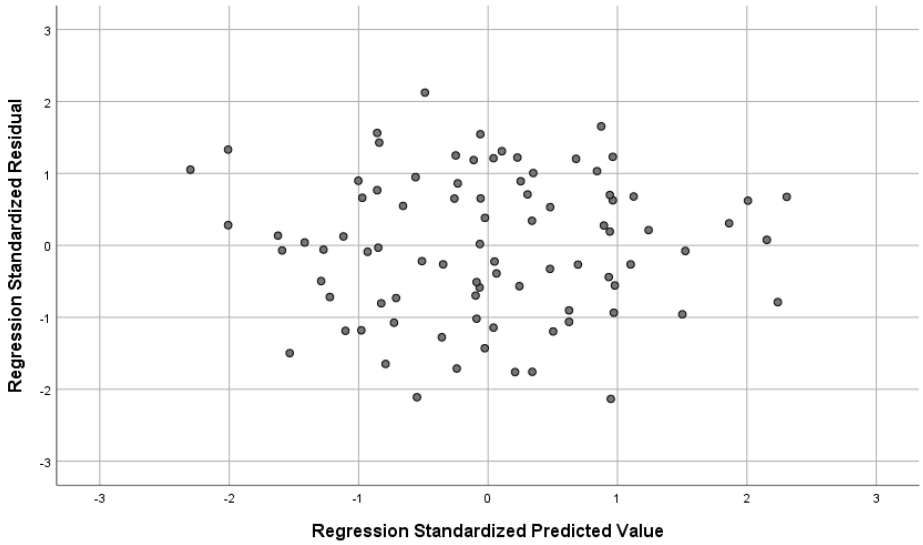

Figure 8. Residuals scatterplot with average class size, years of teaching experience, and transactional leadership predicting school climate.

The results of the first step of the hierarchical regression were not statistically significant, $F(2, 83) = 2.82$, $p = .065$, $R^2 = 0.06$, indicating that there was not a collectively significant relationship between average class size, years of teaching

experience, and school climate. The results of the second step of the hierarchical regression were statistically significant, F (3, 82) = 6.04, p = .001, R^2 = 0.18, suggesting that transactional leadership significantly improved the model's predictive ability on school climate. The coefficient of determination improved by 12%, suggesting that the addition of transactional leadership contributed an additional 12% of variance beyond what could be explained by average class size and years of teaching experience. Transactional leadership (B = 0.35, t = 3.43, p = .001) was a significant predictor in the model, indicating with every one-unit increase in transactional leadership scores, class climate also increased by approximately 0.35 units. The null hypothesis for research question two ($H2_0$) was rejected. Table 5 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 5

Hierarchical Linear Regression with Transactional Leadership Predicting School Climate While Controlling for Average Class Size and Years of Teaching Experience

Variable	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*	*p*	VIF
STEP 1:						
Average class size	-0.06	0.08	-.08	-0.72	.472	1.00
Years of teaching experience	0.09	0.04	.24	2.24	.028	1.00
STEP 2:						
Average class size	-0.05	0.07	-.07	-0.68	.498	1.00
Years of teaching experience	0.09	0.04	.25	2.47	.016	1.00
Transactional leadership	0.35	0.10	.34	3.43	.001	1.00

Note. Step 1: F (2, 83) = 2.82, p = .065, R^2 = 0.06
Step 2: F (3, 82) = 6.04, p = .001, R^2 = 0.18

Research Question 3. To address research question three, a hierarchical linear regression was used to examine whether passive-avoidant leadership style of principals

predicts school climate, while controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher. In the first step of the hierarchical regression model, average class size and years of experience were entered into the model. In the second step of the regression model, passive-avoidant leadership was entered into the model. The continuous criterion variable corresponded to school climate.

Prior to analysis, the assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were tested. Linearity was tested with a scatterplot between passive-avoidant leadership and school climate. The scatterplot indicated an inverse trend between the two variables (see Figure 9). Normality was visually examined through a P-P scatterplot and a residuals histogram. The P-P scatterplot closely followed the normality trend line, indicating that the assumption of normality was met (see Figure 10). The residuals histogram closely followed a bell-shaped distribution, providing further evidence for normality (see Figure 11). A residuals scatterplot was utilized to assess the assumption of homoscedasticity, and the assumption was met due to a non-recurring pattern in the data (see Figure 12). Absence of multicollinearity was tested through VIFs. The assumption was met due to all the VIFs being lower than 10.0 (see Table 3).

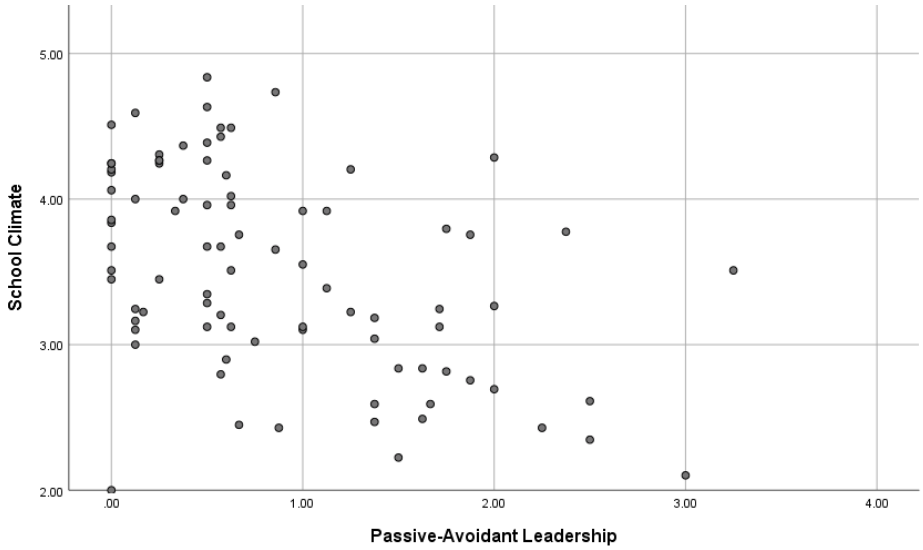

Figure 9. Scatterplot between passive-avoidant leadership and school climate.

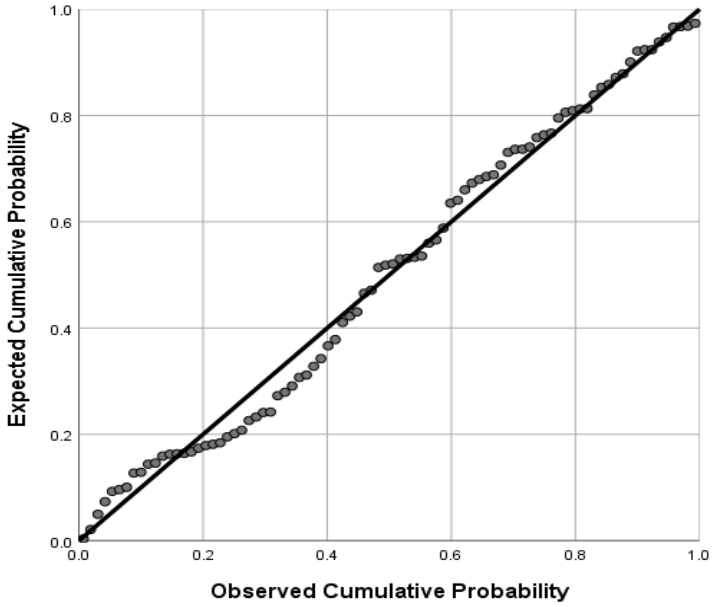

Figure 10. Normal P-P plot with average class size, years of teaching experience, and passive-avoidant leadership predicting school climate.

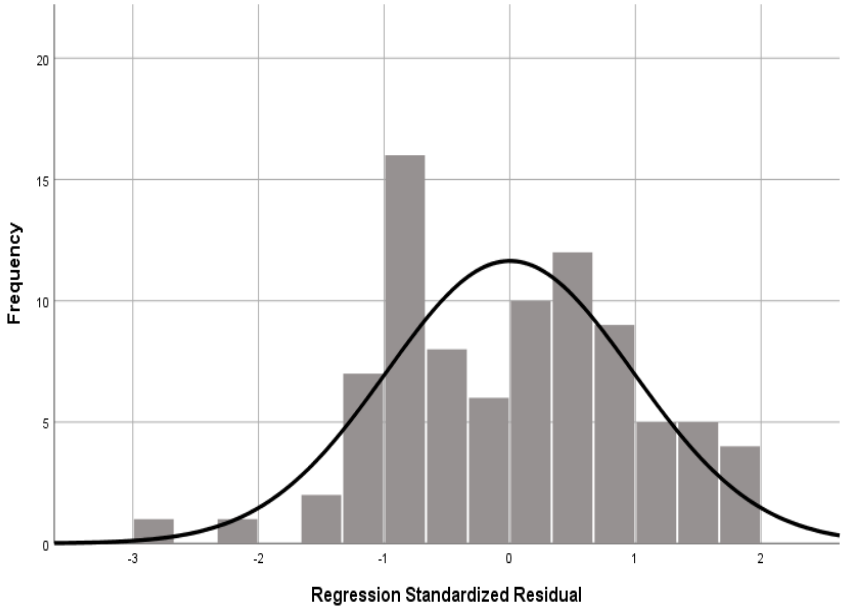

Figure 11. Residuals histogram with average class size, years of teaching experience, and passive-avoidant leadership predicting school climate.

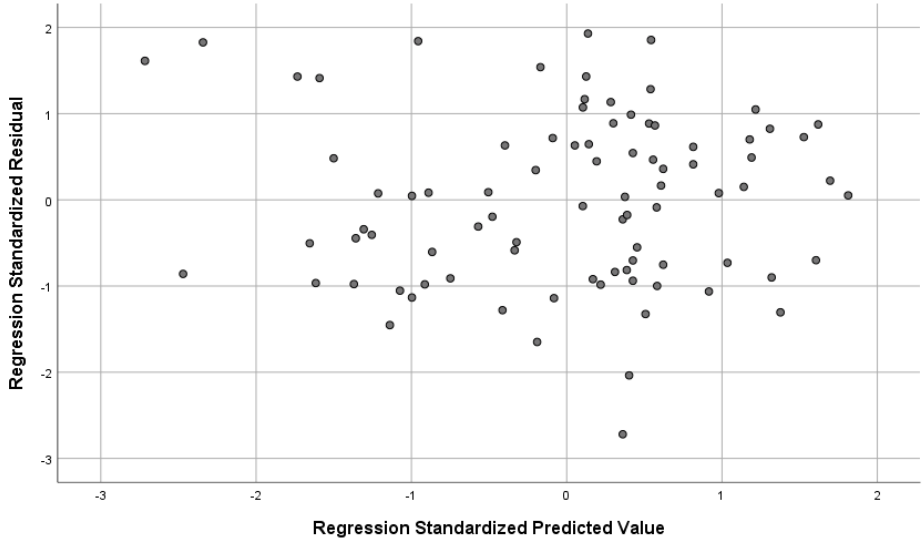

Figure 12. Residuals scatterplot with average class size, years of teaching experience, and passive-avoidant leadership predicting school climate.

The results of the first step of the hierarchical regression were not statistically significant, $F(2, 83) = 2.82$, $p = .065$, $R^2 = 0.06$, indicating that there was not a collectively significant relationship between average class size, years of teaching

experience, and school climate. The results of the second step of the hierarchical regression were statistically significant, $F(3, 82) = 10.12$, $p = .001$, $R^2 = 0.27$, suggesting that passive-avoidant leadership significantly improved the model's predictive ability on school climate. The coefficient of determination improved by 21%, suggesting that the addition of passive-avoidant leadership contributed an additional 21% of variance beyond what could be explained by average class size and years of teaching experience. Passive-avoidant leadership ($B = -0.41$, $t = -4.82$, $p < .001$) was a significant predictor in the model, indicating with every one-unit increase in passive-avoidant leadership scores, class climate decreased by approximately 0.41 units. The null hypothesis for research question three ($H3_0$) was rejected. Table 6 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 6

Hierarchical Linear Regression with Passive-Avoidant Leadership Predicting School Climate While Controlling for Average Class Size and Years of Teaching Experience

Variable	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*	*p*	VIF
STEP 1:						
Average class size	-0.06	0.08	-.08	-0.72	.472	1.00
Years of teaching experience	0.09	0.04	.24	2.24	.028	1.00
STEP 2:						
Average class size	-0.06	0.07	-.08	-0.88	.383	1.00
Years of teaching experience	0.08	0.03	.21	2.21	.030	1.01
Passive-avoidant leadership	-0.41	0.09	-.46	-4.82	<.001	1.00

Note. Step 1: $F(2, 83) = 2.82$, $p = .065$, $R^2 = 0.06$
Step 2: $F(3, 82) = 10.12$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.27$

Summary

The purpose of this multivariate correlational study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership qualities of school principals and school climate as perceived by high school teachers in an urban school district. In this chapter, the data collection and data analysis findings were presented. Descriptive data were provided regarding the characteristics of the sample and the variables of interest. All four variables met the acceptable level of internal consistency. In addition, Cronbach alpha test of reliability was utilized to assess the internal consistency of the scales. Hierarchical linear regressions were utilized to assess the research questions. After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived transformational leadership style of the principal was significantly predictive of school climate. After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived transactional leadership style of the principal was significantly predictive of school climate. After controlling for average class size and years of experience of the teacher, the perceived passive-avoidant leadership style of the principal was significantly predictive of school climate. The null hypotheses for research questions one through three were rejected in favor of the alternative. In the next chapter, the findings of the data analysis will continue to be examined. Connections will be drawn to the existing literature and theoretical framework. Limitations and suggestions for future research will also be provided.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

One of the key determinants for education reform is being able to determine leadership effectiveness or how the leadership behavior is implemented (Leithwood, Sun, & Schumacker, 2019). The current study was conducted to examine how teachers perceived the leadership behavior of their school principals and its relationship to school climate. The perceptions of the teachers were self-reported from two surveys: the MLQ and the SCI-R. The MLQ measured three different types of leadership styles: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive-avoidant leadership. The SCI consisted of seven dimensions of school climate. Teachers who participated were employees in five urban public high schools. The average class size ranged from 21 to 30 students, and years of experience ranged from under 1 year to 35 years.

The results indicated that, controlling for average class size and years of teacher experience, the three different leadership styles were significantly related to school climate. Transformational leadership had the strongest, positive predictive relationship with school climate, F (3,82) = 13.99, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .34$. Transactional leadership also had a strong positive relationship with school climate, F (3,82) = 6.04, $p = .001$, $R^2 = .18$. Passive-avoidant leadership had a strong negative relationship with school climate, F (3,82) = 10.12, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .27$. These relationships may have demonstrated how beneficial or detrimental principal leadership style can be in cultivating a school climate supportive of learning.

Interpretation of the Findings

Leadership theory was the theoretical framework that guided this study. Leadership theory explains how and why specific individuals become leaders as well as the nature and consequences of different leadership styles (Bass, 2008). Leadership theory describes leaders' abilities to guide subordinates, teams, or organizations to accomplish specific objectives and organizational goals in terms of the three leadership styles examined in this study.

Previous investigations into the relationships among leadership styles were consistent with the results of the current research. For instance, Judge and Piccolo (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles and found that across 87 studies, transformational leadership styles were highly related to and went beyond transactional leadership styles, $r = .80$. There was a clear distinction from laissez-faire or passive-avoidant leadership styles, $r = -.65$. The researchers also noted the importance of studying all three styles, which were statistically as well as conceptually related (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Similarly, Sayadi (2016) found that transformational and transactional leadership were associated with the leader's effectiveness, the follower's organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the follower's effort. The findings also indicated that the presence of a charismatic leader was a stronger predictor of value commitment and satisfaction and that laissez-faire leadership was a strong but negative predictor of the intent to stay on the job.

Further, the findings of previous research as well as the current study indicated that educational leadership was related to student achievement. For instance, Wu, Shen,

Zhang, and Zheng (2020) revealed that principals' leadership had a positive and direct relationship with academic science achievement and teacher job satisfaction. Additionally, Karadag (2020) completed a meta-analysis of 151 articles, which showed that all three types of leadership predicted the quality of school climate, with the passive-avoidant style having a negative relationship with school climate.

Comparison with Literature on School Climate

The results of this study, showing that types of leadership strongly predicted school climate, were supported by previous research. According to Leithwood and Sun (2018), the principal's influence on education is mediated through the school environment. Other studies have also demonstrated that the leadership of the principals is a contributory factor in teaching, learning, and academic success. For example, Day et al. (2006) investigated how successful leaders directly and indirectly achieved and were able to sustain school improvement over time using transformational and instructional leadership strategies. However, the findings of the study also indicated that the ability to sustain effectiveness over long periods of time was not due primarily to the principal's leadership style. This result was related to the school's needs and to how the leader articulated the organizational values through a combination of strategies incorporated into the school environment (Day et al., 2016).

Similar results were found in several other studies. McCarley et al. (2016) found direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership on the organizational climate, knowledge sharing, and organizational learning, concluding that the quality of leadership and positive school climate were critical. In a sample of 399 teachers that represented

five high schools in an urban Texas school district, Damanik and Aldridge (2017) also found a significant correlation between transformational leadership and the elements of school climate. Louis et al. (2010) further suggested that the principal's success was based on setting clear direction, strategic problem solving, developing talent, and improving teaching and learning, qualities consistent with transformational leadership. Additionally, despite some debate as to the relative importance of school leadership, compared to classroom instruction, in the effect on student achievement (Gordon & Fefer, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2008), school leadership has been shown to have a positive influence on the quality of teaching, learning, and performance, with leadership on a par with instruction (Leithwood et al., 2020). The reinvigoration of the importance of leadership is consistent with the findings of the current study, as the predictive relationships were significant and directionally consistent with leadership style and school climate.

In the current study, transformational leadership style was the strongest positive predictor of the school climate. Transformational leaders are characterized as progress-oriented, staff-facilitating, and vision-driven (Tucker & Russell, 2004). Principal leadership styles have significantly influenced the performance of teachers, and research has encouraged principals to be liberal when interacting with staff members and students to enhance performance outcomes in a school setting (Emu & Nwannunu, 2018).

Additionally, recent research has suggested that transactional leaders focus on administration and execution (Bell et al., 2016; Tucker & Russell, 2004), which are necessary management skills. Transactional leadership, along with sharing knowledge,

has had a positive relationship with creativity, with knowledge sharing mediating the role between the transactional leader and the creativity within the organization (Hussain et al., 2017). This finding was consistent with the results of the current study, which showed that transactional leadership positively predicted organizational climate, although not as strongly as transformational leadership did.

Finally, passive-avoidant leaders are absent from leadership roles, appearing only when problems occur and often not specifying working relationships or work objectives (Bass et al., 2003). Research has shown that a passive-avoidant leadership style is negatively predictive of sportsmanship (Martinez et al., 2018). The current study showed that passive-avoidant leadership had a significant negative predictive relationship with school climate, supporting the theory that this leadership style does not promote the health of an organization that depends on active leadership skills.

Limitations

The study had several limitations in terms of reliability, validity, and generalizability. Measurements may have been unreliable because of the data collection procedures. As the data were based solely on the teachers' perceptions, the reliability of the data depended on the truthfulness of the participants when completing both surveys. At the time data collection was initiated, schools in the district were undergoing an investigation for failed leadership, thereby creating several contextual issues that may have influenced participant responses. Participants may have been concerned that evaluating principals and actively participating in the study may have put their job stability at risk. School principals may have been reluctant to allow their administrative

secretaries to participate actively as a team in distributing the surveys consistently because they may have believed that I was sent from the school district Human Resources department to be evaluated from the district office. Extra steps were taken to mitigate concerns and to reiterate procedures that protected the anonymity of participants. The measures themselves, as reported in Chapter 3, had robust psychometric properties.

Regarding internal validity, the design of the study did not allow for examination of cause and effect because it was not possible to know if the principal's leadership style caused the school organizational environment or if the school climate affected the principal's leadership behavior. However, previous investigations of school climate have consistently used predictive models in which school climate is the criterion variable of study (see Leithwood & Sun, 2018; McCarley et al., 2016).

Further, this study was delimited to include only full-time secondary school teachers in a large urban city public high school district with a minimum of 75% of the student body eligible for FARMs. Charter schools, separate public day schools, and alternative schools were excluded from the sample. All five schools selected were Title 1 traditional public high schools in distressed economic areas. The findings were not generalizable to other locations or types of high schools. Additionally, this study was limited by the lack of a random sampling method to select participants. The participants volunteered from a selected group of schools. Therefore, any attempt to generalize the findings beyond the selected sample must be interpreted with caution. Finally, the sampling frame only included one district in this large northeastern urban city.

Recommendations for Further Research

In the existing school climate, the environment in which the leadership styles of educational leaders develop has become far more complex and challenging (Milley & Arnot, 2016). In fact, the circumstances of the pandemic and economic decline have significant implications for researchers interested in how leaders function effectively in conditions of extreme uncertainty and risk. Although the literature points to the value of experience, the results of this study point to the value of transformational leadership style. I recommend that researchers examine how work experience and transformational leadership predict school climate. I also recommend that researchers examine high schools according to the high school management type.

Comparisons could also be made with charter schools, separate public day schools, or alternative high schools on the variables of transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership and school climate. A meta-analysis (Cosner et al., 2015) showed that principals in medium to large school districts used outdated or superficial evaluation instruments that had a limited connection to modern leadership standards. Given the findings of the current study, that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with school climate, I recommend that school districts that serve high-poverty urban public schools provide new evaluation instruments connected to current empirical research data, leadership standards, and dimensions relevant to all aspects of leadership in the education field. These instruments should demonstrate positive effects with increased performance outcomes on every level within the organization. The assessments should be conducted at midyear and at the end of the school term.

As indicated previously (Bell et al., 2016; Tucker & Russell, 2004), transactional leaders are more focused on execution and the administrative process. In certain circumstances, transactional leadership skills are important for management but should be used for clearly directional supervision, rather than relied upon. As in the current study, Hussain et al. (2017) found that transactional leadership had a positive relationship with school climate, but that the relationship of transformational leadership was stronger. The integration of transactional leadership with transformational leadership can be suggested, but this integration must be applied when educational leaders are competent, knowledgeable, and skilled. I recommend that future researchers use qualitative methods to interview principals with transformational leadership skills about their use of transactional skills in creating effective work performance.

Interview questions could involve what rewards were used to inspire followers to increase their motivation for task completion. Finally, the current research did not rate the principals' responses to their perceptions of their leadership styles. If this study were replicated, I would recommend that the researcher permit principals to rate themselves. Ratings would then be compared to the teachers' perceptions in the investigation of school climate.

Implications

Social change is about taking what is learned from research and applying it at the level where a difference can be made. Based on the findings of the current study, I recommend that school districts develop and provide comprehensive executive coaching and professional development training that focuses on leadership style dimensions for

new hires, experienced teachers, and leaders. This training would be designed to improve the overall school performance by guiding the understanding of a practical framework for effective leadership in the urban school setting. The current study, like previous investigations in the field of education, indicated that the leadership style, especially transformational leadership, is associated with improved performance outcomes Maria (2014). Educational leaders are placed in their position to improve the teaching and learning process by influencing teachers to go beyond what they could even imagine and motivate followers to execute. Educational leaders contribute significantly to teachers' willingness to want to learn and their continued commitment to increase their knowledge and skills pertaining to their practice (Leithwood et al., 2020). The findings of this study have shown the importance of incorporating transformational leadership practices in school systems in the United States and perhaps around the world. The transformational leadership model provides employees hope and the ability to achieve more than they had originally expected, thereby allowing the followers to become more committed to their practice while staying focused on the mission and vision within the organization.

To achieve these goals, leaders must understand the importance of strong, effective leadership programs that prepare people for uncertainties. A way forward is to implement executive coaching and training and development programs to enhance the transformational leadership dimensions of the full-range leadership model. This model provides followers with the possibility and hope to become great leaders. Although the results of the current study can have a profound effect on the way leaders lead, the results also show that transformational leadership can be effective when using or integrating

other forms of leadership Maria (2014). In a study of English instructors (Erdel & Takkac, 2020), the researcher examined the full-range leadership model to determine the relationship of the instructor's leadership behavior to performance outcomes, students' extra effort, and student satisfaction. The findings of the study indicated that transformational and transactional leadership were significantly correlated with all three leadership outcomes of the model (Erdel & Takkac, 2020).

A study (Ebrahimi et al., 2017) was conducted to examine the relationship of transformational and transactional leadership in education to employee creativity, together with the moderating role of learning orientation and the gender of the executive leader. The findings indicated a relationship of transformational and transactional leadership styles to the participants' creativity. The growth of an organization depends on the dynamicity of effective working teams within the organization (Bai, Lin, & Li, 2016). If an educational leader wants transformation within the school setting, the leader should be implementing methods to create social change.

My commitment to social change is to provide an executive coaching program that focuses on the full-range leadership model. The program would provide global leadership competencies that are integrative and compatible with the common core standards on leadership of the district in which the urban public school is situated.

The theoretical framework for this effort would be leadership theory, which guided the current study (Bass, 2008; Leithwood & Sun, 2018). The leadership of the principal plays a vital role in school climate, staff morale, trust in the leader, staff motivation to learn, commitment, teachers' job satisfaction, and the ability of students to

learn and perform within a school setting. Principals' leadership can transcend many different organizational factors within a school setting (Milley & Arnot, 2016; Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Nevertheless, there is a worldwide consensus that positive and effective school autonomy depends largely on effective leaders (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012, p. 14). The current study provides direction for social change in urban neighborhoods that are socially and economically at a disadvantage. It is suggested that school leaders in these neighborhoods receive specialized training for leadership via executive coaching support. The results can also be used to inform industry leaders and legislators of specific ways that will improve Title I high schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods to create positive autonomy and increase high school performance outcomes in students.

In theory, according to Bass (2004) leadership theory provides an explanation of the development and application of leadership that examines its nature and consequences. Therefore, if teachers in urban high schools perceive their principals and their industry educational leaders as being effective, subordinates will model themselves after their leaders. This model will provide a new norm that inspires, motivates, and encourages staff members to recognize the importance of taking care of the children, who are the future (Rhoden, 2012).

In terms of practice, this model provides a foundation for educational leaders who struggle with working in urban communities. The leaders will be able to improve educational reform and restructure policy, as these involve executive coaching and professional training and development in the education industry globally. At the same

time, the model will provide insight for leaders to go beyond what even they would expect.

The implications of the current study also include the principal's willingness to be innovative, the need for increased commitment, and the importance of job satisfaction. If principals create a sustainable environment, they may help to produce students who are productive and skillfully able to compete globally.

Conclusions

The relationship of leadership styles (in particular, transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles) to school climate had not been examined in urban high schools of low socioeconomic status. There has been an increase in demand for educational leaders to provide effective school leadership. According to Baptiste (2019), a high level of student achievement depends on the effectiveness of the principal's leadership.

Leadership is a skill that individuals can learn (Lingam & Lingam, 2015). Leadership involves behaviors and practices that are applicable regardless of profession or organization. It is important for urban school districts to expand by providing proper professional training and development, executive coaching for industry leaders, and coaching support for teachers and staff members. These forms of support need to focus specifically on understanding leadership dimensions that provide a more effective outcome, based on current empirical data. Although many variables are important to the success of a school, real change occurs when principals focus on creating social change (Usten, 2018).

Urban school districts in the United States have been marked by failed leadership. Great progress in achieving racial equality was made with the Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) Brown (1954). Educational leaders must have a continued commitment to positive change in the educational landscape for all racial and ethnic groups. Educational leaders have the power to choose; the ability to make decisions; and the ability to turn opposition into opportunity, to change lives, and to change perspectives. It is the duty of urban school leaders to create a system designed for every student to succeed.

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Appendix A: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Rater Form

www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below.
Sample Items:

As a leader ….

I talk optimistically about the future.
I spend time teaching and coaching.
I avoid making decisions.

The person I am rating….

Talks optimistically about the future.
Spends time teaching and coaching.
Avoids making decisions

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

Appendix B: Permission to Reproduce SCI-R3

School Climate Inventory SCI-R3

The University of Memphis
The Center for Research in Educational Policy
Permission to Use CREP''s School Climate Inventory-Revised

Jack Daniel Strahl (jstrahl) [redacted]
To: Kelly Watson
Wed, Apr 18, 2018 at 3:29 PM

Hello Kelly,

This is to confirm that you have permission to use CREP's School Climate Inventory-Revised (SCI-R) for your dissertation. As we have previously discussed, the instrument is proprietary to the Center and the University of Memphis. As such, we can offer its use free only for dissertation purposes. For all other uses, a contract and fee would be required.

Thank you,
Dan Strahl

Associate Director/The Center for Research in Educational Policy

The University of Memphis

THIS INSTRUMENT CAN NOT BE USED WITHOUT CREP PERMISSION

2435

School Climate Inventory - R3

School Name:_____ **State:** _____

DIRECTIONS
Use a No. 2 pencil.
MAKE DARK MARKS
EX
ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHANGE

Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following items as they are currently reflected in your school. If you have no basis on which to respond, leave the item blank.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Faculty and staff here share a sense of commitment to the school goals.	○	○	○	○	○
2. At this school, students are expected to resolve conflicts without fighting, insults, or threats.	○	○	○	○	○
3. The principal of this school is always clear about his/her expectations of students, faculty, and parents.	○	○	○	○	○
4. To enhance student learning, teachers at this school take full advantage of current educational technologies.	○	○	○	○	○
5. Community businesses are active in this school.	○	○	○	○	○
6. Students are encouraged to help others with problems.	○	○	○	○	○
7. Students are safe traveling to and from school whether they walk or ride the bus.	○	○	○	○	○
8. Bullying, threatening, or abusive behavior is not characteristic of the students at this school.	○	○	○	○	○
9. The instructional methods that teachers use respect the different ways that students learn.	○	○	○	○	○
10. The school building is neat, bright, clean, and comfortable.	○	○	○	○	○
11. Parents actively support school activities.	○	○	○	○	○
12. Parents are treated courteously when they contact the school.	○	○	○	○	○
13. This school's principal is fair and consistent in addressing disciplinary issues.	○	○	○	○	○
14. School employees and students show respect for each other's individual differences.	○	○	○	○	○
15. At every grade level, content and performance standards guide the learning activities that teachers choose.	○	○	○	○	○
16. Teachers are encouraged to communicate concerns, questions, and constructive ideas.	○	○	○	○	○
17. Students share the responsibility for keeping the school attractive and clean.	○	○	○	○	○
18. Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.	○	○	○	○	○
19. Parent volunteers are used wherever possible.	○	○	○	○	○
20. School administrators encourage teachers to be creative and to try new methods.	○	○	○	○	○
21. Respect for school property and the personal property of others is expected of all students.	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○
22. At each grade level, all students in this school are expected to meet or exceed content standards.	○	○	○	○	○
23. At this school, students of different social and cultural backgrounds behave positively towards one another.					
24. Teachers often provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills.	○	○	○	○	○
25. Student misbehavior in the school does not interfere with teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
26. Students participate in solving school-related problems.	○	○	○	○	○
27. Tolerance for people of diverse backgrounds is modeled and expected of all students.	○	○	○	○	○
28. Faculty and staff cooperate a great deal in trying to achieve school goals.	○	○	○	○	○
29. An atmosphere of trust exists among the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents.	○	○	○	○	○
30. Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	○	○	○	○	○
31. Teachers are active participants in decision making at this school.	○	○	○	○	○
32. Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.	○	○	○	○	○
33. At this school, teachers demonstrate a lot of enthusiasm for what they do.	○	○	○	○	○
34. The administration and faculty at this school use data to drive planning and decision making.	○	○	○	○	○
35. Teachers use the results of student assessments to evaluate and improve instruction.	○	○	○	○	○
36. At this school, troubled students are appropriately counseled and supported.	○	○	○	○	○
37. Parents are encouraged to visit their children's classrooms.	○	○	○	○	○
38. Teachers are proud of this school and its students.	○	○	○	○	○
39. This school is a safe place for teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
40. Parents and community members take part in addressing school-related problems.	○	○	○	○	○

2435

School Climate Inventory - Revised

Continued

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
41. At this school, students are expected to be drug and alcohol free.	○	○	○	○	○
42. The principal makes high quality instruction the school's first priority.	○	○	○	○	○
43. All students at this school are expected to achieve at high levels.	○	○	○	○	○
44. Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	○	○	○	○	○
45. The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.	○	○	○	○	○
46. Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	○	○	○	○	○
47. The principal is highly visible throughout the school.	○	○	○	○	○
48. To more fully engage learners, teachers use a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and media.	○	○	○	○	○
49. People in this school really care about each other.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

Please place an X in the space provided.

1. What is your average class size?

   0-10
   11-20
   21-30
   31-40
   41-50

2. How many years of teaching experience?

   Less than 1 year
   1-5 years
   6-10 years
   11-15 years
   16-20 years
   21- 25 years
   26 to 30 years
   31-35 years
   More than 35 years