A COMPARISON OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP READINESS

IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School

at the University of Missouri

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

KARYN M. J. CHRISTY

Dr. Robert Watson, Dissertation Supervisor

May 2008

…………Christy, you are my heart. The memories you have given me through this long journey are gifts no other could give. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study determined the order of leadership dimensions most utilized in elementary and middle school settings compared the most and least prevalent characteristics of distributed leadership exhibited in elementary and middle schools. The study asked the question: Are middle school settings more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings?

Data were collected utilizing the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale, a 51 item instrument to measure preparedness to distribute leadership. The data analysis was conducted from 302 educational practitioners, including 181 elementary educators and 121 middle school educators from elementary and middle schools in a Missouri public school district.

With a probability of alpha=.05, the data results of the independent samples *t*-test were analyzed. It was found the average responses for each distributed leadership readiness dimension of the elementary schools were significantly higher than the middle school average responses for each distributed leadership readiness dimension.

The results of the data analysis did not support the research hypothesis. The researcher found this school district's elementary school certified participants scored their schools significantly higher in all four dimensions of distributed leadership readiness than those participants from this district's middle schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Principals in PK-12 school settings are being asked to take on more and more responsibilities in order to effectively manage their schools and attempt to increase student achievement. The emergence of standards-based accountability has increased the demands placed upon school administrators. Their tasks include, but are not limited to, managing the school, supervising and evaluating instruction, building community-school relationships, and acting as change agents.

Principals are also required to serve as leaders for student learning. They ought to be experts in curriculum content and classroom best practices, enabling them to assist teachers in improving teaching skills. Principals are responsible for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data to reach for continuous improvement. It is essential they communicate and seek support for the school's common goal of student achievement from all the school stakeholders including, students, staff, parents, and community members. Therefore, it is necessary for principals to have the leadership skills to implement each of the afore mentioned strategies (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). Diapolo and Tschannen-Moran (2003) suggested the job is impossible for most principals as they feel torn between their responsibilities as instructional leaders and school managers (Cooley & Shen; Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress, 2003). Additionally, Pounder and Merrill (2001) noted, qualified candidates for educational administrative positions may diminish due to the perceived workload.

In addition to increased demand for meeting standards, principals are also being asked to work collaboratively in an attempt to develop leadership in others. This request is based upon research revealing school improvement takes place through collaborative learning communities (Lashway, 2003). Murphy and Datnow (2002) found successful principals met the increased demands by building *dense leadership organizations*, or distributed leadership, which is a social phenomenon "woven into the threads of the organization" (p. 7). This dense leadership was built through improvement of their own collaboration skills, encouragement of teacher leadership, provision of resources for professional development, and utilization of leadership practices to manage the school systematically. Research results from Leithwood and Reihl (2003) and Phillips (2003) buttressed this notion of collaborative communities having a vital part in school improvement.

To meet increasing demands on their time and to effectively implement change within their buildings, principals need to consider utilizing distributed leadership, where various staff members take part in decision making, planning, problem solving, professional development, implementation, and assessment (Burke, 2003; Gronn, 2002; Lashway, 2002; Spillane, 2005). Distributed leadership practices organize staff to be most productive. Additionally, research has also shown the collaboration necessary for distributed leadership is an effective learning tool when desiring to increase student achievement (Harris, 2003; Lashway, 2003; Sebring, Hallman, & Smylie, 2003). Therefore, distributed leadership is being considered as an answer to the principals' need for assistance in completing their duties and the need for increased collaboration in efforts to increase student achievement.

Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

Distributed leadership is a change in the organizational thinking that redefines leadership as the responsibility of everyone in the school. Elmore (2000) explained through the components of *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility,* leadership can be distributed. Although the majority of researchers agree distributive leadership means leadership should be distributed throughout the whole school, there are various ways this can be attained (Lashway, 2003b).

There are many venues in which the principal's responsibilities can be distributed throughout the school. Examples of distributive leadership can run the spectrum from a principal simply encouraging the faculty to take on leadership responsibilities to an entire district implementing a new decision making structure for all its schools. It may mean the assistant principal takes over some of the principal's responsibilities. It could also mean giving some decision making responsibilities to a team of teachers or assigning teacher leaders to various grade levels.

Teacher teams have been utilized for years as the main component of the middle-school paradigm (Clark & Clark, 1994). Interest in teacher teams increased as a means for school improvement when research on professional learning communities indicated change was more effective when decision making was shared by the stakeholders (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Preskill & Torres, 1999). This encouraged schools to experiment with "distributed leadership by organizing teachers into teams" that identify and solve defined or undefined problems (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007, p. 71). Studies by Bryk and Driscoll (1988); DuFour and Eaker (1998); and Scribner, Cockrell,

Cockrell, and Valentine (1999), indicated student achievement is higher in schools where teachers work in self-managing teams to develop goals, curricula, instructional strategies, budgets, and staff development programs. Self-managing teams are effective at innovation because they permit internal networking to encourage creativity.

Unlike middle schools that operate with grade-level instructional teams with scheduled common planning times to collaborate, most elementary schools have self-contained classrooms and no interdisciplinary teams. At the middle level, the interdisciplinary teaming structure provides an effective mechanism for discussion and decision making. A common planning time, flexible scheduling, common adjacent classrooms, and team autonomy encourages collaboration and growth (Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, & Petzko, 2004). Furthermore, Scribner et al. (2007) explained the use of teacher teams is an illustration of distributed leadership. Due to these differing structures and climates, there may be a difference in the readiness of the elementary and middle schools to distribute leadership.

When researching distributed leadership preparedness in elementary and middle school settings, it is important to note whether leadership is held by one administrator or if leadership activities, roles, and decision making is distributed among other staff members. Due to the differing structure of elementary and middle school programs, it is vital for administrators to be aware of various leadership techniques available for operating effective elementary and middle schools.

Statement of the Problem

Up to the present time, research on distributed leadership has mainly focused on elementary schools (Heller & Firestone, 1995; Sebring et al., 2003; Spillane, Diamond,

Walker, Halverson, & Jita, 2001). Yet, one distributed leadership qualitative study was found involving three elementary schools (Sebring et al., 2003), and the results were compared to a study done in one middle school (Burke, 2003). The results from the various schools revealed some differences in how all the schools distributed leadership and how long they were able to sustain it.

The research included a longitudinal study of Chicago elementary schools and a case study of shared and distributed leadership in Amherst Regional Middle School in Massachusetts. The purpose of the elementary school study was to identify the factors that facilitated or inhibited distributed leadership. Only one of the three schools that were found to utilize distributed leadership was able to sustain it over a period of time. The largest factor that inhibited the use of distributed leadership in the elementary schools was the principals' responses to the high stakes system testing program. The principals became increasingly concerned over the lack of progress their school was making and took back the leadership they had distributed. The one elementary school that sustained distributed leadership had a principal who responded differently to her school's lack of progress. She promoted distributed leadership by supporting her staff in their collaboration through an establishment of common preparation times for teachers at each grade level and by increasing the frequency of faculty meetings (Sebring et al., 2003).

The middle school case study revealed, after three years, the leadership was still strongly distributed "at the individual level for students and teachers, at the team level, in study groups, and at the whole school level in the leadership team [and it] created a learning organization" (Burke, 2003, p. 14). This was attributed to effective collaboration and organized structures within the school utilizing the teachers' knowledge and skills to

promote a common goal. Based upon the research, there were some differences in the way distributed leadership was utilized at the various schools, and the middle school was the only one that utilized a leadership team to distribute leadership. The results of this qualitative research revealed the one middle school studied and one out of the three elementary schools were able to sustain distributed leadership. Both schools that sustained distributed leadership revealed strong teacher teams and effective collaboration.

Another study was conducted that included a variety of settings. A quantitative study by Gordon (2005) provided data based upon the level of readiness of distributed leadership in elementary, middle, and high school settings. The data was used to examine the effect of distributed leadership on student achievement. The results of the study were based upon data collected using the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) instrument. The survey data were then analyzed utilizing the achievement results of 36 high performing and low performing schools in Connecticut. The DLRS instrument measured distributed leadership readiness in the four areas of *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility*. The results of the surveys revealed both high and low performing schools differed significantly with respect to the school culture variable pertaining to distributed leadership readiness. Yet, Gordon's study did not separate the results of elementary, middle, or high schools. Although the results were significant in the area of School Culture between high and low performing schools, the results did not differentiate between the three different grade configurations.

A third, and more recent example, was a study conducted by Scribner et al. (2007) focusing on how teacher teams in high schools support distributed leadership. This study

described how leadership emerges from teacher collaboration through work and conversations. The results of the study revealed how the interplay between structures and social processes contributes to the interactional process of distributed leadership (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Although many schools utilize teacher teams to hold leadership functions with the goal of organizational success, this research revealed the success of sharing leadership is dependent on the purpose, autonomy, and patterns of discourse within the teacher teams and the organization. These outcomes are buttressed by Spillane et al.'s (2004) explanation of distributed leadership as situationally distributed through "formal structures and activities such as teacher teams and socially distributed via interactions between organizational members" (p. 93). Although the focus was on teacher teams, this study was done only in high school settings. Therefore, the middle school concept of interdisciplinary teaming was not addressed.

It is evident from the examples identified, various distributed leadership research exists within the elementary, middle school, and high school settings, with some of it including teacher teams. Yet, no quantitative studies were found comparing readiness to distribute leadership between elementary and middle schools within the same school district.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if middle schools are more ready to distribute leadership than elementary schools. Quantitative methods will allow the researcher to collect data focusing on which setting is more conducive to sharing leadership, distribute and collect sufficient surveys concerning each setting, and analyze the data in order to come to a conclusion on the stated hypothesis. Therefore, a

quantitative study was necessary to adequately collect enough significant data to determine if middle school settings are more conducive to distribute leadership than elementary school settings.

Quantitative data was collected and analyzed based upon the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). The DLRS is a self-evaluation scale intended to provide a profile of a school's willingness to engage in shared leadership practices. The DLRS was developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to measure school's readiness to share leadership. It was based on current research on school leadership designed to improve public schools' ability to increase student academic achievement (Gordon, 2005). The DLRS focuses on four key elements of distributed leadership: *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility*. Preparedness for distributed leadership will be measured through questions asking the degree to which characteristics of the four distributed leadership dimensions are present in the school community,

Research Questions

This quantitative study asked the question: Are middle school settings more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings? Aligning with Elmore's (2000) assertions educational leadership, which involves improving instruction, focuses on four key dimensions: *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility*, this study focused on these categories when determining school readiness for distributing leadership. To compare the readiness to share leadership in both settings the following questions were considered:

1. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership distributed?

a. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be

   distributed in the elementary schools?

b. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be

   distributed in the middle schools?

c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their

   readiness to distribute the four dimensions of leadership?

2. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which each of the

leadership dimensions is ready to be distributed in the elementary setting versus

the middle school setting?

a. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the

   Leadership practices dimension is ready to be distributed in each

   setting?

b. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the

   Mission, vision, and goals dimension is ready to be distributed in each

   setting?

c. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *School

   culture* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

d. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *Shared

   responsibility* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

3. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different

   dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed?

a. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the

different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the

elementary schools?

b. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the

Different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the

middle schools?

c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their

readiness to distribute each specific characteristic (survey item) of

leadership?

Research Hypothesis

Given the need for distributed leadership and that elementary and middle school

settings are quite different, this research seeks to determine if there is a difference

between the two settings when comparing the four dimensions of leadership. Since

quantitative research aspires to utilize deductive reasoning to predict the results of the

study (Merriam, 1998), the researcher hypothesizes middle school settings will be more

conducive to distributing leadership than elementary school settings. Unlike many

elementary self-contained classrooms having one teacher instructing all subjects, middle

school operates with grade-level instructional teams delivering different core subjects

facilitated by various teachers. At the middle level, the interdisciplinary teaming structure

provides an effective mechanism for discussion and decision making. The common

planning time, flexible scheduling, common adjacent team autonomy encourage

collaboration and growth (Valentine et al., 2004). Furthermore, Scribner et al. (2007)

explained the use of teacher teams is an illustration of distributed leadership.

Limitations and Assumptions

When considering the many areas in which biases could enter into the implementation and interpretation of this study, it was necessary to consider the limitations and assumptions of the research. Since the researcher was a part of the district being studied the researcher was close to the data. Additionally, an instrument called the DLRS was utilized to collect data. Consequently, the following limitations and assumptions were considered:

Limitations

The following were limitations of this study.

1.   The researcher of this study was a principal within the district being studied. The researcher chose the literature to review that guided this study and also was a part of the population benefiting from the results of the study. Therefore, the researcher was close to the data.

2.   Although the surveys were distributed in an effort to have a similar amount of data from elementary and middle schools, the staff who chose to return completed surveys could not be determined.

Assumptions

The following were assumptions of this study.

1.   The Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) is a reliable and valid instrument to assess four key dimensions of distributed leadership: *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility*. These four leadership dimensions are the basis of the 51 survey questions.

2.   The questions on the survey encouraged the participants to reveal their

beliefs of how leadership is shared within their school setting through

the constant analysis of pre-conceived notions or *self-reflexivity*. This

self-reflexivity encouraged a focus on the awareness of their

assumptions and beliefs (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005).

3.   The elementary school settings are composed mainly of self-contained

classrooms with no interdisciplinary teaming and do not have a full-

time assistant principal.

4.   The middle school settings surveyed have an environment based upon

the middle school concept including interdisciplinary teaming and a

full-time assistant principal.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms were clarified for the purpose of this research.

Content validity. Content validity is when an expert determines the degree to

which a test measures an intended content area (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Construct validity. Construct validity reveals "the appropriateness of the intended

test interpretations and the justification of the test being used" (Gay and Airasian, 2000,

p. 168).

Distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is "multiple sources of guidance

and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent

through a common culture." (Harris, 2005, p. 165).

Distributed leadership readiness. Distributed leadership readiness is defined by

the degree to which an organization is ready to distribute leadership across the leadership

dimensions of *Leadership practices, Mission, vision, and goals; School culture;* and *Shared responsibility*.

      Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale Instrument (DLRS). The DLRS is a self-evaluation scale intended to provide a profile of a school's willingness to engage in shared leadership practices. The DLRS was developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to measure school's readiness to share leadership. It was based on current research on school leadership designed to improve public schools' ability to increase student academic achievement (Gordon, 2005). The DLRS instrument measures distributed leadership readiness in the four areas of *Mission, vision, and goal; School culture; Shared responsibility;* and *Leadership practices*. The survey is comprised of four separate sections addressing all four leadership dimension.

      Elementary school. Elementary schools in this study are public schools varying in size and in grade configurations. Elementary schools educate the primary grades beginning at kindergarten or pre-kindergarten and then continue through to various grades up to and including grade 5.

      Leadership practices. Leadership practices facilitate the distribution of leadership by enabling, supporting, coordinating, and guiding the work of the other leaders while also establishing a wholesome emotional climate.

      Middle school. Middle schools are middle level public schools educating students in grades 6-8.

      Mission, Vision, and goals. Mission establishes an organization's purpose, while vision and goals creates a sense of direction (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Interdisciplinary teaming. This teacher teaming consists of two or more teachers who share a group of students and a common schedule permitting collaboration (George & Alexander, 1993).

Middle school concept. The focus on meeting the unique developmental needs of young adolescents who are undergoing tremendous cognitive, emotional, physical, and social change describes the middle school concept (Valentine et al., 2004).

Non-Title I schools. Those schools not receiving additionally funding through the Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Reliability. Reliability is "the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 169).

School culture. School culture is based upon "the assumptions, beliefs, values, and habits that constitute the norm of the organization – norms that shape how people think, feel, and act" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 131).

Shared responsibility. Shared responsibility refers to the utilization of highly skilled and competent educators in various leadership positions within the school (Spillane et al., 1999).

Title I schools. These are schools receiving additional funding based upon the Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This program is "the largest compensatory federal education program…aimed at improving the educational opportunities of disadvantaged students" (Kirby, McCombs, Naftel, & Murray, 2003, p. 1). "The primary goal of Title I is to eradicate, or to significantly narrow, the achievement gap separating educationally and economically disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers" (Borman, 2000, p. 32).

Summary

      This study consists of five chapters. Chapter One introduced the background and conceptual underpinnings of the study. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions were also addressed. The limitations and assumptions of the study were cited and definitions of key terms were listed. Chapter Two presents a review of related literature for the study. Key concepts, research, and history connected with the study are identified. Chapter Three contains information on the research design and methodology including research questions, quantitative hypothesis, design of the study, population and sample, data collection and instrumentation, and data analysis. In Chapter Four, the data collection and analysis results are presented for each research question and hypothesis. Chapter Five provides a summary of the study, findings, and recommendations and implications for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Effective school leaders have an indirect, but powerful influence on student

achievement and the effectiveness of the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Leadership

has been shown to have a potent impact in securing school development and change

(Hopkins, 2000; West, Harris, & Hopkins, 2000). Therefore, the concept of leadership

has produced a vast amount of interest among researchers and practitioners exemplified

by the enormous quantity of literature existing on school leadership and leadership

theory.

One of the major problems with the present leadership literature is the excessive

number of leadership theories, styles and approaches presented (Harris, 2003). While the

majority of past theories on school leadership have focused upon the capabilities of one

individual, this accepted belief of a solitary leader is now being challenged as traditional

models of leadership and organizational change are being analyzed (Foster, 2001).

Hallinger and Heck (1996) supported this notion by suggesting that it is unrealistic to

think only principals provide leadership for school improvement. Therefore, instead of

viewing leadership as a role for one individual, leadership is now being re-defined as a

practice distributed among many individuals (Harris, 2003). Consequently, the concept of

distributed leadership is receiving much attention and growing empirical support (Gronn,

2002; Spillane, 2006).

Distributed leadership is an emerging theory of leadership that is less concerned

with individual capabilities, skills, and talents and more involved with creating joint

responsibility for leadership activities. The focus is less upon the characteristics of the leader and more upon creating environments for shared learning and developing leadership capabilities (Harris, 2003). Spillane & Diamond (2007) stated part of the appeal of the distributed perspective has to do with the ease with which it can be many things to many people. Frequently it is used as a synonym for democratic leadership, shared leadership, and collaborative leadership. Some use it to create effective school leadership, others use it for improving schools, and some use it as an analytical lens to study school leadership. Harris (2005) claimed some commentators expressed skepticism as to whether distributed leadership is just a new label for old familiar constructs or ideas. Because of the many uses and terms to describe distributed leadership, Harris feared it will become a generic term for any attempt to share leadership or delegate leadership to others.

Definition of Leadership

Researchers tend to define leadership according to their individual perspectives and the aspects of the phenomenon of most interest to them. After a comprehensive review of the leadership literature, Stogdill (1974) concluded "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (p. 259). Some theorists are skeptical as to whether leadership is even useful as a scientific concept because it has so many different meanings (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). Yet, Leithwood and Duke (1999) explained leadership does not have one specific definition due to the complexity of its concept. They claimed simple concepts are typically open to clear definition while more complex concepts are usually defined vaguely. As an example of comparing simple concepts to more complex, Thomas and

Pruett (1993) stated it is easier for economists to define the simpler concept of innovation than it is for psychologist to define the more complex concept of intelligence. Therefore, one single description of leadership may have many dimensions due to its complexity.

Yukl (2006) explained perception of leader effectiveness also differ among researchers based upon the researcher's definition of leadership. Leadership effectiveness is usually measured "by the consequences of the leader's actions for followers and other organization stakeholders" (p. 9). Davis (2003) agreed there are many differing views of effective leadership yet, when considering effective leadership for schools, Davis contended school leadership is distinguished by its correlation with change. Effective school leadership moves the school and its stakeholders "forward in some positive way" (p. 6).

In an attempt to understand the many definitions of leadership in organizations, Yukl (2006) categorized them in terms of traits, behaviors, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships, and occupation of administrative position. Yukl also agreed with Bass (1981) when stating although there were differences in the definitions of leadership, the majority of researchers believe leadership "involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization" (p. 3). While Leithwood and Duke (1999) agreed with the belief influence seems to be a necessary part of most leadership definitions, Yukl pointed out concepts of leadership differ concerning the processes of leadership and identification of the type of leadership. Therefore, various leadership variables, such as traits and behaviors, and various types of leadership structures, such as one leader or many leaders, are considered.

Although House (1977) and Hemphill and Coons (1957) defined leadership when referring to the behavior of one individual, Gronn (2002) described leadership as being comprised of one individual or many individuals. Spillane (2005a) buttressed Gronn's definition by viewing leadership through the distributive lens. Spillane described leadership as a system of practice by many individuals composed of three interacting components: leaders, followers, and situation. Thus, it is evident there is controversy involving the issue of whether leadership should be viewed as a specialized role or as a shared influence process. Therefore, descriptions of the past and present leadership theories are provided to explain how researchers have come to their present definition of distributed leadership.

To better understand the nature of distributed leadership, it is best to overview the history of leadership theories that have brought us up to the present time. An overview the history of leadership theoretical approaches that have brought educators up to the present time will be presented. Due to ongoing research and changing social conditions, various leadership theoretical approaches evolved beginning with the trait theories of leadership through the distributed leadership theory. Next, distributed leadership is described.

In the description of distributed leadership, the history of social influences on school leadership and how it has led to the need for distributed leadership will be explained. Additionally the four dimensions of distributed leadership will be identified and the importance of teacher teams will be explained. Last, it will be elucidated most elementary school structures differ from the structure of middle schools. The middle

school interdisciplinary teaming encourages collaboration and decision making, thus

facilitating readiness to distribute leadership.

Theoretical Approaches to Leadership

Frameworks for studying leadership mainly focus on the leader or on the role of

organizations in shaping the actions and behaviors of the leader (Spillane & Sherer,

2004). Although various authors categorize leadership theories in different ways, the

literature showed there are four types of commonly held traditional leadership theories

(Lipham, 1973; Wildavsky, 1985). These traditional theories include the self-evident

theory, traitist theory, situational theory, and behaviorist theory. While Glasman and

Glasman (1997) defined each of the theories as traditional theories of leadership, Yukl

(2006), instead, felt most empirical studies fell into distinct lines of research. Therefore,

Yukl categorized the theories into five leadership theoretical approaches: a) the trait

approach, b) the behavior approach, c) the situational approach, d) the power-influence

approach, and e) the integrative approach. Furthermore, another theoretical approach

focusing on the role of organizations in shaping the actions and behaviors of the leader is

Bolman and Deal's (2003) four organizational frameworks. The last theoretical approach

presented, distributed leadership, differs from the other theories because it focuses on the

reciprocal processes among the leaders, followers, and situation, rather than the specific

behaviors of an individual leader (Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert,

Gardner, & Szabo, 2002).

Self-Evident Theoretical Approach

Glasman and Glasman (1997) explained the self-evident theory postulates leaders

"are born and not made, and that instinct is more important than training" (p. 6). This

theory is also called the Great Man approach because leadership qualities are identified by studying well-known leaders without identifying the standards by which the leaders are selected. The self-evident theory is built upon the assumption that people are born with instinct to become leaders and therefore "leaders are born and not made" (p. 6). Although this theory is not specifically mentioned by Yukl (2006), he included "natural leaders" in his earliest process of categorizing the theories (p. 13).

Trait Theoretical Approach

The traitest theory, also included in Yukl's (2006) trait approach, was one of the earliest descriptions of leadership. Glasman and Glasman (1997) explained it identifies patterns of personality traits that distinguish leaders from followers. Yukl expounded upon their definition by explaining the trait approach includes all theories emphasizing leaders' attributes such temperament, motives, values, skills, and abilities. Providing specific examples, Yukl explained "early leadership theories attributed managerial success to extraordinary abilities such as tireless energy, penetrating intuition, uncanny foresight, and irresistible persuasive powers" (p. 13). Evidence from research has shown an individual's traits are determined by both learning and an inherited ability to attain satisfaction from certain experiences (Bouchard, Lykken, McGue, Segal, & Tellegen, 1990).

The early leadership researchers were confident the traits essential for leadership could be identified by research comparing leaders with non-leaders, or comparing those leaders who were able to assist the group in attaining its goals to those who were unable to assist the group in attaining its goals. During the 1930s and 1940s, trait studies were conducted in an attempt to validate the trait theories, yet the data failed to identify any

traits that would guarantee leadership success. Stogdill (1948) reviewed 124 trait studies

conducted from 1904 to 1948 and found the results of the studies consistently evidenced

the conception of a leader as someone who acquires status by showing the ability to help

the group in attaining its goals. Significant traits included intelligence, initiative,

understanding of the task, attentiveness to the needs of others, diligence in dealing with

problems, self-confidence, desire to accept responsibility, and aspiration to occupy a

position of dominance and control. The review failed to find evidence a person must

possess a particular set of traits to become a successful leader, which is the basic

assertion of the trait approach. "The importance of each trait depended on the situation,

and the research did not identify any traits that were necessary or sufficient to ensure

leadership success in all situations" (Yukl, 2006, p. 182).

Yukl (2006) cited further research substantiating Stogdill's (1948) findings by

claiming the reason for the lack of evidence linking leadership traits to leadership success

was due to poor research methods. The analysis of any other variables that could have

had a bearing on the leaders' ability to assist the organization in attaining its goals was

neglected. Therefore, improved design methods were implemented to slowly provide

evidence that leader attributes were related to leadership behavior and effectiveness.

Behavior Theoretical Approach

Due to the new direction in research, early in the 1950s the behavior theories

began to appear. This theoretical approach analyzes specific leadership behaviors and

how they relate to one another (Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Lipham,1973; Wildavsky,

1985; Yukl, 2006). The behaviorist theory postulates both personal and situational

aspects determine leadership, yet specific leadership behaviors do not always transfer to

new situations (Glasman & Glasman). Yukl further explained all theories identifying

what leaders actually do on the job can be categorized under the behavior approach and

behavior research has focused on two subcategories; a) identification of leadership

activities and duties and b) identification of effective leadership behaviors. Leadership

effectiveness is identified by how well the leader manages conflict and exploits

opportunities.

Research on effective leadership behavior, or types of leadership behavior most

likely to influence subordinate satisfaction and performance, was significantly influenced

by research at Ohio State University during the 1950s. Fleishan (1953) first identified

categories of leadership behavior and then developed questionnaires to measure how

often a leader used these behaviors. After compiling a list of 1800 leadership behaviors,

the researchers further reduced the list to 150 items they felt were good examples of

important leadership functions. A questionnaire composed of these 150 items was

completed by samples of military and civilian personnel to describe the behavior of their

supervisors (Yukl, 2006).

The results of a factor analysis on the completed questionnaires revealed two

broad categories of supervisor behaviors identified by their subordinates. The two

categories were labeled "consideration" and "initiating structure" and were independent

of one another. More specifically, no correlation was found between a leader's use of one

type of categorical behavior with that same leader's utilization of the other type of

categorical behavior. The leadership behaviors contained in the consideration category

were related to leader concern for people and interpersonal relationships. The leader

acted in a supportive and congenial manner while showing concern for the needs of those

in the organization. The initiating structure category contained behaviors dealing with leader concern for accomplishing specified tasks. The leaders structured their roles and the organizational member responsibilities with the intention of reaching the task goals.

Another study, conducted by Fleishman and Harris (1962) in a truck manufacturing plant of the International Harvester Company, correlated consideration and initiating structure. Workers at the plant completed questionnaires concerning their supervisors' behavior. Leadership effectiveness factors included the number of written grievances and the amount of voluntary employee turnover. Results revealed supervisors who exhibited consideration had fewer grievances and less turnover in their work units than supervisors who were not perceived as considerate. In contrast, results for initiating structure revealed supervisors who used a large amount of structuring behavior had more turnover and grievances. Yet, there was a certain point at which neither characteristic made a significant difference. "There appeared to be certain critical levels beyond which increased consideration or decreased initiating structure have no effect on turnover or grievance rate" (Fleishman & Harris, 1962, p. 53). Skinner's (1969) study of supervisors in a textile firm corroborated most of the results of Fleishman and Harris's study (Yukl, 2006).

The Ohio State leadership questionnaires and modified versions of them have been used by many different researchers in hundreds of different survey studies. The results of the research were not strong or consistent for most criteria of leadership effectiveness (Bass, 1990; Fisher & Edwards, 1988; Yukl, 2006). In some of the survey studies, subordinates were more satisfied and performed better with a structuring leader, whereas other survey studies found the opposite relationship or no significant relationship

at all. The findings were also inconsistent for the relationship between consideration and subordinate performance. The only consistent finding was a positive relationship between consideration and subordinate satisfaction. Consistent with Fleishman and Harris' study, research revealed subordinates are usually more satisfied with a leader who is at least moderately considerate.

Although between 1950 and 1980, a tremendous amount of research was done to investigate effective leadership behaviors, much of the results have not been conclusive. Yukl (2006) concluded the overall pattern of results from behavior research revealed effective leaders utilize a pattern of behavior appropriate for the situation. Additionally effective leaders show a high interest in attainting goals and a high concern for relationships.

Situational Theoretical Approach

The situational theory focuses on the social characteristics of the organizations and how they influence the type of leadership exhibited. This theory claims distinguishing characteristics of the organizational members are more important to leadership than personal traits (Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Lipham, 1973; Wildavsky, 1985). To expand upon this notion, Yukl (2006) categorized all similar theories under the situational approach. He explained one situational variable is follower characteristics, but there are more variables. These variables include the nature of the work performed, the type of the organization, and the features of the organization's peripheral surroundings. Research within this approach has been divided into two major subcategories. One type of research compares leadership processes in various types of managerial positions, organizations, and cultures. Diverging from leadership process, the second type of

research focuses on leadership effectiveness by identifying various aspects of the situation that have a bearing on the leaders' attributes. The assumption is different attributes will be effective in different situations, and the same attribute is not optimal in all situations. Theories describing aspects of leadership applying to some situations, but not others, are called contingency theories whereas, more extreme forms of situational theory identifying the conditions that can make hierarchical leadership unnecessary are called leadership substitute.

Contingency Theories

Spillane et al. (2001) stated contingency theories transpired in an attempt to address the "inattention to context and situation" in the behavioral theories (p.7). Contingency theories have a situational approach due to their focus on leadership aspects contingent upon the situation variables. Various features of a situation found to increase or decrease the effects of a leader's behavior or traits within a given situation are called situational moderator variables. Contingency theories define leadership effectiveness based upon the utilization of situational moderator variables.

Yukl (2006) suggested contingency theories are most useful when they include "intervening variables to explain why the effect of behavior on outcomes varies across situations (p. 214). Leithwood and Duke (1999) further explained although the various contingency theories identify distinctly different leadership styles and stances for problem solving, all contingency theories share the same focus. The focus was identified by Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004), who explained contingency theories define effective leadership through the interaction of "the leader's personal traits, the leader's behavior, and factors in the leadership situation" (Gordon, 2005). Four contingency theories of

leadership are briefly reviewed including the LPC Contingency theory, Path-Goal Contingency Theory, Situational Leadership Contingency Theory, and Leadership Substitutes Contingency Theory.

LPC Contingency Theory. The LPC contingency theory was one of the earliest contingency theories of leadership, and it encouraged greater interest in situational factors (Yukl, 2006). Fiedler (1967) utilized the LPC contingency theory to analyze leadership through consideration of the situation, the organizational members, and its tasks. The LPC contingency theory describes how the situation affects the relationship between leadership effectiveness and a trait measure called the least preferred coworker (LPC) score. The LPC score is determined by asking a leader to select one past or present coworker with whom the leader could work least well, and rate this person on a scale of varying adjectives such as friendly or unfriendly and efficient or inefficient. The sum of the ratings on these bipolar adjective scales is the leader's LPC score. This score is used to identify if the leader's behaviors are more relationship or task motivated. Fiedler's interpretation of the motive hierarchy was supported by Rice's (1978) review of 25 years of research on LPC scores.

Path-Goal Contingency Theory. The second contingency theory, the path-goal theory of leadership, was developed to explain how the behavior of a leader influences the satisfaction and motivation of organizational members. House's (1971) path-goal theory highlighted the leader's ability to motivate organizational members to reach goals, the significance of the goals, and the rewards connected with reaching goals (Gordon, 2005; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). According to House (1971), "the motivational function of the leaders consists of increasing personal payoffs to subordinates for work-

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goal attainment" by clarifying the work, reducing barriers, and increasing opportunities for worker satisfaction (p. 324). Yukl (2006) further explained leaders also influence organizational members' satisfaction level, particularly satisfaction with the leader. Yet, the leader's actions do not necessarily have the same effect on the satisfaction level and the performance level of the organizational members. "Depending on the situation, leader behavior may affect satisfaction and performance the same way, or both differently, or one but not the other" (p. 218).

House (1971) based his Path-goal contingency theory of leadership on the "expectancy theory of motivation" (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004, p. 160). Expectancy theory is used to explain how a leader can influence subordinate satisfaction and effort. It describes work motivation in terms of a rational choice processes in which a person decides how much effort to devote to the job at a given point of time. In choosing between a maximal effort and a minimal (or moderate) effort, a person considers the likelihood that a given level of effort will lead to successful completion of the task and the likelihood that task completion will result in desirable outcomes (e.g. higher pay, recognition, promotion, sense of achievement) while avoiding undesirable outcomes such as layoffs, accidents, reprimands, rejection by coworkers, and excessive stress. If subordinates believe valued outcomes can be attainted only by making a serious effort and they believe such an effort will succeed, then they will make the effort. The effect of a leader's behavior is primarily to modify these perceptions and beliefs.

The initial version of the theory contained only two leader behaviors which were supportive leadership and directive leadership. Another leadership behavior, participative leadership was added in the later rendition by House and Mitchell (1974). Participative

leadership seeks advice from organizational members and considers their opinions and suggestions in the decision making process. Participative leadership has taken various forms in educational leadership.

Yukl (2006) explained participative leadership involves utilizing various decision making processes allowing other individuals, besides the leader, some influence over the decision. Words such as "group," "shared," "empowering," and "democratic" could be used as synonymous with participative leadership. Leithwood and Duke (1999) buttressed Yukl's description by explaining participative leadership stresses the decision-making processes of the group. Participative leadership may be used to encourage democratic principles or to enhance effectiveness of the organization. Leithwood and Duke proposed another reason for utilizing participative leadership in schools was for site-based management (SBM) approaches. In SBM input for decision making is given "to any legitimate stakeholder in the school based on their expert knowledge, their democratic right to choose, and their critical role in implementing decisions" (p. 51). Murphy and Hallinger (1993) indicated school leaders need to adopt more participatory forms of leadership which are more consultative, receptive, and democratic allowing teachers and parents to be involved in a large portion of the school decision making process.

Site-Based Management (SBM) is a widely accepted conception of participatory leadership (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Murphy and Beck (1995) suggested SBM usually takes one of three forms; administrative-controlled SBM, professional-controlled SBM, and community-controlled SBM. Administrative-controlled SBM gives authority to the local school administrators to make decisions on the budget, personnel, and curriculum

with the intent of making the best use of resources for the students' benefit. Principals often consult informally with teachers, parents, students, and community members in the decision making process.

Teacher-controlled SBM is utilized to make better use of their expert knowledge in determining how money will be spent, selection of the curriculum, and periodically for choosing personnel. Hess (1991) concluded educators closest to the students have the expert knowledge to make the best decisions for their achievement. Additionally, the participation of the educators in the decision making process will give them ownership in the decisions during implementation and leads to improved effectiveness and efficiency (Clune & White, 1998; David, 1989).

Community controlled SBM are established with the intent of increasing accountability to parents and the community while improving customer satisfaction (Wohlstetter & Mohrman, 1993). In this situation, parents and other community members have a majority of the input when deciding upon the curriculum so it will reflect their values. Leithwood and Duke (1991) stated an equal participation SBM does exist in the form of site councils that have decision-making power. Their membership is balanced between school staff, parents, and community members. All the school stakeholders partner together to make the best educational decisions possible for the school.

Situational Leadership Contingency Theory. Hershey and Blanchard (1977) proposed a contingency theory considering the appropriate type of leadership behavior depending upon the level of maturity the worker has in relation to their tasks. A worker of high maturity has both the ability and confidence to do a task, whereas a worker of low

maturity lacks ability and self-confidence. According to the theory, the level of the worker's maturity determines the task and relationship behavior for the leader.

Barrow (1977) questioned the theory presented by Hershey and Blanchard (1977) stating it lacks a clear explanation of the process by which the leader behavior influences the workers' performance. Additionally, Barrow believed maturity is a combination of many elements and the procedure used to weight and combine them was questionable. Yet, Yukl, 2006, pointed out Hershey and Blanchard's theory made some positive contributions by highlighting the importance of leaders to be adaptive and flexible in their behavior. Situational leadership theory also encourages leaders to be conscious of opportunities to increase the skills and confidence of workers rather than assuming an employee with low levels of skills or motivation must forever remain a poor employee.

Leadership Substitutes Contingency Theory. Kerr and Jermier (1978) postulated a theory identifying characteristics of the work situation reducing the importance of leadership by leaders. The theory makes a distinction between substitutes and neutralizers, which are two different kinds of situational variables. Substitutes include any characteristics of the worker, task, or organization ensuring the worker will clearly understand their roles, know how to do the work, be highly motivated, and have job satisfaction. Examples of substitutes would be the exceptional ability of a worker, an intrinsically satisfying task, and a cohesive work group within the organization. Substitutes make leader behavior unnecessary because little direction is necessary. When workers have prior experience or training, they already have acquired the skills and knowledge to accomplish their tasks. If workers are motivated by their work because it is interesting and enjoyable to them, the leader may not need to motivate them.

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Additionally, if workers are members of an extremely supportive work group, the assistance they receive from one another may substitute for efforts of the leader to assist and encourage workers.

Neutralizers are any characteristics of the work or organization that thwart a leader from acting in a specific way or that annul the results of the leader's actions. An example of a neutralizer is the lack of interest of workers toward rewards. Howell and Higgins (1990) claimed some situations have so many neutralizers it is difficult for a leader to succeed. Thus, the solution is not to replace the leader or provide more training, but to change the situation. Two ways to make the situation more favorable for the leader would be to either remove the neutralizers or make the leadership less important by increasing substitutes. Substitutes make some types of behavior by the leader unnecessary while neutralizers are limitations preventing the leader from doing anything to improve conditions.

Research concerning substitute leadership theory buttressed some aspects of the theory, but other aspects have not been tested or supported (Howell & Dorfman, 1986; Pitner, 1986; Podsakoff, Niehoff, MacKenzie, & Williams, 1993; Yukl, 2006). In one review by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Ahearne, and Bommer (1995) there was little evidence the relationship between the leader and other organizational members' motivation were effected by situation variables; however there was extensive evidence situational variables affected the workers' satisfaction or motivation. This was buttressed by McIntosh's (1988) claim it was more conducive to analyze the effect of situational variables on substitutes or leader behavior than on neutralizing effects on leader behavior. Yukl (2006) claimed the greatest contribution of substitutes theory is to provide a

different perspective on leadership by deemphasizing the importance of formal leaders and encouraging a focus on leadership processes in groups and organizations. The review of the contingencies theories revealed explanations for leadership effectiveness when considering leadership traits in various situations. Nevertheless, a major limitation of contingency theories is the lack of consideration of leadership processes "that transform the way followers view themselves and their work" (Yukl, 2006, p. 244).

Power-Influence Theoretical Approaches

The fourth theory approach, the power-influence approach, examines leadership effectiveness in terms of the amount and type of power possessed by a leader and how power is exercised. Power is viewed as vital for influencing workers, peers, superiors, and people outside the organization. The concept of power-influence has been utilized to examine how people are able to influence each other in organizations (Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1992). Power involves the ability of one individual to influence another individual, or event. Researchers analyzing power in leadership distinguish between different types of power. While French and Raven (1959) developed a taxonomy to classify different types of power according to their source, Bass (1960) and Etzioni (1991) viewed power sources through the lenses of positional power and personal power.

Power Taxonomy Theory. French and Raven's (1959) taxonomy includes five different types of power which include reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, and referent power. Reward power is the perception by an intended person that another individual controls important resources and rewards desired by the intended person. Coercive power by a leader is based upon the ability of the leader to administer punishment to subordinates. Legitimate power is exercised by those who have control

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over work activities. Expert power stems from the ability to influence others due to possession of exclusive knowledge about the best way to complete a job or resolve a dilemma. Reverent power is held by the individual who is admired by people who are loyal to the individual and desire to please the individual. Although the taxonomy presented by French and Raven influenced further research on power, more sources of power were later presented. Pettigrew (1972) claimed another important source of power is control over information. Information power involves both the ability to access information and the control over the distribution of information to others. Additionally, Cartwright (1965) put forth another type of power, ecological power. Ecological power is the ability to control the work environment, technology, and organization of the work. Ecological power can provide an opportunity for an individual to have indirect influence over other people. By rearranging the workplace through the design of jobs (Oldham, 1976), or by establishing a strong culture of shared norms, values, and beliefs (Schein, 1992), behavior can be influenced by a workers' perception of opportunities and constraints.

     Position and Personal Power Theory. Power sources can also be viewed through the lens of position power and personal power (Bass, 1960; Etzioni, 1991; Yukl, 2006). Research by Yukl and Falbe (1991) revealed these two types of power are independent from one another. They both contain distinctly different components that partially overlap. Position power is defined as influence resulting from legitimate authority, control over resources and rewards, control over punishments, control over information, and control over the physical work environment. Personal power is defined as influence obtained from expert skills at a task and influence based on loyalty and friendship. Yukl

(2006) explained it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between position and personal power, because they "interact in complex ways" (p.149). Because the degree of power and influence can fluctuate, further studies, focusing on the social exchange theory, have been done to reveal how power is gained or lost.

Social Exchange Theory. A theory that described how power is gained or lost is social exchange theory (Yukl, 2006). Social exchange theory explains the process by which power is gained and lost over time between leaders and followers in small groups. This theory focuses on the importance of expertise to be demonstrated by those who are given authority.

The basic form of social interaction is the exchange of benefits or favors, including material and psychological benefits such as expressions of approval, respect, esteem, and affection. Hollander's (1980) version of social exchange theory is specifically concerned with leadership. The amount of status and power given to an individual grows proportionately to the group's perspective of the individual's potential input to the group in relation to the other members. The individual's input may include power over resources or vital information, or the ability to deal with crucial problems. Power is given to the leader if leader's suggestions prove to bring success, but if the leader's suggestions lead to failure, then the leader will loose power and status. Social exchange theory focuses mainly on expert power and authority, and fails to concentrate on the other forms of power and influence. While the trait, behavior, situational, and power-influence approaches to leadership focused on one type of leadership variable, the integrative approach considers more than one type of leadership variable.

Integrative Theoretical Approach

When researchers in the 1980s became interested in the emotional and symbolic aspects of leadership, an integrative approach was considered. The last theoretical approach, the integrative approach, takes into consideration two or more elements in the leadership process. These elements include traits, behavior, influence, situation, processes, and outcomes. Included in this category are moral leadership, charismatic leadership, and transformational leadership. All three theories describe "how a leader can influence the motivation and loyalty of organization members, which is relevant for understanding effective leadership" (Yukl, 2006, p. 275).

Moral leadership. Moral, or ethical, leadership refers to political and symbolic concepts of leadership (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Some researchers claimed values are a central part of leadership (Bates, 1993; Evers & Lakomski, 1991; Greenfield, 1991; Hodgkinson, 1991). The focus of moral leadership is on the values and ethics of the leader. Yukl (2006) claimed ethical decisions are based upon the purpose of the action, its consistency with moral standards, and the outcome for all the stakeholders. While some writers suggested school decision making is a purely rational act and values have no place in administrative decision making, Leithwood, et al. (2000) claimed it is inevitable values will invade the decision-making process.

Among the issues of greatest concern to those exploring moral school leadership perspectives is the nature of the values used by leaders in their decision making and how conflicts among values can be resolved. Hodgkinson (1978) proposed a theory of three different levels of values categorized according to their effectiveness in justifying choices made by leaders. He recommended leaders choose higher over lower level values when

confronted with value conflicts. Evers and Lakomski (1991) presented a different

position on moral leadership by advocating educational leadership make moral choices

that enhance organizational learning. A third perspective on how conflicts can be

resolved by moral leadership is considered political. Slater (1994) supported this

perspective of moral leadership which considers not only a specific set of moral values,

but also the nature of the relationships among the organizational members and the

distribution of power between all the school stakeholders. Slater claimed political

versions of moral leadership value extensive involvement to represent the school

community. Moral leadership does not allow schools to be governed in ways that violate

democratic principles. Therefore, moral leadership could also be considered a part of the

participative leadership category (Leithwood & Duke, 1991).

Charismatic leadership. Leithwood and Duke (1999) and Yukl (2006) revealed

current theories of charismatic leadership were strongly influenced by the ideas of Max

Weber (1947). He used the term *charisma* to describe a form of influence based not on

tradition or formal authority but rather on follower perceptions that the leader is endowed

with exceptional qualities. Weber claimed charisma appears in a leader who has a

revolutionary vision that offers a solution to a social crisis. In doing so, the leader attracts

followers who believe in the vision. When the followers experience success which makes

the vision seem possible, they perceive the leader as extraordinary. Two versions of

charismatic leadership differ when considering the specific attributes of the charismatic

leader. Conger and Kanungo (1998) proposed an attribution theory of charismatic

leadership based on the assumption charisma is a specific set of exceptionable attributes

followers perceive are possessed by a leader. From a different perspective, House (1977)

proposed a self-concept theory of charismatic leadership which focuses upon the interaction between the leader, followers, and situation.

Conger and Kanungo (1998) proposed followers attribute charismatic qualities to a leader based upon the leader's behavior, expertise, and based upon characteristics of the situation. Followers will view leaders as charismatic if the leaders promote a unique vision, act in uncommon ways to achieve the vision, are sacrificial to achieve the vision, who are confident, Additionally, charismatic leaders emotionally appeal to followers to inspire them to accomplish things that seemed impossible. Unlike Weber (1947), Conger and Kanungo (1998) believed a crisis does not necessarily have to be present for charismatic leadership to appear. They state a charismatic leader is able to create a feeling of dissatisfaction with current conditions among the followers while at the same time providing a vision of a more promising future to them (Yukl, 2006).

In a different context, House (1977) described charismatic leadership being exemplified by the interactions between leader, followers, and the situation. The charismatic leader has a strong influence on the followers because they believe the leader's ideas are correct. Therefore, they willingly follow the leader and feel fondness for the leader. Additionally, the followers are strongly supportive of the organizational mission and feel they can positively contribute to its success. House's theory is in contrast to the theory by Conger and Kanungo (1987) in that, although followers may feel the leader has extraordinary abilities, it is not a necessity for charismatic leadership.

In both versions of the charismatic leadership the leaders may, or may not, transform the followers. Trice and Beyer (1993) postulated it is not desirable to have charismatic leaders in vital positions because positive changes made within the

organization by a charismatic leader are not likely to stay in place once the charismatic leader leaves the organization.

Transformational leadership. The theories of transformational leadership were first conceptualized by James McGregor Burns (1978). Burns proposed most concepts of leadership overemphasized the role of power while failing to acknowledge the essence of leadership. The influence of leadership is found in relationships between motives, resources, leaders, and followers as evidenced by his statement, "the most powerful influences consist of deeply human relationships in which two or more persons engage with one another" (p. 11).

In presenting the concept of transformational leadership, Burns (1978) made a distinction between transforming leadership and transactional leadership (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Yukl, 2006). While transformational leadership appeals to the moral values of organizational members to raise their consciousness about ethical issues and to channel their energy and resources to improve the organization, transactional leadership motivates followers by appealing to their interest in exchanging things they value. The central component of transformational leadership in organizations is the process by which leaders appeal to followers' values and emotions (Bass, 1996; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986).

In contrast to Burns (1978), the more recent versions of transformational leadership are more concerned with achievement of practical objectives than with the moral improvement of followers or social reform (Yukl, 2006). In the current definitions of transformational leadership influenced by Bass (1985), the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward the leader. Additionally, they are motivated to do

more than they originally expected to do. According to Bass, the leader transforms and

encourages followers by increasing awareness of the importance and value of their work,

reminding them to rise above their own self-interest for the sake of the organization or

team, while initiating their higher-order needs. The leaders also facilitate the

improvement of the skills and self-confidence of the organizational members in order to

prepare them to take on more responsibility. This creates an empowered organization.

Transformational leaders provide support and encouragement to maintain enthusiasm and

effort during problem solving, obstacles, and weariness. "In contrast, transactional

leadership involves an exchange process that may result in follower compliance with

leader requests, but is not likely to generate enthusiasm and commitment task objectives"

(Yukl, 2006, p. 278).

Both Yukl (2006) and Leithwood and Duke (1999) recognized differences

between Burns (1978) and Bass (1996) contributions to the theory. Yukl acknowledged

transformational leadership theories were influenced by Burns, while empirical research

on the theory was done by Bass. Furthermore, Leithwood and Duke pointed out Burns

considered transformational and transactional practices as being on opposite ends of the

effective leadership continuum. Yet, Bass suggested transformational and transactional

were two distinctly different leadership approaches which built upon one another.

Transactional practices supported the tasks needed to meet the organizational daily needs,

while transformational practices were needed for change. Bass claimed effective leaders

use a combination of both transformational and transactional leadership.

The focus of transformational leadership is on the commitments and capabilities

of individuals within the organization. Those in administrative positions are not always

the ones with the authority and influence. Instead, organizational members attribute

influence to those who inspire them to improve their skills for the purpose of attaining

their goals. Leithwood (1994) described school transformational leadership along seven

dimensions: (a) building school vision, (b) establishing school goals, (c) providing

intellectual stimulation, (d) offering individualized support, (e) modeling best practices

and important organizational values, (f) demonstrating high performance expectations,

(g) creating a productive school culture, and (h) developing structures to foster

participation in school decisions. Therefore, transformational leadership within a school

could be held by one person or by many people.

Organizational Leadership Theoretical Approach

Bolman and Deal (2003) presented four frames through which organizational

leadership could be viewed. Bolman and Deal explained a frame is a set of ideas or

assumptions that aid stakeholders in understanding and traversing a particular

organizational situation. Frames are tools that help "get things done" (p. 18).

Furthermore, for any given time and situation, one orientation may be more advantageous

than another. Choosing a perspective from which to work involves a combination of

analysis, insight, and skill.

The four frames were based on a set of assumptions of situational variables within

the organization. Each archetype was used to develop a corresponding theory of school

leadership (Gordon, 2005). Glasman and Glasman (1997) provided the following

definitions of each theory. The structural frame focused upon the organization's goals

and roles. In this model, school leaders create organizational structures to accomplish the

organizational goals and solve problems. The human resource frame emphasized the

interdependence between organizations and individuals. School leaders chose individuals who would be a good fit within the organization. These staff members feel their work was meaningful and satisfying while providing the human resources necessary for the organization to accomplish its mission. The political frame outlined power, conflict, and the distribution of scarce resources as the fundamental elements in an organization. In this model, school leadership utilized group coalition and the process of negotiation to improve decision making involving the allocation of scarce resources. The symbolic frame emphasized the importance of experiences and events to the organization. Leadership was concerned with creating organizational symbols to ease the level of doubt and ambiguity in the organization and provide focus for its structure and activities.

Elmore (2000) did not believe any of Bolman and Deal's (2003) organizational theories captured the vital elements for school improvement. He stated the theories failed to make the connection between the work leaders should be doing and the instructional improvement. Argyris and Schon (1996) further explained organizational success requires the organization to have the ability to "see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole" (p. xix).

All the leadership theories presented thus far have focused upon the leader rather than the leadership practice and view the social situation as influencing the leader's practice. In this manner, the focus is upon others and what they do. Rogoff (1990) explained in researching leadership theories, the social situation is the independent variable, and the leader's actions are the dependent variables. Spillane and Sherer (2004) believed new theoretical frameworks are necessary for analyzing leadership practice.

These new frameworks should be "built out of concepts that speak directly to practice," (Pickering 1992, p. 7). A leadership theory based upon leadership practice is distributed leadership.

Distributed Leadership Practice

Distributed leadership derives its theoretical framework from concepts of distributed cognition and activity theory. In this theory, the social environment is a vital component for intellectual activity. Analyzing purposeful activity in its natural surroundings is vital for the study of human cognition (Hutchins, 1995; Leont'ev, 1981; Pea, 1993; Spillane et al., 2001). An individual's cognition is not only the mental capacity of the individual, but also the awareness of the individual based upon the situation. Situation includes both other people and the sociocultural context. Therefore, leadership practice cannot be considered only as a function of the mental capacity of the individual because practice is enhanced, and hindered, by the situation in which it takes place (Resnick, 1991).

Cognition is distributed through the environments' material and cultural artifacts and through other people as they collaborate to complete their tasks (Latuour, 1987; Pea, 1993). Recent investigations in distributed cognition and sociocultural activity theory have focused on ways in which cognition is distributed across or "stretched over" material and cultural artifacts (Rogoff, 1990). Artifacts include language, notational systems, tools of various sorts, and buildings (Gagliardi, 1990). While cognition can be distributed *situationally* in the physical environment, through the environments' material and cultural artifacts, it can also be distributed *socially* through other people as they collaborate to complete tasks (Latuour, 1987; Pea 1993).

Furthermore, Pea (1993) argued distributed cognition is not about the end result being more than the sum of the parts, it is about the end result of distributed cognition being different than the sum of the parts. Therefore, focusing upon the interdependence and interaction of individuals and their environment is the appropriate way to study leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2006).

In Engestrom's (1999) activity theory, an activity system consists of the subject, who does the activity, the object, who the activity is done to, and the instruments, what is used to accomplish the activity. According to activity theory, situations are activity systems. Engestrom indicated situations should be viewed as activity systems integrating actors, outcomes, and artifacts into a cohesive system of action. Furthermore, research by Vygotsky (1978), revealed practice or socio-culture activity, rather than the individual, should be the focus of leadership analysis. The focus of analysis for leadership practice should be from the individual to the event. Recent work by scholars at the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition expanded upon this belief by postulating cultural practices should be the focus of analysis (Sherer, 2004). Research in distributed cognition and socio-cultural activity theories have been beneficial in understanding human activity in complex and constantly changing situations and form the intellectual roots of work on distributed leadership (Spillane & Sherer, 2004).

Distributed leadership is divergent to the traditional educational leadership theory of one hierarchal leader who is responsible for all the leadership duties necessary to effectively lead and manage a school. There are two aspects of distributed leadership: the leader-plus aspect and the practice aspect (Spillane, 2006). The leader-plus aspect refers to the need for multiple leaders. The leader practice aspect refers to the interaction

between the leaders, the followers, and the situation. Gronn's (2002) definition of

distributed leadership as a set of people collectively performing all of the essential

leadership functions, refers to the leader-plus aspect. Some of these duties may be shared

by several members of a group, allocated to individual members, or implemented by

different people at different times. Yet, other researchers recognize the leader practice

aspect and acknowledge distributed leadership is more than just sharing of

responsibilities. Lashway (2003b) and Spillane (2005a) stated distributed leadership was

about leadership practice, the interactions between leaders, followers, and their situation,

rather than only leadership roles and tasks. In order to have distributed leadership,

individuals have an interdependency upon one another's actions and these interactions

must be understood. Leadership is not distributed by just giving it away or delegating it,

but leadership is distributed by purposefully utilizing people, materials, and

organizational structures to reach a common goal. It is a change in culture where the

skills and knowledge of people in the organization are enhanced and they have

productive relationships with one another. "This moves the focus beyond what leaders

do, to how and why they do it" (Sebring et al., 2003, p. 5).

To create a better understanding of how and why educational leaders choose to

lead the way in which they do, historical data can be utilized. This data will shed light on

the social influences directing us to our present leadership practices. Following is a brief

overview of school leadership.

History of School Leadership

Utilizing historical data can also be beneficial to understanding school leadership.

They contribute information about the cultural context within which schools and school

leadership continue to grow and mature (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). Three historical periods in American education are significant (Tyack & Hansor, 1982). The first period covers the years 1820 to 1890 when the special cause in this period was the common school. The unique culture of this period was the Protestant ethic which encouraged the uneducated to become educated in common schools. The second period includes the years 1890 to 1954 when the social climate encouraged professionalism in education. Therefore, reform was required in the structure of the local government allowing nonexperts to become specialists as school systems became more efficient. The third period spans the years 1954 to 1980, when the climate was to achieve social justice and therefore, attempts were made to correct social and economic inequality. During this period, better service was provided for the disadvantaged as school systems adjusted to service the diversity of students. Consequently, the change in the social climate changed the context of school leaders' work. Educational administrators now had to consider all the stakeholders in the school community (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). The main challenge for educational leaders during this time period was to utilize public schools to correct social and economic inequalities. By using the public schools as an instrument to provide equality of educational opportunity, "leaders found themselves heavily involved in the processes of negotiation and facilitation of shared decision making between educators and the community" (Glasman & Glasman, 1997, p. 5).

Not only did school leaders continue to hold the responsibility of including all stakeholders in decision making processes, standards-based reform emerged requiring school leadership to also be accountable for student learning. Standards based reform identified expectations set by society explaining what should be taught and what students

should be able to demonstrate about their learning. Elmore (2000) claimed standard-based reform holds school administrators accountable for evaluating teachers' practices and analyzing "whether students can demonstrate what they are expected to learn" (p. 2). Additionally, the results of the evaluations are to be used to improve both teaching and learning. Therefore, standards-based reform assumes student achievement is based upon what happens inside schools.

Based upon the demand of students to meet certain standards, school administrators are asked to become instructional leaders also. Hallinger (1992) developed a teacher survey and the results revealed one consequence of using instructional leadership is improvement in student achievement (Sheppard, 1996). Instructional leaders focus on the teachers' behavior directly affecting academic achievement in students. Yet, Foster (1986) claimed there is a lack of specific descriptions of instructional leadership. Nevertheless, most versions of instructional leadership described it as the distribution of authority to administrative roles while assuming the administrator will be the venue of expert knowledge on how to improve instruction (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Contrary to earlier definitions, Kleine-Kracht (1993) stated principals alone cannot fulfill all of a school's need for instructional leadership. Elmore (2000) further argued this need for the distribution of knowledge required for instructional improvement demands leadership to be distributed across knowledgeable individuals within our schools. Therefore, due to the significant increase in demands placed on school leadership such as expectations for improvement to meet standards-based reform, changing circumstances, increasing workload, and the need for innovation, school administrators are looking toward utilizing

team or distributed leadership (Harris, 2005; Johnston & Pickersgill, 1992; Vanderberghe, 1992).

There is an agreed upon belief distributive leadership means leadership should be distributed throughout the whole school, yet there are various ways this can be attained (Lashway, 2003a). Examples of distributive leadership can run the spectrum from a principal simply encouraging the faculty to take on leadership responsibilities to an entire district implementing a new decision making structure for all its schools. It may mean the assistant principal takes over some of the principal's responsibilities. It could also mean giving some grade level teams decision making responsibilities. Through each of these avenues, some of the principal's responsibilities have been distributed throughout the school.

Distributing Leadership Across Four Leadership Dimensions

Distributed leadership is a change in the organizational thinking that redefines leadership as the responsibility of everyone in the school. Elmore (2000) explained through the four leadership dimensions of *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals; School culture;* and *Shared responsibility,* leadership can be distributed. First, distributed *leadership practices* organize staff to be most productive. Elmore indicated distributed leadership is possible even though performance-based accountability in schools require specific individuals to be responsible for the guidance, direction, and performance of the organization. Lashway (2003b) further explained rather than being the "chief doer" of the organization, the principal builds the structure of leadership within the organization (p. 1). The principal facilitates the distribution of leadership by enabling, supporting, coordinating, and guiding the work of the other leaders while also

establishing a wholesome emotional climate. Elmore agreed by stating distributed

leadership does not mean no one is responsible, it means the responsibility of

administrative leaders is to enhance the skills and knowledge of individuals in the school,

create a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge,

encourage productive relationship among the various school staff, and require individual

accountability toward the school mission. Additionally, effective distributed leadership

practices require seeking knowledge and skill outside the organization to bring to the

staff when skills within the organization are not enough to solve a problem. Leadership's

most vital responsibility is to create a common culture of expectations concerning the use

of individual skills and abilities. Harris (2003) explained distributing leadership is

exploiting the staff members' abilities within the organization. By facilitating these

processes, the principal develops the leadership potential in all staff members (Burke,

2003; Harris, 2003; Sebring et al., 2003).

Second, distributed leadership requires a *shared mission, vision and goals*.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) defined school mission as what school stakeholders

understand to be the unspoken and stated purpose and direction of the school. DuFour

and Eaker (1998) further explained a "mission establishes an organization's purpose,

vision instills a sense of direction" (p. 62). The mission, vision, and goals of a school can

only be effective if all school stakeholders are aware of them and they are "clear,

meaningful, useful, and current" (Gordon, 2005, p. 37). Neuman and Simmons (2000)

claimed in order to distribute leadership, the school must have a shared vision with clear

goals focusing on student learning.

Third, distributed leadership requires a *common culture*. DuFour and Eaker (1998) explained school culture is based upon "the assumptions, beliefs, values, and habits that constitute the norm of the organization – norms that shape how people think, feel, and act" (p. 131). Sergiovanni (2000) described culture as "the normative glue that holds a particular school together" (p. 1). Elmore (2000) further explained how important a common culture is in distributing leadership.

> In a knowledge-intensive enterprise like teaching and learning, there is no way to perform these complex tasks without widely distributing the responsibility for leadership among roles in the organization, and without working hard at creating a common culture, or set of values, symbols, and rituals. (p. 16)

Thus, effective distributed leadership requires guidance and direction from multiple expert sources with a common culture. It is the common values, or culture, that enables the school to attain their mission through distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000).

Fourth, distributed leadership also encourages *shared responsibility* among staff members. Elmore (2000) proposed educators are inclined to specialize in areas of their interests, aptitudes, prior knowledge, skills, and specialized roles. Furthermore, some principals and teachers are more competent than others based upon their personal interests, skills, experience, or knowledge. By utilizing these highly skilled and competent educators in various leadership positions within the school, the responsibility is shared. Effective distributed leadership requires the ability to organize individuals with various competencies so they complement one another. Spillane et al. (1999) further explained the vital element of effectively distributing leadership requires the expertise and responsibilities of the staff to be extended over people in different roles rather

divided among them. This is buttressed by Elmore who suggested the success of

distributing leadership is just as dependent on the joint dependency and reciprocity

between individual roles in the organization as the definition of role responsibilities.

These various transactions between the roles include conversations among the leadership.

Scribner et al. (2007) believed to better understand distributed leadership, researchers

need to analyze the conversation taking place between various forms of leadership within

the organization, such as teacher teams.

Distributed Leadership and Teacher Teams

Teacher teams have been utilized for years as the main component of the middle-

school paradigm (Clark & Clark, 1994). Yet, when research on professional learning

communities indicated change was more effective when decision making was shared by

the stakeholders, interest in teacher teams increased as a means for school improvement

(Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Preskill & Torres, 1999). This encouraged schools to

experiment with "distributed leadership by organizing teachers into teams" (Scribner et

al., 2007, p. 71) that identify and solve defined or undefined problems. Studies by Bryk

and Driscoll (1988), DuFour and Eaker (1998), and Scribner et al. (1999) indicated

student achievement is higher in schools where teachers work in self-managing teams to

develop goals, curricula, instructional strategies, budgets, and staff development

programs. Yet, Janiz (1982) indicated one negative implication of teaming and other

collaborative structures is the possible increase in groupthink, where the members of the

team encourage similar ideas and opinions while stifling innovation.

When viewing teacher teams as a distributed concept, two different levels can be

observed. First, the structural use of teacher teams within the school to problem solve is

an example of the situational distribution of leadership (Spillane et al., 2004). Based upon the premise teacher teams are more capable of accessing the expertise of the staff, the teams are created and empowered to solve a specific problem facing the school (Crow, Hausman, & Scribner, 2002).

Secondly, the interactions within the teacher teams can be viewed as the social distribution of distributed leadership. In order to create an atmosphere of creativity where a teacher team can solve a difficult problem that does not have an obvious solution, the team must be organized in a socially distributed manner allowing equitable contributions from all members of the team. In effective self-managed teams, "multiple leaders emerge and a dynamic pattern of shared team leadership evolves" (Belasen, 2000, p. 259). Self-managing teams are effective at innovation because they permit internal networking to encourage creativity. To better understand how teacher teaming is utilized in middle schools, a brief description of the emergence of the middle school concept follows.

The Emergence of Teacher Teams in Middle School

In the 1800s public elementary schools initially housed students through the eighth grade. Then from 1890 to 1940, during the "golden age of U.S. education," (Valentine et al., 2004, p. 1) educators rigorously analyzed the intellectual, social, and democratic functions of United States public education. During this time, Edward L. Thorndike identified individual differences in students which led to his creation of educational measurement processes and G. Stanley Hall presented developmental theories of adolescence (Lipka, Lounsbury, Toepfer, Vars, Alessi, & Kridel, 1998). This research encouraged educators to create reforms improving the educational experiences of young adolescents.

After this research, concerns developed with the organization of elementary schools. Educators felt a separate school setting for young adolescents was needed to effectively deal with the needs of students in seventh and eighth grade. The special needs of adolescents were identified as a more challenging and rigorous curriculum, teachers who were specialists in their content areas, conditions providing for individual differences, resources to meet the unique needs of young adolescents; and a reduction in the number of dropouts and students retained at the same grade for a second or third year (Briggs, 1920; Koos, 1927). These needs, unique to adolescents continue to influence the current middle school educational programs and practices (Clark & Clark, 1994).

When the 1913 report of the Committee on Economy of Time in Education (Baker, 1913), appealed for the organization of junior high schools, educators and local school board members across the United States began to establish junior high schools in their communities (Valentine et al., 2004). The junior high school with grades 7-9 became accepted as the appropriate place for the education of young adolescents by the middle of the twentieth century. Junior high schools contained courses similar to those in high schools and content specialist teachers were organized by subject matter. To provide for individual differences, the majority of students were grouped by ability, or tracked, in their core classes (Wright & Greer, 1963).

By the 1950s educators were concerned the organization and practices of junior high schools were not the unique environment needed to develop young adolescents into successful learners. Since there was an increase in tracking and ability grouping, failure of guidance counselors to meet student needs due to high pupil-to counselor ratios, and widespread dissatisfaction of teachers with their assignments to junior high schools,

school stakeholders expressed concern that departmentalization, teacher specialization, and ability grouping were inappropriate for junior high school students (Clark & Clark, 1994).

Therefore, an increasing number of educators were desiring to reorganization junior high school grades due to literature suggesting ninth grade be moved to high schools in order to offer all of the college-preparation courses. Additionally, research was revealing young adolescents were maturing at an earlier age than children of previous generations (Bough, 1969; Grambs, Noyce, & Robertson, 1961). At the same time, a number of educators were concerned that junior high schools were not geared toward adolescents since the programs and policies were the same as high schools. Influenced by new information of young adolescent development, William Alexander, Emmett Williams and Donald Eichhorn became leading advocates of the middle school concept in the 1960s. Not only did they advocate the new grade configuration of 6-8 grade, but they also promoted homerooms with 25 students and forming interdisciplinary teams, or four-person teams of teachers with specialties in the core subjects.

By the end of the 1980s, middle school had become well-defined. Almost universally, middle level educators recognized the importance of schools that were developmentally appropriate to the needs of young adolescents. Through tradition, practice, and research middle school educators organized their schools in a variety of ways. By 1990, most middle schools were grades 6-8, and had 400-800 students. Additionally, 40 percent of the schools had interdisciplinary teaming programs (Braddock, 1990).

The release of *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21ˢᵗ Century* in

1989 (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development) gave middle level education

national recognition. Turning points provided eight essential principles for transforming

middle grades education. These eight essential principals included creating small learning

communities, teaching a core academic program, ensuring success for all adolescents,

empowering teachers and administrators, staffing schools with expert teachers, improving

performance through better health and fitness, reengaging families, and connecting

schools and communities. Although successful middle school principals strongly support

all eight elements, Valentine, Clark, Hackman, and Petzko (2002) study revealed

principals ranked creating small learning communities as one of the most important

elements of success. The creation of small learning communities is done through the

main component of the current middle school philosophy, interdisciplinary teaming. This

teacher teaming consists of two or more teachers who share a group of students and a

common schedule permitting collaboration (George & Alexander, 1993). Middle school

interdisciplinary teaming structure effectively provides support for the teachers'

development and improvement of their teaching abilities. Through common planning

time, flexible scheduling, common adjacent classrooms, and team autonomy, teacher

collaboration and ongoing professional growth occurs (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall,

2000).

The importance of interdisciplinary teaming is further demonstrated by Valentine

et al.'s (2004), study of the practices and procedures of six highly successful middle level

schools. Although there were many factors that contributed to the success of these

schools, the four basic elements that served as a foundation for their success were a

consensus of values and beliefs, a continuing desire for individual and collective learning,

a culture of respect and support, and a commitment to collaboration and shared

leadership. Through interdisciplinary teaming, the principals in these schools provided

the teachers with time and opportunities to work together and make important decisions.

The teachers in these schools were also involved in school leadership through team

leadership, department leadership, committee leadership, and advisory council

membership. Additionally, the teachers of these highly successful middle schools

coordinated professional development while directing efforts to improve classroom

instruction.

To understand how leadership develops from these teams, a distributed leadership

perspective can be utilized. This perspective reveals educational leadership as involving

the actions of many stakeholders and occurs through the intricate network of interactions

and relationships among all the school staff members (Gronn, 2000; Ogawa & Bossert,

1995; Scribner et al., 2007; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004). While

interdisciplinary teaming, with scheduled collaboration time for teacher teams, provides

middle schools the opportunity to structurally, or situationally, distribute leadership,

interdisciplinary teaming is not conducive to the structure of the self-contained classroom

found in most elementary schools. Yet, when also considering the necessity of not only

situationally distributing leadership, but also socially distributing leadership through the

interactions within the teacher teams, the question remains: Are middle schools more

ready to distribute leadership than elementary schools?

Summary

An overview the history of leadership theoretical approaches that have brought educators up to the present time has been presented. Due to ongoing research and changing social conditions, various leadership theoretical approaches evolved beginning with the trait theories of leadership through the distributed leadership theory. Next distributed leadership is described.

In the description of distributed leadership, the history of social influences on school leadership and how it has led to the need for distributed leadership were explained. Additionally the four dimensions of distributed leadership were identified and the importance of teacher teams was explained. Last, it was elucidated most elementary school structures differ from the structure of middle schools. The middle school interdisciplinary teaming encourages collaboration and decision making, thus facilitating readiness to distribute leadership.

Chapter One introduced the background and conceptual underpinnings of the study. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions were also addressed. The limitations and assumptions of the study were cited and definitions of key terms were listed. Chapter Two presented a review of related literature for the study. Key concepts, research, and history connected with the study were identified. Chapter Three will provide information on the research design and methodology including research questions, quantitative hypothesis, design of the study, population and sample, data collection and instrumentation, and data analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Principals in PK-12 school settings are being asked to take on more and more responsibilities in order to effectively manage their schools and attempt to increase student achievement. Their tasks include, but are not limited to, managing the school, supervising and evaluating instruction, building community-school relationships, and acting as change agents. To meet increasing demands on their time and to effectively implement change within their buildings, principals need to consider utilizing distributed leadership, where various staff members take part in decision making, planning, problem solving, professional development, implementation, and assessment (Burke, 2003; Gronn, 2002; Lashway, 2002; Spillane, 2005b). Additionally, research has shown the collaboration necessary for distributed leadership is an effective learning tool when desiring to increase student achievement (Harris, 2003; Lashway, 2003ba; Sebring et al., 2003). Therefore, distributed leadership is being considered as an answer to the principals' need for assistance in completing their duties and the need for increased collaboration in efforts to increase student achievement. Sebring et al. and Burke (2003) cited separate studies done within several elementary schools and one middle school which had implemented distributed leadership. The outcomes of implementing distributed leadership were more sustaining and positive in the one middle school and one of the elementary schools. The remaining elementary schools were unable to sustain distributed leadership. Is there a difference between elementary schools and middle schools in their readiness to distribute leadership?

Leadership is defined by Gronn (2002) as a status ascribed to one individual, an aggregate of separate individuals, or sets of small numbers of individuals. The leadership role may, therefore, be held by one person or distributed among several individuals. Spillane (2005a) proposed, "From a distributed perspective, leadership is a system of practice comprised of a collection of interacting components: leaders, followers, and situation" (p. 150). Therefore, actions of individuals within the organization create situations causing leaders to act the way they do. Leadership practice is defined by the interactions of leaders, followers, and situations. This system of interactions is more than the sum of the separate parts.

The interacting components of leaders, followers, and situation need to work democratically to engage all the stakeholders (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006). Distributed leadership focuses on the collective effort of all the organizational members to work democratically concerning setting goals, creating a school culture, making decisions, conducting evaluations, and providing professional development (Elmore, 2000). This quantitative case study utilized a questionnaire to gather data for comparing the readiness for distributed, or shared, leadership in elementary and middle school settings.

Following is a description of the methodology employed in this research. The research questions, approach, study design, and data analysis will be examined to demonstrate the distributed leadership practices in the elementary and middle schools studied.

Research Questions

This quantitative study asked the question: Are middle school settings more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings? Elmore (2000)

asserts educational leadership involves improving instruction and it is most effective

when distributed. Furthermore, educational leadership focuses on four key dimensions:

Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals; *School culture*; and *Shared*

responsibility. Therefore, this study focused on the four dimensions when determining

school readiness for distributing leadership. To compare the readiness to share leadership

in both settings the following questions were considered:

    1. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership distributed?

        a. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be

          distributed in the elementary schools?

        b. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be

          distributed in the middle schools?

        c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their

          readiness to distribute the four dimensions of leadership?

    2. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which each of the

leadership dimensions is ready to be distributed in the elementary setting versus

the middle school setting?

        a. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the

          Leadership practices dimension is ready to be distributed in each

          setting?

        b. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the

          Mission, vision, and goals dimension is ready to be distributed in each

          setting?

        c. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *School*

culture dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

d. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *Shared responsibility* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

3. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed?

a. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the elementary schools?

b. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the Different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the middle schools?

c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their readiness to distribute each specific characteristic (survey item) of leadership?

Research Hypothesis

Given the need for distributed leadership and that elementary and middle school settings are quite different, this research seeks to determine if there is a difference between the two settings when comparing the four dimensions of leadership. Since quantitative research aspires to utilize deductive reasoning to predict the results of the study (Merriam, 1998), the researcher hypothesized middle school settings will be more conducive to distributing leadership than elementary school settings. Unlike elementary self-contained classrooms with one teacher instructing all subjects, middle school operates with grade-level instructional teams delivering different core subjects facilitated

by various teachers. At the middle level, the interdisciplinary teaming structure provides an effective mechanism for discussion and decision making. The common planning time, flexible scheduling, common adjacent classrooms, and team autonomy encourage collaboration and growth (Valentine et al., 2004). Furthermore, Scribner et al. (2007) explained the use of teacher teams is an illustration of distributed leadership.

When researching distributed leadership preparedness in elementary and middle school settings, it will be important to note whether leadership is held by one administrator, or if leadership activities, roles, and decision making is distributed among other staff members. Due to the differing structure of elementary and middle school programs, it is vital for administrators to be aware of various leadership techniques available for operating effective elementary and middle schools. The intention of this research is to provide data on the preparedness of elementary and middle schools to distribute leadership and determine whether or not the elementary schools are less prepared than middle schools.

Paradigmatic Approach

When utilizing research to evaluate an organization, researchers confront philosophical, or truth-seeking issues (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). The paradigm, or worldview, presented by the researcher will be determined by the researchers' assumptions and beliefs and therefore, will be projected as reality in the study. Paradigms tell practitioners "what is important, legitimate, and reasonable" (Patton, 1997, p. 267). This study took a critical realism paradigmatic approach. The critical realism paradigm has an objectivist ontology, or a realist view of the nature of the world. In other words, the researcher believes an external reality exists and focuses on the necessity of theory

based language (Coghlan & Brannick 2005). In this case, the theory being assumed is Elmore's (2000) assertions of distributed leadership is stretched across four key dimensions of *Leadership practice; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility*. These four leadership dimensions are the basis of the 51 survey questions.

Additionally, critical realism takes a subjectivist epistemology, or relativist perspective concerning the grounds for knowledge. This study's purpose was to concentrate on revealing the views and interests of everyone through the constant analysis of pre-conceived notions or *self-reflexivity*. This self-reflexivity encourages a focus on the awareness of others' assumptions and beliefs and facilitates the process of identifying "what is right and what is wrong" (Coghlan & Brannick 2005, p. 7). The questions on the survey encouraged the participants to reveal their beliefs of how leadership is shared within their school setting.

Another aspect of the critical realism approach focuses on the researcher being close to the data. The researcher of this study was a principal within the district being studied. Coghlan and Brannick (2005) stated "the issue is not so much the form of the knowledge produced or the methodology employed to gather data/evidence but who decided the research agenda in the first place and who benefits directly from it" (p. 7). The researcher chose the literature to review that guided this study and also was a part of the population benefiting from the results of the study. Therefore, the researcher was close to the data.

Quantitative Approach

Whereas the question in this study seeks to compare the readiness of elementary schools to middle schools, quantitative methods were chosen allowing the researcher to collect data focusing on which setting was more conducive to sharing leadership. When choosing the appropriate approach for a specific study, various aspects of the study should be considered. Characteristics determining the research approach include the focus of the study, goal of the investigation, data collection, and findings (Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Merriam, 1998).

First, since quantitative research focuses on investigating issues that can be answered by analyzing data measured by quantity, i.e., how much or how many, quantitative methods will provide the data necessary to measure, analyze, and evaluate each setting. Consequently, the researcher will be able to compare the data and answer the question as to which school setting is most ready to distribute leadership.

Second, the goal of this study is to test the hypothesis of this study: middle school settings will be more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings. Since quantitative research aspires to utilize deductive reasoning to predict the results of the study through testing, quantitative methods will provide data allowing the researcher to either accept or reject the hypothesis (Merriam, 1998).

Third, quantitative research utilizes inanimate instruments such as scales, tests, computers, and surveys to collect data which is precise and numerical in nature. Since the researcher chose to gather data utilizing a survey resulting in numerical data comparing the two settings, quantitative methods were employed. The researcher distributed and collected sufficient surveys concerning each setting and analyzed the data in order to

come to a conclusion. Gay and Airasian (2000) explained "quantitative descriptive studies are carried out to obtain information about the preferences, attitudes, practices, concerns, or interests of some group of people" (p. 11). In this study, the researcher's desire was to compile data based upon the current practices in middle and elementary schools.

Since the question in this study seeks to compare the readiness of elementary schools to middle schools, quantitative methods will allow the researcher to distribute and collect sufficient surveys concerning each setting, collect data focusing on each setting's readiness to sharing leadership, and analyze the data in order to come to a conclusion on the stated hypotheses. Therefore, a quantitative study was necessary to adequately collect enough significant data to determine if middle school settings are more conducive to *distribute* leadership than elementary school settings.

Implications when utilizing quantitative methods are evident concerning data collection. First and foremost, the confidentiality of the individuals surveyed should be considered. Returned surveys should remain anonymous and the identity of the schools utilized in the study should not be revealed. Additionally, a quantitative descriptive study utilizing an instrument considering the various elements of leadership would be necessary to allow the researcher to compare the two different school settings. The necessary information is mainly collected through questionnaires that are self-administered by those involved in the study (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Because researchers are often asking questions that have not been asked before, new instruments must be created to suit the specific study. Developing the questions for an instrument requires "clarity, consistency, and tact" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p.11). The

DLRS is a relatively new instrument and presents clear and consistent questions specific to distributing leadership within school settings. Therefore it is an appropriate instrument to utilize in this study of elementary and middle school settings. Additionally, the researcher is dependent upon those surveyed to take the time to provide the necessary information and return the questionnaires. Valid conclusions cannot be drawn if the response rate is low. Therefore, if the response rate is low from the elementary and middle schools in the first distribution of surveys in this study, more surveys will be distributed to seek a higher response rate.

Population and Sample

This quantitative case study included elementary schools and middle schools in one public school district in Missouri. This district comprises 35 elementary schools totaling 11,232 students, one intermediate school, housing 600 fifth and sixth graders, nine middle schools totaling 5,456 students, and five high schools totaling 7,570 students. All but three of the elementary schools hold the primary grades up to, and including, sixth grade. Two of the elementary schools, feeding into the intermediate school, hold primary grades up to, and including, fourth grade. Eight of the middle schools are composed of sixth, seventh and eighth graders. One of the middle schools holds only seventh and eight graders. The sixth graders feeding into this last middle school are in the intermediate school. Students enrolled in the district are 7% African American, 2% Asian, 3% Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 87% White. Students receiving free or reduced priced meals total 43%.

All of the schools were selected from the district of which the researcher was familiar with the purpose of facilitating cooperation from the participants. Therefore, it

was a sampling based upon convenience. The educators from the school the researcher administrated were not utilized. The participants for the surveys were certified educators from the elementary and middle schools. The sample was comprised of 100 elementary educators and 100 middle school educators. A purposeful sampling of elementary and middle schools was achieved by selecting both Title I and non-Title I schools.

<center>*Data Collection and Instrumentation*</center>

Quantitative data was collected and analyzed based upon the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). This survey was distributed to elementary and middle school administrators and teachers at their sites. The researcher had permission from the school district to place the survey and the informed consent letter (Appendix A), in the school mailboxes of those being surveyed. The surveys were completed by the school staff and then returned anonymously. Each survey was coded to distinguish between elementary and middle schools.

The Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale

The DLRS (Appendix B) is a self-evaluation scale intended to provide a profile of a school's willingness to engage in shared leadership practices. The DLRS was developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to measure school's readiness to share leadership. It was based on current research on school leadership designed to improve public schools' ability to increase student academic achievement (Gordon, 2005). The DLRS originally focused on five key elements of leadership necessary to its effective distribution: *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals; School culture; Decision-making; and Evaluation and professional development.* When testing for construct validity, the researchers found it necessary to

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combine the dimensions of *Decision-making and Professional development* under one dimension labeled *Shared responsibility*. This is explained further during the construct validity discussion. Through questions asking the degree to which characteristics of the leadership dimensions were present in the school community, preparedness for distributed leadership was measured.

The DLRS was completed by various individuals: school administrators, classroom teachers and support teachers. The first page consisted of the instructions for completing the instrument. The second page collected the demographic data including gender, race, position, and years in education. This information helped determine if the respondents were certified staff. The next two pages of the instrument consisted of 51 questions regarding the characteristics of the leadership dimensions requiring responses in category scales ranging from "continually" to "rarely/never". The 51 questions have identical format, thus disregarding Fink's (2006) suggestion to "avoid many items that look alike." Yet, it may increase the response rate since it will be faster for the participants to complete. The questions were based on research and thus, reached the intended goal of providing profiles by which the staff compared their school's distributed leadership practices across the key elements of instructional leadership.

Content validity. A committee of educators determined the *face validity* of the items contained on the DLRS based on effective school research including Elmore's (2000) research on distributed leadership. This committee assigned each item to one of the original five dimensions of distributed leadership mentioned in Elmore's study to conclude the DLRS had face validity. Gay and Airasian (2000) explained the term *face validity* is used in combination with content validity and refers to the degree to which a

test appears to measure what it claims to measure. When an expert determines the degree to which a test measures an intended content area the test is considered to have content validity. There is no formula to compute it and it is not expressed quantitatively. Usually professionals knowledgeable in the subject matter comprised in the test are asked to determine its content validity. These experts examine the test and the process used to develop the test to make a judgment concerning whether or not the items on the test represent the intended content area. The committee of educators did find the DLRS to have face validity.

Construct validity. Gordon (2005) found the DLRS to also have construct validity. Gay and Airisian (2000) believed construct validity is the most important form of validity because it asks what construct, or non observable trait which explains behavior, the test is actually measuring. In other words, it reveals "the appropriateness of the intended test interpretations and the justification of the test being used" (p. 168). Specific to the DLRS, construct validity is asking if the DLRS items are actually measuring the constructs of *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals; School culture; Decision-making;* and *Evaluation and professional development.*

Gordon (2005) performed a quantitative factor analysis test to determine the construct validity of the DLRS. Factor analysis is defined by Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) as the examination of the relationship between content items created due to the beliefs of the researchers and behavior that is observable. Gordon ran an exploratory analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The output was examined that summarized the information in the correlation matrix which revealed most of the coefficients were .3 or above. Therefore,

the data was appropriate for factor analysis (Pallant, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001).

The principal component extraction method, the screenplot, and the orthogonal and

oblique rotations were performed. The analysis began with five conceptually derived

dimensions and resulted in four empirically distinguishable factors. The items in three of

the dimensions: *Mission, vision, and goal; School culture, and Leadership practices;*

were almost identical to the empirically derived items. Most of the items from the other

two dimensions, *Decision making* and *Professional development*, were combined into a

single factor labeled *Shared responsibility*. All the items loaded above .35, revealing a

strong construct validity (Gordon).

 Reliability. Gay and Airasian (2000) defined reliability as "the degree to which a

test consistently measures whatever it is measuring" (p. 169). While the validity reveals

the appropriateness of an instrument, reliability reveals the consistency of the data

produced by the instrument. Gordon (2005) utilized the internal consistency method that

requires one administration to test the reliability of the DLRS. The internal consistency

method was used to examine the correlation among all the items measuring each

dimension contained on the instrument. Additionally, Gordon utilized item-total

correlation to examine the correlation of particular items with the remaining items in the

dimension. Tabachnick and Fidel (2001) recommended Cronbach's alpha as a commonly

used measure of internal consistency and item-total correlation. When measuring internal

consistency, Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) suggested an alpha coefficient of .70 or more

was a high internal consistency reliability estimate. Conversely, a reliability coefficient of

less than .70 was believed to be below the internal consistency criterion. When measuring

item-total correlation, Pallant (2002) believed researchers should consider discarding

items with correlations less than .30 with their respective dimensions. After Gordon tested the reliability of the DLRS, "the reliability coefficient for all the dimensions was above the recommended .7 and the item-total correlations were all above the recommended .3" (p. 58). Consequently, Gordon found the DLRS to be a reliable instrument.

The state of Connecticut administered the DLRS to their schools and found the DLRS to be both valid and reliable in measuring distributed leadership. Since this survey compared groups of people, reliability coefficients of .50 or above were needed to qualify as acceptable (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Gordon (2005) also found this instrument to be both valid and reliable. Since the DLRS has been utilized in only a few studies up to this point, Larry Jacobs, one of the educators who created the DLRS, requested the survey be sited in this study and requested any results obtained be shared with him when utilizing the instrument. His requests were granted and he will be notified of the minor adjustments made to the DLRS to align with this research. Additional information concerning the DLRS can be obtained from the Wallace Foundation at www.wallacefoundation.org.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized quantitative data to explore the relationship between the two different school settings and the various leadership dimensions. To address the first research question as to what extent the four dimensions of distributed leadership practices were utilized in the two different school types, the response data was first divided according to elementary and middle school responses. Then, the average responses were calculated for each of the four different distributed leadership dimensions. The researcher

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next examined the order of each dimension to find which was most prevalent to least prevalent in each setting. Last, the results of the data from the elementary and the middle school settings were compared based upon the degree to which the dimensions were utilized from most prevalent to least prevalent.

To answer the second research question concerning any significant difference between the extent to which each of the distributed leadership dimensions was utilized in the elementary setting versus the middle school setting, an independent samples t-test was utilized. The t-test was used to determine if the average responses of the elementary responses and the middle school responses were significantly different from one another at a selected probability level (Gay & Airasian, 2000). In the case of this research, the probability level chosen was alpha = 05. This level of probability determined how large the difference between the average responses of the elementary responses and the middle school responses had to be in order to be considered significant.

The independent variables were identified as the two different school types, elementary schools and middle schools. An independent variable is a specific characteristic, which was the school type, which is believed to make a difference in leadership practices. Each of the four dimensions was a dependent variable. A dependent variable is the change or difference in behavior resulting from the independent variable. Therefore, the independent samples t-test was utilized to find if any of the four dimensions of distributed leadership practices were affected by the elementary or middle school settings. The t-test revealed whether the average responses for the four dimensions of distributed leadership practices were significantly different (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

The third research question addressed the extent to which each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different dimensions of distributed leadership practices was utilized. The responses were rated based upon a Likert five point scale. To calculate the numbers, the data was first divided by elementary and middle school responses. Second, the average responses were calculated for each of the specific characteristics (survey items). Third, the researcher examined the average responses to find which characteristics were most prevalent and which characteristics were least prevalent in each setting. Last, the results from each of the school type settings were compared to find any similarities and differences between the responses from the elementary and middle school settings.

Summary

This chapter examined the methodology employed in this quantitative case study. Utilizing the critical realism paradigmatic approach, the researcher asked the question of whether middle school settings or elementary settings were more conducive to distributed leadership. The DLRS was used to collect quantitative data. An independent samples *t*-test was applied to the data, determining to what extent each of the five leadership dimensions were utilized within each of the school settings being studied. By utilizing this paradigmatic approach and study design, the researcher compared the readiness for distributed leadership in the elementary and middle school settings studied.

Chapters One, Two, and Three have laid the groundwork for this study by presenting the purpose of the study, the research questions, related literature, and the design and methodology utilized in the research. In Chapter Four, the data collection and analysis results are presented for each research question and hypothesis. Chapter Five

will provide a summary of the study, findings, and recommendations and implications for

future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

Administrators of PK-12 schools are being required to take on more and more

responsibilities in order to effectively manage their schools and attempt to increase

student achievement. The emergence of standards-based accountability has increased the

demands placed upon school administrators. Their tasks include, but are not limited to,

managing the school, supervising and evaluating instruction, building community-school

relationships, and acting as change agents (Elmore, 2000; Harris, 2003; Lashway, 2003).

Principals are also required to serve as leaders for student learning. They are

asked to be experts in curriculum content and classroom best practices, enabling them to

assist teachers in improving teaching skills. Principals are responsible for collecting,

analyzing, and utilizing data to reach for continuous improvement. School administrators

are also being asked to communicate and seek support for the school's common goal of

student achievement from all the school stakeholders including, students, staff, parents,

and community members. Therefore, it is necessary for principals to have the leadership

skills to implement each of the afore mentioned strategies (Institute for Educational

Leadership, 2000).

Diapolo and Tschannen-Moran (2003) suggested the principal's job is impossible

for most. School administrators feel torn between their responsibilities as instructional

leaders and school managers (Cooley & Shen; Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress,

2003). Additionally, Pounder and Merrill (2001) noted, qualified candidates for

educational administrative positions may diminish due to the perceived workload.

In addition to increased demand for meeting standards, principals are also being asked to work collaboratively in an attempt to develop leadership in others. This request is based upon research revealing school improvement takes place through collaborative learning communities (Lashway, 2003). Murphy and Datnow (2002) found successful principals met the increased demands by building *dense leadership organizations*, or distributed leadership, which is a social phenomenon "woven into the threads of the organization" (p. 7). This dense leadership was built through improvement of their own collaboration skills, encouragement of teacher leadership, provision of resources for professional development, and utilization of leadership practices to manage the school systematically. Research results from Leithwood and Reihl (2003) and Phillips (2003) buttressed this notion of collaborative communities having a vital part in school improvement.

To meet increasing demands on their time and to effectively implement change within their buildings, principals need to consider utilizing distributed leadership, where various staff members take part in decision making, planning, problem solving, professional development, implementation, and assessment (Burke, 2003; Gronn, 2002; Lashway, 2002; Spillane, 2005). Distributed leadership practices organize staff to be most productive. Additionally, research has also shown the collaboration necessary for distributed leadership is an effective learning tool when desiring to increase student achievement (Harris, 2003; Lashway, 2003; Sebring, Hallman, & Smylie, 2003). Therefore, distributed leadership is being considered as an answer to the principals' need for assistance in completing their duties and the need for increased collaboration in efforts to increase student achievement.

Leadership is defined by Gronn (2002) as a status ascribed to one individual, an aggregate of separate individuals, or sets of small numbers of individuals. The leadership role may, therefore, be held by one person or distributed among several individuals. Spillane (2005a) proposed, "From a distributed perspective, leadership is a system of practice comprised of a collection of interacting components: leaders, followers, and situation" (p. 150). Therefore, actions of individuals within the organization create situations causing leaders to act the way they do. Leadership practice is defined by the interactions of leaders, followers, and situations. This system of interactions is more than the sum of the separate parts. The interacting components of leaders, followers, and situation need to work democratically to engage all the stakeholders (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006). Distributed leadership focuses on the collective effort of all the organizational members to work democratically concerning setting goals, creating a school culture, making decisions, conducting evaluations, and providing professional development (Elmore, 2000).

Sebring et al. (2003) and Burke (2003) cited separate studies done within several elementary schools and one middle school which had implemented distributed leadership. The outcomes of implementing distributed leadership were more sustaining and positive in the one middle school and one of the elementary schools. The remaining elementary schools were unable to sustain distributed leadership. Therefore, further research is needed to determine if there is a difference between elementary schools and middle schools in their readiness to distribute leadership.

Overview of Study

This quantitative study asked the question: Are middle school settings more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings? Consequently, surveys were distributed to all certified educators within a total of 22 schools, including eight middle schools and 15 elementary schools. A total of 749 surveys were distributed, which included 323 middle school certified staff surveys and 426 elementary school certified staff surveys. A total of 359 surveys were returned, for a return rate of 48%. Middle school returned surveys totaled 168, 30 of which were discarded for insufficient information. Elementary staff returned surveys totaled 209, of which 27 were discarded due to insufficient information. Therefore, 181 elementary surveys and 121 middle school surveys, totaling 302 completed surveys, were utilized in the results of this study, for a total return rate of 40%.

The majority of the returned surveys were completed by white female classroom teachers holding master's degrees. Furthermore, 50% of those completing surveys had been in their perspective buildings more than seven years. While 85% of the surveys were completed by females, 15% were completed by males. While 96.4% of the participants were white, the remainder were of diverse ethnic backgrounds as shown on Table 2. Whereas 82% of the surveys were completed by classroom teachers, 13% were completed by support teachers, and five percent were completed by the school administrators. Additionally, 67% of the participants had at least one master's degree, 27% had a bachelor's degree, 3 % had a specialist degree, and 2 % had a doctorate degree.

Table 1

Ethnicity of Respondents

Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	1.0
Black (non-Hispanic)	3	1.0
White	291	96.4
Hispanic	2	.7
Other	3	1.0
Total	302	100.0

Although the demographics did specifically identify white female classroom teachers holding at least one master's degree as the primary characteristics of those returning completed surveys, Title I and non-Title I schools were evenly represented. Of the 302 completed surveys returned and utilized in this research, fifty-two percent were from Title schools and forty-eight percent were from non-Title I schools. The data obtained from this research was comparable in respect to the amount of surveys dispersed and the amount collected from Title I and non-Title I schools.

This study was designed to explore the relationship between the two different school settings and the four leadership dimensions of *Leadership practice; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility* measured by the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). The DLRS is a self-evaluation scale intended to

provide a profile of a school's willingness to engage in shared leadership practices. Each of the 51 items on the DLRS were statements associated with one of the four dimensions. The number of statements within each dimension ranged from 10 item statements to 15 item statements (Appendix C). The *Leadership practice* dimension had 10 item statements. The *Mission, vision, and goals* dimension had 14 item statements. The *School culture* dimension had 16 item statements, while the *Shared responsibility* dimension had 11 item statements.

The dimensions were based on the Likert scale and rated by the participants from one to four: 1 = Rarely/Never; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Frequently; 4 = Consistently. Therefore, the lower the number, the less ready the school was to distribute leadership. Conversely, the greater the number, the more ready the school was to distribute leadership. When analyzing the data, the statements were compiled and the numbers totaled, thus establishing an overall total rating for each dimension (Appendix D). Since each dimension had a differing number of item statements ranging from 10 to 14, the average answer for each dimension was utilized so the data would be comparable.

Research Questions

This quantitative study asked the question: Are middle school settings more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings? This study focused on four key dimensions: *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility*, when determining school readiness for distributing leadership. Elmore (2000) asserted educational leadership, which involves improving instruction, is based upon these four dimensions. To compare the readiness to share leadership in both settings the following questions were considered:

1. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership distributed?

    a. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the elementary schools?

    b. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the middle schools?

    c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their readiness to distribute the four dimensions of leadership?

2. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which each of the leadership dimensions is ready to be distributed in the elementary setting versus the middle school setting?

    a. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *Leadership practices* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

    b. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *Mission, vision, and goals* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

    c. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *School culture* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

    d. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *Shared responsibility* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

3. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed?

    a. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the

different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the

elementary schools?

b. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the

Different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the

middle schools?

c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their

readiness to distribute each specific characteristic (survey item) of

leadership?

First Research Question

To address the first research question as to what extent the four dimensions of

distributed leadership practices were utilized in the two different school types, the

response data considered: (a) The extent to which the four dimensions of leadership were

ready to be distributed in the elementary schools; (b) The extent to which the four

dimensions of leadership were ready to be distributed in the middle schools; and (c) The

extent to which the elementary and middle schools differed in their readiness to distribute

the four dimensions of leadership.

To answer the first research question, response data was first divided according to

elementary response and middle school response. Then, all the survey item answers were

entered into SPSS. The average response was calculated for each of the four different

distributed leadership dimensions of *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*;

School culture; and *Shared responsibility*. The researcher next examined the order of

each dimension to find which was most prevalent to least prevalent in each setting. Last,

the results of the data from the elementary and the middle school settings were compared

based upon the degree to which the dimensions were utilized from most prevalent to least

prevalent. Table 2 contains the average response for each of the distributed leadership

dimensions based upon the school type.

Table 2

Average Responses for Elementary and Middle School Leadership Dimensions

Type of School		Leadership Practices	School Climate	Shared Responsibility	Mission Vision Goal
Elementary	Mean	3.1970	3.5729	3.5283	3.5561
	N	134	162	164	154
	Std. Dev.	.594956	.50729	.43797	.41376
Middle	Mean	2.9232	3.3775	3.4221	3.3814
	N	95	101	112	103
	Std. Dev.	.49259	.55141	.40653	.38329

Note. Possible answers range from 1= Rarely/Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4= Continually.

The average responses for each of the two different types of schools appear

somewhat different and the two school settings ranked the dimensions in different order

of most to least utilized. Elementary school average responses from greatest to least were

ranked as follows: *School culture* (3.5729)*; Mission, vision, goals* (3.5561)*; Shared*

responsibility (3.5283)*; and Leadership practices* (3.1970)*.* Middle school average

responses from greatest to least were ranked as follows: *Shared responsibility* (3.4221);

Mission, vision, goals (3.3814); *School culture* (3.3775); *and Leadership practices*

(2.9232)*.* Both school settings ranked *Mission, vision, goals* second and *Leadership*

practices fourth. Yet, elementary schools ranked *School culture* first, as most utilized, and *Shared responsibility* third. Conversely, middle schools ranked *Shared responsibility* first and *School culture* third.

The first research question considered the extent to which both schools utilized the four different dimensions of distributed leadership readiness and compared the results from both settings. The data showed the average responses for each of the two different types of schools differed and both school types ranked the dimensions in different order when considering most utilized to least utilized. Both elementary and middle school participants scored their schools as ranking *Mission, vision, goals* second and *Leadership practices* fourth. While elementary schools ranked *School culture* first and *Shared responsibility* third, middle schools ranked *Shared responsibility* first and *School culture* third.

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Second Research Question

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The second research question addressed finding any significant difference between the extent to which each of the distributed leadership dimensions was utilized in the elementary setting versus the middle school setting. Therefore, the researcher considered: (a) Any significant difference between the extent to which the *Leadership practices* dimension was ready to be distributed in each school setting; (b) Any significant difference between the extent to which the *Mission, vision, and goals* dimension was ready to be distributed in each school setting; (c) Any significant difference between the extent to which the *School culture* dimension was ready to be distributed in each school setting; and (d) Any significant difference between the extent to which the *Shared responsibility* dimension was ready to be distributed in each school

setting. Therefore, to address the second research question, an independent samples *t*-test was used.

The *t*-test was employed to determine if the averages of the elementary responses and the middle school responses were significantly different from one another at a selected probability level of alpha = .05. This level of probability determined how large the difference between the average responses of the elementary responses and the middle school responses had to be in order to be considered significant. Therefore, the independent samples *t*-test was utilized to find if any of the four dimensions of distributed leadership practices were affected by the elementary or middle school settings. Table 3 contains the results of the independent samples *t*-test.

Table 3

Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Elementary and Middle School

| | *t*-test for Equality of Means | | |
	t	*df*	*Sig.*
Leadership Practices	3.680	227	< .001
Mission Vision Goals	3.416	255	.001
School culture	2.938	261	.004
Shared Responsibility	2.036	274	.043

By utilizing the average responses and standard deviation scores in Table 1, and the results of the independent *t*- test in Table 2, the two results from the school types could be compared. Although the average responses for the elementary schools appeared to be higher in each of the four dimensions, the *t*-test revealed the average responses for the four dimensions in elementary schools were significantly higher than middle schools. The results revealed a significant relationship between the two school types in the dimension of *School culture* [elementary mean= 3.5729, *sd*= .50729; middle school mean= 3.3775, sd=.55141; $t(261)= 2.938$; $p < .05$]. The results revealed a significant relationship between the two school types in the dimension of *Mission, vision, goal* [elementary mean= 3.5561, *sd*= .41376; middle school mean = 3.3814, *sd*= .38329; $t(255)= 3.416$; $p < .05$]. The results revealed a significant relationship between the two school types in the dimension of *Shared responsibility* [elementary mean= 3.5283, *sd*= .43797; middle school mean= 3.4221, *sd*= .40653; $t(274)= 2.036$; $p < .05$]. The results revealed a significant relationship between the two school types in the dimension of *Leadership practices* [elementary mean= 3.1970, *sd*= .59496; middle school mean= 2.9232, *sd*= .49259; $t(227)=3.680$; $p < .05$]. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between the two school setting's average responses in each dimension of the four distributed leadership dimensions.

The second research question addressed finding any significant difference between the extent to which each of the distributed leadership dimensions was utilized in the elementary setting versus the middle school setting. With a probability of alpha =.05, the data results of the independent samples *t*-test were analyzed. It was found the average responses for each distributed leadership readiness dimension of the elementary schools

were significantly higher than the middle school means for each distributed leadership readiness dimension.

Third Research Question

The third research question addressed the extent to which each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different dimensions of distributed leadership practices was utilized. To answer the third research question the data was used to consider: (a) The extent to which each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different dimensions of leadership were ready to be distributed in the elementary schools; (b) The extent to which each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different dimensions of leadership were ready to be distributed in the middle schools; and (c) The extent to which elementary and middle schools differed in their readiness to distribute each specific characteristic (survey item) of leadership.

To calculate the numbers, the data was first divided by elementary and middle school responses. Second, the average responses were calculated for each of the specific characteristics (survey items). Third, the researcher examined the average responses to find which characteristics were most prevalent and which characteristics were least prevalent in each setting. Last, the results from each of the school type settings were compared to find any similarities and differences between the responses from the elementary and middle school settings.

Tables 4 through 7 identify the average responses of the most prevalent, or highest ranked, and least prevalent, or lowest ranked, statements in both elementary and middle schools. Table 3 lists the elementary schools' five most prevalent statement items ranking a clearly written mission statement with the highest average response of 3.91.

This was followed by: (a) "High expectations of administrators," with an average response of 3.87; (b) "Curriculum alignment with state standards," with an average response of 3.86; (c) "The ability to describe the mission statement by administrators," with an average response of 3.86; and (d) "Support of the mission statement by administrators," with an average responses of 3.82.

Table 4

Elementary School Average Responses of the Five Most Prevalent Statement Items

Statement	Average response
Clearly written mission statement	3.91
Administrators have high expectations	3.87
School curriculum is aligned with state standards	3.86
Administrators can describe mission statement	3.86
Administrators can support mission statement	3.82

Note. Possible answers range from 1= Rarely/Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4= Continually.

Table 5 lists the elementary schools' five least prevalent statement items. When listing the bottom five from least prevalent to most prevalent, the ability of the parents to describe the mission statement was the lowest ranked with an average response of 2.27. Among the other five least prevalent statement items were: (a) "Students can describe the mission statement," with an average responses of 2.67, (b) "Teachers in leadership are provided sufficient time," with an average response of 2.70; (c) "Veteran teachers fill most leadership roles," with an average responses of 2.77; and (d) "Teachers in leadership have sufficient resources," with an average responses of 2.86.

Table 5

Elementary School Average Responses of the Five Least Prevalent Survey Items

Statement	Average response
Teachers in leadership have sufficient resources	2.86
Veteran Teachers fill most leadership roles	2.77
Teachers in leadership are provided sufficient time	2.70
Students can describe the mission statement	2.67
Parents can describe the mission statement	2.27

Note. Possible answers range from 1= Rarely/Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4= Continually.

Table 6 lists the middle schools' five most prevalent statement items ranking a clearly written mission statement with the highest average response of 3.85. This was followed by: (a) "Curriculum alignment with state standards", with an average response of 3.81; (b) "Administrators have high expectations," with an average response of 3.78; (c) "Teachers have high expectations," with an average response of 3.77; and (d) "Administrators can support a mission statement," with an average response of 3.77.

Table 6

Middle School Average Responses of the Five Most Prevalent Statement Items

Statement	Average response
Clearly written mission statement	3.85
School curriculum is aligned with state standards	3.81
Administrators have high expectations	3.78
Teachers have high expectations	3.77
Administrators can support mission statement	3.77

Note. Possible answers range from 1= Rarely/Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4= Continually.

Table 7 lists the middle schools' five least prevalent statement items. When listing the bottom five from least prevalent to most prevalent, the ability of the parents to describe the mission statement was the lowest ranked with an average response of 1.99. Among the other five least prevalent statement items were: (a) "Students can describe the mission statement," with the average response of 2.01; (b) "Teachers in leadership are provided sufficient time," with the average response of 2.49; (c) "Teachers in leadership have sufficient resources," with an average response of 2.53; and (d) "Teachers are interested in leadership roles," with an average response of 2.54.

Table 7

Middle School Average Responses of the Five Least Prevalent Survey Items

Statement	Average response
Teachers are interested in leadership roles	2.54
Teachers in leadership have sufficient resources	2.53
Teachers in leadership are provided sufficient time	2.49
Students can describe the mission statement	2.01
Parents can describe the mission statement	1.99

Note. Possible answers range from 1= Rarely/Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4= Continually.

When comparing the characteristics from most prevalent to least prevalent in both school types, many similarities were found. In the five most prevalent characteristics utilized within the two school types, four out of the five were the same. Both elementary and middle school participants scored their respective schools highest in having a clearly written mission statement. Additionally, within the next top four characteristics of each school type, three of the four characteristics were the same for both: "Administrators have high expectations"; "School curriculum is aligned with state standards"; and "Administrators can describe the school mission statement."

In the five least prevalent characteristics utilized within the two school types, four out of the five were the same and the bottom three were in the exact same order. The bottom three in order from least to greatest were: "Parents can describe the school mission statement"; "Students can describe the school mission statement"; and "Teachers in leadership are provided sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities." The fourth

similar characteristic both school types had in the least prevalent was: "Teachers in leadership have sufficient resources to carry out their responsibilities."

There were a couple of differences between the school types when identifying the five most and five least prevalent characteristics. Elementary school and middle school data each had one different characteristic in the most prevalent and one different characteristic in the least prevalent items. While elementary school educators' scores revealed "Administrators supporting the school mission" in the top five characteristics, middle school educators' scores placed "Teachers having high expectations" in their top five characteristics. Yet, while these differences did exist, both of the differing characteristics mentioned did place in both of the schools' nine most prevalent characteristics.

Additionally, elementary school and middle school data each had one different characteristic in the least prevalent items. While elementary educators' scores identified "Veteran teachers fill most leadership roles in school" in the bottom five characteristics, middle school educators' scores revealed "Teachers are interested in leadership roles" in their bottom five characteristics. Although these differences were apparent, both of the differing characteristics were contained in both the elementary and middle schools' eight least prevalent characteristics.

Research Hypothesis

Given the need for distributed leadership and that elementary and middle school settings are quite different, this research sought to determine if there was a difference between the two settings when comparing the four dimensions of leadership. Since quantitative research aspires to utilize deductive reasoning to predict the results of the

study (Merriam, 1998), the researcher hypothesized middle school settings would be more conducive to distributing leadership than elementary school settings. Unlike many elementary self-contained classrooms having one teacher instructing all subjects, middle school operates with grade-level instructional teams delivering different core subjects facilitated by various teachers. At the middle level, the interdisciplinary teaming structure provides an effective mechanism for discussion and decision making. The common planning time, flexible scheduling, common adjacent team autonomy encourage collaboration and growth (Valentine et al., 2004). Furthermore, Scribner et al. (2007) explained the use of teacher teams is an illustration of distributed leadership.

The researcher's hypothesis stated middle school settings would be more conducive to distributing leadership than elementary school settings. The results of the data analysis did not support the hypothesis. The researcher found this school district's elementary school certified participants' scored their schools significantly higher in all four dimensions of distributed leadership readiness than those participants from this district's middle schools.

Summary

The first research question considered the extent to which both schools utilized the four different dimensions of distributed leadership readiness and compared the results from both settings. The data showed the average responses for each of the two different types of schools differed and both school types ranked the dimensions in different order when considering most utilized to least utilized. Both elementary and middle school participants scored their schools as ranking *Mission, vision, goals* second and *Leadership practices* fourth. Yet, elementary schools ranked *School culture* first, as most utilized,

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and *Shared responsibility* third. Conversely, middle schools ranked *Shared responsibility* first and *School culture* third.

The second research question addressed finding any significant difference between the extent to which each of the distributed leadership dimensions was utilized in the elementary setting versus the middle school setting. With a probability of alpha=.05, the data results of the independent samples *t*-test were analyzed. It was found the average responses for each distributed leadership readiness dimension of the elementary schools were significantly higher than the middle school average responses for each distributed leadership readiness dimension.

When comparing the most prevalent and least prevalent item characteristics of the dimensions from both elementary and middle schools, more similarities than differences were identified. Four out of five in both the most prevalent and least prevalent characteristics were similar for both school types. Elementary school and middle school data each had one different characteristic in the most prevalent and one different characteristic in the least prevalent items. Although these differences were apparent, both of the differing characteristics were contained in both the elementary and middle schools' nine most prevalent characteristics and eight least prevalent characteristics.

The results of the data analysis did not support the research hypothesis. The researcher found this school district's elementary school certified participants' scored their schools significantly higher in all four dimensions of distributed leadership readiness than those participants from this district's middle schools.

Chapters One, Two, and Three laid the groundwork for this study by presenting the purpose of the study, the research questions, related literature, and the design and

methodology utilized in the research. In Chapter Four, the data collection and analysis

results were presented for each research question and hypothesis. Chapter Five will

provide a summary and conclusions and recommendations and implications for future

research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Due to the significant increase in demands placed on school leadership such as expectations for improvement to meet standards-based reform, changing circumstances, increasing workload, and the need for innovation, school administrators are looking toward utilizing team or distributed leadership (Harris, 2005; Johnston & Pickersgill, 1992; Vanderberghe, 1992). There is an agreed upon belief distributive leadership means leadership should be distributed throughout the whole school, yet there are various ways this can be attained (Lashway, 2003a). Examples of distributive leadership can run the spectrum from a principal simply encouraging the faculty to take on leadership responsibilities to an entire district implementing a new decision making structure for all its schools. It may mean the assistant principal takes over some of the principal's responsibilities. It could also mean giving some grade level teams decision making responsibilities. Through each of these avenues, some of the principal's responsibilities have been distributed throughout the school.

Unlike most elementary self-contained classrooms with one teacher instructing all subjects, middle school operates with grade-level instructional teams delivering different core subjects facilitated by various teachers. At the middle level, the interdisciplinary teaming structure provides an effective mechanism for discussion and decision making. The common planning time, flexible scheduling, common adjacent classrooms, and team autonomy encourage collaboration and growth (Valentine et al., 2004). Furthermore,

Scribner et al. (2007) explained the use of teacher teams is an illustration of distributed leadership.

It is vital for administrators to be aware of various leadership techniques available for operating effective elementary and middle schools. When researching distributed leadership preparedness in elementary and middle schools, the differing structure of elementary and middle school programs was apparent. The intention of this research was to provide data on the preparedness of elementary and middle schools to distribute leadership and determine whether or not the elementary schools are less prepared than middle schools.

This quantitative study utilized the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) to determine schools' readiness to engage in distributed leadership. This study was designed to explore the relationship between the two different school settings and the four leadership dimensions of *Leadership practice; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility* measured by the DLRS. The DLRS is a self-evaluation scale intended to provide a profile of a school's willingness to engage in shared leadership practices. Each of the 51 items on the DLRS were statements associated with one of the four dimensions.

Data collected using the DLRS instrument was used to ask the question: Are middle school settings more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings? A total of 359 certified educators from 22 public schools in the same school district participated in this study. Of the 22 schools, 15 were elementary schools and eight were middle schools. After discarding 57 returned surveys due to insufficient

information, 302 were used in the study, including 181 elementary surveys and 121 middle school surveys.

Research Questions

This quantitative study asked the question: Are middle school settings more conducive to distributed leadership than elementary school settings? Aligning with Elmore's (2000) assertions educational leadership, which involves improving instruction, focuses on four key dimensions: *Leadership practices; Mission, vision, and goals*; *School culture*; and *Shared responsibility*, this study focused on these categories when determining school readiness for distributing leadership. To compare the readiness to share leadership in both settings the following questions were considered:

1. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership distributed?

    a. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the elementary schools?

    b. To what extent are the four dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the middle schools?

    c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their readiness to distribute the four dimensions of leadership?

2. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which each of the leadership dimensions is ready to be distributed in the elementary setting versus the middle school setting?

    a. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *Leadership practices* dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

b. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the

   Mission, vision, and goals dimension is ready to be distributed in each

   setting?

c. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *School*

   culture dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

d. Is there a significant difference between the extent to which the *Shared*

   responsibility dimension is ready to be distributed in each setting?

3. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the different

   dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed?

   a. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the

      different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the

      elementary schools?

   b. To what extent is each specific characteristic (survey item) within the

      Different dimensions of leadership ready to be distributed in the

      middle schools?

   c. To what extent do elementary and middle schools differ in their

      readiness to distribute each specific characteristic (survey item) of

      leadership?

Research Hypothesis

Given that elementary and middle school settings are quite different and both

have a need for distributing leadership, this research sought to determine if there was a

difference between the two settings when comparing the four dimensions of leadership.

Since this quantitative research aspired to utilize deductive reasoning to predict the

results of the study (Merriam, 1998), the researcher hypothesized middle school settings would be more conducive to distributing leadership than elementary school settings. The researcher's hypothesis stated middle school settings would be more conducive to distributing leadership than elementary school settings.

The first research question considered the extent to which both schools utilized the four different dimensions of distributed leadership readiness and compared the results from both settings. The data showed the average responses for each of the two different types of schools differed and both school types ranked the dimensions in different order when considering most utilized to least utilized. Both elementary and middle school participants scored their schools as ranking *Mission, vision, goals* second and *Leadership practices* fourth. While elementary schools ranked *School culture* first and *Shared responsibility* third, middle schools ranked *Shared responsibility* first and *School culture* third.

The results of the elementary educators ranked the four dimensions from most utilized to least utilized in their perspective schools: *School culture; Mission, vision, goals; Shared responsibility; and Leadership practices.* These results buttressed Gordon's (2005) research which utilized the DLRS data to study the extent to which the dimensions of distributed leadership were associated with student achievement. Gordon's study found schools with higher student achievement ranked the four dimensions in the same order as the schools did within this research.

The second research question addressed finding any significant difference between the extent to which each of the distributed leadership dimensions was utilized in the elementary setting versus the middle school setting. With a probability of alpha =.05,

the data results of the independent samples *t*-test were analyzed. It was found the average

responses for each distributed leadership readiness dimension of the elementary schools

were significantly higher than the middle school average responses for each distributed

leadership readiness dimension.

When addressing the third research question comparing the most prevalent and

least prevalent item characteristics of the dimensions from both elementary and middle

schools, more similarities than differences were identified. Four out of five in both the

most prevalent and least prevalent characteristics were similar for both school types.

Elementary school and middle school data each had one different characteristic in the

most prevalent and one different characteristic in the least prevalent items. Although

these differences were apparent, both of the differing characteristics were contained in

both the elementary and middle schools' nine most prevalent characteristics and eight

least prevalent characteristics.

The results of the data analysis did not support the hypothesis. The researcher

found this school district's elementary school certified participants' scored their schools

significantly higher in all four dimensions of distributed leadership readiness than those

participants from this district's middle schools.

Limitations and Assumptions

The interpretation of the results of this study takes into account the limitations and

assumptions of the research. The researcher of this study was a principal within the

district being studied. Yet, the researchers' school was not included in this study. The

researcher chose the literature to review that guided this study and also was a part of the

population benefiting from the results of the study. Therefore, the researcher was close to

the data. Nevertheless, since this was a quantitative study, based on results of anonymous data from a Likert-scale instrument, the researcher was able to report the results of the data with minimal biases.

Additionally, although the surveys were distributed in an effort to have a similar amount of data from elementary and middle schools, the staff who chose to return completed surveys could not be pre-determined. Consequently, more surveys were returned from elementary schools than middle schools. A total of 302 returned surveys were used in the study, including 181 elementary school surveys and 121 middle school surveys.

This study was based upon the assumptions the participants would be self-reflective and honest, the elementary schools would have self-contained classrooms, and the middle schools would have interdisciplinary teaming. The self reporting nature of the survey required the assumption the participants were aware of the school environment in which they worked and the assumption the participants' responses were honest. Since 50% of those completing surveys had been in their perspective buildings more than seven years, at least half of the participants should have been very aware of their school environment. Additionally, all the surveys were returned anonymously to facilitate honesty of the responses.

Surveys were distributed to elementary school settings composed mainly of self-contained classrooms with no interdisciplinary teaming. Only four elementary teachers did not have self-contained classrooms. Two sets of two teachers shared responsibilities in teaching their students. Additionally, none of the elementary schools had a full-time assistant principal. All the middle schools involved in the study had interdisciplinary

teaming and a full-time assistant principal on staff. Therefore, there was a definite structural difference in the two different types of school settings.

Implications for Practice

School leadership can presently use the results of this study to assist them in their distribution of leadership by identifying areas of change that may be needed to distribute leadership in both elementary and middle school settings. In this study, middle schools were not found to be more ready to distribute leadership than elementary schools. In fact, the results of this study point toward the converse. Elementary school educators perceived their schools to be more ready to distribute leadership than middle school educators.

This research exposed important implications for practice to those administrators who are considering the utilization of distributed leadership. The data revealed the distributed leadership dimensions utilized most to least in elementary schools and those distributed leadership dimensions utilized most to least in middle schools. Although middle schools ranked *Shared responsibility* first, and therefore highest, in utilization of the distributed leadership dimensions, elementary schools ranked *Shared responsibility* as third. Consequently, middle school educators perceived their school as being more ready to distribute leadership in the *Shared responsibility* dimension more than any of the other dimensions.

Elmore (2000) proposed educators are inclined to specialize in areas of their interests, aptitudes, prior knowledge, skills, and specialized roles. Furthermore, some principals and teachers are more competent than others based upon their personal interests, skills, experience, or knowledge. By utilizing these highly skilled and

competent educators in various leadership positions within the school, the responsibility is shared. Effective distributed leadership requires the ability to organize individuals with various competencies so they complement one another.

Spillane et al. (1999) further explained the vital element of effectively distributing leadership requires the expertise and responsibilities of the staff to be extended over people in different roles rather divided among them. This is buttressed by Elmore who suggested the success of distributing leadership is just as dependent on the joint dependency and reciprocity between individual roles in the organization as the definition of role responsibilities. These various transactions between the roles include conversations among the leadership. Scribner et al. (2007) believed to better understand distributed leadership, researchers need to analyze the conversation taking place between various forms of leadership within the organization, such as teacher teams.

A second important aspect revealed elementary school educators perceived their schools as being more ready to distribute leadership in the *School culture* dimension than any of the other dimensions by ranking it first. Yet, middle school educators ranked *School culture* as third out of the four dimensions. Distributed leadership requires a *common culture*. DuFour and Eaker (1998) explained school culture is based upon "the assumptions, beliefs, values, and habits that constitute the norm of the organization – norms that shape how people think, feel, and act" (p. 131).

Sergiovanni (2000) described culture as "the normative glue that holds a particular school together" (p. 1). Elmore (2000) further explained how important a common culture is in distributing leadership.

In a knowledge-intensive enterprise like teaching and learning, there is no way to perform these complex tasks without widely distributing the responsibility for leadership among roles in the organization, and without working hard at creating a common culture, or set of values, symbols, and rituals. (p. 16)

Thus, effective distributed leadership requires guidance and direction from multiple expert sources with a common culture. It is the common values, or culture, that enables the school to attain their mission through distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000).

A third important factor revealed *Leadership practices* as being marked the lowest for both schools. Distributed leadership practices organize staff to be most productive. Elmore indicated distributed leadership is possible even though performance-based accountability in schools require specific individuals to be responsible for the guidance, direction, and performance of the organization. Lashway (2003b) further explained rather than being the "chief doer" of the organization, the principal builds the structure of leadership within the organization (p. 1). The principal facilitates the distribution of leadership by enabling, supporting, coordinating, and guiding the work of the other leaders while also establishing a wholesome emotional climate. Elmore agreed by stating distributed leadership does not mean no one is responsible, it means the responsibility of administrative leaders is to enhance the skills and knowledge of individuals in the school, create a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, encourage productive relationship among the various school staff, and require individual accountability toward the school mission.

Additionally, effective distributed leadership practices require seeking knowledge and skill outside the organization to bring to the staff when skills within the organization

are not enough to solve a problem. Leadership's most vital responsibility is to create a common culture of expectations concerning the use of individual skills and abilities. Harris (2003) explained distributing leadership is exploiting the staff members' abilities within the organization (Harris, 2003). By facilitating these processes, the principal develops the leadership potential in all staff members (Burke, 2003; Harris, 2003; Sebring et al., 2003).

Although the *leadership practices* dimension was ranked lowest for both school settings, it is particularly interesting to note the average responses were lowest for middle schools. Since leadership practices on the DLRS was addressed through statements addressing teachers having time, resources, and desire to hold leadership roles, the structure of interdisciplinary teaming should support such areas. The schedule and school structure in middle schools is intended to provide more time for collaboration in decision making and leadership roles. Therefore, why did middle school educators perceive their schools as less ready to distribute leadership than elementary school educators perceived their schools?

Recommendations for Future Research

School leadership can presently use the results of this study to assist them in their distribution of leadership by identifying areas of change that may be needed to distribute leadership in both elementary and middle school settings. Since much of the work on distributed leadership has focused on elementary schools, further investigation is needed on how leadership can be distributed in middle schools. Spillane and Diamond (2007) agreed by stating the question still remains of how leadership is distributed in secondary

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schools. Future research on distributed leadership should consider the differences in the people and the practices in middle schools and elementary schools.

Since the data revealed the average responses of the elementary schools educators ranked *School culture* first and middle school educators ranked *Shared responsibility* first, further research on response bias should be considered. The type of people who choose to teach elementary school could be very different than the type of people who choose to teach middle school students. Therefore, this may effect their perception of their *School culture*.

Middle school educators ranked *Shared responsibility* highest, which supports Scribner et al.'s (2007) claim the use of teacher teams is an illustration of distributed leadership. At the middle school level, the interdisciplinary teaming is critical. Investigating leadership practice from a distributed perspective at the middle school level must take into consideration interdisciplinary teaming. The distinctive culture of the teams is important in studying leadership from a distributed perspective. Therefore, further research is needed to find if distributed leadership and the four different distributed leadership dimensions of *School culture; Mission, vision, goals; Shared responsibility; and Leadership practices* appear different at the middle school level than they do at the elementary school level.

Leadership should develop from interdisciplinary teams by involving the actions of many stakeholders and through the intricate network of interactions and relationships among all the school staff members (Spillane et al., 2004). Although interdisciplinary teaming, with scheduled collaboration time for teacher teams, provides middle schools the opportunity to structurally, or situationally, distribute leadership, it is not evident if

the teams are effectively distributing leadership socially through the interactions within the teacher teams. In effective self-managed teams, "multiple leaders emerge and a dynamic pattern of shared team leadership evolves" (Belasen, 2000, p. 259). Self-managing teams are effective at innovation because they permit internal networking to encourage creativity. Yet, Janiz (1982) indicated one negative implication of teaming and other collaborative structures is the possible increase in *groupthink*, where the members of the team encourage similar ideas and opinions while stifling innovation. A closer examination of the teams' interactions and practices may reveal a need for professional development to enhance skills for effective team collaboration.

The unique structure created by interdisciplinary teaming in middle schools can be utilized as a leadership tool within the school. Scribner et al. (2007) explained the use of teacher teams is an example of distributed leadership. Future research in middle schools is recommended through observations, personal interviews, or focus groups to provide information concerning the interactions between the staff and within the teacher interdisciplinary teams. This will allow a better understanding of how distributed leadership can be utilized by school leaders to effectively meet the increasing demands placed upon them.

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Appendix A

Dear SPS Educator,

Greetings, I would like to invite you to participate in a research entitled "Comparing Elementary and Middle Schools for Distributed Leadership Readiness" to complete my dissertation for the University of Missouri-Columbia. This study is intended to help raise awareness concerning the use of distributed process in both school settings. The study may have potential positive implications for leadership roles within schools. This is one of the ongoing efforts to support school personnel in their endeavor to raise student achievement. Results will be published in Dissertation Abstracts and submitted to professional conferences and refereed journals for publication. You have been chosen due to your employment in the Springfield Public Schools District in Missouri.

Informed Consent Statement Concerning Participants' Rights Protection

The Research- This dissertation research uses the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale to investigate how approximately 70 administrators and 100 teachers view leadership distribution in their schools. Participation is cost free, voluntary, lasts until the enclosed survey is mailed back to me, and may be terminated at any time without consequences. The informed assent and survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If later you do not wish your data to be used, please inform the researcher; your wish will be honored before culmination of the study.

Confidentiality- Participants; answers will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. With no exception, only the researcher and the dissertation supervisor will have access to identifiable data. Collected data will be destroyed in five years. Data will be aggregated for statistical analysis and summarized for reporting, protecting participants' confidentiality in all cases. Participants' identity and district or school affiliation will not be published.

Risks- Participants' voluntary participation, anonymity, and control as to which survey items they answer insure that there is no foreseeable risk of any kind. The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if discomfort eventually results from research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities if participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with the research. In such unlikely event, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately to obtain a review of the matter and receive specific information. Related ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects ser forth in the Code of Federal Regulations "45 CFR 46" will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

Contacts- This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board-IRBs of the University of Missouri-Columbia and by the Institutional Review Board-IRB of Missouri State University. If you have further questions regarding research and participants' rights, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585 or visit http://www.research.missouri.edu/cirb/index.htm. For inquiries about the survey or your participation, please contact the researcher at (417) 523-7800 or by e-mail at kchristy@spsmail.org. You may also contact the dissertation supervisor Dr. Robert Watson by e-mail at Robertwatson@missouristate.edu.

The survey was designed to take approximately 10 minutes. A SASE return envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Please sign and return your survey through school mail. Additionally, if you would like to receive the survey results in about nine months, please e-mail your request to me. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Karyn Christy, M.Ed., Doctoral Candidate
University of Missouri- Columbia

Appendix B

Greetings Fellow Middle School and Elementary SPS Educators,

I am in the last phase of completing my doctorate and need information about <u>your</u> <u>school</u> *for my dissertation comparing the leadership practices in Springfield Public Schools' elementary and middle schools. In order to complete this study, I need approximately 100 middle school and 100 elementary school completed surveys. I am very aware that time is a precious commodity, therefore, you have been chosen to participate in a* <u>brief</u> *survey that should only take you about* <u>10 minutes</u> *to rate characteristics of leadership practices in your building. A comparison will be made between the responses of elementary educators and middle school educators in the SPS district. These comparisons will be used to determine if there are differences between the degree to which leadership practices are shared, or distributed, among the staff members of elementary and middle school educators.*

Please:

1) Fill in your demographic information and the survey questions concerning

   your school's practices

2) Place the completed survey in the enclosed envelope.

3) Keep the informed consent letter for your records

4) Deposit the sealed envelope in the candy-decorated box in your staff lounge or put

   it in the district's mail blue bag in your school's main office !! ☺

If you would like the results of this study, please contact Karyn Christy at

kchristy@spsmail.org.

Thank you very much!

Karyn Christy
Principal
Wilson's Creek

Certified Staff Demographic Information for Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS)

Directions: Please check one answer for each of the nine categories below. <u>All</u> responses will be held <u>strictly</u> confidential. Thank you for your assistance.

1. <u>Gender</u>   ____ Female

                                                            ____ Male

2. <u>Race/Ethnicity</u>   ____ Native American

                                                            ____ Asian/Pacific Islander

                                                            ____ Black (non-Hispanic)

                                                            ____ White

                                                            ____ Hispanic

                                                            ____ Other

3. <u>Highest Degree</u>   ____ BA

                                                            ____ MA

                                                            ____ Specialist

                                                            ____ Doctorate

4. <u>Total Yrs in Education</u>   _____

5. <u>Total Yrs in this school</u>   _____

6. <u>Total Yrs in this district</u>   _____

7. <u>Do you currently hold an Administrator's certificate?</u>   _____ No

                                                                       _____ Yes

8. <u>Primary responsibility</u>:   _____ school administrator

                                                            _____ classroom teacher

                                                            _____ support teacher

9. I work in a: _____ Title I school

                                                            _____ non-Title I school

Rating Scale **Directions**: Please mark your responses in the first four columns at the right. Use the four point scale from '**Rarely**/**Never**' to '**Continually**' to describe how regularly the following statements apply to you and your school. *Select 'Insufficient Information' if you do not have sufficient information to respond to the statement.*	Insufficient Information	Rarely/ Never	Sometime	Frequently	Continually
1. The school has clearly written vision and/or mission statements.					
2. Teachers can describe the vision and/or mission statements for the school.					
3. Teachers support the common vision and/or mission statements for the school.					
4. Administrators can describe a common vision and/or mission for the school.					
5. Administrators support a common vision and/or mission for the school.					
6. If parents are asked to describe the school's vision and/or mission, most would be able to describe it clearly.					
7. If students are asked to describe the school's vision and/or mission, most would be able to describe it generally.					
8. School goals are aligned with its vision and/or mission statements.					
9. The school uses a school improvement plan as a basis to evaluate the progress it is making in attaining its goals.					
10. Teachers collectively establish school goals.					
11. Administrators establish school goals.					
12. Teachers collectively revise goals annually.					
13. Administrators revise goals annually.					
14. The school's curriculum is aligned with the state's academic standards.					
15. Teachers have high expectations for students' academic performance.					
16 Administrators have high expectations for students' academic performance.					
17. Teachers and administrators share accountability for students' academic performance.					
18. School resources are directed to those areas in which student learning needs to improve most.					
19. The school is a learning community that continually improves its effectiveness.					
20. There is a high level of mutual respect among the professional staff in the school.					
21. There is a high level of trust among the professional staff in the school.					
22. There is high level of mutual respect between the school administration and the other professional staff in the school.					
23. There is a high level of trust between the school administration and the other professional staff in the school.					
24. The school administrator(s) welcome professional staff members input on issues related to curriculum, instruction, and improving student performance.					
25. The school supports using new instructional innovations.					
26. The school's daily and/or weekly schedules provide time for teachers to collaborate on instructional issues.					
27. School professionals and parents agree on the most effective roles parents can play as partners in their child's education.					

	Insufficient Information	Rarely/ Never	Sometime	Frequently	Continually
*** You are almost done!!! Please remember to seal your <u>completed</u> survey in the envelopes provided and place them in the candy-decorated box in your staff lounge or in your school's district mail blue bag. Thank you!! ☺					
28. The school clearly communicates the 'chain of contact' between home and school so parents know who to contact when they have questions and concerns.					
29. The school makes available a variety of data (e.g. student performance) for teachers to use to improve student achievement.					
30. Decisions to change curriculum and/or instructional programs are based on assessment data.					
31. There is a formal structure in place in the school (e.g. curriculum committee) to provide professional staff opportunities to participate in school-level instructional decision-making.					
32. The principal actively encourages professional staff members to Participate in instructional decision-making.					
33. Professional staff members in the school have the responsibility to make decisions that affect meeting school goals.					
34. The school provides teachers with professional development aligned with the school's mission and/or goals.					
35. Administrators participate along side teachers in the school's professional development activities.					
36. The principal actively participates in his/her own professional development activities to improve leadership in the school.					
37. My supervisor and I jointly develop my annual professional development plan.					
38. My professional development plan includes activities that are based on school needs.					
39. My professional development plan includes activities that are based on my Individual professional needs.					
40. Teachers actively participate in instructional decision-making.					
41. Central office and school administrators work together to determine the professional development activities.					
42. The principal is knowledgeable about current instructional issues.					
43. My principal's practices are consistent with his/her words.					
44. Informal school leaders play an important role in the school in improving the achievement of students.					
45. Informal school leaders play an important role in the school in improving the performance of professionals.					
46. The school has expanded its capacity by providing professional staff formal opportunities to take on leadership roles.					
47. Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient school time to permit them to make meaningful contributions to the school.					
48. Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient resources to be able to make meaningful contributions to the school.					
49. Veteran teachers fill most leadership roles in the school.					
50. New teachers are provided opportunities to fill some school leadership roles.					
51. Teachers are interested in participating in school leadership roles.					

Appendix C

Number of Items in Each Dimension of DLRS Instrument

Dimension	Number of Items
Leadership Practices	10
Mission, Vision, and Goal	14
School Culture	16
Shared Responsibility	11

n = 5

Appendix D
Item Number and Statement Associated with the Leadership Dimensions

Item Number and Statement Associated with *Leadership practices*

_____

Item number   Statement associated with *Leadership practices*

_____

34. The school provides teachers with professional development aligned with the
school's mission and/or goals.

41. Central office and school administrators work together to determine the
        professional development activities.

44. Informal school leaders play an important role in the school in improving the
        achievement of students.

45. Informal school leaders play an important role in the school in improving the
        performance of professionals.

46. The school has expanded its capacity by providing professional staff formal
        opportunities to take on leadership roles.

47. Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient school
         time to permit them to make meaningful contributions to the school.

48. Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient resources
        to be able to make meaningful contributions to the school.

49. Veteran teachers fill most leadership roles in the school.

50. New teachers are provided opportunities to fill some school leadership roles.

51. Teachers are interested in participating in school leadership roles.

_____

n = 10

Item Number and Statement Associated with *Mission, vision, and goals*

_____

Item number   Statement associated with *Mission, vision, and goals*

_____

1. The school has clearly written vision and/or mission statements.

2. Teachers can describe the vision and/or mission statements for the school.

3. Teachers support the common vision and/or mission statements for the school.\

4. Administrators can describe a common vision and/or mission for the school.

5. Administrators support a common vision and/or mission for the school.

6. If parents are asked to describe the school's vision and/or mission, most
   would be able to describe it clearly.

7. If students are asked to describe the school's vision and/or mission, most
   would be able to describe it generally.

8. School goals are aligned with its vision and/or mission statements.

9. The school uses a school improvement plan as a basis to evaluate the progress
   it is making in attaining its goals.

10. Teachers collectively establish school goals.

11. Administrators establish school goals.

12. Teachers collectively revise goals annually.

13. Administrators revise goals annually.

14. The school's curriculum is aligned with the state's academic standards

_____

n = 14

Item Number and Statement Associated with *School culture*

_____

Item number   Statement associated with *School culture*

_____

20. There is a high level of mutual respect among the professional staff in the
    school.

21. There is a high level of trust among the professional staff in the school.

22. There is high level of mutual respect between the school administration and
    the other professional staff in the school.

23. There is a high level of trust between the school administration and the
    other professional staff in the school.

24. The school administrator(s) welcome professional staff members input on
    issues related to curriculum, instruction, and improving student performance.

25. The school supports using new instructional innovations.

32. The principal actively encourages professional staff members to
    participate in instructional decision-making.

33. Professional staff members in the school have the responsibility
    to make decisions that affect meeting school goals.

35. Administrators participate along side teachers in the school's professional
    development activities.

36. The principal actively participates in his/her own professional development
    activities to improve leadership in the school.

37. My supervisor and I jointly develop my annual professional development
    plan.

38. My professional development plan includes activities that are based on
    school needs.

39. My professional development plan includes activities that are based on my
    individual professional needs.

40. Teachers actively participate in instructional decision-making.

42. The principal is knowledgeable about current instructional issues.

43. My principal's practices are consistent with his/her words.
_____
n = 16

Item Number and Statement Associated with *Shared responsibility*

Item number	Statement associated with *Shared responsibility*

15. Teachers have high expectations for students' academic performance.

16. Administrators have high expectations for students' academic performance.

17. Teachers and administrators share accountability for students' academic performance.

18. School resources are directed to those areas in which student learning needs to improve most.

19. The school is a learning community that continually improves its effectiveness.

26. The school's daily and/or weekly schedules provide time for teachers to collaborate on instructional issues.

27. School professionals and parents agree on the most effective roles parents can play as partners in their child's education.

28. The school clearly communicates the 'chain of contact' between home and school so parents know who to contact when they have questions and concerns.

29. The school makes available a variety of data (e.g. student performance) for teachers to use to improve student achievement.

30. Decisions to change curriculum and/or instructional programs are based on assessment data.

31. There is a formal structure in place in the school (e.g. curriculum committee) to provide professional staff opportunities to participate in school-level instructional decision-making.

n = 11

Appendix E

IRB Approval Letter

Dear Investigator:

Your human subject research project entitled COMPARING ELEMENTARY AND
MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOR DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP READINESS was reviewed
and APPROVED as "Exempt" on February 27, 2008 and will expire on February 27,
2009. Research activities approved at this level are eligible for exemption from some
federal IRB requirements. Although you will not be required to submit the annual
Continuing Review Report, your approval will be contingent upon your agreement to
annually submit the "Annual Exempt Research Certification" form to maintain current
IRB approval. You must submit the "Annual Exempt Research Certification" form by
January 13, 2009 to provide enough time for review and avoid delays in the IRB process.
Failure to timely submit the certification form by the deadline will result in automatic
expiration of IRB approval. (See form: http://irb.missouri.edu/eirb/)

If you wish to revise your activities, you do not need to submit an Amendment
Application. You must contact the Campus IRB office for a determination of whether the
proposed changes will continue to qualify for exempt status. You will be expected to
provide a brief written description of the proposed revisions and how it will impact the
risks to subject participants. The Campus IRB will provide a written determination of
whether the proposed revisions change from exemption to expedite or full board review
status. If the activities no longer qualify for exemption, as a result of the proposed
revisions, an expedited or full board IRB application must be submitted to the Campus
IRB. The investigator may not proceed with the proposed revisions until IRB approval is
granted.

Please be aware that all human subject research activities must receive prior approval by
the IRB prior to initiation, regardless of the review level status. If you have any questions
regarding the IRB process, do not hesitate to contact the Campus IRB office at (573) 882-
9585.

Campus Institutional Review Board

VITA

The author, Karyn Christy, was an elementary teacher in the Chicago Public Schools system for seven years while completing her Master's in Administration degree before moving to Missouri in 2001. Ms. Christy became an elementary assistant principal soon after arriving in Missouri. The following year, she moved to an assistant principal position in a middle school in Springfield, Missouri. During her assistant principalship in the middle school, she was hired to be the principal of the first fifth and sixth grade intermediate school in Springfield Public Schools. The new school opened in 2005, where she remains as principal.