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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE STRENGTHS
OF ISLAMIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN CALIFORNIA, TEXAS, NEW YORK, FLORIDA, AND ILLINOIS

by

SYED KAMRAN QADRI
B.S. University of Central Florida, 2000
M.Ed. University of Central Florida, 2004

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
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at the University of Central Florida
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Major Professor: Rosemarye Taylor

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ABSTRACT

As the focal point of the school, the principal's leadership is integral to its effective functioning. This study used a self-assessment to analyze the self-identified strengths of principals in Islamic schools within the five most populated states in the United States (which also have the largest number of mosques) and the commonalities in those strengths based on (a) the enrollment of the school; (b) year school was established; (c) the gender of the principal; (d) the principal's professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience; and (e) geographic location.

While only a small amount of statistical significance was evident ($p < .05$) in exploring the differences between groups, several conclusions were made. In analyzing the strengths of the principals, the least selected strength was Significance and the most was Analytical, which had the highest proportion of affirmatively responding principals as compared to any of the other strengths. Additionally, the relationship between principal strength and school enrollment resulted in for the strengths of Command and Developer at a significance level that was less stringent than the $p = .002$ dictated by the study; principals at schools that have a student enrollment of 151-200 ranked Command higher as compared to principals in schools of other sizes, whereas those with an enrollment of 150 or fewer students ranked Developer as a more preferred strength.

In addressing principal strengths and gender, the results showcased males ranking Self-assuredness as their preferred trait more frequently than their female counterparts, who preferred Futuristic. Furthermore, the relationship of principal strengths and area of education resulted in the strengths of Activator, Maximizer, and Positivity as being

ranked higher for principals who had a degree in education at the $p = .05$ level. The strengths of Empathy, Harmony, and Responsibility ($p < .05$) and Deliberative ($p < .01$) were ranked higher by principals who did not have a degree in education. Also, based on the average rankings of principal strengths, Achiever indicated the strongest association for principals with a degree in education and Deliberative for principals who did not.

The results of the mean ranking of the strengths among principals of differing years of experience resulted in the ranking of Focus and Includer at higher levels for principals with 3-6 years of experience ($p < .01$). Furthermore, the average rankings showcased the strength of Achiever as the most strongly rated for principals with less than 3 years of experience, Focus for principals with 3-6 years of experience, and Analytical for principals with more than 6 years.

Examination of principal strengths based on geographic location was conducted descriptively due to small group sizes. Among the five states of focus, average rankings of strengths indicated that Deliberative was the most preferred among California principals, Includer among Florida principals, Activator among Illinois respondents, Command among New York principals, and Analytical in Texas.

To my parents . . . my first teachers

“O Allah benefit me with what You have taught me, and teach me that which will benefit me, and grant me knowledge which will benefit me.”
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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To the Islamic school administrators, I salute you for your dedication and commitment towards the establishment and functioning of effective Islamic schools. It is my sincere hope that this study will help contribute in developing and producing effective and exemplary school leaders. I want to give a heartfelt thank you to the school leaders; without your contribution, it would have been impossible to complete this study.

Having graduated from Orange County Public Schools and working for it from 2002-2011, it is only befitting that I recognize OCPS for the role it played in my development as a leader. It was at OCPS that I was introduced to strengths-based leadership and given the opportunity to hone and develop my own leadership skills. My administrators had the faith in my abilities and provided me with the opportunity to take on administrative responsibilities while still in the classroom – for this I am grateful to you all. This was the ideal on-the-job training and its value is immeasurable.

To my fellow educators who are either planning to embark on this journey or have already begun, I wish you the best and pray that soon you too will be ready to add the salutation of doctor before your name.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS

Introduction

This study expanded on research by Paduano (2012) that examined the self-identified strengths of principals utilizing the themes listed in the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment and the relationship of those strengths based on (a) percentage of adequate yearly progress achieved, (b) grade levels (middle or high school) served, and (c) community (urban or suburban) served. Paduano concluded that a statistically significant difference existed between strengths as identified by the principals and the achievement of adequate yearly progress of the schools they served. She also found statistical significance in the areas of Communication and Harmony that were attributable to the grade level served, as well as among the themes of Achiever and Responsibility as related to type of community served.

While Paduano (2012) identified the strengths of the principals at the secondary level in a large public school district that served over 175,000 Florida students, this study used similar methodology to expand the examination of principal strengths to small parochial private schools. The proposed study addressed the self-identified strengths of principals in Islamic schools in the five most populated states in the United States based on the (a) enrollment level of the school; (b) year the school was established; (c) gender of the principal; (d) the principal's professional preparation, such as having degree in education versus other fields and years of experience; and (e) geographic location.

Conceptual Framework

Muslims in America

The presence of Muslims in America dates back to the importation of millions of African slaves into North America from the early 17th century to the early 19th century (Emerick, 2002). In addition to Africans, other immigrants brought Islam with them to North America. These immigrants arrived from different parts of the Muslim world during four great waves. As Emerick (2002) detailed, the first influx of Muslims into North America occurred between 1875 and 1912, when laborers from Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan migrated to the U.S. and became factory workers and traders. Soon thereafter, Arabs arrived to work as laborers from throughout the Middle East between 1919 and 1921. After a hiatus, immigration continued again between 1947 and 1960, when mostly well-educated Muslims from Palestine, Egypt, and Eastern Europe arrived in America. Finally, from 1967 through the present time, professionals and students, primarily from Asia (largely the Indian subcontinent), the Arab world, and Africa immigrated for work or studies and remained in the country.

Islam has been the third-largest religion in America for many years. The number of Muslims in the U.S. has ranged from two to seven million (Johnson, 2011), making the American Muslim population higher than that of predominantly Muslim countries such as Libya, Kuwait, and Qatar (Esposito, 2002). According to a Pew survey, the Muslim population in the United States is expected to double by 2030 because of immigration and high birth rates (Johnson, 2011). The growth in the number of Muslims has also led to an

increase in the number of mosques in the United States. According to Bagby (2012), the number of mosques in the U.S. increased by 74% between 2000 and 2011, from 1,209 to 2,106. Table 1 provides the 2011 ranking of states with the largest numbers of mosques; the top three states include New York, California, and Texas, with over 650 mosques in these states.

Table 1

Ten States with the Largest Number of Mosques

Rank	State	Number of Mosques
1	New York	257
2	California	246
3	Texas	166
4	Florida	118
5	Illinois	109
6	New Jersey	109
7	Pennsylvania	99
8	Michigan	77
9	Georgia	69
10	Virginia	62

Note. Adapted from *United States Mosque Survey 2011* by I. Bagby, 2012.

Need for Islamic Education

Islamic education is an essential component of the Muslim community. However, the basis for the specific establishment of Islamic schools in the United States is not unique. Straus and Wax (as cited in Moes, n.d.) wrote that the reasons for creating Islamic schools are similar to those of other immigrant or religious groups, including

Jews, Catholics, Mormons, and even the first Puritan settlers—all of which were religious minority groups who faced discrimination. Wong (2002) provided a series of examples of such discrimination. For example, during the 1830s and 1840s, anti-Catholic violence was prevalent in various parts of the country with individuals such as Lyman Beecher writing and speaking about a Catholic plot to take over the United States and impose Catholic rule (Wong, 2002). During the same time, Mormons were also being discriminated against as they became successful. When founder Joseph Smith announced that he would run as a candidate for the presidency of the U.S., unrest ensued and the locals arresting Smith and his brother; in 1844 they were executed by an anti-Mormon mob. Between 1933 and 1939, discrimination against Jews reached historic proportions in the U.S. as evidenced by violent attacks taking place in New York and Boston. Furthermore, Jews were being excluded from membership in country clubs, barred from practicing medicine, and disallowed to hold political office in many states.

Widespread discrimination against Muslims in the U.S. is a relatively new phenomenon. Anti-Muslim hate crimes had been the second-least reported in 1992, the year the FBI started to track hate crimes, but following the tragic event of September 11, 2001, they became the second-highest reported right after anti-Jewish hate crimes. Religiously-motivated hate crimes against Muslims in the U.S. increased by 1600% in 2001 from the prior year (Wong, 2002). Adding to this negativity is the presentation of inaccurate information about those who identify as Muslims, such as an alleged plot to take over the U.S. and impose Sharia law, a similar approach taken by Lyman Beecher against the Catholics.

Suliman (as cited in Moes, n.d.) stated that the goals of establishing Islamic schools are to focus on the teaching of the religion by imparting knowledge of acceptable and unacceptable practices and to safeguard the students from exposure to intense peer pressure related to drugs and alcohol, racism, promiscuity, and premarital sex. Rahman (2013) noted that Islamic schools also provide an environment where students can pray in congregation and gain a deeper understanding of Islam as a way of life. In the absence of religious-based bullying, students in Islamic schools have the opportunity to interact with other Muslim children in a positive context, enabling them to strengthening their faith. Through nurturing and mentoring, Islamic schools can also help establish strong identities and senses of responsibility within their students (Rahman, 2013). The reasons most cited by parents for placing their children in Islamic schools include (a) the Islamic environment itself, (b) providing a religious education, and (c) preservation of their children's religion and identity (Badawi, 2006).

The Islamic Schools League of America (ISLA), a nonprofit organization that connects Muslim educators and institutions, estimated in 2011 that 40,000 students were enrolled in Islamic schools in the United States, representing a 25% increase from 2006. Those numbers are expected to continue growing as new schools open and existing schools expand (Huus, 2011). To accommodate the increase in students, the number of Islamic schools has also increased, from approximately 50 in 1989 to the 2011 figure of 235 (Keyworth, 2011).

Role of the Principal

An educator has one of two functions: to either teach, or to support teaching and learning (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). As the cornerstone of the educational institution, the principal is entrusted to fulfill these functions. The principal's leadership is essential to the effective functioning of a successful school, as principals are the link between the teachers, students, parents, school board, and community. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004) stated that the job of the school principal is critical to the success of the school, with effective leadership having a direct correlation to student achievement. While the individual impact of the elements that contribute to learning is minimal, the combination of those components under the leadership of the principal can be monumental (Harvey, 2011).

In order to keep a team functioning optimally, great coaches devote the time and resources to identify talent and make informed decisions regarding the collective skill set of their players. A championship team cannot be assembled without a coach who embodies proper leadership traits because teams need leaders; the principalship is no different (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, & Adams, 2012). Ikemoto et al. (2012) further indicated that an instructional leader's influence on student achievement can be attributed to 25% of a school's total impact. Therefore, an effective principal can play a crucial role in laying the foundation of quality teaching and learning to take place at the school.

Challenges for Islamic School Principals

Although each Islamic school is unique, most face similar challenges, including a shortage of qualified leadership. The operation of a school requires a leader who (a) has a relevant professional background, (b) is equipped to deal with the challenges of long hours and a heavy workload, (c) strives to be an effective communicator, (d) can maximize the strong suits of the staff, and (e) embodies a passion for learning (Ozgur, n.d.). The lack of a qualified leader results in an organization that is not operating at its optimum level as “everything rises and falls with leadership” (Blanchard & Miller, 2004, p. 18).

Islamic schools are relatively new in North America, having made their first appearance only in the last two to three decades (Badawi, 2006). Because they are relatively new, Islamic schools face a multitude of challenges.

[Islamic schools] struggle financially, are comprised of governing boards of influential well-meaning individuals who are not necessarily experts in education, the staff may lack certification, and their pay is generally below that of public schools in the same area thereby creating challenges in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. (Ozgur, n.d., p. 3)

Islamic schools are also faced with greater challenges of a dwindling leadership pool due to (a) non-competitive compensation, (b) lack of relevant professional background and experience, (c) heavy workloads with limited support, and (d) the uncertainties that lead to burnout and the eventual loss of the school leader (Ozgur, n.d.).

Statement of the Problem

The American Muslim community has formed a substantial presence. As of 2011, the Muslim community in the U.S. was estimated to be between two and seven million (Johnson, 2011). Furthermore, the number of mosques in the U.S. increased 74% between 2000 and 2011 (Bagby, 2012). The increase in the number of Muslims in the U.S. has also resulted in an increase in the number of students enrolled at Islamic schools; in 2011, an estimated 40,000 students were enrolled at these schools, representing a 25% increase since 2006; additional growth is expected as new schools open and existing ones expand (Huus, 2011). Therefore, Islamic schools are faced with enormous pressure to hire and promote appropriate leaders, even though research on the strengths of the principals has been inadequate.

Purpose of Study

With the increase in the number of Islamic schools, schools and school boards are faced with escalating pressure to recruit and retain qualified principals. In many cases, once principals are hired, their strengths and areas of expertise are not utilized because they are not identified. Identifying and understanding the strengths of these instructional leaders will assist in maximizing the potential of the principal and ensuring that their capabilities are fully optimized to benefit the school and its stakeholders. Furthermore, the self-identified strengths will serve as a supplementary component in placing the principals in areas where they can excel and thrive, ensuring the best fit for the school and its culture.

Significance of the Study

The increased accountability attributed and minimum benefits provided to principals have led to the scarcity for school boards to find quality candidates for Islamic School principalship. Through analyzing the strengths of the targeted principals in order to determine if there are commonalities based on (a) the enrollment of the school; (b) gender of the principal; (c) professional preparation of the principal, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience; and (d) geographic location of the principal, the researcher sought to identify the existence of a relationship between leadership strengths and demographic attributes. If any such relationships exist, school boards can utilize a similar model and place principals in their respective positions by identifying their strengths that they feel fit best with the vision and mission of the school. With their identified strengths, the principals can also target specific areas for professional development and growth.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the self-identified strengths of principals of Islamic schools in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois?
2. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals for school enrollment?
3. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based on their gender?

4. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based upon their professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience?
5. What, if any, are the differences between self-identified strengths of the principals for different geographic locations?

Definition of Terms

Allah: This word from the Arabic language means “the one and only God,” referring to the same God that spoke to the Jews and Christians (Emerick, 2002, p. 18).

Alhamdulillah: This phrase is defined as “the perfect, most beautiful praise is only for Allah” (Owais, 2008, para. 4).

Assalamualaikum: This Muslim greeting translates to “peace be upon you” (Emerick, 2002, p. 70).

Clifton StrengthsFinder: This timed, Web-based assessment presents 177 items to the respondent with descriptors anchoring different ends of a continuum of behaviors. After completing the assessment, the participants receive a report showcasing their top five (most dominant) themes (Asplund, Lopez, Hodges, & Harter, 2009).

Iman: The “Arabic word for faith or belief” (Emerick, 2002, p. 28).

Inshallah: This Arabic term translates to “if Allah wills” or “God willing” (“Inshallah,” 2013).

Islam: “The proper name to use when referring to the religion practiced by Muslims. It is an Arabic word that means two things: to surrender your will to God and to acquire peace in your soul” (Emerick, 2002, p. 5).

Islamic Educators Communication Network (IECN): This is an online discussion forum of educators, primarily of those who work in Islamic schools maintained by the Islamic Schools Leagues of America (ISLA).

Islamic Schools League of America (ISLA): This nonprofit organization connects Muslim educators and institutions (ISLA, 2013).

Leadership: Blanchard (2007) defines this concept as “the capacity to influence others by unleashing their power and potential to impact the greater good” (p. xix).

Mosque: This is “the focal point of the Islamic community”; this facility serves not only as a location where the five daily prayers can be offered along with the congregational Friday prayers, but it is also used for “mediation and reflection”. Mosques can also be referred to as *masjids* (Emerick, 2002, p. 236).

Muslims: “A person who is surrendering to God and finding peace. A follower of the religion of Islam” (Emerick, 2002, p. 370).

PBUH: Often used after the names of Prophets referring to Peace Be Upon Him.

SERVE: Blanchard and Miller (2004) use this acronym to describe the five ways leaders must serve if they want to reach their full potential as a leader. S is for seeing the future, E is for engaging in the development of others, R is for reinventing continuously, V is for valuing results and relationships, and E is for embodying the values of the organization at which they are leading.

Signature Themes: These top five themes are displayed following the administering of the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment. These themes help the individual “learn about and build upon their greatest talents in order to create strengths that will enhance all aspects of their lives” (Gallup, Inc., 2008, “About the Clifton StrengthsFinder.”).

Succession Planning: This systematic approach to leadership development ensures that the organization’s cultures, values, and mission stay intact in the event a leadership role needs to be filled due to an unplanned absence (Olson, 2008, p. 20).

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

The factors that could limit the validity of this research include:

1. Technology issues and changes in positions may affect all targeted participants from receiving the communication that introduced them to the study.
2. The survey methodology depends on self-reported information, which restricts the conclusions made to those reflecting reported beliefs.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study include the following:

1. Because the population for this study was limited to the targeted five states, generalization may be limited. The study was limited to full-time Islamic schools from the targeted five states of California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois. Evening and weekend schools were excluded.
2. The study was limited to the schools identified through the Islamic Schools League of America (ISLA) and the states were limited to the information provided from the Mosque Study. Schools not listed through the ISLA were excluded. Data of Islamic schools are very difficult to obtain. Up until the work of the Islamic Schools League of America, there was not a current comprehensive list of full-time Islamic schools in the United States. Thus, this study did not capture those schools not registered or identified by the Islamic Schools League of America.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided an outline of the study introducing the problem and the clarifying components. The history of Muslims in America, the need for Islamic education, and the role of the principal were discussed. Research methodology and procedures, including data collection and analysis procedures, were also introduced.

The next chapter discusses the review of literature. Following Chapter 2, Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss the methodology used as well as the analysis of data. The final chapter will contain the summary and discussion of the findings, the outcome for its practice, and suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature and related research for the study. Multiple resources were used in conducting the literature review. These resources included (a) the University of Central Florida's library and online databases including Education Full Text, ERIC, and Dissertation and Theses Full Text; (b) search engines to gain additional websites, resources, and information on leadership-related topics; (c) Islamic Schools League of America's website to select the schools and get the contact information of the principals, and (d) the researcher's own professional library. Additionally, the reference sections of the resources were also reviewed.

In order to provide answers to the research questions and thoroughly support them with research-based evidence, the literature review included (a) role of the principals, (b) principal effectiveness, (c) the challenges faced in finding a quality principal who aligns with the school's vision and mission, (d) the importance of recruiting and retaining qualified principals, (e) succession planning, (f) standards for school leaders, and (g) principal strengths. Also included is research regarding (a) a brief history of Muslims in America, (b) the need for Islamic education, (c) leadership in Islam, and (d) challenges for Islamic school principals.

Muslims in America

Islam arrived in America as a result of the slave trade; an estimated 30% of enslaved Blacks were Muslims. Additionally, Muslim names can be found within numerous historical contexts, including reports of runaway slaves and in rosters of soldiers in the Revolutionary War. Over a century later, thousands of African Americans have converted to Islam. Such prominent Muslims include Malcolm Little and Cassius Clay, more commonly known as Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali, respectively (Abdul Rauf, 2011). Emerick (2002) detailed how other immigrants also brought Islam with them to North America, emigrating from different parts of the Muslim world including various parts of the Middle East and Asia. These Muslims arrived as factory workers, laborers, students, and already well-educated professionals to create a diverse North American Muslim populace. Today's Muslim population in the U.S. is higher in numbers than that of predominantly Muslim countries such as Libya, Kuwait, and Qatar (Esposito, 2002). Johnson (2011) indicated how the Muslim population in the U.S. is poised to double by 2030 due to immigration and high birth rates.

Abdul Rauf (2011) provided a series of facts regarding Muslims on which non-Muslim Americans may not be fully informed. A common misconception, particularly among Americans, is that the majority of Muslims are Arabs. As Abdul Rauf highlights, this assumption is incorrect, as the American Muslim community proudly identifies itself as being one of the most diverse communities in the world; about 88% check a different box on their U.S. Census form. The Muslim community is also very much part of the economic framework of America, as 66% of American Muslim households earn more

than \$50,000 per year—more than the average U.S. household. Abdul Rauf further presented the results of a 2009 Gallup study that indicated Muslim American women are not only more educated than the average American and Western European women, but also earn incomes closer to their male counterparts than do American women of any other religion. Muslim Americans have also become politically active in Congress—Representatives Keith Ellison and Andre Carson are both Muslim. Finally, thousands of Muslims serve on active duty in the armed forces (Abdul Rauf, 2011).

Need for Islamic Education

The Muslim community in the U.S. values education. Prior to the 1990s, educational options were limited for Muslim parents: they could either send their children to public schools, or choose private schools, most of which were parochial schools of Christian or Jewish faiths. Religious Islamic teachings would occur either in the evenings or over the weekends at the local mosque. Today, parents have the option to send their children to full-time private Islamic schools. About 50 Islamic schools existed in the U.S. in 1989, but by 2011 the number increased to approximately 235 (Keyworth, 2011).

Elshinnawi (2010) shared statements made by Yvonne Haddad, an Islamic history professor at Georgetown University, who noted that the function of Islamic schools in the U.S. is very similar to that of other private, parochial schools: teach the core curriculum and include religious studies. Haddad elaborated that the Islamic schools in North America teach to the curricular standards of the state with no difference in the content of

social studies, history, geography, math and science; the differentiating factor is the period of Islamic studies.

Islamic education is an essential component of the Muslim community. The basis for the establishment of Islamic schools in the U.S. is not unique; these schools were founded for similar reasons as those of other immigrant or religious groups (Straus & Wax, as cited in Moes, n.d.). Suliman (as cited in Moes, n.d.) shared the twofold goals of Islamic schools: a religious focus and safeguarding students from undesirable activities of the dominant population. Parents have cited that they place their children in Islamic schools for the (a) Islamic environment, (b) religious education, and (c) preservation of their children's religion and identity (Badawi, 2006).

Emerick (n.d.) writes that the time in which a child is not in class during a school day is estimated to total two to three hours as a result of breaks, lunch, extracurricular activities, or waiting for the bus, among other activities. During this time, children are exposed to the cultural lifestyle of the student body—hearing about boyfriends and girlfriends, cursing, gossip, fighting, and other societal ills. Additionally, there will be others who are also victims of bullying at some level. Such factors can hinder and negatively impact learning, even in the presence of good teachers.

Islamic schools play a crucial role in the lives of individuals and society by providing children with an environment that is conducive to learning and living their faith. Furthermore, Islamic schools also assist in creating social and emotional stability through maintaining homogeneity of culture and values; this arrangement not only helps

to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning, but also assists in continuing to maintain and develop belongingness to the Islamic faith (Sound Vision Foundation, n.d.).

Zehr (1999) shared further benefits of Islamic schools. Islamic schools, as part of their curriculum, merge the traditional state-approved curriculum and religious subjects of Islamic Studies, Quran, and Arabic (the language on the Quran), without compromising the rigor or integrity of either curriculum. Additionally, they help to instill morals and values in their students, uphold higher standards for discipline, and can incorporate religious values and practices throughout the school day. Islamic schools also have smaller class sizes, similar to those of other private and parochial schools; therefore, an opportunity for individualized instruction can be provided.

Leadership in Islam

Islam is not just seen as a religion, but a way of life. Through its teachings, it provides guidelines on how one should live one's life on matters ranging from "economics, jurisprudence, diplomacy, and governance to aspects focusing on individual well-being such as social values and etiquettes, family relationships, and lifestyle" (Mir, 2010, p. 69). Mir (2010) further notes that in the Islamic model of leadership, leaders strive to achieve a self-governing society that is just and focused on the well-being of its citizens, free from intolerance, abuse, and oppression.

The term "servant leadership" was conceived in the late 1970s by Robert Greenleaf, who identified its fundamental concept as possessing the motivation and desire to serve others. This very concept was being practiced by Prophet Muhammad

(PBUH) nearly 1,500 years ago; he emphasized the importance of sound morals and values as well as an equitable system of justice. The Prophet modeled this facet of leadership through his words and actions, rightfully stating that “the leader of the nation is their servant” (Mir, 2010, p. 70).

Islam acknowledges that individuals can find leadership potential at varying levels, ranging from being a leader of an organization to leading a country. Mir (2010) shared the five basic attributes that serve as the prerequisites to becoming a leader on the premise of Islam. The first attribute, piety, allows leaders to maintain high moral standards while practicing the traits of humbleness, self-discipline, and integrity. In practicing the second attribute, humility, modest and humble leaders are sought out by followers. Mir provided an example of humility:

After the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Abu Bakr Siddiq, who was reluctant in taking on the responsibility, was appointed as the first caliph of Islam. After his appointment, Abu Bakr stated the following: “I have been appointed as ruler over you, although I am not the best amongst you. I have never sought this position; nor has there ever been a desire in my heart to have this in preference to anyone else . . . If I do right, you must help and obey me; if I go astray, set me right. Obey me so long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. If I disobey them, then you have no obligation to follow me.” (p. 71)

In the third attribute, social responsibility, leaders must ensure the well-being of followers. As Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised, “none of you (truly) believes, until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself” (Mir, 2010, p. 71). The fourth

attribute, self-development, dictates continuous dedication to spirituality and self-improvement. The fifth and final attribute, mutual consultation, indicates that while decisions should be independently made, they should only occur after critical examination of all viewpoints and evidence. “This cultivates a culture of collegiality, facilitates a division of responsibility, and builds team spirit” (Mir, 2010, p. 71).

Challenges for Islamic School Principals

Effective leadership plays an important role in having a successful organization. While few educators choose to take on the challenge of becoming a principal, it is a far greater challenge to recruit and retain those effective leaders to commit to improving low-achieving schools (Peck, 2010). Exemplary principals are successful not just because they possess a strong will or determination, but also because of their commitment to four key traits of school leadership: (a) maintaining a collaborative school environment, (b) engaging in data-driven decision making, (c) holding high expectations, and (d) championing family and community involvement (Peck, 2010). Furthermore, because principals help foster teaching and learning, the quality of school principals can make a real difference in classrooms. Research has established that leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors as an influence on learning (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013).

“Everything rises and falls with leadership” (Blanchard & Miller, 2004, p. 18). Although each Islamic school is very different from the others, most face similar challenges, among them a shortage of qualified leadership. The operation of a school

requires a leader who (a) has a relevant professional background, (b) is equipped to deal with the challenges of long hours and a heavy workload, (c) strives to be an effective communicator, (d) can maximize the strengths of the staff, and (e) embodies a passion for learning (Ozgur, n.d.).

Islamic schools are relatively new in North America, having made their first appearance only in the 1970s and 1980s (Badawi, 2006). Because they are relatively new, Islamic schools face a multitude of challenges.

[Islamic schools] struggle financially, are comprised of governing boards of influential well-meaning individuals who are not necessarily experts in education, the staff may lack certification, and their pay is generally below that of public schools in the same area thereby creating challenges in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. (Ozgur, n.d., p. 3)

Further challenges within Islamic schools include (a) a dwindling leadership pool due to non-competitive compensation, (b) lack of relevant professional background and experience, (c) heavy workloads with limited support, and (d) the uncertainties that lead to burnout and the eventual loss of the school leader (Ozgur, n.d.).

Meeting the Principal Demand

As the retirement rate of principals increases, it is indicative that a shortage of top candidates for the principalship will develop as educators may be hesitant on accepting an increasingly high-stakes job. Schools will be staffed with principals, but the quality instructional leader necessary to ensure that adequate yearly progress in being met in the

era of accountability is of concern (Aarons, 2010). It is important to ensure that a steady flow of new principals are prepared to take on the challenges of running low-performing schools, but school districts need to be committed to giving full support to those leaders, especially during the early years of the principalship (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013).

With quantifiable evidence showcasing the impact principals can have on enhancing teaching and learning, a growing number of large school districts are focusing on strengthening school leadership. Mendels and Mitgang (2013) cited the work of Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) in stressing that the increased focus on the principalship is a result of the fact that quality instructional leaders can make an impact on achievement; when examining the school-related factors which influence learning, the impact of leadership is second only to teaching. Additionally, principalship extends beyond management; principals must become instructional leaders focused on team building in order to (a) ensure the success of all students, (b) empower others to be leaders, (c) assist their teachers in utilizing the best and most current instructional practices, and (d) utilize data to improve the school (Portin, 2009, as cited in Mendels & Mitgang, 2013).

Research has indicated that school districts are faced with challenges to hire school principals because current testing instruments such as the Praxis Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision Examination are not effective predictors of the practical aspects of the principalship. On most occasions, school districts do not dedicate the time nor the necessary resources to develop an understanding of the needs of

the local school, the school district, and expertise of the prospective principal (Clifford, 2012).

Additionally, research implies that the hiring practices of certain school districts can also be a contributing factor that limits the applicant pool and serves as a roadblock to attract the best candidates for the principalship. Clifford (2012) suggests that during recruitment of principals, school districts need to (a) determine and understand the needs of the school and the school district; (b) select candidates from a wide pool, not just from nearby school districts, and (c) dedicate sufficient time and resources for the search. Small businesses can spend \$100,000 when searching for an executive, but most school districts would find it a challenge at this level. However, it is crucial to understand that investing in the search during its initial stages will prove beneficial for years to come.

The Role of the Principal

Educators either teach or support teaching and learning (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). As the cornerstone of the educational institution, the principal's leadership is essential to the effective functioning of a successful school, as principals serve as the link between teachers, students, parents, the school board, and the community. Their support for teaching and learning is integral for a school to thrive, especially in this current age of accountability. Waters et al. (2004) stated that the job of the school principal is critical to the success of the school, with effective leadership directly correlating with student achievement. While the individual impacts of elements that contribute to learning are

minimal, the combination of those components under the leadership of the principal can be monumental (Harvey, 2011).

Leadership is defined as the “capacity to influence others by unleashing their power and potential to impact the greater good” (Blanchard, 2007, p. xix). As with great coaches, great leaders unleash their potential in identifying individuals with specific skill set and making placement decisions to form the proper foundation to maximize teaching effectiveness at a school. A decade of research highlights the crucial role effective principals can play in laying the foundation of quality teaching and learning to take place at the school; on average, the instructional leader can account for a quarter of a school’s total impact on student achievement (Ikemoto et al., 2012). Furthermore, Harvey (2011) noted that effective school leaders perform the following five key functions within their organization: (a) shaping the vision for academic success, (b) creating a climate conducive to learning, (c) developing leadership traits in others, (d) improving instruction, and (e) cultivating school improvement through the effective management of people and data.

Habegger (2008) describes the job of the principal as constantly multitasking and adapting to a multitude of different roles at any given moment. Common ingredients that limit and provide barriers to student learning include “poverty, fewer resources (both material and human), students whose primary language is not English, parents who have less than a high school education, and a disproportionately high number of under-qualified teachers” (Habegger, 2008, p. 1). Some schools facing these hindrances have still managed to achieve success in the area of student achievement, but they only

managed to do so because of the leadership of an effective principal who was able to positively impact the school's culture.

Habegger (2008) observed principals at high-performing schools in low socioeconomic areas and witnessed the roles principals undertook: (a) making certain that daily instruction aligned to state standards, (b) ensuring the upkeep of the school building, (c) introducing instructional design that can yield student success, (d) establishing partnerships with stakeholders such as parents and the community, and (e) fostering an organizational culture where everyone feels valued. Through these various roles, school leaders created a sound culture that positively impacted student achievement and encouraged learning and active engagement for students and staff. As Habegger stated, "these principals know school culture is the heart of improvement and growth" (p. 2). Through their active involvement, the principals infused in their faculty and staff the necessary confidence needed to run a successful organization and collectively improved the school's effectiveness through the active involvement of all stakeholders.

Principal Effectiveness

Effective school leaders possess strengths in the areas of both instructional leadership and management (Protheroe, 2011). Qualitative studies have described the effectiveness of a principal as the contributing factor related to teacher satisfaction and the decision to stay at their respective schools (Grissom, 2011). The impact of a principal on teachers can be measured either directly or indirectly. Direct impacts can result from mentoring opportunities or providing the teachers with the necessary supplies to

effectively complete their tasks, while indirect impacts can be made by providing teachers with an environment conducive to learning through the adequate maintenance of school facilities (Grissom, 2011).

Although numerous articles have been written outlining the importance of school leadership, minimal quantifiable research exists regarding principal effectiveness on student achievement; even less research addresses specific practices that result in some principals being more effective than others (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). This trend has begun to shift only in recent years, as studies have emerged with measureable evidence on the integral role instructional leaders play on student achievement.

While the majority of factors related to schools have minimal impact on learning when considered individually, effective leadership has the ability to combine these factors to show an adequate impact. Moreover, in addition to being sound managers, effective principals are great instructional leaders, providing their staff with the necessary support and guidance and their students with the motivation to succeed (Spiro, 2013).

A commonly held belief is that a good principal is a key ingredient for a successful school. Therefore, in schools that have steadily performed at low levels, a component of No Child Left Behind has recommended that principals be replaced. In fact, the current Obama administration has made replacement of leadership a requirement of schools that are receiving federal funding to serve as a catalyst for school turnaround. Additionally, as part of its Alliance to Reform Education Leadership initiative, the George W. Bush Institute has set the goal of improving the quality of principals; the organization believes that in order for students to have the necessary skills and

preparedness to be competitive in a global society, it is critical for principals to be strong leaders who are equipped with the tools that will enable them to hire, develop, support, and retain good teachers (Branch et al., 2013).

Branch et al. (2013) further stated that a key challenge in measuring the impact of a principal is determining the extent of the role other factors play in driving student achievement. Schools that serve an area with higher socioeconomic status can create an understanding that the principal is playing a key role in the success of the students, when in reality the success can be attributed to the family backgrounds of students. Similarly, a school that serves an area of lower socioeconomic status with limited parental involvement can wrongfully place blame on the principal, who may be trying to make the best of the situation in attempting to raise levels of student achievement.

Therefore, in order to accurately showcase the principal's impact, Branch et al. (2013) used a value-added model. This model examined math achievement based on the characteristics of the students in the school, including prior year academic performance. This methodology enabled the researchers to examine whether higher achievement exists amongst schools that serve similar students, helping to attribute any differences to principal effectiveness. The researchers cited this approach as being similar to one in which teacher effectiveness is measured on the basis of individual student achievement. The results validated the impact of the principal on an entire school; achievement of a typical student can be raised by 2-7 months of learning during a single school year, whereas those deemed ineffective can lower student achievement by the same amount.

Creating Strong Leaders

Much attention has been given to teacher preparation and quality, yet the same attention has not necessarily been given to leadership development among principals. Unfortunately, in most school districts, individuals who aspire to become principals have been able to nominate themselves for leadership positions regardless of their ability, drive, or preparedness. Therefore, school districts have begun to strengthen their hiring practices by adding selectivity, standardization, and rigor to ensure the kind of strong leadership that will yield changes in schools (Aarons, 2010).

University-based preparation programs for principals have long been criticized for not staying current with school district needs and not providing their graduates with the necessary tools to effectively lead their schools. As a result, more school districts are collaborating with principal preparation program providers to create a program of study that cater to their specific needs and give hiring preferences to program graduates (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013).

In an initiative launched by The Wallace Foundation, a philanthropy which has supported efforts to improve school leadership, six school districts including Prince George's County (MD), Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC), Denver (CO), Gwinnett County (GA), Hillsborough County (FL), and New York City were invited to take part in a six-year, \$75 million initiative to establish a system ensuring a steady flow of quality principals for the local school districts. These school districts were chosen because they had already taken the initiative to improve school leadership (Mendels, 2012). This will provide the school districts with a larger pool of leaders who are trained properly, hired,

and developed on the job. The fundamental concept behind the program was the notion that an effective principal requires the following four components: (a) core standards for functioning, in the form of clear and demanding guidelines outlining the work principals and assistant principals must do; (b) effective preparation, through quality preparation programs that recruit individuals who demonstrate the potential for the principalship and provide them with the necessary tools with which they can respond to school district needs; (c) a selective hiring process, through which individuals are hired who will be a good fit for the school and the school district at large; and (d) a mixture of quality on-the-job support and performance evaluation, as found through regular assessments and support including professional development and mentoring, especially for the newly hired principals (Mendels, 2012).

Most school districts follow state leadership standards for selecting and keeping their principals, while others have standards adapted to meet their own needs. However, a crucial component to the standards is an understanding that these standards only serve their purpose when they are utilized effectively during the selection, hiring, professional preparation, and evaluation of school leaders. Therefore, school districts have also begun to develop specific principal competencies to help in creating strong principals. The public school system of Chicago serves as a prime example; in this school district, high principal turnover was affecting 25% of its schools. The school district embarked on developing six detailed principal competencies, each accompanied with leadership behaviors and actions:

1. Continuously support teacher and staff to do their best.
2. Foster a strong system of learning that will ensure learning for all children.
3. Inculcate a school culture that focuses on college and career preparedness.
4. Encourage and empower the stakeholders to become engaged.
5. Be in constant pursuit of best practices.
6. Take charge of the schools, ensuring that the vision and mission are being met. (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013).

States and school districts can also utilize the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 Standards for School Leaders as the framework for developing their own guidelines as it pertains to the evaluation of school leaders. These guidelines are comprised of six standards that can serve as the foundation on which to build upon the duties and responsibilities of the school leader (Chief Council for State School Officers, 2008). Details are located in Table 2.

Table 2

2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders

Standard	Details
1	An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.
2	An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3	An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4	An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
5	An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6	An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, and economic, legal, and cultural context.

Note. Adapted from *Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008*, by Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature and related research. Since the study pertains to Islamic schools, literature regarding a brief history of Muslims in America, the need for Islamic education, leadership in Islam, and challenges for Islamic school principals was provided. In order to also drive the rationale for the research questions and thoroughly support them with research-based evidence, the literature review was

expanded to include research regarding meeting the principal demand, role of the principal, principal effectiveness, and creating strong leaders.

Chapter 3 will describe the study's methodology for collecting and analyzing data, including validity and reliability information of the instrument. Subsequently, Chapter 4 will present an analysis of the data, while Chapter 5 will provide a final summary of findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As outlined in the review of literature, principals play an integral role in the educational institution, yet it is a challenge to recruit and retain a qualified instructional leader, especially for small, private, non-profit parochial schools such as Islamic schools. The purpose of this study was to identify the strengths of Islamic school principals to determine the presence of a correlation between these strengths and factors such as gender, education, years of experience, and geographic location. Recognizing the strengths that most strongly correlate will enable the current principals to focus on their strong points and work on their weaknesses.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the self-identified strengths of principals of Islamic schools in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois?
2. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals for school enrollment?
3. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based on their gender?

4. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based upon their professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience?
5. What, if any, are the differences between self-identified strengths of the principals for different geographic locations?

Population and Sample

The five most populated states with the largest number of mosques in the U.S. were New York, California, Texas, Florida, and Illinois as indicated by Bagby (2012). Therefore, administrators at Islamic schools within these states served as the targeted population of the study. According to ISLA (2013), a total of 100 full-time Islamic schools are present in these states: 28 in California, 24 in Texas, 23 in New York, 14 in Illinois, and 11 in Florida. The targeted schools and leaders were considered full-time as they taught both the school curriculum as well as religious studies; evening and weekend schools were excluded from this study. Of those invited, 34 principals responded of a possible 97 with valid e-mail addresses, yielding a participation rate of 35%. No participating principals were disqualified from the study.

Instrumentation

In order to determine the strengths of the principals, each participant completed a 30 Themes Self-Assessment and identified their 10 greatest strengths. The instrument was developed by Paduano (2012) who provided permission for the researcher's use in

this study (see Appendix A). The instrument can be found in Appendix C. There is no reliability nor validity information on the exact instrument utilized other than it was reviewed for content validity by experts in leadership at the University of Central Florida.

While the Clifton StrengthsFinder was not used as the instrument, it is the premise on which the content of the instrument used for the current study was based. Information regarding the reliability and validity of the Clifton StrengthsFinder is limited to the following two research components that addressed the accuracy of the instrument; *The Clifton StrengthsFinder Technical Report: Development and Validation* and *Clifton StrengthsFinder Research Frequently Asked Questions* (Paduano, 2012, p. 17).

Researchers used data from more than 50,000 respondents in order to examine the internal reliability of Clifton StrengthsFinder. The findings by Gallup's researchers of the themes yielded an average internal consistency of .785, suggesting that the themes are internally consistent (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). Gallup's researchers also found that most test-retest correlations were above .70 (Lopez et al., 2005). Upon assessing the average item-total correlations and theme-score intercorrelations for the entire Clifton StrengthsFinder database, including the subsamples, it was concluded that the items have a direct correlation regarding their themes when compared with others; each of the 34 themes provides exclusive information for the purpose of evaluation and validates the notion that there is no redundancy amongst the themes (Lopez et al., 2005).

Other sources of data included the Islamic Schools League of America website (2013), the Mosque Study (Baggins, 2012), and the demographics portion of the survey

administered to the participants inquiring about the school enrollment, gender, professional preparation, and geographic location.

Data Collection

During the Fall 2012 semester, Islamic schools in the targeted states were called to verify the names of the current principals, their e-mail addresses, and the mailing address. In January 2013, all full-time Islamic school principals within the targeted states received a letter via the United States Postal Service introducing them to the study and inviting them to participate in the research. The letter was personalized to the respective participants, as doing so establishes a connection between the researcher and the participant and helps to increase the likelihood of receiving a response (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). In addition to the invitation, the mailer also included a form with information about the school including the principal's e-mail address. The letter instructed the principal to add any missing information, update any of the incorrect information, and submit it via e-mail.

An e-mail with the survey link was sent on February 11, 2013. In order to remind the principals to complete the survey, a postcard was sent on February 22, 2013. A robocall was made on March 4, 2013; e-mail reminders were sent on March 19, 2013 and March 24, 2013. Personalized calls were made between April 1, 2013 and April 5, 2013 with an e-mail reminder being sent during that time span on April 4, 2013; a final e-mail was sent on April 20, 2013. In order to attempt to gain more respondents, one final

postcard was mailed on April 23, 2013. Copies of all communication with participants are contained in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

As the initial step in data analysis, all data including the 10 self-identified strengths of the principals from the 30 Themes Self-Assessment were entered into SPSS. Each of the strengths provided a score based upon its ranking; the top-ranked strength was provided a score of 10 points, the second-ranked strength a score of 9 points, and each lower rank was provided a score that decreased by one point. Unselected strengths receive a score of zero. All 10 self-identified strengths selected by the principals could be considered formidable areas. Therefore, a selection that was ranked lower should not be interpreted as a weak area, but rather a strength that was not given a higher preference throughout the selection process.

Furthermore, descriptive statistics were computed for school enrollment, gender, professional preparation, years of experience, geographic location, and other demographic variables. The research questions were then used as guidelines to analyze the variables utilizing the nonparametric statistical analysis. As it related to all of the research questions, the dependent variable was the selection of the 10 strengths; the independent variables differed based on the research questions.

For the first research question, “What are the self-identified strengths of principals of Islamic schools in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois?” descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the population as a whole. In specifically examining

Research Question 1, the average ranking for each strength was provided and then ranked against each other.

The second question “What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals for school enrollment?” compared the dependent strengths variable to the independent variable representing the ordinal categorical ranges of number of students enrolled at the respective schools where the principal is supervising. The Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized since the independent variable has seven possible levels (ranging from less than 50 to above 300) that were compared to the strengths selected. A Bonferroni correction was used because several Kruskal-Wallis were being administered concurrently; the chances of obtaining false-positive results due to multiple pair-wise tests using a single data are greatly reduced. The level of significance for the study was $\alpha = .05$; with 30 concurrent tests being run, dividing the level of significance by 30 for the Bonferroni correction leads to an adjusted level of significance of $\alpha = .002$.

The third question “What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based on their gender?” utilized the dependent strengths variable with the independent dichotomous variable representing gender. In order to determine differences in the self-identified strengths of principals based on the gender of the principal, a Mann-Whitney test was run since there are only two groups involved with the independent variable. Once again, the Bonferroni correction was used because several Mann-Whitney tests are being administered concurrently; the chances of obtaining false-positive results due to multiple pair-wise tests using a single data are greatly reduced.

The fourth question, “What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based upon their professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience?” the Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests were utilized depending on the number of groups in the variable; for example, degree in education was a dichotomous, yes-or-no answer, while years of experience had multiple levels representing the values of less than 3, 3-6, 7-9, and 10 or more. A Bonferroni correction was also used for each variable analysis because several statistical tests are being administered concurrently; the chances of obtaining false-positive results due to multiple pair-wise tests using a single data are greatly reduced.

For the fifth research question, “What, if any, are the differences between self-identified strengths of the principals for different geographic locations?” the dependent strengths variable were compared among the groups of the nominal geographic location independent variable that contained five levels, each representing a different state. The Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized since principals from five different states were compared to the strengths selected. A Bonferroni correction was used because several Kruskal-Wallis tests are being administered concurrently; the chances of obtaining false-positive results due to multiple pair-wise tests using a single data are greatly reduced.

Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the methodology used for the study, including the research questions, sample and population size, instrument used, and collection of data, including communication with the participants. Chapter 4 will provide the full results of the data

analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 will contain a summary and discussion of the findings, implications for practice, and suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Chapter 4 provides demographic information related to the participants and presents an analysis of the five research questions of the study. The findings are showcased in the subsequent sections. Subsequently, Chapter 5 will include conclusions to the study and also provide recommendations for future research.

Purpose of Study

With the increase in the number of Islamic schools, schools and school boards are under pressure to recruit and retain qualified principals. The increased accountability attributed and minimum benefits provided to principals have led to the scarcity for school boards to find quality candidates for Islamic school principalship. Through analyzing the strengths of the targeted principals in order to determine if there are commonalities based on (a) the enrollment of the school; (b) gender of the principal; (c) professional preparation of the principal, e.g., degree in education versus other fields and years of experience; and (d) geographic location of the principal, the researcher sought to identify the existence of a relationship between leadership strengths and demographic attributes. In most situations, once a principal is hired, their strengths and areas of expertise are not utilized because they are not identified. Identifying and understanding the strengths of these instructional leaders will assist in making the most of the potential of the principal

and ensuring that their capabilities are maximized to the fullest to benefit the school and its stakeholders. Furthermore, with their identified strengths, the principals can also target specific areas for professional development and growth.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the self-identified strengths of principals of Islamic schools in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois?
2. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals for school enrollment?
3. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based on their gender?
4. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based upon their professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience?
5. What, if any, are the differences between self-identified strengths of the principals for different geographic locations?

Demographics

Several demographic qualities were collected from the 34 Islamic school principals who participated in this study: (a) geographic location; (b) school enrollment

size; (c) principal gender; and (d) professional preparation, i.e., education versus another area of study or years of experience.

The geographic distribution of participants, as well as the distribution of mosques and schools in each state (Bagby, 2012) is located in Table 3. The majority of the participants in the study were located in either California or Texas, with both states respectively representing 11 participants each (32.4%). The next most frequently cited location was Florida, with 7 participants (20.6%). Fewer participants were located in New York (3, 8.8%) and Illinois (2, 5.9%).

Table 3

Mosques, Schools, and Principal Respondents

State	# Mosques	# Schools	# Respondents	Response Rate
California	246	28	11	39.3
Texas	166	24	11	45.8
Florida	118	11	7	63.6
New York	257	23	3	13.0
Illinois	109	14	2	14.3

Table 4 presents the population sizes of the Islamic schools at which the participants served as principal. The most frequently cited population size was 151 to 200 students, noted by 11 principals (32.4%). In all, 21 participants (61.8%) cited that they led a school of 151 students or more. Very few principals (2, 5.9%) noted that they led an extremely small school of 50 students or fewer.

Table 4

School Enrollment Size (N = 34)

Student Enrollment	#	%
50 or fewer	2	5.9
51-100	6	17.6
101-150	5	14.7
151-200	11	32.4
201-250	3	8.8
251-300	0	0.0
Over 300	7	20.6

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics related to participants' personal and professional demographics; specifically, gender, the presence of a degree in education, and the number of years of experience as principal. The majority of the participants in the study were female (27, 79.4%), while males accounted for the other 20.6%. Likewise, most participants (26, 76.5%) held a degree in education. Overall years of experience as a principal were fairly evenly distributed among the experience options presented. While 20 respondents (58.8%) cited 6 or fewer years of experience, the remaining 14 respondents (41.1%) cited having at least 7 years of experience.

Table 5

Personal and Professional Demographics of Respondents (N = 34)

Demographic	#	%
Gender		
Male	7	20.6
Female	27	79.4
Degree in Education		
Yes	26	76.5
No	8	23.5
Years as Principal		
Fewer than 3	10	29.4
3-6	10	29.4
7-9	6	17.6
10 or more	8	23.5

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the self-identified strengths of principals of Islamic schools in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois?

For Research Question 1, descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the identified strengths of the population as a whole. Principals were asked to rank and identify their 10 greatest strengths from the 30 themes presented to them. For the theme they rated as their strongest, 10 points were awarded; for the theme rated as second strongest, 9 points were awarded. This pattern continued through to awarding 1 point for

the final theme identified. All unselected themes were awarded no points. In taking this approach, the researcher was able to provide weight to the strengths ranked more highly than others. In specifically examining Research Question 1, the average ranking for each strength was provided and subsequently ordered.

Table 6 presents the mean ranks for all of the strengths. Strengths with the smaller mean values are indicative of having received fewer points on average than did the strengths with larger values. As indicated by the table, Analytical ($M = 3.50$) was the strength with which respondents identified the most, while Significance ($M = 0.41$) was the strength with which respondents identified the least.

Examining these trends further, it is apparent that Significance, defined as the desire to feel important by others (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001), was not a strength of importance to the respondents. Only two participants selected this strength, with one ranking it as most important and one ranking it as seventh most important. However, as Table 7 showcases, Analytical was the most selected strength. Defined as the capacity to consider all aspects that may impact a situation (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001), this strength was ranked by 23 out of the possible 34 participants; nearly a quarter of the participants (8, 23.5%) ranked the strength in their top three.

Table 6

Overall Ranking of Strengths (N = 34)

Strength	<i>M</i>	Rank
Analytical	3.50	1
Achiever	3.15	2
Command	3.00	3
Learner	2.85	4
Arranger	2.59	5
Belief	2.59	5
Deliberative	2.56	7
Strategic	2.56	7
Focus	2.41	9
Communication	2.26	10
Responsibility	2.06	11
Harmony	1.97	12
Restorative	1.91	13
Consistency	1.85	14
Activator	1.82	15
Developer	1.82	15
Positivity	1.74	17
Self-Assured	1.68	18
Empathy	1.47	19
Futuristic	1.47	19
Includer	1.47	19
Maximizer	1.41	22
Relator	1.24	23
Discipline	1.18	24
Intellection	1.15	25
Adaptability	1.00	26
Ideation	0.68	27
Individualization	0.53	28
Input	0.41	29
Significance	0.41	29

Table 7

Ranking Selections of the Analytical Strength (N = 34)

Ranking	#	%
First	2	5.9
Second	5	14.7
Third	1	2.9
Fourth	2	5.9
Fifth	2	5.9
Sixth	0	0.0
Seventh	0	0.0
Eighth	3	8.8
Ninth	3	8.8
Tenth	5	14.7
Not Selected	11	32.4

Research Question 2

What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals for school enrollment?

To identify school enrollment, principals answered a questionnaire item that provided a series of possible enrollment ranges. This research question was analyzed via Kruskal-Wallis test, which was used to indicate differences in mean ranks of the ordered ratings of the self-identified principal strengths between those in different enrollment groups: (a) 150 students or fewer, (b) 151-200 students, and (c) over 200 students. These enrollment groups represent the result of some combining of smaller groups; for example, only two principals represented schools with fewer than 50 students and only three principals represented schools with 201-250 students. In the interest of having

reasonable group sizes for making inferences about this population, the decision was made to combine some of the small groups into larger groups.

Full results for the Kruskal-Wallis test are provided in Table 8. For each of the three enrollment groups, the mean rank for the test is provided. In examining any of the strengths, a lower mean rank value for a group implies that the strength was either less frequently selected or not provided with as high of an ordered rating as compared to a group with a higher mean rank value for the strength. It is also important to keep in mind that the mean rank values should only be compared within each strength, not between different strengths. The test statistic (χ^2) and the level of statistical significance (p) are also provided in Table 8. Although the Bonferroni-corrected level of significance was set at $p = .002$, the results tables provide results with significance levels of $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ as well. The group with the highest mean rank for each strength is indicated by the bolded value in each row.

Table 8

Kruskal-Wallis Results for Strength Identification by School Enrollment (N = 34)

Strength	School Enrollment			χ^2	<i>p</i>
	≤ 150 (<i>n</i> = 13)	151-200 (<i>n</i> = 11)	≥ 200 (<i>n</i> = 10)		
Achiever	15.35	21.18	16.25	2.54	.28
Activator	17.46	18.95	15.95	0.74	.69
Adaptability	19.04	16.59	16.50	1.33	.52
Analytical	14.23	20.73	18.20	2.72	.26
Arranger	18.88	16.45	16.85	0.50	.78
Belief	14.50	17.68	21.20	3.11	.21
Command	12.54	21.82	19.20	6.03	.05*
Communication	15.38	19.00	18.60	1.13	.57
Consistency	19.46	16.27	16.30	1.07	.59
Deliberative	18.50	15.82	18.05	0.52	.77
Developer	22.65	16.41	12.00	9.68	.008**
Discipline	17.88	15.41	19.30	1.67	.44
Empathy	17.81	16.05	18.70	0.57	.75
Focus	20.35	14.95	16.60	2.26	.32
Futuristic	17.77	16.68	18.05	0.17	.92
Harmony	18.54	15.45	18.40	0.86	.65
Ideation	18.27	15.50	18.70	2.13	.35
Includer	16.23	17.77	18.85	0.67	.72
Individualization	17.23	17.55	17.80	0.08	.96
Input	18.12	15.50	18.90	2.21	.33
Intellection	17.62	18.09	16.70	0.28	.87
Learner	13.85	21.00	18.40	3.66	.16
Maximizer	17.08	17.59	17.95	0.07	.97
Positivity	18.08	20.05	13.95	3.14	.21
Relator	17.62	19.64	15.00	3.00	.22
Responsibility	17.81	15.59	19.20	0.97	.62
Restorative	18.04	15.27	19.25	1.23	.54
Self-Assured	18.69	14.77	18.95	2.22	.33
Significance	19.12	16.50	16.50	3.33	.19
Strategic	17.12	19.05	16.30	0.51	.78

Note. *df* = 2 for all tests.**p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .002.

None of the strengths indicated any significant differences in mean ranks of the ordered strengths ratings between principals who lead schools of different sizes at the more stringent level of significance ($p < .002$). Two strengths indicated differences in mean rankings between enrollment groups, but at the less stringent significance level of $p < .05$. Principals in differently-sized schools did vary in their ratings of the Command strength, $\chi^2(2) = 6.03$, $p = .05$; those at schools with enrollments of 151-200 students provided higher ordered rankings ($M_r = 21.82$, $n = 11$) to this strength than did those at schools with enrollments of over 200 students ($M_r = 19.20$, $n = 10$) or those with enrollments of 150 or fewer students ($M_r = 12.54$, $n = 13$). Additionally, principals in differently-sized schools did vary in their ratings of the Developer strength, $\chi^2(2) = 9.68$, $p = .008$; those at schools with enrollments of 150 or fewer students provided higher ordered rankings ($M_r = 22.65$, $n = 13$) to this strength than did those with enrollments of 151-200 students ($M_r = 16.41$, $n = 11$) or those at schools with enrollments of over 200 students ($M_r = 12.00$, $n = 10$). Again, however, neither of these differences met the adjusted $p = .002$ requirement.

Despite the differences not being significant, the results present that principals in the 150 or fewer student groups provided stronger ordered ratings to the strengths of Adaptability, Arranger, Consistency, Deliberative, Developer, Focus, Harmony, and Significance than did principals in the other enrollment groups. Principals in schools with enrollments of 151-200, when compared to principals in the other enrollment groups, provided stronger ordered ratings to the strengths of Achiever, Activator, Analytical, Command, Communication, Intellection, Learner, Positivity, Relator, and Strategic.

Finally, principals in schools serving over 200 students provided stronger ordered ratings to the qualities of Belief, Discipline, Empathy, Futuristic, Ideation, Includer, Individualization, Input, Maximizer, Responsibility, Restorative, and Self-Assured than did principals in the other enrollment groups.

Separate from the Kruskal-Wallis test, simple mean ranks were run for each of the strengths within each enrollment group to further examine patterns within the data. These mean values have a possible range from 0 to 10, where 0 would represent that no principal selected the strength and 10 would represent that every principal selected the strength as his or her highest-rated trait. The rank column provides a value between 1 (highest-ranked within the enrollment group) and 30 (lowest-ranked within the enrollment group). Table 9 provides these mean ranks for each strength.

Table 9

Rankings of Strengths by School Enrollment Levels (N = 34)

Strength	≤ 150 ($n = 13$)		151-200 ($n = 11$)		≥ 200 ($n = 10$)	
	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank
Achiever	2.08	11	4.91	1	2.60	9
Activator	1.54	17	2.73	7	1.20	21
Adaptability	1.77	14	0.73	24	0.30	26
Analytical	2.54	6	4.55	2	3.60	1
Arranger	3.00	3	2.36	10	2.30	12
Belief	1.38	21	3.09	6	3.60	1
Command	1.54	17	4.36	3	3.40	3
Communication	1.54	17	2.73	7	2.70	7
Consistency	2.62	5	1.18	20	1.60	19
Deliberative	2.92	4	1.91	12	2.80	6
Developer	3.54	2	1.45	16	0.00	28
Discipline	1.23	24	0.36	26	2.00	15
Empathy	1.69	16	0.91	22	1.80	17
Focus	3.69	1	1.27	18	2.00	15
Futuristic	1.77	14	1.27	18	1.30	20
Harmony	2.38	7	0.82	23	2.70	7
Ideation	1.31	23	0.00	28	0.60	25
Includer	0.69	28	1.55	14	2.40	11
Individualization	0.15	30	0.64	25	0.90	22
Input	0.54	29	0.00	28	0.70	24
Intellection	1.15	25	1.45	16	0.80	23
Learner	1.54	17	3.91	4	3.40	3
Maximizer	0.77	27	1.82	13	1.80	17
Positivity	2.15	8	2.55	9	0.30	26
Relator	1.38	21	2.18	11	0.00	28
Responsibility	2.08	11	1.09	21	3.10	5
Restorative	1.92	13	1.55	14	2.30	12
Self-Assured	2.15	8	0.27	27	2.60	9
Significance	1.08	26	0.00	28	0.00	28
Strategic	2.15	8	3.36	5	2.20	14

Research Question 3

What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based on their gender?

The third research question utilized the dependent strengths variable with the independent dichotomous variable representing gender. In order to determine differences in the self-identified strengths of principals based on the gender of the principal, a Mann-Whitney test was run to explore the presence of any differences between male and female respondents. This test is ideal when comparisons need to be made between two groups that are not assumed to be normally distributed or when sample size is small.

The Mann-Whitney test ranked the strength selection of all 34 participants of the study; results are located in Table 10. As was the case with Research Question 2, a Bonferroni correction was made to the $\alpha = .05$ significance level, yielding a new study level of significance of $\alpha = .002$. For informational purposes, any results meeting the $p < .05$ and $p < .01$ levels are demarcated by asterisks. The standardized test statistic (Z) and level of statistical significance (p) are also provided within Table 10. Furthermore, the group with the highest mean rank for each strength is indicated by the bolded value in each row. In examining the results, no strengths yielded significant differences in identification between differences in gender of the principals at the conservative $p < .002$ significance level, nor did any strengths indicate differences at the original $p < .05$ significance level.

Table 10

Mann-Whitney Results for Strength Identification by Principal Gender (N = 34)

Strength	Gender		Z	p
	Male (n = 7)	Female (n = 27)		
Achiever	14.64	18.24	-0.90	.67
Activator	16.50	17.76	-0.37	.71
Adaptability	19.86	16.89	-1.14	.25
Analytical	14.43	18.30	-0.94	.35
Arranger	17.43	17.52	-0.02	.98
Belief	19.14	17.07	-0.54	.59
Command	17.79	17.43	-0.09	.93
Communication	15.43	18.04	-0.67	.50
Consistency	16.00	17.89	-0.51	.61
Deliberative	16.57	17.74	-0.29	.77
Developer	19.36	17.02	-0.67	.51
Discipline	19.21	17.06	-0.72	.47
Empathy	19.36	17.02	-0.67	.51
Focus	17.50	17.50	0.00	.99
Futuristic	14.07	18.39	-1.23	.22
Harmony	15.64	17.98	-0.62	.54
Ideation	17.71	17.44	-0.11	.91
Includer	15.50	18.02	-0.77	.44
Individualization	16.00	17.89	-0.91	.36
Input	20.64	16.69	-1.68	.09
Intellection	19.57	16.96	-1.00	.32
Learner	16.14	17.85	-0.43	.67
Maximizer	15.36	18.06	-0.79	.43
Positivity	15.21	18.09	-0.85	.40
Relator	17.43	17.52	-0.04	.97
Responsibility	20.29	16.78	-0.97	.33
Restorative	18.36	17.28	-0.30	.77
Self-Assured	20.93	16.61	-1.38	.17
Significance	18.86	17.15	-0.99	.32
Strategic	17.57	17.48	-0.02	.98

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .002$.

Although none of the other strengths showed significant differences in mean ranking between genders of the participants, male principals ranked the following strengths higher than their female counterparts: Adaptability, Belief, Command, Developer, Discipline, Empathy, Focus, Ideation, Input, Intellection, Responsibility, Restorative, Self-Assured, Significance, and Strategic. On the contrary, female principals preferred Achiever, Activator, Analytical, Arranger, Communication, Consistency, Deliberative, Focus, Futuristic, Harmony, Includer, Individualization, Learner, Maximizer, Positivity, and Relator.

Apart from the Mann-Whitney test, simple mean ranks were run for each of the strengths by gender to further examine patterns within the data. These mean values have a possible range from 0 to 10, where 0 would represent that no principal selected the strength and 10 would represent that every principal selected the strength as his or her highest-rated trait. The rank column provides a value between 1 (highest-ranked within the gender group) and 30 (lowest-ranked within the gender group). Table 11 provides these mean ranks for each strength.

Table 11

Rankings of Strengths by Principal Gender (N = 34)

Strength	Male (<i>n</i> = 7)		Female (<i>n</i> = 27)	
	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank
Achiever	1.86	15	3.48	2
Activator	0.71	26	2.11	11
Adaptability	1.86	15	0.78	26
Analytical	2.71	4	3.70	1
Arranger	2.57	8	2.59	5
Belief	2.86	3	2.52	6
Command	2.71	4	3.07	3
Communication	1.43	19	2.48	8
Consistency	1.43	19	1.96	13
Deliberative	2.71	4	2.52	6
Developer	2.71	4	1.59	19
Discipline	2.14	12	0.93	24
Empathy	2.14	12	1.30	22
Focus	2.43	10	2.41	10
Futuristic	0.43	28	1.74	17
Harmony	1.57	18	2.07	12
Ideation	0.29	29	0.78	26
Includer	0.86	25	1.63	18
Individualization	0.00	30	0.67	28
Input	1.43	19	0.15	30
Intellection	2.00	14	0.93	24
Learner	2.43	10	2.96	4
Maximizer	1.14	23	1.48	20
Positivity	1.14	23	1.89	16
Relator	1.29	22	1.22	23
Responsibility	2.57	8	1.93	15
Restorative	1.71	17	1.96	13
Self-Assured	3.00	1	1.33	21
Significance	0.57	27	0.37	29
Strategic	3.00	1	2.44	9

Research Question 4

What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based upon their professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience?

Having a Degree in Education

The Mann-Whitney statistical test was utilized to analyze the strengths of the principals whose degree was in education versus those whose was not. This statistical test was used because the independent variable, degree in education versus another field, was answered dichotomously with either a yes or no response. This test is ideal when comparisons need to be made between two groups that are not assumed to be normally distributed or when sample size is small.

The mean rankings are provided in Table 12. As was the case with previous research questions, a Bonferroni correction was made to the $\alpha = .05$ significance level, yielding a new study level of significance of $\alpha = .002$. For informational purposes, any results meeting the $p \leq .05$ and $p \leq .01$ levels are demarcated by asterisks. The standardized test statistic (Z) and level of statistical significance (p) are also provided within Table 12. Highlighted numbers are indicative of the higher-ranked strengths for each group, whereas the group with a lower value demonstrates that the particular strength received fewer points by comparison.

Table 12

Mann-Whitney Results for Strength Identification by Principal Having a Degree in Education (N = 34)

Strength	Area of Degree		Z	p
	Education (n = 26)	Non-Education (n = 8)		
Achiever	18.71	13.56	-1.35	.18
Activator	19.04	12.50	-2.02	.04*
Adaptability	17.54	17.38	-0.07	.95
Analytical	17.81	16.50	-0.33	.74
Arranger	17.44	17.69	-0.07	.95
Belief	17.88	16.25	-0.45	.66
Command	18.79	13.31	-1.41	.16
Communication	17.31	18.13	-0.22	.83
Consistency	18.35	14.75	-1.02	.31
Deliberative	15.06	25.44	-2.71	.007**
Developer	16.81	19.75	-0.88	.38
Discipline	17.37	17.94	-0.20	.84
Empathy	15.46	24.13	-2.59	.01*
Focus	17.17	18.56	-0.38	.70
Futuristic	17.79	16.56	-0.37	.71
Harmony	15.62	23.63	-2.23	.03*
Ideation	16.81	19.75	-1.31	.19
Includer	17.67	16.94	-0.24	.81
Individualization	17.96	16.00	-0.99	.32
Input	16.81	19.75	-1.31	.19
Intellection	16.96	19.25	-0.92	.36
Learner	18.08	15.63	-0.65	.51
Maximizer	19.04	12.50	-2.02	.04*
Positivity	19.04	12.50	-2.02	.04*
Relator	18.27	15.00	-1.32	.19
Responsibility	15.87	22.81	-2.02	.04*
Restorative	18.36	16.23	-1.57	.12
Self-Assured	18.73	13.50	-1.75	.08
Significance	17.81	16.50	-0.80	.43
Strategic	16.92	19.38	-0.66	.51

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .002$.

None of the strengths indicated any significant differences in mean ranks of the ordered strengths ratings between respondents who had a degree in education compared to those who did not at the more stringent level of significance ($p < .002$). Five strengths did indicate differences at the less stringent significance level of $p < .05$; in the cases of Activator ($Z = -2.02, p = .04$), Maximizer ($Z = -2.02, p = .04$), and Positivity ($Z = -2.02, p = .04$), those with degrees in education ranked these qualities higher than did those without degrees in education. Likewise, those without degrees in education ranked Empathy ($Z = -2.59, p = .01$), Harmony ($Z = -2.23, p = .03$), and Responsibility ($Z = -2.02, p = .04$) higher than did those with degrees in education. In the case of the Deliberative strength, significance was indicated at the moderately stringent significance level of $p < .01$; those without degrees in education rated it higher than those with degrees in education ($Z = -2.71, p = .007$). All of the mean rankings for the Mann-Whitney test can be found in Table 12; again, however, none of these differences met the adjusted $p < .002$ requirement.

Despite the lack of significant differences at the more stringent level, the strengths that were ranked more highly among the 26 principals who held a degree in education were Achiever, Activator, Adaptability, Analytical, Belief, Command, Consistency, Futuristic, Includer, Individualization, Learner, Maximizer, Positivity, Relator, Restorative, Self-assured, and Significance. By comparison, the strengths that were ranked more highly among the eight principals who had a non-education degree included Belief, Communication, Deliberative, Developer, Discipline, Empathy, Focus, Harmony, Ideation, Input, Intellection, Responsibility, and Strategic.

Separate from the Mann-Whitney statistical test, the average rankings of strengths for the principals based on whether or not they held a degree in education was run. These mean values have a possible range from 0 to 10, where 0 would represent that no principal selected the strength and 10 would represent that every principal selected the strength as his or her highest-rated trait. The rank column provides a value between 1 (highest-ranked within the degree group) and 30 (lowest-ranked within the degree group). Table 13 provides these mean ranks for each strength. Achiever was the top choice for principals whose degree was in education, while principals who did not have a degree in education ranked Deliberative as their top choice.

Table 13

Rankings of Strengths by Principal Having a Degree in Education (N = 34)

Strength	Education (n = 26)		Non-Education (n = 8)	
	M	Rank	M	Rank
Achiever	3.69	1	1.38	17
Activator	2.38	7	0.00	24
Adaptability	0.92	25	1.25	19
Analytical	3.58	2	3.25	6
Arranger	2.65	6	2.38	10
Belief	2.73	5	2.13	13
Command	3.42	3	1.63	15
Communication	2.23	10	2.38	10
Consistency	2.15	12	0.88	22
Deliberative	1.92	14	4.63	1
Developer	1.54	18	2.75	8
Discipline	1.23	22	1.00	21
Empathy	0.96	24	3.13	7
Focus	2.31	8	2.75	8
Futuristic	1.50	19	1.38	17
Harmony	1.35	21	4.00	4
Ideation	0.42	29	1.50	16
Includer	1.58	17	1.13	20
Individualization	0.69	27	0.00	24
Input	0.27	30	0.88	22
Intellection	0.88	26	2.00	14
Learner	3.00	4	2.38	10
Maximizer	1.85	15	0.00	24
Positivity	2.27	9	0.00	24
Relator	1.62	16	0.00	24
Responsibility	1.38	20	4.25	2
Restorative	1.23	22	4.13	3
Self-Assured	2.19	11	0.00	24
Significance	0.54	28	0.00	24
Strategic	2.15	12	3.88	5

Years of Experience

The second part of the question addressed years of experience for the school administrator serving in the principalship. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to highlight any differences in the mean ranking of the strengths between respondents with differing years of principal experience. The years of experience variable, after combining small categories, had three levels representing the values of fewer than 3 years, 3-6 years, and 7 or more years. Combined with the fact that the dependent variable was not assumed to be normally distributed, Kruskal-Wallis was deemed the appropriate test to use.

The Kruskal-Wallis test ranked the strength selection of all 34 participants of the study; results are located in Table 14. As with the other research questions, a Bonferroni correction was made to the $\alpha = .05$ significance level, yielding a new study level of significance of $\alpha = .002$. For informational purposes, any results meeting the $p < .05$ and $p < .01$ levels are demarcated by asterisks. The test statistic (χ^2) and the level of statistical significance (p) are also provided in Table 14. The group with the highest mean rank for each strength is indicated by the bolded value in each row.

None of the strengths indicated any significant differences in mean ranks of the ordered strengths ratings between principals with differing levels of experience at the more stringent level of significance ($p < .002$). However, testing did indicate that the strengths of Focus and Includer showcased some differences among respondents with disparate years of experience, but at the less stringent significance level of $p < .05$. Principals with differing years of experience did vary in their ratings of the Focus strength, $\chi^2(2) = 8.96, p = .01$; those with 3-6 years of principal experience provided

higher ordered rankings ($M_r = 23.50, n = 10$) to this strength than did those principals with fewer than 3 years of principal experience ($M_r = 18.60, n = 10$) or those with 7 or more years of experience ($M_r = 12.43, n = 14$). Additionally, principals with different levels of experience did vary in their ratings of the Includer strength, $\chi^2(2) = 7.41, p = .03$; those with 3-6 years of principal experience provided higher ordered rankings ($M_r = 22.80, n = 10$) to this strength than did those with fewer than 3 years of experience ($M_r = 16.90, n = 10$) or those at schools with 7 or more years of experience ($M_r = 14.14, n = 14$). Again, however, neither of these differences met the adjusted $p < .002$ requirement.

Despite the differences not being significant at the more stringent level, the results present that principals with fewer than 3 years of experience provided stronger ordered ratings to the strengths of Achiever, Communication, Discipline, Harmony, Input, Relator, Restorative, and Significance. Principals with 3-6 years of experience selected Adaptability, Consistency, Discipline, Empathy, Focus, Futuristic, Includer, Individualization, Input, Intellection, Learner, and Maximizer. Finally, principals with more than 6 years of experience selected Activator, Analytical, Arranger, Belief, Command, Deliberative, Ideation, Positivity, Responsibility, Self-assured, and Strategic.

Separate from the Kruskal-Wallis test, simple mean ranks were run for each of the strengths within each experience group to further examine patterns within the data. Achiever was the top choice for principals with less than 3 years of experience, principals with 3-6 years of experience ranked Focus as their preferred strength, and Analytical was ranked first by principals with years of experience that totaled more than 6 years. The end result for all of the rankings is provided in Table 15.

Table 14

Kruskal-Wallis Results for Strength Identification by Overall Principal Years of Experience (N = 34)

Strength	Principal Years of Experience			χ^2	<i>p</i>
	< 3 Yrs (<i>n</i> = 10)	3-6 Yrs (<i>n</i> = 10)	≥ 7 Yrs (<i>n</i> = 14)		
Achiever	19.20	15.25	17.89	0.92	.63
Activator	17.30	13.75	20.32	3.93	.14
Adaptability	18.25	18.50	16.25	1.00	.61
Analytical	17.10	12.00	21.71	5.82	.06
Arranger	15.95	16.90	19.04	0.74	.69
Belief	16.30	15.55	19.75	1.51	.47
Command	17.80	14.45	19.46	1.61	.45
Communication	21.90	12.70	17.79	5.05	.08
Consistency	16.90	20.70	15.64	2.04	.36
Deliberative	16.70	17.30	18.21	0.16	.93
Developer	13.40	20.30	18.43	3.79	.15
Discipline	19.15	17.30	16.46	0.86	.65
Empathy	18.65	19.60	15.18	1.94	.38
Focus	18.60	23.50	12.43	8.96	.01*
Futuristic	16.85	21.00	15.46	2.70	.26
Harmony	19.90	17.80	15.57	1.40	.50
Ideation	17.35	17.05	17.93	0.16	.93
Includer	16.90	22.80	14.14	7.41	.03*
Individualization	16.00	19.30	17.29	2.31	.32
Input	18.90	18.90	15.50	3.07	.22
Intellection	16.50	20.30	16.21	2.97	.23
Learner	14.90	19.20	18.14	1.18	.55
Maximizer	14.50	21.15	17.04	3.52	.17
Positivity	17.50	16.55	18.18	0.24	.89
Relator	20.30	15.00	17.29	3.77	.15
Responsibility	18.30	13.70	19.64	2.98	.23
Restorative	19.65	16.85	16.43	0.92	.63
Self-Assured	16.80	17.30	18.14	0.20	.90
Significance	18.15	16.50	17.75	0.92	.63
Strategic	15.90	14.45	20.82	3.26	.20

Note. *df* = 2 for all tests.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .002.

Table 15

Rankings of Strengths by Overall Principal Years of Experience (N = 34)

Strength	< 3 Yrs (n = 10)		3-6 Yrs (n = 10)		≥ 7 Yrs (n = 14)	
	M	Rank	M	Rank	M	Rank
Achiever	3.90	1	2.30	11	3.21	6
Activator	1.50	18	0.10	28	3.29	5
Adaptability	1.10	23	1.50	19	0.57	27
Analytical	3.40	3	1.40	20	5.07	1
Arranger	2.30	9	2.40	10	2.93	7
Belief	1.90	12	1.70	18	3.71	3
Command	3.40	3	1.80	14	3.57	4
Communication	3.50	2	0.90	24	2.36	11
Consistency	1.40	20	3.20	3	1.21	17
Deliberative	2.50	7	2.60	6	2.57	10
Developer	0.40	28	2.70	5	2.21	12
Discipline	1.70	14	1.10	22	0.86	20
Empathy	1.70	14	2.30	11	0.71	24
Focus	2.80	5	4.30	1	0.79	22
Futuristic	1.20	21	2.60	6	0.86	20
Harmony	2.30	9	2.30	11	1.50	16
Ideation	1.00	24	0.20	27	0.79	22
Includer	1.50	18	3.10	4	0.29	29
Individualization	0.00	30	0.90	24	0.64	26
Input	0.70	26	0.70	26	0.00	30
Intellection	0.60	27	2.50	9	0.57	27
Learner	1.70	14	4.00	2	2.86	8
Maximizer	0.80	25	2.60	6	1.00	18
Positivity	1.70	14	1.80	14	1.71	14
Relator	2.80	5	0.00	29	1.00	18
Responsibility	2.30	9	1.00	23	2.64	9
Restorative	2.50	7	1.80	14	1.57	15
Self-Assured	1.20	21	1.80	14	1.93	13
Significance	0.40	28	0.00	29	0.71	24
Strategic	1.90	12	1.40	20	3.86	2

Research Question 5

What, if any, are the differences between self-identified strengths of the principals for different geographic locations?

For the fifth and final research question, the dependent strengths variable was compared among the groups of the nominal geographic location independent variable that contained five levels, each representing a different state. However, the states of Illinois, and New York had exceptionally small sample sizes ($n = 2$ for IL; $n = 3$). Making inferences on such small groups is questionable, so in an effort to retain the information but utilize more homogenous group sizes, Florida, Illinois, and New York were combined to create a single group ($n = 12$), while California and Texas remained as individual categories. Conceptually, Florida, Illinois, and New York all represented Eastern or Midwestern states, so conclusions can still be drawn through larger geographies; likewise, California represents the Pacific region and Texas represents the South Central part of the country. The Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized due to the need to compare differences between the three groups on a variable that cannot be assumed to have come from a normal distribution.

The Kruskal-Wallis test ranked the strength selection of all 34 participants of the study; results are located in Table 16. As with the other research questions, a Bonferroni correction was made to the $\alpha = .05$ significance level, yielding a new study level of significance of $\alpha = .002$. For informational purposes, any results meeting the $p < .05$ and $p < .01$ levels are demarcated by asterisks. The test statistic (χ^2) and the level of

statistical significance (p) are also provided in Table 16. The group with the highest mean rank for each strength is indicated by the bolded value in each row.

None of the strengths indicated any significant differences in mean ranks of the ordered strengths ratings between geographic locations at the more stringent level of significance ($p < .002$). However, testing did indicate that the strength of Command showcased some differences among regions at the less stringent significance level of $p < .05$. Principals in different locations varied in their ratings of the Command strength, $\chi^2(2) = 6.66, p = .04$; those in Florida, Illinois, and New York provided higher ordered rankings ($M_r = 23.04, n = 12$) to this strength than did those principals in Texas ($M_r = 15.86, n = 11$) or those in California ($M_r = 13.09, n = 11$). Again, however, these differences did not meet the adjusted $p < .002$ requirement.

Despite the differences not being significant at the more stringent level, the results present that principals from California provided stronger ordered ratings to the strengths of Adaptability, Belief, Deliberative, Developer, Empathy, Harmony, Individualization, Maximize, Self-assured, and Strategic. Principals from Florida, Illinois, and New York provided strong ratings for Arranger, Command, Consistency, Discipline, Focus, Includer, Input, Intellection, Learner and Relator. Lastly, principals from Texas selected Achiever, Activator, Analytical, Communication, Futuristic, Ideation, Positivity, Responsibility, Restorative, and Significance as their preferred strengths.

Separate from the Kruskal-Wallis test, simple mean ranks were run for each of the strengths within each experience group to further examine patterns within the data.

Deliberative was the top choice for principals in California, Command was the highest-

rated for principals in Florida, Illinois, and New York, and Analytical was the strongest choice among principals in Texas. The end result for all of the rankings is provided in Table 17. Furthermore, rankings are separated for the each individual state (including Florida, Illinois, and New York) in Table 18. Although the sample sizes are somewhat small, Includer was the highest-ranked choice of those in Florida, Activator the highest in Illinois, and Command the highest in New York.

Table 16

Kruskal-Wallis Results for Strength Identification by Geographic Location (N = 34)

Strength	State			χ^2	<i>p</i>
	CA (<i>n</i> = 11)	FL/IL/NY (<i>n</i> = 12)	TX (<i>n</i> = 11)		
Achiever	17.00	15.79	19.86	1.12	.57
Activator	15.23	18.33	18.86	1.33	.51
Adaptability	18.18	16.46	17.95	0.54	.76
Analytical	16.36	16.58	19.64	0.78	.68
Arranger	14.36	19.42	18.55	2.01	.67
Belief	18.18	16.75	17.64	0.15	.93
Command	13.09	23.04	15.86	6.66	.04*
Communication	19.59	13.54	19.73	3.45	.18
Consistency	14.45	19.00	18.91	1.99	.67
Deliberative	22.18	14.25	16.36	4.25	.12
Developer	19.64	16.79	16.14	1.12	.57
Discipline	15.59	19.83	16.86	2.22	.33
Empathy	19.55	15.75	17.36	1.21	.55
Focus	17.32	17.75	17.41	0.02	.99
Futuristic	18.77	14.67	19.32	2.20	.33
Harmony	19.00	14.79	18.95	1.73	.42
Ideation	17.00	16.79	18.77	0.86	.65
Includer	17.00	20.92	14.27	4.31	.12
Individualization	17.64	17.42	17.45	0.01	.99
Input	16.95	18.50	16.95	0.60	.74
Intellection	18.27	19.08	15.00	2.80	.25
Learner	18.27	20.50	13.45	3.40	.18
Maximizer	19.41	15.63	17.64	1.28	.53
Positivity	18.05	16.46	18.09	0.31	.86
Relator	15.00	19.08	18.27	2.80	.25
Responsibility	16.45	16.63	19.50	0.90	.64
Restorative	17.45	17.29	17.77	0.02	.99
Self-Assured	20.18	16.25	16.18	2.14	.34
Significance	16.50	17.88	18.09	1.00	.61
Strategic	18.50	17.58	16.41	0.29	.87

Note. *df* = 2 for all tests.**p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .002.

Table 17

Rankings of Strengths by Geographic Location w/Combined States (N = 34)

Strength	CA (<i>n</i> = 11)		FL/IL/NY (<i>n</i> = 12)		TX (<i>n</i> = 11)	
	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank
Achiever	2.73	6	2.50	6	4.27	2
Activator	0.82	24	2.17	10	2.45	10
Adaptability	1.36	20	0.67	26	1.00	21
Analytical	2.73	6	3.17	3	4.64	1
Arranger	1.45	19	3.08	4	3.18	3
Belief	3.00	4	2.25	8	2.55	8
Command	1.27	21	5.00	1	2.55	8
Communication	3.00	4	1.17	19	2.73	5
Consistency	1.09	22	2.08	11	2.36	11
Deliberative	3.82	1	1.67	17	2.27	12
Developer	2.64	9	1.75	15	1.09	20
Discipline	0.64	26	2.08	11	0.73	25
Empathy	2.00	14	0.92	24	1.55	18
Focus	2.73	6	2.25	8	2.27	12
Futuristic	2.00	14	0.67	26	1.82	15
Harmony	2.09	13	1.17	19	2.73	5
Ideation	0.36	27	0.17	30	1.55	18
Includer	0.91	23	3.08	4	0.27	27
Individualization	0.82	24	0.58	28	0.18	28
Input	0.18	28	0.83	25	0.18	28
Intellection	1.55	18	1.83	14	0.00	30
Learner	3.55	2	4.00	2	0.91	22
Maximizer	2.55	10	1.08	22	0.64	26
Positivity	2.45	12	1.17	19	1.64	17
Relator	0.00	29	1.92	13	1.73	16
Responsibility	1.82	16	1.50	18	2.91	4
Restorative	1.73	17	1.75	15	2.27	12
Self-Assured	3.18	3	1.00	23	0.91	22
Significance	0.00	29	0.33	29	0.91	22
Strategic	2.55	10	2.42	7	2.73	5

Table 18

Rankings of Strengths – All States (N = 34)

Strength	CA (n = 11)		TX (n = 11)		FL (n = 7)		IL (n = 2)		NY (n = 3)	
	M	Rank	M	Rank	M	Rank	M	Rank	M	Rank
Achiever	2.73	6	4.27	2	2.57	5	0.00	19	4.00	4
Activator	0.82	24	2.45	10	0.57	26	5.00	1	4.00	4
Adaptability	1.36	20	1.00	21	1.14	20	0.00	19	0.00	20
Analytical	2.73	6	4.64	1	2.57	5	4.50	2	3.67	7
Arranger	1.45	19	3.18	3	3.57	4	0.00	19	4.00	4
Belief	3.00	4	2.55	8	2.00	11	4.00	5	1.67	13
Command	1.27	21	2.55	8	5.14	2	3.50	7	5.67	1
Communication	3.00	4	2.73	5	0.71	24	3.00	8	1.00	18
Consistency	1.09	22	2.36	11	1.57	15	0.00	19	4.67	3
Deliberative	3.82	1	2.27	12	1.57	15	2.50	10	1.33	16
Developer	2.64	9	1.09	20	0.86	23	0.00	19	5.00	2
Discipline	0.64	26	0.73	25	1.86	13	2.00	12	2.67	11
Empathy	2.00	14	1.55	18	1.57	15	0.00	19	0.00	20
Focus	2.73	6	2.27	12	2.29	9	0.00	19	3.67	7
Futuristic	2.00	14	1.82	15	1.14	20	0.00	19	0.00	20
Harmony	2.09	13	2.73	5	2.00	11	0.00	19	0.00	20
Ideation	0.36	27	1.55	18	0.29	27	0.00	19	0.00	20
Includer	0.91	23	0.27	27	5.29	1	0.00	19	0.00	20
Individualization	0.82	24	0.18	28	1.00	22	0.00	19	0.00	20

Strength	CA (<i>n</i> = 11)		TX (<i>n</i> = 11)		FL (<i>n</i> = 7)		IL (<i>n</i> = 2)		NY (<i>n</i> = 3)	
	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank	<i>M</i>	Rank
Input	0.18	28	0.18	28	0.71	24	2.50	10	0.00	20
Intellection	1.55	18	0.00	30	2.29	9	3.00	8	0.00	20
Learner	3.55	2	0.91	22	4.71	3	4.50	2	2.00	12
Maximizer	2.55	10	0.64	26	1.43	18	1.50	14	0.00	20
Positivity	2.45	12	1.64	17	0.29	27	4.00	5	1.33	16
Relator	0.00	29	1.73	16	1.29	19	4.50	2	1.67	13
Responsibility	1.82	16	2.91	4	1.71	14	0.50	18	1.67	13
Restorative	1.73	17	2.27	12	2.43	7	1.00	16	0.67	19
Self-Assured	3.18	3	0.91	22	0.00	29	1.50	14	3.00	10
Significance	0.00	29	0.91	22	0.00	29	2.00	12	0.00	20
Strategic	2.55	10	2.73	5	2.43	7	1.00	16	3.33	9

Summary

Chapter 4 provided demographic information related to the participating principals of the study. Also provided in the chapter was the analysis of the five research questions that formed the basis of the study. Chapter 5 will include conclusions to the study and also provide recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Discussions pertaining to the findings presented in Chapter 4 can be found in this chapter. Additionally, Chapter 5 also includes feedback pertaining to the practices of the research, suggestions for future research, and final remarks for the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the self-identified strengths of principals of Islamic schools in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois?
2. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals for school enrollment?
3. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based on their gender?
4. What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based upon their professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience?
5. What, if any, are the differences between self-identified strengths of the principals for different geographic locations?

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1

What are the self-identified strengths of principals of Islamic schools in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois?

This research question did not require inferential statistical analysis since the strengths were not being compared to any of the demographic variables. However, descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the population as a whole. Based on the data analysis, the least selected strength was Significance, defined as the desire to feel important by others (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). This strength was ranked by only two participants (one ranked it as their top strength, the other ranked it in the seventh slot); a total of 32 participants out of the possible 34 did not select it at all. On the contrary, Analytical, which is defined as the capacity to consider all aspects that may impact a situation (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001), was selected by 67.6% of the participants (23 out of 34). This strength had the highest proportion of affirmatively responding principals as compared to any of the other strengths.

The lack of inclination given to the strength of Significance and the preference shown toward Analytical can be attributed to the Islamic model of leadership, where leaders strive to achieve a self-governing society that is just and focused on the well-being of its citizens, free from intolerance, abuse, and oppression (Mir, 2010). As principals of Islamic schools, these leaders emulate the examples of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), an instrumental individual who modeled servant leadership through his words and actions, rightfully stating that “the leader of the nation is their servant” (Mir, 2010, p.

70). Therefore, the focal point of these principals is not the desire to feel important by others, but rather to consider all aspects that may impact a situation.

As schools try to improve and provide quality instruction that intellectually, socially, and emotionally engages the learner, a study funded by the Spencer Foundation concluded that an instrumental force resulting in significant and lasting change is sustainable leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). Leadership sustainability necessitates that in addition to giving careful thought to leadership succession, attention should also be directed toward making certain that other stakeholders within the organization contribute toward the development and implementation of the leader's vision, resulting in leaving an everlasting impact.

Fundamental ingredients to leadership sustainability include delegating and empowering stakeholders to take on the responsibility to accomplish required tasks for the organization, as well as becoming aware of the influence the actions of a leader can have on the school and community. Moreover, leadership sustainability requires that leaders move forward with the latest ideas and innovative methods that can bring about change, rather than the staying with the status quo of traditional and standardized measures for teaching and learning (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004).

The title of the principal makes the individual the de facto leader. However, the leadership of the principal is shown when they enable others to exercise direct influence (Portin, 2004). This concept aligns with the popular Analytical strength selected by the majority of participants, as principals have to consider all aspects that may impact a situation. These results also align with the study funded by the Spencer Foundation

regarding sustainable leadership and its necessary integral components, including (a) the delegation of responsibility, (b) understanding the power of influence possessed by a leader, and (c) the ability to move forward with the implementation of innovative ideas. On the contrary, the strength of Significance was ranked by only 2 of 34 participants, showcasing that most principals do not feel the need to be made to feel important by others.

Research Question 2

What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals for school enrollment?

This research question analyzed the differences in mean ranks of the ordered ratings of the principal strengths between those in different enrollment groups: (a) 150 students or fewer, (b) 151-200 students, and (c) over 200 students. In the interest of having reasonable group sizes for making inferences about this population, the decision was made to combine some of the small groups into larger groups.

Although no differences in mean rankings occurred between enrollment groups at the study's more stringently adjusted significance level ($p < .002$), two strengths did demonstrate differences at the less stringent significance level of $p < .05$: Command and Developer. Those principals at schools with enrollments of 151-200 gave preference to the Command trait, which illustrates the presence of the leader and the ability to take control of a situation and make decisions. By comparison, Developer is the trait that symbolizes leaders who recognize and cultivate the potential in others, including the

identification of minor improvements and drawing satisfaction from them. This strength was preferred by principals at schools with an enrollment of 150 or fewer students.

This variation in leadership skills of principals based on enrollment size of the schools is demonstrated in a 2011 study by Daniel Packard. In this study, the participating principals indicated that enrollment has a profound impact on their leadership traits. The principals reasoned that as enrollment increases, it necessitates a greater challenge of both establishing and expanding on relationships with staff and students. Furthermore, the increase in the volume of responsibilities such as staff observations and meetings, monitoring the curriculum and instruction delivered to students, amount of time spent on student discipline, and listening to parent/teacher complaints are all an added outcome of student enrollment (Packard, 2011). In addition, principals from larger districts referenced less independence and increased standardization as the disadvantage to larger districts, whereas school leaders from smaller districts shared their excitement for being given greater freedom to direct and put into practice instructional initiatives (Packard, 2011).

While Islamic schools are not arranged in districts like their public school counterparts, the challenges faced by the school leaders are similar to those as previously described. Moreover, Islamic schools are also faced with greater challenges of a dwindling leadership pool due to (a) non-competitive compensation, (b) lack of relevant professional background and experience, (c) heavy workloads with limited support, and (d) the uncertainties that lead to burnout and the eventual loss of the school leader (Ozgur, n.d.). Increased enrollment can be of great financial value to the school, but if

the challenges faced by the principals remain the same, then this factor may not only impact the effectiveness of how they lead, but also play a pivotal role in the selection of their perceived strengths.

Research Question 3

What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based on their gender?

The ordered rankings of the strengths were analyzed with regards to the gender of the principals. Examining the results, no strengths yielded significant differences with respect to principal gender in identification of the strengths. However, the strength of Self-assuredness, a theme that signifies confidence in the ability to manage one's own life and represents a gauge that provides self-assurance in giving surety that a respondent's decisions are fitting, was ranked higher by males. On the contrary, Futuristic, a theme whose focal point is the future and what can come of it as the result of the leader's inspiration and vision, was ranked higher by females.

The area of research pertaining to leadership styles of men and women, especially as managers, is growing. While leadership behavior is seen as being similar for both males and females in high-level leadership positions due to the demands of the position, at the same time it has been suggested that women are able to successfully reach the position because they exhibited similar leadership characteristics as their male counterparts (Riggio, 2010). However, when management and workers are questioned regarding leadership traits based on gender, they provide a different perspective. For

example, female leaders are seen as being more supporting, understanding, and approachable than their male counterparts, who are seen as being more action-oriented and focused on the task at hand. This feedback is not just limited to the positive but also includes the negative, such as in the perception that female leaders can be temperamental (Riggio, 2010).

Furthermore, in referencing transformational leadership, a leadership style in which leaders (a) inspire, (b) serve as positive role models, (c) show concern about followers, and (d) empower and motivate followers to be both creative and risk-takers, research shows that women collectively embody more of these qualities than do men (Riggio, 2010). Although this trend does not directly correlate to the current study's findings implying that the strength of Self-assuredness was most strongly cited by men or that Futuristic was the most identified theme for women, it does provide a glimpse into the differences in the leadership traits and qualities that can exist between the genders.

Research Question 4

What, if any, are the differences between the self-identified strengths of principals based upon their professional preparation, e.g., degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience?

Analyzing the strengths of the principals whose degree was in education versus those whose was not in the field, the two groups did not differ to a statistically significant extent at the stringent threshold of $p < .002$ on any of the strengths. However, at the $p < .05$ level, the strengths of Activator, Maximizer, and Positivity were ranked higher for principals who had a degree in education when compared to those who did not. The

strengths of Empathy, Harmony, Responsibility ($p < .05$) and Deliberative ($p < .01$) were ranked higher by principals who did not have a degree in education. Furthermore, the average rankings of strengths for the principals based on their degree in education versus another field resulted in the strength of Achiever indicating the strongest association for principals whose degree was in education and Deliberative for principals who did not have a degree in education.

Islamic schools would prefer their school leaders possess a certain level of credentials, such as a master's degree or higher in educational leadership, supervision experience, and curriculum development expertise. However, it is often difficult to secure a candidate with such credentials due in large part to the lack of resources to recruit and retain the ideal candidate. Therefore, candidates without a degree in education or formal training in a college education program maybe the next viable option as these candidates are available or are the ones who have initiated the interest in helping to open the school or work for it.

In order to increase the pool of candidates for the principalship, some states are offering an alternate route toward becoming the principal. This practice has raised some concerns with regards to the preparation level of the candidates because states like California can waive the coursework in its entirety for those individuals who pass the test (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). However, states such as Mississippi have developed a quality leadership training program called the Mississippi Alternate Path to Quality School Leadership (MAPQSL), which offers a free 3-week summer training program for candidates with MBA, MPA, or MPP degrees who have at

least 5 years of supervisory experience and the recommendation from the school district. Once the summer training is completed, an entry-level license is awarded with which the candidates can apply for the assistant principal position. In order to apply for the principalship and secure the career-level license, additional requirements, including successfully completing the necessary coursework, need to be met. A similar program is also available to teachers in the K-12 setting who have a master's degree in education with at least 3 years of teaching experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

On the contrary, the traditional principal preparation program can provide a candidate with a cohort group, internship, the opportunity to develop a close partnership with the local school district, and a curriculum that integrates theory and practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Programs such as those offered by Delta State University in Mississippi lead to a master's degree in education and combine graduate coursework focused on instructional leadership with a full-time internship experience and financial support for teachers so that they can spend a full year preparing for the leadership role (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

While research is limited on the role a degree in education versus another field plays in the principal's strengths, its influence is present. The experiences and knowledge from a degree that is not within the confines of the traditional education programs of study subjects the individual to different ideas and insights outside of the education realm, whereas the traditional educational leadership program can provide expertise in the areas of long-established thinking and outcomes. In both scenarios the

knowledge, skill, and experiences of the principal can play a role in the differences observed in the selection of strengths.

The results of analyzing the mean ranking of the strengths versus the years of experience as a principal in the groups representing values of less than 3 years, 3-6 years, 7-9 years, and 10 or more years also did not yield any significant differences in ratings for any of the strengths at the stringent $p < .002$ level. However, there was significance at the $p < .01$ level for the strengths of Focus and Includer; both were ranked more strongly among principals with 3-6 years of experience than among principals in the other experience groups. Furthermore, the average rankings of strengths for the principals based on their years of experience showcased the strength of Achiever as the most strongly rated for principals with less than 3 years of experience. Principals with 3-6 years of experience rated Focus as their preferred strength. Lastly, Analytical was rated most highly by principals with years of experience that totaled more than 6 years.

While the literature is limited when discussing the correlation of principal experience and strengths, evidence exists suggesting that new principals often receive substantial support in the various facets of the principalship when compared to their more experienced counterparts. In separately examining experience and outcomes, researchers concluded that the majority (57%) of the principals in the innovative in-service program had 5 or fewer years of experience, as compared to only 39% of the comparison principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Although this does not directly correlate to the strengths selected in the current study, it does provide a sound argument into the different selection of strengths based on years of experience.

Specific research concerning leadership traits and its correlation to principal preparation or experience is limited, but available research has cited that the development of leadership capabilities over time can be attributed to education and experience (Northouse, 2013). Furthermore, leadership is not reserved for the select few, but rather for anyone who has the potential and capitalizes on learning from their experience. Northouse (2013) cites that the leader-centered model, known as the leadership skills model, is consistent with the curricula of most leadership programs and stresses the importance of developing particular leadership skills.

Research Question 5

What, if any, are the differences between self-identified strengths of the principals for different geographic locations?

In comparing the geographic location and strengths, due to the small sample size, states had to be combined to create the following three groups: California ($n = 11$); Florida, Illinois, and New York ($n = 12$); and Texas ($n = 11$). While none of the strengths showed a level of significance at the more stringent $p < .002$ level, the strength of Command was rated more strongly by the group of principals from the combined states of Florida, Illinois, and New York at the $p < .05$ level as compared to the other states. Furthermore, the average rankings of strengths for the principals based on their geographic location resulted in the strength of Deliberative as the strongest choice for principals in California, Command for principals in Florida, Illinois, and New York, and Analytical for principals in Texas.

Because Islamic schools are relatively new in North America, they are faced with a multitude of challenges. These challenges range from financial struggles to finding certified staff who are willing to work long hours at a relatively low pay when compared to their public school counterparts (Ozgun, n.d.). While research pertaining to Islamic school leadership is limited, leadership models and expectations for those in leadership positions are similar in nature, full of complexities because of the ever-changing directives and the diversity of the markets being served (Perrin et al., 2010). Perrin et al. (2010) further add that when leaders who are aware of these influences put strengths into practice that are in line with (a) their goals, (b) the extent of their operations, and (c) their geographic location, “they are better equipped to build on their strengths, minimize their liabilities, and achieve success for themselves and their organization” (p. 16). Furthermore, leaders more greatly value qualities of diversity when they are part of organizations with a greater number of employees, have global revenue, and come from a larger geographic region; they are better able to meet an assortment of challenges that they may face (Perrin et al., 2010).

Additional Analysis

While the additional variables were not analyzed for this study, they could have had an impact on the strengths the principals selected. For example, in the case of Research Question 2, which addressed differences between the self-identified strengths of principals by levels of school enrollment, 18 of the 21 schools with an enrollment of over 150 students (85%) had principals who had prior administrative experience. Among

these principals, Command was selected as the preferred strength. A plausible reason for their selection may rest upon the prior leadership experience. At schools with an enrollment under 150, 10 out of 13 (77%) had prior administrative experience; their preferred strength was Developer. Therefore, those principals at schools with a greater enrollment chose the strength of Command, where they can take control of a situation and make decisions, whereas those with the lower percentage preferred Developer, where the potential of others is recognized and cultivated, small improvement is recognized, and satisfaction is derived from these improvements (Asplund, Lopez, Hodges, & Harter, 2009).

Another example is present in Research Question 4, which dealt with the self-identified strengths of the principals compared to their years of experience as a principal. Principals with three or fewer years selected Achiever, described as having the determination to work hard (Asplund et al., 2009). The rationale behind this selection can be attributed to the understanding that beginning principals may feel that they have to prove their ability to themselves, the school, and its stakeholders. Those principals with 3-6 years of experience selected Focus as the preferred strength; those with more than 6 years of experience selected Analytical as the highest-ranking strength. For this moderately-experienced group, selecting the strength of Focus aligns with experience, as these principals have become comfortable with their roles and have moved past the notion that they have to work hard to prove their worth to themselves, the school, and its stakeholders. Instead, they take direction, follow through, and make the necessary corrections to stay on track. They are also satisfied with being simultaneously busy and

productive by both prioritizing and then following through with their actions as indicative by the strength of Focus (Asplund et al., 2009). Lastly, those principals with more than 6 years of experience ranked Analytical as the highest strength. This selection can be the result of these veteran principals having passed both the initial and additional experience phase of the principalship; these veteran principals with over half a decade of experience are now equipped with the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation, as is representative of the Analytical strength (Asplund et al., 2009).

Similar relationships may exist between the remaining research questions where the selection of the leadership strengths is influenced by factors such as the age of the school, accreditation status, highest degree earned by the principal, number of years the principal has served in the capacity of a school leader at his or her current school, and the grade level the school serves. A display of the entire matrix of variables of interest with all of the respondent values is located in Table 19.

Table 19

Respondent-Level Demographic and Strengths Results for Selected Variables (N = 34)

Yr Est	State	Accredit	Enroll	Yrs Princ Exp	Prior Adm Exp	Prior Tch Exp	Gender	Ed Deg	Top Strength	Low Strength
1982	CA	Yes	151-200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	No	Belief	Harmony
1984	CA	Yes	151-200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Learner	Deliberative
1988	CA	Yes	≥ 200	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Learner	Restorative
1991	NY	Yes	≥ 200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Activator	Strategic
1991	FL	Yes	151-200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Achiever	Strategic
1992	FL	Yes	≥ 200	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Includer	Analytical
1992	TX	Yes	≤ 150	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Significance	Maximizer
1993	TX	Yes	≥ 200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	No	Harmony	Achiever
1994	CA	Yes	151-200	7+	No	No	Female	Yes	Belief	Strategic
1995	TX	Yes	151-200	≤ 3	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Relator	Analytical
1995	CA	Yes	≤ 150	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Focus	Strategic
1996	FL	Yes	≥ 200	≤ 3	No	Yes	Female	Yes	Arranger	Belief
1996	TX	Yes	≥ 200	≤ 3	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Analytical	Futuristic
1997	IL	No	≤ 150	7+	Yes	Yes	Male	Yes	Strategic	Command
1997	IL	No	151-200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Achiever	Consistency
1998	CA	Yes	≥ 200	≤ 3	Yes	Yes	Male	Yes	Deliberative	Restorative
2000	CA	Yes	≤ 150	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Positivity	Activator
2001	CA	Yes	≥ 200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Strategic	Analytical
2001	FL	Yes	151-200	≤ 3	No	Yes	Female	Yes	Command	Harmony

Yr Est	State	Accredit	Enroll	Yrs Princ Exp	Prior Adm Exp	Prior Tch Exp	Gender	Ed Deg	Top Strength	Low Strength
2001	CA	Yes	≤ 150	3-6	Yes	No	Male	No	Adaptability	Command
2001	IL	Yes	≤ 150	7+	No	Yes	Female	Yes	Command	Arranger
2002	TX	Yes	≥ 200	≤ 3	Yes	Yes	Male	Yes	Analytical	Communication
2003	FL	Yes	151-200	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Maximizer	Analytical
2003	FL	No	151-200	7+	Yes	Yes	Male	No	Strategic	Learner
2004	FL	Yes	≥ 200	3-6	Yes	Yes	Male	No	Responsibility	Focus
2004	CA	Yes	≤ 150	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	No	Strategic	Analytical
2005	CA	No	≤ 150	≤ 3	Yes	Yes	Female	No	Responsibility	Harmony
2006	NY	No	≤ 150	≤ 3	No	Yes	Male	Yes	Strategic	Responsibility
2006	TX	Yes	≤ 150	7+	No	Yes	Female	Yes	Activator	Achiever
2007	TX	Yes	151-200	≤ 3	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Achiever	Learner
2007	TX	Yes	151-200	7+	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Strategic	Learner
2009	TX	No	≤ 150	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Achiever	Developer
2010	TX	No	≤ 150	3-6	Yes	Yes	Female	Yes	Arranger	Maximizer
2012	TX	Yes	≤ 150	≤ 3	Yes	Yes	Female	No	Ideation	Discipline

Challenges

While the study was challenging, a more challenging feat involved the gathering of contact information for the population so that respondents could be invited to and subsequently sent the survey. No central distribution list exists that contains all the necessary information to distribute the survey. The researcher did manage to utilize the website for the Islamic Schools League of America, which contained school information. However, the information was not current. The researcher had to use this list as a basis for finding additional information such as the current principal, updated number of students, and whether the school was even open anymore. Contact information, such as a telephone number or e-mail address, were frequently missing, prompting the researcher to utilize additional search engines to find the information and make updates where necessary. Because of this limitation, schools not listed on the ISLA website were excluded from the study, as there was really no other way to search them.

Other challenges included getting the school leaders to complete the survey; reasons for this issue may have included (a) the limited number of studies on Islamic schools, (b) principals not having had previous opportunities to participate in a study, (c) concerns about the confidentiality of the information, and (d) survey invitations not reaching the school principal due to a lapse in communication. Therefore, while the sample size of 34 out of this population may not have been the ideal return rate, it was the result of months of work in securing the sample and represented the best the researcher could do, given the circumstances.

While variables other than principal strengths in comparison to school enrollment, the gender of the principal, professional preparation, i.e. degree in education vs. other fields and years of experience, and different geographic locations of the schools were not compared, data was collected for other variables including the year the school was established, whether or not it is accredited, highest degree the principal earned, prior teaching and/or administrative experience, years the principal is at their current school, and grade level the school serves.

Implications for Practice

In order to meet the needs of an organization, oft-limited resources are expended for preparation and professional development to assist employees in compensating for their limitations with the hope of turning them into strengths. Therefore, identifying the strengths of principals and having a thorough understanding of them in advance will be beneficial to the institution and its stakeholders, as it will enable them to put limited resources to use by focusing on strengths and not compensating for weaknesses. Additionally, school boards will be better informed and prepared when hiring staff so that they can complement the strengths of the leadership that are already part of the organization, helping it to move forward.

Based upon the results of this study, several recommendations can be made with respect to hiring and training. First, a principal selection process can be developed to include an instrument that outlines the candidate's strong points but also stays mindful of school needs. Questions related to the needs of the school can be devised and utilized to

align with the interview process. Throughout the process, careful thought must be given to ensure that the candidate is a good fit for the job and the job for the candidate while keeping in mind the needs of the school and the community.

Recommendations can also extend to once a principal is recruited and selected. Principals should utilize their strengths but also need to be supported by the greater governing board of the organization in helping to fulfill its vision and mission. In other words, if Input is not a strength of the current principal, others within the organization can assist in these related areas and allow the principal to focus on the areas that represent his or her strengths. This action can be optimized by utilizing the StrengthsFinder beyond school leadership, offering its guidance to other faculty and staff stakeholders as well. Professional development opportunities should be aligned with the strengths of the principal and not just the limitations whenever possible.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research can be drawn from the results of the current study. One set of recommendations involves the instrument used. This study could be replicated using a similar demographic survey, but instead of using the 30-themed instrument that is used to rank the top 10 strengths, it can be replaced with the original Clifton StrengthsFinder Online Instrument that requires answering a series of questions, which then provides the top 5 strengths based on the responses. In doing so, the validity of the responses may be enhanced, as the determination of strengths is not left entirely to the respondent. Because the StrengthsFinder instrument can be cost-

prohibitive, the study could also be replicated using a free instrument similar to the actual online StrengthsFinder Instrument, called the Workuno Strengths Test. If both prospective studies were run, results of both instruments could be compared.

If maintaining similar methodology to the current study, a replicate study could be extended to include all Islamic schools, thereby including principals from a larger geographic base. The larger population size and anticipated sample size increase would help with yielding better statistical reliability and an improved opportunity for greater generalization of the results. Additionally, the study could be replicated while exploring differences in school-based demographics, such as the socioeconomic composition of the county or locality served, or the financial stability of the school (e.g., those in school-owned buildings or those in leased/mortgaged buildings). Public schools can also be included in another iteration so that differences between public and private institutions can be better determined.

Additional principal qualities should be explored as related to strengths. For example, a longitudinal study could be conducted to examine differences within a cohort of principals as they have gained experience in either serving in that role or by furthering their studies into higher education. Principal strengths can also be compared to those of both the school board that oversees them and the teachers that they supervise. A study examining the differences in principal strengths between those who were born and raised in the United States versus those that migrated to the United States would be particularly germane to the context of a study involving Islamic schools. Finally, qualitative research would help to further validate the results of the StrengthsFinder; a qualitative study of the

principals could include interview questions followed by an administration of the StrengthsFinder online assessment so that the results can be compared.

Another recommendation toward the future study would be to increase the response rate of the participants thereby strengthening the findings and implications. This response rate can be increased by establishing a relationship with the participants through contacting them individually on a scheduled basis, personalize communication to each participant, and provide continuous follow-up. Also, finding an organization to partner with such as the Islamic Society of North America which hosts the annual education forum in the east and west coasts helps to increase visibility and adds credibility. Additional suggestions include advertising about the study in periodicals such as the Islamic Horizons Magazine that are known to be circulated within the Islamic schools, have a prominent educator talk about the importance of the study on various media outlets frequented by Islamic school educators, and establishing a better strategic timing of when to deliver the questionnaire.

Summary

A summary and findings of the five research questions of the study was presented in Chapter 5. The summary and conclusions were provided on the basis of the findings based on the review of literature from Chapter 2, the data analysis from Chapter 4, and additional readings. Following this information, the researcher provided ideas related to the implications for practice and suggestions for future research.

APPENDIX A
PERMISSION TO USE SURVEY & GALLUP TRADEMARKED THEMES

To Whom It May Concern,

I am giving permission for Kamran Qadri to copy, alter and/or recreate the survey used in my dissertation entitled Strengths of Secondary School Principals in One Large Florida School District and Achievement of Adequate Yearly Progress In 2010-2011.

Sincerely,

Kelly Paduano

RE: WWW.GALLUP.COM Escalation - Incident #1998005

To see messages related to this one, [group messages by conversation](#).

Permissions (Permissions1@gallup.com)

[Add to contacts](#)

10/24/13

To: 'Kamran Qadri'

Hi Kamran,

After reviewing your request and the additional information you provided, we can grant partial permission. We can specifically allow you to use all of the proposed language in your dissertation that you cite below, with one exception: We do not permit the StrengthsFinder themes to be reprinted in any form. You must remove those trademarked terms.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks again.

Gallup Permissions

Permissions (Permissions1@gallup.com)

[Add to contacts](#)

10/29/13

To: 'Kamran Qadri'

Cc: Asplund, Jim

Hello Kamran,

Upon reconsideration of your request, we have decided to grant permission for you to use the 34 themes for this educational purpose. Please be sure to give proper citation to Gallup.

Thank you,

Gallup Permissions

APPENDIX B
E-MAIL AND MAIL INVITATIONS AND REMINDERS

USPS Communication

Dear Principal:

Assalamualaikum. My name is Kamran Qadri and I am a product of an Islamic school. I am currently in the dissertation phase of my doctorate in Educational Leadership at the University of Central Florida. My dissertation is focusing on the Strengths of Islamic School Principals. You are among approximately 100 school level principals from the states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois who have been invited to provide input for this research.

The study is confidential and focuses on full-time Islamic schools where both secular and religious studies are taught. The survey you may take part in will consist of demographic information about you and the school that you are serving at as the principal, and then ranking your ten greatest strengths in an online self-assessment. These strengths are based on the Clifton StrengthsFinder Themes. Viewing of any personally identifiable information will be limited to me, the researcher. There are no anticipated risks or benefits to participating in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at kqadri.mua@gmail.com. My faculty advisor, Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, may be contacted by phone at (407) 823-1469 or by email at rosemarye.taylor@ucf.edu

If you have any questions or concerns about the rights of research participants, they can be directed to the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board Office which oversees research involving human participants. The contact information is as follows: UCF Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246. Tel: (407) 823-2901 or (407) 882-2276.

On the next page you will find information about your school. I will be using the e-mail address provided on the next page to send you a link and instructions on how to complete the online self-assessment. In the event that the information is missing or incorrect, especially your e-mail address, please e-mail me at kqadri.mua@gmail.com with the correct information before Friday, February 8, 2013. The e-mail with the survey link will be sent out on Monday, February 11, 2013. Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate and Inshallah I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Kamran Qadri
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida
Principal, Miftaahul Uloom Academy

VERIFICATION REPORT
2012-2013

Principal:

School:

Year Established:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Website:

Email:

Grades:

Enrollment:

February 11 E-mail

Dear Islamic School Principal,

Assalamualaikum! I hope that this e-mail finds you in the best of health and Iman. As per my letter dated January 28, 2013 you are among approximately 100 Islamic School principals from the states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois who have been invited to provide input for research that will be utilized for my doctoral dissertation in Educational Leadership. If you did not receive the letter in the mail, please e-mail me and I can send you a copy.

Please access the survey by visiting <http://www.instant.ly/s/LKc-dxOPYAA>. Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate and Inshallah I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

Kamran Qadri
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida
Principal, Miftaahul Uloom Academy

March 19 & 24 E-mail Reminders

Dear Islamic School Principal,

Assalamualaikum! I hope that this e-mail finds you in the best of health and Iman. This is a friendly reminder to please complete the survey. Your feedback is critical for me to move forward with my doctoral dissertation in Educational Leadership. Please access the survey by visiting <http://www.instant.ly/s/LKc-dxOPYAA>. It is important that all of the questions are completed including the last 10 with regards to the Strengths Profile. Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate and Inshallah I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

Kamran Qadri
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida
Principal, Miftaahul Uloom Academy

E mail Reminder on April 4, 2013

Dear Principal,

Greetings of Friday. This is a reminder to please complete the survey. The survey can be accessed by visiting <http://www.instant.ly/s/LKc-dxOPYAA>. Please note that it is important to complete the survey in its entirety, especially the last 10 questions on Strengths Finder as the survey is correlating the questions from before to the Strengths Finder. I would be grateful to you if it can be completed before midnight on Friday, April 5, 2013. I am not able to proceed with my study without your cooperation. Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate and Inshallah I look forward to your responses.

Post Card February 22 and April 23

Dear Principal,

This is a reminder to please complete the survey for my dissertation by Tuesday, April 30, 2013. The survey can be accessed by visiting <http://www.instant.ly/s/LKc-dxOPYAA>. Please note that it is important to complete the survey in its entirety, especially the last 10 questions on Strengths Finder as the survey is correlating the questions to the Strengths Finder.

Alhamdulillah I am close to my goal of a 50% return rate. Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate and Inshallah I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

Kamran Qadri
Principal, Miftaahul Uloom Academy
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida

**APPENDIX C
INSTRUMENT**

INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important study about the Characteristics of Islamic School Principals. You are among approximately 100 school level principals from the states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois who have been invited to provide input for this research.

I will be available to explain this research study to you; whether or not you take part is up to you. You can agree to take part now and later change your mind. Whatever you decide, it will not be held against you. Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

The study is confidential. The survey you may take part in will consist of demographic information about you and the school that you are serving at as the principal, and then ranking your ten greatest characteristics in an online self-assessment. Viewing of any personally identifiable information will be limited to me, the researcher. There are no anticipated risks or benefits to participating in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at kqadri.mua@gmail.com. My faculty advisor, Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, may be contacted by phone at (407) 823-1469 or by email at rtaylor@mail.ucf.edu.

Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the researcher.
- You cannot reach the researcher.
- You want to talk to someone besides the researcher.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate. By clicking "Yes" the participant is giving informed consent.

I have read the information above and give my informed consent to participate in this study.

- Yes

Dear Islamic School Principal,

The following questionnaire will assist the researcher in gathering data regarding principals of Islamic schools in the states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois. The findings of the survey will then be used as data for the doctoral study exploring the characteristics of Islamic school principals.

The survey consists of 60 questions with the first set of 30 relating to demographic type questions and the remaining 30 relating to leadership styles. The entire survey should take between 30 to 45 minutes. Please answer all the questions, including school demographic information that you may have already verified earlier as part of the initial letter mailed to you. Your participation in the survey is instrumental in completing the study.

Sincerely,

Kamran Qadri, M.Ed.
Principal, Miftaahul Uloom Academy
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida

Part I:

Demographic information about the principal and the school

Principal's Name

Principal's E-mail Address

Principal's Gender

- Female
- Male

Principal's Highest Degree Earned

- Bachelors
- Masters
- Doctorate
- Other

Is degree earned in the field of education?

- Yes
- No

Did you have prior administrative experience before your current principalship?

- Yes
- No

Did you have prior teaching experience before becoming a principal?

- Yes
- No

How many years have you served as the principal at the current school?

- Less than 3
- 3-6
- 7-9
- More than 10

How many years have you been in the principalship, including the current school?

- Less than 3
- 3-6
- 7-9
- More than 10

What is the name of the school where you are currently serving as the principal (Please type the complete name and do not use abbreviations)?

Which year was your school established?

School Address (Please make sure you include your zip code):

What is the telephone number?

What is the fax number?

List your school's website address. If your school does not have a website, please enter N/A

Is your school accredited?

- Yes
- No

If your current school is accredited, who is the accrediting agency or agencies? If your school is not accredited enter N/A.

Which of the following grade levels are served by your school (you may select more than 1):

- PK-5
- 6-8
- 9-12

What is the total enrollment of your school?

- Less than 50
- 51-100
- 101-150
- 151-200
- 201-250
- 251-300
- Above 300

What percentage of students are on the federal free/reduced lunch program? If your school does not participate in the program, enter N/A.

What percentage of students are classified as exceptional students and can receive services as part of the exceptional student education program? If your school does not participate in the program, enter N/A.

What percentage of students are classified as English Language Learners? If your school does not participate in the classification of ELL, enter N/A.

What is the demographic make-up of the student body? Please list the percentage next to identifying variable in the box provided below.

- ___ **White**
- ___ **Asian**
- ___ **Middle Eastern**
- ___ **European**
- ___ **Central American and the Caribbean**
- ___ **South American**
- ___ **African**
- ___ **Other**

If your high school goes up to 12th grade, what is the graduating class size? If your school does not have a senior class, please enter N/A.

Which of the Standardized Tests listed below are administered to your student body?

- Stanford Achievement Test
- IOWA Test
- SAT
- ACT
- State Test (i.e. FCAT)
- Other, please specify:

What percentage of seniors graduate high school?

- Less than 25%
- More than 25%, less than 50%
- More than 50% less than 75%
- More than 75% less than 100%
- 100%

What is the average SAT score of the graduating class? If your school does not have a senior class, please enter N/A.

What percentage of students graduating enroll at a 2 year college? If your school does not have a senior class, please enter N/A.

What percentage of students graduating enroll at a 4 year college or university? If your school does not have a senior class, please enter N/A.















Descriptive Text







Part II:

Thank you for taking the time to complete the first part of the survey. The remaining 30 questions will ask you to select the leadership styles that best fit you. Remember, there is no correct answer.

Please read over the 30 themes listed below and rank the ten themes that most accurately describe your strengths. Leave those that are not in your top ten blank. You may only have one strength per rating.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Achiever-Get satisfaction from being busy and productive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activator-Can make things happen by turning thoughts into action; often impatient.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adaptability-Prefer to "go with the flow."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analytical-Have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arranger-Can organize, but they also have a flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Belief-Have certain core values that are unchanging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Command-Can take control of a situation and make decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication-Find it easy to put their thoughts into words.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consistency-Keenly aware of the need to treat people the same.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deliberative- described by the serious care they take in making decision; Anticipates obstacles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Developer-Recognize and cultivate the potential in others. 
- Discipline-Enjoy routine and structure. 
 - Empathy-Can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others' lives 
- Focus-Can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary 
- Futuristic-Inspired by the future and what could be. 
- Harmony-Look for consensus; Don't enjoy conflict 
- Ideation-Fascinated by ideas; find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena. 
- Includer-Show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them. 
- Individualization-Intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. 
- Input-Have a craving to know more; Like to collect and archive all kinds of information. 
- Intellection-Characterized by their intellectual activity. 
- Learner-Have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. 
- Maximizer-Focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. 
- Positivity-Have an enthusiasm that is contagious; Upbeat and can get others excited 

- Relator-Enjoy close relationships with others; satisfaction in working hard with friends to 
- Responsibility-Take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. 
- Restorative-Good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it. 
- Self-assurance-Possess an inner compass that gives them confidence 
- Significance -Want to be very important in the eyes of others. 
- Strategic -Create alternative ways to proceed 

Buckingham, M., & Clifton, D. O. (2001). Now, Discover Your Strengths. New York City: Free Press.

Thank You Page

APPENDIX D
MEANING OF STRENGTHS

Brief Descriptions of the 34 Themes of Talent Measured by the Clifton StrengthsFinder

Achiever

People especially talented in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.

Activator

People especially talented in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.

Adaptability

People especially talented in the Adaptability theme prefer to "go with the flow." They tend to be "now" people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.

Analytical

People especially talented in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.

Arranger

People especially talented in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

Belief

People especially talented in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.

Command

People especially talented in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.

Communication

People especially talented in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.

Competition

People especially talented in the Competition theme measure their progress against the performance of others. They strive to win first place and revel in contests.

Connectedness

People especially talented in the Connectedness theme have faith in the links between all things. They believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has a reason.

Consistency

People especially talented in the Consistency theme are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same. They try to treat everyone in the world with consistency by setting up clear rules and adhering to them.

Context

People especially talented in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.

Deliberative

People especially talented in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.

Developer

People especially talented in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.

Discipline

People especially talented in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.

Empathy

People especially talented in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others' lives or others' situations.

Focus

People especially talented in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, then act.

Futuristic

People especially talented in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.

Harmony

People especially talented in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.

Ideation

People especially talented in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

Includer

People especially talented in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.

Individualization

People especially talented in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.

Input

People especially talented in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.

Intellection

People especially talented in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.

Learner

People especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

Maximizer

People especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.

Positivity

People especially talented in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.

Relator

People especially talented in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.

Responsibility

People especially talented in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.

Restorative

People especially talented in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.

Self-Assurance

People especially talented in the Self-Assurance theme feel confident in their ability to manage their own lives. They possess an inner compass that gives them confidence that their decisions are right.

Significance

People especially talented in the Significance theme want to be very important in the eyes of others. They are independent and want to be recognized.

Strategic

People especially talented in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

Woo

People especially talented in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.

Source: J. Asplund, S. J. Lopez, T. Hodges, & J. Harter (2009). *The Clifton StrengthsFinder 2.0 technical report: Development and validation*.

APPENDIX E
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**
To: **Syed K. Qadri**
Date: **January 18, 2013**

Dear Researcher:

On 1/18/2013, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STRENGTHS AND TALENTS OF PRINCIPALS OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA, TEXAS, NEW YORK, FLORIDA, AND ILLINOIS
Investigator:	Syed K. Qadri
IRB Number:	SBE-13-09039
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 01/18/2013 04:36:32 PM EST

IRB Coordinator

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