PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THE ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

STATUS OF TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

Gennifer Lynn Miller

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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APPROVED BY:

Tracey Pritchard, Ed.D., Committee Chair

William Gribbin, Ph.D., Committee Member

Janet Richards, Ed.D., Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this correlational study was to determine the correlation between perceived leadership style and academic achievement in Title I Virginia elementary schools as measured by Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status. The results of this study could provide education institutions and school districts with insight regarding education for school administration that would enhance characteristics that may increase academic achievement. The researcher examined the correlation between principals' perceived leadership styles and the AYP status of Title I elementary schools in Virginia through the use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and Virginia Report Cards, through a point-biserial correlation analysis. This study involved principals in Title I Virginia elementary schools and their teachers, henceforth referred to as raters. It was determined that there was not a significant correlation between perceived transformational or transactional leadership characteristics and academic achievement; however, there was a significant correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and academic achievement. It was also determined that there was a significant positive correlation between perceived transformational and transactional leadership characteristics and extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction. There was a significant negative correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction. Further research could include the length of a principal's tenure in correlation to AYP status, as well as the demographics of the schools in correlation to AYP status.

Keywords: academic, achievement, leadership, principal, student

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beautiful daughter Callie Anna Miller. For the times that I worked while you watched a movie…thank you. For the times that you cooked me dinner so that I could continue to work…thank you. For your love and support in always encouraging me and having faith that I could get it done…thank you.

I want you to know that you can be anything you want to be, do anything you want to do, and accomplish anything you set your mind to. Social norms, statistics regarding background or rates of success for individuals from certain family circumstances, and people's opinions of ability, aptitude, and fortitude are not valid indications of who you are or what you can accomplish. You are in charge of your future, and your willpower, determination, drive, and passion determine your destiny. It is my hope that completing this degree will set an example of this for you follow.

I am so very proud to call you my daughter. You are my greatest accomplishment and my biggest blessing. This dissertation is dedicated to you, Callie Anna, in hopes that it can serve as a reminder that you can be and do anything you set your mind too, and that your mom will always be in your corner and supporting you in any endeavor you choose to take on.

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Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Student academic achievement is the driving force behind public education and federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) mandates (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between student achievement as indicated by AYP standards set forth by the state of Virginia and perceived leadership styles, as measured by leadership characteristics, of Virginia elementary principals in Title I schools. This quantitative, correlational research design utilized data from two measurement instruments, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1995) and the Virginia Department of Education 2016/2017 indicators, to examine whether or not a relationship exists between academic achievement, as measured by the school's AYP status, and principals' perceived leadership styles in Title I schools. Results of this study were used to determine if leadership style affects the academic achievement of elementary students, which would allow school districts to provide direction and professional development for leaders to foster the characteristics of the leadership style that promote the greatest levels of academic achievement.

Background

Principals and educational leaders have an impact on academic achievement (Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, 2013). Although the impact is indirect, educational leaders' influence within the school determines the climate of the school, as well as the values of the school and the motivation of those directly influencing academic achievement (Edwards, 2014). There are 15 core practices that are evident in successful educational leaders that can be classified as: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program. According to the Wallace Foundation (2017), the 15 core practices include:

- building a shared vision,

- fostering the acceptance of group goals,

- creating high performance expectations,

- communicating direction,

- providing individualized support and consideration,

- offering intellectual stimulation,

- modeling appropriate values and practices,

- building collaborative cultures,

- restructuring the organization to support collaboration,

- building productive relationships with families and communities,

- connecting the school to the wider community,

- staffing the program,

- providing instructional support,

- monitoring school activity,

- buffering the staff from distractions to their work, and

- aligning resources.

These practices enable principals to ensure their school provides students with the best possible environment and opportunity to realize academic success (Robinson, 2015). According to Hirsch (2010), "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 151).

It is important to understand the characteristics of leadership styles when considering the impact of educational leadership on academic achievement. Two main leadership styles, transformational and transactional, are believed to show the most promise for improving

organizational outcomes, while another style, laissez-faire, denotes the lack of leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Transformational leadership empowers followers and fosters a sense of ownership in the success of the entitiy, and transactional leadership offers a reward system for desired outcomes and actions. The laissez-faire style, on the other hand, occurs when there is a lack of direction and leadership.

Principals and educational leaders must evaluate the climate and culture of the school they are leading and utilize the most appropriate leadership style in order to maximize academic achievement. Over time their particular leadership style may influence the climate of the school, enabling principals to modify their leadership style accordingly. In many cases a principal may choose to utilize a combination of leadership styles based on the situation, climate and vision (Burgess, 2016).

Many school systems have attributed academic gains and continued academic excellence in the presence of high growth rates to leadership. This belief, according to Hatrick (2008), explains why "Loudoun County Public Schools in Virginia has grown by 5% of their student population, 3,000 students a year, every year since 1991, and through outstanding leadership have managed to be ranked among the top schools in the state" (p. 54). Likewise, Westwood High School, in Memphis, Tennessee flourished under the leadership of Tommie McCarter (Hatrick, 2008). According to Rourke and Hartzman (2008), when McCarter took over the school, the academic achievement was so low it was on the verge of being taken over by the state, and through exemplary leadership it turned around and became ranked as one of the top high schools in the state. It has been repeatedly argued that principals who correctly utilize the 15 core practices have a profound indirect impact on academic achievement (Wallace Foundation, 2017). Principals and educational leaders who are truly committed to academic

achievement and success can and do have a tremendous impact on academic achievement by utilizing the 15 core practices of educational leadership within their leadership style (Leithwood, 2005).

In the 21st century, the challenge of raising student achievement and meeting AYP mandates in public schools is the responsibility of district leaders, principals, assistant principals, teachers, support personnel, students and parents. In many of the schools, the responsibility rests on the ever-optimistic shoulders of the building administrators who must lead their schools with leadership characteristics that promote academic achievement, as well as placing teachers in the appropriate classrooms to enhance student achievement at all levels. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) states, "One possible remedy for schools in which test scores fail to meet the state's standards for effectiveness is to change principals" (p. 3).

Academic achievement is promoted when the educational leaders of a school, in conjunction with staff and stakeholders, establish high academic goals that are valued and promoted by all (Chen, 2014). Principals must communicate the values and goals in such a manner that their value is recognized and adopted by all involved in the educational process. Only when teachers and stakeholders buy into the vision can the goals and academic excellence be achieved. When the teachers and stakeholders buy into the academic values and goals that have been developed, then academic achievement is impacted (Allen, 2015).

In order for academic excellence to take place, educational leaders must increase motivation in the staff, which will indirectly influence academic achievement. Kouzes and Posner (2007) found "that when leaders effectively communicate a vision, constituents report significantly higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, loyalty, team spirit, productivity, and profitability" (p. 133). Therefore, it is the duty of the principal to ensure that

goals and values are communicated in such a way that teachers realize the value and achievability of the goals and become committed to making them a reality.

In addition to communicating goals and values in such a way that the staff buys into them, the principal must also provide the resources and programs that will enable teachers to motivate their students towards academic achievement (Breidenstein, 2012). It is not enough to simply develop a set of goals. Principals need to ensure that teachers have the necessary tools and resources within their classrooms to attain these goals. Kruger, Witziers, and Sleegers (2007) postulated that when teachers do not have the necessary resources to put into action the plans that they have bought into, they will grow frustrated and motivation will decrease. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that teachers remain motivated to work towards the vision and goals of academic excellence by providing them with the resources that will enable them do so (Kruger et al., 2007).

While principals and educational leaders must provide teachers with resources and training, they must also consider the culture of the organization and community. According to Robinson (2015), educational leaders must take into account the culture of the community and school that they are leading and then devise the most effective way to put the educational leadership practices to use. The challenges that face educational leaders are ever changing and leaders need to be able to adapt to these changes (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Chen (2014) indicated that utilizing the collaboration and lifelong learning experiences in the core practices will assist in ensuring that these changes are handled smoothly in the best possible manner; however, change is rarely easy.

Principals and educational leaders must realize that the climate and culture of the school directly affect the motivation of both staff and students (Gray & Ross, 2006). "School culture

involves deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have formed over the course of the school's history" (Deal & Peterson, 1990, p. 3). Student achievement is directly related to motivation, and therefore principals must ensure that the climate and culture of their school fosters motivation and academic excellence (May, Huff, & Goldring, 2012).

Academic achievement is promoted when the educational leaders of a school set high academic goals that stakeholders and staff value and promote (Allen, 2015). Principals must be motivated to achieve excellence. Motivation and vision start with the principal, so it is imperative for the principal to be a visionary (Chen, 2014). If a principal has an attitude of defeat, and mediocrity is acceptable, then academic achievement and excellence will wither and die (Gray & Ross, 2006). Leadership is a challenge with great reward for those who endeavor to do it well. Academic excellence should be the goal of a great educational leader, and the leaders influence on academic achievement can assist in attaining that goal (Robinson, 2015).

The research that exists suggests that leadership characterisics do influence academic growth (Chen, 2014; Cherry, 2017; Lynch, 2015). In a quantitative study by Gaziel (2007), the relationship between a secondary principal's instructional leadership and student achievement was scrutinized. Gaziel (2007) found that although studies showed that a principal's leadership characteristics played a pivotal role in students' academic achievement, there was vagueness surrounding the specific leadership characteristics. Gaziel (2007) also emphasized the importance of looking "for the indirect effect of the principal's instructional leadership behaviors on student achievement and the contextual variables such as students' SES background and school size on student achievement" (p. 17).

Research by Hirsch (2010), in his working conditions survey for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, suggested that principal leadership characteristics play an essential role in

the success or failure of schools. Hirsch (2010) indicated that "school improvement is not possible without skilled knowledgeable leadership that is responsive to the needs of all teachers and students" (p. 151). This concept was supported by Day (2004), who linked student achievement with successful school leadership, as well as Kelley, Thornton, and Daughtery (2005), whose research also supported the link between school leadership and student achievement.

Gutelius (2011) completed case study research on effective leadership in urban public schools and stated, "Leading schools in challenging settings is a difficult role, and when the leaders is obviously committed to the task and exudes an attitude that is caring, optimistic, and sincere, that task of having the school succeed through effective leadership is more likely to occur" (p. 153). Many urban and rural public schools face challenges that make academic success difficult. According to the research conducted by Gutelius (2011), "The challenges facing leaders are complex and difficult, and when principals are able to meet those challenges by rendering exemplary leadership, their schools are able to excel" (p. 151).

 While the research has shown that principal leadership does impact academic progress, there is limited information as to which specific leadership style is most effective in Title I elementary schools. This study sought to discover the correlation between specific leadership styles as measured by specific leadership characteristics, and academic achievement as measured by AYP status in Title I elementary schools.

Problem Statement

School districts must know which leadership styles and characteristics, if any, promote higher levels of academic achievement in Title I elementary schools, in order to provide professional development that will enhance these characteristics. "More research on school

leadership leading to school improvement and student success needs to be performed in order to gain an understanding of the values and constructs which impact school districts and school leadership" (Rautiola, 2009, p. 29). According to Rautiola (2009), "The study of school leadership impacting student achievement has shown that successful leaders do exhibit certain traits, which lead to both school improvement and increased student achievement" (p. 28). The objective of Rautiola's research study was to discover the most effective leadership characteristics and styles, in order to develop those characteristics in school principals and thus increase academic achievement.

According to authors Anderson, Leithwood, Seashore, and Wahlstrom (2004), "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 7). This statement suggests that principals do impact academic achievement. Although there has been research conducted on the effects of high school and middle school principals on academic achievement (Berrong, 2012), there is a significant gap in the research regarding the effect of elementary principals on academic achievement. NCLB (2001) states that "one possible remedy for schools in which test scores fail to meet the state's standards for effectiveness is to change principals" (p. 3). Therefore, research is needed to shed light on the correlation between perceived leadership styles of Title I elementary principals and the AYP status of their schools in order to determine the leadership style and characteristics that produce the highest levels of academic achievement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to test the theory of correlation that relates academic achievement, as measured by AYP status, to principal's leadership style in Title I elementary schools in Virginia. Marzano, McNulty, and Waters (2004) discovered that there is a

positive correlation between student achievement and school leadership, and this study identifed the specific leadership styles and characteristics that lead to increased academic achievement. The independent variable of perceived leadership style, as identified by specific leadership characteristics, was generally defined as the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Clark, 2015). Transformational and transactional leadership styles, along with laissez-faire (lack of leadership) were considered, in correlation to the AYP status of Title I elementary schools, to determine which leadership style promoted the highest levels of academic achievement. The dependent variable, academic achievement, was generally defined as the achievement by individuals of objectives related to various types of knowledge and skills (International Observatory on Academic Achievement, 2010) and was measured by the AYP status of the schools. It is therefore important to discern what leadership style is the most effective, in order to understand what types of professional development educational leaders should be provided with, and what characteristics should be developed, to improve academic achievement in elementary students in order to ensure that their schools meet AYP.

Significance of the Study

Since student achievement is the measure of leadership success (Robinson, 2015), this study investigated whether or not leadership style impacted academic achievement. The study examined whether elementary principals in Title I schools can be more successful through targeted professional development. Principals impact student achievement significantly through their role as a leader (Robinson, 2015); thus it is critical that the leadership characteristics that produce increased academic achievement are identified so they can be cultivated in present and future school administrators. Since elementary schools are most often smaller organizations than

middle or secondary schools, elementary principals may have a greater impact on academic achievement than their middle and secondary counterparts (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003). When enhanced student performance is desired, "it is important that principals and other administrative personnel identify and develop a leadership style or model that fits the school's needs and culture, and would lead to enhanced school performance" (Rautiola, 2009, p. 27).

The goal of successful principals is to promote the greatest levels of academic achievement in students (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014). This study identified the most effective characteristics, in regards to leadership styles of principals, to enable schools to realize the full potential of all students. According to Allen (2015), principals are responsible for setting direction and providing the school with common goals and values toward which to work. Characteristics related to setting direction include, "building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, creating high performance expectations, and communicating the direction" (Anderson, Leithwood, Louis, & Wahlstrom, 2010, p. 68). In order to be effective educational leaders, principals must develop a core set of values from which the school will operate. These values will provide the staff and students with a foundation from which to work. The goals that are set for the staff and students will stem from the value system that has been set in place (Berrong, 2012). Specifically, a successful school must incorporate

> aspects of the school environment, including a physical environment that is welcoming and favorable to learning, a social environment that encourages positive communication and interactions between all stakeholders, an affective environment that stimulates a sense of belonging, especially among students, and an academic environment that fosters a learning system that promotes success for all. (Allen, 2015, p. 13)

This study identified the most successful leadership styles and characteristics in order for school systems to provide meaningful professional development for their principals, so that all students have the opportunity to realize the highest level of academic success.

School districts are continually utilizing scarce funding for staff development. "In these lean times, getting funding for professional development opportunities can seem like an insurmountable challenge" (Goldberg, 2006, p. 1). For this reason it is critically important that all staff development that takes place is productive and useful (King, 2006). According to Berrong (2012), by determining which leadership characteristics have the greatest impact on academic achievement, the staff development funding and time can be put to its optimal usage.

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a relationship between perceived transformational leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between perceived transactional leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

Definitions

1. *Academic Achievement* – The achievement by individuals of objectives related to various types of knowledge and skills. These objectives are socially established based on the age, prior learning and capacity of individuals with regard to education, socialization, and qualification (International Observatory on Academic Achievement, 2010).

2. *Climate* – The perception of people about the organization and its leaders, directly attributed to the leadership and management style of the leaders, based on the skills, knowledge and attitude and priorities of the leaders (Clark, 2015).

3. *Culture* – A system of shared values, assumptions, beliefs and norms that unite the members of the organization (Clark, 2015).

4. *Idealized Influence* – The leader serves as an ideal role model for followers; the leader "walks the talk," and is admired for this (Riggio, 2009).

5. *Individualized Consideration* – Transformational leaders demonstrate genuine concern for the needs and feelings of followers (Riggio, 2009).

6. *Inspirational Motivation* – Transformational leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate followers (Riggio, 2009).

7. *Intellectual Stimulation* – The leader challenges followers to be innovative and creative (Riggio, 2009).

8. *Leadership Style* – The manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Clark, 2015).

9. *Motivation* – The combination of a person's desire and energy directed at achieving a goal. It is the cause of action (Clark, 2015).

10. *Values* – Ideas about the worth or importance of things, concepts and people (Barnett, 2011).

11. *Vision* – The ability or an instance of great perception, especially of future developments (Leithwood, 2005).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Literature suggests that principal leadership styles have a profound effect on the academic achievement of students (Coelli & Green, 2012). This chapter will discuss the full range of leadership theory (Avolio & Bass, 1991) as well as behaviorism theory. These theories provide the basis for this research study and encompass the leadership styles that will be discussed, as well as the ideal that posits leadership characteristics can be learned and utilized to increase academic achievement in Title I elementary schools. Additionally, the concepts of educational leadership, core practices, AYP, and Title I schools will be explored. The leadership styles of principals and educational leaders impact academic achievement (Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, 2013). Based on research by Yahya (2015), principals and educational leaders can learn successful leadership characteristics. It is important to discern what leadership characteristics are the most effective in order to understand how educational leaders should be trained and what characteristics they should be taught to maximize student achievement and meet AYP standards.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was based on the full range of leadership model and theory developed by Avolio and Bass (1991). This model includes transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire (nonleadership). The theory associated with the full range of leadership model holds that transformational leadership is the most effective style of leadership, with transactional leadership also being effective, and laissez-faire (nonleadership) being the least effective. According to Burgess (2016), the most successful and effective leaders most often display transformational leadership traits and the least effective leaders display laissez-faire

leadership traits, with transactional leaders also being somewhat effective although not as effective as transformational leaders.

Transformational leadership is one of the leadership styles identified by the full range of leadership model, and consists of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (4 *I*s). Bass and Riggio (2006) stated, "Transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity" (p. 3). At the heart of transformational leadership is the concept that leadership can occur at any level by any individual, and through inspiration and empowerment the transformational leader develops their followers' leadership potential, often motivating them to achieve higher than they ever thought they could (Cherry, 2017).

Transactional leadership is characterized by leaders rewarding or disciplining followers based on their performance or expected actions or outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Constructive transaction is called contingent reward, and corrective transaction is called management-by-exception. Management-by-exception can take the form of active, wherein the leader takes an active role in monitoring the follower, or passive, in which the leader waits for followers to make an error and then corrects it.

Laissez-faire leadership is identified as an absence of leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to the the full range of leadership theory developed by Avolio and Bass (1991), laissez-faire is the least active leadership style and also the most ineffective. This leadership style is characterized by the leader not making decisions, delaying actions, ignoring responsibilities, and not using of authority.
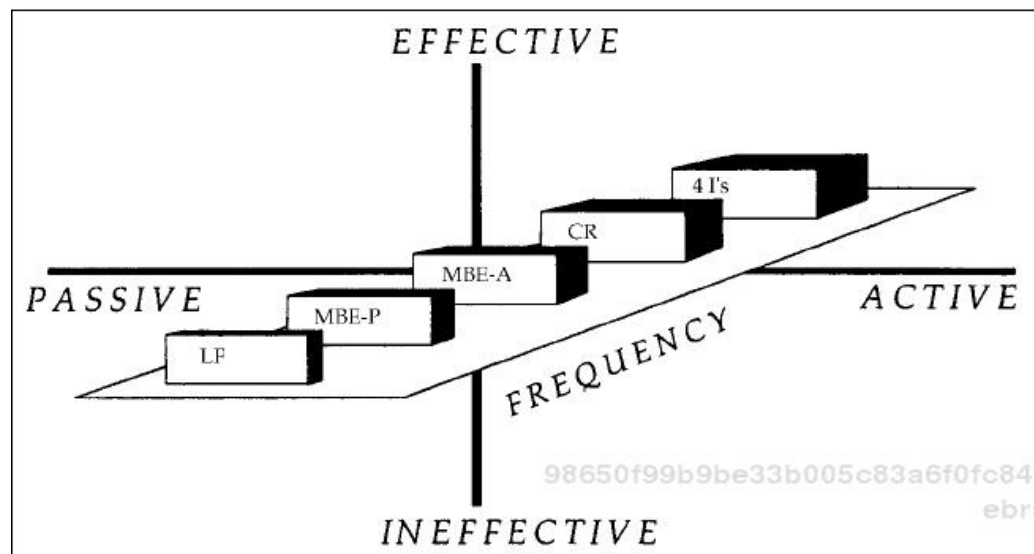
Figure 1. The model of the full range of leadership. Adapted from *Transformational Leadership (Vol 2)* by B. Bass and R. Riggio, 2006, New York, NY: Psychology Press.

The behavioral theories of Skinner also contribute to the framework for this study. Leaders who are ineffective behave very differently from leaders who are highly effective (Burgess, 2016). For this study, the principals' leadership style and behaviors were studied in correlation to Title I elementary school's AYP status.

The basis of the behaviorism theory is that learning is defined as a change in behavior of the learner (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2012). Leadership encompasses many characteristics that can be taught and learned, thereby producing a change in behavior (Leapley-Portscheller, 2008). If the leadership characteristics of a principal are not producing the desired results, then the principal needs to learn characteristics that will produce the desired results (Robinson, 2015).

The leadership styles of principals and educational leaders can play a large role in academic achievement (Yahya, 2015). Chen (2014) held that leaders' behaviors and actions are based on life experiences, concepts that they have learned, and notions that have been self-

taught. Based on research by Yahya (2015), principals and educational leaders can learn successful leadership skills.

Empirical Evidence

Principals and educational leaders impact academic achievement. Although the impact is indirect, educational leaders' influence within the school determines the climate of the school, as well as the values of the school and the motivation of those directly influencing academic achievement (Yahya, 2015). An overwhelming amount of research indicates a school leader's leadership style greatly impacts teachers in a variety of ways including engagement levels, job satisfaction, academic delivery, and efficacy (Allen, 2015).

Many studies have shown that the individual principal's leadership has been the determining factor in a public school's success (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Robinson (2015) posited that regardless of the socioeconomic or ethnic factors in the school community, the school principal's role is the primary factor contributing to public school excellence. Principals' leadership can influence academic achievement in either a positive or negative manner. According to Yahya (2015), creating high performance expectations for the school and effectively communicating those expectations to the students, staff, and stakeholders will increase academic achievement. When looking at successful and effective schools, one of the most consistent components is a leader who has strong instructional leadership characteristics (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013) determined that improved learning was dictated in part by effective educational leadership, namely the individual school principals'. Principals within the educational system must maximize their impact on student academic achievement in order to be successful. In order to positively affect academic achievement, principals and educational

leaders need to recognize and develop the characteristcs that encourage and enhance academic achievement (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

Although teachers have a more direct impact on student academic achievement, principals and educational leaders also have a significant impact. While researchers have long thought that there was a relationship between principals' leadership styles and academic achievement, Hauserman and Stick (2013) claimed that leadership characteristics not only matter, but that the characteristics and leadership style of principals is second only to direct instruction and teaching in regards to school related factors that affect and impact academic achievement. The influence of principals' leadership styles on student academic achievement must be recognized, developed, and utilized in order to maximize student achievement and ensure all schools meet AYP standards.

Principal leadership, as well as other educational leadership, has a significant impact on student academic achievement (Yahya, 2015). School administrative leadership effect, both direct and indirect, accounts for approximately 25% of the total effect regarding academic achievement for students (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Since educational leadership plays a role in student achievement and student achievement varies depending on the school, the conclusion can be drawn that the lack of effective educational leadership is reflected in the outcomes of schools that produce lower achieving students and which do not meet the AYP standards set by the state (Chen, 2014).

According to Avolio and Bass (2004), principals' leadership styles and attributes can be classified as either transformational, transactional or laissez-faire, with each style having a different effect on the climate of the school as well as the motivation of the staff.

Table 1

Leadership Continuum and Factors

Transformational	Transactional	Laissez-faire
Charisma	Rewards	Free reign
Inspirational motivation	Constructive transactions	Delegative
Intellectual stimulation	Management by exception	
Individualized consideration	Corrective transactions	

Note. Adapted from "Transformational Leadership," by D. Clark, 2015.

Principals play a major role in teachers' motivation, which has an indirect impact on student achievement (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Motivation can be broken down into external and internal motivation. Internal motivation tends to exist and work best in situations where autonomy is valued and employees or followers have the power to make decisions in regards to how to accomplish the tasks set before them. On the other hand, external motivation tends to be the driving force in controlled environments where there is considerable pressure from either the leader or outside forces to either behave in a certain way or have a very defined outcome (Eyal & Roth, 2011). According to Hauserman and Stick (2013), various leadership styles are known to promote different sources of motivation for teachers. Research has shown that when teachers are intrinsically motivated, motivation is mirrored in their students and academic achievement increases (Kitendo, 2015). Eyal and Roth (2011) stated:

Although controlled (extrinsic) motivation can lead teachers to comply with the system's standards, it is the autonomous (intrinsic) motivation that transforms their jobs into a meaningful experience, drives them to practice autonomy-supportive teaching, protects them from burnout, increases their well-being, improves their effectiveness, and fosters their retention in the system. (p. 269)

Transformational Leadership

The transformational leadership style exists when leaders foster positive changes in their followers evidenced by the followers acting in the interest of the group as a whole, as well as taking an interest in each other's needs and tasks (Cherry, 2017). Transformational leaders encourage their followers to focus on the greater good of the organization as a whole rather on their own personal or unit interests (Management Study Guide, 2013). Since staff members of transformational leaders generally have a greater satisfaction level regarding their job position and are committed to a shared goal, this leadership style has the potential to greatly impact a school's climate and therefore academic achievement (Allen, 2015). According to Hameiri and Nir (2013), transformational leaders are often charismatic individuals who inspire those around them, are role models, and empower their followers. In so doing, these principals and leaders increase their followers' identification with the organization's goals, as well as empower them to think innovatively in order to attain those goals. Transformational leaders influence their followers to meet and exceed the common goals of the group rather than focusing on their individual goals by making sure that their followers' needs are met, providing and fostering a sense of mission and pride toward common goals, and empowering their followers in the tasks, ideas, and manner in which the goals are accomplished (Breidenstein, 2014). According to UK Essays (2013):

> Transformational leadership theory is a cooperative, process-focused networking where the leader motivates his followers to create, inspire and influences changes in them. Leaders of this style act as role models for their followers, attend their needs and involve them in the decision making process. The main point in this

theory is to encourage the followers to perform to their full capacity and meet the expectations. (p. 2)

Leaders who embrace the transformational style of leadership enhance the motivation, performance, and morale of those who follow them in order to transcend focusing on short-term goals and promote focusing on higher order needs (Cherry, 2017). Transformational leaders encourage their followers to exceed even their own expectations for themselves, and achieve what they may perceive to be the impossible (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Transformational leaders look beyond the surface and engage the whole person rather than just a specific trait by recognizing the potential in their followers, which often results in higher motivation levels that develop followers into leaders (Allen, 2015). A recent study conducted by Allen (2015) brought to light a statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and the climate of schools.

Transformational leadership is based on two assumptions and is characterized by three different ways that leaders affect change in their followers, according to Avolio and Bass (2004). The first assumption that Avolio and Bass (2004) identify is that people are more motivated to complete a job and complete it well if they understand the importance of it, and the second assumption is that when followers are focused on the team and a common goal rather than on their individual tasks, better work follows. The transformational leader transforms their followers by:

- increasing their awareness of task importance and value.
- getting them to focus first on team or organizational goals, rather than their own interests, and
- activating their higher-order needs. (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

"Transformational leaders create something new from something old by changing the basic political and cultural systems" (Clark, 2015, p. 1). Transformational leadership is characterized by followers that identify with their leader and have strong emotions regarding their organization and the tasks required of them (Breidenstein, 2014). Transformational leaders encourage their followers to look beyond their individual needs and wants, and to rather see the goals and values of the group and pursue them for the greater good of the organization (Cherry, 2017).

Transformational leadership consists of four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Burgess, 2016). According to Burgess (2016), transformational leaders are admired for leading by example (idealized influence) and showing concern for the needs and feeling of followers (individualized consideration), which in turn prompts employees to bring their very best efforts to the table. The charismas of the transformational leader are found in the ability of the leader to inspire and motivate followers (inspirational motivation), and the idealized influence of being a role model for followers (idealized influence). The ability and tendency of transformational leaders to challenge their followers to be the best that they can possibly be (intellectual stimulation), promotes the highest levels of performance (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Transformational leaders base their leadership on moral foundations that are grounded in these four components (Burgess, 2016). Through empowerment and mentoring, transformational leaders assist their followers in reaching their full potential, which makes the followers' contributions to the organization much more meaningful and useful due to the capabilities of the follower being more fully developed (Allen, 2015).

Due to a common vision and empowered followers, transformational leaders create followers with an intrinsic motivation to achieve shared goals, which often results in greater

gains in academic achievement for students (Burgess, 2016), a factor with much significance for this study. Furthermore, Eyal and Roth (2011) pointed out that "reviews of studies on transformational leadership concluded that its major influence on teachers' extent of motivation occurred when the principal developed a clear vision, framed school goals including high-academic goals, and gained staff consensus on desired outcomes" (p. 261). Allen (2015) concluded that when principals used all dimensions of the transformational leadership style, teachers' motivation increased, which resulted in greater gains in regards to student achievement. Due to the distribution of power associated with the transformational leadership style, teachers tend to feel a greater sense of responsibility for the organization's goals and therefore their motivation to attain those goals is higher (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). According to Eyal and Roth (2011), there are three factors that determine the motivation of followers: the followers' personal goals, the followers' beliefs regarding their own limits or capacities, and the followers' personal situations in context with what is being asked of them. In holding with those beliefs, when followers feel an increased sense of power regarding their situation, it would stand to reason that their motivation and sense of responsibility to the organization's goals would increase.

Transactional Leadership

According to the *Management Study Guide* (2013), transactional leadership is a style of leadership that is based on the follower's self-interest which involves the leader maintaining authority and responsibility, while the followers are expected to follow as directed by the leader, and are either rewarded or receive punative consequences based on outcomes. The transactional leadership style is based on a system of punishments and rewards. Transactional leadership involves the leader identifying the needs and/or wants of employees and using those needs and

wants as a reward for expected performances (UK Essays, 2013). As stated by Burgess (2016), transactional leadership is based on a contract between the leader and follower to work and get rewards for completing the tasks in a type of exchange program. Transactional leadership is built upon an exchange of things that are valued between the leader and followers (Allen, 2015).

Transactional leadership's reward-punishment dynamic is based on two factors: contingent reward and management-by-exception (active). Khan, Ramzan, Ahmed, and Nawaz (2011) stated:

Contingent reward that may be called as a constructive transaction that identify

the leader behaviors focused on identifying the clear tasks along with the expected

rewards to be received on accomplishment fulfilling the spirit of exchange

between the parties, and management-by-exception (active) that is an active and

corrective transactional role defines an active vigilance performed by leaders to

ensure the right and timely accomplishment of planned objectives. (p. 131)

The theory of transactional leadership is based on the view that both positive and negative consequences motivate people (Burgess, 2016).

Transactional leadership is defined by three dimensions: contingent reward, management by exception active, and management by exception passive (Burgess, 2016). Contingent reward is identified by what the leader agrees to exchange with the follower for a job completed to the leader's satisfaction according to specific expectations for the said task. Directly opposite of contingent reward is management by exception, which refers to the level of corrective action the leader will take for a job not completed to specifications and standards. The specific difference between management by exception – active, and management by exception – passive is the timing of the leader's involvement (Burgess, 2016). A leader who is employing the management

by exception – active model intervenes early, anticipates problems, and moves to have the follower correct those actions before there are serious issues with successful completion of the task. Leaders who utilize management by exception – passive model wait until there are serious issues with the completion of the task to then intervene and take action.

In order for transactional leadership to work, everyone involved must know who the leader is and who the followers are. The transactional leadership style requires followers to obey their leader and do their individual jobs (Weber, 2010). Transactional leadership is a system through which followers' compliance with the organization's expectations, rules and wishes of the leader are achieved through an exchange process derived from the needs and wants of the followers (Burgess, 2016). According to Clark (2015), leaders who are transactional make changes to the organization's human resources, mission, and structure to accomplish the organization's goals. Transactional leadership has historically been the most prevalent leadership style found in schools (Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, 2013).

The transactional leadership style is most often associated with extrinsic motivation, although there are dimensions of intrinsic motivation as well (Burgess, 2016). According to Leithwood and Mascall (2008), since transactional leadership tends to focus on followers complying with a set of standards and expectations with those expectations being measured by predetermined criteria, followers tend to not be expected to think innovatively and identify less with the goals and vision of the leader. Transactional leadership places great value on extrinsic rewards and motivation, which results in an environment that is tightly controlled by leaders, and the work and activities of the followers is strictly monitored. This produces low intrinsic motivation from followers and relies heavily on coercion to reach the goals of the organization (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire is characterized by complete autonomy for the followers. Although neither transactional nor transformational leadership characteristics are present, the "leaders" that employ this style often do not take responsibility for outcomes, avoid making decisions, and often will not use the authority that leaders often possess (Khan et al., 2011). This leadership style is often referred to as delegative leadership, as leaders who utilize this style of leadership allow followers to make decisions and are often viewed as hands-off leaders (Cherry, 2017). "Laissez-faire leadership, also known as Delegative Leadership or Free Reign Leadership in short, can be described as a type of leadership that involves little direction and lots of freedom" (Rytwinski, 2012, p. 1). Gill (2016) stated that "people who enjoy a wide degree of latitude in making decisions and working on projects autonomously are often most comfortable with laissez-faire leaders. People who work well in a rigid environment with clear directives and routine goals typically prefer authoritarian leaders" (p. 3). A laissez-faire leadership style is characterized by very little guidance from leaders, complete freedom for followers to make decisions, tools and resources that are needed are provided by the leader, and group members are expected to solve problems on their own (Cherry, 2017).

According to Gill (2016), laissez-faire leadership is based on trust and best utilized in situations where followers work best with a high degree of autonomy in the completion of projects. This type of leadership requires that followers are capable and comfortable making decisions with little or no guidance from the leader, and simply requires that the job is gets done correctly. In short, "It means leaders leave it up to their subordinates to complete responsibilities in a manner they choose, without requiring strict policies or procedures" (Gill, 2016, p. 1). The

strength of the laissez-faire leadership style is that the leader can build a strong team and then depend on the team to complete tasks with little or no guidance.

Core Practices

The four catagories of successful educational leaders' skills, setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional process, enable principals to ensure their school provides students with the best possible environment and opportunity to realize academic success (Leithwood et al., 2004). Instructional leaders have an extensive impact and influence on teaching and learning (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

The 15 core practices can be sorted into four categories that all successful school leaders employ: setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program (Louis et al., 2004). Although principals do not have a direct impact on academic achievement, their indirect impact must be maximized to enhance student academic success in order to meet AYP in Title I schools. The pressures exerted by legislation such as NCLB, as well as other subsequent mandates to improve student achievement, have left school districts and institutions of higher learning with the task of determining the most effective instructional leadership styles and skills in order to equip principals to meet the growing achievement requirements (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Because principals directly influence the climate and values of a school, their influence on teachers directly impacts academic achievement of students and the AYP status of the entire school (Yahya, 2015).

Educational leadership within a school has an indirect impact on student academic achievement, which has a direct impact on the school's AYP status. "It is important to analyze instructional leadership of principals because actions as leaders can impact student achievement" (Robinson, 2015, p. 20). According to research completed by Leithwood et al. (2004), classroom

instruction is the only element that influences student achievement and learning more than leadership. Six years after their initial study, these same researchers further supported this claim by stating that there was not a school that they had found that increased the learning and academic achievement of students in the absence of a strong school leader. Academic achievement can be defined as the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the proficiency level, usually established by the state, on language and mathematics tests (International Observatory on Academic Achievement, 2010). After decades of research it has been repeatedly shown that principals' leadership styles, as well as the manner in which they conduct themselves in the professional setting, play a large role in the success of the students regarding academic achievement, as well as in the success of the daily processes involved in the running of an academic institution (Nir & Hameiri, 2014). "Not unlike other social organizations, the world of the school has power, structure, logic, and values, which combine to exert strong influence on the ways in which individuals perceive the world, interpret it, and respond to it" (King, 2006, p. 17).

Principals and educational leaders must realize that the climate and culture of the school directly affects the motivation of both staff and students (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). A school's culture is not developed overnight. Culture involves the traditions, values, and beliefs of the students and staff that have been developed over time (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Student achievement is directly related to motivation, and therefore principals must ensure that the climate and culture of their school fosters motivation and academic excellence (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). The culture of a school is a reflection of the beliefs and self-concept of the students, staff and community that it serves. It embodies what is important to the stakeholders, staff and students, and is a representation of what they hold to be important. The culture of a

school is who they believe themselves to be, what they value, and what is important to them (Paul, 2015).

Academic achievement is promoted when the educational leaders of a school set high academic goals that stakeholders and staff value and promote (Hatrick, 2008). According to Yahya (2015), principals must communicate the values and goals in such a manner that the worth and significance of those values and goals is recognized and adopted by all involved. When the teachers and stakeholders buy into the academic values and goals that the principal has proposed, academic achievement is impacted. "Principals can affect the achievement of their students indirectly using their leadership to develop an organizational climate in which academic and intellectual pursuits are central to the school" (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003, p. iii).

In order for academic excellence to take place, educational leaders must increase motivation among the staff, which will indirectly influence academic achievement (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). According to Yahya (2015), when a school's staff values the goals and values of the school then their motivation increases; therefore, it is the duty of the principal to ensure that the goals and values are communicated in such a way that teachers realize the value and achievability of the goals and become committed to making them a reality.

In addition to communicating goals and values in such a way that the staff buys into them, the principal must also provide the resources and programs that will enable teachers to motivate their students towards academic achievement (Robinson, 2015). It is not enough to simply develop a set of goals. Principals need to ensure that teachers have the necessary tools and resources within their classrooms to attain these goals (Yahya, 2015). When teachers do not have the necessary resources to put into action the plans that they have bought into, they will grow frustrated and motivation will decrease (Leithwood, 2005). It is the principal's

responsibility to ensure that teachers remain motivated to work towards the vision and goals of academic excellence by providing them with the resources that will enable them do so (Yahya, 2015). According to the National Conference of State Legislators (2002), principals are responsible for the learning and acadmics in their respective schools, and are expected to know and understand best academic practices in order to ensure the acadmic success of all of their students. The academic performance of the school student body dictates the success or failure of the school administration, as the principal and other leaders of the school are expected to know, understand, and promote the most effective classroom instruction techniques that will improve instruction and thereby the academic performance of the students.

It has been repeatedly shown that principals who correctly utilize the four core practices have a profound indirect impact on academic achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). According to Robinson (2015):

> Principals are instructional leaders when they establish a strong mission for the school, create a school-wide system of instructional focus and support, establish a positive learning climate and when they work together with teachers to improve learning and outcomes for students. (p. 20)

Principals and educational leaders who are truly committed to academic achievement and success can, and do, have a tremendous impact on academic achievement by utilizing the four core practices of educational leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Setting Direction

Principals are responsible for setting direction and providing the school with common goals and values toward which to work (Yahya, 2015). In schools that are highly effective, a strong orientation and focus on the goals of the school is present. This is true both in schools

that are improving as well as schools that are consistently effective (Bendikson, Robinson, & Hattie, 2012). Practices in setting direction include communicating the direction of the organization to the staff, working with the staff and stakeholders to develop group goals and then fostering a sense of group effort in attaining those goals, building and maintaining a shared vision for the school, and developing and maintaining high performance expectations for all staff members (Anderson et al., 2010). In order to be effective educational leaders, principals must develop a core set of values from which the school will operate, and these values will provide the staff and students with a foundation from which to work (Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, 2013). Papalewis and Fortune (2002) said:

> Above all, leadership and stewardship in a school mandate the development of a clear mission. This does not mean that only the principal is aware of the mission statement. It means that as school leader, the principal must involve everyone in the school in recognizing, enforcing, and implementing the mission statement. The statement must become a daily concrete objective. (p. 12)

Creating high performance expectations for the school and effectively communicating those expectations to the students, staff, and stakeholders will increase academic achievement (Yahya, 2015). Increased academic achievement and a vision of success are the result of strong leadership regarding the total academic program (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). When students and teachers know what is expected of them and buy into the vision, academic achievement will rise. Alig-Mielcarek (2003) found that although the principal of the school did not have a direct impact on student achievement, the leadership characteristics of the principal did have an indirect impact on student achievement in both reading and math.

In order for a school to realize academic excellence, the principal must convince all stakeholders that the goals they have set for the school are desirable, achievable and sustainable, and the principal must communicate the goals and vision in a manner that makes them desirable on a personal level to staff and students (Chen, 2014). In addition, the goals must be achievable and able to be sustained over a period of time because if goals are perceived as unattainable then motivation to achieve those goals will be minimal (Kitendo, 2015). Connell (1999) stated:

> Of primary importance is the principal's engagement in a school. There is no high-achieving school where the staff is not serious about their work and where they are not focused. One can sense that people in a building are moving in the same direction. Everyone knows their job and why they're there….even the lunch-room aide. In low-achieving schools, everyone is an island unto themselves. (p. 17)

When the principal is successful in unifying the school towards a vision of academic excellence, then academic achievement will follow (Yahya, 2015).

Developing People

Principals must equip their staff with the necessary skills to reach the goals that have been set for academic achievement (Chen, 2014). There are are many characteristics that are included in developing staff members. Among these are intellectually stimulating each individual in order to increase their capacity to contribute to the school and students academic achievement, modeling the values and practices that are important and appropriate in the school setting, and providing each individual staff member with the support and consideration that they need to flourish in the academic setting and increase academic achievement (Louis et al., 2010). Staff development and training are effective in minimizing frustration of staff when new

concepts and goals are put in place by principals, and in addition to providing training for the staff, principals must reward teachers for outstanding achievement (Deal & Peterson, 1990). When individuals realize success in accomplishing goals, morale and motivation increase if they are recognized for their accomplishments (Leapley-Portscheller, 2008).

It is imperative that staff be given the opportunity and encouragement from the principal to pursue continuing education classes (Chen, 2014). Recently, school administrators have begun to realize that not only are they responsible for student academic progress, but they are also responsible for the professional development and continued learning of their staff, as well as for their own professional development and lifelong learning experiences (King, 2006). According to Gaziel (2007), teachers that are lifelong learners bring up-to-date information and technology into the classrooms that would otherwise not be there. When principals foster a climate of lifelong learning for the staff they are providing the students with teachers who will enhance their academic achievement. In addition, this practice provides a model for the students of what continuing education looks like, as well as providing a picture of commitment to education to the families of the students as well as to the community as a whole (Chen, 2014).

Principals must model the values and practices that they are setting forth for their school. If staff and students do not see the theory in practice then they are much less likely to adhere to it themselves. Principals must model the behaviors and values that they expect from their staff and students at all times. Principals must always back up what they are vocalizing to staff by having their actions model and demonstrate what their words are conveying (Yahya, 2015).

Redesigning the Organization

Principals need to ensure that a school fosters a climate that is conducive to success. (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). "Climate is the feel or enduring quality of an environment that

affects the behavior of the members and is based on their collective perceptions of behaviors"
(Alig-Mielcarek, 2003, p. 5). Academic achievement will be affected when the climate of the
school fosters academic success, and it is the principal's responsibility to ensure that this climate
is in place (Hatrick, 2008). In order to provide the school with this climate the principal needs to
foster an environment that is collaborative and restructure the school as needed to support a
collaborative culture, build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders, and work to
connect the school to the community in ways that support the academic success of all students
(Chen, 2014). Numerous studies have indicated that good principals are the most important key
to school reform (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

School climate, according to Hoy (1990), has been one of the focuses of school reform
since the early 1990s. Allen (2015) stated:

> In a very general sense, school climate can also be defined in terms of specific
> aspects of the school environment, including a physical environment that is
> welcoming and favorable to learning, a social environment that encourages
> positive communication and interaction between all stakeholders, an affective
> environment that stimulates a sense of belonging, especially among students, and
> an academic environment that fosters a learning system that promotes success for
> all. (p. 14)

Since educational leaders have such an impact and influence on school climate and
organizational structures, which can affect teacher motivation, there has been an increased push
to investigate the connection between climate and achievement (Allen, 2015).

Leaders can utilize collaboration, environment, expectations, instruction, involvement,
leadership, and order, all dimensions of school climate identified by The Center for Research in

Educational Policy (2002), to foster a school climate that promotes academic achievement. Cooperation, as well as participation in problem solving and school climate, are the basis for collaboration and environment, while the degree to which students are responsible for their own learning and the level of development and implementation of the instructional program are expectations of instruction. Involvement consists of the level at which stakeholders are engaged by the school, and leadership consists of the extent of instructional leadership the principal provides for the school. The stability and student behaviors measure the level of structure and overall orderliness of a campus. The climate of an organization, in this case a school, has a great impact on both individuals and small groups of people, and the impact of that affects the whole organization (Allen, 2015). By utilizing and maximizing all of these dimensions, school leaders can positively influence academic achievement (Allen, 2015).

When principals foster collaboration, academic achievement will increase due to teachers feeling more ownership for the vision and for school decisions (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Collaboration allows teachers and educational leaders to capitalize on strengths of individuals for increased academic achievement (Chen, 2014). When committee decisions are data driven, they can utilize the experts within the organization to formulate goals and plans to meet those goals that will promote academic excellence. Commitment to collaboration by the leader of a school will help to maintain the momentum needed to achieve the highest levels of academic achievement (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). School reform has begun to shift from a top-down hierarchical model to one of shared leadership and collaboration due to the changing expections for school leaders. This is the result of expectations of leadership rather than dictatorship (Owens, 2004).

The principal can also have a profound effect on academic achievement by fostering

relationships with the families within the school and the local community (Chen, 2014). By

fostering these relationships, the principal can capitalize on the knowledge of those within the

families and communities to further the education of the students in the school and increase

academic achievement. In addition, these relationships could have the potential to bring in

financial backing for the school and its programs, as well as provide additional support for the

students and staff (Goldberg, 2006). Strong administrative leadership in a school is a consistent

characteristic in highly effective schools. Without a strong administrative leader, the other

elements that combine to produce high levels of academic achievement either do not come

together at all, or do not work together to produce the desired result (The Wallace Foundation,

2017).

Managing the Instructional Program

In today's educational system, principals and school administration are required to be

instructional leaders that promote the highest levels of academic achievement for all students in

order to meet AYP requirements and maintain accredidation (Lynch, 2015). Managing the

instructional program provides the principal with an opportunity to have a profound effect on

academic achievement (Yahya, 2015). This area encompasses such practices as "staffing the

program, providing instructional support, monitoring school activity, buffering staff from

distractions to their work, and aligning resources" (Louis et al., 2010, p. 69). Principals are key

in determining the educational programming of schools, which makes them essential to

successful school. The school climate is strongly influenced by the decisions, goals and attitudes

of the principal, and the satisfaction and growth of staff members is also largely determined by

the principal's willingness to grow people or stifle them, depending on leadership style

(Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Principals must ensure that academic excellence is the core value and goal that is driving all instruction, and that teachers are utilizing the skills and resources made available to them in their classrooms. Principals can accomplish this through evaluating teachers within the classroom, analyzing test data, and providing mentoring programs for those who may be struggling (Lynch, 2015). The more focused the school's leadership is on instruction, the more effective the school will be in adding value to student outcomes (Robinson, 2015).

Research has shown that consistent feedback from principals who are well informed has an impact on classroom instruction. Alig-Mielcarek (2003) related that when principals monitored the instruction that teachers were providing and were in the classrooms conducting both formal and informal observations, teachers were more likely to explore how to reach students in a more meaningful way, lessons were more carefully planned and thought out, diversity in delivery styles was embraced, and teachers were more apt to modify classroom practice to ensure the best possible academic experience for each and every student. Principals should provide constructive feedback for teachers on their classroom instruction, and then support them in improving their instruction (Lynch, 2015). Additionally, a study conducted by Silva, White, and Yoshida (2011) showed that when principals engaged in conversations and discussions with students regarding standardized test achievement, those students were more likely to be motivated to do well on the test and most met the target goals on the assessments.

Instructional leadership consists of principal behaviors that set high expectations and clear goals for student and teacher performance, monitor and provide feedback regarding the technical core (teaching and learning) of schools, provide

and promote professional growth for all staff members, and help create and

maintain a school climate of high academic press. (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003, p. 13)

Sound instructional leadership that provides these behaviors will provide a notable increase in

academic achievement, as the teachers are able to deliver the information in a more effective

manner. As a result of their research, Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013) concluded that the

leadership behaviors of the principals often predicted the achievement results for schools. For

this reason, principals must be intentional and consistent in their instructional leadership in order

to foster high performance and improvement. Principals in schools that need the most

improvement and are showing the lowest achievement must display exemplary instructional

leadership and it must be more evident than in those schools that are currently showing academic

achievement that is acceptable according to federal and state standards (Bendikson et al., 2012).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Federal and state accountability standards of accountability have put pressure on school

principals at all levels to raise the academic achievement of all students, including subgroups

(Chen, 2014). Under NCLB, public schools are required to make AYP, which essentially

ensures all students are making at least a year's progress for each year spent in the classroom

(Chen, 2014). This is a measure of accountability to ensure that all students are being reached by

the educational system in an adequate manner. NCLB was created with the purpose of providing

an adequate and equal education for all students and to hold schools accountable for ensuring

better educational outcomes for all students. It was also designed to identify schools that are not

meeting educational standards for all students and provide supports to get those schools back on

track (Chen, 2014).

NCLB requires states to "develop assessments aligned with state standards and to be accountable for students' annual academic progress. States and school districts must develop yearly report cards documenting the success of their students meeting achievement goals" (as cited in American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2002, p. 1). By the year 2013–14, the goal of NCLB was to have all students proficient or advanced in reading and math (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). Toward this end, schools had to determine the amount of progress needed by students to meet this goal and show AYP the goal set by NCLB. Based on the Academic Performance Indicator, states are required to determine an expected annual percentage growth target, with the minimum growth target of 5% annually (Christie, 2003). Students are to be tested yearly from grade three to eight and at least twice in high school; the results are then compared to previous years and schools are then better able to determine if the students are meeting the AYP goal (Peneducation, 2010). AYP must include the performance of subgroups, and not just the average of the student body as a whole. The expectation is that individuals in leadership positions within school systems will utilize data to form indivualized state assessment tests to drive instruction and provide a quality education for all students (Chen, 2014). According to Yahya (2015), school leadership and good teaching are measured by student achievement, as evidenced by the emphasis on testing as a means to hold schools accountable. Alig-Mielcarek (2003) indicated:

> The standards movement of the last twenty years has led to federal and state
> legislation that created challenging standards for all students and assessments to
> test knowledge of those standards. This new standards-based education system
> encompasses three core features: content and performance standards for each

discipline, assessments aligned to the standards, and accountability for meeting

standards on the assessment. (p. 59)

There are severe consequences for schools that do not meet AYP, as determined by

NCLB. If a school that is put on notice does not meet the AYP standard in its first year, that

school can then be placed on probation. When this happens district leadership is required to

promptly notify parents that the school is on probation, to implement performance contracts for

the principal, to provide for remediation services to students, to notify parents of their option to

transfer their children to another public school within the system, and to revise school

improvement plans to incorporate the findings of the joint study (Chen, 2014). If the school fails

to meet AYP standards for two consecutive years, it is identified as a school that needs

improvement, and more drastic steps will be taken to ensure the school improves in its efforts to

meet the standard. If these steps do not provide the needed intervention to allow the school to

meet AYP, then more severe consequences could be inflicted to include closing the school

(Virginia Department of Education, n.d.).

Principals are held accountable for ensuring that the increasingly higher levels of student

academic proficienciey expectations are met each year in order to meet the AYP requirements

(Leapley-Portscheller, 2008). Owens (2004) posited that the passage of this act, "has everything

to do with the day-to-day realities of being a leader in the schools and anyone who would be an

effective leader in the schools of America's future must have a clear understanding of the

assumptions and beliefs that underlie the arguments of those on both sides of the confrontation"

(p. 20).

In seeking to meet AYP requirements, principals must understand the process that is used

to determine whether these goals have been met. According to The Educational Trust (2004),

state leaders meet to determine the minimum or baseline requirements that students must meet to show adequate academic progress. Students who are not achieving at the AYP levels for prior years are expected to overcome greater gaps in proficiency in both reading and math in order to meet the AYP requirements of the current year (Leapley-Portscheller, 2008). Principals must make sure that a specific percentage of their student populations in various categories are meeting these requirements in order to maintain their status of meeting AYP. For this reason it is essential for principals to understand the leadership styles and behaviors that foster increased academic achievement for all students (Yahya, 2015).

Support for AYP. NCLB was implemented to ensure that all students receive a quality education. Proponents of AYP state that it would be impossible to close the gap between the high and low achievers in schools without government intervention. Proponents feel that a uniform goals requirement for each school is a fair way to measure how each school is progressing toward the goal (Peneducation, 2010). AYP allows for each school to have standard requirement that must be met by all students. This measure ensures that all subgroups are receiving the same education as the student body as a whole, to include minority groups, special education students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and immigrant students. "While many may view standardized testing as just the monitoring piece of accountability, it can raise organizational and instructional capacity when the assessments require higher cognitive levels of performance from students" (Greenlee & Bruner, 2001, p. 2).

Supporters also indicate that AYP requirements require that teachers be certified and retrained to meet the goals of the diverse classroom (Peneducation, 2010). When teachers are highly qualified and consistently being trained in best practices for reaching a diverse student population, then academic achievement will likely increase for all students, which will allow

schools to meet AYP standards. Since teachers are now mandated to be highly qualified, this policy will work in favor of the schools by ensuring that the teachers know their subject area and can provide students with quality education, which will increase academic achievement (Christie, 2003).

Criticisms of AYP. Just as there are supporters of the NCLB and AYP mandate, there are also opponents. One of the main points of contention is that this mandate places too much emphasis on testing, which in turn has resulted in teachers teaching to the test. "Schools across the nation are cutting back on subjects such as social studies, music, and art to make more time for reading and math, and in some cases even tripling the class time that low-proficiency students spend on these subjects" (Olson, 2006, p. 13). Some of the critics of NCLB and AYP claim that teachers are boring the students by spending more time in the academic areas and reducing the arts.

Some parties have also cited the fairness of the law as a criticism. Since all of the subgroups are to be included in AYP, it is quite possible for a school to be deemed failing in regards to AYP, even if it has an excellent graduation rate, because of a subgroup such as the special education population not meeting the standard. In addition, funding for schools that do not meet the AYP standards has been an issue. Opponents argue that the federal government has not upheld their part of the bargain of funding the program fully (Peneducation, 2010). When a school fails to meet the AYP standards, tutoring and other assistance must be provided, and many schools have stated that the funding needed to successfully implement and sustain these extra programs is just not adequate (Christie, 2003).

Meeting AYP. Although many people have opposing views regarding AYP and NCLB, it is widely held that the goals and intentions of these institutions were beneficial for all students

(Peneducation, 2010). Although the number of schools that are meeting AYP has decreased slightly over time, there are still many examples of schools that did not originally meet the AYP standard that are now meeting and exceeding the standard. A group by the name of Technology & Learning spoke with many school districts across the nation regarding AYP. They found that districts that were utilizing technology to reform their instruction, and that also had strong administrative leadership, were the most effective (Chen, 2014).

Schools struggling with AYP should look to the examples of dozens of their counterparts around the country that have taken a personal approach to raising test scores. Instead of applying broad academic policies and inviting teachers to statewide conferences to learn about new teaching methods, these schools use data to gauge student progress at any point during the school year, and then use the information to customize curriculum and instructional programs (Gamble-Risley, 2006). According to observations made by Fullan (2001) in regards to positive reform in Chicago elementary schools:

> Principals worked together with a supportive base of parents, teachers, and community members to mobilize initiative. Their efforts broadly focused along two major dimensions: first, reaching out to parents and community to strengthen the ties between local school professionals and the clientele they are to serve; and second, working to expand the professional capacities of individual teachers, to promote the formation of a coherent professional community, and to direct resources toward enhancing the quality of instruction. (p. 142)

Many school districts have utilized these exact tools to improve the academics at their schools and meet AYP standards. California's Elk Grove Unified School District uses individualized strategies to meet the needs of their students. In the past this school district had been known for

high teacher pay and abundant student population, but since NCLB was implemented, the school district has become known for the outstanding academic achievement of its students due to the individualized instruction that has increased academic achievement for the student body as a whole (Gamble-Risley, 2006).

> Personalizing instruction has worked wonders at Adams 12 Five Star Schools (CO), where educators use their student information systems and assessment tools to drill down to a particular student's weaknesses, to evaluate teaching methods and curriculum, and to apply new skills and technologies to improve test scores. (Gamble-Risley, 2006, p. 36)

Technology, individualized instruction, and strong leadership are the keys to meeting the AYP standards.

Schools that do not meet the AYP standards often go into a process known as school improvement, which focuses on campus leadership, school climate, and student achievement (Allen, 2015). School leadership and stakeholders work together to develop a school improvement plan that analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the school and then provides a means to build on the strengths, close gaps, and strengthen areas identified as weaknesses (Allen, 2015). The educational process is closely monitored by the U.S. Department of Education until academic achievement increases and AYP goals are met.

Title I Schools

Title I funding aims to even the playing field for low-income students. The U.S. Department of Education provides supplemental funding to school districts that are identified as having a certain percentage of students living in poverty, to meet the needs of at-risk and low income students. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Title I Schools (2013) states:

The mission of the Office of Title I is to provide a continuum of services and

resources to Title I districts and charter schools that enrich curriculum and

instruction, promote interaction and coordination of supplementary services and

resources, and result in excellence and high expectations for educators and

students. Through collective efforts, we endeavor to increase accountability for

all participants in the educational process; enhance cooperation between school

and home; provide educators in Title I schools with greater autonomy for shared

decision-making, and most importantly, promote increased educational

performance of students attending Title 1 schools. (p. 1)

Title I schools are schools that have a high percentage of at-risk students, as well as a high

percentage of students living at or near poverty level. In order to qualify for Title I funding, 40%

or more of the student population in a school must qualify for the free and reduced lunch

program. The funding provided by Title I enables the schools that these students attend to have

the resources to ensure these students receive an education that will allow them to achieve

academic success (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.).

       National Title I Distinguished Schools. According to the National Title I Association

(2017), the National Title I Distinguished Schools program has been honoring schools for

exlempary efforts and achievement in regards to assisting the students in Title I schools to reach

high levels of academic achievement. States select schools to be recognized based on one of two

criteria. Each school selected to be recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School has

either had exemplary student performance for two or more consecutive years, or they have

significantly closed the achievement gap for the students identified as Title I and their peers.

Each state is allowed to select two schools (one from each category) for national recognition.

Summary

Principals and educational leaders do have an impact on AYP through academic achievement (Burgess, 2016). Educational leaders must take into account the culture of the community and school that they are leading and then devise the most effective way to put the four core educational practices to use (Leithwood et al., 2004). The challenges that face educational leaders are ever changing and leaders need to be able to adapt to these changes (Chen, 2014). Utilizing the collaboration and lifelong learning experiences in the core practices will assist in ensuring that these changes are handled smoothly in the best possible manner; however, change is rarely easy (Kitendo, 2015). School administrators must continue to grow and adapt to the changes that are taking place in today's educational world. In order to do this, effective leadership characteristics that expand the traditional margins must be developed and promoted (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). The proven correlation between leadership style and school climate indicates that principals have a significant impact on the direction and success of their schools (Allen, 2015).

Since elementary education provides the foundation for middle and high school learning it is imperative that high levels of academic excellence are reached at this level as well as at the middle and high school levels. When schools are seeking ways to improve student achievement and work towards school improvement, they must consider the leadership styles of their campus and individual school leaders in order to provide professional development to assist these leaders in setting a positive school climate that promotes academic achievement (Allen, 2015). Research must be conducted to determine the leadership styles and traits, specifically in elementary principals, in order to promote the growth of these leadership traits and styles, which in turn may foster academic excellence in students.

While a top-down leadership style is supported in the No Child Left Behind Act, contemporary scholarly thought about leadership is dominated by the recognition that change, complexity and uncertainty are dominant characteristics of today's school environments and the need to find new and better ways to lead is imminent. (King, 2006, p. 18)

Principals must be motivated to achieve excellence, as evidenced by National Title I Distinguished Schools. Motivation and vision start with the principal, so it is imperative for the principal to be a visionary (Yahya, 2015). If a principal has an attitude of defeat, and mediocrity is acceptable, then academic achievement and excellence will wither and die. Leadership is a challenge with great reward for those who endeavor to do it well (Robinson, 2015). Academic excellence should be the goal of a great educational leader, and the leader's influence on academic achievement can assist in attaining that goal, meeting AYP in all schools, and achieving the status of National Title I Distinguished School for Title 1 schools. "A clear definition of school leadership in an era of standard-based educational reform would enable principals to work efficiently with other educational stakeholders to create an environment in schools conducive to improving student achievement" (Leapley-Portscheller, 2008, p. 30).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The objective of this correlation study was to determine if a relationship exists between perceived leadership styles of Virginia Title I elementary school principals and academic achievement as measured by the AYP report card. This study provides insight for educational administrators in regards to professional development and best practices in order to attain the highest levels of academic achievement. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass, 2004) was utilized to determine perceived leadership styles of principals in Virginia Title I elementary schools. Data collected from this survey were then correlated to the Virginia School Report Card for 2016/2017 to identify relationships between perceived leadership styles of Virginia Title I elementary school principals and academic achievement as measured by the AYP report card.

Design

This study consisted of a correlation research design that explored whether there is a relationship between academic achievement, as measured by a school's AYP status, and perceived leadership styles of elementary principals in Virginia Title I schools. The correlation design was chosen to, "establish, confirm, or validate relationships and to develop generalizations that contribute to theory" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 95).

Data for this study were obtained utilizing Avolio and Bass's (2004) MLQ, which was administered to Virginia Title I elementary school raters consisting of faculty members under the leadership of the individual principals. The MLQ allowed the researcher to identify the perceived leadership style of the individual principals. The focus of this correlation study was to

determine if academic achievement, as measured by AYP status of schools, correlated with elementary principals' perceived leadership styles in Title I Virginia elementary schools.

The MLQ (Bass, 2004) was utilized as a data collection instrument for this research design, along with the Virginia Department of Education 2016/2017 AYP report cards. The dependent variable in this study was the AYP school report, and the independent variable was the leadership styles of Title I elementary school principals. The MLQ measures effectiveness and perceived leadership behaviors through a survey consisting of 45 items that are rated on a scale of zero to four (Bass, 2004). Based on the answers given by the raters, the MLQ determined the perceived leadership style of individual elementary principals using the major leadership models of transformation leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). This survey identified the perceived leadership qualities of elementary principals in Title I schools, which were then correlated with the AYP status of the school. The collection and analysis of the data sought to identify and determine relationships between academic achievement, as measured by Virginia AYP report cards, and Title I elementary principals' perceived leadership styles.

A correlation research design was utilized to determine if there is a relationship between the phenomeonon of perceived leadership styles and academic achievement (Vannette & Krosnick, 2017). This was an appropriate design for this study because in correlation studies, researchers gather data about two or more characteristics for a particular group of people or other appropriate units of study. These data are numbers that reflect specific measurements of the characteristics in question; for instance, they might be test scores, grade point averages, ratings assigned by an expert observer, or frequencies of certain behaviors (Leedy et al., 2005).

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a relationship between perceived transformational leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between perceived transactional leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study are:

H$_0$1: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived transformational leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status.

H$_0$2: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived transactional leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status.

H$_0$3: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status.

Participants and Setting

This study was limited to Title I elementary schools in Virginia, and only principals in these schools and their raters were included in the study. As AYP standards vary by state, this allowed a consistency to be maintained in regards to AYP standards.

The appropriate sample size was determined by conducting a power analysis using an alpha of 0.05 and a power of 0.80. In order to return a medium effect size ($p = .3$), the desired sample size was 82 raters. To gain a small effect size ($p = .1$), the desired sample size was 779.

For this research, there were 131 raters who completed the survey. According to the Virginia Department of Education (n.d.), there are currently 662 Title I elementary schools in Virginia.

Raters for each principal consisted of staff members who worked under the principal for the entire academic year of 2016/2017 from which the data to determine AYP were collected. Permission requests to contact teachers in Title I elementary schools were sent via email to all superintendents in counties that have Title I elementary schools as identified by the Virginia Department of Education in their "Virginia Title I School Listings." Upon receiving permission from superintendents, the email addresses of faculty were collected for all Title I elementary schools in their district. The faculty were then sent the MLQ through email, with a statement of consent to participate being indicated by their completion of the survey. The age and ethnicity of all principals and raters was kept confidential, as this study sought to determine perceived leadership style to determine correlation between perceived leadership style and AYP.

Instrumentation

"The MLQ is an internationally accepted research instrument that measures a broad range of leadership styles including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles" (Leapley-Portscheller, 2008, p. 52). According to the results of an independent study conducted by Muenjohn and Armstrong (2008), the MLQ has a reliability factor of 0.86. "To test the construct validity of the MLQ, its authors have completed studies testing the present nine factor model against various other models" (Hebert, 2011). The nine-factor model has been demonstrated as being superior with a goodness-of-fit index of .91 for a follower rating (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Construct validity based on the overall transformational leadership concept has been found to be valid (Carless, 1998). The MLQ has been used extensively worldwide in

leadership research, which along with the high coefficients for readability, validates the use of the MLQ as appropriate for this study.

Likewise, the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments that students take to determine AYP have been found to be both valid and reliable. "In February 1999, the SOL tests were certified as being valid and reliable by three national assessment experts external to the Virginia Department of Education" (Yecke, 1999). According to the Virginia Department of Education (2011), the SOL tests for Grades 3 through 5 have an alpha reliability coefficient ranging from 0.86 to 0.90 and a validity ranging from 0.88 to 0.93 depending on the subject and grade level being tested.

Procedures

Prior to beginning the study, the researcher sent the required paperwork to Liberty University's Internal Review Board for approval. Data from the MLQ were collected using an adaptation of Creswell's (2002) Three-Phase Survey Administration Procedure. Superintendents from districts that have elementary Title I schools received an email explaining the study and requesting permission for the faculty of these schools to participate in the study. Their affirmative response stood as their permission to conduct the study. One week after the initial emailing, superintendents who did not respond to the first request for permission received a second email ensuring confidentiality and once again requesting permission to contact teachers.

The researcher gathered the email addresses of teachers in the Title I elementary schools under the direction of the superintendents that consented to participate via the schools' websites, or lists from the participating school districts. These participating teachers are referred to as raters. Raters must be individuals who are subordinate to the principal within the school being studied, and they must have been a part of the staff for the entire year prior to Standards of

Learning testing. Surveys were sent only to raters in schools that were under the direction of superintendents who replied to the initial email with permission to participate. Raters' completion of the survey stood as their consent to participate, and this was made clear in the survey instructions they received from Mind Garden. Mind Garden sent the raters the MLQ electronically. When the raters had completed the survey, they sent it back to Mind Garden via the Internet.

Once surveys were completed, they were sent electronically to a database facilitated by Mind Garden, Inc. After all the data were compiled by Mind Garden, they were entered into the Statistical Processing for the Social Sciences software program for statistical analysis.

Confidentiality for all principals participating in the study was strictly maintained by converting principals' names to numbers and storing them in the secure Mind Garden database, and this was communicated to all participants. This allowed the researcher to maintain confidentiality while still being able to identify the school the rater was associated with in order to determine the correlation between perceived leadership style and school AYP data. Raters' anonymity was preserved as there was no identifying information collected from the raters. Survey materials included explicit directions and confirmed that the data would be maintained for three years in the Mind Garden database in Menlo, California, and then destroyed.

The Virginia Department of Education provides a yearly report on Title I schools in Virginia. This information was utilized to determine whether the schools participating in the study met the standards for AYP or not. This information was then correlated with the data collected from the MLQ on leadership styles to identify any correlation between perceived leadership style and AYP status.

Data Analysis

Leadership data collected by the MLQ were correlated with the Virginia AYP School

Report Card for the 2016–2017 school year. The AYP School Report Card is a public document

provided through the Virginia Department of Education and is part of the accountability system

mandated by NCLB. According to the Virginia Department of Education (2011), for a school

division or the individual school to have met AYP, at least 86% of students overall, and students

in all AYP subgroup (White, Black, Hispanic, limited English proficient) students with

disabilities, and students who areeconomically disadvantaged, must have demonstrated

proficiency on Standards of Learning and other assessments in reading, and 85% must have

passed state tests in mathematics. AYP ratings for the 2016–2017 school year are based on

achievement tests administered during 2015–2016, or on average achievement during the three

most recent school years.

The independent variable in this study was the perceived leadership style of Virginia

Title I elementary school principals as rated by his/her subordinates referred to in this study as

raters. This variable was measured by the MLQ (Bass, 2004), which was administered to raters

in rural Virginia Title I elementary schools. This was accomplished via the Internet and

processed by Mind Garden.

The dependent variable in this study was academic achievement as measured by the AYP

indicators. This variable was measured by the individual school reports and AYP indicators

available through the Virginia Department of Education. Not everything within the study could

be controlled. For example, attendance, student effort, and parental influences could not be

controlled. However, the purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship

between academic achievement, as measured by AYP indicators, and the perceived leadership style of Virginia Title I elementary school principals.

A Pearson product moment correlation analysis was conducted to determine the degree of correlation between the variables (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). Leedy and Ormond (2005) upheld that parametric statistics that involve an analysis between data that are continuous and data that are artificially divided into an either-or dichotomy are proper for Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The Pearson product moment correlation analysis was applied to determine if there is a relationship between perceived leadership style and academic achievement as measured by the AYP status of individual Virginia Title I elementary schools. Since the MLQ produces continuous data and the Virginia School Report Card reports dichotomous data, a Pearson product moment correlation analysis, with a Pearson coefficient of r_{pb}, was used to analyze the data in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four will identify the research questions and null hypotheses, and provide an overview of the findings as well as specific results of the study broken down according to each hypothesis. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a correlation between perceived leadership styles of Title I elementary principals and academic achievement as measured by the AYP status of the schools.

Research Questions

The focus of this research was on three research questions pertaining to three leadership styles. The three research questions were as follows:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between perceived transformational leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between perceived transactional leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status?

Null Hypotheses

The following three Null Hypotheses were developed based on the research questions:

H_01: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived transformational leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status.

H_02: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived transactional leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status.

H₀3: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status.

Descriptive Statistics

This correlation study determined the perceived leadership style of principals in Title I elementary schools and correlated the leadership style with the AYP status of the principals' schools. There were 25 principals included in this study, and teachers that were under those principals' supervision for the 2016–2017 school year completed the surveys. The data from the eight principals with only one rater (teacher) were excluded from the study, leaving 27 principals in the study.

Superintendents of school districts with Title I elementary schools were sent an email requesting permission to contact the teachers in Title I elementary schools to complete a survey on their principal's leadership style. Teachers in Title I schools where superintendents granted permission for the researcher to contact them, were sent an email containing a link to the the survey and the consent form. Teachers who consented to complete the survey then completed the MLQ and submitted it online to Mind Garden. The data were compiled by Mind Garden and then entered into the SPSS software for analysis using a point-biserial correlation analysis. Principals' names were arbitrarily assigned a number to preserve confidentiality, and there was no identifying information collected from the teachers/raters in order to preserve anyonimity for raters.

The study included nine school districts in Virginia and 25 principals and schools. There was a total of 131 suveys completed. Only teachers who were under the supervision of the current principal during the 2016–2017 school year were invited to participate in the study.

Raters were asked to complete the MLQ to rate the frequency that principals exhibitied various transformational, transactional, and laissez faire leadership characteristics. If raters chose 0 for frequency, it indicated that the frequency that the principal exhibits that characteristic was "not at all." If the rater chose a frequency of 1, it indicated that the principal exhibits the characteristic "once in a while." A rating of 2 indicated a frequency of "sometimes." If a rater chose a frequency of 3, it indicated the characteristic was exhibited "fairly often," and a rating of 4 delineated a characteristic frequency of "frequently, if not always."

The mean, median and mode varied greatly between the different leadership characteristics, with the greatest difference being with the laissez-faire leadership characteristics. Although there is a difference in the mean, median and mode, the standard deviations for each leadership style are similar, as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation

	Transformational	Transactional	Laissez-faire
n			
Valid	25	25	25
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	3.1572	2.4229	0.6024
Median	3.2000	2.2500	0.4100
Mode	3.18	2.18	0.08
Std. Deviation	.43928	.35331	.47431

When examining the mean, median, mode and standard deviation for the 25 principals whose data were included in the study, there is a declining mean, median and mode between the perceived transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles; however, the standard deviation is relatively equal with perceived transactional leadership being slightly lower. This is accounted for based on the high number of principals who exhibitited

transformational leadership styles as opposed to the low number of principals who exhibited

laissez-faire leadership characteristics.

Sixty-three percent of the principals involved in the study were female and 37% were

male. Table 3 exhibits this information.

Table 3

Gender of Principals

Gender	f	%
Male	10	37
Female	17	63
Total	27	100

The number of surveys returned for each principal varied. There were a total of 131

surveys returned. Table 4 shows the number of surveys returned for each principal.

Table 4

Principal Surveys Returned

Principal	f	%
1	5	3.8
2	7	5.3
3	5	3.8
4	7	5.3
5	3	2.3
6	3	2.3
7	3	2.3
8	6	4.6
9	2	1.5
10	6	4.6
11	2	1.5
12	6	4.6
13	5	3.8
14	7	5.3
15	5	3.8
16	4	3.0
17	5	3.8
18	6	4.6
19	7	5.3
20	3	2.3
21	4	3.0
22	3	2.3
23	4	3.0
24	3	2.3
25	2	1.5
26	6	4.6
27	2	1.5
Total	131	100

The principals had varying percentages of their teachers return the surveys. Since completing

this survey was not mandatory, this may have had an impact on how many teachers/raters

completed the survey. Table 5 represents the percentage of each principal's teachers that

returned the surveys.

Table 5

Percentage of Surveys Returned Per Principal

Principal	Surveys returned	Teachers who returned surveys (%)
1	5	12.8
2	7	21.2
3	5	23.8
4	7	36.8
5	3	30.0
6	3	13.0
7	3	8.6
8	6	35.3
9	2	10.5
10	6	16.2
11	2	12.5
12	6	13.3
13	5	20.8
14	7	20.0
15	5	8.6
16	4	9.5
17	5	9.6
18	6	24.0
19	7	35.0
20	3	6.7
21	4	14.3
22	3	20.0
23	4	7.8
24	3	11.1
25	2	15.4
26	6	22.2
27	2	7.4

Results

There were three assumption tests to ensure that the point-biserial correlation was the best fit for this research. The first assumption test that was used was the boxplot. Data analysis for the boxplot revealed that principals 25 and 26 were outliers due to their abnormally high scores for the given leadership style, so their data were eliminated from the study.
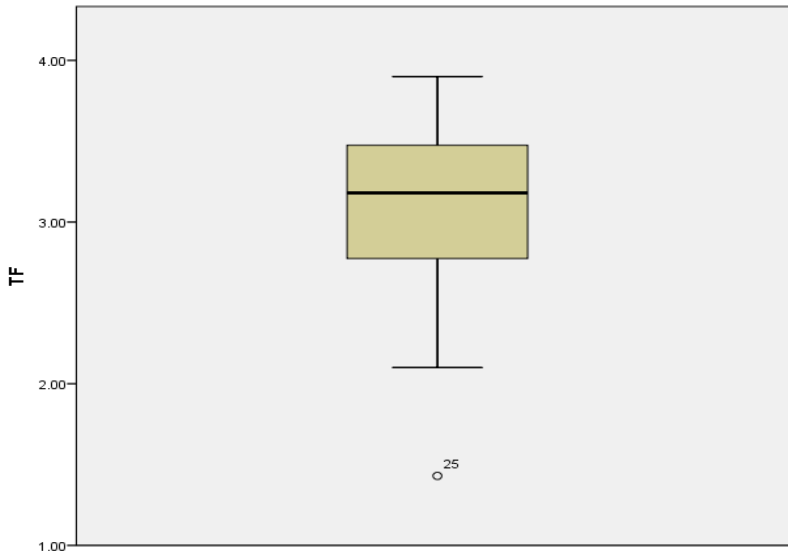
Figure 2. Transformational boxplot.
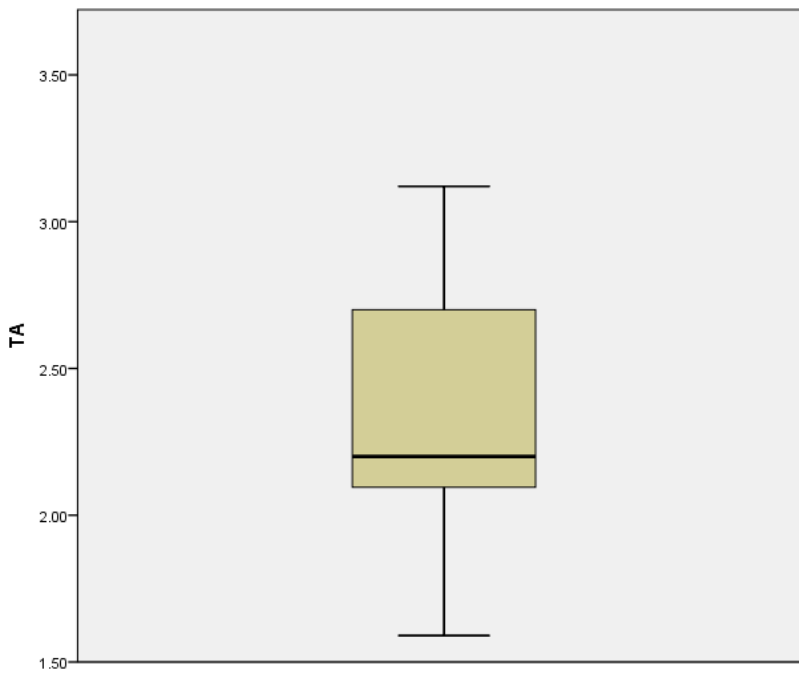
Figure 3. Transactional boxplot.

Figure 4. Laissez-faire boxplot.

The second assumption test that was conducted on the data was the Kolmogorov-Smirnov

and Shapiro-Wilk tests for normality. The test showed a higher level of significance for

perceived transformational leadership and AYP status due to the fact that the majority of

elementary schools that did not make AYP status having a leader with perceived

transformational leadership characteristics.

Table 6

Tests of Normality

	AYP	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	*df*	Sig.	Statistic	*df*	Sig.
TF	No	.237	4		.936	4	.628
	Yes	.201	21	.026	.914	21	.066
TA	No	.378	4		.716	4	.017
	Yes	.217	21	.011	.910	21	.054
LF	No	.300	4		.840	4	.196
	Yes	.235	21	.004	.832	21	.002

Note. TF = transformational leadership; TA = transactional leadership; LF = laissez-faire
leadership

The third assumptions test that was conducted on the data was Levene's test for variance. Once again, this test showed higher levels of significance for transformational leadership, and the lowest levels of significance for laissez-faire leadership. This is due to the majority of leaders having perceived transformational leadership characteristics.

Table 7

Test of Variance

	Levene's statistic	*df*1	*df*2	Sig.
TF				
Mean	0.595	1	23	.448
Median	0.647	1	23	.429
Median and with adjusted *df*	0.647	1	21.698	.430
Trimmed mean	0.626	1	23	.437
TA				
Mean	1.964	1	23	.174
Median	2.868	1	23	.104
Median with adjusted *df*	2.868	1	20.122	.106
Trimmed mean	2.187	1	23	.153
LF				
Mean	5.623	1	23	.026
Median	2.034	1	23	.167
Median with adjusted *df*	2.034	1	20.026	.169
Trimmed mean	4.889	1	23	.037

Note. TF = transformational leadership; TA = transactional leadership; LF = laissez-faire leadership

Hypothesis H₀1

Null hypothesis $H_0 1$ stated that there would be no significant correlation between perceived transformational leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status. The *p* value for this correlation was $p = .529$. According to the Pearson product-moment correlation, the result is not significant at $p < 0.05$. Based on this result, the researcher failed to reject this null hypothesis.

Table 8

Transformational Characteristics and AYP

		AYP	TF
AYP	Pearson correlation	1	-.132
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.529
	N	25	25
TF	Pearson correlation	-.132	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.529	
	N	25	25

Note. TF = Transformational

In this study, there was a much higher amount of schools that met AYP than did not meet AYP; however, the majority of schools included in the study that did not meet AYP had leaders that exhibited transformational leadership characteristics. This produced results that do not allow the researcher to reject the hypothesis that perceived transformational leadership characteristics have an impact on AYP status in Title I elementary school.

Hypothesis $H_0 2$

Null hypothesis $H_0 2$ stated that there would be no significant correlation between perceived transactional leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status. The p value for this correlation was $p = .619$. According to the Pearson product moment correlation, the result is not significant at $p < 0.05$. For this reason, the researcher failed to reject this null hypothesis.

Table 9

Transactional Characteristics and AYP

		AYP	TA
AYP	Pearson correlation	1	.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.619
	N	25	25
TA	Pearson correlation	.105	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.619	
	N	25	25

Note. TA = Transactional

Transactional leadership characteristics show a mild positive correlation with AYP status; however, it is not significant so the researcher failed to reject the hypothesis that perceived transactional leadership characteristics would have no significant correlation with AYP status.

Hypothesis $H_0 3$

Null hypothesis $H_0 3$ stated that there would be no significant correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their school's AYP status. The p value for this correlation was $p = .035$. According to the Pearson product moment correlation, the result is significant with $p > 0.05$. The correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and AYP status is significant, and therefore the researcher rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 10

Laissez-Faire Characteristics and AYP

		AYP	LF
AYP	Pearson correlation	1	.423[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.035
	N	25	25
LF	Pearson correlation	.423[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	
	N	25	25

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

The significance in the correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and AYP status could be attributed to the low number of schools that did not reach AYP. In this study the majority of the elementary school had met AYP, making the few that did not meet AYP have a significant impact on the results of the study. There was a significantly lower number of principals who exhibited perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics than principals who exhibited perceived characteristics of transformational leadership.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This correlation study sought to determine if there is a correlation between perceived leadership styles of Title I elementary principals and academic achievement. This chapter will discuss the specific results of this study in relation to the studies discussed in the review of literature. In this chapter, the implications of this study as well as the limitations of the study will be reviewed. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for further research in the areas of leadership and academic achievement.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine if there is a correlation between perceived leadership styles of Title I elementary principals and academic achievement as measured by AYP status. Teachers in Title I elementary schools completed the MLQ, an online survey, to determine their principal's leadership style. There were 25 principals whose data were included in the study. The leadership styles and AYP status of the schools were then compared to determine if there was a significant correlation between the various perceived leadership styles and academic achievement.

Transformational Leadership

The first research question that was posed was, is there a significant correlation between perceived transformational leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status. Based on the data from this research there is not a significant correlation between perceived transformational leadership characteristics and the AYP status of schools with the effect size being -.132. The correlation between transformational leadership characteristics and academic achievement is not significant, so the hypothesis stating

there is no correlation between perceived transformational leadership characteristics and AYP status in Title I elementary schools failed to be rejected.

Cherry (2017) supported transformational leadership as the most effective leadership style, and although this research does not necessarily support the correlation between the leadership style and AYP status, there was a significant correlation between the perception of extra effort (.900), productivity (.897), and satisfaction (.934) and transformational leadership characteristics.

Table 11

TF Effort, Productivity, and Satisfaction Correlation

		TF	Extra effort	Productivity	Satisfaction
TF	Pearson correlation*	1	.900	.897	.934
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Extra effort	Pearson correlation*	.900	1	.876	.873
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Productivity	Pearson correlation*	.897	.876	1	.949
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Satisfaction	Pearson correlation*	.934	.873	.949	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	25	25	25	25

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

Teachers who worked under the supervision of principals who exhibited transformational leadership characteristics perceived themselves as having higher levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction. These data support the idea that leaders that demonstrate transformational leadership characteristics foster higher levels of satisfaction in their followers (Allen, 2015), and promote extra effort from followers (Eyal & Roth, 2011); however, since there is not a significant correlation between perceived transformational leadership

characteristics and AYP status, transformational leadership does not support higher levels of academic achievement.

The results of this research offer a puzzling conclusion regarding the correlation between perceived transformational leadership characteristics and academic achievement. If there is a perception of higher levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction among Title I teachers, then it should stand to reason that academic achievement would increase and, therefore, schools would meet AYP (Allen, 2015). One of the variables that was not controlled in this research study was how long the principal had been at the school, and another was how long the Title I teachers had been at the school. Since changes in academic achievement happen over time, it would not be realistic to think that a transformational principal who had been in that position for only one year would have had time to impact extremely low academic achievement significantly enough to change the AYP status; however, it could be expected that if that principal had held the position for several years and the teachers had been exhibiting willingness to put in extra effort and had higher levels of productivity for several years, then the AYP status could be impacted and reflect higher levels of academic achievement.

Perceived transformational leadership characteristics did not show a significant level of correlation with academic achievement as measured by AYP status in this study; however, the perception of higher levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction among Title I teachers under the supervision of principals with transformational characteristics suggest that this style of leadership produces positive reactions in followers. This research failed to reject the null hypothesis that perceived transformational leadership characteristics did not correlate with academic achievement as measured by AYP status, but it did find a positive correlation between

the perception of higher levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction among the followers

of principals with perceived transformational leadership characteristics.

Transactional Leadership

The second research question that was posed was, is there a significant correlation

between perceived transactional leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I

Virginia schools and their school's AYP status. Based on the data from this research, there was

not a significant correlation between perceived transactional leadership characteristics in Title I

principals and the AYP status of the schools they lead, with the effect size being .105.

Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between perceived

transactional leadership characteristics in Virginia Title I elementary principals and their

school's AYP status failed to be rejected.

Although this research did not find a significant correlation between perceived

transactional leadership characteristics and academic achievement as measured by AYP status,

there was a significant correlation between perceived transactional leadership characteristics in

leaders and the followers' perception of extra effort (.442), productivity (.489), and satisfaction

(.398).

Table 12

TA Effort, Productivity, and Satisfaction Correlation

		TA	Extra effort	Productivity	Satisfaction
TA	Pearson correlation	1	.442[*]	.489[*]	.398[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.027	.013	.049
	N	25	25	25	25
Extra effort	Pearson Correlation	.442[*]	1	.876[**]	.873[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027		.000	.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Productivity	Pearson correlation	.489[*]	.876[**]	1	.949[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.000		.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Satisfaction	Pearson correlation	.398[*]	.873[**]	.949[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.049	.000	.000	
	N	25	25	25	25

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

The correlations between perceived transactional leadership characteristics and perceived levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction were not as strong as the correlation between the perceived transformational leadership characteristics and perceived levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction, but they were still significant.

Adeyemi & Bolarinwa (2013) stated that transactional leadership was the most prevalent style of leadership utilized in schools, and although this study did not show a coorelation between transactional leadership and AYP status of Title I elementary schools, the positive correlation with extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction may be an indicator of why it has been the most prevalent leadership style in schools. Also, as noted by Burgess (2016), transactional leadership is most often associated with extrinsic motivation which could be seen as the standards of learning test scores. Likewise, the transactional characteristics of either reward or punative consequences (Management Study Guide, 2013), could be seen as avoiding the risk of

the consequence of school improvement by maintaining acceptable test scores which could account for this style of leadership leading to a positive correlation with extra effort and productivity.

The absence of a significant correlation between perceived transactional leadership characteristics and the AYP status of the school means that this research failed to reject the null hypothesis. There is a positive correlation between perceived transactional leadership characteristics and the perception of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction; however this study did not show that perceived transactional leadership characteristics increased academic achievement.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

The third research question that was posed was, is there a significant correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in elementary principals of Title I Virginia schools and their school's AYP status. Based on the data collected in this research study, there was a significant positive correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and the AYP status of the school, causing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. The effect size was .423. This positive correlation indicates that Title I elementary principals that demonstrated perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics promoted higher levels of academic achievement as evidenced by the AYP status of the elementary schools reported by the 2016–2017 Virginia school report cards.

Although there was a significant positive correlation between the perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and AYP status of schools, there was a significant negative correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and the perception of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction among the Title I teachers that completed the survey. The negative

correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and the perceived extra

effort (-.788), productivity (-.870), and satisfaction (-.848) was much stronger than the positive

correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and AYP status.

Table 13

LF Effort, Productivity, and Satisfaction Correlation

		LF	Extra effort	Productivity	Satisfaction
LF	Pearson correlation*	1	-.788	-.870	-.848
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Extra effort	Pearson correlation*	-.788	1	.876	.873
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Productivity	Pearson correlation*	-.870	.876	1	.949
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	25	25	25	25
Satisfaction	Pearson correlation*	-.848	.873	.949	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	25	25	25	25

Note. LF = Laissez Faire
*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This research found a positive correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership

characteristics and academic achievement, which would support the findings of Gill (2016) who

found that the strength of this leadership was in building a strong team and then counting on

them to acquire the desired outcome (meeting AYP) with high levels of autonomy.

The negative correlation between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics and the

perception of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction that these data present, indicates that

although academic achievement is happening, the Title I teachers that participated in this study

are dissatisfied and feel that productivity and extra effort are lacking. The positive correlation

between perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics in Title I elementary principals and

academic achievement as measured by the AYP status of their schools, caused the researcher to

reject the null hypothesis.

Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire

      The data from this research revealed different statistics for the three perceived leadership

characteristics in regards to academic achievement in Title I elementary schools as measured by

AYP status, as well as the perceived extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction of followers.

Table 14

Leadership Correlation

	Perceived Transformational Leadership Characteristics	Perceived Transactional Leadership Characteristics	Perceived Laissez-Faire Leadership Characteristics
Academic achievement	No significant correlation	No significant correlation	Significant positive correlation
Extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction	Significant positive correlation	Significant positive correlation	Significant negative correlation

Perceived transformational leadership characteristics had the highest significant correlation for

perceived levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction, and no significant correlation with

AYP, while perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics had the only significant positive

correlation with AYP, and a negative correlation with perceived levels of extra effort,

productivity, and satisfaction. Perceived transactional leadership characteristics did not show a

significant correlation with AYP, but did show a significant positive correlation with perceived

levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction. According to this research study, perceived

laissez-faire leadership characteristics were the only leadership characteristics that showed a

significant positive correlation with academic achievement in Title I elementary schools as

measured by the AYP status of the schools.

Title I Schools

Title I provides funds for schools with high populations of low-income, or disadvantaged, students to ensure that all students have the resources needed to reach their educational goals (Malburg, 2015). These schools can be categorized as either targeted assistance, which identifies students within the school that qualify for Title I services, or schoolwide, which is for schools with a 40% or higher disadvantaged population and includes all students. Of the schools included in this study, 10 were targeted assistance, and 15 were schoolwide.

Table 15

Title I Schools

	Title I Schools
Targeted assistance	10
Schoolwide	15

In this research study, the number of targeted assistance schools that did not meet AYP and the number of schoolwide schools that did not meet AYP were equal, which would indicate that this factor did not have a significant impact on the study.

There are two improvement status' that Title I schools may fall under. Title I schools may either not have an improvement status or be categorized as a focus school or a priority school. Among other criteria, a focus school is within the lowest achieving 10% of Title I schools based on the performance of all students in reading and/or mathematics for federal Annual Measurable Objectives, and a priority school is in the lowest achieving 5% (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). In this study, there were no priority schools that participated, two focus schools, and the rest of the schools were not in improvement status. For the 2016–2017 school year, one of the focus schools in the study had met AYP and the other had not.

Significance in Relation to Other Research

The results of this research support the research findings of Chen (2014) which found that transformational leadership did not have a significant impact on academic achievement. This research found that there was not a significant coorelation between perceived transformational leadership characteristics and the AYP status of Title I elementary schools. Also, according to Chen (2014), "The results showed no significant difference in principals' overall transformational leadership practices between high and low performing schools" (p. 134). Although Chen's (2014) study was focused on middle and high school principals, the results were similar to this researchers' findings in Virginia Title I elementary schools. The data from both studies indicate that there is no significant correlation between transformational leadership characteristics and academic achievement.

Data from this study did support Hauserman and Stick's (2013) findings stating that "the interpretation of the data indicated teachers strongly preferred behaviors that aligned with the aspects of transformational leadership" (p. 185). The data from this research study found that there was a significant positive correlation between perceived transformational leadership characteristics and perceived levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction among followers. Although there was a significant correlation between perceived levels of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction, that correlation did not carry over into academic achievement as measured by the AYP status of the Title I elementary schools in this study.

Even though the data from this study supports some previous studies, it is also in direct contradiction to the study completed by Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013). The data from Adeyemi an Bolarinwa's (2013) research indicated that, "there was no significant relationship between principals' laissez-faire leadership style and students' academic performance" (p. 195).

Data from this research study indicate that there is a positive correlation between student

achievement as measured by AYP, and perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics.

Bendikson et al. (2012) found that "in secondary schools, principals are more likely to

focus on indirect instructional leadership than they are in primary schools, because middle

leaders such as heads of department take on much of the direct instructional leadership" (p. 1).

In the studies completed by Chen (2014) as well as Adeyemi and Bolainwa (2013), the data were

collected from middle and high schools, while in this study, the data were collected from Title I

elementary schools. If effective leadership characteristic differ according to the educational

level of the schools and the needs of the school, "this may reflect the need for effective principals

to respond appropriately to the conditions at their specific school" (Bendikson et al., 2012, p. 1).

Implications

The implications of the correlations of perceived transformational, transactional, and

laissez-faire leadership traits with academic achievement, as measured by AYP status, are

significant for future and current educational leaders. The purpose of this study was to determine

if there was a correlation between perceived leadership characteristics and academic

achievement. This study provides insight into perceived leadership characteristics that can

increase not only academic achievement in Title I schools, but also effort, productivity, and

satisfaction in Title I teachers.

Transformational leadership characteristics are associated with shared leadership

(Hameiri & Nir, 2013), while transactional leadership is based more on contingent rewards

(Burgess, 2016). Laissez-faire leadership provides for almost total autonomy (Gill, 2016). This

study's findings indicate that autonomy, or perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristics, are

correlated with higher levels of academic achievement based on AYP status in Title I elementary

schools included in this study. The findings also indicate that there was a high level of perceived extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction with both perceived transformational and transactional leadership characteristics. This suggests that while academic achievement is higher with autonomy (perceived laissez-faire leadership characteristic) for teachers in Title I elementary schools, those same teachers also appreciate sharing leadership roles (perceived transformational leadership characteric) and being rewarded for a job well done (perceived transactional leadership characteristic).

This information is invaluable to school districts in regards to professional development for educational leaders, as well as educational leader preparation programs (Yahya, 2015). When school districts have a school that is struggling with meeting AYP or with effort, productivity, or satisfaction in Title I teachers, they can either provide professional development for the current educational leader to strengthen the leadership characteristics associated with the deficiency, or employ a new leader who has the strengths needed to effectively address the areas of concern.

The implications for academic achievement in Title I elementary schools and Title I students are also extraordinary. The data from this study indicates a correlation between laissez-faire leadership characteristics and higher levels of academic achievement. Based on this information, educational leaders can begin to give Title I teachers the autonomy associated with laissez-faire leadership (Gill, 2016) within their classrooms to enable their students to reach higher levels of achievement. In addition, leaders can work to provide the transformational leadership characteristics of shared leadership and decision making (Hameiri & Nir, 2013) at a building or management level that will increase satisfaction, which will provide a positive environment for the Title I teachers**.**

Limitations

There are a variety of limitations, both internal and external, that could affect the validity of this study. Although steps were taken to minimize the limitations, there are some limitations that could not be controlled for this study.

There were several internal limitations that may have affected the study. The first and most evident limitation is the raters that completed the survey. Since this was a voluntary survey, not all teachers for each principal completed the survey. There could be a sample of teachers that either did or did not appreciate the leadership style of their principal. There could also be teachers that did not complete the survey due to fear of retaliation, despite the assurance of anonymity. Random sampling is generally a limitation in survey or questionnaire research that is voluntary, due to there being something dissimilar about those who choose to participate and those that don't (Vannette & Krosnick, 2017). These limitations were minimized by sending the survey to all teachers and ensuring anonymity for raters who completed the survey, in order to preserve the assumption of random sampling.

Another internal limitation to the study is that the measure of leadership style is based on Title I teachers perceptions of principal's leadership characteristics, as well as their perceptions of extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction, and is therefore subjective. This would impact both the perceived leadership style as well as the perceived teacher engagement (extra effort, productivity, and satisfaction). This is a limitation to the study due to the fact that these subjective measures are correlated to the objective measure of AYP status of Title I elementary schools.

There were also external limitations to the study. The length of time that each leader and rater had been at the school was an external limitation, as it takes time to produce change (Allen,

2015). This limitation was addressed by ensuring that only Title I teachers under the supervision of the current principal for the 2016–2017 school year completed the survey. This is also a limitation that could produce further studies over time. The second external limitation that could have affected this study is the demographic make-up of students as well as the education levels of the Title I teachers (Chen, 2014). These were factors that this study did not address, but could also be addressed in future studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research and the results it produced provide for many recommendations for future research. The most obvious and potentially insightful research would be a longitudinal study of principal leadership styles. The individual school report cards for each school and leader could be analyzed over time to determine if increases or decreases in academic achievement could be based on perceived leadership style. These analyses would also give further insight into whether or not the perceived transformational leaders could bring their schools to an academic achievement level that would meet AYP. This would also provide insight as to whether or not the leaders with perceived laissez-faire characteristics maintained their AYP status with low levels of effort, productivity and satisfaction.

Future research could also be conducted regarding the demographics of each school and the AYP status. For instance, a study could be conducted to determine if rural Title I schools have a higher level of academic achievement than urban schools, or if leadership style varies depending on whether or not the school is rural or urban. Research on secondary principals' perceived leadership characteristics and correlation to AYP status would also be useful. Additionally, it would be an interesting to determine if various teacher factors such as years of service or ability based on observations, would impact the AYP status of schools.

Educational leadership will continue to be a topic that is widely discussed and scrutinized. Continued insight into best practices that produce higher achievement levels will provide leadership preparation programs the tools they need to produce leaders that are best prepared to further the education of the youth that will lead our country in the future.

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APPENDIX A: SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION EMAIL

Dear Superintendent,

 I am a student at Liberty University, and Principal at ██████████████████ in ██ ████, VA, working on a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. I am conducting a research study entitled Leadership and Adequate Yearly Progress: A Correlation Study of Perceived Leadership Style and the Adequate Yearly Progress Status in Title I Elementary Schools. The purpose of the study is to identify associations between perceived elementary principal leadership style and the school's adequate yearly progress (AYP) status as measured by the Virginia Report Card. I am requesting your permission to contact teachers at your Title I elementary schools requesting that they fill out a short voluntary survey regarding the leadership characteristics of their principal.

 The results of this study will be published and will be made available to you; however, all school district, school, and principal information will remain confidential. Teacher participants will be anonymous. There are no foreseeable risks to you or the teachers for participating in the study.

 An affirmative reply to this email acknowledges your permission to contact elementary school teachers in Title I schools in your district and that you understand there is no risk to you, your teachers, or your principals and all information will remain confidential.
If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,
Gennifer Miller
██████████████

APPENDIX B: TEACHER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Teacher:

As a graduate student in the Department of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to determine if leadership style affects academic achievement, and I am emailing to request that you participate in my study. The superintendent has provided me with permission to contact you as a teacher in a Title I elementary school.

If you were under the supervision of the current principal for the 2016/2017 school year, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to click on the link to complete a survey. It should take approximately ten minutes for you to complete the survey. Your schools name will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential, and you will not be asked to provide your name.

To participate, click on the survey link provided at the bottom of this email.

A consent document is provided as the first page you will see after you click on the survey link. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please click on the survey link at the end of the consent information to indicate that you have read the consent information and are willing to take the survey.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Gennifer Miller

APPENDIX C: STAMPED CONSENT

CONSENT FORM
LEADERSHIP AND ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS: A CORRELATION STUDY OF
PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THE ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS
STATUS OF TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
Gennifer Miller
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study regarding leadership styles and academic achievement. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in a Title I elementary school in Virginia. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Gennifer Miller, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine if leadership style affects academic achievement.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to click on the survey link at the bottom of this page, take the survey, and hit the submit button. It will take approximately ten minutes to complete the survey.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study; however, benefits to society include providing school districts with information that will allow them to provide principals with professional development that will enhance leadership characteristics that promote higher levels of academic achievement for students.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a specific school. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.
   Participants will not provide their name, but will provide the name of their school. This will provide anonymity for the participants taking the survey. School names will be kept confidential by the researcher.
   Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If

you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose not to participate in the study, simply delete this email and do not click on the survey link.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Gennifer Miller. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at   You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Pritchard, at

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. By clicking on the survey link, I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION
WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

APPENDIX D: IRB EXEMPTION

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 13, 2017

Gennifer Miller
IRB Exemption 3021.121317: Leadership and Adequate Yearly Progress: A Correlation Study of Perceived Leadership Style and the Adequate Yearly Progress Status of Title I Elementary Schools

Dear Gennifer Miller,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

> (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
> (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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