

AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT SERVANT LEADERSHIP
HAS ON STAFF RETENTION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT

DISSERTATION

This dissertation of Kendra McMillan, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education with a major in Educational Leadership and titled AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT SERVANT LEADERSHIP HAS ON STAFF RETENTION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates given below, is now granted to submit final copies.

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The author would like to acknowledge all the teachers and support staff who have taught me that “nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.” You have been my teachers and friends in this amazing career and journey. Thank you for all your support and guidance.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my faithful and supportive husband and three beautiful and amazingly different children. Your education and future inspire me to work harder and continually improve myself. Thank you for your patience and love throughout this process. I promise to now turn back over the dining room table once and for all.

I would also like to thank the many servant and transformational leaders who were my mentors. There are two leaders in particular to whom I would like to dedicate this accomplishment: Tony Feldhausen and Deborah Long. Without probably even knowing it, you two led your followers with the qualities that encapsulate a servant and transformational heart. You focused on serving others and building relationships with people to ensure not only positive change within them, but also within the school and district you served. You taught me what it meant to want to stay at a school, despite its challenges, just to work for and with you. I consider myself to be honored to have had you as mentors and know that I only have God to thank for that gift. Your love, guidance, empowerment, support, and friendship will never be forgotten, and I hope that you can see that your life's work was and continues to be meaningful for adults and children. You two embody what it means to serve others. I humbly thank you.

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ABSTRACT

A successful superintendent once shared that, according to his research, the primary reason people remain with a company or a school is they enjoy those with whom they work. The second reason they stay? They enjoy those for whom they work. These kinds of leaders stand out in the crowd. They inspire people to work harder and improve themselves. People stay at the company or school because of them. Initially, this dissertation began as a mixed-methodology study and emerged to be qualitative in nature. The study focuses on two styles of effective leadership—transformational and servant—and whether one style has a greater impact on staff retention in elementary schools. Given the percentage of teachers who leave the profession and the impact that loss has on student achievement, elementary principals need to know effective leadership styles and how the role of the principal impacts school climate, job satisfaction, and, ultimately, staff retention. Using two Likert-scale surveys, elementary teachers determined whether their principals led with tendencies toward transformational or servant leadership. The teachers then responded to open-ended questions and personal interviews to determine the reasons behind their desire to remain at their current schools. All participants perceived their principals to lead with more of a servant leadership style than a transformational style. This led to the focus of the study shifting from a comparison of two styles to honing in on only servant leadership. The qualitative data revealed that the elementary principals can encourage staff members to remain at their schools by focusing on building relationships with others, supporting them, and being an effective communicator. Trust was also identified as a key component on how those relationships are built and sustained. Trust was also tied to how effective the support and communication was between the teacher and principal.

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Chapter I

Introduction

If the pictorial image of an elementary school is an apple, then the principal is the apple's core. Whitaker (2012) suggests that whatever occurs in a school, the principal filters it all. Great principals have much in common, regardless of the dynamics and size of their schools (Lindahl, 2012; Paul, Smith, & Dochney, 2012; Whitaker, 2012). The principal has a significant impact on the climate of a school, which impacts student achievement and staff retention (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2011; Doll, 2010; Lindahl, 2010; Ohlson, 2009).

Researchers have studied two distinct leadership styles, transformational and servant, in educational settings for decades because of the styles' unique focus on being people-oriented (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Greenleaf, 2002; Parolini, Patterson, & Winston, 2009; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Both styles are dynamic and effective for school and organizational leadership (Stone et al., 2004). Because research suggests the principals' impact on students is secondary only to teachers' impact, identifying effective leadership styles is critical (Fullan, 2010).

Servant leadership, a term popularized by Robert Greenleaf in 1977, is described as a leader who focuses on serving others. As Greenleaf explains in the 2002 edition of his book *Servant Leadership*, the style:

... begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. The conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. (p. 27)

Multiple researchers have studied the different characteristics of servant leadership in business and educational settings (Russell & Stone, 2002; Shaw & Newton, 2014; Spears, 2004).

Outcomes demonstrate significant positive correlation between principals who practice servant leadership and positive school climate and trust (Black, 2010; Joseph & Winston, 2005).

Like servant leadership, transformational leadership incorporates a people-oriented leadership style. Transformational leadership, however, centers on motivation of people and creation of a supportive environment for the purpose of change and to meet the goals of the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Transformational leadership, defined by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), includes four common dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1993). In the decades following these definitions, researchers conducted studies that show a strong, positive correlation between leaders who use transformational leadership and the quality of their followers' organizational commitment, including teachers' levels of trust in their principals and levels of job satisfaction (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Dumay & Galand, 2012; Leithwood, 1992).

Research demonstrates how the percentage of teacher turnover negatively affects student achievement (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). The cost of teacher attrition is not isolated to student achievement alone. In a study published by the Alliance for Excellent Education in July 2014, Ingersoll estimates that attrition-related costs to school districts in the United States range from \$1 billion to over \$2 billion per year. Berry (2001) suggests that retaining teachers is possibly more critical than recruiting them, because principals should spend their energy and efforts retaining current staff members, which can reduce the necessity for preparation of new ones (Berry, 2001).

Many variables can factor into why a teacher wants to remain in a school, such as climate and job satisfaction. This study seeks to understand the role of transformational and servant

leadership styles, whether one style makes a greater difference in teacher retention at the elementary level, and the reasons behind why teachers remain in a school.

Statement of the Problem

Over the course of the past few decades, principal preparation courses have covered the logistics of the job: finances, personnel, and facilities, for example. Principals receive little training, aside from on-the-job, regarding how to support their staff members to increase the likelihood of staff retention (Berry, 2001; Parrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008). Administrators know teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement, yet, with the many other duties of the job, principals often struggle to focus on or remember the critical characteristics inherent in teacher retention (Berry, 2001; Parrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008).

Statistics on the number of teachers who leave the profession only a few years into their career are higher than in other professions. According to the research reviewed, an average of up to 40% of teachers leave the profession each year, compared to 11% turnover in other professions (Heller, 2004; Ingersoll, 2011; Parrachione et al., 2008). Administrators must invest money, time, and energy to coach new teachers so they are of high quality (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Parrachione et al., 2008). Administrators spend billions of dollars each year on recruiting, selecting, and training new teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Parrachione et al., 2008). They are then faced with the challenge of keeping those high-quality teachers, which is where principals should focus their energy (Parrachione et al., 2008; Yost, 2006). Problems surrounding retention of high-quality staff have a direct impact on the quality of education students receive (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Brown & Wynn, 2009). Given the challenge and importance of retaining high-quality teachers, this study focuses on whether transformational or servant leadership has a greater impact on teacher retention at the elementary school level.

Background to the Study

The various types of effective school leadership have been a research topic for decades (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Lambert, 2006; Russell, 2008). Transformational and servant leadership stand out as having significant positive influences on staff job satisfaction and commitment, and on the overall climate of a business or school (Avolio et al., 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bennett, 2001; Black, 2010; Brown & Wynn, 2009; Leithwood, 1992; McClellan, 2007; Parolini et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004).

In the essay *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, Greenleaf (1977) defines the concept and characteristics of servant leadership. Servant leaders put the needs of their employees above their own. When a leader empowers and supports staff, the organization in turn will be stronger and grow (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Larry Spears (2004) added to Greenleaf's work by summarizing characteristics he defined as key to the development of servant leaders: the ability to listen, be empathetic, be persuasive, and conceptualize; the ability to be healing aware; foresight; stewardship; commitment to the growth of people; and dedication to building community. Spears (2004) also created a list of 10 characteristics that further define servant leadership with respect to specific behaviors displayed, such as love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. To improve school culture and staff retention, a principal should focus on building relationships with staff members by embracing the beliefs and behaviors of a servant leader (Black, 2010).

Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia (2004) and Bass and Avolio (1993) defined transformational leadership as a style in which leaders transform followers by focusing on empowerment. By concentrating on four factors—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—transformational leaders empower

followers and increase levels of commitment to their organizations (Avolio et al., 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1993). By helping staff members solve problems in a more efficient manner, providing meaningful professional development, and creating collaborative cultures within their schools, transformational leaders improve staff retention (Leithwood, 1992).

The transformational and servant leadership frameworks will serve as a conceptual foundation for answering the research questions in this study.

The Research Questions

The overarching purpose of this study is to identify which leadership style, transformational or servant, has a greater impact on staff retention at the elementary level and to analyze underlying reasons behind it. Creswell (2015) states that researchers will identify research questions as a means to further explore a topic with increased depth. With that in mind, this study examines the following questions:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive the leadership styles of their principals?
2. What is the relationship, if present, between servant leadership style and teacher retention?
3. What is the relationship, if present, between transformational leadership style and teacher retention?
4. Does one style have a greater impact on staff retention than the other, and why?

Description of Terms

Educators tend to use acronyms for many topics. Creswell (2015) suggests researchers should define important variables so readers better understand their intended meaning. Education

researchers use several formal terms to describe effective leadership and related issues. This section attempts to succinctly clarify them. Chapter 2 will further define these terms.

Servant leadership. Popularized by Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership is a style in which leaders focus on serving their followers.

Transformational leadership. Studied by Avolio et al. (2004) and Bass & Avolio (1993), transformational leadership is a style in which leaders focus on empowering their followers as the main means to accomplish organizational goals.

School climate. A set of internal characteristics, such as shared values and a common purpose, among a school's staff that sets it apart from other schools and influences its members (Hoy & Miskel, 2005).

Job satisfaction. The positive and negative feelings people have about their job (Knox & Anfara, 2013).

Teacher attrition. When teachers leave the profession (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012).

Teacher retention. When teachers either remain in the same school from year to year or change schools but remain in the profession (Schaefer et al., 2012).

Potential Significance of the Study

This study expands on existing research by looking specifically at the role of servant and transformational leadership styles as demonstrated by elementary school principals. It adds to the body of knowledge by analyzing the two styles' relative impacts on elementary school teacher retention. While research demonstrates that the servant leadership approach impacts school climate (Black, 2010) and teacher retention at a high school level (Shaw & Newton, 2014), research does

not connect the servant leadership style with positive climate and teacher retention at the elementary school level.

As with servant leadership, many researchers have studied the characteristics and impact of transformational leadership, especially in the business sector. Bass and Avolio (1993), Avolio et al. (2004), and Turner, Barling, Epitronpaki, Butcher, and Milner (2002), conducted multiple studies regarding the impact of transformational leaders in the corporate world. Existing studies have examined the correlation between servant leadership and positive school climate, but the research is lacking on the impact of transformational leadership on school climate or staff retention, specifically at the elementary school level.

This comparative analysis will add to the body of literature and could be used in future leadership preparation programs for principals. Knowing the specific characteristics that lead to a more positive school climate, and therefore higher staff retention, could prove to be beneficial to current administrators in the field when it comes to saving or investing money, time, and energy.

Overview of Research Methods

This study initially employed a mixed-methods approach of collecting quantitative data to examine the above-mentioned questions, followed by additional interviews with participants to collect qualitative data to explore the results in more detail. This research design is best described by Creswell (2015) as the explanatory sequential mixed-method design because of its use of the qualitative results to explain the quantitative data. However, through the course of the data collection and analysis, it became evident that due to the one-dimensionality of the results, statistical correlation tests could not be conducted. The methodology shifted to qualitative in nature. Creswell (2015) defines qualitative research as a methodology in which a researcher analyzes interviews and identifies themes to give insight

into answering research questions. Because of the lack of statistical data in this particular study, the methodology shifted to qualitative research.

Two quantitative instruments were utilized to answer the first two research questions. Through quantitative surveys, participants identified which of the two leadership styles their principals employed more predominantly, then identified whether they wanted to remain at their schools. Follow-up personal interviews with the surveyed teachers provided insight into the reasons behind the teachers' decisions to stay or leave. These findings are intended to have an impact on education leadership preparation programs by demonstrating to faculty at the postsecondary level the importance of a leadership style that supports teachers.

To determine the leadership style of each principal, participants completed the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) survey (Dennis, 2004) as well as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The SLAI measures whether the principals used servant leadership characteristics (Dennis, 2004). The MLQ instrument measures the extent of the principals' use of transformational leadership (Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992).

Both of these instruments were scored on a Likert scale, producing a numerical response for scoring and ordinal data (Creswell, 2015). Those responses revealed correlations between the level of a principal's servant or transformational leadership style and whether or not the teacher intended to remain at that school. These instruments revealed a unilateral response, which changed the study to require qualitative methodology.

Follow-up interviews with the surveyed teachers provided the information needed to delve into answering the fourth research question regarding staff retention. Analysis of the teachers' responses revealed the reasons behind the teachers' decisions and provided

understanding regarding whether servant leadership or transformational leadership has a higher tendency to encourage retention. The personal interview questions fell under a qualitative style of research; therefore, the themes that arose in the interviews were assigned codes and analyzed for any interrelatedness.

Summary

This first chapter described transformational and servant leadership and explored the research surrounding the problem with teacher retention. The chapter shared four research questions driving the study and defined key terms used throughout the dissertation. Also included was an overview of the research methods, including the two survey instruments. The second chapter will provide a more thorough description of the role of the elementary principal, leadership styles, and teacher retention. Chapter III outlines the research design, the participants, and how the data was collected and analyzed. The fourth and fifth chapters report the results from the study, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter II

The Literature Review

Introduction

Over the past 50 years, a substantial amount of research has examined how different leadership styles are effective not only in the private sector, but in public education as well (Avolio et al., 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Eyal & Kark, 2004; Greenleaf, 1977, 2002; Lambert, 2006; Whitaker, 2012). Much research also has investigated the impact of a principal on a school's climate, as well as the impact on teacher job satisfaction and retention (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Pepper & Thomas, 2000; Shaw & Newton, 2014).

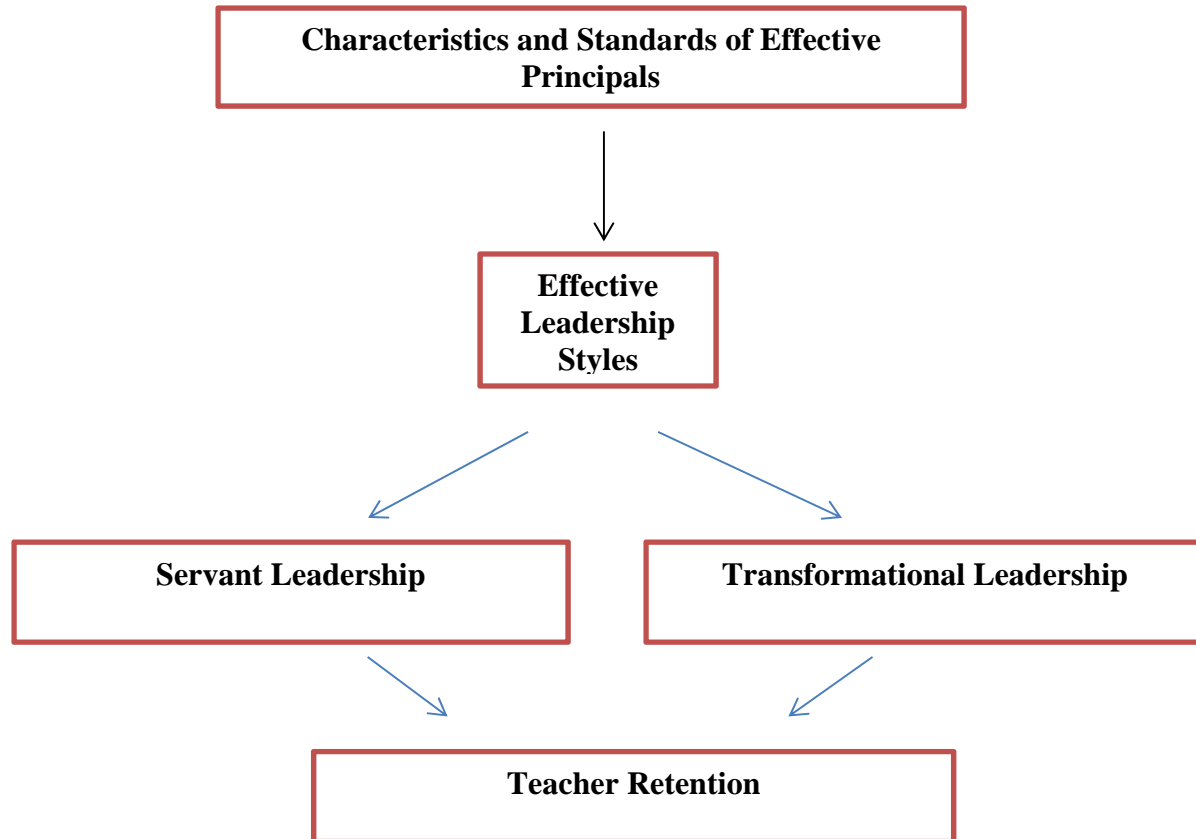
This dissertation examines whether the use of a transformational or a servant leadership style has a greater impact on staff retention at the elementary school level. First, it investigates the characteristics and standards of elementary school principals and effective leadership styles. It specifically examines transformational and servant leadership styles and their impacts on teacher retention. This dissertation is based on research using two instruments with elementary school teachers to determine which of the two leadership styles their principals tend to employ. Participant interviews sought to explain how principals' leadership styles affect teachers' decision to remain at their schools.

This literature review delves into five key areas surrounding effective leadership and its impact on school climate and teacher retention: (a) characteristics of effective school leadership, (b) characteristics of different leadership styles, (c) Greenleaf's (1977) theory of the servant leadership style, (d) the transformational leadership style, and (e) the impact a principal has on teacher retention.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2008), the state of Idaho (2015), and Whitaker (2012) outline standards for what effective principals should do. The first section of this chapter will encompass the research supporting the notion that an effective principal lies at the core of a high-achieving school and explain which characteristics and standards define effectiveness (Lambert, 2006; Lindahl, 2010; Whitaker, 2012). The second section focuses on the research surrounding different educational leadership styles over the past few decades. The third and fourth sections delve into the research surrounding servant and transformational leadership styles and the differences in the two. The fifth and final section reviews the statistics surrounding teacher retention and the impact it has on student achievement.

Figure 1 illustrates how this literature review and the research that follows connect the first four themes and lead to an assertion regarding leadership styles' overall impact on teacher retention.

Figure 1

Categories of the Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of literature surrounding principals' job expectations, effective leadership styles, and how those who lead with either a servant or transformational style can ultimately impact teacher retention.

Characteristics and Standards of Effective Principals

With the passing of No Child Left Behind (2001), effective school leadership has been a rich topic of discussion and research because of the known impact a principal has on the success of a school (Lindahl, 2010; Whitaker, 2012). The role of the principal continues to change over time as educational reform movements and definitions of effective schools change (Valentine &

Prater, 2011). Novelist Todd Whitaker (2012) authored a book about the things great principals do differently that set them apart from and above the rest. Through his own experiences and review of eight dissertations on principal efficacy, Whitaker (2012) narrowed his list to 18 characteristics of effective school leaders:

1. Great principals never forget that it is people, not programs, that determine the quality of a school.
2. Great principals have clarity about who they are, what they do, and how others perceive them.
3. Great principals take responsibility for their own performance and for all aspects of their school.
4. Great principals create a positive atmosphere in their schools. They treat every person with respect. In particular, they understand the power of praise.
5. Great principals consistently filter out the negatives that don't matter and share a positive attitude.
6. Great principals deliberately apply a range of strategies to improve teacher performance.
7. Great principals take every opportunity to hire and retain the very best teachers.
8. Great principals keep standardized testing in perspective and focus on the real issue of student learning.
9. Great principals understand the dynamics of change.
10. Great principals know when to focus on behavior before beliefs.

11. Great principals are loyal to their students, to their teachers, and to the school.
They expect loyalty to students and the school to take precedence over loyalty to themselves.
12. Before making any decision or attempting to bring about any change, great principals ask themselves one central question: What will my best teachers think of this?
13. Great principals continually ask themselves who is most comfortable and who is least comfortable with each decision they make. They treat everyone as if they were good.
14. Great principals understand high achievers, are sensitive to their best teachers' needs, and make the most of this valuable resource.
15. Great principals make it cool to care. They understand that behaviors and beliefs are tied to emotion, and they understand the power of emotion to jump-start change.
16. Great principals work hard to keep their relationships in good repair—to avoid personal hurt and to repair any possible damage.
17. Great principals take steps to improve or remove negative and ineffective staff members.
18. Great principals establish clear expectations at the start of the year and follow them consistently as the year progresses (p. 143).

The 18 characteristics provide a sense of how important it is for a principal to know him or herself as a person. They also reveal a common theme of assuming positive rather than

negative intentions in others and how critical it is to focus on the best teachers, understanding who will be most or least comfortable when decisions and changes are made.

Building meaningful relationships with staff members and putting their needs in the forefront is also critical (Fullan, 2002; Whitaker, 2012). These characteristics are a guide for principals for how to handle certain situations or experiences in a student- and staff-centered manner, with a focus on building relationships, not power and authority (Fullan, 2001; Lindahl, 2010; Whitaker, 2012).

A principal's effectiveness impacts a school's effectiveness (Fullan, 2002; Lindahl, 2010; Russell, 2008; Whitaker, 2012). Lindahl's (2010) research tied teachers' perceptions of their principals at higher-performing schools with the six standards published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2008), *Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do*. The results of Lindahl's study showed that principals at higher-performing schools tended to meet these standards, included in Table 1.

Table 1

Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do

| Standard Number | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| Standard 1 | Effective Principals Lead Schools in a Way That Places Student and Adult Learning at the Center. |
| Standard 2 | Effective Principals Set High Expectations and Standards for the Academic and Social Development of All Students and the Performance of Adults. |
| Standard 3 | Effective Principals Demand Content Instruction That Ensures Student Achievement of Agreed-On Academic Standards. |
| Standard 4 | Effective Principals Create a Culture of Continuous Learning for Adults Tied to Student Learning and Other Goals. |
| Standard 5 | Effective Principals Use Multiple Sources of Data as Diagnostic Tools to Assess, Identify, and Apply Instructional Improvement. |
| Standard 6 | Effective Principals Actively Engage the Community to Create Shared Responsibility for Student and School Success. |

Note. NAESP, 2008.

To further define what effective principals should be able to know and do, the Idaho State Department of Education identified specific domains and descriptions for the standards. The *Standards for Effective Principals* is listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Idaho Standards for Effective Principals

| | |
|---|---|
| Domain 1 – School Climate | <p>An educational leader promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional development. An educational leader articulates and promotes high expectations for teaching and learning while responding to diverse community interest and needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. School Culture—Principal establishes a safe, collaborative, and supportive culture ensuring all students are successfully prepared to meet the requirements for tomorrow’s careers and life endeavors. b. Communication—Principal is proactive in communicating the vision and goals of the school or district, the plans for the future, and the successes and challenges to all stakeholders. c. Advocacy—Principal advocates for education, the district and school, teachers, parents, and students that engenders school support and involvement. |
| Domain 2 – Collaborative Leadership | <p>An educational leader promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment. In collaboration with others, uses appropriate data to establish rigorous, concrete goals in the context of</p> |

student achievement and instructional programs. He or she uses research and/or best practices in improving the education program.

- a. Shared Leadership—Principal fosters shared leadership that takes advantage of individual expertise, strengths, and talents, and cultivates professional growth.
- b. Priority Management—Principal organizes time and delegates responsibilities to balance administrative/managerial, educational, and community leadership priorities.
- c. Transparency—Principal seeks input from stakeholders and takes all perspectives into consideration when making decisions.
- d. Leadership Renewal—Principal strives to continuously improve leadership skills through professional development, self-reflection, and utilization of input from others.
- e. Accountability—Principal establishes high standards for professional, legal, ethical, and fiscal accountability self and others.

Domain 3 –
Instructional
Leadership

An educational leader promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. He or she provides leadership for major initiatives and change efforts and uses research and/or best practices in improving the education program.

-
- a. Innovation—Principal seeks and implements innovative and effective solutions that comply with general and special education law.
 - b. Instructional Vision—Principal insures that instruction is guided by a shared, research-based instructional vision that articulates what students do to effectively learn the subject.
 - c. High Expectations—Principal sets high expectation for all students academically, behaviorally, and in all aspects of student well-being.
 - d. Continuous Improvement of Instruction—Principal has proof of proficiency in assessing teacher performance based upon the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Aligns resources, policies, and procedures toward continuous improvement of instructional practice guided by the instructional vision.
 - e. Evaluation—Principal uses teacher evaluation and other formative feedback mechanisms to continuously improve teacher effectiveness.
 - f. Recruitment and Retention—Principal recruits and maintains a high quality staff.
-

Note. Retrieved from: <https://sde.idaho.gov/federal-programs/ed-effectiveness/files/effective-principals/Standards-for-Effective-Principals.pdf>

Whitaker (2012), NAESP (2008), and the Idaho State Department of Education clearly outline the responsibilities great principals have before them. Determining which leadership styles are most effective in successfully meeting these responsibilities is paramount (Hallinger, 2011; Lambert, 2006; Lindahl, 2010).

Effective Leadership Styles

Researchers have studied multiple leadership styles over the past 40 years seeking to understand what specific characteristics and behaviors principals must exemplify to best meet their responsibilities (Hallinger, 2011; Marzano, 2005; Taylor, 1994). As noted by Taylor's review of educational leadership (1994), many of the styles overlap. Major styles include situational, instructional, transactional, servant, and transformational.

The situational leadership style was originally defined in 1977 by Hershey and Blanchard as one in which leaders modify their behavior or tasks depending upon their employees' maturity level and urgency of the task (Graeff, 1983; Taylor, 1994). The need for leaders to be flexible in their style and approach is critical (Graeff, 1983). This leadership style sees the employee as the key determinant of what kind of behavior the leader should utilize (Graeff, 1983).

The idea of instructional leadership began to take shape and form in the 1980s and early 1990s with the effective schools movement and is unique in that it emphasizes instruction and learning (Leithwood, 1992; Taylor, 1994; Valentine & Prater, 2011). There are three dimensions to the instructional leadership model: defining the mission of the school, managing instructional programs, and creating and sustaining a positive school climate focused on student learning (Hallinger, 2003; Taylor, 1994). Within each of those three dimensions, 10 further dimensions define instructional leadership in more specific manners (Hallinger, 2003):

1. Framing clear school goals;

2. Communicating clear school goals;
3. Supervising and evaluating instruction;
4. Coordinating curriculum;
5. Monitoring student progress;
6. Protecting instructional time;
7. Promoting professional development;
8. Maintaining high visibility;
9. Providing incentives for teachers;
10. Providing incentives for learning (p. 336).

Critics of this leadership style cite that principals could have difficulty embodying all 10 instructional leadership dimensions due to the middle-management role in which this style places them (Hallinger, 2003). Secondary principals in particular can struggle the greatest with being instructional leaders when they may not have the same content knowledge as the teachers they are supervising (Hallinger, 2003).

Transactional leadership is one of two subsets of the transformational leadership theory (Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014) and is founded on the premise of a transfer or give-and-take of some kind between leaders and followers. In a review of literature regarding transformational leadership and organizational culture, Bass (1993) defined transactional leadership as one in which roles and assignments are clearly outlined. The reward or reinforcement for work completed is also evident to all. Minimal collaboration and a lack of collaboration permeates this style of leadership (Bass, 1993). Leithwood (1992) describes transactional leadership as a style in which leaders use their power to control variables impacting followers, and leaders will not give up power without an exchange of some sort.

Transformational leadership encompasses many of the previously mentioned practices (Shatzer et al., 2014). While originally coined by Burns (1978), transformational leadership has matured thanks to the work of researchers Bass and Avolio (1993) and Leithwood (1992). Transformational leadership is composed of four main ideas: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Leaders utilizing this model sustain a collaborative culture in their schools, where working together to solve problems is encouraged and supported (Leithwood, 1992). Transformational leaders also focus their energy on developing their staffs professionally, toward a common mission of the school (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Leithwood, 1992).

Closely connected to transformational leadership theory is the concept of servant leadership (Parolini et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004). Robert Greenleaf articulated this style in 1977. Spears (2004), Russell and Stone (2002) have further expanded the explanation of the model. Servant leadership is characterized as a style in which leaders put the needs of others before their own. When leaders effectively serve their employees, their organizations' goals will be met (Greenleaf, 2002; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 2004; Stone et al., 2004).

Researchers have studied numerous styles of educational leadership, each with its own unique features and traits that make it effective (Hallinger, 2003). All theories and styles contribute to empirical research on leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Given the context of the requirements of the job, a principal's leadership is one key to the success of the school (Fullan, 2002). Two particular leadership styles stand out as a means to accomplish the immense list of responsibilities principals have before them: servant and transformational. Because each one focuses on relationships with people as a means to accomplish an organization's goals, research has shown these styles to be dynamic (Parolini, et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004).

Servant Leadership

Woven throughout the many characteristics of effective leadership that Whitaker (2012), Lindahl (2010), and Russell (2008) define is the concept of servant leadership. Characteristics of great leaders rise from an underlying philosophy or core set of values defining what a leader is. A critical aspect of this study is determining the impact a principal's servant leadership has on teacher retention.

Forty-five years ago, Robert K. Greenleaf wrote an essay titled "Servant Leadership." In that essay, he described a man's journey and his realization that the truest form of leadership is one in which the leader has the desire to serve others and help them to reach their true potential. Organizations led in this manner are stronger and more effective (Spears, 2004). The words "servant" and "leader" are often viewed as more opposite than alike. People who approach leadership with an attitude of service and support bring great potential or growth out of others (Spears, 2004).

According to Spears (2004), 10 main characteristics are key to leading with a servant leadership style:

1. Listening—Spears (2004) argues that the most critical characteristic of a servant leader is the ability to listen and seek to understand what another person is saying, and then reflecting and composing a response. Author Steven R. Covey (2004) supports this facet as one of the seven habits of highly effective people. Covey (2004) claims that to be effective a person must "seek first to understand, then be understood."
2. Empathy—Paul, Smith, and Dochney (2012) define empathy as truly putting one's self in another's shoes to try and understand what the other person is

experiencing. A servant leader presumes positive intentions in others (Spears, 2004).

3. Healing—Servant leaders look for ways and have the ability to help heal themselves and others when they have suffered or are suffering emotional pain (Spears, 2004). Servant leaders help others who may be broken become whole again (Greenleaf, 2002). Covey (2004) also asserts the importance of healing and wholeness by focusing on attitude and habits.
4. Awareness—McClellan (2007) argues that awareness is one of the most critical characteristics of servant leaders, as they need to commit to being open to what is being said or done.
5. Persuasion—Servant leaders use motivation and encouragement to guide others into thinking an idea is not only a good one, but also that it is their own idea (McClellan, 2007). Servant leaders engage individuals in decision-making and build consensus, instead of using their position or authority to force others to comply (McClellan, 2007; Spears, 2004).
6. Conceptualization—Servant leaders have the capacity to design and see big-picture ideas and plans to accomplish a task (McClellan, 2007; Spears, 2004). These leaders are able to find a balance between conceptualization and daily routine operations of a school or organization (McClellan, 2007; Spears, 2004).
7. Foresight—McClellan (2007) explains that foresight is a characteristic described as a leader's ability to know and understand what has occurred in the past and what is occurring in the present, and to better predict and plan for future events.

8. Stewardship—Stewardship is one of the most prominent aspects of servant leadership, as servant leaders hold a commitment to serving the needs of others through encouragement (Paul et al., 2012; Spears, 2004).
9. Commitment to the growth of people—Servant leaders understand the importance and responsibility of supporting individual personal and professional growth over organizational growth (McClellan, 2007).
10. Building community—Servant leaders work to create a sense of family and community as evidenced through demonstrating caring with and among workers (McClellan, 2007).

While Spears (2004) claims that the list of 10 characteristics is not comprehensive of all servant leadership qualities, it is a place to start to see the impact and potential of this leadership style. Multiple researchers have added to the body of research to further define and illustrate servant leadership behaviors. Russell and Stone (2002) developed a list of functional and accompanying attributes of leadership. In an attempt to help leaders know if they are behaving or leading an organization or school with a servant leadership style, Bennett (2001) created a set of actions a principal can display, similar to Whitaker's (2012) list of what great principals do. As evidenced by the findings in numerous studies, a leader who uses a servant leadership style will have a positive impact on organizational trust, school climate and job satisfaction, and ultimately a stronger likelihood of employee retention (Black, 2010; Ebener & O'Connell, 2010; Shaw & Newton, 2014).

To further define servant leadership, Patterson (2003) described the theory in the framework of virtue (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005). Utilizing the research that already existed

regarding servant leadership, Patterson (2003) narrowed down the behaviors and attitudes that define this style to seven virtues:

1. *Agapao* love—According to Dennis and Bocarnea (2005), *agapao* love is defined as genuine caring and unconditional love from leaders toward their followers.
2. Humility—Servant leaders must understand who they are and that they do not have all of the answers (Hunter, 2004).
3. Altruistic—Leaders who display altruism behave unselfishly and are concerned about the welfare of others (Caffey, 2012).
4. Visionary—Servant leaders are able to see in which direction an organization needs to go (Russell & Stone, 2002).
5. Trusting—An essential component in any leadership style is trust (Covey, 2004) and acting with integrity (Russell, 2008).
6. Serving—At the center of servant leadership is the desire to serve others (Greenleaf, 2002).
7. Empowering of others—Servant leaders respect what their followers are able to do and, by doing that, share power and control (Russell, 2008).

The 10 characteristics of servant-leadership defined by Spears (2004), coupled with Patterson's (2003) constructs for servant leadership behavior, and, finally, Whitaker's (2012) list of things that great principals do builds the foundation for the qualities effective elementary school principals should have when they embody a servant leadership style. The research defining this style and examining its results clearly outlines the impact an effective servant leader can have on the climate of a school (Black, 2010).

Transformational Leadership

Around the same time Greenleaf began his journey into discovering and defining servant leadership, a definition for transformational leadership was beginning to take shape in 1978.

James McGregor Burns first identified this leadership style and began to develop what makes it distinct from other styles. Years later, it was further clarified by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio (Kelloway et al., 2012; Liontos, 1993). As with servant leadership, research of transformational leadership mostly examined areas outside of education until the past few decades.

Transformational leadership can be defined according to Kelloway, Turner, Barling, and Loughlin (2012), as having four main dimensions:

1. Idealized influence—Where the leaders focus on what is ethically right as opposed to succumbing to the pressures of an organization to get the job done;
2. Inspirational motivation—Where leaders encourage and inspire followers to tackle challenges;
3. Intellectual stimulation—Where leaders support their employees as they search for information, ask meaningful questions, and look for ways to be innovative;
4. Individual consideration—Where leaders consider and pay attention to individual needs, interests, and personalities.

In a quantitative study, Kirby, Paradise, and King (1992) sought to determine whether educators viewed their educational leaders as utilizing a transformational or transactional style of leadership, and which behaviors were able to predict job satisfaction and leadership effectiveness. Utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) with 103 educators, Kirby et al. (1992) found that transformational leaders are related to an increase in job

satisfaction among teachers, particularly with behaviors associated to individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation.

In an article titled “Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture,” Bass and Avolio (1993) demonstrate how leaders who fit the model of the four dimensions create a sense of family within their organizations as well as a level of commitment to their organizations. A study conducted by Avolio et al. (2004) of 520 nurses in a large hospital in Singapore supported the claim that the presence of transformational leaders correlates with employees’ commitment to their organizations.

In the early 1990s, Kenneth Leithwood (1992) conducted multiple studies in the school setting, drawing a connection between transformational leadership and school climate. In 1992, Leithwood wrote an article in *Educational Leadership* summarizing the literature about the impact of transformational leadership and found three main goals of transformational leaders in school settings:

1. Helping teachers develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture;
2. Fostering teacher development; and
3. Helping teachers solve problems together more effectively (Leithwood, 1992).

In the business sector and secondary education, servant and transformational leadership styles are both solidly studied and proven to be effective in motivating staff and increasing job satisfaction, and shown to be associated with staff retention (Leithwood, 1992; Spears, 2002).

The next section of the literature review describes the differences and similarities of the two leadership theories.

Differences and Similarities in Servant and Transformational Leadership

While servant and transformational leadership styles are both demonstrably effective, certain distinctions make each one stand alone (Parolini et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004). In their study, Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004) sought to examine the similarities and differences of the two leadership styles and illustrated the two theories in a side-by-side comparison (as seen in Table 3). On the left side, under the transformational leadership attributes column, functional attributes (as described by Russell and Stone, 2002) are noted in italics. The four functional attributes described by Russell and Stone (2002) are the primary behaviors of a transformational leader: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The primary characteristics of each of those four behaviors are listed in regular print underneath each of the transformational leadership attributes. In the right-hand column, the functional or primary attributes of servant leadership are listed and grouped according to how they correlate with the four primary transformational leadership characteristics (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Table 3

Comparison of Attributes of Servant and Transformational Leadership Styles

| Transformational leadership attributes | Servant leadership attributes |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <i>Idealized (charismatic) influence</i> | Influence |
| Vision | <i>Vision</i> |
| Trust | <i>Trust</i> |
| Respect | Credibility and competence |
| Risk-sharing | Delegation |
| Integrity | <i>Honesty and integrity</i> |
| Modeling | <i>Modeling</i> and visibility |
| | <i>Service</i> |
| <i>Inspirational motivation</i> | |
| Commitment to goals | Stewardship |
| Communication | Communication |
| Enthusiasm | |
| <i>Intellectual stimulation</i> | |
| Rationality | Persuasion |
| Problem Solving | <i>Pioneering</i> |
| <i>Individualized consideration</i> | <i>Appreciation of others</i> |
| Personal attention | Encouragement |

| | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Mentoring | Teaching |
| Listening | Listening |
| Empowerment | <i>Empowerment</i> |

Note. Stone, et al. (2004) Reprinted with permission

Table 3 highlights the many similarities in the two leadership styles. Stone et al. (2004) explains that it is not surprising that the styles are so similar, given that both are focused on people: valuing and building relationships with individuals.

The primary difference in the two styles according to Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004) and Parolini et al. (2009) is a leader's focus. Within the framework of the servant leadership style, a leader's focus is individuals and relationships; a leader's focus in the transformational style is the organization, and developing and empowering others to make the organization more effective (Parolini et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004). The shift of the leader's primary focus from the organization to the follower is the key difference in the two styles (Stone et al. (2004). In practice, the context or structure of the operation and individual values of the leader may determine the leadership style (Stone et al., 2004).

In her dissertation and further research, Parolini (2007) argues there are five main distinctions between servant and transformational leadership styles: moral, focus, motive and mission, development, and influence. The first distinction in the two styles centers on the moral nature of the individual leader. A transformational leader's moral focus is developing and empowering his or her followers' values to support the goals of the organization (Parolini, 2007). The transformational leader's altruistic tendencies are centered on what is best for the organization. In contrast, the servant leader's moral distinction is centered on serving the needs

of the individual follower. The servant leader's altruistic tendencies are consciously and deliberately focused on what is best for the individual (Parolini, 2007).

The second distinction is the unique focus of the leader. While both leadership styles are focused on people and relationships, a key difference according to Parolini (2007) comes down to the specific allegiance of the leader. A transformational leader's focus is on the needs of the organization, and he or she builds commitment from followers toward meeting those needs. The loyalty of the transformational leader is to the goals of the organization. The focus for the servant leader is on the needs and autonomy of the followers, and the leader is loyal to his or her followers. For the servant leader, achieving the objectives of the organization is second to each individual's needs (Parolini, 2007).

The motive and mission of the leader is the third distinct difference in the two leadership styles. Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) found that transformational and servant leaders function with differing motives and missions. These differing motives create organization cultures that vary as well. The transformational leader's mission is to create a dynamic culture that will meet and exceed the goals of the organization. The servant leader, on the other hand, is motivated to create a culture in which individuals grow and develop (Smith, et al., 2004).

The fourth distinct difference in the two leadership styles is around development of individual followers. Parolini (2007) describes the transformational leader as one who encourages and develops followers to emulate the leader's behavior and values. In contrast, the servant leader's development is focused on individuals becoming autonomous and servant leaders themselves (Parolini, et al., 2009).

The final distinction between the two leadership styles is the influence process they each employ. Burns (1978) and later Bass (1985) describe a transformational leader as one that

influences others through his or her own charisma, whereas a servant leader influences others through the act of service itself (Parolini, et al., 2009).

Teacher Retention

Because the percentage of turnover each year in education is 13.2% (compared to 11% turnover in other professions), 29% of new educators leave the profession in the first three years, and 3% of new teachers leave the profession by the fifth year (Heller, 2004), principals must focus their attention on retaining staff. According to Shaw and Newton (2014), it takes three to seven years for a new teacher to truly become high-quality, and schools would greatly benefit from finding strategies to enhance teacher retention. Couple those statistics with the knowledge that teacher quality is the top factor that impacts student performance (Alliance For Excellent Education, 2014; Schaefer et al., 2012), and studying the topic of teacher retention becomes critical.

The teacher retention literature can be broken into two interconnected discussions: recruiting high-quality new teachers and retaining the current staff in a school. Both discussions are important, and just as costly in time and energy for administrators. The research on both discussions shows the importance and impact staff retention has on student achievement (Berry, 2004; Brown & Wynn, 2009; Ronfeldt et al., 2011; Yost, 2006).

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2014), the cost of teacher attrition nationwide is astonishing. Ingersoll (2008) conducted a study to determine the cost of attrition for each state. Based upon the number of teachers who left the teaching profession in the state of Idaho, the range of costs for the state was \$4 million to \$9 million (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014).

Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2011) conducted a study to examine how teacher turnover impacts student achievement, particularly in low-income schools. Using a unique identification strategy and two classes of fixed-effects regression models, they measured direct effect of teacher turnover on student achievement. Over the course of five academic years, they conducted approximately 625,000 observations of fourth- and fifth-grade students in New York City elementary schools. Their findings concluded that teacher turnover negatively affected both math and English language arts achievement results, and was most harmful to students in low-performing schools as well as to black students (Ronfeldt et al., 2011). The findings also indicated that teacher turnover impacts student achievement in a broader manner, beyond the students whose teachers left (Ronfeldt et al., 2011), which could possibly be due to the effect attrition has on the overall collegiality among a school's staff. The researchers concluded it would behoove policymakers to implement incentives to retain teachers who work in schools with lower-performing and black students because of the greater impact teacher turnover has on them (Ronfeldt et al., 2011). Brown and Wynn (2009), in a qualitative study, found that by researching schools that have low attrition and transfer rates, they could identify specific leadership styles and strategies that had a positive impact on staff retention. Those strategies that influenced staff retention included:

1. Principals made sure that teachers had the resources and conditions to be successful not only in the classroom, but also for ongoing professional development;
2. A shared decision-making style was in place at the school;
3. An open door philosophy was in place, and the principal was visible throughout the school; and

4. Learning communities were supported and encouraged (Brown & Wynn, 2009).

Researchers such as Yost (2006) and Berry (2001) support the idea that instead of focusing on recruiting new teachers, principals need to spend their energy on retaining the ones they already have. Berry (2001) studied the topic of recruiting and retaining “highly qualified” teachers in hard-to-staff schools. Through a literature review of traditional and alternative-route programs as well as new teacher induction programs, Berry (2001) concluded that staff retention will increase if teachers are thoroughly prepared to teach from their traditional and nontraditional programs. Working conditions, supportive principals, pay, opportunities for growth, shared decision-making, and a collegial staff are also factors that increase the likelihood for teachers to stay in their current positions (Berry, 2001).

Conclusion

Effective leadership has a tremendous impact on school success (Lindahl, 2010; Whitaker, 2012). The existing literature concludes that:

1. Great principals focus on building positive and meaningful relationships with others;
2. By utilizing a servant leadership or transformational leadership approach, effective principals can have an even greater impact on school climate and teacher job satisfaction; and
3. There is a critical need to study what factors influence teacher retention in the United States.

The first two sections of the literature review centered on what effective leadership practices look like for principals, as well as the various styles of leadership in the literature. The next section of the literature review took the topic of effective leadership to a deeper level and explained how impactful a servant leadership style can be. Greenleaf’s (1977, 2002) work

described a servant leader as one whose priority is to serve others and help them grow as people. By focusing on and supporting their staff, servant leaders then in turn make their entire organization or school stronger and healthier (Newton & Shaw, 2014). Newton and Shaw (2014) found there was a significant positive correlation between the teachers' perception of their principals' use of servant leadership and their level of job satisfaction, as well as their intent to remain at their schools. The literature supports the notion that servant leadership behaviors and characteristics are the foundation or framework for making effective leaders even greater.

In conjunction with the section on servant leadership is the review of literature regarding transformational leadership and its impact on the overall culture of an organization and employees' level of commitment to it. By focusing on four dimensions, transformational leaders can impact their employees' commitment and the overall collaborative culture of their schools (Liontos, 1993).

Research conducted by Parolini et al., (2009) and Stone et al., (2004), found similar attributes within transformational and servant leadership, and defined the primary difference as leader focus.

The research demonstrating the traits of effective leadership—whether servant or transformational—connects to how and why principals impact school climate, teachers' job satisfaction, and, ultimately, why teachers choose to stay working for their leaders. The literature supports the importance of principals utilizing either a servant leadership style or a transformational leadership style (Black, 2010; Leithwood, 1992; Spears, 2004).

Other research demonstrates that teacher retention in public schools presents a challenge, and this problem cannot be ignored (Heller, 2004; Ingersoll, 2011). This problem can be countered not only with a positive school climate, but also with a higher level of teacher job

satisfaction (Ronfeldt et al., 2011). At the nexus of school climate and job satisfaction is effective school leadership.

While there are multiple studies supporting the use of a servant or transformational leadership style (Black, 2010; Leithwood, 1992; Shaw & Newton, 2014; Spears, 2004), the existing studies of the impact principals have on school climate and job satisfaction, and therefore staff retention, focus on administration in secondary schools. There is a need for further study, specifically at the elementary level, regarding the perceived use of servant or transformational leadership styles and their impact on teacher retention. This research study seeks to identify the leadership characteristics at the elementary school level that correlate to greater teacher retention.

Chapter III

Design and Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify whether servant and/or transformational leadership correlate with staff retention, whether there was a difference in staff retention between the two styles, and the reasons behind the differences. With that in mind, the study examined the following questions:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive the leadership styles of their principals?
2. What is the relationship, if present, between servant leadership style and teacher retention?
3. What is the relationship, if present, between transformational leadership style and teacher retention?
4. Does one style have a greater impact on staff retention than the other, and why?

A group of elementary teachers used two survey instruments to determine which of the two styles they perceived their principal to lead with. Follow-up interviews with these teachers provided a deeper understanding of the leadership characteristics of their principals. The interviews gave insight into what specific behaviors the principals displayed that affected the teachers' decisions to remain at their schools.

This chapter describes the research design, participants, setting, data collection, and analysis.

Research Design

To study the above-mentioned questions, a mixed-methods approach of collecting data was initially employed. Due to the one-dimensionality of the results, however, the study became qualitative in nature. This research design is best described by Marshall and Rossman (2016) as one that typically:

1. Takes place in the natural world;
2. Draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study;
3. Focuses on context;
4. Is emergent and evolving rather than tightly prefigured, and;
5. Is fundamentally interpretive (p. 2).

Participants provided insight into the first research question by completing The Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) survey (Dennis, 2004) as well as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5 (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The results from these two surveys show whether the participating elementary teachers perceived their principals as leading more predominantly with either a servant leadership or transformational leadership style.

The second and third research questions were partially addressed by a question at the end of the survey regarding the participating teachers' intent to stay their schools, and whether their decisions were related to their principals' leadership styles. Participants were then posed a question to ascertain their willingness to participate in a confidential interview. From this point, the data fall into two distinct categories:

1. Teachers who perceived their principals to lead with a servant leadership style and wanted to stay at their schools

2. Teachers who perceived their principals to lead with a transformational style and wanted to stay at their schools

The follow-up interviews addressed the fourth research question. Participants answered questions (see Appendix G for the interview protocol) to further explore the correlation between the leadership styles they identified in their principals and their desire to remain at their schools. Responses from those interviews helped answer the underlying question of what behavioral characteristics impact teacher retention.

Participants and Setting

The participants in this study were elementary school teachers working in rural and urban schools in the northwestern United States. This study included four different elementary school sites, selected based upon knowledge of the schools' principals' leadership styles. Creswell (2015) defines purpose sampling as a means to intentionally select participants to study based upon the presumption that they understand or are familiar with the topic so that researchers can better understand it. These sites were intentionally selected because all four principals were experienced administrators, with a range of three to 13 years. All four principals have a reputation for being effective leaders within their region, districts, and state, as evidenced by observation and comments from staff members, fellow administrators, and parents.

Of the four participating elementary schools, one is a charter school (labeled as School 1 in Table 5) located in an urban setting with a population over 20,000. School 1 was chartered by the local public school district with a student population of about 2,200. The student count at the time of the study at School 1 was 129, kindergarten through fifth grade. Four teachers were surveyed at this site, and three participated in the interview.

Schools 2 and 3 are located in small, rural towns and are the only elementary schools within their particular districts and towns. Their respective student populations are located in Table 4. Six teachers were surveyed at School 2, with three of them agreeing to be interviewed. At School 3, 10 teachers completed the surveys and nine participated in interviews. School 4 is located within a larger city of more than 40,000 and a school district with nearly 4,000 students. It is one of seven elementary schools in the district and at the time of the survey had a population of 435 students, kindergarten through sixth grade. Two teachers were surveyed at School 4, and one agreed to be interviewed. Overall, 22 elementary teachers completed the surveys and 16 participated in interviews.

Table 4

Participants and School Site Data

| School Number | Number of Students | Number of Participants Completing the Survey | Number of Participants Interviewed |
|---------------|--------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| School 1 | 129 | 4 | 3 |
| School 2 | 184 | 6 | 3 |
| School 3 | 285 | 10 | 9 |
| School 4 | 435 | 2 | 1 |
| Totals | | 22 | 16 |

The Human Research Review Committee at Northwest Nazarene University approved this study in the spring of 2016. Each school district superintendent, as well as the four principals, granted permission for the research (see Appendix B for site approval letters). A request for permission to conduct a follow-up interview was also included at the end of the two survey instruments (see Appendix E for a copy of the surveys and questions). Participants

received and completed informed consent forms (see Appendix A) prior to filling out the two questionnaires or being interviewed. Participants initially received information regarding the study via email. Participants were then contacted to participate, through a meeting with staff at each of the schools. The meeting included specific details surrounding the purpose of the study as well as the surveys and interviews.

Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a servant or a transformational leadership style has a greater impact on staff retention, and to understand the participants' underlying reasons to explain their decisions. Data collection for this study began in October 2016 with a total of 22 participants completing the survey instruments electronically through Qualtrics. Prior to completing the survey instruments, participants completed and returned an informed consent form (see appendix A). To answer the first question of determining which leadership style teachers perceive in their principals, servant or transformational, participants completed two surveys: the Servant Leadership Assessment (Dennis, 2004) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5 (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Participants first completed the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) survey (Dennis, 2004) to determine if they perceived their principals as practicing servant leadership. The SLAI measures the seven virtues outlined in Patterson's (2003) theory of servant leadership. Those seven constructs of Patterson's (2003) theory include (a) demonstrates *agapao* love, (b) acts with humility, (c) is altruistic, (d) leads with vision, (e) leads with trust, (f) is serving, and (g) is empowering of followers (Dennis, 2004). Items were based on a Likert-type 0-6 scale, with 0 representing complete disagreement with a statement and 6 representing complete agreement.

The second instrument participants completed was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5 (Bass & Avolio, 1993) to determine if the teachers perceived their principals as practicing transformational leadership. There were 45 five-point Likert scale items on this survey. The MLQ provides information on three types of leadership: laissez-faire (also known as non-leadership), transactional, and transformational (Wilson, 2004). The reliability of items on the MLQ range from .74 to .94 (Wilson, 2004).

At the end of the two surveys, participants answered whether they intended to remain at the schools where they were currently teaching because of their principals' leadership styles. The second question asked if they would be willing to be interviewed in a one-on-one setting to answer further questions about why they intended to stay. Both of these questions were presented in a yes-or-no format, with no open-ended opportunity to explain. This opportunity was given in the one-on-one interview sessions with participants following the completion and analysis of the questionnaires.

Data gathered from these surveys fit into two sections: participants who perceived their principals as leading with a servant style, and those who perceived their principals as leading with a transformational style. Any results indicating no perception of either style were discarded, because this study focuses on the correlation between servant and transformational leadership and staff retention.

In the second and qualitative phase of data collection, 22 participants were contacted via email to schedule an interview at a location that was most convenient for them. Sixteen of the 22 participants agreed to an interview. These teachers participated in one-on-one interviews to allow for a more honest and open dialogue (see Appendix G for interview protocol). Participants who signed the informed consent (see Appendix A) were given pseudonyms and had any personally

identifying information changed, given the sensitive nature of the topic. The researcher recorded and transcribed interviews and reviewed multiple times for common themes and trends.

Analytical Methods

Data from both the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) were reported in a five- and seven-point Likert-scale format with a percentage of how positively or negatively participants associated each statement with the leadership style of their principals. Likert scales fall under the definition of description statistics. Descriptive statistics provided an overall tendency that describes the data (Creswell, 2015). The mean of the individual statements painted a picture of how participants perceived their principals. Since the two scales from the surveys were not the same, the five-point scale average from the MLQ 5 survey had to be transferred to a seven-point scale average so they were comparable (Field, 2013). Comparing the averages of the two instruments determined which of the two styles participants perceived their principals using more prevalently. The second portion of the data analysis compared the survey results for participants who identified their principals as practicing one style overall with the participants' decisions to stay at their schools or not.

To better understand the underlying reasons behind a subject, researchers collect and analyze qualitative data to determine themes and trends (Creswell, 2015). An analysis of the transcripts from the 16 one-on-one interviews provided the basis for the qualitative portion of this study. Each interview lasted 10 minutes on average. Analyzing the data to determine the themes of the participants' responses answered the fourth research question about the reasons behind why teachers want to remain at their schools. Overall themes within the data emerged relative to the reasons why participants wanted to remain at their schools, working for their

principals. Marshall and Rossman (2016) share that “generating names and labels for phenomena identified in the data—themes, categories—is coding” (pg. 222). This kind of coding and labeling of the themes revealed what common messages the participants identified as important to their decisions to remain at their schools.

Limitations and Delimitations

Creswell (2015) points out that limitations with data collection and analysis are important to recognize as they give future researchers an idea of how these results may be used in future studies or generalized overall. Limitations tend to be the factors or variables over which a researcher may not have as much control (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Delimitations are the intentional variables over which the researcher does have control to define the study (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

The first limiting factor that came into play with this study was the honesty and openness of the participants. This study presumes each participant completed the surveys with honesty and without fear of any breach of confidentiality, especially if the participant did not intend to remain at the school.

The second limiting factor was the number of respondents and the small sample size of only four sites, as well as the fact that the sites were only located in one region of a particular state.

A significant delimitation of this study was the purposeful selection of the four elementary school sites. This focus of this study is on effective leadership styles and their impact on teacher retention. The researcher selected each of the four sites based upon personal knowledge of and experience working with the schools’ principals. Surveying teachers at a

school where the principal does not have a reputation for being effective could have potentially had a negative impact on the study.

Because of the identification of the two distinct styles, the participants in the study may have been persuaded to select only one of the two leadership styles from the start. The data reflected the researcher's bias toward those four particular school sites and personal knowledge of the principals. The researcher had limited knowledge of individual teachers at each site, but personal connections may have had an influence on the results.

Role of the Researcher

Leading with a servant and people-oriented manner is at my philosophical core. Prior to ever hearing the terms "servant leadership" or "transformational leadership," I observed these leadership styles modeled in my mentors and esteemed colleagues. More than likely, these leaders did not even know they were falling into the behaviors aligned with one or both of these styles, because they naturally practice these behaviors. However, leaders who displayed behaviors the polar opposite of servant and transformational leadership have taught me about these styles by demonstrating what they are not. These non-examples have provided me just as much insight as the true examples.

In my observations over the past 14 years as an elementary principal, I have learned these people-focused leadership behaviors through fire and failure, and they have been proven to me to be most effective in leading schools and individuals in a journey of improvement. These experiences have led to my strong belief that these two leadership styles do have an impact on leading teachers to want to remain working for their principals. My role as the researcher in this study was to observe and to deepen the understanding of the nuanced ways the two styles affect

teacher retention, with the hopes of having an impact on future leadership education and trainings.

Summary

Given the alarming number of teachers leaving the profession, it is imperative to study this topic. The purpose of this study was to determine whether servant or transformational leadership had a greater impact on teacher retention, and to reveal some of the reasons behind this. Chapter III detailed the study's methodology, which began as mixed but became qualitative. It also reviewed the selected research designs, participants, setting, data collected, methods used for analysis, and limitations.

To answer the first two research questions, two quantitative survey instruments determined if the participants' principals led with a servant or transformational style: the SLAI and the MLQ. Data from these two instruments were analyzed through SPSS and were illustrated in a scatter plot to determine the relationship between principal leadership styles and participants' desire to remain at their schools.

As a means to measure the fourth research question, the researcher interviewed participants individually to get a better understanding of why their principals' styles impacted their decisions to stay at their schools. These qualitative data were organized by common themes and connections. The following chapter will go into further analysis and results of the quantitative and qualitative data. Based upon those results, Chapter V will give recommendations and discussion of the findings as they relate to leadership and retention.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

A principal's leadership is a key to whether or not teachers want to remain or leave a school (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact a principal's transformational or servant leadership style has on elementary teacher retention and to better understand the underlying reasons behind that impact. First, this study reviewed the specific roles and responsibilities of an effective principal. Second, it defined and described several different leadership styles, with an emphasis on two specific people-oriented styles: transformational and servant. Finally, it articulated the research surrounding teacher retention, outlining the critical need for investigating the topic of principal leadership (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Podolsky et al., 2016). The questions this study seeks to answer are:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive the leadership styles of their principals?
2. What is the relationship, if present, between servant leadership style and teacher retention?
3. What is the relationship, if present, between transformational leadership style and teacher retention?
4. Does one style have a greater impact on staff retention than the other, and why?

To collect the quantitative data to answer research questions one, two and three, participants from four elementary schools completed The Servant Leadership Assessment and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, two Likert-scale surveys, using Qualtrics software. At the end of the

surveys, participants answered whether they intended to remain at their schools and if their principals' leadership styles influenced them. A one-on-one interview with agreeing participants provided the qualitative data to answer the fourth research question. This chapter discusses the results of the study, in the order of the research questions presented.

Survey Validity and Reliability

The participants first completed the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument. The SLAI was designed by Dennis (2004) to assess Patterson's (2003) theory of servant leadership. The purpose of the instrument is to assess specific leadership characteristics of a leader. Those seven characteristics are aligned to Patterson's (2003) theory and include:

- Leading with love
- Acting with humility
- Being altruistic
- Having vision for followers
- Trusting
- Serving
- Empowering followers

Those seven characteristics have been combined into four factors: *agapao* love, empowerment, vision, and humility. Forty-two statements measured participant beliefs about their principals' behaviors (Dennis, 2004). Items on the SLAI are on a 1 to 7 Likert scale, with the higher the number selected, the stronger the agreement. According to Dennis (2004), the reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha. Tanner (2012) states that Cronbach's alpha is commonly utilized to determine internal consistency for each item on an instrument, especially when the survey is administered one time only. According to DeVillis (2003) and Kline (2005), an

instrument's test items should have an alpha coefficient of .7 or higher to be considered strong. All items on the SLAI were found to have a Cronbach alpha coefficient measure between .86 and .92 (Dennis, 2004), indicating a high level of internal reliability in the instrument. According to Dennis (2004), DeVellis' (2003) Scale Development Guidelines were followed to ensure the face and content validity of the instrument.

The second survey instrument participants completed was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X) developed by Bass and Avolio (1993). The MLQ is composed of 45 items that measure to what degree someone leads with a transformational leadership style (Bass and Avolio, 1993). Bass and Avolio's (1993) version of the MLQ is composed of 45 items measured on a five-point Likert scale and assess transformational leadership behaviors according to the following six factors:

- Charisma/inspirational
- Intellectual stimulation
- Individualized consideration
- Contingent rewards
- Management-by-exception-active
- Passive/avoidant

The reliability coefficients, according to Cronbach's alpha statistical test, ranged from .64 to .92, indicating a strong level of reliability.

Results

The results from analysis of not only the two surveys but also the interviews yielded a response to each of the research questions. A summary of the results for each question is described below.

Research Question #1: How do elementary school teachers perceive the leadership styles of their principals?

From October through December 2016, elementary teachers at four different school sites received an invitation to attend an informational meeting about this research study. At that meeting, after hearing about the purpose and data collection process, participants received and completed the Informed Consent Form (Appendix A). Willing participants then received the link to the Qualtrics survey via email.

The Qualtrics survey software program calculated an average score after the participants completed both the SLAI and MLQ. To effectively compare the two Likert-scale survey averages, the five-point scale result from the MLQ was transferred into a seven-point scale result. This enabled the researcher to compare the two averages equally to determine to which degree the participants perceived the leadership styles of their principals. According to Field (2013), to convert a five-point Likert-scale average to a seven-point scale, the five-point Likert-scale average must be multiplied by 3.2 and then subtract by .5. The results from the conversion are noted in Table 5.

Table 5

Average and Converted Scores From SLAI and MLQ Surveys

| Participant | Average SLAI score | Average MLQ score | Converted MLQ score |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 5.86 | 3.47 | 4.705 |
| 2 | 5.9 | 3.27 | 4.405 |
| 3 | 4.93 | 2.18 | 2.77 |
| 4 | 4.93 | 2.96 | 3.94 |
| 5 | 3.24 | 1.76 | 2.14 |
| 6 | 5.45 | 2.69 | 3.535 |
| 7 | 4 | 2.51 | 3.265 |
| 8 | 5.26 | 2.22 | 2.83 |
| 9 | 5.55 | 2.82 | 3.73 |
| 10 | 5.88 | 2.53 | 3.295 |
| 11 | 4.95 | 2.47 | 3.205 |
| 12 | 5.57 | 2.44 | 3.16 |
| 13 | 4.57 | 2.29 | 2.935 |
| 14 | 5.48 | 3.02 | 4.03 |
| 15 | 4.86 | 2.67 | 3.505 |
| 16 | 5.12 | 2.71 | 3.565 |
| 17 | 5.31 | 2.16 | 2.74 |
| 18 | 5.24 | 2.24 | 2.86 |

| | | | |
|-----------|------|------|-------|
| 19 | 5.31 | 2.38 | 3.07 |
| 20 | 4.67 | 2.13 | 2.695 |
| 21 | 5.33 | 2.56 | 3.34 |
| 22 | 5.71 | 3.18 | 4.27 |

The results after the conversion of the MLQ five-point scale average to a seven-point average indicate that all 22 of the participants perceived their principal to lead with a servant leadership style, thereby answering research question #1. Due to the one-dimensional response from the participants, to a certain degree, the exploration of research questions two and three became moot. This led to a greater emphasis on the results from research question four.

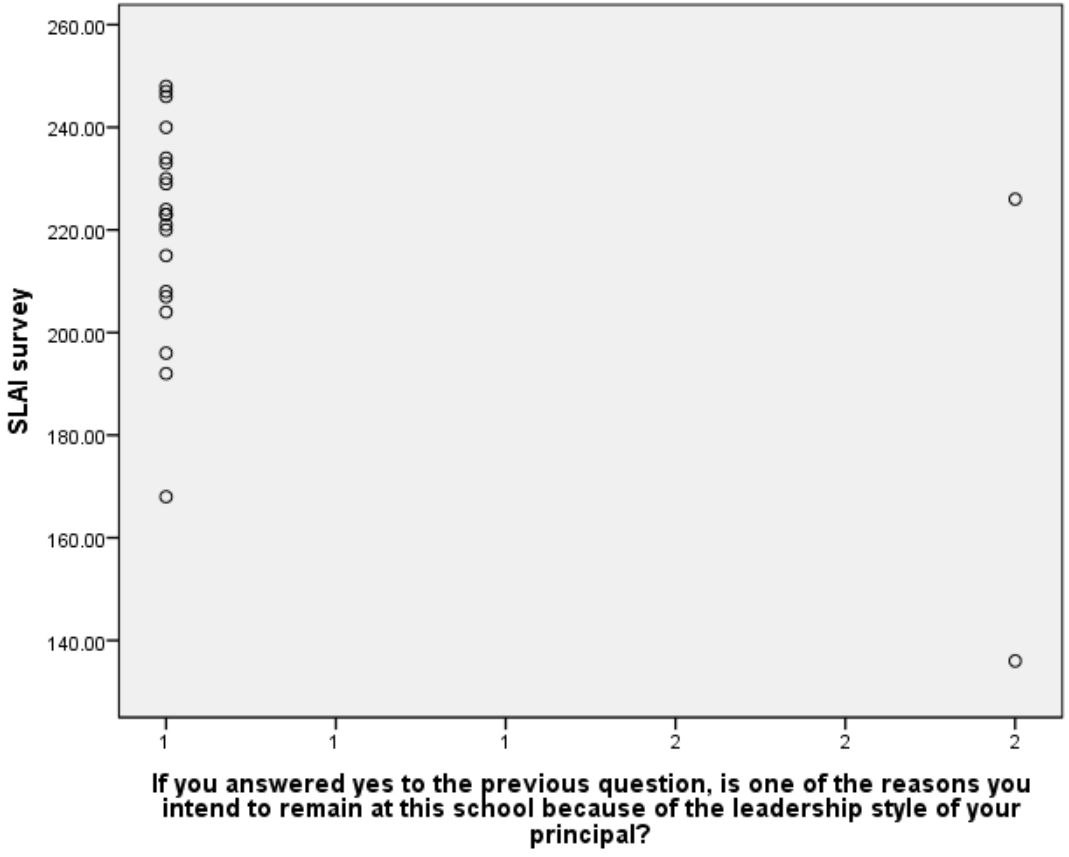
Research Question #2: What is the relationship, if present, between servant leadership style and teacher retention?

To answer this research question, participants responded at the end of the Qualtrics survey if they intended to remain working at the schools in which they currently teach, and if so, if their principal's leadership style played a role. Out of the 22 participants who completed the survey, all indicated that their principals lead with a perceived servant leadership style. Of those 22 participants, all but two answered the question of whether they intended to remain at their current schools. As shown in the scatter plot in Figure 2, 20 of the 22 participants intend to remain at their current schools, and said the perceived leadership style of their principals as one of the reasons they want to remain at their schools. Therefore, the answer to the second research question is yes, there is a relationship between servant leadership style and teacher retention. Due

to the one-dimensional results from all participants regarding the perceived leadership styles of their principals, statistical correlation tests were not necessary.

Figure 2

Scatter Plot Showing the Intent to Remain At the School Due To Perceived Servant Leadership Style of Their Principal (1 = Yes; 2 = No).



Research Question #3: What is the relationship, if present, between transformational leadership style and teacher retention?

As determined in answering research question #1, all 22 participants identified servant leadership as their principals' perceived style. As shared in the literature review in Chapter II, both servant and transformational leadership styles are people-oriented in nature, with many overlapping characteristics. The primary difference between the two styles comes down to the focus of the leaders themselves. (Parolini et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004). Because of this overlap in characteristics, there is likely a relationship between transformational style and teacher retention. However, within the parameters of this study, all of the participants perceived their principals to lead more with a servant style than transformational.

Research Question #4: Does one style have a greater impact on staff retention than the other, and why?

After completing the quantitative portion of the study using the Qualtrics surveys, participants answered a yes or no question to determine whether they would be willing to be interviewed to share more about why they intended to stay at their schools. Of the 22 participants, one declined to be interviewed, and of the remaining 21 who agreed to participate, 16 took part in the process. All 16 participants were female teachers, ranging in age from 25 to 59 years old, representing each of the four school sites studied. The demographic information about their years of experience is noted in Table 6.

Table 6

Interview Participant Demographics

| Number of years teaching | Number of participants |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 0-5 years | 9 |
| 6-10 years | 2 |
| 11+ years | 5 (with four of the five teachers having 23+ years of experience) |

Twenty-one participants who agreed to be interviewed received emails. Using a sign-up software program (signup.com), the teachers could sign up for the specific interview timeslot that worked best for them on the days the researcher visited their schools. Phone or written responses were also an option for participants. Along with the email inviting participants to sign up for an interview time, the teachers also received a copy of the questions they would be asked (Appendix D). Multiple follow-up emails were sent out to the five participants who did not schedule an interview. All interviews were held in each teacher's classroom and were recorded. Interviews lasted between five and 20 minutes. Each participant received an additional copy of the interview questions. The researcher transcribed the recordings from the interviews, reviewed them for accuracy, and coded them for themes. Even though the nature of the interviews was to share about what principals do that encourages teachers to want to remain at their schools, pseudonyms were still given to participants to keep all information anonymous.

With the one-dimensional response from the surveys, the focus of the interviews—and, therefore, the answer to research question four—underwent a shift. Initially, the interview was intended to explore the differences in the characteristics of transformational and servant leadership styles of the identified principals that encouraged teachers to want to remain in their schools. Due to the one-dimensionality of the quantitative data, the qualitative portion of the study needed to shift to explore the perceptions teachers have about principals who lead with a perceived servant style.

The interview questions, as outlined in Appendix D, were centered around finding out what specific behaviors, qualities, and actions the teachers had observed in their principals that encourages them to want to remain at the schools in which they currently work. Given the overwhelming response of all 22 participants perceiving their principals to lead with a servant leadership style, the qualitative data reviewed and analyzed becomes particularly interesting because of the strong connection it makes to the definition of that leadership style. All 22 participants answered research question #4 indicating that their principals lead with a servant leadership style versus a transformational style, and 20 out of those 22 intend to remain in their schools because of that perceived style. The interviews uncovered underlying themes about what principal behaviors encourage teacher retention. A copy of one of the 16 transcripts is in Appendix H. Within this transcript, highlighted key words correspond to the themes that emerged.

Three themes predominantly emerged in the coding of the qualitative data about the behaviors and characteristics of the four principals studied:

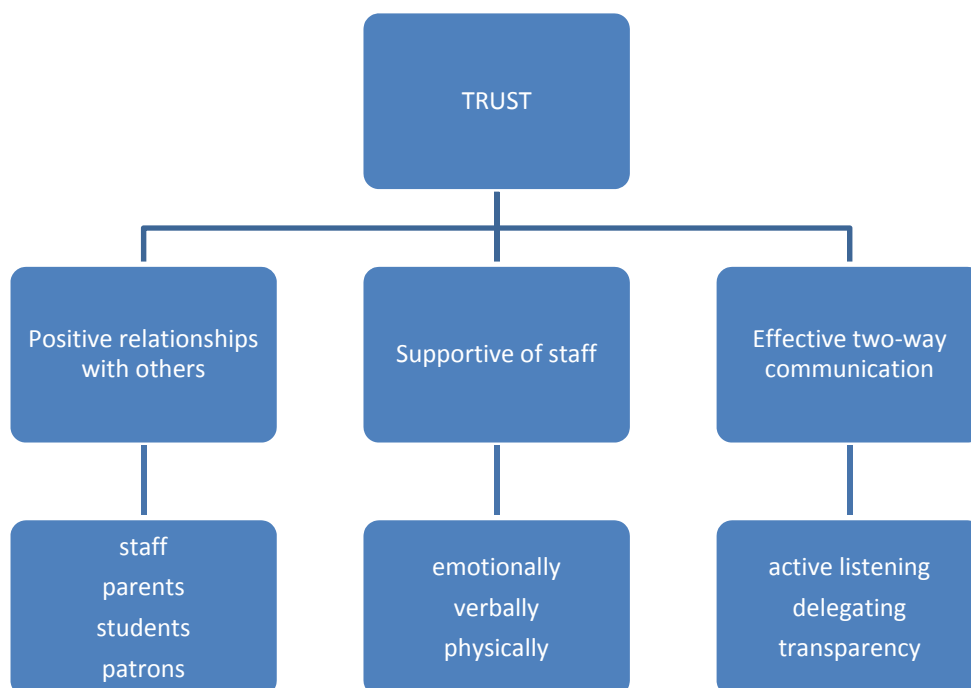
1. Positive relationships with others—staff, students, parents, and patrons of the community;

2. Supportive of staff—emotionally, verbally, physically; and
3. Effective two-way communication—active listening, delegating, and transparency.

One overarching characteristic continued to stand out in the data and was mentioned in some fashion in all 16 interviews: trust. This characteristic was infused throughout all three themes, and none of the overall themes would exist without trust having been established first and foremost by the principal. Trust is an essential component for a leader (Covey, 2004) and it is also one of the seven virtues noted by Patterson (2003). Figure 3 shows the three themes with the overarching umbrella characteristic of trust connected to each. This chapter will discuss and review each of the three themes separately.

Figure 3

Themes from Interview Data



Theme One: Positive Relationships With Others

It was evident in the interviews that a key reason the participants viewed their principals as servant leaders is the principals' ability to build positive and meaningful relationships with not just the staff, but also students, parents, and the patrons of the community. Patterson (2003) described servant leadership as comprising seven virtuous habits, the first of which is *agapao* love. According to Dennis and Bocarnea (2005), *agapao* love is defined as genuine caring and unconditional love on the behalf of a leader toward his or her followers. This description of *agapao* love coincides with the comments the participants shared about their leaders' behaviors. The principals' relationships were built on compassion, caring, empathy, and kindness. They find out what's important to their teachers and what their strengths are. All four principals were described as ones who put those relationships and people first, over the job.

One teacher shared, "She's always making sure that our personal lives are OK before checking in on how we're doing teaching wise. She's always making sure that everybody's health is OK and that our families are OK."

Another teacher from a different school site shared, "[She will] ... make your staff feel like you care about them on a personal level and that you're understanding that this is a job and this is important, but that there are sometimes other things that people need to go and take care of ..."

These are also examples of altruistic behavior: when a leader behaves unselfishly and is concerned about the welfare of others. This altruistic behavior is one of the seven key virtues of a servant leader (Caffey, 2012; Patterson, 2003).

Another interesting trait more than one teacher mentioned was the willingness of their principals to accept blame when they made a poor decision, and ability to apologize when

wrong. The virtue of humility is yet another one of the seven key behaviors of a servant leader as outlined by Patterson (2003). Humility is defined as understanding who you are, that you do not have all the answers (Hunter, 2004).

Building relationships not only with staff, but also with students, parents, and patrons was another characteristic participants noted; in fact, those interactions were described as positive and friendly as well as examples of how people should treat others. Sipe and Frick (2009) devoted one of their seven pillars of servant leadership to “putting people first,” which aptly describes this theme overall. These four principals showed that they value putting people first by showing care and concern for all others. They show the relationships they invest with others are more important than the job itself.

Theme Two: Supportive of Staff

The second theme that emerged was support from principals to staff—whether emotional, verbal, or physical. A common thread among the teachers was this feeling of support and trust from their principals. The teachers felt emotional support most predominantly in two ways: support and trust that the teachers are doing what is in the best interest of their students, and not micromanaging. Many of the teachers commented on how they felt supported by their principals when selecting a different curricular program or approach with students and/or parents. Teachers described their principals as “having their back” when conflict arises. Instead of jumping to conclusions, the principals found out what the other side of the story was. The teachers felt the other kind of emotional support when they had personal issues outside of school. The principals supported them and understood that their personal and family lives needed to be taken care of before the teachers could be effective in their classrooms.

The second theme of support participants experienced was verbal in nature. Many participants mentioned encouraging comments and notes from their principals, not only to the teachers themselves, but also to others outside of the school. For example, one teacher described her principal as “always making sure that we are seen in the best light” to the parents and the community.

Another teacher described this verbal support as:

... She treats us as professionals, and I think she presents herself to the community that we are a group of professionals including herself. ... I just really appreciate that about her, because in this day and age we have trouble getting teachers to come in. ... We have trouble having teachers stay, and I think her willingness to support us professionally and then present us to the community and other organizations and our school that we are a professional organization is [something] I really appreciate. When [pseudonym principal] goes out to meetings and organizations that she’s a part of, she’ll promote us. ... I just think that’s huge in helping teachers feel like they make a difference or are part of a group that’s doing well.

Another aspect of verbal support noted by many participants is their principals’ abilities to problem-solve with teachers in a positive and productive manner. Instead of leaving teachers to figure things out on their own, these principals are always willing to come alongside teachers and help problem solve with them, the teachers said.

The final type of support participants shared was physical in nature. Physical support included scheduling and paying for substitutes for teachers to attend professional development, filling in for teachers when they have playground or bus duty, and attending meetings on a regular basis. The teachers greatly appreciated that their principals not only encouraged them to

attend professional development opportunities, but also followed through with paying for their substitute costs and even the trainings. If professional development opportunities were not available, principals often brought trainings to the school. As one teacher shared, "... a good principal should encourage [a teacher] to grow as an educator. Provide opportunities for them to grow because that creates excitement in their profession." The teachers saw their principals as truly understanding the importance and value of professional development for their teachers. "Empowering of others" is one of the seven tenets of servant leadership. The teachers observed these four principals acting with the understanding that by empowering their teachers to learn and grow as educators, they share power and control (Russell, 2008).

The teachers also appreciated physical support in the way of taking playground or bus duty. The teachers saw these principals as always willing to do anything they asked someone else to do, and that no job was beneath them. Sending teachers home early when it has been a long week, giving them a break when they know it is needed, and attending meetings on a regular basis were other examples of physical support these principals gave their teachers.

A servant leader is one who seeks first to serve, and through that service, leads followers (Greenleaf, 2002; Sipe and Frick, 2009). This service is rooted in the needs of others and in a manner that focuses on helping individuals grow (Greenleaf, 2002; Sipe and Frick, 2009). The participants' illustrations of emotional, verbal, and physical support are examples of this definition.

Theme Three: Effective Two-Way Communication

A key characteristic of a servant leader is skilled communication (Sipe and Frick, 2009). A skilled communicator seeks first to understand, then be understood (Covey, 2004). This level and type of communication is the final theme in the qualitative portion of the study, and

participants described it in detail in the interviews. The first component to the strong theme of effective two-way communication was each principal's ability to be an active listener. One teacher described this as, "...[They] don't just listen and hear the words, but really take in what they're saying and take the time to respond back to your staff." Many teachers shared experiences in which they felt comfortable enough to walk into a principal's office, shut the door, and "vent." The teachers appreciated not just the willingness to listen, but also how their principals were truly "present" for such conversations—willing to set work matters aside so that the teachers had their full attention. This willingness to not only listen but also seek out teachers' ideas was a common thread the participants mentioned. The teachers also noted their principals' abilities to mediate between parties effectively in the event of conflict. A final related comment to this component was the importance of confidentiality, which connects with the overarching theme of trust.

The second component of the effective two-way communication theme was principals delegating tasks and projects to staff. Teachers described this as "mutual collaboration" in which everyone's opinion and effort is valued and appreciated. Delegating responsibility was not viewed as a weakness; in fact, the teachers felt it gave them more opportunity to have input and buy-in. One teacher shared that when her principal delegates responsibility:

...I have more of an ownership because I created it and I got my teachers to help me, and want to make sure whatever it is go through so I see that as creating a culture where I have so much ownership in the programs we have done, and I want to stay here because it took years to develop.

The teachers linked delegating responsibility with trust because their principals trusted them to complete their tasks, and to do so well. This is an example of how servant leaders empower

others by respecting what their followers can do. By doing that, leaders share power and control (Russell, 2008).

The third component of the effective two-way communication theme was the perception that principals were not hiding anything. One teacher described this transparency as:

I think that when principals are transparent, it makes staff feel a lot more trustworthy towards them when they share as much as they can about situations with them and not leaving us in the dark on things. [Pseudonym Principal] is really good at being as transparent as she can be, and it makes us trust her a lot more.

Principals who are honest and authentic with their words and actions send a message to followers about their character and what kind of leader they are (Covey, 2004; Sipe and Frick, 2009).

Overall, the three themes from the qualitative data revealed the answer to the fourth research question: Does one style have a greater impact on staff retention than the other, and why? Patterson (2003) defined the servant leadership style as one that incorporates the following seven virtues:

- *Agapao* love
- Humility
- Altruistic
- Visionary
- Trusting
- Serving
- Empowering of others

The qualitative data revealed that a principal leading with a servant leadership style does impact a teacher's decision to want to remain in a school.

Conclusion

Chapter IV summarized the quantitative and qualitative data collection results about principal leadership and its impact on teacher retention. The results from the two Likert-scale instruments assessing servant and transformational leadership indicated that all teachers surveyed perceive their principals to lead with a servant leadership style. Further analysis showed that 20 out of 22 participants who perceive their principals to lead with the servant leadership style intend to remain at the schools in which they are working because of that leadership style. Interviews with 16 of those participants provided more insight into the reasons behind teachers wanting to remain in their schools. The themes that emerged from those interviews indicated that a high level of trust was an umbrella to three specific themes:

1. Positive relationships with others—staff, students, parents, and patrons of the community;
2. Supportive of staff—emotionally, verbally, physically; and
3. Effective two-way communication—active listening, delegating, and transparency.

Chapter V will provide a summary of insights as to why all 22 participants may have perceived the servant leadership style to be more prevalent in their principals. The following chapter also will include findings and recommendations that may be beneficial for post-secondary institutions as well as school districts hiring principals. Chapter V will summarize ideas for future studies related to principal leadership and teacher retention.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

Research overwhelmingly supports the importance of principals and the effects they have on teacher retention (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Fullan, 2002; Lindahl, 2010; Podolsky et al., 2016). The underlying purpose of this study was to reveal some of the reasons principals' perceived leadership styles impact teachers' decisions to remain working at their schools. Initially this study began with a mixed-methodology, but due to the one-dimensionality of data collected, moved to solely qualitative. The following research questions were the focus of this study:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive the leadership styles of their principals?
2. What is the relationship, if present, between servant leadership style and teacher retention?
3. What is the relationship, if present, between transformational leadership style and teacher retention?
4. Does one style have a greater impact on staff retention than the other, and why?

In this study, participants completed two Likert-scale instruments to determine which of the two leadership styles, transformational or servant, they perceive their principals to lead with. The overall averages from each instrument were weighted and compared to reveal which of the two styles participants predominantly perceived. Individual interviews then gave participants the chance to elaborate on the characteristics of their principals' behavior that encourages them to want to stay working at their schools. This chapter provides a summary of the results,

conclusions from the research and data, suggestions for further research on this topic, and implications for how this research could impact professional practice.

Summary of the Results

This section contains a summary of the results from the data collected and analyzed in this now qualitative study. The results from the two Likert-scale instruments assessing the servant and transformational leadership styles indicated that all teachers surveyed perceive their principals to lead more predominantly with a servant leadership style. Further analysis revealed that 20 out of 22 participants who perceive their principals to lead with the servant leadership style intend to remain at the schools at which they work because of their principals' servant leadership style. Interviews with 16 of those participants provided more insight into the reasons behind the teachers wanting to remain in their schools. The overarching theme that arose from those interviews indicated that a high level of trust was woven throughout the teacher-principal relationships. Specific themes from the qualitative data revealed why the principals' perceived servant leadership positively affected the teachers' decisions to remain at their schools. Those three themes of characteristics and behaviors of the principals were:

1. Positive relationships with others—staff, students, parents, and patrons of the community;
2. Supportive of staff —emotionally, verbally, physically;
3. Effective two-way communication—active listening, delegating, and transparency.

Overall, the results of the data collected and analyzed leads to the following key findings of this study:

1. All participants perceived their principals to lead with more of a servant leadership style than a transformational leadership style.
2. The leadership style of a principal does impact a teacher's decision to want to remain in his or her school.
3. Elementary principals can encourage their staffs to remain at their schools by focusing on building relationships with others, supporting them, and being an effective communicator.
4. Trust is a key component of how those relationships are built and sustained. Trust is also tied to how effective the support and communication is between the teacher and principal.

Conclusions

Research Question #1: How do elementary school teachers perceive the leadership styles of their principals?

Participants from all four elementary school sites identified their principals' leadership styles as more closely aligned with the characteristics of servant leadership than transformational leadership. Both styles focus on valuing and building relationships with individuals. The primary difference in the two styles is the leader's focus (Parolini et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004). Within the definition of servant leadership, the leader's focus is on individuals and helping them grow, regardless of how or if that growth impacts the organization. Transformational leaders lead by developing and empowering others so that the organization becomes more effective (Parolini et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2004). The findings from this study suggest that participants perceive their principals to be more focused on their individual growth and improvement as educators than the growth of organizations, districts, or schools.

Research Question #2: What is the relationship, if present, between servant leadership style and teacher retention?

The study's second key finding was that the principals' perceived servant leadership styles were an important variable in participants' decisions to remain at their schools. In fact, 91% of participants indicated that their decisions to stay at their schools were in part because of their principals' servant leadership. As such, the data in this study imply that the leadership style of a principal influences whether a teacher wants to remain in a school or not. The research clearly supports the importance of effective principals and how that role impacts teachers (Podolsky et al., 2016). This study's findings suggest that districts that are concerned with teacher retention should focus on individual principals and their leadership styles.

Research Question #3: What is the relationship, if present, between transformational leadership style and teacher retention?

Even though all 22 participants identified their principals as leading more predominantly with servant leadership style than transformational style, it is important to note again, servant and transformational leadership styles are more similar than different. The teachers in this study likely perceive their principals to lead with some of the characteristics of a transformational style. The principals' focus on the growth of teachers more than schools or districts revealed the more predominant servant style. Given the overlap in the two styles, there is likely a relationship between transformational style and teacher retention. This could prove to be an interesting future question to study on its own.

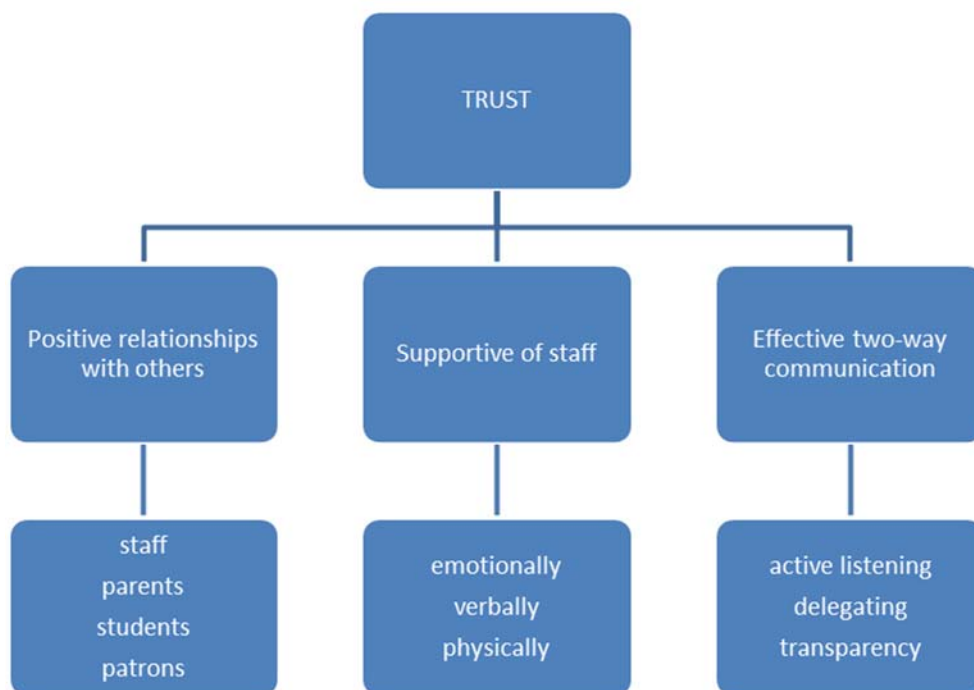
Research Question #4: Does one style have a greater impact on staff retention than the other and why?

Overall, the teachers more predominantly perceived their principals to lead with servant style. This conclusion is unsurprising in light of the qualitative interview data: Comments from the interviews included statements such as, "... [Pseudonym principal] is putting people and individual relationships first." Participants never mentioned the needs of the organizations, districts, or schools in the interviews. Their responses focused entirely on how their principals build relationships, support them, and communicate effectively.

The importance of principal principal's role cannot be understated (Fullan, 2002). The third and fourth key findings and final conclusions about this research question are found in the themes from the 16 one-on-one interviews with teachers. Those findings are illustrated below.

Figure 4

Themes from Interview Data



Trust is a key component of how relationships are built and sustained (Covey, 2004). Trust is also tied to how effective the support and communication is between a teacher and a principal. Elementary principals can encourage their staffs to remain at their schools by focusing on building relationships with others, supporting them, and being effective communicators.

The results from the qualitative data are real-life examples of Patterson's (2003) seven virtues of a servant leader. Those virtues include:

1. *Agapao* love—According to Dennis and Bocarnea (2005), *agapao* love is defined as genuine caring and unconditional love from leaders toward their followers.
2. Humility—Servant leaders must understand who they are and that they do not have all of the answers (Hunter, 2004).
3. Altruistic—Leaders who display altruism behave unselfishly and are concerned about the welfare of others (Caffey, 2012).
4. Visionary—Servant leaders are able to see in which direction an organization needs to go (Russell & Stone, 2002).
5. Trusting—An essential component in any leadership style is trust (Covey, 2004) and acting with integrity (Russell, 2008).
6. Serving—At the center of servant leadership is the desire to serve others (Greenleaf, 2002).
7. Empowering of others—Servant leaders respect what their followers are able to do and, by doing that, share power and control (Russell, 2008).

Elementary principals who embody the virtues and characteristics of a servant leader as noted above can make an impact on teachers' decisions to remain working at their schools because the focus is on individual growth (Greenleaf, 2002).

Recommendations for Further Research

A great deal of research exists in the field of educational leadership. There is a gap, however, in the research on the impact a servant or transformational leadership style has on teacher retention at the elementary school level. This study's findings suggest that elementary school principals who demonstrate a servant leadership style do affect whether teachers intend to remain working at their schools. This study could be a catalyst for multiple future research projects, ideas for which are listed below.

A researcher could replicate this study, but with secondary-level teachers and principals. It would be beneficial to note the similarities and differences between the two groups of teachers in the qualitative portion of the study. Are the examples of a servant leader perceived to be the same at the secondary level? The overarching themes from the qualitative data in this study would likely exist at the secondary level; however, the specific examples of types of support may differ.

While analyzing the qualitative portion of the data, it was interesting to note the differences in examples of support perceived by the teachers with 20+ years of experience in the classroom versus the teacher who had five years of experience or less. A trend among the more experienced teachers was how much they appreciated how their principals "had their backs" when a parent complained. The experienced teachers appreciated more tangible physical support from their principals, such as covering recess or bus duty. It would be interesting to identify the ways to best support the needs of experienced 20+ year teachers compared to newer teachers.

Another study of interest could be identifying the most effective characteristics principals could embody to impact classified staff retention. Literature and research in the educational leadership field does not represent classified support staff, such as school secretaries, cooks, and

aides. Little to no mention is given to which kind of support or leadership style is most effective with this group of staff members. Retention data for this group is unavailable; however, experience and anecdote indicate this group often has higher turnover than teachers.

Throughout the literature review, a common theme among the research is the impact of the principal's leadership style on the school climate, student achievement, and teacher retention. Little to no research was found, however, on the impact of the leadership style a superintendent or district office level administration has on elementary and secondary principals. The leadership style of a superintendent could have a trickle-down effect on the leadership style of school administrators. It could be interesting to duplicate this study at that level. What characteristics and behaviors do superintendents and/or district office administration embody to encourage and promote retention of school principals?

An implication for professional practice from this study is for principals to participate in ongoing professional development specifically on servant leadership style and behaviors. Related to this implication, it could be beneficial to study the effects of that professional development to identify if those principals who participate have higher levels of staff retention or not. A related study could be a comparison of the teacher-retention rates between principals who participate and those who do not.

One of the key findings of this study indicated that elementary principals can encourage their staffs to remain at their schools by focusing on building relationships with others, supporting them, and being effective communicators. A second key finding indicated that trust is a key component of how those relationships are built and sustained. Trust was also tied to effective support and communication between a teacher and a principal. A final study of interest would be to take those two key findings to a more in-depth level and examine *how* principals

actually build those relationships that are mutually beneficial. A purely phenomenological qualitative study could be conducted at multiple school sites that are led by principals perceived as servant leaders to see exactly what behaviors they embody.

Implications for Professional Practice

This study includes several implications that would benefit educational leaders' professional practice at different levels. First and foremost, the courses that make up the educational leadership programs at the post-secondary level should be aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administrators (2015). These standards exemplify what an effective principal should know and be able to do, with a specific standard dedicated to building a "Professional Community for Teachers and Staff." Along with the typical courses in educational law, personnel, and school finance, post-secondary programs should include a course on the importance of leading in a servant manner and how principals develop this style to build and maintain positive relationships with staff.

Principals currently working in field would benefit from ongoing professional development specific to developing a servant leadership style. In one particular state, the elementary and secondary administration association developed a three-year professional development program called "Project Leadership." Administrators at any level, with any number of years of experience, can participate in this program. For three years, participants attend a three-day training each fall. Each group or cohort attends classes similar to post-secondary educational leadership programs. Classes include topics such as leadership styles, conflict resolution, educational law, and team building. Throughout the year, participants meet with

others in their region to share ideas and network. This kind of ongoing professional development is an effective way to support the key findings of this study.

A final implication for professional practice is at the level of hiring school principals. Knowing the impact a principal can have on teacher retention when he or she embodies a servant leadership style, it would behoove human resources directors, superintendents, and school boards to actively recruit applicants who lead in this manner. This, however, assumes that human resources directors, superintendents, and school boards agree with the value and importance of principals leading in a servant style model. At the interview level, a hiring team could ask specific hypothetical questions that could tease out applicants' leadership styles. Questions about relationship building and ways to support staff could give a hiring team insight as to each applicant's true leadership philosophy.

Closing

This study has sought to bring to light specific characteristics that effective principals can and should embody to encourage teachers to want to remain in their schools. The key findings are unsurprising—in fact, they coincide with the review of literature on effective leadership. The qualitative data collected in this study supported the researcher's leadership philosophy that “nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.” The key tenets in the definition of servant leadership were woven throughout the qualitative data. Given the research stating that quality teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement, principals have a moral and ethical obligation to support and serve those teachers so they can be the very best for students.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Kendra McMillan, Ed.S., in the Department of Graduate Education at Northwest Nazarene University, is conducting a research study related to the impact principals with transformational or servant leadership styles have on teacher retention. With this study, we hope to show which leadership style has a greater impact on teacher retention. We appreciate your involvement in helping us investigate how to better serve and meet the needs of Northwest Nazarene University students.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a healthy volunteer, over the age of 18.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:

1. You will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form, volunteering to participate in the study.
2. You will answer a set of online questions related to leadership styles to determine which style your principal leads with, then one open-ended question asking if you intend to remain at that building or not.
3. You will be asked if you would be willing to complete an in-person interview related to your perceptions about remaining at your school or not. This interview should take approximately 30 minutes and will be audio taped.
4. You will be asked to reply to an email at the conclusion of the study asking you to confirm the data that was gathered during the research process.

These procedures will be completed at a location mutually decided upon by the participant and principal investigator and will take a total time of about 60 minutes.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

1. Some of the discussion questions may make you uncomfortable or upset, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
2. For this research project, the researchers are requesting demographic information. Due to the make-up of Idaho's population, the combined answers to these questions may make an individual person identifiable. The researchers will make every effort to protect your confidentiality. However, if you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you may leave them blank.
3. Confidentiality: Participation in research may involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study. All data from notes, audio tapes, and disks will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Department and the key to the cabinet will be kept in a separate location. In compliance with the Federalwide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).
4. Only the primary researcher and the research supervisor will be privy to data from this study. As researchers, both parties are bound to keep data as secure and confidential as possible.

D. BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information you provide may help educators to better understand which leadership style has a greater impact on teacher retention and what key variables play into that decision.

E. PAYMENTS

Participants who complete the online survey instruments will be entered into a random drawing for a gift card. All participants who agree to a personal interview will receive a gift card to compensate them for their additional time.

F. QUESTIONS

If you have questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the investigator. Kendra McMillan can be contacted via email at kcmillan@nnu.edu, via telephone at 208-882-2621 (W), or by writing: PO Box 8384, Moscow, ID 83843.

Should you feel distressed due to participation in this, you should contact your own health care provider.

G. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status as a student at Northwest Nazarene University.

I give my consent to participate in this study:

Signature of Study Participant

Date

I give my consent for the interview and discussion to be audio taped in this study:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| Signature of Study Participant | Date |

I give my consent for direct quotes to be used in this study:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| Signature of Study Participant | Date |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| Signature of Person Obtaining Consent | Date |

**THE NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW
COMMITTEE HAS REVIEWED THIS PROJECT FOR THE PROTECTION OF
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH.**

Appendix B

Sample Email Requesting Permission To Conduct Research

Dear [REDACTED],

I hope this email finds you and your district doing well this Thanksgiving week! This is Kendra McMillan, Principal at Lena Whitmore Elementary in Moscow and for the purpose of this email, doctoral student from Northwest Nazarene University. I am conducting a research study that focuses on principal leadership and teacher retention.

The focus of my study is to analyze servant and transformational leadership styles to determine which style and specific behaviors have a greater impact on teacher retention. Hopefully my findings will shed some light on ways we can lead our buildings that encourage teachers to stay.

I am seeking your permission to survey the teachers at [REDACTED] Elementary School next fall, 2016. I have spoken with [REDACTED] about my study and believe that his leadership style is one that matches one of the two I am studying. Teachers in his building will be asked to voluntarily complete two online questionnaires as well as follow-up one-on-one interviews if they are willing. Each questionnaire and interview transcripts will be kept confidential. No names or personal identifies will appear on the questionnaire or in my results.

I am hoping you and the staff at [REDACTED] Elementary would be willing to support me in my journey and add to the body of research surrounding effective leadership styles. If so, I have

attached a letter granting your permission that I would submit to my committee for approval. The letter would need to be copied onto your district letterhead and have your signature. The letter could then be emailed back to me.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support. If you have any questions or concerns or would like to discuss my study in further detail prior to granting permission, I would be happy to visit with you. My email is kmcmillan@nnu.edu and cell number is [REDACTED].

Have a wonderful holiday,

Kendra McMillan

Appendix C

School District Letters of Approval

October 5, 2015

Northwest Nazarene University

Attention: HRRC Committee

Helstrom Business Center 1st floor

623 S. University Boulevard

Nampa, ID 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Mrs. Kendra McMillan

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that Administration at [REDACTED] School District has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, intervention, assessment procedures, proposed data and collection procedures, data analysis, and purpose of the study. Mrs. McMillan has permission to conduct her research in the district of and with staff of [REDACTED] Elementary School within [REDACTED] School District. The authorization dates for this research are July 2016 to April 2017.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Superintendent

November 23, 2015

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center, 1st Floor
623 S. University Boulevard
Nampa, ID 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Ms. Kendra McMillan

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that I have reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan, including subjects, interventions, assessment procedures, proposed data and collection procedures, data analysis, and purpose of the study. After reviewing this information, as superintendent of the [REDACTED] School District # [REDACTED], I give Ms. McMillan permission to conduct her research with the staff and administration of [REDACTED] Elementary School. The authorization dates for this research will be conducted from July, 2016 to April, 2017.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Superintendent

January 11, 2016

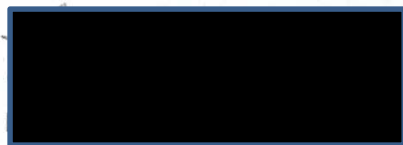
Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st floor
623 S. University Boulevard
Nampa, ID 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Mrs. Kendra McMillan

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that Administration that [REDACTED] has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, intervention, assessment procedures, proposed data and collection procedures, data analysis, and purpose of the study. Mrs. McMillan has permission to conduct her research of and with the staff of [REDACTED] School. The authorization dates for this research are July 2016 to April 2017.

Respectfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Chair, Board of Directors

Appendix D

Permission to use Servant Leadership Survey Instrument

Rob Dennis

to me

Dear Kendra McMillan,

I received your message for using the SLAI instrument. You may use it for your research, and slightly modify it for your use (i.e., change organization & company to group) if needed.

Send an abstract/synopsis of expected use of the instrument, in addition to the modified instrument you plan to use (if applicable). {Completed.}

Please send me a copy of finished work (or article publication/draft).

Enclosed are:

Updated Instrument – SLAI; URL address, if applicable (most requests use paper forms), and factor breakdown for coding.

I will send follow-up request every three months or so to check on progress. You may only see my name in the email address (“To:”), but in the “blind copy” will be about other researchers using the instrument.

Blessings,

Rob Dennis, Ph.D.

From: Kendra McMillan <kcmillan@nnu.edu>

Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2016 4:05 PM

To: dennis_robby@hotmail.com

Subject: permission to use SLAI

Dear Dr.Dennis,

My name is Kendra McMillan and I am a doctoral student at Northwest Nazarene University in Idaho. I am working on a dissertation on servant and transformational leadership and the impact they have on teacher retention. I am emailing you to gain permission to utilize the SLAI survey for part of my research study. I have attached a synopsis of my proposed study. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Kendra McMillan

kcmillan@nnu.edu

Attachments area

Preview attachment Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument.zip

Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument.zip

Appendix E

Servant Leadership Survey Instrument

This anonymous and confidential survey asks you to evaluate your leader.

The 42 items in this survey cover a variety of attitudes and behaviors. Please use the following 0-6 scale to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the items. Please provide your response to each statement by selecting one of the seven boxes, the higher the number the stronger the agreement with that statement. The selection is a continuum along which “0” equals zero amount or zero agreement and the highest number equals the maximum amount possible.

Please respond to each statement as you believe your leader would think, act, or behave.

| Survey Item | Scale | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My leader sees serving as a mission of responsibility to others. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader is genuinely interested in me as a person. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader trusts me to keep a secret. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader models service to inspire others. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has shown unselfish regard for my well-being. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader desires to develop my leadership potential. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader creates a culture that fosters high standards of ethics. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader talks more about employees’ accomplishments than his or her own. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has endured hardships, e.g., political, “turf wars,” etc. to defend me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader shows trustworthiness in me by being open to receive input from me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My leader lets me make decisions with increasing responsibility. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader does not overestimate his or her merits. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| The level of trust my leader places in me increases my commitment to the school. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has sought my vision regarding the school's vision. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader understands that serving others is most important. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader gives of him or herself, expecting nothing in return. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has shown his or her care for me by encouraging me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader gives of his or herself with no ulterior motives. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has shown compassion in his or her actions toward me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader is not interested in self-glorification. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader makes me feel important. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader is humble enough to consult others in the school when he or she may not have all the answers. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has made personal sacrifice(s) for me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader gives me the authority I need to do my job. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader turns over some control to me so that I may accept more responsibility. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has made sacrifices in helping others. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader shows concern for me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My leader empowers me with opportunities so that I develop my skills. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader understands that service is the core of leadership. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader communicates trust to me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader seeks to instill trust rather than fear or insecurity. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has encouraged me to participate in determining and developing a shared vision. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader entrusts me to make decisions. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader and I have written a clear and concise vision statement for our school. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader aspires not to be served but to serve others. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has asked me what I think the future direction of our school should be. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader does not center attention on his or her own accomplishments. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader models service in his or her behaviors, attitudes, or values. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader's demeanor is one of humility. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader has shown that he or she wants to include teachers' vision into the school's goals and objectives. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| My leader knows I am above corruption. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My leader seeks my commitment concerning the shared vision of our school. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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Appendix F

Permission to use Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

For use by kendra mcmillan only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on March 18, 2016

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for the above named person to use the following copyright material for his/her research:

Instrument: *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*

Authors: *Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass*

Copyright: *1995 by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass*

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any published material.

Sincerely,

Robert Most

Mind Garden, Inc.

www.mindgarden.com

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

Interview Questions:

1. Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this interview. I appreciate the time you have already given to complete the surveys and for your additional time today agreeing to be interviewed.
2. Please state your name, age, position, and number of years at the school you currently work at.
3. Based upon your survey results, you indicated that your principal leads with a transformational/servant leadership style. (Depending upon which leadership style was selected I would share the following).
 - a. The definition of a servant leader is one who leads by focusing on putting people first and serving individuals and relationships. Given that definition, please describe the qualities or behaviors you find your principal displaying that encourage you to want to remain at this school?
 - b. A transformational leader focuses on developing and empowering others and that through that focus the organization becomes more effective. Given that definition, please describe the qualities or behaviors you find your principal displaying that encourage you to want to remain at this school?
4. What are some behaviors or qualities of an elementary school principal that would need to be missing that would make you want to leave this school?

5. What is one piece of advice you would give a principal to create a school culture where teachers want to remain there?
6. Describe an actual experience you have had with your principal that made you want to remain at this school.
7. Anything else you'd like to share in regards to leadership and teacher retention?

Thank you again for your time and honesty! I would be happy to forward you the findings of my research once completed this spring.

Appendix H

Copy of Coded Transcript

1 Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this interview. I appreciate the time you have
2 already given to complete the surveys and for your additional time today agreeing to be
3 interviewed. Please state your name, age, position, and number of years at the school you
4 currently work at.

5 My name is Kay Donaldson and I am 33 and I'm a fifth grade teacher and this is my 5th year
6 teaching here.

7 Sounds like there was a lot of teachers hired 4-5 years ago like that there was a big turnover in
8 your building?

9 Yes it was.

10 Based upon your survey results, you indicated that your principal leads with a servant leadership
11 style. The definition of a servant leader is one who leads by focusing on putting people first and
12 serving individuals and relationships. Given that definition, please describe the qualities or
13 behaviors you find your principal displaying that encourage you to want to remain at this school?

14 Well just like it says, focusing on **putting people first** is definitely what I see with Bob. He
15 definitely likes to come and ask us, hey is there anything else that you need that you know isn't
16 being done yet or he always **asks for our input on things** too and so he's asking us to kind of help
17 out as well and so he really **values our input** and just kind of what we do in the classroom. He
18 comes and walks around a lot...you see him a lot during the day too and he'll make little notes
19 and come back and talk to us and say hey I saw you do this and it was really awesome or I saw
20 this little kid doing this and I really liked how you handled it and **gives really good feedback** too
21 which is individualized for each of us too which is really nice to have that and automatic too. So

22 he's always watching, always listening and doesn't just let things go. That's part of what I think
23 is really good for him as a leader.

24 What are some behaviors or qualities of an elementary school principal that would need to be
25 missing that would make you want to leave this school?

26 Umm..the listening piece. Bob's a really good listener and I really feel like anytime I have
27 anything to say it's valued. So if that wasn't here that would probably be something that would a
28 big thing, not feeling like what I have to contribute is valued. And so but he does a really good
29 job at that. That's a big one. And just he's pretty flexible too so if we like wanted to do a training
30 he allows us to do trainings that would take us outside of this school during the school day or
31 take us out of school for the day and he's pretty good at letting us get the training we need to get
32 better at our jobs that are for our students. He's pretty open to things like that and I think that if I
33 was at a school that didn't have that opportunity and it was always on your own and you had to
34 seek it out that would be kind of tough but he always helps us. There's this really good training
35 and it would be really good for you and you'd really benefit from this...and so that's another
36 thing that helps. So if that wasn't there, it would make it tougher definitely to stay.

37 What is one piece of advice you would give a principal to create a culture where teachers want to
38 remain there?

39 Listen. And be an active listener, don't just listen and hear the words but really take in what
40 they're saying and take the time to respond back to your staff.

41 You gave this already but is there another actual experience you have had with your principal
42 that made you want to remain at this school.

43 He's also a friendly face, he's really easy to talk to which is helpful. And just seeing him with
44 students is really neat just to see how he interacts with students and adult alike. He makes it such

45 a nice community here with in the school that everybody wants to be here and just loves seeing
46 him smile and they love talking to him in the classrooms and in the hallways and so...that's a
47 really good part about him.

48 Anything else you'd like to share in regards to leadership and teacher retention?

49 Just that you know I always heard really good comments about Bob and being at this school just
50 talking with other like teacher friends in other districts or other friends and he's got a good thing
51 going and we're one big family and that's what it feels like...a big family. Just Bob has
52 definitely fostered that within all of us. That definitely helps to keep everybody here and keep
53 going. He was actually my mentor teacher when I did my student teaching here and so that was
54 at 5th grade and he was actually a fifth grade teacher at the time and I wasn't in his classroom but
55 I got some great information from him. And after that I said I wanted to be here and knowing
56 that he had the principal position and it's been really nice. It's been really nice to see his
57 transition here.

58 That can be even more difficult when you're a teacher on staff and then be principal and still
59 have that family feeling and create that kind of trust and relationships can be even more
60 challenging.

61 Right, and he's just done a spectacular job.

62 Thank you again for your time and honesty! I would be happy to forward you the findings of my
63 research once completed this spring.