

THE DISCONNECT OF PERCEPTION IN RURAL EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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THE DISCONNECT OF PERCEPTION IN RURAL EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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The Disconnect of Perception in Rural Educational Leadership

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a disparity between leadership behavior perceptions made by both the rural superintendent on the elementary principal and an elementary principal on himself as measured by Kouzes & Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). Perceived leadership behavior practices were examined relative to the Leadership Practices Inventory. The 30-survey questions were categorized into the five practices of exemplary leadership that included Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

In this study the findings demonstrated the leadership practices perceptions of rural elementary principals do not align with their supervising superintendents. This research is important in that it has implied a disconnect between the rural elementary principal and his/her superintendent regarding the role of principal as an instructional leader. The findings of this study provide critical information for rural administrative teams. The results of this study demonstrated that rural principals' and superintendents' perceptions of the actual leadership practices of an acting principal are significantly different. The Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership were the framework by which the leadership practices were defined. Educational settings do not adhere to a cookie cutter replication all generating the same results. This study indicated there is a problem in rural administrative team perception of demonstrated leadership practice. Equity issues, role variability, lack of resources, sociocultural challenges and a polarizing community context all have to be contended with in rural schools. For rural administrators the findings imply that rural principals and superintendents need to be informed about instructional leadership and create an aligned partnership.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Leithwood (2005) insists that successful leaders must be able to respond effectively to the unique school contexts in which they work. In a rural school setting successful leadership can be challenging and requires matching the appropriate response with the appropriate leadership behavior. “Rural life creates unconventional circumstances for rural principals and that effective rural leadership is about adopting strategies that are responsive to realities of each individual rural community” (Cray & Millen, 2010, p.8). This study will investigate the perceived disparity between the rural superintendent’s and the elementary principal’s perceptions of Kouzes and Posner’s (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.

Leadership practices of rural administrators have generated little academic interest (Arnold, 2000). Most of what we know about effective school district leadership practice has been gathered from studying urban and suburban school leaders and their districts (Arnold, 2004; Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, & Dean, 2005). Cray and Millen (2010) summarize rural leadership by saying:

Leadership in rural schools is multifaceted, place-conscious, and relationship-dependent; the needs and priorities of students, parents, and community members require a leader who is knowledgeable about educational policies, yet receptive to the distinctive needs, perceptions, and culture of educational stakeholders of that rural community.

Furthermore, because leadership in rural schools cannot be detached from the historical and social practices of the immediate community, rural principals must be able to nimbly mediate relations within the local community and the larger school system. (p.7)

Problem Statement

Superintendents and elementary principals in rural school districts may agree in theory with the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership identified by Kouzes and Posner (2012), but in practice the interpretation and therefore perception of the five practices may differ between the superintendent and elementary principal. Differing perceptions may show a disconnect in the administrative team demonstrating a lack of understanding due to rural school complexities.

Null Hypothesis

Perceptions of superintendents and elementary principals in rural school districts do not align in perception in accordance to Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.

Theoretical Framework

Rural education needs attention and research to understand supports which may promote rural educators (Burton & Johnson, 2010). As candidates enter school leadership, few possess the proper preparation to meet the challenges posed in the rural school setting. Rural schools are not identical, including the relationship between the superintendent and principals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). "One-size-fits-all solutions don't meet the needs of ignored and misunderstood rural schools" (Bryant, 2010, p.54). Rude & Whetstone (2008) stated,

"The challenges facing educational communities today are as sacred in their importance as they are difficult to undergo. It is up to ethical leaders in rural communities that are far away from the mainstream of urban life to take a piece of the mess and not wait for higher authorities to figure out the answers" (p. 16).

Literature examining the differences between rural and urban locations is founded on the critical argument that place, the where, impacts educational attitudes, values and assumptions (Ching &

Creed, 1997). Rural districts have obstacles that distinguish them from urban and suburban schools. Harmon (2001) contends a lack of resources in rural districts is the largest concern facing administrators. Lither, Roscigno and Condron (2003) found challenges of disproportionate school funding, inadequate school facilities, amount of academic course offerings and teacher retention to be the general theme of a typical rural district. Presto, Jakubiec and Kooymans (2013) contend, “In order to promote effective leadership policies, practices, and programs within rural contexts, educational stakeholders need to understand the unique situation faced by the rural principal” (p.1).

Brent (2007) shared the complexities and contexts of today’s public schools have outgrown standard models of leadership, and thus, there is a need for more effective leadership practices. In Kouzes and Posner's (2007) research on effective leadership practices, the researchers explained how leadership behaviors influence organizational cultures. In 1982, Kouzes and Posner (2012) began their research by studying the primary leadership practices present in effective leaders. Focusing on what the leader did when the leader was at his/her personal best. From research and data collection, generated from in-depth interviews and case studies from personal-best leadership experiences, Kouzes and Posner (1987, 1995, 2002, 2007, 2012) developed The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. Each of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership embed two commitments,” which serve as a template for explaining, understanding, appreciating, and learning how leaders get extraordinary things done in organizations” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012 p.28). The practices and commitments are: 1.) Model the Way (a) clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared values (b) set an example by aligning actions with shared values; 2.) Inspire a Shared Vision (a) envision the future by imagining exciting and enabling possibilities (b) enlist others in a common vision by appealing

to shared aspirations; 3.) Challenge the Process (a) search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve (b) experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience; 4.) Enable Others to Act (a) foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships (b) strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence; 5.) Encourage the Heart (a) recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence (b) celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

Over 1.3 million respondent surveys have been analyzed, and over 500 dissertations, and research projects have been based on The Five Practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Kouzes and Posner (2012) contend the more frequently an individual engages in effective leadership practices and behaviors and understands leadership is a relationship, the more significant and successful he/she will be. Kouzes and Posner's five practices and commitments provided the foundation and purpose for the current study's development by providing the leadership foundation agreed upon in theory for a successful leader to practice daily for the betterment of a rural school system. Found in Kouzes and Posner's research, "How you behave as a leader matters, and it matters a lot" (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p.28).

Rationale/Purpose of Study

"Times change, problems change, technologies change, and people change. Leadership endures," (Kouzes and Posner, 2012, p. 1) proclaim Kouzes and Posner. Leadership will always play a vital role in our schools. Marzano and Waters (2009) highlight effective leadership by stating "when district leaders are carrying out their leadership responsibilities effectively, student achievement across the district is positively affected" (p. 5). The problem is leadership as defined for rural administrators is very different from his/her suburban and urban counterparts.

“Compared to urban principals, rural principals face unique challenges” (Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013, p.2).

This study seeks to demonstrate the disconnect between elementary principals and superintendents in selected Missouri rural public school districts as measured by Kouzes & Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) created by Kouzes and Posner (2012) was created to assess two different perceptions. The LPI-Self is an instrument that allows the leader to analyze his or her own leadership behaviors, and the LPI-Observer gives the ability to analyze characteristics of a leader from the perception of the observer in the overall organization. The LPI has five-leadership practices and within them are ten behavioral commitments. Model the Way; involves the principal demonstrating his or her beliefs, vision, expectations of staff, learning, processing and more. Inspire a Shared Vision; understanding the organizations needs the principal envisions the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities and enlisting stakeholders in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations. Challenge the Process; assists the principal in venturing out for the cause of progress; experimenting and taking risks moving the school forward. Enable Others to Act; requires a principal who inspires and fosters collaboration by building trust and focusing on school relationships giving the power away and fostering the organizations power. Encourage the Heart; involves a principal recognizing contributions and celebrating the values and victories so that the spirit of a school community is built (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p.29). The LPI measurement tool allows for a quantitative measure on effective rural educational leadership. The survey will compare the self-perceived leadership behaviors of the rural elementary principal with the superintendent's perceived leadership behaviors of the elementary principal.

The primary purpose of this study is to determine if there is a disparity between leadership behavior perceptions made by both the rural superintendent regarding the elementary principal and an elementary principal on himself. The results of this study could provide a link between literature and the research of leadership in rural schools prompting possible changes in preparation programs for rural leadership candidates as well as the future development of state and federal educational policy changes that need to be taken into consideration regarding rural schools.

Limitations/Delimitations

Limitations-

1. Data being used in this study will be acquired through the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Self-and Observer, which reflect a subjective perception. Therefore, the accuracy of the data is dependent on the honesty and clarity of the superintendents and principals taking the surveys.
2. The validity of the study is highly dependent on the reliability of the instrument, and the LPI has strong internal reliability coefficients (.75-.92) and high test and retest reliability, but this is not a perfect survey tool, and there is always a limitation in quantifiable data.
3. The data accuracy will be dependent on the return rate of LPI-Self and LPI-Observer surveys.

Delimitations-

1. The study will focus on Missouri rural elementary schools in a defined region of the state.
2. Only rural superintendents and elementary principals who have had at least two years in their current position will be considered for this study. Superintendents and principals with two years of working in conjunction with one another will provide an adequate

foundation for participants to make perceptions on leadership behaviors modeled in the district.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: The five practices that emerged through years of Kouzes and Posner's research and were common among exemplary leaders. The five practices include: (a) Challenge the Process, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Enable Others to Act, (d) Model the Way, and (e) Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012)

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Observer-Survey: A 30-item survey tool that applies a 10-point Likert scale and enables others to rate their leaders based on the frequency with which they engage in The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, incorporating: (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Self-Survey: A 30-item survey tool that applies a 10-point Likert scale and enables leaders to rate themselves on the frequency with which they engage The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, incorporating: (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Principals: Person holding the position of instructional leader of an individual school as determined by the school district board and the State of Missouri through licensing and having met certain state requirements and directly supervised by the district superintendent.

Rural School: Schools that serve as the only elementary, have a student enrollment of four hundred and fifty students or less, have one elementary principal with no assistant principal

and a supervising superintendent. Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) 5 Resource and Process Standards and Indicators #9 states a desirable standard for principal to student ratio is 2 to 451-600 students.

Superintendent: The chief executive officer of the school district as determined by the school district board and the State of Missouri through licensing and having met certain state requirements in charge of implementing all district policies and regulations.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the background and the problem statement for the study that will be further described in subsequent chapters. Chapter 1 began with an introduction and general background research on the context of rural schools and how educational leadership needs to be aligned and prepared for the unique challenges principals and superintendents are faced with daily. Urban-based school models and systems have guided much of the research on rural education (Kannepal & DeYoung, 1999). This study will explore the disparity in perceptions and practices of Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership between rural elementary principals and his/her superintendent strengthening rural educational leadership research.

The theoretical framework, rationale/purpose of the study, limitations/delimitations, and definitions of the study followed. The next chapter will review in depth the literature regarding educational leadership, Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership and obstacles faced by rural elementary principals.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to address a gap in rural educational leadership research with a focus on the perceptions and practices of Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. There is a need for more effective leadership practices with the complexities and contexts of today's schools (Brent, 2007). Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership distinguish five specific leadership practices that set the foundation to get extraordinary things done in organizations (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). "Leadership in rural schools is multifaceted, place-conscious, and relationship-dependent," explains Cray and Millen (2010) and in these contexts and complexities a rural school provides a unique setting to analyze these leadership practices (p.7). This chapter will provide a review of the literature analyzing leadership, and then describe in detail Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012) and the research that correlates to each practice and finally will analyze the specific obstacles facing the rural elementary principal.

Leadership

Educational leadership has evolved immensely during this past century due to the changing demands of society; economically, socially and culturally. "Leadership is about relationships, about credibility, and about what you *do*. And everything you will ever do as a leader is based on one audacious assumption: that *you matter*" (Kouzes and Posner, 2012, p.

329). Bolman and Deal (1991) concur saying that leadership is in relationships and the imaginations and perceptions of their followers. “Leadership is something that goes on among people; it isn't something within a person” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 34). John Maxwell’s (1993) theorized characteristics of a successful leader included the ability to be influenced, created positive change, acquired and cultivated problem solving skills, displayed a positive attitude, provided a vision, practiced self-discipline, treasured integrity, maintained priorities, and expanded relationships. Maxwell insisted that a person’s leadership skills marked the level of a successful organization.

Servant leadership has relevance in this research study and was first discussed by Greenleaf (2004) in the 1970s and has remained popular today, due to its positive influence on organizational success. Greenleaf’s first book, *The Servant as Leader* (1977), focused on serving others holistically to inspire overall improvement of one’s self and subsequently one’s team. Greenleaf’s philosophy proclaimed that a leader had to first be a servant. Spears (1998) listed ten characteristics of servant-leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, growth of people, and building community. Greenleaf (2004) concluded that an organization led by a person who prioritized the needs of others was seen as having a positive effect on the success of the group.

The forefront of the educational environment will require a leader who is ready for the current demands of students and teachers. Wagner et al. (2006) defend the fact that our current educational system was created for an industrialized nation and does not meet the current demands of society. The twenty-first-century educational climate mainly focused on mandates and reform causing superintendents, principals and other educational leaders to develop new and innovative leadership styles to make their schools successful (King 2002).

Three major pieces of research and findings on leadership are relevant to this study. Peter Senge's, *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), Michael Fullan's, *Framework for Leadership* (2001) and T. Waters, R.J. Marzano and B. McNulty's, *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement* (2003).

In 1990, Senge described the idea of creating a learning organization. In Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline* Senge described five-component technologies that work together to develop a learning organization; systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. Each discipline focused on how individuals think, what individuals want, and how individuals interact with each other in creating new ideas, innovations, strategies and designing policy and structure through working together (Senge, 1990). These ideas help in creating an organization devoted to learning and improving from within utilizing the human capital that it has to re-invent and innovate the organization. Through the use of the five disciplines, Senge supported the idea of a learning community and the need for shared leadership and responsibility in problem solving and continuous improvement.

Michael Fullan's *Framework for Leadership* (Fullan, 2001) represented a convergence of theories, knowledge bases, ideas, and strategies for effective leadership. Fullan's framework identified five core aspects of leadership: a) Moral Purpose- acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of the people it effects, b) Understanding Change- leaders must understand the process and complexities of change, c) Relationship Building- fostering purposeful interaction and problem-solving, d) Knowledge Creation and Sharing- disseminating practices and constantly increasing knowledge inside and outside the organization, and e) Coherence Making- working through the ambiguities and complexities of hard-to-solve problems to find unity (Fullan, 2001). Leaders embracing these five aspects find themselves committed to

their purpose and also bring a commitment to those they serve both within and outside their organization (Fullan, 2001). Fullan (2001) explained that effective leaders empower people to feel that even the most difficult obstacles can be tackled productively and demonstrate a strong, hopeful sense of optimism that never gives up. Fullan (2001) added leaders, “enthusiasm and confidence are, in a word, infectious, and they are infectiously effective provided they incorporate all five-leadership capacities in their day-to-day behavior” (p. 118).

In 2003 Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel) published *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement*, a working paper written by T. Waters, R.J. Marzano and B. McNulty. From this work Marzano et al. (2005) developed a listing of 21-leadership responsibilities of school principals that were based on the Marzano et al. meta-analysis of 69 studies conducted since 1970. In all, McRel (Marzano et al., 2005) computed 69 correlations representing the relationship between general leadership behavior and student academic achievement. The Marzano et al. analysis found that principal leadership has a substantial effect on student achievement with these responsibilities having the highest statistically significant correlation: (a) Situational Awareness- aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems (b) Intellectual Stimulation- ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices, and make the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school’s culture (c) Change Agent- willing to and actively challenges the status quo (d) Input- involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies. Concerning the role of superintendent on the district level Marzano et al. (2006) determined there were six district-level responsibilities with a statistically significant correlation with average student achievement: (a) Instructional

goal setting- collaboratively developing clear and non-negotiable goals about student achievement and instruction (b) Monitoring achievement- utilizing the results of formative assessments (c) Board alignment with and support of district goals- focus and maintained endorsement (d) Allocating resources to support instruction- assets aligned closely with district-level non-negotiable goals for instruction and achievement (e) Building-level autonomy- independently leading within the confines of non-negotiable instruction and achievement goals.

Marzano et al. (2006) also found that superintendents' tenure is positively correlated with student achievement. Leadership has been considered the essence of strategic school improvement (Marzano et al., 2005).

Sergiovanni (1994) stated that all leadership theories should emphasize connecting people to each other and to their work. The many models related to leadership were extensive and based on both educational and business leadership. Leadership attributes that lead to becoming a successful leader have been studied and theorized for many years. Many authors such as Covey (1990, 2004), Sergiovanni (1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2005), DuFour & Eaker (1998), Senge (1990, 1994, 2012), Fullan (1993, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003), Kotter (1996, 1999), Bolman & Deal (2002), Elmore (2000), Leithwood & Riehl (2003), and Reeves (2002, 2006) have researched and developed many attributes, components and skills for successful school leadership. "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Walstrom, 2004, p. 3).

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

Even though educational leadership has taken on many meanings and definitions throughout time and by many authors, Kouzes and Posner's (2012) work developed The Five

Practices of Exemplary Leadership and noted regardless of the times or context of a leader, great administrators' journeys follow similar paths. Kouzes and Posner (2012) contend, "leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow" (p.30). In that relationship, Kouzes and Posner (2012) found that while demonstrating the five exemplary practices there is a deeply related complement to how the leader responds to the expectation of their constituent. The expectations are for the leader to be honest, forward-looking, competent and inspiring. These four characteristics have been consistent over time, cultures, ethnicities and genders.

Kouzes and Posner (2012) developed a model for exemplary leadership, based upon 25 years of research. Beginning in 1982, Kouzes and Posner developed *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*. Conducting over 4000 case studies and 200,000 surveys, their research found that leadership effectiveness is perceived in proportion to the demonstration of these five exemplary practices: (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage the Heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2012). The five exemplary practices were founded based on what leaders were doing when they were at their personal best as a leader. Kouzes and Posner's (2012) research showed that these fundamental personal best behaviors and actions of leaders had remained the same and are as relevant today as the behaviors and actions were when Kouzes and Posner began the study in 1982. Within each of the five practices were two behaviors/commitments that Kouzes and Posner (1982) identified as the Ten Commitments of leadership.

Model the Way. According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), to model the way, begins with clarifying values by finding your voice and affirming shared values then setting an example by aligning actions with shared values. "True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed, or assigned.

It comes only from influence, and that cannot be mandated. It must be earned. The only thing a title can buy is a little time-either to increase your level of influence with others or to undermine it (Maxwell, 2007, p. 13).” Successful leaders demonstrated an aim for greatness, passion, deep personal and emotional commitment to the work, the people, and the place of work (Bolman & Deal, 2000). The success of a principal has been linked to the capacity of that leader in communicating and modeling efficiently his or her values and beliefs (Newman et al., 2007). Fullan (2001) describes this as a moral purpose, where successful leaders act with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of the school. According to Fullan (2001), moral purpose is the compass for an administrator’s direction in life and provides administrators with both means and ends. Fullan (2001) said that values are a crucial piece of the journey. Reeves (2002) challenged leaders in educational systems to be morally obligated to values and meeting their responsibility. The principal’s beliefs must be supported by action. Kotter (1996) concurred saying, “The most powerful way to communicate a new direction is through behavior” (p. 95).

Commitment One. Finding one’s voice by clarifying personal values. Commitment 1 has a person look into the inner self and asks about the deeply held beliefs that drive an individual and creates a person’s voice. Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated, “Titles are granted, but it’s your behavior that earns you respect” (p.16). An individual must be clear about his/her own guiding principles and strive to be consistent in word and deed (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). A process of shared values is articulated, understood and committed to by all parties. Gardner (1990) contended that shared values are the bedrock on which leaders build the edifice of group achievement. Leaders who are honest about their own actions and willingly recognize, voice, and adjust inconsistencies between their behavior and the vision also build trust and increase

their credibility with employees (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Sergiovanni (2005) placed values and beliefs as “the life world of the school. . .the heartbeat” (p. 23), and stated that the heart of a person deals with what the person values, believes, hopes for and is committed to. Reeves (2002) referred to the leadership that begins at one’s center as “inner strength,” working to build their practice outward from their core values and beliefs.

Commitment Two. Setting an example by aligning actions with shared values defines commitment two. Through trust, the leader gains credibility in their leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated, “Credibility is the foundation of leadership” (p. 37). Kouzes and Posner (2012) call this the *do of doing what you say you will do*. Reeves (2002) defined this as an effective leader “on a continuing quest to identify, understand, and replicate the antecedents of excellence” (p. 14). The leader becomes the role model for what the organization stands for, and the essential lead in creating a culture of alignment of shared values that in turn becomes modeled and reinforced by the whole organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Values and ethical behavior modeled by the principal on a continued basis are engrained in the vision (Elmuti et al., 2005). Kouzes and Posner (2012) contend that a leader’s actions contribute to an organizations level of commitment, loyalty, motivation, pride and productivity more than any other single variable.

Inspire a Vision. Developing and communicating a vision, and setting goals and performance expectations were identified as basic practices for successful school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004). In the practice of inspiring a shared vision, Kouzes and Posner (2012) described that a leader must envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities, and enlist others in the dreams by appealing to shared aspirations. Kotter (1996) defines vision as "a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why

people should strive to create that future" (p. 68). According to Senge (1994), "When there is a genuine vision people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to" (p. 9). Kotter (2001) stated that there is considerable importance for a leader to define and develop a clear plan and purpose for the organization. DuFour and Eaker (1992) indicate that a shared vision provides an organization with a sense of purpose, direction, and an ideal future state. Senge (1994) stated, "shared visions are the required second discipline for organizations to be truly effective today...in truth, a shared vision is not just an idea, but a force in people's hearts" (p. 5). Inspiring a vision constructs an organizational culture that provides paths for followers to pursue tasks and strive for success (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Reeves (2002) stated every effective organization needed an "architect" and suggested that the architect's main role is to create a clear and engaging vision.

Commitment Three. Envision the future by imagining the possibilities. Visions of what can be if everyone works together for a common purpose and are passionate about the difference each of them can make in the end (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). In this process it is important to reflect on the past, attend to the present and prospect the future with everyone having a stake in the vision elevating them from a job to a calling (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). According to DuFour et al. (2008), the vision tells us what we want to become in the future; the values and beliefs tell us how to get there. Senge (1994) viewed this as "building a sense of commitment in a group, by developing shared images of the future we seek to create, and the principles and guiding practices by which we hope to get there" (p. 6). According to Bolman and Deal (1997), a strong vision model will show the leader has a clear vision of where the organization should end up, specifying the means by which to get there, and consistently reward efforts to move in that direction.

Commitment Four. Enlist others. Kouzes and Posner (2012) explain that “enlisting others is all about igniting passion for a purpose and moving people to persist against great odds” (p.129). The vision process seeks consensus, as it can be practically achieved, on the idea of a new and better state of the future (Sergiovanni, 2009). Sergiovanni (2009) stated how articulating a vision is a dynamic process: stating a vision of things to come; revising it in light of emerging events, ideas, and beliefs, and restating the vision that binds the members of the organization in mutual purpose and resolve. Senge (1990) defended “shared vision is vital for the learning organization because it provides a focus and energy for learning” (p. 206). Senge continued his importance on shared vision by saying:

Organizations intent on building shared visions continually encourage members to develop their personal visions. If people don't have their own vision, all they can do is sign up for someone else's. The result is compliance, never commitment. On the other hand, people with a strong sense of personal direction can join together to create a powerful synergy toward what I/we truly want. (p. 211)

There is an appeal to the common ideals of the whole organization making the vision compelling and memorable with leader generated enthusiasm and excitement for the common genuine vision. A vision embraced by all stakeholders will strengthen collectively over a period of time. Moving people toward greatness requires connecting one's self and others to a mission with a moral purpose rather than connecting one's self and others to a monetary reward or compliance with an external authority (Fullan, 2001; Reeves, 2008).

Challenge the Process. To challenge the process, Kouzes and Posner (2012) state that leaders search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways

to improve, and you experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learn from experience. Kouzes and Posner (2012) elaborated about challenging the process:

Challenge is the opportunity for greatness. People do their best when there's chance to change the way things are. Maintaining the status quo simply breeds mediocrity. Leaders seek and accept challenging opportunities to test their abilities. They motivate others as well to exceed their self-perceived limits. They seize initiative and make something meaningful happen. (p. 156)

Effective leaders are willing to experiment with new ideas, new strategies, and approaches, and understand the importance of taking risks without fear (Harris, 2004). Research deepens this understanding that effective school leaders are change agents who are willing to challenge existing systems and find that improvements can be made (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). The more a leader is willing to consider new ideas, accept change, question current practices, and work to school improvement, the more durable change efforts will be (Fullan, 1993).

Commitment Five. Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve. According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), "Exemplary leaders look for good ideas everywhere. They promote external communication. They listen, take advice, and learn" (p.156). An exemplary leader not only looks inside the box, but to the far reaches of outside the box as well to find ways to improve. A leader must look outside his/her experience. In a meta-analysis of school leadership characteristics, Marzano et al. (2005) found that a leader's situational awareness had the greatest correlation ($r = 0.33$) with effective school leadership. Situational awareness is the ability of a leader to reflect on his/her practices in situations and draw upon knowledge that provides methods and solutions for the problem at hand.

Commitment Six. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience. According to Kotter (1996), short-term wins have three characteristics that make them vital. (1) Short-term wins are visible. (2) The success is apparent and definitive. (3) The win is attributed to the risk taken. A led environment where leaders transform challenge into exploration, uncertainty into an adventure, fear into resolve, and risk into reward makes progress become unstoppable (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Exemplary leaders create a climate that is conducive to active learning, where mistakes are part of the process of innovation within an organization, and a growth mindset always takes something away from the experience. Greene (2000) indicated that when risk taking is encouraged the result becomes a nonthreatening work environment. An environment that fosters risk taking facilitates growth. Short-term wins help to justify the costs required to support the change, builds morale and provides motivation for continued change, sways neutral employees into supporters of the change, provides data to adjust the vision, and re-emphasizes the goal of the total change initiative (Kotter, 1996). Fullan (1993) also stresses that short-term wins help to build momentum which will get the organization through the tough times.

Enable Others to Act. When a leader enables others to act, Kouzes and Posner (2012) believes the leader fosters collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships, and strengthens others by increasing self-determination and developing competence. Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated, “Leaders know that they can’t do it alone. [Leaders] need partners to make extraordinary things happen in organizations” (p.214). Enabling and motivating staff, which have discovered the moral and intellectual benefits of collaboration and shared accomplishment, increases the capacity to eliminate complacency and construct an interactive culture (Fullan, 2007). The “I” of the organization turned into a “we” fostering an environment of collaboration

focused on the commitment of the organization. An empowerment within an organization stimulates change and innovation (Yukl, 2010). With empowerment there is a more robust problem solving process, greater personal ownership, and increased awareness of the relationships between the employee's work and the organization's mission (Sergiovanni, 2009). School leaders are more effective when the staff is involved in the "design and implementation of important decisions and policies" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 51). Wahlstrom and Lewis (2008) conducted a study on teacher practice and principal leadership and concluded that "when teachers are involved in making decisions that affect them, they tend to strengthen or deepen their instructional practice" (p. 483).

Commitment Seven. Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships. According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), exemplary leaders invest in creating trustworthy relationships that build into spirited cohesive teams that feel like family. A successful administrator understands the importance of building positive relationships for creating an atmosphere conducive for developing a successful school (Fullan, 2006). Trust defined by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) included key areas such as benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness creating an environment of interdependence where stakeholders are willing to take risks and be vulnerable to one another to enable the process of learning. An effective organizations ability to collaborate productively with peers requires a willingness to trust colleagues and leaders (Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju, 2011).

The single human element of trust has been shown to influence and encourage positive relationships between stakeholders including students, teachers, administrators, and parents (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008). Leaders build trust by holding themselves responsible when things go wrong and by sharing credit when they experience success (Collins, 2001). The

organizational climate is one of shared creation and shared responsibility. Research has shown that administrators willing to share decision-making and create a supportive environment create a higher level of trust in the school organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The goal of a leader involving the facilitation of relationships is to strive for interdependency where a created collective purpose is achieved (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Great school leaders build strong relationships by first-serving others (Wagner, 2010). Effective schools use the power of positive and trusting relationships between the school's stakeholders and focus those attributes on creating school success (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). A leader that has a compelling vision and genuine behavior that supports the vision builds trust. (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

Bolman and Deal (1995) shared, "Effective leadership is a relationship rooted in community. Successful leaders embody their group's most precious values and beliefs. Their ability to lead emerges from the strength and sustenance of those around them" (p. 56). An effective leader draws from inner strength and spirituality to build strong relationships within the educational community (Sergiovanni, 2000, 2005). Reflection and dialogue sustains a collaborative effort. "Highly successful leaders develop and count on leadership contributions from many others in their organizations. Principals typically count on key teachers for such leadership" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p.28).

Little (1982) studied the effects of teacher collaboration on student achievement. She found that successful schools had teachers who collaborated and had interactions focused on continuous improvement. Little (2003), detailed that collaboration would be difficult without the supportive conditions of the school organization and argued that a collaboration exists when there is sincere trust and understanding that focuses on ways to improve. With collaboration, teachers deepen their knowledge and assume roles that assist in reforming curriculum, teaching

strategies, and assessment making the school more successful (Little, 2003). Fullan (2008) argues that “with purposeful peer interaction, people band together to outperform themselves relative to their own past performance” (p. 63). According to Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008), collaboration amongst teachers generates higher student achievement by opening their practice through sharing, reflecting, and risk taking. Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) concur saying, “Teams working together develop a clear, operational understanding of their goals and strategies, fostering new ideas, skills, and a shared commitment to district-wide development” (p. 44).

Commitment Eight. Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence. Kouzes and Posner (2012) explain:

Leaders significantly increase people’s belief in their own ability to make a difference. They move from being *in control* to *giving over control* to others, becoming their coach. They help others learn new skills, develop existing talents, and provide institutional supports required for ongoing growth and change. In the final analysis, leaders turn their constituents into leaders. (p. 243)

Effective principals empower others by giving the power away, strengthening all those around giving them the room to achieve expected results. An open environment that allows people to ask questions, express concerns and challenge methodologies without fear of getting disciplined for it facilitates positive change (Winum, Ryterband, & Stephenson, 1997). Senge (2000) shared, “People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative” (p. 13). Leaders look to develop competence by providing data and information and commit an investment to “coach” them along each step showing them how to be at their best (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Collaborative leaders are successful because they understand and focus on personal engagement/relationships and the development of others

leadership skills making it their responsibility (Fullan, 2003, & Glanz, 2006). Effective principals make others feel strong, capable and committed to complete the school's vision. Knowledge, skills and attitudes must be aligned for there to be a true collaboration of all members of the organization.

Developing competence is another term for professional development in the field of education. Barth (2006) contended that growing and developing people is one of the most important aspects of the work of educational leaders. The major role of the principal "is helping all employees find meaning, increased skill development, and personal satisfaction in making contributions that simultaneously fulfill their own goals and the goals of the organization" (Fullan, 2008, p. 25). DuFour and Eaker (2008), stress that it is imperative that school leaders and other educators develop and participate in systems that promote interdependent collaboration, strategic planning, reflection, and evaluation of current practices.

Reeves (2001) supported a focused three-tiered approach to professional development to improve the teacher and student achievement. At the district level, building level and classroom level there must be an alignment with a comprehensive accountability plan. Professional development can only impact student achievement when educators commit to deliberate about learning experiences where they collaborate with their colleagues in an ongoing manner to transform both teaching and learning (DuFour et al., 2004). Darling-Hammond (1997) asserts, "Every child should be guaranteed a caring, competent, qualified teacher - and every teacher and principal, high-quality preparation and ongoing professional development" (p. 5).

Encourage the Heart. To encourage the heart, Kouzes and Posner (2012) state that one must recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence, and celebrating the values and victories by creating a spirit of community. Celebration draws a "community"

together showing pride and appreciation. Fullan (2001) reinforces this by stating that people want to be a part of a winning team and feel a difference is being made. Celebration must be genuine and heartfelt. People need encouragement to function at their best and emotional refueling to replenish their spirits (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Providing recognition through praise and rewards has a positive organizational effect when instituted under appropriate circumstances (Yukl, 2006). Celebration is a way of honoring those who perform at a level of excellence and recognize them for supporting the vision as a team player through ritual ceremony established by the organization (Deal & Key, 1998). Sergiovanni (1992) contends that the leadership that counts is the kind that “touches” people tapping into their emotions, appealing to their values and makes connections. “Genuine acts of caring draw people forward” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p.23).

Commitment Nine. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), “leaders give heart by visibly recognizing people’s contributions to the common vision” (p.272). By expecting the best and giving personal recognition to individuals, you are able to uplift people’s spirits and arouse the internal drive to strive (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). “These events are symbolic and provide opportunities for (a) connections, (b) memories and (c) learning that the regular workday cannot always provide” (Deal and Key,1998,p. 6-7). Hunter, Schmidt and Judeisch (1990) found that employee performance can be enhanced by 15 to 20 percent when leaders focus on relationships. A leader never wants to create a situation where an individual feels undervalued. Bolman and Deal (1995) emphasize that celebrations create a meaning in their work, faith in themselves, confidence and hope for the future. Deal and Key (1998) agree reinforcing that celebrations

create community, cohesiveness, and commitment. They infuse our lives with purpose, reconnect our shared values, and fuse the soul with the spirit.

Commitment Ten. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community. Confirmed by Kouzes and Posner's research, "Performance improves when leaders publicly honor those who have excelled and who have been an example to others" (p.304). Kouzes and Posner (2012) explain:

When leaders bring people together, rejoice in collective successes, and directly display their gratitude, they reinforce the essence of community. Being personally involved makes it clear that everyone is committed to making extraordinary things happen. (p.304) Celebrating successes and failure with employees develops a relationship that instills an internal desire to succeed to enhance and prosper the organization. Marzano et al. (2005) found that when school leaders recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of the school as a whole, there is a positive correlation ($r = 0.19$) with student achievement. The more astounding results were that when school leaders recognized and rewarded individual accomplishments a higher correlation ($r = 0.24$) was achieved. Recognizing employees' contributions presents another opportunity to solidify and reinforce cultural values (Deal & Key, 1998). The purpose of encouraging the heart is to form a collective identity and community so that when the organization goes through the tough times all parties involved can rely upon each other.

Obstacles of the Rural Elementary Principal

The United States Census Bureau (2013) stated that rural areas encompass all populations existing outside urban clusters (2,500-50,000 people) or urbanized areas (50,000 or more people). United States rural schools (29, 264) outnumber those located in cities (24,447), suburban areas (22,500) and towns (12,003) (Chen, 2011). Thirty-one percent of American

Public Schools are considered rural, with almost a quarter of all American school children attending these schools (US Department of Education, 2011). Statistics from the 2010-2011 school year show that out of the 2,410 schools in the state of Missouri 1,088 of them are classified as rural (US Department of Education, 2011). In Missouri more than one in four students is enrolled in a rural school district (Strange, Johnson, Showalter, & Klein, 2012). For a school to be eligible for federal dollars under the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) a school must have an average daily attendance of six hundred students or less and less than three hundred and fifty students to qualify for the federal Small Schools Grant (US Department of Education, 2013).

“Compared to urban principals, rural principals face unique challenges” (Preston et al., 2013, p.2). Lamkin (2003) found that the demands of rural leadership differ significantly enough to warrant specialized training. Suburban and rural schools face many equity issues. As the expectations for principals move from site-manager to one of a visionary leader able to respond to their environments, there emerges a poor assumption that rural administrative needs are defined by the same issues that administrators face in suburban and urban districts (Hess & Kelly, 2005). Preston et al., (2013) explain:

When focusing on the effectiveness of leadership in rural schools, research highlights that rural principals commonly face specific sociocultural and economic challenges associated with the school community. In order to promote effective leadership policies, practices, and programs within rural contexts, educational stakeholders need to understand the unique situation faced by the rural principal. (p.1)

Cray & Millen (2010) stress that as raised expectations for school leaders continue to develop, their impact on rural schools needs to be an integral part of the research, policymaking and decision making.

Roles and Duties. Generally, rural school districts have one superintendent, one elementary principal, and one high school principal; however, this varies greatly from district to district. Shared leadership roles are very common in most rural schools. Rural principals "face multiple conflicting work demands in ways that far exceed those of their non-rural peers" (Starr & White, 2008, p. 6). Ashton & Duncan (2012) concur saying, "Rural school settings also increase the role multiplicity of the school leader as he/she tries to wear the many different hats normally worn by multiple administrators in larger urban schools" p.20. A rural principal can hold many job responsibilities within one building and change in any given minute of the school day. Due to enrollment and funding, a rural principal may not have the luxury of having instructional coaches, curriculum directors, student resource officers or even an assistant principal. "Rural principals often find themselves responsible for all aspects of the daily running of the school, including budgetary issues, human resources, school discipline, conflict management between various stakeholders, as well as, serving as an instructional leader, working with stakeholder groups (PTO), reporting to the superintendent... The list could go on" (Ashton & Duncan, 2012, p. 25). In larger school districts, the elementary principal can focus on key instructional leadership skills, whereas in a rural school the multiple role-variability means the elementary principal's multiple roles requires multiple focuses that require time out of the day. Browne-Ferrigno & Allen (2006) found that rural school principals tend to focus on management concerns and lack instructional leadership. Principals in larger schools are able to

delegate and share in management tasks; this is not an option to their small rural counterparts (Starr & White, 2008).

Continual state and federal mandates also create additional stresses that are unique to rural school leaders. These mandates increase the workload, create financial inequity, and expand the responsibility of already stretched school leaders without increasing the resources necessary for the mandates to be accomplished (Canales, Carmen, & John, 2008). “Unlike large schools with sizeable administrative staffs and numerous resources, small school leaders often face these challenges alone, but are required to meet the same accountability standards as their larger counterparts” (Ashton & Duncan, 2012, p.20).

Community Context. The heart of many rural communities is their school. Families in rural communities expect their children's education to be equivalent to their urban and suburban counterparts (Arfstrom, 2002). In return, rural schools mirror the economic and social struggles found in the communities and are strongly influenced by these viewpoints (Bauch, 2001). Howley (2005) contends that a place is of such significance to rural people that it becomes a part of their communal identity. Research shows that rural principals who do not share social, political, historical, or cultural familiarity with the school they lead are often viewed as untrustworthy by community members (Browne-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006). Preston et al. (2013) contend that, “being the principal of a rural school is more than just a job; it is a lifestyle that tends to be closely watched by many local community members” (p. 3). Being a rural administrator is quite polarizing with the level of expectations afforded by its community (Lamkin, 2006).

Cruzeiro and Boone's (2009) study showed that rural superintendents placed great value on the ability of potential principals to understand and fit into the political and social context of

the local community. A rural principal is expected to relate to the rural lifestyle, usually live within the school community itself, join and become very active in local organizations, participate in local events, and act like a professional, behavioral, social, cultural, and spiritual role model. In urban and suburban schools the principal blends into the community due to the size of the population, city and level of professional stature. In a rural area, the principal is always at the forefront for scrutiny and praise depending on the current issue at hand. Rural principals that realize the school is a symbol of the community's social wealth, economic prosperity, and overall identity are the ones who are the most successful (Preston et al., 2013). Rural principals become jugglers learning to balance the diverse political, social, and personal interests of local parents and community members all while being the promoter pushing and selling school objectives (Preston et al., 2013).

Lack of Resources. Starr and White (2008) found that rural school principals have and learn to do more with less. Harmon (2001) contends that a lack of resources in rural districts is the largest concern facing administrators. Rural tax bases and state funding formulas followed by federal mandates financially take a toll. Declining enrollment, loss of resources, and loss of population are all factors that give most rural school districts across the United States continuous challenges (Patterson et al., 2005). Limited funding compounds issues including travel costs for professional development and extracurricular activities which are due to geographic isolation. Rural principals have to be very creative in obtaining grants and allocating the grant resources. Other unique issues faced by rural districts; absence of specialized teachers (math, science and special education), aging infrastructure problems and reliable technology (infrastructures and Internet bandwidth) (Preston et al., 2013).

Wallin & Reimer (2008) state that rural schools deal with educational problems such as (a) isolation from specialized services; (b) limited accessibility to quality staff development and university services; (c) teacher shortages in math and science; (d) decreasing enrollment which leads to decreased funding; and (e) declining pool of qualified administrative candidates. The most important resource in any school district is teachers and for rural schools the ability to recruit and retain quality teachers becomes a challenge due to the location of the district and budgetary restraints which impact the salary schedule (Sargent, 2003). Locke et al. (2012) found that retaining quality rural teachers was largely dependent on the principal, his/her leadership tactics, and his/her relationships with staff members.

Promoting Change. Educational leaders underestimate, overlook, or are oblivious to the challenges of implementing change (Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves et al., 2001; Senge et al., 1999). Senge (1990) noted people don't resist change. People resist being changed. Fullan (1993) showed there are different degrees of change and very few educators have received training on the change process and how it impacts their own ability to adapt to new ideas, especially those that impact student learning and achievement. Exemplary leadership makes the change happen (Fullan, 1993, 2001).

“Rural community members possess a strong sense of belonging, pride, and appreciation for their community. In an effort to preserve this sociocultural harmony, rural community members are placed to be apprehensive of change” (Preston et al., 2013, p.6). Rural communities tend to be generational cycles of the same families all founded in the same values and beliefs over a long period. The school and its systems are “sacred ground”. Clarke (2006, 2009) concurs, the culture of rural schools directly reflects the characteristics of the immediate community the concept of “change” is often a contentious issue for rural principals.

In rural districts resistance to change makes it very difficult for administrators to meet new mandated levels of state and federal accountabilities. The mandates often will not align with the community's values, beliefs or needs. Preston et al. (2013) contend that in today's standardized academic achievement atmosphere, the principal balances between accountability and "centralized policy", all while serving the needs, wants and especially the identity of the local community.

Professional Development. Research contends that the most effective professional development programs and procedures are those that are deeply tied to and clearly situated within a particular work context of the educators who engage in professional development (Little, 1982). Rural principals contend with the issue of their personal, professional development and the responsibility of being seen as the instructional expert in all subjects by their staff and school community (Cray & Millen, 2010). There is a lack of context-dependent personal, professional development for rural leadership. Educational leaders, who engage in professional development including online professional learning communities, raise the quality of their leadership, improve their teachers, and increase student achievement within their schools (Kearney, 2005). Starke-Meyerring & Andrews (2006) found that although the creation of a professional learning community for school principals may be desirable, that selected participants will effortlessly engage in a virtual professional learning without a thorough pedagogical design is unlikely. Sustaining a presence in an online professional learning community requires more effort than in a traditional face-to-face community (Hawthornthwaite, Wellman, and Garton, 1998).

Jones and Karen (2003) found these rural leaders are often isolated from their peers and have limited time to examine their own professional growth. Due to this professional isolation

researchers have found that rural principals find it extremely difficult to create a professional network with other principals, thus strengthening their professional development (Clark & Stevens, 2009; Lock et al., 2012). Due to the above mentioned workload and duties and lack of resources (money) for travel, professional development becomes an obstacle. Another factor to be considered is the research conducted by Lock et al. (2012), and Salazar (2007) showing rural principals need unique forms of leadership development and training for their rural context.

Rural Principal and Superintendent Relationship. “In today’s environment, successful leadership is animated by the will to educate all children to high standards. Such leadership depends, first and foremost, on the example set by the district superintendent” (Senge, 2012, p.428). Schools can only be effective with the right leadership (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1996; Bolman & Deal, 2002; Marzano, 2003). Marzano et al. (2006) meta-analysis of effective superintendents found that the relationship between the leadership behaviors of the superintendent and performance of the school principal as a significant element in successful schools. The superintendent's main influence that impacts the students and staff is through principals (Marzano et al., 2005). One of Waters and Marzano’s (2006) six found leadership practices positively linked to improved student achievement is superintendents providing defined autonomy to principals within clearly defined operational boundaries. Superintendents must build relationships with their principals that allow for a unified message of leadership throughout the district. Richard Elmore’s (2000) research also looked at the role of the superintendent as it relates to the principal, and distinguished that effective superintendents in his studies were very active in monitoring curriculum and instruction in their schools, as well as were active in the supervision, evaluation and mentoring of principals.

“Superintendents in rural school districts wear too many hats to spend large amounts of time working on school principal training and curriculum development” (Cray & Millen, 2010, p. 35). The demands of instructional leadership fall squarely on the shoulders of the principal. Being an instructional leader continues to be the primary role expectation expressed by school boards for superintendents (Alsbury, 2008; Eller & Carlson, 2009; Wagner, 2010). Three-fourths of a rural superintendent’s time is devoted to district items: budgetary, financial, personnel, law, facilities, and public relations, with little time, focused on student instructional or academic achievement (Kowalski, 2006). In most rural districts superintendents are looked on as the budgetary keepers of the district. Most rural superintendents assume the position after serving in the district as a classroom teacher or administrator. An effective superintendent has to relearn what it means to be an educator due to these factors (Senge, 2012).

Wagner (2010) concludes the superintendent-principal relationship should include coaching, mentoring, teaching, and active learning for both parties. Eller & Carlson (2009) concur saying that successful work conditions that support an effective superintendent-principal relationship include an emotionally safe workplace, clear and reasonable expectations, honest and open communication, lack of micromanaging, vision development, and frequent visibility.

Conclusion

The literature review supported educational leadership traits in schools as it relates to Kouzes and Posner’s five practices of exemplary leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2007) contend that effective school leaders are accountable for the leadership that they demonstrate. School leaders perform an essential role in increasing productivity in schools and improving student outcomes (Marzano & Waters, 2009). The more educational leaders engage in and demonstrate

the five practices of exemplary leadership, the more likely it is that leaders will have a positive influence in school.

The rest of the chapter addressed literature detailing the obstacles faced by rural elementary principals. Literature examining the differences between rural and urban places is founded on the critical argument that place, the where, impacts educational attitudes, values and assumptions (Ching & Creed, 1997). “Compared to urban principals, rural principals face unique challenges” (Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013, p.2). The context of the rural setting affords leadership traits and practices that match these complexities. The complexity and issues surrounding rural schools cannot be examined through just one lens (Johnson & Strange, 2009). The next chapter will detail the methodology, participants, data collection, the survey instrument, and guidelines involved in this quantitative study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

In consideration of the problem statement presented in Chapter One, a quantitative study was chosen.

Problem Statement: Superintendents and elementary principals in rural school districts may agree in theory with the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership identified by Kouzes and Posner (2012) but in practice, the interpretation and therefore perception of the five practices may differ between the superintendent and elementary principal. Differing perceptions may show a disconnect in the administrative team demonstrating a lack of understanding due to rural school complexities.

In quantitative studies, the main focus for the researcher is on the relationships that exist among the different variables. The researcher then seeks to explain, predict, or control the phenomena under study based on these relationships (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Burns (2000) concludes that a quantitative approach is a systematic and acceptable means for a researcher to look at data and make solid conclusions. A quantitative survey design method using Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) 360 online gathered the necessary data to answer the study's problem statement (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Rural elementary principals were given the LPI-Self to assess his/her perceptions of his/her leadership behavior as measured to the degree to which rural elementary principals practice the five traits of exemplary leadership. Superintendents were given the LPI-Observer to assess his/her perceptions of his/her principals' leadership behavior. Analysis will determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the perceptual alignment of the rural elementary principal and the superintendent.

Participants and Data Collection

The LPI-Self and LPI-Observer surveys were given to Western Missouri rural elementary principals and his/her superintendent. Western Missouri is defined as regions C, F and H in accordance to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's regional supervisor map (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013). Region C, F and H includes 46 western Missouri counties. Rural elementary schools will be defined as schools that serve as the only elementary school in the community, have a student enrollment of 450 students or less, and have one elementary principal with no assistant principal and a supervising superintendent. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2013) Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) 5 Resource and Process Standards and Indicators states a desirable standard for principal to student ratio is 2 to 451-600 students. The sample size was determined based on the number of schools that met the above criteria and have an elementary principal and superintendent who had been in the building for a minimum of two years together. There were 85 districts that met the defined definitions above according to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Directory.

After approval for this study was obtained from the dissertation committee and the Southwest Baptist University RRB approval application was approved, emailed letters were sent to the principal/superintendent teams of rural elementary schools explaining the nature and purpose of the research project along with requirements of participants and confidentiality (Appendix A). Emails were procured through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education directory. Principal/superintendent teams were presented with the LPI survey instrument access link LPIonline.com/360 through email, where the principal will be administered the LPI-Self and the superintendent the LPI-Observer survey with clear

explanations and descriptions of the study. Each survey will be coded with a demographic question which will enable the researcher to differentiate between each school district through a demographic question naming county and school district to keep the schools separate. Reminder emails reiterating the nature and purpose of the research project, link to the survey, and the researcher's contact information will be sent to those respondents who have not completed the survey. Permission was previously obtained through writing from Kouzes and Posner International to use the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) as the instrument of the study (Appendix C). A Questionnaire containing one demographic question was added to the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Self and Observer for all participants:

1. Name and county of your school district:_____

Survey Instrument

Kouzes and Posner's (2003) Third Edition Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) 360 was used for this research. The LPI was developed through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods and studies. In-depth interviews and written case studies from personal best leadership experiences generated the conceptual framework, which consists of five- leadership practices: (a) Challenge the Process, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Enable Others to Act, (d) Model the Way, and (e) Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Leadership practices inventory assessments are based on solid research that spans thirty years and has supported leaders in discovering and developing their leadership potential (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The LPI has been extensively applied in many organizational settings and is highly regarded in both the academic and practitioner world.

The Leadership Practices Inventory is made up of two surveys: the LPI-Self and LPI-Observer—see Appendix B (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). For observations of the modeled

exemplary leadership behaviors, the LPI-Self will be taken in this research study by the rural elementary principal for personal reflection on their leadership behaviors and the LPI-Observer will be taken by the rural principals' superintendent to reflect observed leadership behaviors of their rural principal. Each LPI consists of 30-item survey which addresses leadership behaviors in each of the five areas. There are six statements within each of the five main areas of personal best leadership practices. Each of the thirty statements are asked with a 10-point Likert scale: (1) Almost never do what is described in the statement, (2) Rarely, (3) Seldom, (4) Once in a while, (5) Occasionally, (6) Sometimes, (7) Fairly often, (8) Usually, (9) Very frequently, and (10) Almost always do what is described in the statement (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The LPI 360, Third Edition has a completion time of around 10 minutes or less with self-scoring or computer-based scoring options.

Validity and Reliability

A solid research study describes the quality of data and results, yielding greater validity. The reliability of a research study examines consistency between a set of independent, interchangeable variables. In this study, the dependent variable is the LPI. The LPI has been repeatedly tested having over 1.3 million online respondents between 2005 and 2009, and has been utilized in over 250 dissertations (Posner, 2010). Internal reliability refers to instrument measurement errors, which affect scores that are unrelated to individual respondents (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Fewer errors in the instrument model translate into reliability, with reliability above .60 being considered good. The internal reliability of the LPI is strong as measured using Cronbach's Alpha with levels all above .75 as shown in Table 1 below. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of reliability with a scale from .00 meaning low reliability, to a scale of 1.00 meaning perfect reliability.

Table 1 *Kouzes and Posner Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients*

Leadership Practices	Self	Observers (all)
Challenge the Process	.80	.89
Inspire a Vision	.87	.92
Enable Others to Act	.75	.88
Model the Way	.77	.88
Encourage the Heart	.87	.92

Source: Internal Reliability of Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)
http://media.wiley.com/assets/56/95/lc_jb_psychometric_properti.pdf

“The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) is one of the most widely used and well regarded leadership development instruments (Posner, 2010, p.1).” The LPI is internally reliable and has test-retest reliability. The LPI is a suitable instrument for this study because the LPI validly measured rural elementary leadership practices for effectiveness based on established theoretical framework. Kouzes and Posner (2002) assure the LPI has both face validity and predictive validity and is suitable for making predictions about leadership effectiveness through modeled exemplary leadership behaviors.

Data Analysis

After the data collection process was complete, the disaggregate of data and full analysis began. Data from the LPI 360 online and the demographic question were secured. The data gathered from the principal/superintendent teams on the Leadership Practices Inventory was downloaded into a Microsoft Excel file and then put into Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SSPS) version 22 for quantitative analysis. Data was computed using the LPI survey results to support the null hypothesis.

The researcher used an independent samples *t*-test to examine the 30 Leadership Practices Inventory statements. The rural superintendent's perceived leadership practices of his/her elementary principal was collectively compared to the rural elementary principals' perceived practice. The *t*-test was chosen to analyze the mean and the distribution. Individual leadership survey questions were scored on a 1 to 10 Likert scale with 10 being the highest. The *t*-test would analyze the data from this preset value of 10. Data from the leadership surveys were then assigned to their leadership practice: (a) Challenge the Process, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Enable Others to Act, (d) Model the Way, and (e) Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Means and standard deviations were then calculated for each leadership practice comparing the data between the rural elementary principal and the superintendent.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed a description of the study design, participants, data collection, survey instrumentation, and data analysis. Rural superintendents and elementary principals in a defined area in western Missouri took online LPI surveys to analyze perceptions of practice within the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership identified by Kouzes and Posner (2012). This research will show if there is alignment or disparity in rural elementary principals' perceptions compared to his/her superintendents'. The next chapter will discuss the findings and information regarding the detailed data collection and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

There has been substantial research on the importance of the leadership practices of principals and superintendents and the affect these have on schools (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1996; Bolman & Deal, 2002; Marzano, 2003). While leadership influence is critical, there is little research on the relationship between the rural elementary principal and his/her superintendent. This study examined the rural elementary principal and superintendent relationship analyzing the self-perceived leadership behaviors of the rural elementary principal with the perceived leadership behaviors his/her superintendent had of the rural elementary principal. This chapter was used to organize and present the gathered data.

Statistical analysis was done on Kouzes and Posner's (2003) LPI 360 Online surveys. Rural elementary principals were given the LPI-Self to assess his/her perceptions of his/her leadership behavior as measured by the degree rural elementary principals' practice the five traits of exemplary leadership. Superintendents were given the LPI-Observer to assess his/her perceptions of his/her principals' leadership behavior. Chapter Four presents the results of the data analysis obtained from 28 pairs of rural elementary principals and their supervising superintendent in Western Missouri.

Problem Statement and Null Hypothesis

Analysis of the data may determine the answer for the problem statement and a null hypothesis.

Problem Statement: Superintendents and elementary principals in rural school districts may agree in theory with The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership identified by Kouzes and

Posner (2012) but in practice the interpretation and therefore perception of the five practices may differ between the superintendent and elementary principal. Differing perceptions may show a disconnect in the administrative team demonstrating a lack of understanding due to rural school complexities.

Null Hypothesis: Perceptions of superintendents and elementary principals in rural school districts do not align in perception in accordance to Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.

Using the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) 360 Online, the researcher had the rural elementary principals complete the LPI-Self and the superintendents then completed the LPI-Observer regarding their supervised rural elementary principal. The LPI-Self is an instrument that allows a leader to analyze his or her own characteristics as being positive or not, and the LPI-Observer gives the ability to analyze characteristics of the leader from the perception of the observer in the overall organization. The LPI has five-leadership practices and within the LPI are ten behavioral commitments. Model the Way; involves the principal demonstrating his or her beliefs, vision, expectations of staff, learning, processing and more. Inspire a Shared Vision; understanding the organizations needs the principal envisions the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities and enlisting stakeholders in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations. Challenge the Process; assists the principal in venturing out for the cause of progress; experimenting and taking risks moving the school forward. Enable Others to Act; requires a principal who inspires and fosters collaboration by building trust and focusing on school relationships giving the power away and fostering the organizations power. Encourage the Heart; involves a principal recognizing contributions and celebrating the values and victories

so that the spirit of a school community is built (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p.29). The mean and standard deviation and independent samples *t*-test scores were calculated using SPSS 22.

Response Rate

Kouzes and Posner's (2003) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) 360 Online surveys were sent to rural public school elementary principals and superintendents located in Western Missouri. An email asking for participation in the study was first sent to seek superintendent approval for the administrative team to participate. Once consent was secured an email detailing the study with the LPI 360-survey link was sent to the determined sample area rural elementary principals and then a survey link was sent to his/her superintendent. Selected sample consisted of 85-school districts. After a period of two weeks, follow-up emails and personal phone calls were made and sent out to the administrative teams who had not completed the survey initially. Out of the 85 rural school districts contacted, 28 responded for a return rate of 33 percent. The total number of respondents resulted in 56 (N=56); two respondents from each of the 28 rural school districts, one elementary principal and his/her supervising superintendent.

Data Analysis

Means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the 30-Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) questions broken down into the subgroups of rural principals and superintendents. Rural elementary principals were queried regarding his/her perceptions of how they demonstrate the five-leadership practices defined by Kouzes and Posner in his/her school. Superintendents from the same rural district were also surveyed and asked to rate the elementary principals serving in their districts on how effectively his/her principal's demonstrate the five-leadership practices. Table 2 depicts statistical analysis for questions 1-30 on the LPI. These items asked respondents to indicate their perceptions on the five-leadership practices: (a) model

the way, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c) challenge the process, (d) enable others to act, and (e) encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Table 2

Group Summary Statistics Mean and Standard Deviation for LPI Survey Questions 1-30

Kouzes and Posner's LPI Survey Questions	Rural Elementary Principals			Superintendents		
	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev
1	28	9.29	.854	28	7.57	1.43
2	28	7.64	1.19	28	5.96	1.26
3	28	7.43	1.60	28	6.18	1.25
4	28	9.50	.577	28	8.50	1.23
5	28	8.82	.983	28	7.75	1.24
6	28	8.61	.994	28	6.86	1.53
7	28	8.04	1.29	28	5.82	1.34
8	28	7.54	1.53	28	6.11	1.26
9	28	7.25	1.04	28	7.11	1.26
10	28	8.64	1.37	28	6.64	1.66
11	28	9.14	.932	28	7.75	1.53
12	28	8.00	1.22	28	6.39	1.52
13	28	7.64	1.57	28	5.82	1.70
14	28	9.79	.418	28	9.00	.981
15	28	8.54	.793	28	7.00	1.36
16	28	6.07	2.12	28	3.64	1.50
17	28	7.89	1.07	28	5.86	1.56
18	28	7.71	1.61	28	4.79	1.55
19	28	7.39	1.13	28	6.57	1.20
20	28	8.32	1.12	28	6.61	1.29
21	28	8.68	1.19	28	6.96	1.71
22	28	8.18	1.23	28	6.54	1.62
23	28	8.75	.967	28	6.89	1.69
24	28	7.54	1.14	28	7.07	1.27
25	28	8.46	.922	28	7.14	1.21
26	28	9.07	.940	28	7.54	1.40
27	28	8.79	1.07	28	7.57	1.79
28	28	6.89	1.69	28	5.50	1.58
29	28	8.29	.897	28	6.68	1.19
30	28	8.64	1.13	28	6.75	1.48

The respondents answered the 30 LPI questions based on how frequently the person engaged in the described behaviors of a given survey question. Rural principals answered based on his/her personal engagement of the described behavior, and the superintendent answered

based on his/her perception of the rural elementary principal serving in the district. Based on a Likert scale of one-to-ten (one being almost never and ten being almost always) the means ranged from 6.07 to 9.79 for principals. Question 16, on the elementary principal survey asked for feedback relating to the effect of the principal's actions on people's (who) performance resulted in the lowest mean of 6.07. The highest mean for principal responses was 9.79 for question 14 which discussed the behavior of treating people with dignity and respect. For superintendents the lowest mean of 3.64 occurred on question 16 and highest mean of 9.00 occurred on question 14. The high and low range of means occurred for both subgroups on questions 14 and 16. Responses to questions 9 and 24 indicated similar perceptions between rural principal and superintendent responses. Question 9 asked about the act of actively listening to diverse points of views with mean results for principals of 7.25, which compared closely to the mean results for superintendents of 7.11. Question 24 asked about the act of giving employees of the school district choice about how to do their work with mean results for principals of 7.54, which compared closely to the mean results for superintendents of 7.07.

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. The coefficient is considered to be a measure of scale reliability.

Cronbach's alpha is written as a function of the number of test items and the average inter-correlation among the items. Cronbach's alpha is not a statistical test it is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency). Table 3 shows the represented alpha for this research.

Table 3

<i>Reliability Statistics</i>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.980	.980	30

The alpha coefficient as represented in Table 3 was .980. This level reflects a high degree of internal consistency.

Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) has 30 questions divided into five subscales representing the five-leadership practices of Model the Way (MTW), Inspire a Shared Vision (IASV), Challenge the Process (CTP), Enable Others to Act (EOTA), and Encourage the Heart (ETH) as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 *Linking LPI Assessment Questions to the Five Leadership Practices*

Leadership Practice	Question #
Model the Way	1. Sets a personal example of what is expected
	6. Makes certain that people adhere to agreed-on standards
	11. Follows through on promises and commitments
	16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect people's performance
	21. Builds consensus around organization's values
	26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership
Inspire a Shared Vision	2. Talks about future trends influencing work
	7. Describes a compelling image of the future
	12. Appeals to others to share dream of the future
	17. Shows others how their interests can be realized
	22. Paints "big picture" of group aspirations
Challenge the Process	27. Speaks with conviction about meaning of work
	3. Seeks challenging opportunities to test skills
	8. Challenges people to try new approaches
	13. Searches outside organization for innovative ways to improve
	18. Ask "What can we learn?"
Enable Others to Act	23. Makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set
	28. Experiments and takes risks
	4. Develops cooperative relationships
	9. Actively listens to diverse points of view

	14. Treats people with dignity and respect
	19. Supports decisions other people make
	24. Gives people choice about how to do their work
	29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs
Encourage the	5. Praises people for a job well done
Heart	10. Expresses confidence in people's abilities
	15. Creatively rewards people for their contributions
	20. Recognizes people for commitment to shared values
	25. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments
	30. Gives team members appreciation and support

Kouzes and Posner have developed six-behavior statements that link directly to one of the five exemplary leadership practices. Table 4 shows the question numbers, the six-behavior statements and which exemplary leadership practice they were linked to in the LPI.

The analyzed data in Table 5 linked each LPI survey question to the five-leadership practices of the LPI. The mean and standard deviation for each of the five-leadership practices were calculated to determine the relative importance of each leadership area and whether there was alignment related to perceived leadership practices demonstrated between the rural elementary principal with the superintendent who supervises him/her. Table 5 summarizes the descriptive data for the five-leadership practices.

Table 5 *Group Statistics Summary by Leadership Practice*

Leadership Practice	Rural Principal Superintendent	N	MEAN	STD DEV
MTW	P	28	50.9	4.7
	S	28	40.3	8.0
IASV	P	28	48.5	6.1
	S	28	38.1	7.9
CTP	P	28	46.0	7.3
	S	28	35.3	7.5
EOTA	P	28	49.8	3.7
	S	28	44.9	4.6

ETH	P	28	51.4	4.9
	S	28	41.9	6.6

The data demonstrated in Table 5 showed the means of each of the five Kouzes and Posner leadership practices for both the principal and the superintendent. Encourage the Heart had the highest mean score of 51.4 for principals followed by Modeling the Way at 50.9. Whereas, superintendents had the highest mean score of 44.9 in Enable Others to Act followed by Encourage the Heart at 41.9. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002) Enable Others to Act was the most frequently used leadership practice among leaders, and this concept was affirmed by the superintendents in this study. According to the means, on the leadership practices survey the rural elementary principal and superintendent indicated differences in alignment for all five categories of Kouzes and Posner's exemplary leadership practices. The leadership practice, Encourage Others to Act, indicated less difference in opinions between principals (49.8) and the superintendents (44.9).

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices to practicing rural elementary principals and the superintendents' observation of the principal. An independent samples *t*-test compares the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. In this research, we had the two subgroups of rural elementary principals and their supervising superintendents aligned against the dependent variable of Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices. An independent sample *t*-test will demonstrate a comparison of the means between the two subgroups determining a disparity or alignment. Table 6 depicts those results.

Table 6

<i>Independent Samples T test</i>			
Questions on LPI Survey	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	p Sig. (2-tailed)
1	5.458	44.187	.000
2	5.116	53.833	.000
3	3.263	51.034	.002
4	3.888	38.309	.000
5	3.589	51.402	.001
6	5.069	46.299	.000
7	6.311	53.938	.000
8	3.822	52.080	.000
9	.463	52.181	.645
10	4.921	52.076	.000
11	4.114	44.589	.000
12	4.361	51.488	.000
13	4.166	53.650	.000
14	3.898	36.480	.000
15	5.160	43.430	.000
16	4.946	48.493	.000
17	5.710	47.756	.000
18	6.945	53.925	.000
19	2.634	53.826	.011
20	5.310	53.045	.000
21	4.356	48.137	.000
22	4.248	50.698	.000
23	5.058	43.042	.000
24	1.438	53.321	.156
25	4.600	50.485	.000
26	4.818	47.221	.000
27	3.079	43.973	.004
28	3.195	53.756	.002
29	5.713	50.228	.000
30	5.377	50.458	.000

Table 6 denotes the p value of $\leq .05$ as the significant value for the data presented. The *t* value indicates the obtained value of the *t*-statistic and *df* indicates the degrees of freedom. Questions 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, and 26 asked rural elementary school principals and superintendents to share their perceptions about the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Model the Way. This study examined the self-perceived leadership behaviors of the rural elementary principal

with the perceived leadership behaviors their superintendent had of the rural elementary principal. Question 1 asked respondents to rate their perceptions related to the importance of principals setting a personal example of what is expected in their buildings. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 6 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals making certain that staff adhere to agreed-on standards. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 11 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals following through on promises and commitments. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 16 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals asking for feedback on how his/her actions affect people's performance at school. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 21 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principal's building consensus around the school's values. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 26 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of a principal being clear about his/her philosophy of leadership. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. All survey questions under the leader practice of Model the Way indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of rural elementary principals and superintendents.

Questions 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, and 27 asked rural elementary school principals and superintendents to share his/her perceptions about the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision. Question 2 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals talking about future trends that influence work at school. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 7 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals describing a compelling image of the future for their staff. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 12 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals appealing to others to share a dream of the future for the school. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 17 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals showing others how their interests can be realized. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 22 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals painting the “big picture” of staff aspirations. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 27 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals speaking with conviction about the meaning of work. This item had a p value of .004 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. All survey questions under the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of rural elementary principals and superintendents.

Questions 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, and 28 asked rural elementary school principals and superintendents to share his/her perceptions about the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Challenge the Process. Question 3 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals seeking challenging opportunities to test their skills. This item had a p value of .002 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 8 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals challenging school staff to try new approaches. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 13 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals searching outside the school for innovative ways to improve. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 18 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals asking “What can we learn?” This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 23 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals making certain that goals, plans and milestones are set for the school. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 28 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals experimenting and taking risks, personally and as a school. This item had a p value of .002 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. All survey questions under the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Challenge the Process indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of rural elementary principals and superintendents.

Questions 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, and 29 asked rural elementary school principals and superintendents to share his/her perceptions about the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Enable Others to Act. Question 4 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals developing cooperative relationships with staff. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 9 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals actively listening to diverse points of view within the organization. This item had a p value of .645 which indicated that there is a possibility of a difference by chance rather than significant perceptual differences in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 14 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals treating their staff with dignity and respect. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 19 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals supporting decisions other people make. This item had a p value of .011 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 24 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals giving district staff choice about how to do employees work. This item had a p value of .156 which also indicated that there is a possibility of a difference by chance rather than significant perceptual differences in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 29 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals ensuring that people grow in district jobs. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Survey questions 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, and 29 under the leader practice of Enable Others to Act indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of rural

elementary principals and superintendents in 4 out of the 6 questions. Questions 9 and 24 indicated that there is a possibility of a difference by chance.

Questions 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 asked rural elementary school principals and superintendents to share his/her perceptions about the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Encourage the Heart. Question 5 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals praising district staff for a job well done. This item had a p value of .001 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 10 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals expressing confidence in district staff's abilities. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 15 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals creatively rewarding district staff for contributions at work. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 20 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals recognizing district staff for commitment to the shared values of the school. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 25 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals finding ways to celebrate accomplishments. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. Question 30 asked respondents to rate his/her perceptions related to the importance of principals giving team members appreciation and support. This item had a p value of .000 which indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and superintendents. All survey

questions under the Kouzes and Posner leadership practice of Encourage the Heart indicated a significant difference in the perceptions of rural elementary principals and superintendents.

Questions 1-30 noted significant differences between the perceptions of rural elementary principals and superintendents surveyed for this study with the exception of questions 9 and 24. Question 9 and question 24 did indicate aligned perceptions between the principals and superintendents in the study. Questions 9 and 24 both link to Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice of Enable Others to Act with question 9 dealing with actively listening to diverse points of view and question 24 focusing on giving district staff choice about how to do employees work. The primary purpose of this study is to determine if there is a disparity between leadership behavior perceptions made by both the rural superintendent regarding the elementary principal and an elementary principal on himself. When looking at the effectiveness of leadership in rural schools, research contends that rural administrators face unique challenges that are integrated throughout the school community (Preston et al., 2013). Significant differences between the perceptions of rural elementary principals and superintendents related to suburban and urban administrative teams could demonstrate the unique challenges of being rural are a possible cause for the disparity in alignment. Cray and Millen (2010) stated, "Leadership in rural schools is multifaceted, place-conscious, and relationship-dependent" (p.7). There are many relationships that in which rural leadership has to contend. The data of this research demonstrated in regards to the rural elementary principal and superintendent a visible disconnect.

Question 9 links to Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice of Enable Others to Act dealing specifically with actively listening to diverse points of view and had a significance level of .645 which is higher than the p level .05 demonstrating that there is a possibility of a difference by chance rather than significant perceptual differences. Question 24 links to Kouzes

and Posner's leadership practice of Enable Others to Act dealing specifically with giving district staff choice about how to do employee work had a significance level of .156 which is also higher than the p level .05 demonstrating that there is a possibility of a difference by chance rather than significant perceptual differences. Both questions nine and 24 could also demonstrate that the two subgroups are aligned on these specific questions. Out of the 30-leadership survey questions, the subgroups only demonstrated a possibility of difference by chance for two of the questions both from the leadership practice Enable Others to Act, which of the five-leadership practices according to Kouzes and Posner (2002) Enable Others to Act was the most frequently used leadership practice among leaders. Normative data from Kouzes and Posner (2012) also showed that Enable Others to Act carried the highest mean of all five practices at 49.39.

Null Hypothesis: Perceptions of superintendents and elementary principals in rural school districts do not align in perception in accordance to Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. Based on the data presented in Chapter Four the researcher must fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Conclusion

Data presented in Chapter Four included results from 28 rural elementary principal and superintendent administration teams that completed Kouzes and Posner's LPI-Self or LPI-Observer survey instrument on exemplary leadership practices. The data was collected and analyzed through LPI 360 Online and SPSS 22 to address the problem statement. Descriptive statistics were initiated to give insight into the survey results data. Means and standard deviations were calculated as well as independent samples *t*-test conducted. The data collected provided insight into the practice and perception of Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of

Exemplary Leadership between rural elementary principals and his/her supervising superintendent.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Schools can only be effective with the right leadership (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1996; Bolman & Deal, 2002; Marzano, 2003). Most of what we know about effective school district leadership practice has been gathered from studying urban and suburban school leaders and urban and suburban school districts (Arnold, 2004; Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, & Dean, 2005). Leadership practices of rural administrators have generated little academic interest (Arnold, 2000). When looking at the effectiveness of leadership in rural schools, research contends that rural administrators face unique challenges that are integrated throughout the school community (Preston et al., 2013). Leadership at the school district level has a significant impact on the direction and success of a school (Marzano et al., 2005).

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a disparity between leadership behavior perceptions made by both the rural superintendent on the elementary principal and an elementary principal on himself as measured by Kouzes & Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The perceived leadership behavior practices were examined relative to the Leadership Practices Inventory. The 30-survey questions were categorized into the five practices of exemplary leadership that included Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. This chapter will provide an overview of the summary of methods, summary of findings, limitations of the study, significant differences of the study with previous research, implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Methods

A quantitative survey design method using Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) 360 online gathered the necessary data to answer the study's problem statement (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Rural elementary principals were given the LPI-Self to assess his/her perceptions of his/her leadership behavior as measured by the degree to which rural elementary principals practice the five traits of exemplary leadership. Superintendents were given the LPI-Observer to assess his/her perceptions of his/her principals' leadership behavior.

The LPI-Self is an instrument that allows the leader to analyze his or her own characteristics as being positive or not, and the LPI-Observer gives the ability to analyze characteristics of a leader from the perception of the observer in the overall organization. The LPI has five-leadership practices and within them are ten behavioral commitments. Model the Way; involves the principal demonstrating his or her beliefs, vision, expectations of staff, learning, processing and more. Inspire a Shared Vision; understanding the organization's needs the principal envisions the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities and enlisting stakeholders in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations. Challenge the Process; assists the principal in venturing out for the cause of progress; experimenting and taking risks moving the school forward. Enable Others to Act; requires a principal who inspires and fosters collaboration by building trust and focusing on school relationships giving the power away and fostering the organization's power. Encourage the Heart; involves a principal recognizing contributions and celebrating the values and victories so that a spirit of a school community is built (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p.29).

The LPI-Self and LPI-Observer surveys were given to 28 Western Missouri rural elementary principals and his/her superintendent. Regions C, F and H include 46 western Missouri counties. Rural elementary schools will be defined as schools that serve as the only

elementary school in the community, have a student enrollment of 450 students or less, had one elementary principal with no assistant principal and a supervising superintendent. A sample size of 85 rural school districts met the above criteria and had an elementary principal and superintendent who had been in the building for a minimum of two years together. Through email and phone contact the LPI surveys were secured over a two-week process. Means and standard deviations were calculated as well as independent samples *t*-test conducted that could determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the perceptual alignment of the rural elementary principal and the superintendent.

Summary of Findings

Drawing on the findings presented in Chapter Four, one conclusion appears to be warranted and is offered contingently with recognition of this study's inherent limitations and self-imposed delimitations. In this study, the leadership practices perceptions of rural elementary principals do not align with their supervising superintendents. The study rejected to fail the null hypothesis. The 30-leadership survey questions of the Leadership Practices Inventory were analyzed for the 28 administrative teams. Of the 30-leadership survey questions, only questions 9 and 24 demonstrated superintendents and principals in rural schools had some agreement around the level of actual leadership practice demonstrated by the principal. Question 9 linked to Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice of Enable Others to Act related to actively listening to diverse points of view. Question 24 links to Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice of Enable Others to Act and defined the practice of specifically giving people choice about how to do their work. Superintendents and principals indicated agreement that the principal in the rural school does demonstrate active listening to various diverse stakeholders and giving staff choices about their work. These two practices are essential in the rural setting, but further review of the data

showed for the other 28-leadership survey questions rural elementary principals and their superintendents had significantly different perceptions regarding the level the principal was demonstrating essential leadership practices.

These findings indicated that individually rural elementary principals perceive they are practicing the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership identified by Kouzes and Posner (2012), and even though supervising superintendents agree in theory with these practices the superintendent perceptually does not see his/her principal practicing these behaviors at this same high level. These findings suggest that there is a difference in understanding in the administrative team which could be due to the unique complexities of being rural. As detailed in Chapter Two, research has shown that rural administrators face equity issues, role variability, lack of resources, sociocultural challenges and a polarizing community context. Rural administrators strive to reach the same educational goals for rural staff and students as suburban and urban counterparts. The problem is to reach these goals the rural administrator must approach the how to strive to these goals very differently. For rural principals the findings could indicate that rural principals may face added barriers as leaders when it comes to being an instructional leader for their building.

Marzano et al. (2005) found that the superintendent's main influence that impacts the students and staff is through principals. If a superintendent's main influence is through his/her principal then the findings of this study indicate that rural superintendent may not be having as much of an impact on students and staff. No perceptual alignment on key leadership behaviors may, create a school climate less than conducive for influencing change. This study demonstrated findings noting the rural principals rated themselves higher for all five Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices than did their superintendents. Rural superintendent's means for all

five practices were ten points or more under principals, except for the practice of Encouraging Others to Act.

For policy makers the findings of this research demonstrate the rural context must be considered when writing and implementing policy. Policy makers implement bills and laws that do not fit the complexities and contexts of rural schools. With no perceptual alignment between the rural superintendent and principal, rural school districts may not be able to meet policy demands efficiently or appropriately. Federal and state mandates increase the workload, create financial inequity, and expand the responsibility of already stretched school leaders without increasing the resources necessary for the mandates to be accomplished (Canales, Carmen, & John, 2008). With thirty-one percent of American Public Schools being considered rural, and almost a quarter of all American school children attending these schools the voice and fit of rural schools is not being accommodated when it comes to policy and law (US Department of Education, 2011).

Significant Differences of Study with Previous Research

A rural administrative team works within unique contexts to reach the same goals, standards and mandates than suburban and urban counterparts. Results from this study show that this unique work context for rural school administrators could impact the perceptions of the elementary principal and superintendent in determining what they considered to be the principal's role as an instructional leader. This difference in the perceptual alignment may create a climate that promotes disagreement and misunderstandings between these two-school leaders. Rural education needs attention and research to understand supports which may promote rural educators (Burton & Johnson, 2010). The overall results of this study further informs and

provides some new insights regarding current research on rural educational leadership that might improve the working relationship between rural elementary principals and superintendents.

1. Rural schools are not identical, including the relationship between the superintendent and principals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Findings from this study indicated a common theme within rural schools noting superintendents and principals had differing opinions regarding leadership behaviors demonstrated by the elementary principal. This theme would lead to differing opinions regarding the principal's role as an instructional leader as well.
2. Marzano et al. (2006) meta-analysis of effective superintendents found that the relationship between the leadership behaviors of the superintendent and performance of the school principal as a significant element in successful schools. This study indicated rural superintendents must be aware of the many roles the elementary principal is asked to fulfill and provide support both professionally and personally to ensure the principal's success. Self-analysis and reflection of leadership behaviors are crucial to the rural superintendent as these become the foundation for them to take the reign of lead instructional leader of the district.
3. According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), exemplary leaders invest in creating relationships that build into spirited cohesive teams that feel like family. The goal of a leader involving the facilitation of relationships is to strive for interdependency where a created collective purpose is achieved (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). This study showed through no perceptual alignment that rural administrative teams may lack understanding and a created collective purpose.

4. DuFour and Eaker (2008), stress that it is imperative that school leaders and other educators develop and participate in systems that promote interdependent collaboration, strategic planning, reflection, and evaluation of current practices. This study showed perceptions of superintendents and elementary principals in rural school districts do not align in perception in accordance to Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership supporting the importance of development and participation in systems that promote interdependent collaboration, strategic planning, reflection, and evaluation of current practices.

Implications for Practice

This research is important in that it has implied a disconnect between the rural elementary principal and his/her superintendent regarding the role of principal as an instructional leader. The findings of this study provide critical information for rural administrative teams. The results of this study demonstrated that rural principals' and superintendents' perceptions of the actual leadership practices of an acting principal are significantly different. The Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership were the framework by which the leadership practices were defined. Educational settings do not adhere to a cookie cutter replication all generating the same results. This study indicated there is a problem in rural administrative team perception of demonstrated leadership practice. Equity issues, role variability, lack of resources, sociocultural challenges and a polarizing community context all have to be contended with in rural schools. For rural administrators the findings imply that rural principals and superintendents need to be informed about instructional leadership and create an aligned partnership. Communication, trust and empowerment on all levels are vital in this partnership. The finding of a disconnect in perceptual alignment may imply a communication breakdown.

All the suggestions below should start with a foundational knowledge of the unique complexities and challenges faced by rural schools before administrating in a rural school.

1. College preparatory classes in rural administration. Training should be considered specifically for aspiring principals and superintendents in how to incorporate and integrate relevant leadership traits and theories that are specific to their rural setting.
2. Continual periodic professional development is needed for rural administrators. This training should specifically target the obstacles incurred by rural administrators.
3. Communication of roles/duties and expectations between rural administrators should be further defined. School superintendents in rural districts should take the lead on this practice.
4. Rural administrative teams must consider a strong focus on coaching, mentoring, teaching, and active learning striving to develop a common understanding related to effective instructional practice.
5. Rural superintendents must strive to focus on an awareness and responsibility of their level of influence. Superintendents must be well-versed on instructional practice and empower the principal to take a lead role in moving the district forward instructionally.
6. Rural superintendents must consider implementing protocols and procedures of communication to ensure consensus.

In regards to state and federal government information from this study can guide policymakers as legislators determine if policy regarding rural schools should differ from suburban and urban counterparts. The effects of governmental unfunded mandates carry heavy burdens for fiscally strapped rural schools. Rural administrators wear numerous and varied hats to meet the demands of state and federal initiatives.

Recommendations for Future Research

Rural schools, as noted within this study, are an understudied educational entity. The data collected from this study provided adequate, baseline information about the perceptual alignment of rural administrators in accordance to Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. This study confirmed a disconnect between the perceptual alignment of the rural elementary principal and his/her superintendent. Additional research should dig deeper into this administrative relationship in order to provide the rural educational leadership community with more information on how to assist rural administrators with rural districts unique working context. Recommendations for future research include:

1. Replicating with a larger sample population to increase statistical significance and external validity. Variables of different rural geographic locations, adding rural high school principals and doing a direct comparison of rural and urban administrators could be considered.
2. Researching if the factors of administrative years of experience, gender, salary and level of education play a role in rural administrator perceptual alignment?
3. Researching if academically successful rural schools show an administrative perceptual alignment in accordance to Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership?
4. Studying successful academic rural schools and identifying which Kouzes and Posner leadership practices trend the highest in these schools?
5. Examining the specifics of rural administrative role variability and the effects on administrative team cohesiveness and student academic achievement.

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Appendix A: Consent Emails

Dear Superintendents,

Hello, fellow rural administrator. My name is Christopher McClimans and I am currently a doctoral student completing my Dissertation at Southwest Baptist University. My study focuses on rural educational leadership between the superintendent and elementary principal. My intentions are that the results of this study will provide a link to the literature and research of leadership in rural schools with possible changes in preparation programs for rural leadership and future development of state and federal educational policy changes that take into consideration the unique context of rural schools. Most of the research out there on effective educational leadership is based on urban and suburban schools.

I am kindly requesting your cooperation and participation in this study.

This study will focus on the rural leadership team of the superintendent and elementary principal. A ten minute survey will be completed by both participants and analyzed. For your time and participation I will send you, the superintendent, direct results of just your team's leadership survey for your personal use.

IF you would be interested in participating and have been evaluating your elementary principal for two years please respond to this email with "YES", and I will then send you and your elementary principal the survey to take on-line. I will send your elementary principal an explanation and details of the study and its purpose.

Please note that your information is kept with strictest confidence and does not indicate or identify individual survey responses or responders.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

I appreciate your kindness, cooperation, and consideration.....Thank you

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating, and you may refuse to answer any of the questions. Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

Right to withdraw from the study: You may withdraw from this survey at any time, even if you begin the survey.

Whom to contact if you have any questions about the study: Christopher McClimans
(417) 646-8333, godspeedmc@gmail.com

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study: Dr. Terry Knox,
Research Review Board, Southwest Baptist University 1600 University Ave, Bolivar, MO,
65613 Phone: 417-328-1735 Email: RRB@sbuniv.edu

Dear Rural Elementary Principal,

Hello, fellow rural administrator. My name is Christopher McClimans and I am currently a doctoral student completing my Dissertation at Southwest Baptist University. My study focuses on rural educational leadership between the superintendent and elementary principal. My intentions are that the results of this study will provide a link to the literature and research of leadership in rural schools with possible changes in preparation programs for rural leadership and future development of state and federal educational policy changes that take into consideration the unique context of rural schools. Most of the research out there on effective educational leadership is based on urban and suburban schools.

I am kindly requesting your cooperation and participation in this study. Your Superintendent has already approved, and will be completing the LPI-Observer Online 360. You will be carrying out an inventory of your Leadership Practices using the LPI-Self 360. This is a 30-Item instrument accompanied by one (1) demographic question and will take only 10 minutes or less of your time.

Please note that your information is kept with strictest confidence and does not indicate or identify individual survey responses or responders.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

I appreciate your kindness, cooperation, and consideration.....Thank you

Agreement: I have read the procedure described above. By continuing and clicking link in notification email you are indicating that you voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and that you have received a copy of this description.

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating, and you may refuse to answer any of the questions. Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

Right to withdraw from the study: You may withdraw from this survey at any time, even if you begin the survey.

Whom to contact if you have any questions about the study: Christopher McClimans
(417) 646-8333, godspeedmc@gmail.com

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study: Dr. Terry Knox,
Research Review Board, Southwest Baptist University 1600 University Ave, Bolivar, MO,
65613 Phone: 417-328-1735 Email: RRB@sbuniv.edu

Appendix B: LPI-Self and LPI-Observer

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY (LPI) SELF

Leadership Practices Inventory

By JAMES M. KOUZES & BARRY Z. POSNER

INSTRUCTIONS

You will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the RATING SCALE on the right, ask yourself:

“How frequently do I engage in the behavior described?”

- Be realistic about the extent to which you *actually* engage in the behavior.
- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
- DO NOT answer in terms of how you would like to behave or in terms of how you think you should behave.
- DO answer in terms of how you typically behave on most days, on most projects, and with most people.
- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving yourself 10s on all items is most likely not an accurate description of your behavior. Similarly, giving yourself all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.
- If you feel that a statement does not apply to you, it’s probably because you don’t frequently engage in the behavior. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower. For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the box to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement.

Every statement must have a rating.

The RATING SCALE runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

1 = Almost Never

2 = Rarely

3 = Seldom

4 = Once in a While

5 = Occasionally

6 = Sometimes

7 = Fairly Often

8 = Usually

9 = Very Frequently

10 = Almost Always

To what extent do you typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement.

1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others.
2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.
3. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.
4. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.
5. I praise people for a job well done.
6. I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.
7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.
8. I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.
9. I actively listen to diverse points of view.
10. I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.
11. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.
12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.
13. I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.
14. I treat others with dignity and respect.
15. I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.
16. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance.
17. I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.
18. I ask "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.
19. I support the decisions that people make on their own.
20. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.
21. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
22. I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.
23. I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.
24. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
25. I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.
26. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.
27. I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
28. I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.
29. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.
30. I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.

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LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY (LPI) OBSERVER

Leadership Practices Inventory

By JAMES M. KOUZES & BARRY Z. POSNER

INSTRUCTIONS

You are being asked by the person whose name appears at the top of the next page to assess his or her leadership behaviors. Below the person's name you will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the RATING SCALE on the right, ask yourself:

“How frequently does this person engage in the behavior described?”

When selecting your response to each statement:

- Be realistic about the extent to which this person *actually* engages in the behavior.
- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
- DO NOT answer in terms of how you would like to see this person behave or in terms of how you think he or she should behave.
- DO answer in terms of how this person typically behaves on most days, on most projects, and with most people.
- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving this person 10s on all items is most likely not an accurate description of his or her behavior. Similarly, giving someone all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.
- If you feel that a statement does not apply, it's probably because you don't see or experience the behavior. That means this person does not frequently engage in the behavior, at least around you. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower. For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the box to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement.

Every statement must have a rating.

The RATING SCALE runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

- 1 = Almost Never
- 2 = Rarely
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Once in a While
- 5 = Occasionally
- 6 = Sometimes
- 7 = Fairly Often
- 8 = Usually
- 9 = Very Frequently
- 10 = Almost Always

To what extent does this leader typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement.

He or She:

1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.
2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.
3. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.
4. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.
5. Praises people for a job well done.
6. Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards that we have agreed on.
7. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.
8. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.
9. Actively listens to diverse points of view.
10. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.
11. Follows through on promises and commitments he/she makes.
12. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.
13. Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.
14. Treats others with dignity and respect.
15. Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.
16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.
17. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.
18. Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.
19. Supports the decisions that people make on their own.
20. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.
21. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
22. Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.
23. Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.
24. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
25. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.
26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.
27. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
28. Experiments and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.
29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.
30. Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.

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Appendix D: LPI Request to Use

WILEY

March 12, 2014

Christopher McClimans
3875 NE 90
Osceola, MO 64776

Dear Mr. McClimans:

Thank you for your request to use the LPI®: Leadership Practices Inventory® in your dissertation. This letter grants you permission to use either the print or electronic LPI [Self/Observer/Self and Observer] instrument[s] in your research. You may **reproduce** the instrument in printed form at no charge beyond the discounted one-time cost of purchasing a single copy; however, you may not distribute any photocopies except for specific research purposes. If you prefer to use the electronic distribution of the LPI you will need to separately contact Ryan Noll (moll@wiley.com) directly for further details regarding product access and payment. Please be sure to review the product information resources before reaching out with pricing questions.

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Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,



Ellen Peterson
Permissions Editor
Epeterson4@gmail.com