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Transformational Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Rural Elementary Schools in Fresno County

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Transformational Leadership: A Qualitative Study of

Rural Elementary Schools in Fresno County

by

Xavier Piña

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

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Transformational Leadership: A Qualitative Study of

Rural Elementary Schools in Fresno County

Loyola Marymount University
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Los Angeles, CA 90045

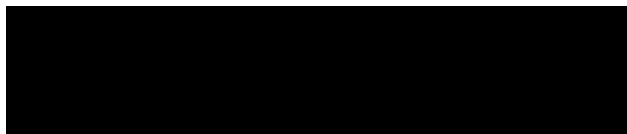This dissertation written by Xavier Piña, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

_____ June 25, 2013 _____
Date

Dissertation Committee

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Franca Dell'Olio, Ed.D., Committee Chair

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ii

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iii

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated my parents Jesús P. Piña and Evangelina L. Piña for their struggle to seek a better life. You provided me with an opportunity to pursue an education. Also, this dissertation is dedicated to my wife Dina González-Piña, my children Samuel Nicolás Piña and Rebeca Elisa Piña. This dissertation is also dedicated to the many people who have influenced my understanding of social justice and Christian thought. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to all of the people who have suffered oppression, faced social injustices, and have stayed committed to their convictions.

Esta disertación es dedicada a mis padres Jesús P. Piña y Evangelina L. Piña por el esfuerzo que tomaron de buscar una vida mejor. Me proveyeron con una oportunidad de obtener una educación. También, esta disertación es dedicada a mi esposa Dina González-Piña, mis hijos Samuel Nicolás Piña y Rebeca Elisa Piña. Esta disertación también es dedicada a las muchas personas que han influido mi comprensión de la justicia social y el pensamiento cristiano. Finalmente, dedico esta disertación a todas las personas que han sufrido opresión, enfrentado injusticias sociales, y se han mantenido comprometidas a sus convicciones.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Transformational Leadership: A qualitative study of

rural elementary schools in Fresno County

by

Xavier Piña

Principal leadership is crucial to improving school effectiveness and positively affecting

organizational culture in the midst of expectations from education reform mandates. Principals

who provide direction and exercise influence can inspire commitment from organizational

members to attain shared goals. Rural school principals face unique obstacles and situations as

documented in the research and literature. This qualitative research study aimed to provide

insight as to the perceived impact of transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics on

organizational culture. This study also provided insight as to the transformational leadership

behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture. The protocols,

which included interviews, were administered by the researcher to principals and certificated

teachers at four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in Program Improvement

[PI] and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic

criteria. The data from the interviews provided insight regarding increased individual and

collective stress in rural elementary schools due to the unprecedented expectations of NCLB. The organizational response to this increased stress was found to be contingent on the behaviors and characteristics by the rural elementary principal. The findings indicated a difference in perceptions between certificated teachers at the rural elementary schools not in PI and in PI. The rural principals in non-PI schools utilized communication to define clear expectation, and a collaborative decision making process to develop a shared vision which cultivated trust among certificated teachers to improve organizational culture and student academic achievement. The rural principals in PI schools were found to have utilized bureaucratic leadership approaches. The bureaucratic leadership approaches led to increased stress and frustration among certificated teachers. Frustration was found to have negatively affected organizational culture and no improvement in student academic achievement. This study validated the need for rural school principals to be aware of effective leadership approaches to positively affect organizational culture.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Education reform is at the forefront of the political agenda since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) in 1983. The report placed U.S. public schools in the spotlight for not adequately preparing students to be globally competitive in the job market. The findings, presented by the NCEE, posited U.S. public schools were in need of reform due to a crisis with low expectations, mediocre instructional practice, and inadequately prepared students for a global market (Elmore, 1997). *A Nation at Risk* created a sense of urgency among policymakers and resulted in several groups attempting to address the findings in *A Nation at Risk*. Education reform initiatives developed over the last 30 years, by policymakers, attempted to improve the organizational outcomes rendered by U.S. public schools. *A Nation at Risk* is the seminal report that influenced education reform over the next 20 years and birthed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002).

NCLB is an updated reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) enacted in 1965 to provide legal authority of the United States government's financial support of K-12 education (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965). ESEA set funding limits and established legal requirements for school districts. The intent of ESEA was to address the educational inequity through the declarations made by the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty. The primary purpose of ESEA was to provide financial aid to schools to better serve the educational needs of educationally deprived children.

However, education reform mandates negatively have impacted the manner in which equity and excellence are attained in effective public schools in the United States (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005). Owens and Valesky (2011) argued the education reform mandates, since the early 1980s, seem to foster the practice of bureaucratic leadership approaches in U.S. public schools. The result of these bureaucratic leadership approaches is the creation of high stress organizational cultures to improve performance and efforts which do not render positive results (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005). In fact, Daly and Chrispeels suggested there is a need to transform the rigid systemic response influence by education reform mandates and have leaders focus on assets rather than deficits. Effective principal leadership can facilitate a focus on identifying and developing systemic strengths, organizational resilience, and supportive infrastructures for the purpose of building effective schools.

Edmonds (1979) identified five key variables to describe effective schools in his seminal work: (a) strong leadership; (b) high expectations; (c) clear mission; (d) safe and orderly environment; and (e) opportunity to learn by time on task. Since the Edmonds (1979) study, the variables used for defining an effective school vary from five to fifteen and highlight slightly different descriptors of action in schools which demonstrate a correlation to student learning (Chrispeels, 1992; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Bullard & Taylor, 1993; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). More recently, Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) identified the following conceptual framework to describe the process for developing effective schools: (a) establishing effective leadership; (b) developing effective teaching strategies; (c) developing and maintaining a focus on learning; (d) producing a positive school culture; (e) establishing high expectations for all; (f) prioritizing

student responsibilities and rights; (g) monitoring progress at all levels; (h) building capacity among staff at the school site; and (i) involving parents in productive and appropriate ways.

Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) use two core functions to describe leadership: (a) providing direction; and (b) exercising influence. These two functions can be utilized by leaders to inspire commitment from educational members to attain shared goals and construct organizational culture. According to Sergiovanni (2001), organizational culture is comprised of common values, beliefs, and norms, which can serve as the compass to navigate people in a common direction.

Several leadership approaches in the literature known by various names: hierarchical, transactional, facilitative, supportive, participative, vision setter, collaborative, distributed, delegated, democratic, dispersed, lateral, shared, teacher, team, thought, and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Belhiah, 2007; Farris, 1973; Howell & Higgins, 1990; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Schin & McClomb, 1998; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Quinn, 1988; Smith & Piele, 1996; Spillane, 2005; Van de Ven, 1986). One of the leadership approaches in the literature is transformational leadership and is a topic of ongoing study (Burns, 1978; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bass, 1985; Caldwell, 1992; Leithwood, 1994; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Gronn, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders inspire others towards a deeper commitment within the organizational culture and increase overall effectiveness. Additionally, Bass argued transformational leadership inspires followers to perform better than expected by raising the levels of consciousness among the followers regarding the importance of specific organizational goals, motivating followers to move from self interest to a shared interest, and inspiring followers towards meeting higher levels of needs.

Statement of the Problem

Chance (1993) laments the fact that policymakers often enact legislation without full knowledge of the ramifications on rural schools by creating unintended consequences. The definitions for rural vary within the literature. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, rural areas are defined as agricultural communities, which are separated by their geographic distance from urban centers (Beeson & Strange, 2003). Education reform mandates are more costly to small, rural school districts than to non-rural school districts. In fact, there is ongoing debate on whether rural school districts need the same types of education reform mandates as non rural districts (Chance, 1993; Lewis, 1992). Consequently the negative aspect of one-size-fits-all education reform mandates confronts rural schools.

Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk,* policymakers continue to develop education reform mandates to evaluate the organizational effectiveness of U.S. public schools. Historically, the role of principals in U.S. public school is multifaceted with contradictory demands (Murphy & Seashore-Louis, 1994). The expectation of principals is to work arduously to transform, restructure, and redefine schools along with the processes and persons within the organization (Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Murphy, 1992). Additionally, principals are responsible for leading organizations with members who are resistant to change (Bredeson, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1987, 1992). School principals are also responsible for clarifying roles and responsibilities within schools during stressful and uncertain times (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992). In fact, school principals are responsible for the formation of organizational conditions (shared goals, organizational culture, and processes) and classroom conditions (instructional content,

4

classroom conditions, and instructional pedagogy) which are directly responsible for increasing student learning (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010).

Rural school principals face changing demographics, economic uncertainty, and pressures of federal school reform mandates due to poor academic performance (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). In California's San Joaquin Valley, the student population statistics demonstrate an increase by 20% between 1970 and 2000. This growth in student population growth is increasing faster than the state average (Goodban, Hedderson, Ortiz, & Branton, 2004). However, the growth in student population is not equally distributed among ethnic backgrounds. The student demographics in California demonstrate there has been a decline in the percentage of white children from 75% percent to 43%, while the increase among Latino children has doubled from 17% to 39% (Goodban et al., 2004). According to Jepsen and deAlth (2005), 25% of the students in the San Joaquin Valley are identified as English Language Learners (EL).

However, rural school principals have a "moral, ethical, and legal responsibility to insure every child who resides in their district has the opportunity to be academically successful" (Laub & O'Connor, 2009, p. 153). Subsequently, Laub and O'Connor (2009) also argued effective school principals are responsible for facilitating the development of a caring and self-enhancing learning environment in collaboration with educational stakeholders. Effective rural school leaders work in collaboration to "develop and advocate a shared mission, stressing the importance of high expectations and academic achievement" (p. 153).

Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) described an array of leadership descriptions which revolutionize the role of principals within organizations. In fact, Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) identified core leadership qualities that are evident among effective leaders: (a) clear

vision; (b) concrete goals with a strategic plan to accomplish them; (c) charisma; (d) strong communication and consensus building skills; (e) strong sense of self and strong convictions; (f) ability to cultivate strong caring relationships; and (g) influential.

In a poll conducted by Farkas, Johnson, and Duffet (2003), findings demonstrated NCLB is straining organizational members in U.S. public schools to meet unprecedented expectations. Some of the negative effects of NCLB are decreased job satisfaction, inability to creatively problem solve, centralized (also known as bureaucratic or hierarchical) decision making, and intra/interpersonal conflict (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005; Hutchinson, 1998; Kyriacou, 2001). Additionally, NCLB increased stress levels which resulted in lost performance productivity, cultures of isolation, and limited opportunities for professional learning (Bakkenes, Brabander, & Imants, 1999; Scribner, 1999). According to Laub and O'Connor (2009) rural school principals faced the challenge of geographical isolation, limited financial resources, weak infrastructure, small student populations, and declining student enrollments. In research conducted by Kowalski (2005), the findings demonstrated small school districts have limited staff in the areas curriculum and instruction.

Therefore, the tendency for rural school leaders is to implement bureaucratic leadership approaches and implement a non-collaborative process to address the needs of students, which are influenced by the expectations of unprecedented educational reform mandate requirements. Hence, teachers are part of an oppressive and restrictive process, which negatively impacts the learning process for students. The trajectory of poor performance in rural schools indicates a need to change school procedures and instructional practices which are the main tasks of educational leaders (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). However, rural school leaders are

responsible for the cultivation of an organizational culture that systematically reviews data and implements a process to meet the needs of all students (Laub & O'Connor, 2009).

Despite the recommendations presented in leadership research, the bureaucratic approaches to principal leadership tend to be the preferred method for exercising coordination and control in public schools (Owens & Valesky, 2011). Given the limited resources and the expectations required by educational reform mandates, rural school leaders only treat the symptoms of poor student academic achievement. Additionally, educational reform mandates are influencing high levels of job dissatisfaction and school ineffectiveness. It is difficult for rural school leaders to exercise contemporary leadership approaches within a structure that continues to implement bureaucratic educational reform processes. However, educational researchers suggest it is possible for school principals to redefine their role within the organization through the implementation of transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985, 1990; Burns, 1978; Hersey & Blanchard, 1982; House, 1971; Leithwood, 1992; Parry 1996; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Yukl, 1971).

Fresno County is located in the San Joaquin Valley in central California. The 2010 census indicated Fresno County is in the top ten most populous counties in the State of California with a population of 930,450 and is the sixth largest in size with an area of 6,014.4 miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). An analysis of data from the California Department of Education (CDE) indicates that in Fresno County, 27 of the 31 school districts or Lead Educational Agencies (LEAs) are in rural geographic communities (CDE, 2011a). As of October 2012, 12 LEAs in Fresno County were identified in Program Improvement (PI). Within the 27 rural geographic

communities, there are 74 schools identified in PI, 43 schools not identified in PI, and 38 schools are not Title 1 schools (CDE, 2012a).

There are four rural elementary schools selected to participate in this qualitative research study. The four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not identified in PI and two elementary schools identified in PI) are selected to determine the perceived impact of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture. The two rural elementary schools not in PI are from the Turnaround School District (pseudonym), located in an agricultural community southwest of Fresno, California. The two rural elementary schools identified in PI are from the Plains School District (pseudonym), located in an agricultural community southwest of Fresno, California.

The two rural elementary schools in the Turnaround School District are two K-6 sites that have the highest percentage of Hispanic/Latino, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and EL students in the district. Both of these rural elementary schools demonstrate an increased Annual Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in Fresno County and are not identified in Program Improvement (PI) as defined by the California Department of Education.

The first non-PI site is King Elementary School (pseudonym) and the school demographic profile is approximately 97.4% Hispanic/Latino, 90.7% socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 64.9% EL students (CDE, 2011b). In 2012, King Elementary School had an API of 780, with 50% of students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA and 62% proficient or advanced in Mathematics. King Elementary School met only ten of its 17 AYP targets in 2012. However, despite not meeting all of its AYP targets, King Elementary School is currently not

identified in Program Improvement. King Elementary School was previously identified in PI but exited due to increased improvement through safe harbor (CDE, 2012a).

The second non-PI site is Independence Elementary School (pseudonym) and the school demographic profile is approximately 89.8% Hispanic/Latino, 85.1% socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 70.4% EL students (CDE, 2011b). In 2012, Independence Elementary School has an API of 833 with 54% of students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA and 65.7% proficient or advanced in Mathematics. Independence Elementary School met all 17 of 17 AYP targets in 2012 through safe harbor (CDE, 2012a).

The two rural elementary schools in the Plains School District are two K-8 sites which have the highest percentage of Hispanic/Latino, low socioeconomically disadvantaged, and EL students in district. Both of these two public rural elementary schools identified as PI Year 5 since 2008 and have not surpassed an API of 700.

The first PI site is Valley Elementary School (pseudonym) and the school demographic profile is approximately 97.8% Hispanic/Latino, 98.3% socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 77.4% EL students (CDE, 2011b). In 2012, Valley Elementary School has an API of 679 with 30.7% of students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA and 36.6% proficient or advanced in Mathematics. Valley Elementary School met only eight of its 17 AYP targets in 2012 and entered into PI status in 2004. The base API for Valley Elementary School reported on the 2005 Accountability Progress Report is 590 (CDE, 2012b).

The second PI site is Ridge Elementary School (pseudonym) and the school demographic profile is approximately 92.3% Hispanic/Latino, 92.3% percent socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 64.8% EL students (CDE, 2011b). In 2012, Ridge Elementary School had an

API of 686 with 36% percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA and 42.7% proficient or advanced in Mathematics. Ridge Elementary School met only nine of 17 AYP targets in 2012 and entered into PI status in 2004. The base API for Ridge Elementary School reported is 610 as indicated by the 2005 Accountability Progress Report (CDE, 2012b).

In summary, the NCLB education reform mandates are straining organizational members and influencing principal leadership styles in U.S. public schools to meet unprecedented expectations. These negative influences are magnified in rural schools due to limited staff, changing demographics, and economic uncertainty as documented in literature and research.

Purpose of the Study

Rural school principals face unique obstacles and situations as documented in the research and literature. The impact of education reform mandates such as NCLB has compounded these challenges. The purpose of this qualitative study is to: (a) identify the perceived impacts of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools in Fresno County; and (b) identify which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI.

Significance of the Study

Shields (2004) argued educational leaders are responsible for developing learning communities, developing professional capacity of teachers, resolution of conflicts, being attentive to parent concerns/suggestions, providing instructional leadership, implementing a

collaborative decision making process, tending to the needs of families with diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, educational leaders are confronted by the intense pressure to demonstrate the academic success of every child as determined by a raw score and performance level on a standardized test (Shields, 2004). Educational leaders are commissioned with the challenge of navigating through turbulent times and still demonstrate organizational effectiveness through improved student academic achievement. School leaders are also challenged to construct organizational culture and must become transformative to begin to challenge the current perception of educational stakeholders. Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) defined transformational leadership as a process that focuses on the collective interests of a group or organization because it is deeply rooted in moral, ethical values, and social justice.

Through this study, the researcher aims to provide an understanding regarding the impact of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture among four rural school site principals and 14 certificated teachers (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County. Also, the researcher aims to strengthen findings in previous studies by identifying the leadership behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture by utilizing the dimensions of transformational leadership as defined by Bennis and Nanus (1985) and further elaborated upon by Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) in two rural elementary schools currently not in PI.

It is imperative for leaders to become grounded in a moral and purposeful approach to leadership (Shields, 2004). The transformational leadership theoretical framework conceptualized by Bennis and Nanus (1985) and further elaborated upon by Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) can provide additional insight for principals in rural schools. This transformational

leadership process can help rural school principals create systemic reform rather than address the symptoms of low academic achievement by students influenced by education reform mandates. Shields (2004) argued transformational leadership "based on dialogue and strong relationships, can provide opportunities for all children to learn in school communities that are socially just and deeply democratic" (p. 110).

Theoretical Framework

The appropriate theoretical framework for this study must address the perceived human resources development theory and transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised to transform organizational culture. The transformational leadership theoretical framework utilized in this research study is grounded in the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985), Sashkin and Sashkin (2005), Schein (1992) and Deal and Peterson (1990).

Owens and Valesky (2011) describe a non-bureaucratic approach focused on developing an organizational culture which is asset based and not deficit based. In fact, a paradigm shift suggests leaders move towards focusing on assets rather than deficit thinking (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005). Also, Daly and Chrispeels (2005) suggested educational leaders must focus on "expanding systemic strengths, organizational resilience, and supportive structures" (p. 8) in order to build and cultivate effective schools. According to Owens and Valesky (2011), the collaborative interaction among organizational members can strengthen the core beliefs of the organization to strive to accomplish a series of identified goals.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) identified four behaviors of transformational leadership to include: (a) attention through vision; (b) meaning through communication; (c) trust through

positioning (actions that implement the vision); and (d) deployment of self (knowing and nurturing one's strengths and making sure they fit with the organization's needs). The theoretical framework for transformational leadership proposed by Bennis and Nanus (1985) was further elaborated by Sashkin and Sashkin (2005). In fact, Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) categorize the findings of Bennis and Nanus (1985) across three areas: (a) behaviors defined as communication, trust, respect/caring for others, and creating opportunities through risk; (b) characteristics defined as self-confidence, empowerment, and vision; and (c) context defined as organizational culture. Bennis and Nanus (1985) argue transformational leadership involves the empowerment of others as its central focus for the purpose of fulfilling the organizational vision. Thus, Bennis and Nanus (1985) conceptualize transformational leaders as social architects responsible for cultivating organizational culture that leads to organizational success (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2005).

This qualitative study provided a deeper understanding of the theoretical framework of the human resources development theory proposed by Owens and Valesky (2011), transformational leadership proposed by Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) and its impact on organizational culture as defined by Schein (1992) and Deal and Peterson (1990).

Research Questions

The researcher has posed two research questions, which will give direction and focus to this leadership research study. These research questions will provide insights as to the perceived impact of education reform mandates on leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational

culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI). Additionally, this study will also reiterate the behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture in the two rural elementary schools not in PI.

1. What is the perceived impact of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that meet specific student demographic criteria?

2. Which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County that are not in Program Improvement?

Methodology

This qualitative research study is comprised of four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County. The following data is compiled for each of the elementary schools in this study. The first rural school selected is King Elementary School (pseudonym) and it served approximately 538 students in kindergarten through sixth grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The second rural school selected is Independence Elementary School (pseudonym) and it served approximately 423 students in kindergarten through sixth grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The third rural school selected is Valley Elementary School (pseudonym) and it served approximately 826 students in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The fourth

rural elementary school is Ridge Elementary School (pseudonym) and it served a student body of approximately 247 in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2010-2011 school year.

The researcher compiled qualitative data through using two interview protocols slightly nuanced for principal participants and teacher participants. The data collected through individual interviews of the principals and focus group interviews of certificated teachers is used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2. A total of two principals and ten certificated teachers from the two non-PI rural elementary schools were selected to be interviewed to answer the two research questions of this qualitative research study. Additionally, the researcher interviewd two additional principals and four certificated teachers from two rural elementary schools in PI in order to provide additional insight to answering the first research question.

The schools identified to participate in this study were identified after reviewing student demographics for 155 rural elementary schools in Fresno County. Each of the four schools, met the following student demographic criteria: (a) the school is rural and receives Title 1 funds; (b) the student demographics are at least 85 percent Hispanic/Latino; (c) at least 85 percent of students are socioeconomically disadvantaged; and (d) at least 50% of students are English Learners. These specific student demographic criteria were selected based on the demographic composites and organizational outcomes of the four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) as measured by the California Standards Test (CST). All data collected were analyzed by the researcher utilizing a typological process.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher developed an appropriate interview protocol for this study based on extensive review of the literature (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Daly & Chrispeels, 2005; Deal & Peterson, 1990; Owens & Valesky, 2011; Sashkin & Sashkin, 2005; Schein, 1992). Also, the study focused on the perceived impact of NCLB on four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria.

Additionally, the study focused on the perceived leadership behaviors and characteristics perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools not in PI. Therefore, the data collected and the findings were reflective of the rural communities represented and may not be generalized to all rural schools. The experiences along with attitudes regarding the leadership behaviors, personal characteristics, and organizational culture collected from the site principals and teachers in this study may be different in this region than from other rural school populations.

Delimitations of the Study

The focus of this study was delimited to an examination of organizational culture as defined by Schein (1992) and Deal and Peterson (1990) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2005). This research study also examined the impact of transformational leadership as conceptualized by Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) on organizational culture defined by Schein (1992) and Deal and Peterson (1990) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) in rural elementary schools included in this study. The four rural elementary school sites identified to participate in

16

this study were all in Fresno County and met specific student demographic criteria. The researcher collected qualitative data through a total of four individual interviews conducted with the principals and four focus group interview conducted with certificated teachers at each of the four rural school sites for the purpose identifying the perceived impact of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture. The researcher also collected qualitative data regarding the transformational leadership behaviors and characteristic exercised by the principal are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools currently not in PI.

Definition of Terms

A Nation at Risk (NAR): A report produced by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) in 1983 regarding the state of education in the United States.

Academic success: The attainment of the targets by students which have been arbitrarily set in order to determine if standards have been met.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): The series of annual academic performance goals established for each state, LEA and school. Each state, LEA, and school is determined to have met AYP if they meet or exceed each year's goals (CDE, 2012c).

Annual Performance Index (API): The single number, which ranges from a low 200 to a high of 1,000 which reflects the LEAs and/or schools performance level for each student group based on the results of the statewide testing. The purpose of API is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools (API Information Guide, 2012).

Bureaucratic leadership style: A leadership approach which is based on following normative rules, and adhering to the lines of authority (Weber, 1947).

California: The most populous state in the United States located on the west coast (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

Education reform mandate: Official order or commission to change the processes or structures in education.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): Federal legislation passed in 1965 as a part of the "War on Poverty." The intent of ESEA was to emphasize equal access to education and establishes high standards and accountability. The law also authorizes federally funded education programs that are administered by the states. In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB, 2002).

English language learners (EL): A term to identify students in the school system whose first language is not English. This term is used to identify students until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP).

Fresno County: The sixth largest county located in the San Joaquin Valley in Central California between Sacramento and Los Angeles.

Hierarchical: A term used to describe structure consisting of multiple levels. A hierarchical structure means that the chain of command looks like a pyramid, with a large base of workers, who are directly supervised by the smaller level above them who are in turn supervised by the level above them and so on.

Hispanic: A term used to classify a person of Latin American decent living in the United States.

Independence Elementary School: The pseudonym used to identify the second rural elementary school in this study not identified in PI. This school is in the Turnaround School District (pseudonym).

King Elementary School: The pseudonym used to identify the first rural elementary school in this study not identified in PI. This school is in the Turnaround School District (pseudonym).

National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE): A collaborative working group comprised of 18 members from the private sector, government, and education arenas. This commission published the report *A Nation at Risk* in 1983.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): The federal legislative action in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001. NCLB supports standards based reform based on establishing annual expectation targets for schools to meet or face punitive sanctions (NCLB, 2002).

Organizational culture: The deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of the organization's history (Deal & Peterson, 1990).

Plains School District: The pseudonym used to identify a rural school district located in an agricultural community southwest of Fresno, California.

Policymaker: A person who sets the plan pursued by a government.

Ridge Elementary School: The pseudonym used to identify the second rural elementary school in this study identified in PI. This school is in the Plains School District (pseudonym).

Rural school: A public school located in primarily agricultural communities and not in an urban area.

San Joaquin Valley: An area in the central valley of California and is mostly rural.

School Leadership and Culture Assessment Questionnaire (SLCAQ): A qualitative data

collection tool developed to collect data for this twofold research study.

Socioeconomic economic status (SES): The measure used to evaluate the combination of factors

including income, level of education, and occupation. The measure is used to assess how

individuals or families fit into society using economic and social measures.

Transformational Leadership: A leadership approach which enhances motivation, morale, and

performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms.

Turnaround School District: The pseudonym used to identify a rural school district located in an

agricultural community southeast of Fresno, California.

Vista Elementary School: The pseudonym used to identify the first rural elementary school in

this study identified in PI. This school is in the Plains School District (pseudonym).

Chapter Summary

In summary, this study presents insights as to the perceived impact of the NCLB

education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational

culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary

schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria in the Fresno

County. The four rural elementary schools selected to participate met the following pre-

established student demographic criteria: (a) the school is a rural and receives Title 1 funds; (b)

at least 85% Hispanic/Latino; (c) at least 85% socioeconomically disadvantaged; and (d) at

least 50% EL. This study also identifies the leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised

by the principal perceived to positively affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County that are not in Program Improvement.

In Chapter 1, the problem to be studied has been identified and clearly explained. Chapter 2 provides a review of all pertinent literature regarding the wave of education reform mandates since the 1980s, traditional and contemporary leadership theories, organizational culture, the impact of leadership factors on organizational culture, and rural school leadership. The review of literature also includes further elaboration of transformational leadership theoretical framework to be used for this particular research study. In Chapter 3, the research methodology and design is clearly outlined for this study. Chapter 4 provides an introduction to the findings compiled by the researcher during the data gathering period. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a restatement of the purpose of the study, the significance of the findings, recommendations for possible improvement to the framework for transforming school culture to improve student academic achievement.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Principal leadership is again at the forefront of school reform and continues to be an area of ongoing study to assess its impact on organizational culture and school effectiveness. According to Nettles and Herrington (2007), school effectiveness is a topic of ongoing discussion in an effort to improve student academic achievement in U.S. public schools. Thus, policymakers continue to place education at the center of political platforms not only in the United States but also globally (Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Beginning with President Ronald Reagan's *A Nation at Risk* in the 1980s through the publication of *A Blueprint for Reform* (United States Department of Education [USDE], 2010) proposed by President Barrak Obama's current administration, school effectiveness continues to be a major theme on the political agenda. According to Nettles and Herrington (2007), educational leadership has the potential to impact school effectiveness and improve organizational outcomes. In fact, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) argued school leadership is a primary factor which contributes to improvement in organizational culture and student learning.

Recently, Seastrom-Louis et al. (2010) released *Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, a final report of research findings sponsored by the Wallace Foundation. The report puts forth the argument that school leadership is a powerful influence which can positively impact the organizational culture and improve student academic achievement. Thacker, Bell, and Schargel (2009) suggested successful school leaders must be able to improve organizational culture in order to improve student academic achievement. When school leaders cultivate a

positive organizational school culture, teachers have the ability to develop leadership capacity, innovativeness, and collaborative relationships. The cultivation of teacher leadership by principals within the organizational culture of schools has the potential to directly impact student academic achievement and performance outcomes (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010).

The review of the literature examines federal education reform mandates, leadership theories, and organizational culture. Over the past 30 years, educational reform mandates by the federal and state governments have provided the political platform to implement more bureaucratic approaches to educational leadership with the expectation schools will demonstrate improvement in student academic achievement.

Education Reform in the United States 1983-2012

The Foundation: *A Nation at Risk* (NAR)

According to Farmer (2009) there was a federal interest to link education to both national security and global competitiveness and has been evident since the Ronald Reagan presidency when the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) published the report *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. The NAR report critiqued the organizational effectiveness and competitiveness of public schools in comparison to other countries (NCEE, 1983; Owens & Valesky, 2011). In its report, the NCEE made several recommendations to improve the organizational effectiveness of schools: (a) content to strengthen the graduation requirements for a high school diploma; (b) standards and expectations to adopt and implement rigorous and measurable content standards and standardized assessments; (c) time to lengthen the school year for the purpose of meeting the new expectations; (d) teaching to improve the preparation of

teachers and make the profession more rewarding; and (e) leadership and fiscal support by having citizens hold elected officials accountable for providing the necessary leadership to attain the reforms and citizens are to provide the fiscal support and sustainability to attain the proposed reforms (NCEE, 1983). The publication of this report placed school effectiveness at the forefront of the educational reform policy movement and it was presented to the American people. Consequently, NAR overruled the increasing body of research literature on effective schools by declaring that K-12 public schools were not being effective; thus, the United States was losing its economic competitiveness abroad (National Education Goals Panel, 1999; Owens & Valesky, 2011). The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) (1999) stated "the overall report painted a very dismal picture of American schooling by frequently citing examples of recent declines in student achievements" (p. 9).

The paradigm shift to determine school effectiveness transitioned from measuring schools by resources received to being evaluated based on the academic outcomes achieved by students (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). The academic student outcomes compiled described the crisis with public schools in the United States. In its report, the NCEE argued students in U.S. public schools were last in student achievement when compared to other industrialized nations. Some of the risks identified by NCEE included illiteracy and low scores on standardized assessments. For example, the NCEE declared illiteracy in the United States was 13% among 17 year old students and as high as 40% among minority students. The scores on standardized academic achievement assessments were at their lowest point since the launching of Sputnik (NCEE, 1983). The findings in the NCEEs report were used to initiate the discussion on educational reform. The NCEE identified concerns with their findings in regards to curriculum

content, expectations for students, time on school work, and instructional pedagogy. In its report the NCEE made 38 recommendations to improve the effectiveness of public schools in the United States.

The Frame: Standards-Based Education

As a result of the report *A Nation at Risk* published by the NCEE in 1983, policymakers calls for a series of gatherings during the second half of the 1980s. One specific gathering is in September of 1989 with an education summit involving the 50 state governors and President George H. W. Bush. The education summit leads to the development of six national goals known as the National Education Goals for the year 2000:

1. By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn.

2. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

3. By the year 2000, all students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.

4. By the year 2000, the nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.

5. By the year 2000, U.S. students will be the first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

6. By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (National Education Goals Panel, 1999)

During the early 1990s, the U.S. Congress continues with the conversation of education reform by establishing the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) in June of 1991. The purpose of the council is to continue the discussion of developing national education content standards as a pathway to determine if the National Education Goals for the year 2000 are on track to being met. Education content standards are used to establish what each student should learn in each grade level and in each content area.

The education reform movement continued with the enactment of Goals 2000: Educate America Act by President Bill Clinton in 1994. The law contains the six goals developed at the National Education Summit in 1989. There are two additional goals added to the list:

1. By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

2. By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) released *What*

Matters Most: Teaching for Americas Future in 1997. The purpose of this seminal research is to declare teachers are critical to improving student achievement. The recommendation by the NCTAF was to place highly effective teachers in every classroom by 2006.

The Roof: No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

By 1998, almost every state was in the process of implementing education content standards in reading and mathematics. The *National Education Goals for 2000* set in the 1990s by policymakers were not met as intended. Thus, President George W. Bush lobbied policymakers for education reform through the enactment of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002). The federal education reform mandate established stronger accountability on U.S. public schools by requiring all students to demonstrate proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014. The NCLB legislation was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

NCLB was birthed and moved forward on the political agenda because local governments were failing students. For this reason, NCLB mandated schools to demonstrate effectiveness by meeting annual measurable objectives (AMO) based on all students and significant subgroups. All U.S. public schools were placed on an improvement plan to demonstrate progress known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) which was determined by student academic achievement results on standardized assessments. In California, the California Standards Test (CST) was used to determine the AYP for U.S. public schools receiving Title 1 funds.

The Impact of NCLB on Schools

Public schools in the United States are measured annually to determine AYP. The result for public schools receiving Title 1 funds not meeting AYP for two consecutive years is to be placed in *Federal School Improvement Status* designed by the U.S. Department of Education. A public school identified in Program Improvement (PI) has to implement a series of mandated restructuring activities if it does not exit out of School Improvement Status.

During 2007-2008 the Center on Education Policy (CEP) (2008) reported the percentage of schools going through a restructuring process was 60% urban, 35% percent suburban, and 5% rural. Although the percentage for rural schools implementing a restructuring process seems small, the number to rural minority students has increased. According to the Rural School and Community Trust (Johnson & Strange, 2007), the student population in rural schools has increased in diversity by more than 50% countrywide.

According to CEP there are an estimated 1,013 schools in California that implemented or planned a restructuring process in 2007-2008 (CEP, 2008). The CEP also reported the number of schools by year in mandated NCLB improvement: 416 in Year 4, 278 in Year 5, 122 in Year 6, 187 in Year 7, 10 in Year 8. In California, 50 percent of schools did not meet AYP goals during the 2008-2009 year (CEP, 2010). It seems the intended goals of NCLB has not rendered the desired results to increase school effectiveness (Owens & Valesky, 2011).

Remodeling Education Reform: A Blueprint for Reform

President Barak Obama's administration has grappled with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which is currently framed through

the lens of NCLB. In A *Blueprint for Reform: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (2010), the U.S. Department of Education outlined four areas of focus for education reform: (a) improving teacher and principal effectiveness to insure that every school has great leaders; (b) providing information to families to help them evaluate and improve their children's schools, and to educators to help them improve their students' learning; (c) implementing college-and-career-ready standards and developing improved assessments aligned with those standards; and (d) improving student learning and achievement in America's lowest performing schools by providing intensive support and effective intervention. (p. 3)

However, as of March 2013, the ESEA has not been reauthorized and it seems that it will not take place anytime soon. Meanwhile, President Obama's administration has designed a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education designed for education reform at the state and local levels. The program is known as Race to the Top (RTTT) and the $4.35 billion earmarked for RTTT had been made available to states via a competitive grant process. The criteria for funding focuses on six main themes: (a) great teachers and leaders; (b) state success factors; (c) standards and assessments; (d) general selection criteria; (e) turning around the lowest achieving schools; and (f) data systems to support instruction.

California is one of four states eligible to apply for the maximum amount of $350 to $700 million. Despite California's attempt to solicit RTTT funds, it has not been selected by the U.S. Department of Education as a recipient for RTTT funds. However, recently President Obama's administration has indicated an interest to make RTTT funds available to individual school districts (Weber, 2011). As the current wave of education reform continues to unfold, Ravitch (2010) argueed the past and current levers to improve school effectiveness continue to not render

positive results. From Ronald Reagan to Barak Obama's presidential tenure, each presidential administration has had its own ideas for education reform on its political platform. Yet, it seems that the bureaucratic approach to a one-size-fits-all educational reform is not working because schools are organizationally complex settings (Owens & Valesky, 2011).

The Impact of Education Reform Mandates on Rural Schools

Chance (1993) posited that policymakers often enact legislation without full knowledge of the ramifications on rural schools. Education reform mandates from federal lawmakers is classified as a phenomenon that produces unintended consequences (Chance, 1993). According to Chance (1993), "the burden of compliance and the costs have been and will continue to be felt by the rural/small schools because of their size, isolation, and limited finances to implement required mandates" (p. 26).

The education reform mandates are more costly to rural school districts than to non-rural school districts. In fact, there is ongoing debate on whether rural school districts need the same types of education reform mandates as other, non-rural districts (Chance, 1993; Lewis, 1992). It is evident rural schools are being confronted with the negative effects of the one-size-fits-all education reform mandates. In research conducted by Kannapel, Coe, Aagaard, and Reeves (1999), the findings indicated that mandated education reforms implemented in rural Kentucky schools raised the question: "whether it is possible or prudent to induce all schools, whether urban, suburban, or rural, to adopt certain tenets of a systemic reform movement that are purported to be crucial to the welfare of the nation" (p. 13).

The Role of Principals in Rural Schools

"Leadership is influence… [and] the ability to obtain followers." (Cruzeiro & Morgan, 2006, p. 569). However, it seems the role of the principal has become more complex within schools. According to Murphy and Seashore-Louis (1994) principals functioned within a set of four expectations: (a) federal and state accountability requirements; (b) crises in the economy and the responsibility of schools to better this situation; (c) the complexities of our nation, communities, and schools; and (d) the transition from an industrial world toward a postindustrial world. These expectations seemed to apply to all principals is U.S. public schools and the role seemed to become more complex with the increasing demands mandated by education reform mandates.

Previous research conducted by Starr and White (2008) examined the role of leadership challenges encountered by rural school principals. Findings indicate principals in rural schools get little to no administrative support, additional personnel and staff. In fact, Starr and White argued rural principals do not have the opportunity to delegate administrative tasks or responsibilities to other staff. Yet, rural school principals had the same moral obligation to comply with federal and state standards as principals in schools located in other geographic locations. Rural school principals were challenged by not having the time, staff, or resources to address areas of need within the school. Starr and White suggested principals are also faced with the challenge of (a) redefined principalship; (b) workload demands; (c) educational equity issues; (d) role elasticity; and (e) school survival.

Starr and White (2008) argued the principalship has been redefined as a result of the increasing amount of mandatory administrative responsibilities and compliance work being

31

required from education reform mandates. In their study, Starr and White discovered all

principals have undergone an increase to their workload over the past 20 years. Although rural

principals seem to recognize their main role as instructional leaders, there is a concern with the

bureaucratic interference from education reform mandates (Barley & Beesley, 2007; Starr &

White, 2008).

As the evolution of demands continues regarding the role of principals, there is a

possibility for improved organizational outcomes in U.S. rural public schools. It is essential for

rural principal to recognize the importance of working collaboratively to improve teaching,

learning, and management requirements (Starr & White, 2008). To facilitate improved

organizational outcomes, rural principals must clearly understand their leadership role within

schools.

Given the shift in perspective regarding school leadership, effective leadership

characteristics seem to have remained intact. According to Laub and O'Connor (2009) school

leaders in effective organizations were able to cultivate a safe and secure learning environment.

The education reform mandates being imposed on rural schools demanding accountability and

managing the organizational systems created a daunting challenge for principals. However, rural

principals are responsible for developing an organizational culture that seeks to promote student

achievement and sets high expectations (Laub & O'Connor, 2009).

Sergiovanni (2005) argued the leadership process is to articulate and apply solutions to

difficult problems. In the United States, the rural areas comprise most of the land mass and

approximately one-fifth of the student population (Mathis, 2003). It seems rural school districts

are not a priority in education reform with much of the attention going to meeting the needs of

schools in urban settings (Johnson & Strange, 2005). However, rural schools cannot continue to be ignored in education reform. Beeson and Strange (2003) posited that nearly one-third of the students attend schools in small rural communities in the United States. School leaders face a complexity of daily demands, which seem to be increasing. Laub and O'Connor (2009) suggested rural school leaders face a myriad of "challenges, shoulder enormous responsibilities, and wear a number of different hats, from instructional leader, resource manager, to politician and consensus builder" (p. 152). The concept of leadership changes as the nature of organizational culture is formed collectively by stakeholders. The educational, political, and managerial dimensions in leadership are more prevalent in rural settings because it is the pillar for the community (Laub & O'Connor, 2009; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2010).

Rural school principals need to be concerned with organizational outcomes such as student success and academic achievement. Rural school principals have an ethical and moral imperative to insure every student that attends their school has the opportunity to be successful. Laub and O'Connor (2009) argued rural school leaders are responsible for building capacity among school staff and must also do "whatever it takes" (p. 153) to educate every child. The organizational culture of a rural school must be caring and collaborative amongst all stakeholders. The development of a collaborative decision making process within a rural school is facilitated by the decentralization of power. Rural school leaders need have the capacity to facilitate a collective organizational culture by soliciting input, analyzing the data, and building consensus among all stakeholders (Barnett, 2004).

In rural schools, it is imperative for principals to be collaborative with stakeholders and articulate a clear collective vision that includes high expectations and academic achievement.

Spillane (2005) argued rural school leaders must be able to develop trust with followers through the implementation of a collaborative interaction process. A collaborative interaction between leaders and followers increases the motivation to pursue a shared commitment and thus working in isolation is reduced. Effective rural school leaders can cultivate an organizational culture which encourages creativity and progressive thinking (English, 2003). When stakeholders feel included in the decision making process in the school, the capacity building is strengthened and others are included into leadership responsibilities. The collaborative approach to developing a cohesive organizational culture in rural schools is contingent upon the relationship between the leaders and the followers. Dinham (2005) suggested leadership is a crucial factor to improving student academic achievement and attainment of outstanding educational outcomes.

It must be understood that the traditional hierarchical and non-collaborative approach to improving schools does not produce sustainable reform (English, 2003). Within rural schools, it is imperative for principals to lead by example and have an open door policy. It is important for educational stakeholders to feel the relational trust with leaders to discuss any issues that may arise. The relational trust can be cultivated by rural school leaders with stakeholders by valuing their participation in every area of the organization (Laub & O'Connor, 2009).

However, principals in rural schools face unique obstacles and situations. Beeson and Strange (2003) argued rural schools are geographically isolated with a limited tax base due to the low socioeconomic status of families in rural communities. In small rural school districts, superintendents have little, if any, support personnel. In research conducted by Kowalski (2005) there was little support in rural school districts for professional development with curriculum and instruction. These limitations in rural schools allow rural school leaders to often treat the

symptoms of poor student academic achievement and not the causes of the problem (Laub & O'Connor, 2009). It seems NCLB has been the driving force for decision making in rural schools with the pressure of meeting its requirements. Thus, rural school leaders feel the stress of having to produce immediate results in improving student academic achievement and never addressing the needs within the organizational culture.

Rural school principals not only need to facilitate disaggregation of data to meet the needs of students but also focus on the organizational culture and climate within the school (Laub & O'Connor, 2009). By addressing the needs of the organizational culture, rural school leaders have the potential to motivate change in attitudes, expectations, and personal beliefs of educational stakeholders. However, the rural school leader must understand that change in the organizational culture is a gradual process (Fullan, 2009; Laub & O'Connor, 2009; Owens & Valesky, 2011). Rural school leaders must understand that sustainable educational reform is an evolving process that includes "synthesis, evaluation, analysis, reflection, and collaboration" (Laub & O'Connoer, 2009, p. 155). According to Deal and Peterson (1999), school reform must take place within the organization. A cohesive organizational culture can have significant impact on innovation and increase effectiveness of schools. Thus, leadership is a crucial process that can facilitate the development of positive organizational culture.

Gupton (2003) identified twelve leadership behaviors that positively impact the organizational culture of a school: (a) genuinely believing and accepting responsibility that all students can learn; (b) focusing on learning by establishing high expectations; (c) having a clear and concrete shared mission; (d) recruiting and hiring staff who will support the shared mission; (e) implementing effective teaching and learning principles; (f) modeling effective teaching

practices for staff; (g) using educational research to build capacity amongst staff; (h) implementing innovative curricular programs; (i) developing and implementing standards based curriculum and assessments; (j) monitoring student progress frequently and using data to inform instruction; (k) expecting all staff to meet high instructional standards through frequent classroom visitations; and (l) communicating clear expectations and clear goals for implementation. Thus, educational leadership is crucial for encouraging innovativeness and the collaboration of school staff to attain organizational objectives and demonstrate effectiveness (Farmer, 2009; Mullen, 2009). According to Owens and Valesky (2011), principal leaders face a career that requires a new resiliency to meet the challenges within the school setting to improve its organizational cohesiveness and effectiveness.

Defining Leadership

Leadership is a concept which can be defined in many ways and it is many times associated with one person leading in a specific context (also referred to as vertical, hierarchical, centralized, or bureaucratic leadership) or a collaborative approach (also referred to as horizontal, shared, or team leadership) (Owens & Valesky, 2011). In fact, leadership is the most studied topic in social sciences but the least understood (Bennis, 1989). Despite the multiple definitions, Northouse (2007) conceptualized leadership through the following components: (a) leadership is a process; (b) leadership is the capacity to influence others; (c) leadership is realized within a group context; (d) leadership is contingent upon goal attainment; and (e) the goals are shared by leaders and followers.

Yukl (2006) defined leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish objectives" (p. 8). According to Northouse (2007), leadership is a "process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). Thus, defining leadership as a process strengthens the premise that the relationship between leaders and followers is important (Northouse, 2007). However, defining leadership as a process implies it is not a phenomenon that only certain people possess within specific groups or situations as implied by some traditional leadership theories (Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2006). There are two core functions used to describe leadership. According to Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) leadership was defined as a process of providing direction and exercising influence. In fact, both of these leadership functions can be demonstrated in different ways and when interconnected to distinct functions distinguish the various leadership models.

Despite the efforts of researchers to propose numerous theoretical generalizations to explain the relationship between leadership and organizational innovativeness, the empirical research is limited (Schin & McClomb, 1998; Waldman & Bass, 1991). In fact, King and Anderson (1995) argued scholars and leaders have accepted the proposed previous leadership frameworks to increase organizational innovativeness with limited empirical evidence. The deficiency stems from several research studies conducted which have only examined a direct link between various leadership styles and organizational innovativeness (Howell & Higgins, 1990; Jaskyte, 2004; Schin & McClomb, 1998). However, Jaskyte (2004) states:

> The proponents of alternative [leadership] views suggest that it is too simplistic to argue that organizational effectiveness is determined primarily by leaders because leadership is mainly a perceptual phenomenon and because other organizational and environmental variables may account for the apparent effects of leaders. (p. 154)

Hence, to better understand the influence of leadership on organizational innovation, it is imperative to study other related factors like organizational culture (Jaskyte, 2004).

Leadership Theories

Trait Approach-Focus on Skills

Are leaders born? Throughout the 20th century, the trait approach was a foundational starting point for studying the phenomenon of leadership (Northouse, 2007). The trait approach focused on identifying specific innate characteristics that were possessed by great leaders. Bass (1990), Jago (1982), and Northouse (2007) argued the trait approach led to the development of great man theories. The great man theory suggested great leaders were born with a specific set of traits which enabled them to be great leaders.

In leadership research conducted by Stogdill (1948, 1974), the findings identified a series of traits associated to individuals that had assumed leadership roles. The results indicated a difference in several characteristics (intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability) between leaders and followers. Stogdill's findings from his first survey suggested traits possessed by individuals are relevant to the leadership capacity being exercised. Thus, implying individuals functioning as leaders in a particular situation may not be a leader in a different situation. Findings also demonstrated leadership was an active relationship between the leader and followers.

The research findings, by Stogdill (1948), concluded the trait approach to leadership was contingent upon situational factors. In subsequent research by Stogdill (1974), findings of a second survey were compared to his findings on his 1948 survey. The results indicated both

personality traits and situational factors were crucial to the essence of leadership. According to

Stogdill (1974), leadership was conceptualized by the following descriptors: (a) drive for

responsibility and task completion; (b) vigor and persistence in the pursuit of specific goals; (c)

innovative and creative in conflict resolution; (d) determination to take the initiative in social

situations; (e) self confidence and clear sense of self; (f) willingness to accept responsibility for

decision making process and results; (g) disposition to absorb interpersonal stress; (h)

willingness to be patient with frustration and delay; (i) ability to be influential; and (j) capacity

to frame social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) stated, "…leaders are not like other people" (p. 59) and

imply there is a difference between leaders and non-leaders across six traits: (a) motivation, the

desire to lead; (b) honesty; (c) integrity; (d) self-confidence; (e) cognitive capacity; and (f)

knowledge of the organization. Thus, the suggestion by Kirkpatrick and Locke was that leaders

are different because they naturally possess the "right stuff" needed for the leadership process.

Northouse (2007) identified five major leadership traits that summarize the trait approach

to leadership: (a) intelligence; (b) self-confidence; (c) determination; (d) integrity; and (e)

sociability. These five leadership traits Northouse posited, place the focus of the leadership

process on leaders. Research findings for the trait approach to leadership indicated leaders that

possess a specific profile increased organizational effectiveness. The traits approach to

leadership is linked to the perspective that *leaders are born*.

There are several strengths identified for the trait approach to leadership. Northouse

(2007) identified four strengths for the trait approach to leadership. First, it provided the

imagery of a hero or heroine leading the way in society. Society seemed to be infatuated with

the notion of identifying heroes and heroines as leaders. Second, approximately 100 years of

extensive leadership research supported the trait leadership approach. Thus, the credibility was

naturally strengthened in the identification of specific traits imperative to the leadership process.

Third, focus was placed on the role of the leader and this perspective allowed for a deeper

understanding of the personality of the leader in the leadership process. Finally, the trait

approach identified descriptive benchmarks. These benchmarks were used to identify strengths

and weaknesses regarding leadership effectiveness.

Along with the identified strengths, there were also criticisms with the trait approach to

leadership. Four criticisms were identified by Northouse (2007). The first criticism was the lack

of identification of a concrete list of traits that are effective in the leadership process. Second,

the trait approach to leadership does not take specific situations into consideration because the

focus is on the leader. Third, the research findings for the traits approach have been interpreted

subjectively and were not definitive in meaning. Thus, emphasis was placed on a static

identification of leadership traits. There was a lack of understanding in the trait approach to

leadership regarding the impact of traits on the organizational members. Finally, the trait

approach was not beneficial for ongoing professional development to improve the process of

leadership.

Behavioral Approach-Focus on Style

After early leadership researchers exhausted their search for traits possessed by leaders, a

new wave of research went from focusing on the traits of leaders to actions of leaders within the

organization. During this era of study, leadership researchers categorized leadership into two

kinds of behaviors: task behaviors and relationship (Northouse, 2007). Northouse defined task behaviors as a process focused on attaining objectives while relationship behaviors cultivated a bond with followers. Leadership research identified the crucial role of leadership processes in the formation of culture and the attainment of organizational goals (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Dumay, 2009; Lewin, 1951; Northouse, 2007). Blake and Mouton (1985) developed and revised several times a model to conceptualize the leadership process known as the Managerial Grid, which is now referred to as the Leadership Grid. The purpose of the grid was to explain the task and the relationship behaviors of leadership to demonstrate organizational effectiveness. The Leadership Grid depicted five leadership styles: (a) authority-compliance; (b) country club management; (c) impoverished management; (d) middle-of-the-road management; and (e) team management.

McGregor (1960) conceptualized leadership by categorizing the relationship between people and the organization through Theory X or Theory Y. Theory X was based upon four assumptions the leader may hold:

1. The average person dislikes work and will avoid it wherever possible.

2. Due to people disliking work, they must be supervised closely; they must be given directives, coerced, or threatened with punishment in order for them to exercise adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational goals.

3. The typical worker will avoid responsibility and seek formal directives from management.

4. Most workers value job security above other job-related factors and have little ambition (Owens & Valesky, 2011).

Theory Y was contingent upon a set of four different descriptors:

1. If motivated, followers will view work as a natural and acceptable as play.

2. Workers will exercise initiative, self direction, and self-control on the job if they buy into the goals of the organization.

3. The average person not only accepts responsibility on the job but also begins to seek it.

4. The average person values innovation defined as the ability to make good decisions and seeks opportunities to be creative at work (Owens & Valesky, 2011).

The intent of the style approach to leadership was to provide a framework for assessing the implementation of leadership behaviors. Despite the identified styles used to conceptualize leadership, it was difficult to conclude which leadership behavior is significant in empowering one group to work better than another (Northouse, 2007).

There were four strengths identified by Northouse (2007) for the style approach to leadership. First, the style approach expanded the focus of leadership research from focusing only on leadership traits to include the behaviors of leaders and their impact on organizational members. Second, a multitude of research studies conducted by Blake and Mouton (1985) and Blake and McCanse (1991) conceptualized a framework to better understand the leadership process. Third, the core leadership behaviors were identified as task and relationship. Thus, the effectiveness of the leader was contingent on the ability to balance the two behaviors effectively. Fourth, the style approach provided a broad conceptualization of the leadership process. Part of the leadership process was contingent on being reflective. Being reflective allowed or can allow leaders to learn about themselves and assess the impact of their behaviors on others.

Northouse (2007) identified three criticisms for the style approach to leadership. First, research findings by Bryman (1992) and Yukl (1994) indicated the inability to clearly link the style approach from leadership to organizational performance outcomes. Second, there was not a universal style of leadership that could demonstrate itself as effective in almost every situation based on inconsistencies in the research. Finally, ideally according to the Managerial Grid, the effective leader should be demonstrated through a high task and high relationship because it was inferred to be the optimal level in the leadership process ((Blake & McCanse, 1991). However, Yukl (1994) argued the high task and high relationship does not always result in effective leadership. There were certain situations that required the implementation of different styles of leadership due to the complexity dynamics within the organization (Northouse, 2007; Owens & Valesky, 2011).

Situational (Contingency) Approach-The Right Place at the Right Time

The situational (also referred to as contingency) theory is when leaders are matched with appropriate situations. The term situational is used to suggest the leader's effectiveness is contingent upon the appropriateness of leadership style to fit in the specific situation (Northouse, 2007). The contingency approach focuses on the situational factors such as characteristics of environment, subordinates and tasks which influence the leadership process and is composed of both a directive and a supportive dimension (House, 1971; Northouse, 2007).

Fielder (1964) identified specific situational variables, which include: (a) combination of directive task structure; (b) supportive relationship amongst leader-member; and (c) the position of the leader to evaluate the performance of followers. Other situational variables identified by

Vroom and Yetton (1973) and Hersey and Blanchard (1977) are: (a) the amount of appropriate information possessed; (b) importance of decision; (c) the willingness for followers to accept the decision; and (4) the maturity of followers. Blanchard (1985) refined the Situational Leadership II (SLII) model originally conceptualized by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) for the situational approach to leadership.

There are four distinct categories identified by Northouse (2007) for directive task and supportive relationship: (1) high directive-low supportive; (2) coaching; (3) high supportive-low directive; and (d) low supportive-low directive.

Directive behavior describes the leader giving directions, setting goals, developing a process for evaluation, and developing a timeline for implementation. When leaders implement this style, it can be conceptualized as a bureaucratic or centralized decision making process (Northouse, 2007; Owens & Valesky, 2011). A highly directive leadership style facilitates a framework that does not include other organizational members in the decision making process.

Supportive behavior facilitates the development of self confidence amongst organizational members to develop cohesion. It is a reciprocated emotional and social relationship between leader and the other organizational members. The higher the degree of supportive behavior by the leader, the more communication is strengthened to problem solve, build trust, and create a collaborative culture (Northouse, 2007). When leaders demonstrate a high level of supportive behavior, the organizational members will feel valued and appreciated by the leader.

Northouse (2007) and Hersey and Blanchard (1993) identified five strengths for the situational leadership approach. First, situational leadership is used as a framework frequently

within the business world for training within organizations. Second, the leadership approach is also practical and is applicable to various situations. Third, the situational approach to leadership does not provide a descriptive analysis but rather a prescriptive model. It describes the series of steps that leaders should take in a specific situation. Fourth, it is imperative for leaders to cultivate a relationship and meet the needs of other organizational members. This approach recognizes the need to treat followers differently because employees will act differently during tasks (Northouse, 2007). Lastly, Fernandez and Vecchio (1997) and Yukl (1998) argued situational leadership outlines for leaders the importance of treating organizational members based on the functions being performed for the purpose of learning new skills.

There are seven criticisms identified by Northouse (2007) regarding situational leadership. First, there are limited studies that confirm the assumptions of the framework for situational leadership. Fernandez and Vecchio (1997), Graeff (1997), and Vecchio and Boatwright (2002) argued the theoretical framework of situational leadership is limited and weak. Second, the conceptual framework is not concrete and specific in the development of organizational members to assess any of the four categories of situational leadership. Third, the theoretical explanation for the change across the four stages of situational leadership is not clearly explained. In fact, several researchers have implied additional research is needed to clarify the ambiguity of organizational member development (Graeff, 1997; Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi,1985). The fourth criticism is related to the link between the style of the leader and the development level of organizational members. Research conducted by Vecchio (1987) of 300 secondary schools and their site based leaders (principals) found new teachers responded better to principals with a more structured leadership approach. However, the veteran teachers

45

did not demonstrate a significantly impacted by the leadership approach of the principal. The fifth criticism of the situational leadership approach is that it does not account for the demographic characteristics of the organizational members (education level, experience, age, and gender). Another criticism is the practicality of situational leadership regarding the issue of group or one on one leadership within the organization. Finally, the questionnaires used to assess situational leadership are biased and categorize the responses to describe leadership style and does not identify the leadership behaviors, thus demonstrating a preference for situational leadership (Graeff, 1983; Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 1989).

Transactional Approach

In his research, Burns (1978) linked the roles of leaders and followers by identifying two different kinds of leadership - transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is used to describe the majority of leadership models, which is based on exchanges between leaders and organizational members. According to Burns (1978) transactional leaders "…approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions" (p. 4). Transactional leaders demonstrate no interest in the capacity needs of organizational members (Northouse, 2007). Kuhnert (1994) and Kuhnert & Lewis (1987) argued transactional leaders can be influential through the exchange things of value and followers comply because it is in their best interest. Boyett (2006) identified and defined three factors of transactional leadership: (a) contingent reward; (b) management by exception defined as active; and (c) management by exception defined or passive.

The first is contingent reward and is based on the understanding that the transactional leadership style is linked to a reward or punishment based on the followers' performance to meet specific organizational objectives or targets (Northouse, 2007). According to Boyett (2006), the behaviors associated with contingent reward have to do with economic and emotional exchanges between leaders and followers. The transactional leadership approach attempts to identify organizational objectives and stresses the benefits of attaining the target. The intention is that this approach will motivate organizational members to meet the standards. Thus, productivity is highly stressed to determine the effectiveness of the organization. An example of contingent reward is a parent who negotiates with a child playtime outside after finishing homework.

The second factor of transactional leadership is categorized through the lens of active management by exception. Leaders who exercise active management by exception are cautious to monitor the performance of responsibilities demonstrated by followers in to order to identify substandard functions and take corrective action (Boyett, 2006). According to Bass (1997) leaders exercising active management by exception are specifically looking for errors and enforce policies to avoid mistakes. The correction tactics used in this factor are for the leader to offer criticism, negative feedback, and negative reinforcement to attain organizational objectives (Northouse, 2007).

The final factor of transactional leadership is passive management by exception. This factor of transactional leadership is used to describe leaders who wait to intervene until serious mistakes are committed and identified. Transactional leaders use correction or punishment as response to unacceptable performance or deviation from the established standards (Burns, 1978).

Transformational Approach

Transformational leadership has been an approach highly researched since the 1980s (Northouse, 2007). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leadership has increased in interest because of its focus on intrinsic motivation. In research conducted by Bass (1985) and Burns (1978), transformational leadership is proposed as a process to cultivate organizational change. The transformational leadership approach is contrary to the transactional leadership approach, which is considered to be inadequate to transform organizational culture (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1990; Parry, 1996). The transformational leadership approach seeks to meet the emotional needs of organizational members to attain shared outcomes through change in organizational culture.

Northouse (2007) argued transformational leadership, by name, implies a process that transforms people. Transformational leadership is the demonstration of exceptional influence on the emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals of followers and helps them discern their motives. Influence can vary from a one-to-one level to entire organizations and it can even include cultures. Along with the need for transformational leaders to cultivate change, a strong interconnectedness also exists between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2007).

Transformational leadership is a process in which the leader engages in a relationship with followers whereby the level of morality and motivation is raised in both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2007). Transformational leadership is not associated with power, but rather it is interconnected to the needs of organizational members. Bass (1978) stated "transformational leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (p. 4). Transformational

leaders strengthen the interconnectedness of organizational members by implementing an innovative strategic planning process to cultivate a positive organizational culture (Harris, 1985; Roberts, 1985).

Transformational leadership is used to define the process by which followers are motivated to perform and identify with organizational goals (Sarros, Cooper, & Santora, 2008). Transformational leadership is also concerned with inspiring followers to think beyond themselves and attain higher levels of performance by implementing four dimensions identified by Bass (1985): (a) idealized influence or charisma; (b) inspirational motivation; (c) intellectual stimulation and; (d) individualized consideration.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) conducted leadership research of the top ninety leaders and identify four common strategies implemented by transformational leaders to attain organizational outcomes: (a) develop a clear shared vision; (b) shape or form organizational culture as reflected by shared values and norms; (c) develop trust and; (d) focus on the strengths of self and others.

Kouzes and Posner (1987, 2002) defined transformational leadership with five observable practices: (a) challenge familiar organizational processes; (b) inspire a shared vision among organizational members; (c) build capacity among organizational members to fulfill the shared vision; (d) model the expected behaviors and; (e) inspire organizational members through recognition and celebration of success.

In research conducted by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) transformational leadership is defined across six factors: (a) articulating a vision for the future; (b) providing an appropriate role model; (c) fostering the acceptance of goals; (d) setting high performance expectations; (e) providing individual support; and (f) providing intellectual

stimulation. In their study, Podsakoff et al. examined the effects of the six factors of transformational leadership on organizational culture and climate for organizational innovation. The six factors are treated as separate but related dimensions rather than as a single construct (Edwards, 2001).

According to Northouse (2007), the literature puts forth strengths for transformational leadership. First, a wide spectrum of qualitative research has been compiled on transformational leadership from many different perspectives. Second, the transformational leadership approach conceptualizes the process by which change for others is advocated and resonates with societal perspectives of leadership. The third strength for transformational leadership is the relationship process that occurs between leaders and followers. Due to the interconnected relationship between leaders and followers, leadership includes the participation of followers in the process. The needs of all organizational members are important in the transformational leadership process. Fourth, a strong emphasis is placed on the needs, values, and morals of followers. Transformational leaders inspire followers to move to higher standards of moral responsibility for their own self interests for the good of the entire organization (Bass, 1985; Howell & Avolio, 1993). The transformational leadership approach differs when compared to other leadership models because it includes a moral dimension (Northouse, 2007). Finally, Yukl (1999) argued transformational leadership has been deemed effective based on substantial evidence. The quantitative studies referenced by Yukl (1999) use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to assess and link transformational leadership to follower satisfaction, motivation, and performance. There is also qualitative evidence compiled through interviews and observations which indicate transformational leadership has shown to be effective (Northouse, 2007).

Northouse (2007) identified five criticisms for transformational leadership. First, it lacks

conceptual clarity to define transformational leadership because it encompasses a wide spectrum

of processes (i.e. creating a vision, motivating, being an advocate for change, building trust,

being nurturing, and being a cultivator or organizational culture). Research findings by Tracey

and Hinkin (1998) indicated a substantial overlap between each of the four dimensions for

transformational leadership (idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation,

intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration). Additionally, the descriptors used to

define transformational leadership frequently overlap with similar conceptualizations of

leadership (Northouse, 2007). Bryman (1992) suggested there is a link between transformational

leadership and charismatic leadership, which results in treating both synonymously. However,

Bass (1985) argued charisma is a component of transformational leadership.

Second, researchers have typically used the MLQ to measure transformational leadership.

Yet, some studies have questioned the validity of the MLQ because the four dimensions correlate

highly which indicates they are not distinct factors (Tejada, Scandura, & Pillai, 2002). Research

findings by Tejada et al. indicated the four dimensions of transformational leadership correlate

with transactional factors implying they are not unique to the transformational model.

Third, transformational leadership is considered as a personality trait rather than a

behavior that can be learned by people (Bryman, 1992). Hence, if transformational leadership is

linked to personality traits, it becomes difficult to teach others to change their traits. However,

several researchers strongly linked transformational leadership to the behaviors demonstrated by

leaders in their interconnected relationship with followers by Weber, House, and Bass

(Northouse, 2007). Yet, the inclination is to view this transformational leadership as a process in

51

which there is one person being the most active in the transformative process. As a result the approach of transformational leadership lends itself to be linked to the trait perspective. For example, creating a shared vision in an organization involves input from all members; there is a tendency to consider leaders as having unique characteristics responsible for cultivating cultural change. This perspective supports the trait characterization of transformational leadership.

A fourth criticism for transformational leadership is that it is considered elitist and antidemocratic (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1993). This perspective is cultivated because transformational leaders are considered directly responsible in creating cultural changes, developing a shared vision, and stimulating innovativeness. As a result, transformational leaders are considered to place their own needs above the needs of other organizational members. However, Bass and Avolio (1993) and Avolio (1999) argued transformational leadership can be directive and participative along with democratic and authoritarian. Hence, many questions are posed regarding transformational leadership. According to Yukl (1999), transformational leadership suffered from a heroic leadership bias because it focuses on the actions of leaders to move followers along to demonstrate effectiveness. However, focusing only on leaders has limited researchers to study distributed leadership or reciprocal influence. It is considered that followers can influence leaders just as leaders can influence followers.

Finally, transformational leadership can be abused within organizations because it is assumed the shared vision and shared values identified are in the best interest of all members of the organization (Northouse, 2007). Hence, organizational members should challenge when the shared vision and shared values are not aligned. However, the process of challenging leadership has not been fully understood (Northouse, 2007). In fact, Northouse (2007) argued there is a

need to understand the psychological impact of transformational leaders on followers and the response of leaders towards followers. Burns argued it is imperative to understand the relationship between leadership charisma and follower worship (Bailey & Axelrod, 2001). According to Conger (1999) and Howell and Avolio (1993), it is the charismatic phenomenon of transformational leadership that can be significantly risky because it can be used to be harmful and destructive towards others.

The Needs of Rural Schools in California

Rural schools in California are becoming more culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse. Approximately half of the student population in California is identified as Latino (Perez-Huber, Huidor, Malagon, Sanchez, & Solorzano, 2006). The Rural School Community Trust (2009) recently released updated demographics regarding rural schools. These current demographics indicate more than half of the students enrolled in rural schools are identified as minority students and approximately 27% are identified as English Learners (EL). Nearly 46% of all students attending rural schools in California qualify for free or reduced meals. The migrant student population is approximately 16% in rural households. The Rural School Community Trust (2009) also reports a high concentration of poverty districts in rural settings, which is also comprised of 90% minority and 86% socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The number of students attending impoverished rural school districts places California 4th in the nation. The impact of NCLB on rural schools indicate a 51.6% proficient or better in English Language Arts (ELA) and 48.8% proficient or better in mathematics.

Goodban et al. (2004) argue the student population in the California's San Joaquin Valley has grown at a faster rate than the state's average, increasing by 20% between 1970 and 2000. The fastest population growth has occurred within the Latino ethnic group by increasing to 39 percent. In Fresno County specifically, there are 35 total public school districts serving approximately 193,671 students (CDE, 2011c). Out of the 35 school districts, 32 are considered to be rural. The three districts not considered rural are urban/suburban serving an approximate enrollment of 128,330.

Transformational Leadership Theoretical Framework

Frameworks for Change Leadership

Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) used two core functions to describe leadership as providing direction and exercising influence. Leaders exercise these two core functions in organizational environments marked by stability and change. Stability is often associated with resistance to change and perpetuation of the status quo resulting in weak infrastructures (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Thus, weak infrastructures can result in change; however, it is the type of change which does not render any significant organizational improvement. It is evident that the weak infrastructures and mandated restructuring have led to a multitude of changes adopted in schools which have not improved the academic achievement of students (Elmore, 1995).

To better understand the roles and responsibilities of change leadership, scholars have proposed several theoretical frameworks. Hersey and Blanchard (1982), House (1971), and Vroom and Yetton (1973) suggested there are several useful frameworks for understanding

change leadership along with the concepts of vision, values, leading by example, communication, rewards and empowerment.

Sosik and Megerian (1999) identified five essential components of organizational leaders who cultivate change: (a) self-awareness; (b) emotional control; (c) motivation; (d) empathy; and (e) social skills. According to Kolb, Rubin, and McIntrye (1971) leaders who cultivate organizational change must be able to teach followers to develop goals, communicate goals across the organization, take the initiative to develop a strategic plan to attain the goals, and perseverance to strive toward the attainment of goals. Leaders also need to be aware of their feelings along with the feelings of all organizational members to cultivate transformational change (Weisinger, 1998). In fact, DuBrin (1998) and Kotter (1999) argued leaders need to be visionary and transformational when initiating the process of organizational change by setting a new path. Leaders transforming organizational culture develop a clear shared vision, encourage innovativeness to help set the direction, and inspire commitment of organizational members to work towards attaining the outcomes (Yukl, 1989).

Despite the frameworks for change leadership, there still has been confusion regarding the roles and related responsibilities of leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). In fact, Kouzes and Posner argued leaders need to understand the organizational vision, the dynamics of the interconnected relationship with followers, and the process needed to attain the vision. Kotter and Heskett (1992) suggested leaders need to create a sense of urgency for change, to cultivate open communication with followers, and clarify any misconceptions about the shared vision.

The evolvement of transformational leadership conceptualized by Bass (1985) is founded in the relationship between leaders and followers. Bass (1985) argued transformational

leadership inspires followers to perform better than expected by (a) raising followers' levels of consciousness about the importance of specific goals; (b) getting followers to move from self interest to for the sake of the team or organization; and (c) motivating followers to address higher level needs. The interconnected relationship developed between leaders and followers through transformational leadership can cultivate changes in organizational culture. The intent of transformational leadership is to improve the effectiveness of followers and building capacity among followers to reach their fullest potential (Avolio, 1999; Avolio & Bass, 1999). Individuals who implement a transformational leadership framework are shown to have strong intrinsic morals and values, and are able to motivate followers to contribute to the greater good of the others rather than self interests by cultivating ongoing development throughout the change process (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Kuhnert, 1994).

Avolio, Waldman, and Yammarino (1991) argued leaders inspire followers by encouraging them to cultivate change, develop a shared vision, and challenge the status quo. The foundation of the transformational leadership process is conceptualized by four dimensions: (a) idealized influence or charisma; (b) inspirational motivation; (c) intellectual stimulation; and (d) individualized consideration (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Bass, 1985, 1995; Avolio & Bass, 1991, 1997; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Northouse, 2007).

The transformational leadership model introduced by Avolio and Bass (1991) demonstrates an intertwined relationship between leadership and organizational culture. The model demonstrated leaders need to be attentive to the beliefs, values, assumptions, traditions and ceremonies embedded into the organizational culture and the influence of these factors for change (Bass & Avolio, 1994). As organizational leaders attempt to transform cultural change, a

56

consideration of the past must not be overlooked. In fact, Avolio and Bass (2002) argued most leaders learn it is imperative to solicit feedback from organizational members when proposing cultural change.

Parry (1996) argued transformational leadership is comprised of role modeling, inspirational motivation, visionary leadership, and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership is defined as a process of inspiring change in the attitudes of organizational members to internalize the vision and goals (Carlson & Perrewe, 1995). Thus, to better understand the function of transformational leadership and organizational change, it is essential to review previous research conducted by Bass and Avolio (1994), Kotter (1996), and Kouzes and Posner (1987, 1995).

According to Bennis and Nanus (1985) transformational leaders focused on intangible qualities of shared vision, shared values, validation of a variety of functions, built consensus, and recruited followers to be part of the change process. After interviewing 90 CEOs in private and public sector organizations, Bennis compiled his notes, records, and identifies several patterns of actions to define transformational leadership (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2005). Bennis and Nanus (1985) identified five traits crucial to the leader-follower relationship: (a) attentive; (b) communicative; (c) trustworthy; (d) respectful; and (e) risk taker. In 1990, Bennis and Nanus reclassified their initial five traits into four crucial traits to the leader-follower relationship: (a) intensity (usually concerning the shared vision of the organization; (b) exceptional communication (and listening) skills; (c) consistency and trustworthiness; and (d) self-confidence.

After nearly 20 years, Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) expanded the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) and other researchers by developing several versions of an assessment questionnaire used to measure transformational leadership behaviors: (a) communication leadership; (b) credible leadership; (c) caring leadership; (d) creation of opportunities. Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) also identify three characteristics of transformational leadership: (a) self confidence; (b) empowerment; and (c) vision. The premise is that when the transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics conceptualized by Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) are implemented, the organizational context (culture) as defined by Schein (1992) and Deal and Peterson (1990) are strengthened and effectiveness is increased.

Linking Transformational Leadership to Communication Leadership

Researchers suggested approximately 70% of the school site leader's time is spent in communication (Kmetz & Willower, 1982; Reyes & Hoyle, 1992). School site principals basically incorporate three basic forms of communication: (a) verbal communication; (b) written communication; and (c) communication through action (Keil & McConnahan, 2005).

Along with Burns (1978), conceptualization of transformational leadership, House (1976) also introduced a charismatic leadership theory. The term charisma was first used to describe the specific skill possessed by persons and exercised to perform extraordinary functions within organizations (Northouse, 2007). Besides the initial definition provided by Weber (1947) which suggested charisma is a superhuman trait possessed only by a few, Weber (1947) also identified charisma as a powerful trait validated by followers (Bryman, 1992; House, 1976). Charismatic

leadership is a dimension of transformational leadership and is contingent upon the relationship between leaders and followers (Kelly, 2003).

Leaders who exercise idealized influence earn the admiration, respect, and trust of followers (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). Through this process, leaders are influential and serve as role models for organizational members and the byproduct results in the cultivation of confidence and trust (Bono & Judge, 2004; Simic, 1998; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). Thus, organizational members can identify with leaders and strive to follow their highly moral and ethical example of conduct. The confidence placed in leaders by followers provides the foundation to transform organizational culture and the likelihood of less resistance to change (Hay, 2010). Leaders with idealized influence or charisma are able to cultivate a high level of trust by conceptualizing a shared vision and sense of mission. When idealized influence is linked to leadership behaviors, the goals, values, needs, beliefs, and aspirations are transformed and changed within the organization (Rowold & Heinitz, 2007; Yukl, 2002).

Linking Transformational Leadership to Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation introduces the leaders as individuals who encourage organizational members to demonstrate appropriate functions or behaviors and is closely linked to inspirational motivation. When inspirational leadership is exercised, all of the organizational members will be motivated to accept new beliefs and ideas continuously (Hay, 2010; Jandaghi, Matin, & Farjami, 2009). Jandaghi, Matin, and Farjami (2009) also stated "inspirational motivation is a process through which the transformational leader[s] motivates his or her followers to become committed to and part of the shared vision in the organization" (p. 274).

The process offers organizational members to attach meaning to their work, and challenges them to establish higher expectations (Hay, 2010).

Senge (1990) categorized inspirational motivation into two factors: (1) transformational leaders inspire followers to be motivated and; (2) transformational leaders strive to attain organizational objectives by creating a shared insight with organizational members (Jandaghi, Matin, & Farjami, 2009). Organizational members select to internalize the shared vision facilitated by the transformational leader and commit to it by choice rather than force. Jandaghi et al. identified six descriptors for inspirational motivation: (a) optimistic speaking of future; (b) enthusiastic speaking about what needs to be done; (c) articulating an attractive perspective of future; (d) modeling the confidence so that objectives will be met; (e) conceptualizing an exciting plan of action for implementation and; (f) confronting challenging problems within the organization (Moghali, 2002). Transformational leaders encourage followers to dream and contribute towards the development of innovative, alternative futures (Bass et al., 2003).

Linking Transformational Leadership to Intellectual Stimulation

The purpose of intellectual stimulation is to provide followers with opportunities to generate creative and innovative solutions to old problems (McGuire & Hutchings, 2007). The literature indicates there is a high interest in exploring the relationship between leaders and followers during the process of change (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008). The process of developing a strong ethical culture is contingent upon the experiences facilitated by transformational leaders (Sama & Shoaf, 2008).

Frick (2009) and Hay (2010) suggested leaders will provide followers with self experiences which will help balance rules with moral ethical practices by stimulating awareness and capacity to problem solve. Frick (2009) described this phenomenon as a process by which leaders and followers are provoked with moral dissonance. Moral dissonance examines policies and rules according to what is in the best interest of all stakeholders. The purpose of moral dissonance is to empower followers towards innovative ideas by taking risks (Hay, 2010; Stone et al., 2003).

Transformational leaders focus on current situations and strategically develop a plan of action (Harold et al., 2008). Leaders will need to articulate the vision for followers to be able to internalize it and possibly experience some moral dissonance. The commitment to transformational change will encourage followers to reconceptualize the perspective of leadership and there will be an increase in independent thinking and autonomy for generating solutions for problems. Through intellectual stimulation, followers are encouraged to reflect and share thoughts (McGuire & Hutchings, 2007). Even though, the research findings of Olsen et al. (2006) suggested moral behavior is not related to intellectual stimulation, Lazaridou (2007) argued the intention of morality in transformational leadership is to foster decency and prevent harm to any other individuals.

Jandaghi et al. (2009) identified five descriptors for intellectual stimulation: (a) reinvestigating basic assumptions and questioning them; (b) looking for various perspectives when problem solving; (c) challenging others to view problems from different perspectives; (d) encouraging innovative thinking to confront traditional problems and; (e) encouraging the revising of ideas that are not questioned yet (Moghali, 2002).

Linking Transformational Leadership to Individualized Consideration

Transformational leadership is also described through individualized consideration. When transformational leaders exercise individualized consideration there is a concern with the personal feelings and needs of organizational members (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Followers are supported individually and differently by transformational leaders on the basis of their talents, skills, and knowledge to increase their responsibilities in the organization (Hay, 2010; Shin & Zhou, 2003). Jandaghi et al. (2009) argued individualized consideration meets the higher needs of development and maturity of followers and identify through six descriptors: (a) spending time in teaching and coaching; (b) treating others as persons and not just as organizational members; (c) paying attention to the needs, capabilities, dreams, and wishes of individuals within the organization; (d) nurturing others towards ongoing growth in their own capabilities; (e) listening to the demands and interests of others and; (f) developing individuality and facilitating the growth of others (Moghali, 2002). This process will facilitate a supportive climate through individual consideration by transformational leaders towards organizational members (Jandaghi et al., 2009).

Defining Organizational Culture

The concept of organizational culture has its roots stemming from the Western Electric research conducted during the 1930s. The findings from these studies indicate a link between some management styles and an increased level of affiliation, competence, and achievement form organizational members (Owens & Valesky, 2011). The byproduct resulted in more productive work and a greater job satisfaction from organizational members. In the 1940s,

research studies were conducted which explore the premise that organization would be more effective by implementing strategic interventions developed to restructure the social norms of leaders and followers (Owens & Valesky, 2011).

Researchers utilize different terms to classify the interactions, thoughts, and behaviors between leaders and organizational members. During the latter part of the 1930s, culture is classified as a phenomenon of social fiction developed by people to give meaning to work and life (Barnard, 1938). Later, according to Selznick (1949) the term institution is used to identify the solidarity, meaning, commitment, and effectiveness in organizations. The term resurfaced during the 1970s to describe organizations (Meyer, 1978). During the 1960s, organizational climate emerged as a new term to describe the level of interconnectedness in elementary schools from research (Halpin & Croft, 1962). Finally, in research conducted by Rutter (1979) on the effectiveness of high schools, findings indicated an ethos is created by the interconnectedness of behavior through thinking. Defining organizational culture is difficult to conceptualize because there are many definitions in the literature (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Hunt, 1991; Owens & Valesky, 2011).

However, culture is defined by anthropologists in an attempt to conceptualize rituals and customs in various societies. In organizations, culture is defined by interactions between the motivational needs and characteristics (temperaments, intelligences, beliefs, perceptions) and characteristics of the environment (Owens & Valesky, 2011). Deal and Peterson (1990) stated "culture consists of stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behavior over time" (p. 7). In later research conducted by Deal and Peterson (1999) culture was used to conceptualize patterns, behaviors, and thought within the parameters of an organization.

Owens and Valesky (2011) defined organizational culture as "a body of solutions to external and internal problems that has worked consistently for a group and that is therefore taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think about, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 142). Killman, Saxton, and Serpa (1985) conceptualized organizational culture as an unconscious (or semiconscious) phenomenon of shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and norms that interconnect community members. Despite the multitude of definitions, anthropologists use the lens of human behavior to conceptualize organizational culture. However, they argue organizational culture is more than the study of human behavior. Owens and Valesky (2011) argued in the study of organizational culture "one looks at the artifacts and technology that people use, and one listens to what they use in making sense of the everyday events that they experience" (p. 142). Hence, the study of organizational culture is contingent upon the study of its values and characteristics.

There are two major themes that define organizational culture. These themes are categorized as norms and assumptions. Owens and Valesky (2011) argued norms are a set of expectations within the organization that influence behavior of members and there is a system of accountability. Assumptions serve as the foundation to behavioral norms and the formation of organizational culture. Assumptions can be defined as the unconscious internal conviction of organizational members to discern the possible from the impossible. Behavior is greatly influenced by underlying assumptions of organizational members (Owens & Valesky, 2011). Bolman and Deal (2003) defined culture as a product and process developed by organizational members. Organizational culture is a product of the actions of its current members and it is a process because it instills the values, beliefs, and norms in its new members.

According to Schein (1968) and Owens and Valesky (2011), organizational culture (also referred to as school culture, atmosphere, personality, tone, or ethos) can be considered as a set of evolving rules over a period of time and associated to the norms of a particular group. The dynamics within an organizational culture significantly impacts the actions of people. The concept of organizational culture is used to define the development of norms, beliefs, and values of a school. Schein (1992) viewed organizational culture as:

> a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with problems…that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 12)

The conceptualization articulated by Schein (1992) is used to better understand the dynamics and influence of interconnectedness within organizations. According to Schein (1992), organizational culture was multidimensional and categorized into three levels: (a) artifacts (visible organizational structures and processes); (b) espoused values (strategies, goals, philosophies) and; (c) basic underlying assumptions (unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings).

Schein (1992) argued the most evident manifestations of organizational culture are visible and audible. Hence, the visible and audible characteristics of organizational culture are linked to the dimension of artifacts. These artifacts are linked to the visible and audible processes or actions that serve to define the organizational culture by discerning their meaning. Values are the second dimension linked to organizational culture and are articulated and visible through mission or vision statements. These statements serve to clarify the assumptions of an organization. Finally, the third dimension is assumptions and is defined as the relationships

between organizational members and their environment. This relationship subconsciously impacts the culture within the organization (Owens & Valesky, 2011).

Schools are not static organizations because each has its own culture (Marzano, Walters, & McNulty, 2005). Although the definition of organizational school culture is unclear, it is the foundation for successful school improvement because it so influential (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Deal and Peterson (1999) argued school culture is shaped by the interconnectedness of organizational members and continues to evolve through the processes used to develop, reinforce, or transform the underlying norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions. A strong, positive, and collaborative school culture will influence many aspects of the school to prioritize, focus, and ensure internal motivation for commitment from organizational members (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein 1992).

Research scholars have varied in their definition of school culture and in its different types. Leithwood (1992) defined the phenomenon of school culture as a dichotomy by describing it as being rigid and hierarchical with teachers working in isolation or in groups collaboratively to create change. The dichotomous definition conceptualized by Leithwood (1992) is further expanded upon by Hopkins, Ainscow, and West (1994) by adding four categories to define school culture: (a) stuck; (b) wandering; (c) promenading and; (d) moving. First, stuck is used to define schools with low student academic achievement, teachers working in isolation, and blame is placed on external stakeholders. Second, wandering is used to define schools experiencing too much innovation and the organizational focus is lost in the process. Third, promenading is used to define schools living in their past achievement and not confronting the current and future needs of the organization. Lastly, Hopkins, et al. use moving

to define schools that implement a balanced process for change and stability as the organization improves.

Owens and Valesky (2011) argue school culture is shaped and defined by overlapping six elements: (a) traditions and beliefs; (b) history; (c) stories and myths; (d) heroes and heroines; (e) behavior norms and; (f) values and beliefs.

> An important aspect of organizational culture, as it is for culture in general, is that it endures through the generations. Each school is different because its history is unique, and that history is constantly in development as the school moves toward its future. Anyone hoping to alter the culture of a school must seek to alter the course of the school's history, and the leverage points for that are in the symbolic elements that define and shape the organizational culture of the school. (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 145)

Past research findings by Purkey and Smith (1983) and Levine and Lezotte (1990) suggested the stronger the school culture the more effective and productive the organization. The capacity of organizational members is developed through a strong culture conceptualized by having a clear focus, collegiality, support, encouragement, and motivation (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). Peterson and Brietzke (1994) determined that school culture can cultivate increased levels in communication and foster a collaborative approach to confront problems through social and professional interactions.

Linking Leadership and Organizational Culture in Schools

Leadership is crucial in defining the organizational culture of a school. Owens and Valesky (2011) argued it is imperative for school leaders to understand the processes to facilitate the development of school culture. Schein (1992) stressed the importance of leadership in the development of organizational culture by stating:

> When one brings culture to the level of the organization, one can see more clearly how it

is created, embedded, developed, and ultimately manipulated, managed, and changed. The dynamic process of culture creation and management are the essence of leadership and make one realize that leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin. (p. 1)

Thus, school leaders are pivotal for cultivating an organizational culture which creates cohesiveness and progress towards a shared set of objectives. Schein argued leaders need to try to "understand culture, give it its due, and ask yourself how well you can begin to understand the culture in which you are embedded" (1992, p.2).

Culture is the result of a complex group of learning processes that is only partially influenced by leader behavior. But if the group's survival is threatened because elements of its culture have become maladapted, it is ultimately the function of leadership to recognize and do something about the situation. It is in this sense that leadership and culture are conceptually intertwined. (p. 5)

Organizational school culture can be directly impacted by leadership when the leaders are able to perceive the limitations of their own culture and implement an adaptive process to continue its development. The ultimate challenge for leaders is to facilitate the cultivation of a positive culture within the context of the existing organization (Schein, 1992). Organizational culture provides a sense of purpose and belonging for administrators, teachers, students, and other community stakeholders. The formation of school culture is a vehicle that can be used to develop a collaborative decision making process (Owens & Valesky, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2001). The organizational culture in a school serves as the rudder to navigate people in a common direction. It provides a set of common values, beliefs, and norms for people to achieve (Sergiovanni, 2001). The organizational culture within a school determines the type of conversations among members in the lunchroom, the instructional pedagogy implemented, the decision making process for professional development, and the focus of student learning (Deal & Peterson, 1999). School leaders able to create this positive organizational cultural environment

are pivotal in bonding students, staff, and others to work toward a shared set of beliefs that have intrinsic meaning. The organizational community has a moral imperative to seek the best for society and for the school because the objectives are linked into one collective vision (Fullan, 2003).

Principals are in a crucial position in schools because they have access to the larger organizational system. However, principal leadership on school effectiveness and student learning is considered secondary to teachers and classroom instruction (Törnsén, 2009). In research findings by Seashore-Louis et al. (2010), principals have a direct impact on school culture and an indirect impact on student learning. Despite the role of principal leadership not having a direct impact on student achievement it is expected that they meet the demands for accountability. The historical perspective of the principal has assumed the "principal is not a major influence on the quality of education in a school" (DeRoche, 1985, p. v). However, a recent study by Seashore-Louis, et al. (2010) confirmed the need to evolve the conceptualization of the role of the principal.

Researchers have been suggesting for some time the need to shift the perspectives towards the conceptualization of the principalship (Lambert, 2003).

> What has been the traditional role of the principal appears to be changing relative to the substantial changes and schoolwide reforms that are beginning to take place in schools. (Christensen, 1992, p. 6)

It is imperative to understand principals alone cannot develop an effective organizational culture for students. The cultivation of an effective organizational culture is contingent upon the inclusion of school staff, students, and stakeholders (Sergiovanni, 2001). Sergiovanni elaborated on the influence of principals on shaping organizational culture in schools:

The culture of the school is therefore the product of conflict and negotiation over definitions of situations. The administrative influence on school language, metaphors, myths, and rituals is a major factor in the determination of the culture, which is reproduced in the consciousness of teacher and pupils. Culture that is based on metaphors of capital accumulation, hierarchy, and domination is at least partly attributable to the exercise of administrative authority during the negotiation of what is to count as the culture in school. (p. 112)

Principals must understand their role within the organizational culture of a school. This means principals must know how to lead people and manage systems (Owens & Valesky, 2011). Principals who are influential are effective not only by demonstrating improvement in student academic achievement but also when there is a clear vision shared by all stakeholders (Joyce, 2009). Leithwood, Bauer, and Riedlinger (2006) suggested effective principals create opportunities for ongoing discussions and review of instructional pedagogy through the inclusion of feedback.

Thus, the tone in organizational culture is influence by leadership behaviors and characteristics. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the interconnectedness between leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational based on the research of scholars in the area of transformational leadership and organizational culture.

Figure 1. Transformational leadership & organizational culture theoretical framework
Adapted from Bennis and Nanus (1985); Sashkin and Sashkin (2005); Schein (1992); and Deal
and Peterson (1990).

Chapter Summary

The education reform mandates since the 1980s have been unsuccessful in producing the

desired improvement in schools across the United States. Rural schools seem to be greatly

impacted by the one-size-fits-all reform mandates imposed by policymakers. The form and

process of school leadership is affected by the centralized process of development for education

reform mandates. An area of interest in genuine school reform is leadership and its impact on

school culture. Rural school leaders who are able to implement an effective leadership approach

will transform an organizational culture that values all stakeholders. Principals who exercise

effective leadership utilize the three dimensions of *transformational leadership* as defined by

71

Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) based on the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985). The three

dimensions of transformational leadership defined by behaviors, characteristics, and

organizational culture may intellectually stimulate others to work towards attaining a set of

concrete goals and objectives. In prior research, the findings document principals have

important effects on school outcomes (Hallinger & Heck 1998; Hallinger & Heck 1996;

Leithwood et al, 2004). In fact, Leithwood et al. (2004) argued in their research findings that

leadership has a direct impact on organizational culture which in turn has a direct impact on

student academic achievement.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (NAR) in 1983 to the passage of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act in 2001, education reform mandates have created intense pressure and stress for rural school principals and their staffs. For rural school principals, the current education reform mandates were conducive to the implementation of rigid leadership approaches which increased collective organizational stress (Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981; Griffith, 2004). According to Orfield, Kim, Sunderman and Greer (2004), it was assumed schools could attain achievement expectations for all students in a short period of time by implementing a process of punitive sanctions losing fiscal and human resources as the most effective process to increase school effectiveness. However, the implementation of bureaucratic leadership approaches tended to result in the implementation of centralized decision making processes have fragmented the organizational culture of schools, increased organizational stress, and decreased job satisfaction (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005; Owens & Valesky, 2011). In fact, Daly and Chrispeels (2005) suggested there is a need to transform rigid systemic responses influenced by education reform mandates and have leaders focus on assets.

Effective principal leadership facilitated a focus on identifying and developing systemic strengths, organizational resilience, and supportive infrastructures for the purpose of building effective schools. In rural schools, principals who implement transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics positively impacted the development of a cohesive organizational school culture, which improved the academic achievement of students.

Shields (2004) argued educational leaders were responsible for developing learning communities, developing professional capacity of teachers, resolution of conflicts, being attentive to parent concerns/suggestions, providing instructional leadership, implementing a collaborative decision making process, and tending to the needs of families with diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, educational leaders were also faced with the intense pressure to demonstrate the academic success of every child as determined by a raw score and performance level on a standardized test (Shields, 2004). Educational leaders in school settings must become transformative to begin to challenge current perceptions of education.

Rural school principals face unique obstacles and situations as documented in the research and literature. The impact of education reform mandates, such as NCLB, compounded these challenges. The purpose of this qualitative study was to: (a) identify the perceived impacts of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools in Fresno County; and (b) identify which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal were perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI.

Research Questions

The researcher posed two research questions, which gave direction and focus to this leadership research study. The data collected from these research questions provided insights as to the perceived impact of education reform mandates on leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI). Additionally, this study also reiterated the behaviors and

characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture in the two rural elementary schools not in PI.

1. What was the perceived impact of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria?

2. Which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal were perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County that are not PI?

Research Design

Research Population

Located in the San Joaquin Valley in central California, Fresno County, according to the 2010 census was in the top ten most populous counties in the state of California. Fresno County has a population of 930,450 and was the sixth largest in size with an area of 6,014.4 miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In Fresno County, 27 of the 31 school districts or Lead Educational Agencies (LEAs) are in rural geographic communities. As of October 2012, 12 LEAs in Fresno County were identified in Program Improvement (PI). Within the 27 rural geographic locations, there were 74 schools identified in PI status, 43 schools not identified in PI status, and 38 schools were not Title 1 schools (Dataquest, 2012).

The researcher selected four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County. The following data were compiled for each rural elementary school in this study. The school profile included the following: (a) name (pseudonyms); (b) student enrollment; (c) grade span; (d) age of school building; (e) general geographic location; (f) staff size; (g) school mission statement; (h) federal accountability status (i) recent AYP and API results; (j) principal participant profile; and (k) teacher participant profiles.

The first school selected for this research study was King Elementary School (pseudonym). King Elementary School is a rural elementary school that served approximately 538 students in kindergarten through sixth grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The school is approximately 46 years old and located in the town of Citrus (pseudonym), eight miles east of the city of Horizon (pseudonym). The school had a total of 41 employees (1 principal, 1 learning director, 21 classroom teachers, 2 certificated support staff, and 15 classified support staff). The 2010-2011 Student Accountability Report Card stated "Our mission, in partnership with the family and community, is to provide a safe learning environment in which students achieve to their fullest potential, develop positive self concepts, and become lifelong learners and responsible citizens." (SARC, 2011, p. 1)

King Elementary School was initially identified as a Program Improvement Year 2 school in 2003-2004. However, during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic years, King Elementary School demonstrated improvement on its California Standards Test (CST) by meeting all of its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). King Elementary School exited Program Improvement status as indicated by the 2005-2006 Accountability Progress Reporting

(APR) and exited Program Improvement status. Since the 2005-2006 APR, King Elementary

School met its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as demonstrated by the results of the California

Standards Test (CST) with the exception of the 2011-2012 school year. A three year snapshot of

student academic achievement at King Elementary School indicated ongoing improvement. (See

Table 1).

Table 1

King Elementary School Three Year AYP and API Snapshot

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Met AYP	Yes	Yes	No
API	759	773	780

Note: Adapted from California Department of Education website by using DataQuest Database.
The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Annual Performance Index (API) data were gathered
by using dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/ and searching for results from 2009-2012.

The principal at King Elementary School was female and is referred to as Principal A.

Principal A was the principal at King Elementary School for the past eight years and had over 20

years of educational experience in the Turnaround School District serving in various capacities

such as teacher or administrator. King Elementary School was in Program Improvement Year 2

prior to the arrival of Principal A. However, during the tenure of Principal A, King Elementary

School exited Program Improvement and demonstrated sufficient ongoing improvement to avoid

falling back into Program Improvement status.

The certificated teachers at King Elementary School were randomly selected to

participate in this study and are referred to as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and

Teacher 5. Table 2 provides demographic information about the teacher participants from King

Elementary School.

Table 2

Demographic Data for Teacher Participants at King Elementary School

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female
Ethnicity	White	Hispanic	Hispanic	White	Hispanic
Grade Level	2nd	4th	1st	1st	3rd
# of years at this school	19	8	12	7	8
# of years in district	19	8	12	10	9
# of years in public education	22	10	12	24	9

Note: Teacher demographic data were collected during the group interviews.

The second non-PI school selected for this study was Independence Elementary School

(pseudonym). Independence Elementary School is also a rural elementary school in the

Turnaround School District and served approximately 423 students in kindergarten through sixth

grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The school was approximately 56 years old and located

between the City of Horizon and the town of Citrus. The school had a total of 35 employees

(one principal, one academic coach, 18 classroom teachers, three certificated support staff, and

12 classified support staff). The Student Accountability Report Card stated the mission of

Independence Elementary School is "to provide excellence in education to a diverse community

through exemplary programs, service, and activities that foster a life-long commitment to academic and character development.*" (SARC, 2011, p. 1)

Independence Elementary School was never identified as a Program Improvement school. For the 2011-2012 school year, Independence Elementary School met all of its targets for AYP. The Annual Performance Index (API) at Independence Elementary School in 1999 was 633 and in 2012 it was 833. Independence Elementary School demonstrated ongoing improvement with the exception of the 2010-2011 school year. However, Independence Elementary School was not classified in Program Improvement. A three snapshot of student academic achievement indicated ongoing improvement with the exception of the 2010-2011 school year (See Table 3).

Table 3

Independence Elementary School Three Year AYP and API Snapshot

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Met AYP	Yes	No	Yes
API	814	781	833

Note: Adapted from California Department of Education website by using DataQuest Database. The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Annual Performance Index (API) data were gathered by using dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/ and searching for results from 2009-2012.

The principal at Independence Elementary School was female and is referred to as Principal B. Principal B was the principal at Independence Elementary School for the past seven years and also had over 32 years of educational experience in the field of education. She served as a superintendent/principal in another rural school district in Fresno County for over 25 years.

Independence Elementary School was never identified in Program Improvement through the 2011-2012 school year.

Certificated teachers at Independence Elementary School were randomly selected to participate in this study and were referred to as Teacher 6, Teacher 7, Teacher 8, Teacher 9, and Teacher 10. Table 4 provides demographic information about the teacher participants form Independence Elementary School (See Table 4).

Table 4

Demographic Data for Teacher Participants at Independence Elementary School

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Ethnicity	White	White	White	White	White
Grade Level	5th	4th	1st	3rd	4th
# of years at this school	21	25	5	10	23
# of years in district	25	25	13	15	23
# of years in public education	25	25	24	15	23

Note: Teacher demographic data were collected during the group interviews.

The Student Accountability Report Card stated the mission of Independence Elementary School was "to provide excellence in education to a diverse community through exemplary programs, service, and activities that foster a life-long commitment to academic and character development." (SARC, 2011, p. 1)

The first PI school selected for this research study was Valley Elementary School (pseudonym). Valley Elementary School is a rural elementary school that served approximately 826 students in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The school was approximately 93 years old and located in the town of Sunrise (pseudonym), 33 miles west of the City of Ashtown (pseudonym). The school had a total of 74 employees (one principal, one learning director, 43 classroom teachers, two certificated support staff, and 29 classified support staff). The 2010-2011 Student Accountability Report Card stated:

> [Our] goal is to provide the students of Valley Elementary School with a safe, caring educational environment for all students. We can prepare our students for the future by providing educational programs and dedicated personnel with a genuine concern for the educational and personal well being of our children. We can also prepare them by helping parents be informed and empowered to help their children.(SARC, 2011, p. 1)

Valley Elementary School was initially identified in PI status in 2003-2004 and reached PI Year 5 in 2008-2009. Valley Elementary School remained in PI year 5 at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. With regards to API, Valley Elementary School started with a base of 548 in 2004 increased to 679 in 2012. A three year snapshot of student academic achievement at Valley Elementary School indicated ongoing improvement (See Table 5).

The principal at Valley Elementary School was male and is referred to as Principal C. Principal C was principal at Valley Elementary School for the past four years had over 25 years of educational experience in the Plains School District serving in various capacities as a teacher and administrator. Valley Elementary School was in Program Improvement Year 4 when Principal C became the principal. During the four year tenure of Principal C at Valley Elementary School, there was no significant increase in the school's API.

Table 5

Independence Elementary School Three Year AYP and API Snapshot

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Met AYP	No	No	No
API	677	703	679

Note: Adapted from California Department of Education website by using DataQuest Database. The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Annual Performance Index (API) data were gathered by using dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/ and searching for results from 2009-2012.

The certificated teachers at Valley Elementary School were randomly selected to participate in this study and were referred to Teacher 11 and Teacher 12 throughout the study. Table 6 provides demographic information about the teacher participants from Valley Elementary School.

The second PI school selected for this research study was Ridge Elementary School (pseudonym). Ridge Elementary School is a rural elementary school that served approximately 247 students in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The school was approximately 60 years old, located in the town of Calmness (pseudonym), 30 miles west of the City of Ashtown (pseudonym). The school had a total of 22 employees (one principal, 10 classroom teachers, one certificated support staff, and 10 classified support staff). The 2010-2011 Student Accountability Report Card stated "Every Child…Every Day…Whatever it Takes!"

Table 6

Demographic Data for Teacher Participants at Valley Elementary School

	Teacher 11	Teacher 12
Gender	Female	Male
Ethnicity	White	Hispanic
Grade Level	5th	7th
# of years at this school	9	10
# of years in district	9	10
# of years in public education	9	15

Note: Teacher demographic data were collected during the group interviews.

The second PI school selected for this research study was Ridge Elementary School (pseudonym). Ridge Elementary School is a rural elementary school that served approximately 247 students in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2010-2011 school year. The school was approximately 60 years old, located in the town of Calmness (pseudonym), 30 miles west of the City of Ashtown (pseudonym). The school had a total of 22 employees (one principal, 10 classroom teachers, one certificated support staff, and 10 classified support staff). The 2010-2011 Student Accountability Report Card stated "Every Child…Every Day…Whatever it Takes!"

Ridge Elementary School was initially identified in PI status in 2003-2004 and reached PI Year 5 in 2008-2009. Ridge Elementary School remained in PI year 5 at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. The API at Ridge Elementary School started with a base of 560 in 2004 and increased to 686 in 2012. A three year snapshot of student academic achievement at Ridge Elementary School indicated ongoing improvement (See Table 7).

Table 7

Ridge Elementary School Three Year AYP and API Snapshot

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Met AYP	No	No	No
API	690	688	686

Note: Adapted from California Department of Education website by using DataQuest Database. The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Annual Performance Index (API) data were gathered by using dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/ and searching for results from 2009-2012.

The principal at Ridge Elementary School was male and is referred to as Principal D. Principal D was the principal at Ridge Elementary School for the past two years and had over 11 years of educational experience in the Plains School District serving in various capacities as a teacher and administrator. The school was in Program Improvement Year 5 when Principal D arrived at Ridge Elementary School as the principal. During the two year tenure of Principal D at Ridge Elementary School, there has been a slight decline in the school's API.

The certificated teachers at Ridge Elementary School were randomly selected to participate in this study and were referred to as Teacher 13 and Teacher 14 throughout the study. Table 8 provides demographic information regarding the teacher participants from Valley Elementary School.

Table 8

Demographic Data for Teacher Participants at Ridge Elementary School

	Teacher 11	Teacher 12
Gender	Female	Male
Ethnicity	White	White
Grade Level	4th	3rd
# of years at this school	12	16
# of years in district	15	16
# of years in public education	15	25

Note: Teacher demographic data were collected during the group interviews.

Data Collection

On the day of the interviews, the researcher arrived 10 minutes before the scheduled time and met with the site principal. First, the researcher decided to conduct the one hour individual interviews with site principals at each of the rural school sites. The researcher met in the site principal's office to conduct the individual interview. The researcher provided principal participants with a brief summary of his professional background. The principal participants also received a copy of the questions on the interview protocol to use as a reference during the interview, and the researcher summarized the purpose of the research study. The researcher answered any relevant questions posed by each of the principal participants during the individual interviews. The researcher took notes and also audio recorded each of the interviews in order to facilitate the transcription process for accuracy. The researcher informed the principal participants that the interviews would be transcribed and a copy of the transcription would be

emailed to the principal participant to review, revise, edit, or omit any comment made during the interview.

After concluding the individual interviews with the site principals, the researcher met with teachers in a predetermined classroom selected by the school site participants. Prior to the interviews, the researcher introduced himself and provided a brief summary of his professional background. The researcher distributed a copy of the questions on the interview protocol to each of participants to use as a reference and summarized the purpose of the research study being conducted. The researcher answered teacher participant questions and then began conducting the focus group interviews. After the conclusion of the one hour teacher focus group interviews, the researcher thanked each of the participants for their time. The researcher took notes and also audio recorded each of the interviews in order to facilitate the transcription process for accuracy. The researcher informed the teacher participants that the interviews would be transcribed and a copy of the transcription of individual comments would be emailed to the teacher participants to review, revise, edit, or omit any comment made during the interview. Teacher participants were only able to review their own individual comments and provide the researcher with feedback. The researcher created a clear timeline to complete the research study (See Table 9).

After principal participants and teacher participants had an opportunity to review their individual comments made during the interviews, the transcriptions were finalized and used for data analysis purposes.

Table 9

Timeline to Complete Research Study

Timeline	Activity
Interview Principal and Two Certificated Teacher at Valley Elementary School	December 2011-January 2012
Interview Principal and Two Certificated Teachers at Ridge Elementary School	January 2012
Interview Principal and Five Certificated Teachers at King Elementary School	January 2012
Interview Principal and Five Certificated Teachers at Independence Elementary School	February 2012
Data Analysis	February-December 2012

Note: The timeline provides timeframe for this research study.

Sampling Method

After reviewing the student demographics for the 155 rural elementary schools in Fresno County, the researcher created a list of schools which met a pre-established student demographic criteria: (a) the school was rural and received Title 1 funds; (b) the student demographics of the school was at least 85% Hispanic/Latino; (c) at least 85% of students were socioeconomically disadvantaged; and (d) at least 50% of students were English Learners. These specific student demographic criteria were selected based on the demographic composites and organizational outcomes of the four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) as measured by the California Standards Test (CST).

The researcher conducted a review of the student demographics amongst the 43 rural elementary schools not identified in PI. There were 10 rural elementary schools not identified in PI, which met the predetermined student demographic criteria across four LEAs eligible to

87

participate in this study. The researcher contacted each of the four LEAs through email

requesting permission to conduct a research study (see Appendix A) but only one LEA accepted

to participate. Only one LEA accepted to participate in this research study. There were two

rural elementary school sites within the LEA that met the predetermined student demographic

criteria and not identified in PI. The two non-PI schools and LEA were assigned pseudonyms.

Also, the researcher conducted a review of the student demographics amongst the 74 rural

elementary schools identified in PI. There were 10 rural elementary schools identified in PI,

which met the predetermined student demographic criteria across three LEAs eligible to

participate in this study. The researcher contacted each of the LEAs district administration

through email requesting permission to conduct research study (See Appendix A) and only one

of the LEAs responded with permission to contact their two non-PI rural elementary schools to

inquire about participating in the qualitative study. The two PI schools and LEA were assigned

pseudonyms. Also, only one of the LEAs responded with permission to contact their two PI

rural elementary schools and inquire about participating in the qualitative study.

Sample Size

Initial contact was made with the two non-PI rural elementary school principals in the

Turnaround School District and the two PI rural elementary school principals in the Plains

School District via email and followed up with a telephone conversation to answer any

questions. When each of the four principals was contacted, all four agreed to participate in the

research study. Additionally, the researcher received approval from each site principal to email

and contact via United States Postal Mail service all certificated teachers at the four rural

elementary schools (two non-PI elementary schools and two PI elementary schools) to inquire as to their willingness to participate in the focus group interviews as a teacher participant. The researcher allowed for a response time of 10 days for interested teachers to submit a signed copy of the LMU Informed Consent form.

The certificated teachers at King Elementary School were asked to express affirmatively their interest in participating in the research study by returning a signed copy of the LMU Informed Consent form. There were 15 certificated teachers at King Elementary School who returned their signed LMU Informed Consent form. Thus, the researcher randomly selected five certificated teachers to participate in the group interview (See Table 2). The five randomly selected teachers were referred to as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and Teacher 5.

The certificated teachers at Independence Elementary School were asked to express affirmatively their interest in participating in the research study by returning a signed copy of the LMU Informed Consent form. There were 11 certificated teachers at Independence Elementary School who returned their signed LMU Informed Consent form. Thus, the researcher randomly selected five certificated teachers to participate in the group interview (See Table 4). The five randomly selected teachers were referred to as Teacher 6, Teacher 7, Teacher 8, Teacher 9, and Teacher 10.

The certificated teachers at Valley Elementary School were asked to express affirmatively their interest in participating in the research study by returning a signed copy of the LMU Informed Consent form. There were 17 certificated teachers at Valley Elementary School who returned their signed LMU Informed Consent form. Thus, the researcher randomly selected

two certificated teachers to participate in the group interview (See Table 6). The two randomly

selected teachers were referred to as Teacher 11 and Teacher 12.

The certificated teachers at Ridge Elementary School were asked to express affirmatively

their interest in participating in the research study by returning a signed copy of the LMU

Informed Consent form. There were seven certificated teachers at Ridge Elementary School who

returned their signed LMU Informed Consent form. Thus, the researcher randomly selected two

certificated teachers to participate in the group interview (See Table 8). The two randomly

selected teachers were referred to as Teacher 13 and Teacher 14.

Based on the number of respondents from each of the four sites, the researcher

determined to randomly select five certificated teachers from both King Elementary School and

Independence Elementary School in the Turnaround School District. The researcher, also,

randomly selected two certificated teachers from both Valley Elementary School and Ridge

Elementary School in the Plains School District. The researcher coordinated the logistics of

scheduling the interviews. The interviews for principal participants and teacher participants

were scheduled during the workday but not during instructional time. The principal participant

individual interviews and the teacher participant focus interviews were conducted on the same

day when at the respective school site.

Data Collection Method

The focus of this twofold qualitative research study was to examine the perceived impact

of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in two

non-PI rural elementary schools. The researcher randomly selected five certificated teachers at

both of the non-PI rural elementary schools. Qualitative data was collected by the researcher

from an individual interview of the principal and a focus group interview of the five certificated

teachers through 60 minute interviews. Additionally, the researcher gathered data from two

principals and four certificated teachers across two rural elementary schools identified in PI. The

qualitative data collected was used to answer the first research question guiding this study. The

researcher compiled qualitative data through 60 minute individual interviews of the site principal

and focus group interviews of the two certificated teachers at both rural elementary schools

identified in PI.

The researcher also collected qualitative data to answer the second research question

guiding this study. The data was used to examine the leadership behaviors and characteristics

perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools not in PI which met a

set of predetermined student demographic criteria.

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized a qualitative research process to answer the two questions posed

for this study. McMillan and Schumacher (1993) defined qualitative research as, "primarily an

inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships)

among categories" (p. 479). According to Wiersma (1995), qualitative research was a strategy

that affirms underlying assumptions and perspectives. Thus, the researcher developed a plan to

gather qualitative data by developing two versions of an appropriate interview protocol based on

extensive review of the literature on education reform mandates, leadership theories, and

organizational culture theories (See Appendices B & C).

The interview protocols contained eight open ended questions, which were similar but slightly nuanced to address principal participants and teacher participants. The qualitative data collected was used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2. The researcher posed additional questions for the purpose of clarifying acquired data information. See Table 10 for a description of the research methodology.

The first question on the interview protocol (See Appendix B) was used to assess the perceived impact of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture (Research Question 1). The data was collected from four rural elementary principals and 14 certificated teachers in four schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) which met a set of predetermined student demographic criteria.

The remaining questions on the interview protocol (Questions 2-8) were used to collect data to assess the transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal which were perceived to have positively affected organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI. The researcher interviewed the principal and five certificated teachers at King Elementary School and Independence Elementary School. The data collected was used to answer Research Question 2.

Table 10

Continuum of Research Study Methodology

Research Question	Theoretical Conceptual Framework	Literature	Method	Data Sources	Analysis/Statistical Treatment
1	Bureaucratic Human Resources Development Theory	Owens & Valesky (2011)	Qualitative Structured Question Items	Interview Protocol Question 1 Principal Version Teacher Version	Typological Analysis The data compiled from the interviews were coded to reveal common themes
2	Transformational Leadership Organizational Culture Model	Bennis & Nanus (1985) Sashkin & Sashkin (2003) Schein (1992) Deal & Peterson (1990)	Qualitative Structured Question Items	Interview Protocol Questions 2-8 Principal Version Teacher Version	Typological Analysis The data compiled from the interviews were coded to reveal common themes

Note: Adapted from Organizational Behavior in Education: Leadership and School Reform by R. Owens and T. Valesky, 2011, Leaders, The Strategies for Taking Charge by W. Bennis and B. Nanus, 1985, Leadership that matters by M. Sashkin and M. G. Sashkin, 2003, Organizational Culture and Leadership by E. Schein, 1992, The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture by T. Deal and K. Peterson, 1990.

The researcher utilized the transformational leadership framework developed by Bennis and Nanus (1985) and further elaborated by Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) and organizational culture framework developed by Schein (1992) and Deal and Peterson (1990). The framework defined transformational leadership across the following dimensions of behaviors, characteristics, and context : (a) communication; (b) trust; (c) respect/caring for others; (d)

creating opportunities (risk taking); (e) self confidence; (f) empowerment orientation; (g) vision (cognitive capability); and (h) organizational culture. Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) categorized the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) across the following dimensions: (a) behaviors; (b) characteristics; and (c) context.

The researcher developed two interview protocols, which were slightly nuanced to principal participants and teacher participants. The interview protocols were utilized to collect data through individual interviews of the site principals and focus group interviews of the certificated teachers at each of the two rural school sites not in PI.

Data Analysis

This research study complied with all federal and professional standards for conducting research with human participants. The researcher submitted a formal application to the Loyola Marymount University Internal Review Board (IRB) requesting exempt status and approval was granted on December 7, 2011 (see Appendix D).

The researcher conducted typological analysis of the data compiled through the interviews. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), typological analysis was defined as "dividing everything observed into groups or categories on the basis of some canon for disaggregating the whole phenomenon under study" (p. 257). For this study, the researcher divided all data collected into categories based on predetermined typologies. Hatch (2002) stated typologies were generated from "theory, common sense, and/or research objectives, and initial data processing happened within those typological groupings" (p. 152). The researcher identified the following categories for typological analysis: (a) communication; (b) trust; (c)

respect/caring for others; (d) creating opportunities (risk); (e) self confidence; (f) empowerment

orientation; (g) vision (cognitive capability); and (h) organizational culture. Sashkin and Sashkin

(2005) categorized the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) across the following dimensions: (a)

behaviors; (b) characteristics; and (c) context. (See Figure 2)
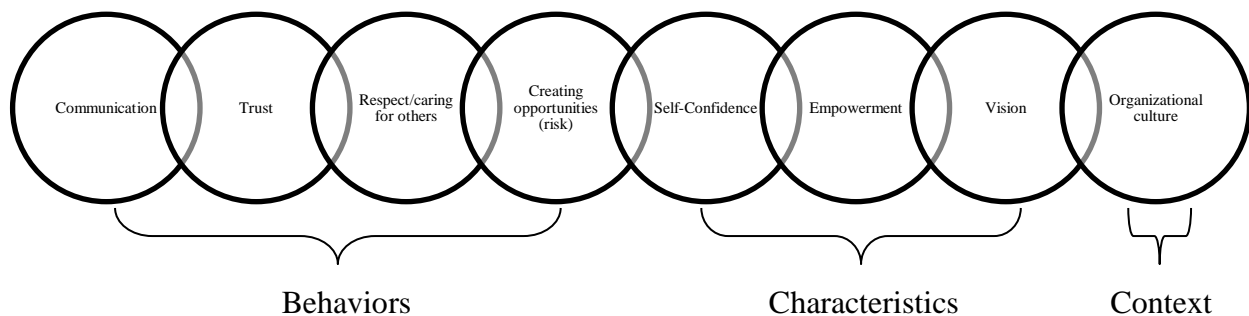
Figure 2. Transformational leadership theoretical framework
Adapted from Bennis and Nanus (1985); Sashkin and Sashkin (2005)

Hatch (2002) suggested a process to implement when conducting typology analysis.

First, the typologies were generated to read through the data with one typology in mind. Next,

the purpose was to find in the data evidence linked to the specific typology. After finding the

evidence that supported the link to the specific typology, main ideas were recorded and entered

on a summary sheet. The researcher looked for patterns, relationships, and themes within the

typologies. The patterns were coded according to a clear record of which entries linked to

specific elements in the patterns. After coding, the researcher assessed if the patterns were

supported by the data and documented patterns as a one-sentence generalization. Finally, the

researcher selected excerpts to support the generalizations.

Limitations of Study

The study was limited to four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria to answer Research Question 1. The data from the two rural elementary schools in the Turnaround School District that were not identified in Program Improvement was used to answer Research Question 2. The findings, discussion, and conclusions of this study may not be applicable to school site principals in other geographic locations.

Chapter Summary

The qualitative data compiled through individual and focus group interviews were organized to answer: (a) What is the perceived impact of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria; and (b) Which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal are perceived to positively affect organizational culture? The following categories for typological analysis were utilized by the researcher: (a) communication; (b) trust; (c) respect/caring for others; (d) creating opportunities (risk); (e) self confidence; (f) empowerment orientation; (g) vision (cognitive capability); and (h) organizational culture. Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) categorized the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) across the following dimensions: (a) behaviors; (b) characteristics; and (c) context.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND MAIN FINDINGS

Restatement of the Purpose

Rural school principals face unique obstacles and situations as documented in research and literature. The impact of education reform mandates, such as NCLB, has compounded these challenges. The purpose of this qualitative study is to: (a) identify the perceived impacts of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools in Fresno County; and (b) identify which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI.

Research Questions

This researcher posed two questions giving direction and focus to this leadership research study. Collected data provided insights to the research questions regarding the perceived impact of the NCLB education mandate on leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria. Also, this study stressed behaviors and characteristics that positively affect organizational culture in the two rural elementary schools not in PI in Fresno County.

1. What is the perceived impact of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two

elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that meet specific student demographic criteria?

2. Which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principals are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County that are not-PI?

Research Design

This study employed qualitative approaches to answer the two research questions and provided additional insights as to the perceived impact of NCLB on leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools in Fresno County (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI). The study also focused on the leadership behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools not in PI in Fresno County. This study analyzed data collected through individual interviews of the principals and focus group interviews conducted with certificated teachers.

Research Question One

What is the perceived impact of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that meet specific student demographic criteria?

Principal Responses

All four of the principals expressed NCLB has increased the sense of pressure with mandated annual expectations. For example, Principal A, a ninth year principal at King Elementary School stated, "NCLB has created a sense of urgency for principals and teachers in schools." The eighth year principal at Independence Elementary School, Principal B, stated, "[NCLB] established lofty goals to focus on. However, these goals don't take into consideration the mobility/language issues of our students." Principal C, a fourth year principal stated, "NCLB has increased the stress of administrators and teachers due to the daunting challenges of having to meet annual targets." Principal D, the second year principal at Ridge Elementary School which is in PI year five stated, "The expectations of NCLB are unrealistic annual targets with punitive measures for not meeting those targets."

Each of the four principals was also asked to elaborate on the perceived impact of NCLB on their leadership behaviors and characteristics. Each principal described their individual perceptions regarding their leadership style during the period under NCLB. All four principals expressed a commitment to improving student academic achievement. Principal A commented, "It is my responsibility to be the primary communicator as the school leader [and] I need to share the vision for this school and I understand the importance of building capacity. I feel it is important to facilitate, create, and share expectations with our staff." Principal A stressed the importance of communicating the vision and building capacity among teachers to attain organizational goals at King Elementary School. Additionally, Principal A commented about the importance of accountability and providing meaningful feedback. Principal A stated,

I am a transparent leader. I do not have a hidden agenda. I am predictable. Teachers know that I am here for them. Teachers understand that I am a part of their team. I am highly visible and I make frequent walkthroughs.

Principal B commented, "NCLB has prompted me, as a leader, to go to the experts [and] work towards a lot of collaboration. Therefore, I have established an advisory committee comprised of teacher volunteers." Principal B stressed that NCLB has influenced her to be a collaborative partner with teachers and established a clear decision making process at Independence Elementary School. Principal B commented,

I know the importance of follow through [and] being supportive. I demonstrate a commitment to students and to staff. This is my driving force. When I have a concern with a teacher, I have the mindset that when they are failing…I am failing.

According to Principal C, the principal at Valley Elementary School,

NCLB has influenced me to promote research based strategies to deliver instruction and to teach students standards based content. We have implemented the Explicit Direct Instruction model to deliver instruction in every classroom. This process has provided a focus to increase our test scores.

Additionally, Principal C explained the importance of being known and identified as the instructional leader. "My responsibility as the principal is to be the instructional leader and hold teachers accountable for implementing the Explicit Direct Instruction framework when teaching students." Principal C viewed his role as a conduit to curriculum resources that he submits to teachers for implementation. Hence, Principal C perceived NCLB to have influenced him be a communicator of expectations to staff and supervise the implementation of those expectations. Principal C is focused on communicating organizational accomplishments to staff members and committed to attaining excellence. Principal D, principal at Ridge Elementary School, stated,

I feel NCLB has had a major influence on my leadership style. I am the person responsible for communicating expectations to teachers. I expect teachers to spend

time in their PLCs looking at student data and discuss how that influences their instruction to improve student learning.

Thus, Principal D identified communication as a vital characteristic of his leadership style. Additionally, Principal D is committed to making data driven decisions. "I review the student data and come up with a plan of action to communicate to my staff the importance of focusing on significant subgroups." Principal D was influenced by NCLB to look at the research and share resources with teachers for implementation with fidelity to meet the needs of students. Principal D stated, "I was provided research based pacing guides and benchmarks and distributed them to teachers for implementation." Principal D expressed a commitment to implement a collaborative approach decision making. "I give teachers opportunities to provide input at staff meetings."

Additionally, the four principals were asked to elaborate on the perceived impact of NCLB on organizational culture. The individual responses of the four principals added stress on administrators and teachers to attain unprecedented annual student academic achievement targets. The four principals expressed a need to promote research based instructional strategies, professional development, teacher collaboration, and data driven decision making among teachers to improve student academic achievement as required by NCLB.

Hence, the four rural principals described the impact of NCLB has led to the development of some type of professional learning community. Each of the four rural elementary schools has implemented a weekly staff development time of one hour at the non-PI sites and two hours at the PI sites to discuss curriculum, instruction, and student learning. Principal A stated, "Each grade level has established a professional learning community and created clear norms in order to function effectively." During the individual interview, Principal B referenced professional learning communities also referred to as PLCs. PLCs are structured

101

opportunities for teachers to engage in a collaborative learning process to improve organizational outcomes. Principal B said, "The PLCs we have developed here is another format to make others feel included." Principal C, All teachers meet in PLC groups to discuss student data and make informed decisions regarding curriculum and instruction." Principal D commented,

> During our weekly professional development time, teachers have time to identify power standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Teachers also have time to work on pacing guides, formative, and summative assessments to evaluate student academic progress.

According to each of the four principals interviewed, the impact of NCLB on these four rural elementary schools has been addressed through the implementation of weekly professional development and the formation of professional learning communities (PLCs). Despite the unprecedented expectations of NCLB, three out of four principals believed NCLB obligated administrators and teachers to clearly identify and understand the expectations for student learning. Principal D, the second year principal at Ridge Elementary School which is in PI Year 5, added, "NCLB has forced administrators and teachers to focus on what exactly students need to be learning. NCLB has become the driving force for teaching and learning in public schools." Hence, the perceived impact of NCLB on organizational culture has been to implement PLCs and utilize data driven decision making.

Thus, the four principals expressed their own perceptions regarding the impact of NCLB on leadership behaviors and characteristics as clear communication skills, empowerment of others, data driven decision making, and collaboration. These leadership behaviors and characteristics were supported by the qualitative data collected through individual interviews of the four principals. The principals perceived NCLB has created opportunities for professional

learning communities, professional development, teacher empowerment, and data driven decision making within the organizational culture of the four rural schools in Fresno County.

Teacher Responses

The responses provided by certificated teachers served as a reconciling perspective regarding the perceived impact of NCLB on leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture. The certificated teachers interviewed validated the perceptions expressed by the four principals regarding the increased pressure created by NCLB. There were three teachers at King Elementary School (elementary school not in PI) which mentioned NCLB has created pressure among educational stakeholders. Teacher 1, a teacher of 22 years, commented, "NCLB has created a lot of pressure to bring [standardized test] scores up." Teacher 2, who has taught for 10 years, said, "The requirements of NCLB identify effective and non effective schools." Teacher 3, a first grade teacher with 12 years experience, further elaborated by adding, "[The influence of NCLB] has caused all of us to feel the pressure. It affects the principal, teachers, parents, and students."

Four out of five teachers at Independence Elementary School (elementary school not in PI) confirmed the expectations of NCLB increased the pressure to produce student academic achievement gains. Teacher 6, a teacher with 25 years experience, said, "NCLB has intensified the expectations for teachers and students." According to Teacher 8, a teacher with 24 years experience, "The requirements of NCLB created a shift in the instructional paradigm." Teacher 9, a 15 year teacher, commented, "This shift in instructional paradigm has required teachers to change instructional methodology and change isn't always an easy process." Teacher

10, an experienced teacher of 23 years, stated, "The purpose of NCLB has been to increase accountability in schools by increasing student academic achievement."

The two teachers at Valley Elementary School (elementary school in PI) commented about the pressure influenced by NCLB. For example, Teacher 11, a fifth grade teacher with nine years of experience, stated, "NCLB has placed unrealistic expectations on public schools and a lot of schools are being labeled as failing." Teacher 12, a seventh grade teacher with 15 years of experience, stated, "The requirements of NCLB are difficult to achieve in rural schools with a high percentage of low income students and English learners."

The two teachers at Ridge Elementary School (elementary school in PI) also expressed NCLB has increased the pressure to perform and produce unprecedented gains in student academic achievement. For example, Teacher 13, a fourth grade teacher with 15 years of experience, stated, "The expectations of NCLB to increase by 10% the number of students who are proficient or advanced is intense." Teacher 14, a third grade teacher with 25 years of experience, commented, "The stress of NCLB is heavy because as a teacher your effectiveness is based on how students score on an end of the year standardized test."

The certificated teachers further elaborated on the perceived impact of NCLB on the leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the site principal. The teachers at King Elementary School expressed their perceptions regarding the impact of NCLB on Principal A's leadership style. Teacher 1 stated, "When Principal A communicates to us it is about kids. Our principal has turned this pressure and has focused us on making sure our kids are learning." Teacher 2 commented, "Principal A [is] focused to prepare us." The teachers expressed Principal A is clear with expectations through her communication. Teacher 3 said, "Principal

A's emails are very direct and clear. We clearly understand expectations and we are able to ask questions if necessary." Teacher 5 stated, "Principal A is a consistent leader who expects the same high standards of herself that she insists on with staff." Consistency was further elaborated upon by Teacher 5, "Principal A is a person of follow through with what she communicates and expects."

At Independence Elementary School, four of the five certificated teachers expressed positive perceptions regarding Principal B's leadership behaviors and characteristics. For example, Teacher 7 stated, "The influence of NCLB on our principal's leadership style has influenced her to get on board with [content] standards [and] this has gotten us on board with [content] standards." Teacher 6 added, "[Our principal] is supportive and collaborative in her leadership style." According to Teacher 8, a first grade teacher in her 24th year, I have seen Principal B function as a focused leader and she is helpful in insuring teachers are focused. Teacher 9 mentioned, "Principal B is respectful of who we are as professionals." Teacher 8 added, "[Even though] we feel the pressure [of NCLB], Principal B leads with sense and calmness."

The certificated teachers at Valley Elementary School expressed their perceptions regarding the impact of NCLB on Principal C's leadership style. For example, Teacher 11 stated, "Principal C communicates often with staff regarding expectations but there is no follow through or assistance offered to improve student learning." Teacher 12 commented, "As teachers we are often frustrated because we don't see the example of our principal in leading us through these expectations required by NCLB." Additionally, Teacher 11, added, "Our principal communicates often through faculty meetings and email, however, he is unapproachable and

lacks follow through." Teacher 12 elaborated, "Our principal comes across as knowing more than everyone else and claims areas of expertise with no real back up." The two certificated teachers at Valley Elementary School felt that Principal C lacked consistency and follow through. Hence, the two certificated teachers did not really perceive Principal C as an effective leader.

The certificated teachers at Ridge Elementary School provided their perceptions regarding the impact of NCLB on Principal D's leadership style. For example, Teacher 13, a 4th grade teacher in her 15th year, said, "Principal D is highly motivated to improve student achievement scores but we don't feel included in the decision making process." Teacher 14 added, "Many times we are told to implement something without being able to provide feedback or input in its development." Additionally, Teacher 13 also commented, "There is no motivation to work together with colleagues to increase test scores." Teacher 14 added, "He doesn't know how to bring staff together. In fact, he alienates teachers from each other through his preferential treatment." Both teachers interviewed at Ridge Elementary School felt that teachers were not valued and respected as professionals.

Research Question Two

Which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County that are not in PI?

Typologies for Data Analysis

The researcher identified the following categories for typological analysis: (a) communication; (b) trust; (c) respect/caring for others; (d) creating opportunities (risk); (e) self confidence; (f) empowerment orientation; (g) vision (cognitive capability); and (h) organizational culture. Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) categorized the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) across the following dimensions: (a) behaviors; (b) characteristics; and (c) context (See Figure 3).
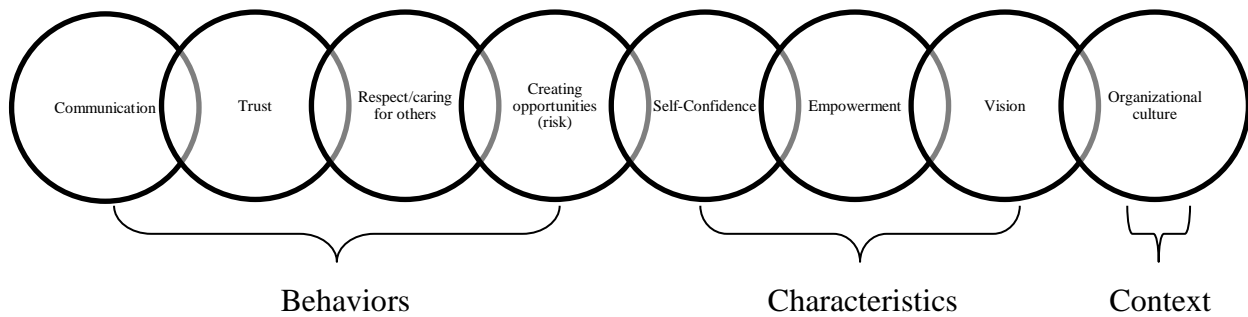
Figure 3. Transformational leadership theoretical framework typologies
Adapted from Bennis and Nanus (1985); Sashkin and Sashkin (2005)

Dimensions of transformational leadership

The researcher utilized an appropriate theoretical framework based on research and literature to assist in the classification of evidence to specific dimensions. The utilization of the selected theoretical framework for this study supported the researcher's comprehension and is summarized in the following Figure 3.

The researcher presented the synthesis of the findings for this study by classifying the data into eight dimensions of transformational leadership. The first four dimensions

(communication, trust, respect/caring for others and creating opportunities) were categorized as behaviors. The next three dimensions (self confidence, empowerment, and vision) were categorized as characteristics. The last dimension (context) was categorized as organizational culture. For purposes of discussion, each dimension was used to form the theoretical framework utilized to analyze the qualitative data collected through individual and focus group interviews.

Theoretical Framework for Transformational Leadership & Organizational Culture

Behaviors				Characteristics			Context
Dimension 1: Communication	**Dimension 2:** Trust	**Dimension 3:** Respect/Caring for Others	**Dimension 4:** Creating Opportunities	**Dimension 5:** Self Confidence	**Dimension 6:** Empowerment	**Dimension 7:** Vision	**Dimension 8:** Organizational Culture
Effective communication refers to active listening, appropriate use of feedback. Transformational Leaders utilize effective communication skills to make complex ideas clear by using metaphors.	*Trust is through consistency of action (dependability) and follow through on promises.* Transformational Leaders are predictable or reliable, even in situations that are uncertain.	*Respect is demonstrating genuine care for followers.* Transformational Leaders are intentional about making followers feel included, part of the group or organization.	*Creating Opportunities is an intentional willingness to empower others in ways that may be perceived as dangerous to leader.* Transformational Leaders put followers in charge of difficult tasks.	*Self Confidence is the awareness that there is no risk in sharing leadership opportunities with followers.* Transformational Leaders are aware there are no risks with sharing responsibilities with followers to succeed.	*Empowerment provides followers with the capacity to do the job right.* Transformational Leaders are able to mobilize people to accept a new group identity or new philosophy for the organization.	*Vision is to have an attractive, realistic, and believable future.* Transformational Leaders have a simple, understandable, beneficial, and energy creating vision.	*Culture is created by shared meanings of people within the organization.* Transformational Leaders are social architects.
Bennis & Nanus (1985) Sashkin & Sashkin (2005)	Bennis & Nanus (1985) Sashkin & Sashkin (2005)	Bennis & Nanus (1985) Sashkin & Sashkin (2005)	Bennis & Nanus (1985) Sashkin & Sashkin (2005)	Bennis & Nanus (1985)	Bennis & Nanus (1985) Sashkin & Sashkin (2005)	Bennis & Nanus (1985) Sashkin & Sashkin (2005)	Bennis & Nanus (1985) Deal & Peterson (1990) Owens & Valesky (2011) Sashkin & Sashkin (2005)

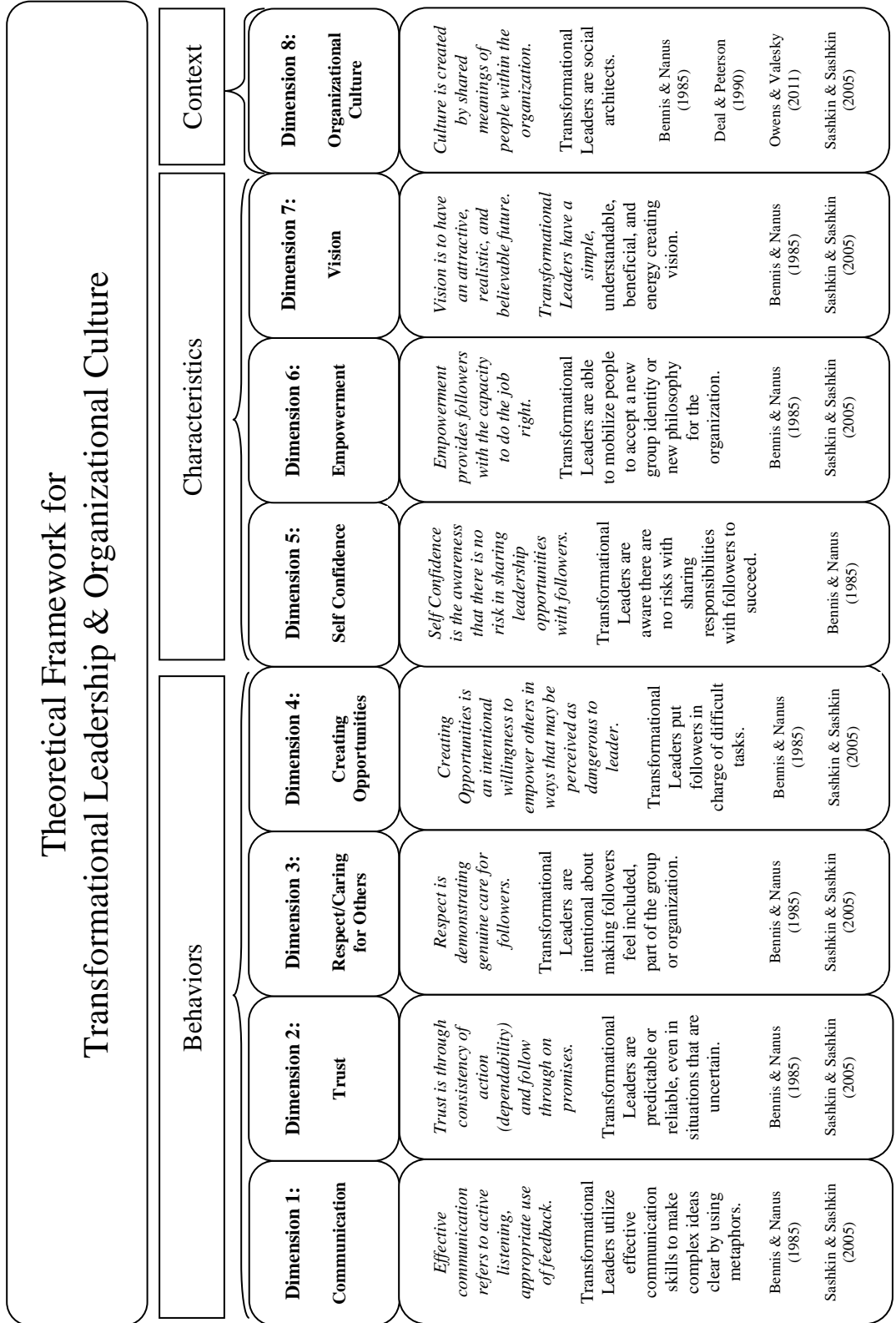*Figure 4.* Transformational leadership & Organizational culture theoretical framework
Adapted from Bennis and Nanus (1985); Deal and Peterson (1990); Owens and Valesky (2011)
Sashkin and Sashkin (2005)

Dimension 1: Communication (behavior). Communication was investigated in relation to methods and content used to encouraged the development of new ideas to improve teaching and learning. The two principals of the schools not in PI stated the importance of developing and communicating a shared vision with staff. Principal B stated, "I articulate the vision from the district to our staff." Principal A commented, "[I] share goals and expectations for our schools and I monitor. My expectations are clear and I listen to coworkers." Principal A stated, "I use email, phone calls, personal or group meetings to communicate with staff and share [clear] goals and expectations for our school." Principal B commented, "I send out emails and a daily bulletin with announcements." Both principals expressed the importance of utilizing effective communication and active listening. Principal A stated, "If we fail to meet the goals, I follow up with a discussion to assess and evaluate areas that need to improve with educational stakeholders. I promote an environment of accountability." Principal B mentioned, "Usually when there is a breakdown, it is due to poor communication."

The perception of teachers was an integral part of the data analysis to affirm the statements contributed by the two principals. There were five certified teachers interviewed at each of the two rural elementary schools. Out of the five teachers interviewed at King Elementary School all five made some type of comment regarding the communication methods utilized by Principal A. Teacher 1 stated, "Principal A models the value of surrounding and embracing the children in our school and their families." Teacher 1 also added, "Principal A compliments us by telling us 'great job'." Teacher 2 said,

> Principal A checks in with every grade level constantly. [Principal A] meets with the data team leaders every month to hear concerns and also to check in and get feedback.

Principal A reads through the minutes from the meetings and provides very specific feedback. She is very specific about what she is replying about in the minutes and it is also our chance to voice our concerns about programs, time, etc. She listens to our needs.

Teacher 3 stated,

Principal A's emails are very direct and clear. She tells us the way it is. We clearly understand expectations and we are able to ask questions. Nancy provides feedback and bases it on her personal experience. She offers suggestions from her own personal life.

Teacher 5 also added, "Principal A responds to our emails and is very respectful." Teacher 4

said, "Principal A invites [communicates and encourages] us to try new strategies or ideas by

saying 'have you tried this…'"

At Independence Elementary School, four of the five teachers interviewed commented

regarding the methods of communication utilized by the Principal B. Teacher 6 said,

The staff has the freedom to send any issue to the advisory committee and Principal B will contribute [participate in the conversation]. [Any issue] can then be addressed at a staff meeting. It is a structured platform to vent any frustration.

Teacher 7 mentioned,

"There is also a strong line of communication. Principal B shares with the advisory committee and the committee goes to the staff and then the communication comes back. We can bring anything up at the advisory committee meeting.

Teacher 9 stated, "There are principals that talk at their staffs and are positional leaders. Our staff

has a voice. We may not get it but we have the opportunity to express our needs."

Teacher 10 concluded by adding, "She [Principal B] uses email and they are relevant to us. She

talks to us in the hallways."

Dimension 2: Trust (behavior). Trust was investigated in relation to actions

demonstrated by the principal which build and atmosphere of trust. During the individual

interviews of the principals and focus group interviews of the certificated teachers, the actions

exercised by the leader were identified which were perceived to build trust with staff and teachers.

Both of the principals in the non-PI schools stressed the importance of trust in their role as site leader. Principal A stated,

I am a transparent leader. I do not have a hidden agenda. I am predictable. Teachers know that I am here for them. Teachers understand that I am a part of their team. I am highly visible and I make frequent walkthroughs.

Principal B mentioned,

I know the importance of follow through [and] being supportive. I demonstrate a commitment to students and to staff. This is my driving force. When I have a concern with a teacher, I have the mindset that when they are failing…I am failing.

When certificated teachers were interviewed, their perspective provided additional insight regarding the credible behaviors exercised by the principal to develop trust. Teacher 1 stated, "She [Principal A] will go to bat for us then we need someone to intercede for us." Teacher 3 replied,

She [Principal A] demonstrates genuine care. She is extremely supportive to our needs. Principal A is transparent and doesn't sugar coat anything. She tells us the way it is.

Teacher 5 commented,
Principal A has an open door policy. I can go and talk with her at any time. Principal A keeps confidential information confidential. She is a person of integrity. She knows us and we are able to be open with her.

Teacher 3 added,

Principal A is such an inspirer of people that we often don't realize how we've gotten to where we are. That's because we trust her enough to follow her lead and walk with her on this journey. I can trust Principal A because she is a person of her word.

At Independence Elementary School, three of the five certificated teachers commented regarding the actions Principal B demonstrates to build trust. Teacher 6 commented,

There are places where principals close the [office] door. There are principals that fear going back into the classroom. Principal B desires and looks for opportunities to get back into the classroom. She will cover for a missing substitute until he or she shows up. Principal B builds rapport with students. She frequently waits and greets students as they arrive in the morning. Students love Principal B because she is approachable.

Teacher 9 stated, "Principal B makes us feel a part of the decision making process at this school. This increases our buy-in into what we are doing for kids." Teacher 10 added, "Principal B is also open to coming into the classroom to view student success and to celebrate it."

Dimension 3: Respect/caring for others (behavior). The third dimension of transformational leadership is identified as respect/caring for others was investigated in relation to methods used by the principals to make organizational members feel part of the group. The two principals of the schools not in PI stated the importance of demonstrating respect and genuine care for others. Both principals previously expressed a commitment to establishing and communicating attainable expectations. The principal at King Elementary School, Principal A, said, "It is important to be selective and buffer additional responsibilities that will distract teachers from their primary role of teaching and ensuring that students are learning." The principal at Independence Elementary School, Principal A, commented, "I serve as a buffer and shield off unnecessary tasks from my staff. I am a liaison between the district office and my site staff." The intention of the principals is to allow teachers to focus on their primary responsibility of delivering effective instructional lessons and to ensure students are learning.

Additionally, celebrations associated with attaining shared organizational outcomes are important. Principal A stated, "When we meet the goals, we celebrate and we go on." Principal B commented,

We celebrate student achievement and staff achievement. For example, we launched balloons when we reached an API of 814 which was an increase of 36 points from the previous year. Yesterday, we celebrated a staff member who earned her U.S. Citizenship with snacks at our morning break. We also celebrate birthdays on a monthly basis. We all bring something to celebrate and we celebrate often.

However, there are times when the desired shared outcomes are not attained. Both principals expressed the need to comfort, console, and refocus as a team. Principal A stated, "We share the joy or the disappointment of decisions we make [together]." Principal B commented,

[During] this last 2010-2011 school year, we had a decrease in our API due to different variables. Sometimes this happen, it's called life. We had some personnel issues with three teachers experiencing the loss of [either] a husband, a sister, and a mother. Each took a semester off from school. The testing situation was unique in that we had to divide our testing before and after spring break. We also had a large group of students which overflowed to us in fifth grade from other school sites, and had a new teacher in third grade. We experience life together as a family.

When certificated teachers were interviewed, their perspective provided additional insight regarding the actions exercised by the principal perceived to make staff members feel included and an integral part of the organization. All five of the teachers interviewed at King Elementary School described actions exercised by Principal A. Teacher 1 said, "Our principal is respectful and cares about all of us." Teacher 2 commented,

She steps in and demonstrates genuine care towards everyone. I've seen Principal A personally walk people over to their cars that are too sick to work. She tells us to go home if we are not feeling well and rest. She wanted to make sure we are taking care of ourselves.

Teacher 3 added, "Principal A checks in with us to make sure we are okay." Teacher 4 said, "Principal A is considerate by making coffee in the morning for the staff." Teachers also expressed that Principal A demonstrates respect and care through being protective of her staff. Teacher 1 commented, "Principal A protects us, and it strengthens her leadership influence among us. Teacher 4 added, "Principal A puts out fires with a lot of people, and we don't even

know about it. This keeps us from becoming distracted in performing our responsibilities as teachers." Teacher 5 also said, "Principal A serves as a buffer and filters distractions so that we can stay focused on performing our jobs." Teacher 2 added, "She [Principal A] verbalizes 'this is not right for our staff.'" Teacher 1 mentioned, "Principal A is a [team player] by participating in different activities with the staff, complimenting us, and celebrating successes. The tone which Principal A uses with staff is conducive to communication. Teacher 2 added, "All forms of communication are nonthreatening. Our principal creates a very comfortable setting for communication."

The teachers at Independence Elementary School commented on their perceptions regarding the actions exercised by the Principal B which demonstrate respect and genuine care. Teacher 10 said, "The principal [Principal B] has become a mediator between the district office and us here at the school." Teacher 7 added, "She [Principal B] filters the work for the staff here." Teacher 9 commented, "Principal B is respectful of who we are as professionals because our staff has a voice." Teacher 6 said, "Principal B makes us feel valued and important to the staff as individuals." Teacher 10 commented, "Our principal shows respect to teachers and that goes a long way with us. Principal B has never lorded authority over us. This makes her an effective communicator.

Dimension 4: Creating opportunities (behavior). The fourth dimension of transformational leadership is identified as creating opportunities for organizational members to assume leadership responsibilities. The two principals of the schools not in PI identified behaviors they exercise to share leadership with organizational members. Principal A stated,

> We have improved our communication at this school by redefining professional learning communities [PLC]. Each grade level has established a professional learning community

115

and created clear norms in order to function effectively. The norms established by each grade level are most times higher in expectation than I would have created for them. The set of norms varies for each grade level. However, each level is expected to communicate and send out their norms, their [PLC] agenda, and [PLC] minutes to all staff. Our PLCs meet every Wednesday and we have an early release time for students so that teachers can meet with their grade level. Our grade level meetings serve as a great platform for teachers to feel part of the group. It's a collaborative group and all members are responsible for participating. The PLCs help all teachers understand the responsibilities they have to the site. We also have weekly staff meetings during the school day on Friday morning. We communicate and we adjust instruction based on data. We practice data driven decision making so that we can provide our students what they need currently rather than dated information. We function as a team. We make decisions together.

Additionally, Principal A mentioned,

We have leadership opportunities that teachers agree to do for our school which is noted in their evaluation in the area of co-curricular duties. These are co-curricular activities that teachers voluntarily sign up to participate in during the school year. Teachers are encouraged to participate and be involved in community events. Many of our teachers enjoy the leadership opportunities.

The principal at Independence Elementary School, Principal B said,

The PLCs we have developed here is another format to make others feel included. We have early release for students every Wednesday [for PLC time]. We also have staff meetings every Friday. [Also], the teachers here participate in delivering presentations to the rest of the staff. In the past we have done book studies and have read articles. For example, this year every grade level created a PowerPoint and they shared information and presented goals with the rest of the staff.

Also, Principal B added,

I have established an advisory committee. The committee is comprised of teacher volunteers. There are eight teachers on the advisory committee, an academic coach, and the principal.

The five certificated teachers interviewed from King Elementary School provided additional insight regarding the actions exercised by the principal to provide staff with leadership opportunities within the organization. All five of the teachers interviewed at King Elementary School described actions incorporated by Principal A. Teacher 2 stated,

Principal A sends out a list of leadership opportunities and allows us to pick our areas of service with some direction from her. These opportunities are co-curricular and are linked to our evaluations.

Teacher 2 also said, "We cannot walk up to her with a problem without a possible solution to it. She wants us to focus on solving problems." Teacher 3 commented, "Principal A allows us to model strategies with our own kids and not be a 'model' classroom. Teacher 2 stated, "We have formed PLCs and we meet every Wednesday." Teacher 4 added, "We have established data team leaders and PLC leaders in order for sharing expectations to the rest of the team. We have weekly staff meetings every Friday." Teacher 4 also stated, "Principal A does expect us to volunteer for leadership opportunities but she also allows us to say 'no' and not feel forced into doing something we may not want to do." Teacher 1 said, "I don't see myself as a leader, but I have several positions at this site. [I serve as a] Data Team Leader, Student Study Team Coordinator, and Action Learning Systems representative. Our principal is respectful and cares about all of us." Teacher 5 commented, "We are also given opportunities to get substitutes for planning, collaboration, and articulation. Principal A makes us feel empowered to decide, and she is creative in her process by making us feel it has been our decision."

At Independence Elementary School, four of the five teachers shared their perceptions regarding the methods Principal B utilizes to create leadership opportunities. Teacher 9 stated, "We have created PLCs and meet by grade levels." Teacher 10 stated, "We meet on Fridays during mid morning." Teacher 7 mentioned, "We have collaboration time. We meet by grade level to discuss the instructional needs of our students." Teacher 7 also added, "We feel that, as teachers, we are included in the decision making process. Teacher 9 affirmed the comment by Teacher 7 and said, "Principal B makes us feel part of the decision making process at this

school." Two of the teachers referred to the advisory committee which has been established for teachers to participate in the decision making process. Teacher 6 stated, "The staff has the freedom to send any issue to the advisory committee." Teacher 10 mentioned, "Our principal has established an advisory committee to work collaboratively on site based decision making."

Dimension 5: Self confidence (characteristic). The fifth dimension of transformational leadership identified as self confidence. The self confidence characteristic is the awareness of strengths and weaknesses. This characteristic allows for leaders to utilize strengths and to rely with confidence on organizational members to offset the leader's areas of weakness. When interviewed by the researcher, both principals exhibited areas of humility in their leadership practice. Both of the principals in the non-PI schools expressed an understanding that their leadership style was a collaborative and team approach. Principal B commented, "I am supportive. I feel my strength is in strategic planning and communication." This characteristic is evident by teachers being provided multiple opportunities for leadership. Through self confidence the leader is aware that his or her responsibility is not to do all of the work but rather to intentionally create opportunities to empower others. Leadership responsibilities are distributed to include organizational members in a clear decision making process. Principal B commented, "I am very deliberate in recruiting people into leadership opportunities."

Principal A stated, "We function as a team [and] I am also a part of their team." Leaders with self confidence are comfortable with sharing leadership opportunities because they do not feel threatened with organizational members knowing more in other areas of education. Principal B commented,

> As a leader [I] go to the experts. I don't feel I have all of the answers. I have a very
> collaborative approach to leadership. I don't have all the answers but I know where to go

to find the answers [other people]. Together we find ways to better support our students.

The certificated teachers at both of the non-PI schools also shared their perspectives regarding characteristics of self confidence exercised by their respective principals. Nine out the ten teachers expressed perceived characteristics of self confidence by their respective site principals. Teacher 2 commented,

> Principal A is confident enough in what she is doing as a leader that she intercedes for us. When something comes as a directive from the district office and she knows it's not the right thing for students, she has a backbone to stand up for what is best for our kids. She is confident enough to stand up to the people who have the power to move her or dismiss her. Principal A is a problem solver.

Teacher 3 added, "She [Principal A] is not afraid to confront anyone. She verbalizes [her concerns]. Principal A is not a push over." Teacher 4 commented, "Principal A invites us to try new strategies or ideas." Teacher 5 said, "Principal A makes us feel empowered to decide and is creative in her process by making us feel it has been our decision. Principal A has a talent in recruiting staff to assume leadership opportunities. Teacher 6 said, "[Principal B] is very supportive and very collaborative in her leadership style. Another teacher, Teacher 7 commented, "We feel that as teachers we are included in the decision making process." Teacher 8 added, "[Principal B] leads with a sense of calmness."

Dimension 6: Empowerment (characteristic). The sixth dimension associated with transformational leadership is empowerment. The empowerment leadership characteristic provides organizational members with the capacity to attain success. The characteristic of empowerment mobilizes organizational members to redefine a new identity or philosophy. Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) suggest empowerment is the presence of structures and processes that facilitate empowerment and increase team performance.

Both of the principals at the non-PI schools expressed they utilize a collaborative approach in their leadership style. The first step in identifying the empowerment characteristic is the attitude of the leader. The principal at King Elementary School, Principal A, stated,

> As the school leader, I [understand] the importance of building capacity amongst my staff members and providing them with the additional training necessary to implement effective strategies. [Therefore] I ensure teachers are provided with additional support as needed. We provide opportunities for ongoing professional development. We provide onsite and off-site trainings. We have embraced Literature Connection, Explicit Direct Instruction, ALS, and that which provides us with good teaching strategies. If we fail to meet the goals, I follow up with a discussion to assess and evaluate areas that need to improve with educational stakeholders.

The principal at Independence Elementary School, Principal B, mentioned, "We have ongoing professional development."

The perceptions of the teachers validated the comments made by the two principals in the non-PI schools. There were seven out of ten teachers who commented about the characteristics perceived to promote empowerment at their respective schools sites. Teacher 1 commented, "Principal A strives to equip us." Teacher 2 added, "Principal A comes by frequently and her focus is to prepare us. [In fact], when money wasn't an issue, all I had to do is go up to her and tell her I need something that will work with my kids." Teacher 3 shared, "Principal A is such an inspirer of people that we often don't realize how we've gotten to where we are." Teacher 4 stated, "Principal A works towards making sure we are prepared for what is coming and that we are prepared to do the job correctly. We have been inspired [empowered] to take ownership in the community along with other educational stakeholders." Teacher 5 expressed, "Principal A provides opportunities for us to teach and model for others on implemented strategies. I have had so much training and have the opportunity to get the training needed to be successful at what I do. We are given opportunities to get substitutes for planning, collaboration, and articulation.

The teachers at Independence Elementary School shared similar comments. Teacher 7 said, "If there is a professional development opportunity, Principal B will find the funding to send us to any training if we feel it will help us become better at our job." Teacher 9 commented, Principal B constantly reminds us that if there is anything we need to just let her know [and she] will find the funds to provide us with the most current technology if it will help us with instruction and learning." Teacher 10 shared, "Principal B encourages us to talk to other colleagues for additional help and support. Principal B also is creative in bringing professional development to us here at the site so that we can all benefit."

Dimension 7: Vision (characteristic). The seventh dimension linked to transformational leadership is vision. The characteristic of vision provides organizational members with an attractive, realistic, and believable future. This vision is understandable, beneficial, and it creates synergy for the organization. Throughout the individual interviews of both principals in the non-PI schools, their vision became evident. Principal A stated,

> We know that all kids can learn and it is up to us to find and implement strategies to facilitate learning. [I] communicate to all staff that improving student academic scores at this school is going to be a collaborative effort by accepting the responsibility for student learning. Students can get it, and we need to use what we have learned about good teaching strategies to determine what will be most helpful to our students.   I feel it is our moral and ethical responsibility to do what is right for students. Our priority is to do what we need to for our kids and do whatever we need to do.

Principal B commented,

> I serve as the primary communicator. I have a strong commitment to lead morally and ethically. I try to lead by example. We have the mindset that these students are 'all of our kids' and we work together to make sure they are learning. The entire staff here takes responsibility in caring and welcoming all who visit this school. We are all representatives to our community and we try to build community.

The organizational vision is the overarching goal for the organization. The vision begins with an asset based perspective by focusing on the strengths of the organization and ongoing actions to build the capacity needed for success. Principal B said, "[My] strength is in strategic planning and communication." Principal A commented,

> I feel it is important to facilitate, create, and share expectations with the staff. It is my responsibility to be the primary communicator as the school site leader. It is my responsibility to facilitate clear communication among all educational stakeholders here at this school. I have a set of reasonable and attainable goals that are generated. [I] communicate these goals to school staff and make sure we are implementing effective strategies necessary to attain these goals. It is important for a leader to follow up on expectations - 'what isn't inspected isn't respected.' I make frequent walkthroughs and I meet with people personally.

The certificated teachers reinforced the statements made by the two principals. There were nine out of ten teachers who commented about characteristics of the vision communicated by the site principal. The teachers at King Elementary School contributed with their perceptions. For example, Teacher 1 said, "Our principal has communicated to us that it is about the kids. Our principal has turned this [NCLB] pressure and has focused us on making sure our kids are learning." Teacher 2 commented, "Principal A comes by frequently and her focus is to prepare us. She'll let us know what she is looking for when she is doing a walkthrough so we'll know what is expected." Teacher 3 added, "She [Principal A] is clear in her expectations." Teacher 5 stated, "Principal A is a consistent leader who expects the same high standards of herself that she insists on with staff.

The teachers at Independence Elementary School also contributed with their perceptions regarding the characteristics of the vision demonstrated by their site principal. One teacher commented about the focus on content standards embraced by the site principal and communicated to the entire staff. Teacher 8 stated,

I was hired the same year Principal B was hired and I have seen her function as a focused leader and she is helpful in insuring teachers are focused. Principal B has her direct path to where we need to go and it is well discerned. She is definitely a person who leads with calmness and composure.

Teacher 10 said, "Principal B makes sure we are addressing and hitting the standards."

There were two teachers who expressed the constant communication of the organizational vision.

Teacher 6 shared, "[Principal B] often that communicates hit is our calling to do what is best for our kids. She reminds us often to do what is best for your kids in the classroom. She knows what her priority is [at our school]. Teacher 10 added, "The goal is frequently communicated."

Dimension 8: Organizational culture (context). The eighth dimension is defined as organizational culture. The dimension of organizational culture was investigated in relation to the values, beliefs, and practices. The two principals in the non-PI schools stated their perceptions regarding the organizational culture regarding their respective schools. Principal A commented, "The staff is not complacent but rather strives for ongoing improvement. The staff [also] believes that what we are doing is right for our students. Principal B stated,

We all share the same goal here and that is to support our kids. The entire staff here takes responsibility in caring. We are all representatives to our community and we try to build that community. We are all equal. We are one, and there shall be no division. [We are] very collaborative, very supportive, and we are family.

The teachers were also interviewed regarding their perceptions on organizational culture. The certificated teachers identified specific behaviors and characteristics perceived to have affected development of school culture. The teachers actually described the current organizational culture and linked it to the leadership style of the site principal. At King Elementary School, Teacher 1 commented, "Principal A [gives us] compliments [and] we celebrate successes. Teacher 1 also stated, "Fun and friendly" as two characteristics which are

123

exercised by the principal to positively affect organizational culture. Teacher 1 described the current organizational culture at King Elementary School by adding, "We feel like family here at this school. We have pride in what we do and we care about the kids in this community." Teacher 2 identified Principal A's work ethic as an important leadership characteristic which is demonstrated by "Principal A [always being] here after five or six o'clock in the evening. In the first few years, she was always here after seven at night." Teacher 2 also mentioned, "Principal A is a problem solver [and] she wants us to focus on solving the problems." Teacher 3 explained, "Principal A is a strong leader because she is firm and knows how to express firmness through gentleness. [Principal A is] kind." According to Teacher 4, Principal A is strong and outgoing. These two characteristics have helped in building a positive school culture. Teacher 5 commented, "[Principal A] is consistent, a decision maker, genuine, and approachable." Teacher 5 also described the organizational culture as

> [A place where] the difference for this school is that it has a strong spiritual element. This motivates us to make an eternal difference. We enjoy a spiritual freedom to express a personal faith. Principal A also affirms that we have the freedom to express or demonstrate our faith in moments of crises.

At Independence Elementary School, the certificated teachers also identified behaviors and characteristics which were perceived to have positively affected organizational culture. The characteristics mentioned by Teacher 9 were "hard work[ing] accountable, results driven, and a communicator. Teacher 10 described Principal B with the following characteristics, "communicator, determined, perseverance, patient, goal focused, clear expectations, [identifies] attainable goals." Teacher 8 described the organizational culture at Independence Elementary School by stating, "Principal B makes us feel like a team and we share the desire in working

together. Everyone accepts that responsibility and we choose to continue working together. This school works well as a group/team."

Chapter Summary

The qualitative data discussed in Chapter 4 was compiled through individual interviews of principals and focus group interviews of certificated teachers in four rural elementary schools in Fresno County to answer the questions: (a) What is the perceived impact of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria; and (b) Which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principals are perceived to positively affect organizational culture? The following categories for typological analysis were utilized by the researcher: (a) communication; (b) trust; (c) respect/caring for others; (d) creating opportunities (risk); (e) self confidence; (f) empowerment; (g) vision (cognitive capability); and (h) organizational culture. Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) categorized the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) across the following dimensions: (a) behaviors; (b) characteristics; and (c) context.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Principal leadership remains at the forefront of school reform and continues to be studied to assess its impact on organizational culture and school effectiveness. School effectiveness is a topic of ongoing discussion in an effort to improve student academic achievement in U.S. public schools (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). According to Nettles and Herrington, educational leadership has the potential to impact school effectiveness and improve organizational outcomes.

For rural schools in California, the student demographics are often more culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse. Rural school principals face unique obstacles and situations as documented in the research and literature. The impact of education reform mandates, such as NCLB, has compounded these challenges. The qualitative data collected through individual and focus group interviews documents the perceptions of principals and certificated teachers on leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture. The purpose of this qualitative study was to: (a) identify the perceived impacts of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools in Fresno County; and (b) identify which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI.

This chapter presents the analysis of findings presented in Chapter 4 and also the implications regarding the perceived impact the NCLB educational reform mandate has on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in specific rural

settings. Additionally, this chapter will discuss the implications regarding the impact of principal leadership behaviors and characteristics on organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with suggestions for future research.

Research Questions

The researcher posed two research questions, which gave direction and focus to this leadership research study. The collected data answers the research questions and provides insights as to the perceived impact of education reform mandates on leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture. Additionally, this study reiterates the behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI.

1. What is the perceived impact of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County that meet specific student demographic criteria?

2. Which transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principals are perceived to affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County that are not PI?

To answer these two research questions, the researcher conducted individual interviews of principals and focus group interviews of certificated teachers. The researcher developed two

127

different interview protocols, which were slightly nuanced towards principals for the individual

interviews and towards the certificated teachers for the focus group interviews. The researcher

interviewed four principals (two principals from non-PI elementary schools & two principals

from PI elementary schools) and 14 certificated teachers (10 teachers from non-PI schools &

four teachers from PI elementary schools) across four rural elementary schools in Fresno County

that met specific student demographic criteria. The findings from the qualitative data are

discussed here.

Summary of Main Findings

This section puts forth the main themes identified from the typological analysis of the

data in Chapter 4. The researcher used the main themes to develop several points for discussion

of main findings and their implications for educational stakeholders. See Table 11 for a list of

themes.

Table 11

Main Themes from the Qualitative Data Collected from Interviews

Theme Number	Main Theme
1	Stress
2	Communication
3	Trust
4	Collaboration
5	Empowerment
6	Shared vision
7	Shared beliefs
8	Effectiveness

Research Question One

The first research question was proposed to provide insight as to the perceived impact of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture. To answer the first research question, the researcher conducted typological analysis and the data compiled from individual and focus group interviews were coded to reveal common themes. There were several factors that emerged from the data collected. The discussion related to the findings for this first research question is presented next.

The Effects of NCLB on U.S. Public Schools

This study captures the perceived effects of NCLB on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture. Policymakers enacted educational reform legislation over the years since *A Nation at Risk* without full knowledge of the ramifications on schools (Chance, 1993). Hence, Chance argued the education reform mandates are classified as a phenomenon that produces unintended consequences.

According to Daly and Chrispeels (2005), newspapers published and portrayed the image of failure among U.S. public schools. The numbers of failing schools continues to increase since the introduction of NCLB since the bar for achievement is raised every year. Since the inception of NCLB, schools struggle to meet unprecedented expectations regarding student academic achievement as demonstrated by standardized test scores. These unprecedented expectations have drive schools to turn to rigid curriculum content standards with narrow scripted texts to address standards. NCLB increases administration of standardized assessments and issues sanctions for not meeting mandated annual goals (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005). These high

demands increase levels of individual and collective stress to the point that rigid bureaucratic leadership systems develop. These centralized decision making processes result in organizational ineffectiveness when faced with meeting the demands of NCLB. The increased individual and collective stress influenced by NCLB negatively affects the morale of principals and certificated teachers in U.S. public schools (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005).

The Effects of Stress in Rural Schools

The findings of this study suggest NCLB influences increased levels of individual and collective stress within the school organization. Individual stress is the response by a person and collective stress is the response of a group of persons to perceived external threats. The increased levels of individual and collective stress stem from the unprecedented expectations of NCLB due to the lack of consideration regarding the needs of students in rural schools. These expectations are unrealistic because the NCLB federal mandate does not take into consideration the language or mobility rates of students in some urban and rural communities.

All students in U.S. public schools, especially students in rural communities, are expected to learn at the same rate. Additionally, the accountability process reflected in the implementation of standardized testing and the imposition of sanctions for not meeting annual measurable objectives increases stress for principals and teachers (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005). Individual and collective stress results in principals utilizing bureaucratic leadership approaches due to the urgency of quickly meeting mandated requirements. Bureaucratic leadership approaches are defined as rigid, top down leadership based on the expectation of producing organizational improvement with no follower input.

The results of this study indicate a difference in leadership behaviors and characteristics between the two principals from the non-PI schools and the two principals from the PI schools in regards to encountering stress. The principals at the non-PI schools utilize communication as a primary means to establish clear expectations and meaningful feedback to teachers. These methods of communication are exercised by the principals in various formal and informal processes. Additionally, the principals at the non-PI schools utilize a collaborative decision making process and include the input of certificated teachers when making organizational decisions. The inclusion of communication, clear expectations, and the utilization of a collaborative decision making processes help develop trust among organizational members. According to the literature, the development of trust among school principals and certificated teachers prepares organizations to response positively to individual and collective stress (Daly & Chrispeels, 2005).

The principals at the PI schools utilize centralized decision making processes which did not allow for certificated teachers to provide suggestions or recommendations regarding the instructional programs at the school sites. The principals instruct teachers to implement research based instructional practices and pacing guides developed by outside educational consultants. The extreme concern caused by NCLB, along with bureaucratic decision making utilized by the principals at the PI schools, are associated with an increase in individual and collective stress. The increased stress creates a negative and fragmented organizational culture in the rural schools in PI. The fragmentation in organizational culture became is by the responses of frustration and lack of desire to work in collaboration as described by certificated teachers.

Although all four principals confirm increased levels of individual and collective stress as a result of the influence of NCLB, higher levels of stress are evident by the responses provided by the principals and certificated teachers at two rural elementary schools in PI. According to the literature, stress has a negative impact on school leadership and organizational culture. However, in the non-PI schools the perceived stress is handled by principals utilizing an intentional and strategic response. The principals at the non-PI schools are focused in creating shared organizational goals with a focus on student learning; while the principals at the PI schools are focused on meeting the mandates of NCLB which were external influences. The findings in this study show a difference in perceived leadership behaviors and characteristics between the two principals at the rural elementary schools not in PI and the two principals at the rural elementary schools in PI. According to certificated teachers at the rural elementary schools not in PI, principals respond to the stress of NCLB by utilizing many forms of communication through clear expectations, and a collaborative approach to decision making. The leadership processes exercised by the two rural elementary principals at the non-PI schools are an intentional response not necessarily to the requirements of the NCLB mandate but to emotional needs of students and teachers. The leadership practices exercised by the two principals at the non-PI schools seem to create a climate for success. This climate of success is confirmed by positive interconnectedness which cultivated by relational trust and ongoing improvement in student academic achievement scores as documented by the CST and the avoidance of PI identification.

The findings align with the literature regarding human resources development theory. Owens and Valesky (2011) argue that leaders facilitate the development school culture by

increasing the consciousness of organizational members to increase their commitment, abilities, and energies in attaining shared goals. The two rural elementary principals utilize communication to establish clear expectations through a collaborative decision making process to increase motivation and commitment by the certificated teachers. This is confirmed by the responses of certificated teachers who clearly identified a strong willingness to trust and follow the influence of their respective rural elementary principal.

The findings in this study also show that the leadership processes utilized by the two rural elementary principals at the PI schools are reactionary to the NCLB mandate. The focus of the principals at the non-PI schools is to demand certificated teachers work towards meeting the annual expectations of the NCLB mandate. According to the certificated teachers at the rural elementary schools in PI, principals respond to the stress of NCLB by utilizing bureaucratic leadership approaches. These leadership approaches are described by certificated teachers to directly impact the behaviors and characteristics exercised by principals along with organizational culture at the rural elementary schools in PI. The rural elementary principals at the schools in PI utilize a centralized decision making process. This process is evident by principals not including certificated teachers in the decision making process. Hence, rather than include teachers in decision making process when considering curriculum and instructional topics, principals choose to acquire and distribute curriculum resources to teachers for immediate implementation. Along with the stress of meeting the mandates of NCLB, certificated teachers describe increased frustration with not having any type of input into classroom instruction and ideas to best meet the needs of students and teachers.

The findings align with the literature regarding bureaucratic theory. Owens and Valesky (2011) argue that leaders facilitate the development of negative school culture by implementing mechanisms to control the behavior of people in the organization. The two rural elementary principals of schools in PI utilize hierarchical control of authority by not providing certificated teachers an opportunity to be part of the decision making process or provide any type of input. The principals at the schools in PI also utilize clearly written rules and procedures to set expectations for certificated teachers and could be perceived as setting clear expectations. However, the main difference between setting clear expectations at the non-PI and PI rural elementary schools is that the latter did not include teacher input in the development of the expectations or shared goals. Thus, teachers express frustration with just being mandated to implement pacing guides and instructional practices that are considered research based without any type of feedback, suggestions, or opportunities for modifications.

The four rural elementary principals express a commitment to improving student academic achievement. However, their individual response to the increased stress is critical to the overall effectiveness of the organizations. The two rural elementary schools not in PI are able to avoid from being in PI due to the principals cultivation of a positive organizational culture which focused on meeting the needs of students and organizational members. This is reflected by including teachers in the decision making process which increases relational trust to follow the influence and direction of the rural elementary principals at the non-PI schools. The result of a positive organizational culture is evidenced by the responses provided by certificated teachers and by the ongoing improvement in student academic achievement as documented by the CST.

The two rural elementary schools in PI are not able to demonstrate any ongoing improvement in student academic achievement as evidenced by the results of the CST. The organizational culture is also perceived to be negative which increase levels of individual and collective stress. This stress stems from increased levels of frustration expressed by certificated teachers at the PI schools. The result of negative organizational culture is evidenced by the responses provided by certificated teachers and their job dissatisfaction. The job dissatisfaction expressed by the certificated teachers result in the PI schools having organizational cultures described as teachers working in isolation and unwilling to be influenced or follow the direction of the site principals.

The findings in this study show differences in perspective between the principals at non-PI schools and PI schools regarding the perceived individual stress influenced by NCLB. The individual stress is felt by principals due to their moral and ethical commitment to increase student academic success. These differences can be linked to the leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principals in the four rural schools. According to the literature, the behaviors exercised by principals contain elements of effectiveness and ineffectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The leadership style exercised by rural principals enhances, encourages, and nurtures a positive or negative school culture during stressful situations caused by external influences.

The increased individual stress felt by rural principals to meet the mandated requirements of NCLB is compounded when one standardized test is used to determine school success or failure. Thus, the findings of this study support that the leadership behaviors and characteristics of two rural principals of the schools in PI affects negatively the certificated teachers at those

sites. At the rural PI sites, principals utilize rigid, non flexible leadership approaches. These rigid, non flexible leadership approaches are ascertained from comments provided by certificated teachers describing their frustration, lack of cohesiveness, and lack of motivation to follow the vision communicated by the principal resulting in increased stress.

According to the literature the increased level of individual and collective stress can be linked to rigid bureaucratic leadership approaches utilized by the principals (Daily & Chrispeels, 2005). Hence, the study findings show the results of bureaucratic leadership approaches result in increased frustration among teachers due to feeling ignored and not being part of the decision making process at the school. These findings are consistent with previous research by Hansen and Sullivan (2003), Kyriacou (2001), Wiley (2000) who found increased individual stress is linked to decreased job satisfaction, inability to problem solve, and the physical manifestations of intra/interpersonal conflict. According to Bakkenes et al. (1999) and Scribner (1999), significant stress levels decrease productivity, encourage cultures of isolation, and involve limited opportunities for professional development. This type of collective stress negatively impacts the organizational culture in a rural school. This negative culture continues to be perpetuated when principals intervene to make some organizational correction with corrective criticism.

The findings of the study also indicate the principals at the two rural elementary schools not in PI are influenced to exercise clear, effective communication and establish a collaborative decision making process. The certificated teachers at the rural elementary schools not in PI support the comments provided by their respective principals. Although NCLB has increased stress among organizational members in rural schools, the principals of the non-PI schools are

136

committed to creating a climate of success by creating a shared vision and constantly communicating that vision with all organizational members. A shared vision is a plan of action that is developed by all organizational members, and the principals facilitate that process. The principal then assumes the role of primary communicator of the vision which includes clear expectations of all educational stakeholders.

The findings in this study indicate a difference in principal behaviors and characteristics between the rural elementary schools not in PI and the elementary schools in PI. These differences are evident in the perceptions shared by the certificated teachers at each of the four rural elementary school sites. The certificated teachers' responses are an indication of the condition of the organizational culture and the schools' response to the NCLB mandate. The principals at the rural elementary schools not in PI set the tone for the organization's collective response to the NCLB mandate. The shared vision developed and communicated by the two principals at the non-PI sites is to assume responsibility for all students by all organizational members. The principals and certificated teachers at the non-PI schools sites focus on making sure students were learning. The two principals at the non-PI school sites are highly respected and trusted by certificated teachers.

However, at the rural elementary school sites in PI, the two principals are perceived to be unapproachable, insecure, not open to dialog. Although the two principals express being intentional about exercising clear communication and implementing research based instructional strategies for students, teachers express a sense of disconnection and unwillingness to progress together toward the expectations cohesively.

According to the research literature, the study of organizational responses in schools to stress is a relatively unexplored topic (Griffith, 2004; Rosenblatt, 2004; Shaw & Barrett-Power, 1997). However, this research study provides some insight regarding the perceived effects of principal behaviors and characteristics on organizational culture as influenced by NCLB. Despite the common perception of individual stress by the principals and certificated teachers from the four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) there is a difference in organizational effectiveness as reflected by AYP and API on the CST. The organizational response facilitated by the principals is critical to the cultivation of organizational culture in these four rural elementary schools.

The literature suggests when principals exercise behaviors and characteristics which are focused on developing trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000), self and collective efficacy (the sense of feeling fulfilled as an individual and group) (Bandura, 1996, 1997), and positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmalyi, 2000) a positive school culture is developed and cultivated within schools. When principals facilitate positive responses to stress influenced by external factors, the organizational members exercise positive organizational behavior to create effective schools. When principals facilitate negative responses to stress influenced by external factors, the organizational members exercise negative behavior to create effective schools. The findings in this study were consistent with the research literature.

Research Question Two

The second research question is proposed to provide insight as to the leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by the site principal perceived to positively affect

organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County that met specific student demographic criteria. The researcher utilized the transformational leadership framework defined by Bennis and Nanus (1985) and further elaborated upon by Sashkin and Sashkin (2005). To answer the second research question, the researcher conducted typological analysis and the data compiled from individual interviews and focus group interviews were coded to reveal common themes. The discussion related to the findings for this second research question is presented next.

Transformational Leadership

This study also captures the transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools in Fresno County not in PI and which met specific student demographic criteria.

According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), transformational leadership is defined by the following dimensions: (a) attention through vision; (b) meaning through communication; (c) trust through positioning (actions that implement the vision); and (d) deployment of self (knowing and nurturing one's strengths and making sure they fit with the needs of the organizations). Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) categorized the findings of Bennis and Nanus (1985) across three areas: (a) behaviors defined as communication, trust, respect/caring for others, and creating opportunities through risk; (b) characteristics defined as self-confidence, empowerment, and vision; and (c) context defined as organizational culture.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) argue transformational leadership involves the empowerment of others as its central focus for the purpose of fulfilling the organizational vision. Thus, Bennis

and Nanus (1985) conceptualize transformational leaders as social architects responsible for cultivating organizational culture that leads to shared success (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2005).

Linking Transformational Leadership to Organizational Culture

The findings of this study are consistent with Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) indicate that principal leadership behaviors and characteristics have positive effects on school culture and organizational effectiveness. The two rural elementary school principals in this study utilize leadership behaviors and characteristics perceived to provide direction and influence teachers towards attainment of shared organizational goals.

In this study, the use of clear and frequent communication by the principal results in teachers having a clear understanding of professional expectations. Communication is crucial to making complex ideas clear for organizational members. Edmonds (1979) and Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) describe effective schools across several key variables of which two are high expectations and clear mission. The findings of this study indicate the principals viewed their role as the primary communicator of organizational expectations. Additionally, study findings indicate that communication involves willingness by the principals to actively listen and provide meaningful feedback to organizational members. Communication is considered by the two rural elementary school principals as an essential behavior exercised daily through their leadership approach. Communication is utilized by the two rural elementary school principals to keep certificated teachers informed and provide a platform for teachers to express concerns. These findings are consistent with Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) who use two core functions to define leadership: (a) providing direction; and (b) exercising influence.

In this study, the certificated teachers identify the communication of the two rural elementary school principals as an embodiment of the shared organizational vision. The certificated teachers feel valued and appreciated, by their respective rural elementary school principal through communication methods utilized. When certificated teachers feel appreciated the individual self efficacy of organizational members improves and increases the collective self efficacy of all, thus creating a positive school culture. When school cultures are positive, a transformative process begins to become more collaborative and results in improved organizational behavior. These findings are consistent with Bryk and Schneider (2002), Cameron (2003), Cooperrider, (2001) Cooperrider and Sekerka (2003), Luthans (2002). Basically, when principals utilize clear communication reflected through active listening and meaningful feedback, certificated teachers respond positively by following the direction and influence of the principal. Certificated teachers describe their willingness to follow the direction and influence of their site principal based on their perception of being respected as organizational members.

However communication, by itself, is not sufficient to positively affect organizational culture. The findings in the study also identify trust as an essential component to positively affect organizational culture. According to the literature, relational trust can be cultivated by rural school principals by valuing the work and commitment of educational stakeholders in every area of the organization (Laub & O'Connor, 2009). The two rural elementary principals demonstrate intentionality in cultivating supportive relationships. These supportive relationships are described by the principals as being sincere and consistent. The utilization of sincerity and consistency by the principal is used to express genuine care for what is going on professionally

141

or personally in the lives of certificated teachers. The demonstration of genuine care for the

professional and personal wellbeing of organization members creates a culture of supportive

relationship as a result of relational trust.

According to the literature, trust is an interactive process between the leader and

followers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The findings in this study confirm that the relationship

between the rural elementary school principals and the certificated teachers is crucial to the

development of trust. The contributing factors to the development of trust for the principals are

the willingness of the principal to buffer unnecessary work, exercise integrity, and facilitate

collaboration. From the certificated teachers' perspective, there are times when busy work is

sent to the sites for completion. However, rather than to create a distraction for staff, the site

principal facilitates the focus of certificated teachers on student learning. According to

certificated teachers, integrity and an attitude of collaboration are important building blocks for

trust. Trust is an interactive process and collaboration means being approachable to discuss any

concern shared by certificated teachers. The more time is invested in an interactive process that

is caring, honest, and collaborative, the more the feeling of trustworthiness toward the principal

will increase. The increase in trust by organizational members towards the leader positively

affects the organization culture.

The findings in this study show a commitment by principals to create opportunities for

capacity building among organizational members. According to Sashkin and Sashkin (2005),

transformational leaders are intentional about creating opportunities for others to take charge.

When principals are committed to building capacity, organizational members are equipped with

the skill set to demonstrate effectiveness. Creating opportunities for certificated teachers results

in empowerment and strengthens communication among organizational members. The findings in the study showed that the two rural elementary school principals facilitate a shared communication process through professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs are a process when certificated teachers gather to constructively dialog about the areas of strengths, areas of weakness, and develop a plan of action to address identified needs. This type of format allows for teachers to generate answers to problems within the organization rather than relying solely on the principal for all of the answers.

According to Sashkin and Sashkin (2005), leaders create opportunities, in order for others to take charge. Through the process of creating opportunities leaders provide avenues for others to build capacity and develop the knowledge, skills, and access resources to do the job well. Bandura (1994) categorizes this process as one of four ways to develop self efficacy. As a result of creating opportunities, followers explicitly experience competence and can exercise personal leadership opportunities (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Sashkin & Sashkin, 2005). The findings in this study conclude that the principals and certificated teachers considered the use of PLCs as a primary method for creating opportunities for all organizational members to build capacity and strengthen the organizational culture.

The findings of the study are consistent with Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2005) in regards to the dimensions of transformational leadership. Based on the findings, the dimensions are interconnected to create a positive organizational culture. If the behaviors, characteristics, and context are independent of each other, it becomes difficult to create genuine systemic reform within schools. In rural schools with limited administrative support and funding, principals need to create a positive organizational culture not to necessarily

meet the expectations of educational reform mandates but rather to meet the needs of all students. These needs can be identified internally rather than by external influences.

Based on the findings, principals acknowledge the current organizational culture was not to meet mandated expectations but rather to strive for ongoing improvement in student academic achievement beyond standardized testing. This ongoing improvement is demonstrated through creating a caring atmosphere for students and organizational members. According to the certificated teachers, principals are approachable, caring, effective communicators empowering, patient, and genuine. These behaviors and characteristics are perceived to positively affect organizational culture in the rural elementary schools not in PI. As a result, certificated teachers in the non-PI schools are likely to follow the direction and influence of the principal.

Significance of Findings

The findings of this qualitative study provide insightful implications regarding the phenomenon of school leadership and organizational culture in a rural setting. The researcher puts forth implications and conclusions based on the findings.

Implications for Federal and State Policymakers

Federal and state policymakers need to strongly consider unintended consequences during the drafting stages of legislation by including a diverse representation of educational stakeholders. Federal and state policymakers need to consider the research on individual and collective stress caused by education reform mandates. Rather to mandate school effectiveness through school influences, federal and state policymakers need to realize that the forced

education reform mandates only perpetuate the culture of school failure rather than success. This is especially true in high mobility and low income students in rural areas.

Implications for California CTC Approved School Leadership Preparation Programs

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) is the independent governing body responsible for approving school leadership preparation programs and the issuance and renewal of credentials school administrators to work in public education. All CCTC approved school leadership preparation programs must adhere to delivering a standards based program for aspiring administrators that is grounded in the knowledge and skills in the school leadership standards referred to as the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders also known as CPSELs. These CPSELs define six standards which are to prepare aspiring administrators for leadership roles in U.S. public schools. However, CCTC approved programs need to better prepare aspiring administrators for school leadership in rural settings.

It is imperative for school leadership preparation programs to train and prepare aspiring administrators on understanding, implementing, and developing the dimensions of transformational leadership in rural settings in order to better address the unique challenges of schools. Aspiring administrators in rural settings will need to be very fluent in not only having an awareness of the CPSELs but also in implementing these leadership standards through their practice. The dimensions of transformational leadership are found to help rural principals facilitate an organizational response to individual, collective stress, and the unique needs of students and teachers. This organizational response is facilitated through the utilization of transformational leadership by the rural principals. This study found that the utilization of

transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics positively affect organizational culture and student academic achievement. The principal preparation programs should include the theoretical framework for transformational leadership as well as experiences to understand the uniqueness of challenges faced by rural schools.

Implications for Current District Administrators and Current Principals

Transformational leadership is perceived to positively affect organizational culture and student academic achievement. Hence, current district administrators need to provide professional development training for current and future principals in rural schools. These trainings should include an understanding of the relevance of organizational culture to student academic performance for schools in rural settings. Additional trainings should include the relevance of leadership behaviors and characteristics and their perceived impact organizational culture for schools in rural settings. Finally, training should include the important role rural principals have in creating organizational responses to individual, collective stress, and implementing the CPSELs in their leadership practices.

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Recommendations for Future Research

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This section proposes recommendations for future research and areas of study. This study researched a limited area of educational leadership relative to rural schools. However, future research regarding educational leadership can be expanded in other ways. The following recommendations are based upon the personal insights gained by the researcher during this investigative process. This study focused on the perceived dimensions of transformational

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146

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leadership in rural schools utilizing qualitative measures. However, additional insight can be provided regarding the direct relationship between each dimension of transformational leadership using quantitative measures.

This study could be expanded to include quantitative measures and also include more than just rural schools to provide additional research literature regarding the function of transformational leadership in U.S. public schools. For example, the perceptions of the principals and teachers are the only ones documented in this qualitative study. A recommendation for future research is to study the perceptions of students to learn about their reactions to NCLB and future educational reform. The perceptions of students might help other educational stakeholders understand the direct impact of NCLB on students personally rather than to infer the impact through standardized test results or through the perceptions of someone else. Future studies that include the perceptions of students might provide insight as to effects of students in one rural environment doing better than in another rural environment.

There are effects of leadership behaviors and characteristics exercised by rural principals that may are trickling down to student achievement in some rural schools and not in others. A recommended area for future research is to examine the organizational leadership capacity within a cross section of rural schools. This may provide insight as to the organizational capacity among the school staff and possibly linked to increased student achievement and provide suggestions for possible frameworks for ongoing coaching and professional development for rural principals.

Conclusions

The findings of the study indicate that the NCLB educational reform mandate has created increased individual and collective stress in the four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) as documented by the responses of principals and certificated teachers. The data reveals increased individual and collective stress is the perceived impact of NCLB on organizational culture. However, the findings also put forth that the principal's leadership behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture are communication, trust, collaboration, empowerment, shared vision, and shared beliefs. These behaviors and characteristics exercised by the principal are perceived to positively affect organizational culture and increase effectiveness as documented by ongoing improvement in student academic achievement.

The findings regarding the dimensions of transformational leadership dimensions are consistent with literature and previous research. The principals in this study exercise the dimensions of transformational leadership thus positively affecting the organizational culture at the two rural elementary schools not in PI.

Chapter Summary

The findings of this study demonstrated the perceived impact of the NCLB education reform mandate on principal leadership behaviors, characteristics and organizational culture for schools in rural communities. An additional area of study was the transformational leadership behaviors and characteristics perceived to positively affect organizational culture in two rural elementary schools not in PI that met specific demographic criteria. The qualitative data

provided evidence that NCLB has created increased individual and collective stress. The principal's response to the individual and collective stress determines the overall tone of the organizational culture in four rural elementary schools (two elementary schools not in PI and two elementary schools in PI) in Fresno County. The findings indicate that the organizational responses by the principals in the non-PI schools were perceived to be more positive than in the elementary schools in PI.

The dimensions of transformational leadership were utilized to code responses provided by principals and teachers. The perceptions of the principals were supported by the perceptions expressed by teacher responses. The dynamics of transformational leadership revolves around a relationship between leader and followers. It is important for principals in rural settings to recognize the interconnectedness of the dimensions of transformational leadership and their impact of positively affecting organizational culture and increasing student academic achievement.

Appendix A

Request Permission to Participate in Research Study

Dear _____,

I am currently a doctoral student in the School of Education at Loyola Marymount University in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. I am seeking your help to conduct a research study with selected rural elementary schools in Fresno County.

The Study: The purpose of this research study is to gain insight regarding the impact of the *No Child Left Behind* reform mandate on school principal behaviors, characteristics, and organizational culture in rural elementary schools. An additional area of research will be to identify school principal behaviors and characteristics which positively affect organizational culture to create an upward trend in California Standards Test scores. I will gather my data through individual interviews of the school site principal and focus group interviews of the certificated teachers. The interviews will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The interviews will be set up at a convenient time for the participant in order to minimize interruption to the instructional day.

Risks/Benefits: There are no risks involved with this study and your participation. The data gathered by me will be shared in my dissertation. The primary objective of this research study is to provide insight and inform hiring practices and professional development for persons desiring to enter the site leadership roles. You will be contacted if the study design or the use of information changes.

Confidentiality: Pseudonyms will be used to refer to the persons interviewed along with the rural elementary school sites and school districts. Therefore, no real names will be released in the study. All interview transcriptions and coding data will be kept in a locked file and on a secure computer with password.

Voluntary Nature/Questions: Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the school, researcher, or Loyola Marymount University. There may be a circumstance where the researcher may conclude your participation before the study ends. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the school, researcher, or Loyola Marymount University. Also, you have the right to refuse to answer any interview question posed by the researcher that you do not wish to answer. If you have any questions, please send an email to xpina@lion.lmu.edu.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate.

Thank you,

Xavier Piña

Doctoral Student
Loyola Marymount University

Print Your Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Leadership & Organizational Culture
Interview Protocol
School Principal

1.   How does the NCLB reform mandate influence you in your leadership style?

2.   What methods of communication do you use to communicate with your staff to encourage them to share information and develop new ideas to improve teaching and learning?

3.   What type of actions do you demonstrate that are considered credible in order to build trust?

4.   How do you make sure your staff members feel included and part of the group?

5.   What do you do to make sure your staff members have the knowledge, skills, and resources to do the job right?

6.   How do you demonstrate self confidence?

7.   How do you create opportunities for staff members to assume leadership opportunities?

8.   Which leadership behaviors/characteristics affected the development of school culture?

(Interview Protocol – Teacher Version)

School Leadership & Organizational Culture Interview Protocol Teacher

1. How have you perceived the influence of NCLB on the leadership style of your site principal?

2. What methods of communication does the site principal use to communicate with staff in order to encourage staff to share information and develop new ideas to improve teaching and learning?

3. What type of actions does the school site principal demonstrate that you consider credible in order to build trust?

4. How does the school site principal make sure your staff members feel included and part of the group?

5. What does the school site principal do to make sure staff members have the knowledge, skills, and resources to do the job right?

6. How does the school site principal demonstrate self confidence?

7. How does the school site principal create opportunities for staff members to assume leadership opportunities?

8. Which leadership behaviors/characteristics of the principal affected the development of school culture?

Appendix D

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

Dear Mr. Pina,

Thank you for submitting your IRB application for your study titled *Transformational Leadership: A Qualitative Study in Two Rural Elementary Schools in Fresno County*. All documents have been received and reviewed, and I am pleased to inform you that your project has been approved.

The effective date for your approval is December 7, 2011 – December 6, 2012. If you wish to continue your project beyond the effective period, you must submit a renewal application to the IRB prior to November 1, 2012. In addition, if there are any changes to your protocol, you are required to submit an addendum application.

Your assigned protocol number is **LMU IRB 2011 F 31**. Please reference your protocol number in all further communications.

Best wishes for a successful research project.

Sincerely,

Julie Paterson

Julie Paterson | IRB Coordinator | Loyola Marymount University | 1 LMU Drive | University Hall Suite 1718 | Los Angeles, CA 90045 | (310) 258-5465 | jpaterso@lmu.edu

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