

10-1-2011

Teachers' Perceptions of the Leadership Styles of Middle School Principals and Instructional Leaders

Jessica Devine

Gary Alger

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj>

 Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Devine, Jessica and Alger, Gary (2011) "Teachers' Perceptions of the Leadership Styles of Middle School Principals and Instructional Leaders," *Academic Leadership: The Online Journal*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 4 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol9/iss4/13>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by FHSU Scholars Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Leadership: The Online Journal by an authorized editor of FHSU Scholars Repository.

Academic Leadership Journal

[Teachers' Perceptions of the Leadership Styles of Middle School Principals and Instructional Leaders](#)

Issues: [Fall 2011 - Volume 9 Issue 4](#)

Posted On 2012-02-24 02:07:14

Author(s): [Jessica Devine](#) and [Gary Alger](#)

Over the past two decades, theorists and researchers have consistently cited the importance of effective school leadership in relation to improved educational outcomes (Fullan, 2002; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The Wallace Foundation recently commissioned an exhaustive research project on the relationships between school leadership and student learning, and the authors concluded that “when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers’ working relationships with one another are stronger and student achievement is higher” (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010, p. 282).

It is no longer accepted that the principal is the sole leader of a school. Leadership is distributed across the school community with administrative leaders, teachers, and policymakers taking on complementary roles and responsibilities (Elmore, 2000; Hargreaves, 2001; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). A school’s success is due to a collective approach to leadership (Bishop, Tinley, & Berman, 1997; Harris, 2003, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000b; Sergiovanni, 1994; Smylie, 1995). One or few administrators can no longer serve in leading an instructional program for an entire school without substantial participation from other educators (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Harris, 2005a; Lambert, 2002, 2003; Lashway, 2002; Southworth, 2002).

In recent times, expert teachers have been called upon to assume leadership functions at the instructional and organizational levels (Frost & Harris, 2003; Harris, 2005b). These leaders are assigned formal positions in the already highly specialized administrative structure of schools (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995). Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann (2002) suggested that a division of leadership responsibilities is needed in which administrators assume primary responsibility for strategic leadership while teachers take on primary responsibility for pedagogical or instructional leadership. However, Louis et al (2010) concluded that teachers who assume leadership roles at the middle and high school levels are less likely to engage in instructional leadership compared with their elementary colleagues, and that their principals face similar challenges. “To realize their potential as instructional leaders, principals working in middle schools and high schools need particular modes of support” (p. 52).

Therefore, teacher leaders, particularly those at the secondary level, are forging their roles on site (Sherrill, 1999), and new university programs that train educators in the field of instructional leadership are emerging. Such programs are preparing educators to establish innovative learning environments, respond to reform initiatives, and transform their educational organization through collaborative

approaches (Western Connecticut State University, n.d.). These educators are being prepared for formal instructional leadership roles within the school community; however, little is known about how they can effectively lead their colleagues and how their leadership styles differ from those of their administrative counterparts.

Literature Review

Leadership Styles

Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. Leadership style has been defined as the consistent behavioral patterns that leaders exhibit when attempting to influence the activities of others with whom they work as perceived by those people (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). Research in business, political, military, and educational venues has developed theories of leaders' styles from the perceptions of followers. James MacGregor Burns (1978) first described leadership as a paradigm in which leadership styles fall into two broad categories of influence. He termed one as *transformational leadership* and the other as *transactional leadership*. Transformational leadership is founded on the belief that leaders and followers can raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality, whereas transactional leadership is founded on the belief that leaders seek to motivate followers by appealing to their own self-interests (Burns, 1978).

Inspired by Burns's theory of transforming leadership, Bass and his colleagues developed the model of transformational leadership and the means to measure it. Bass (1985) viewed the transformational-transactional leadership paradigm as being comprised of complementary constructs rather than Burns's original theory in which they represent polar constructs. Burns (1978) discussed leadership as transforming and inspiring, whereas his successors examined and pursued the behaviors and attributes of transformational leaders.

School Leadership

Kenneth Leithwood and his colleagues bridged Bass's leadership construct to the field of education. Leithwood (1992, 1994) determined that the transformational school leader pursues three fundamental goals: helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; fostering teacher development; and helping teachers solve problems more effectively. Once teachers accept leadership behaviors as appropriate or essential, leadership will move to the transformational stage of bonding, as followers and leaders share a common vision and commitment to improvement (Sergiovanni, 1995).

Transformational leaders motivate colleagues with whom they work by promoting a positive, collegial climate (Blatt, 2002; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000b). Transformational leaders do not merely react to environmental circumstances, rather they attempt to shape and create them (Bass & Avolio, 1994b). Transactional leaders motivate followers through negotiation, exchange, and contractual dimensions (Bass, 1985). Transactional components are fundamental to the stability of an organization. In contrast to these active leadership styles, a passive style of leadership is characterized by an absence of leadership; it is often referred to as *non-leadership* (Bass, 1985). It has been shown that in effective organizations, transformational leadership augments the effects of transactional leadership (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Chan & Chan, 2005; Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990). In order for schools to run effectively, the leadership of the organization must encompass transformational

behaviors while also utilizing transactional behaviors when appropriate (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999b, 2000b; Sosik, Potosky, & Jung, 2002).

Despite sometimes overwhelming managerial responsibilities, which tend to be more transactional in nature, principals are expected to act as visionaries, or transformational leaders, for a school and community (Bredeson, 1985; Stronge, 1993; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995). In fact, research focusing on principals has determined that teachers prefer school leaders who exhibit a more transformational style of leadership (Chirichello, 1999). In addition, transformational leadership behaviors have been associated with improved educational outcomes (Goens & Clover, 1991; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999a, 2000a; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Silins, 1994). A substantial body of literature and numerous empirical studies demonstrate that teachers associate a more open school environment with principals who exhibit transformational characteristics: establishing trusting relationships, encouraging participation in the decision-making process, providing individualized consideration, and inspiring others to work toward a common goal or purpose (Blatt, 2002; Chirichello, 1999; Leithwood, 1994; Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Pepper, 2002; Silins, 1994; Smylie, 1992).

Some authors posit that teachers who perform formal leadership roles inherently possess and exhibit many characteristics associated with transformational leadership (Crowther, 1997; Pounder, 2006; Wetig, 2002; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Lucas and Valentine (2002) conducted a study focusing on teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles of teacher leader teams and principals. They found that teachers perceived teacher leader teams to be important in motivating colleagues through some transformational behaviors: fostering commitment to school goals, providing individualized support and intellectual stimulation to teachers, and holding high expectations for their peers' performance. The findings also indicated that principals and teacher leadership teams have different roles to play in the exercise of transformational leadership and in shaping the climate of a school. They suggested that future studies need to be conducted to determine the specific transformational behaviors that teacher leaders should exhibit in relation to their administrative counterparts.

Although it has been suggested, no studies have been conducted that examine the difference between the leadership styles of instructional leaders and principals as measured by the perceptions of the teachers.

Teacher Leaders as Instructional Leaders

In recent times, expert teachers have been called upon to assume leadership functions at the instructional and organizational levels (Frost & Harris, 2003; Harris, 2005b). Some teachers assume informal leadership roles while others are assigned formal positions in the already highly specialized administrative structure of schools (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995). Harris (2003) noted that regardless of how teacher leadership is defined, it is important to acknowledge that its foundation is rooted in a distributed perspective of leadership. Therefore, the success of a school in which leadership is distributed across the community is dependent on the development of teacher leaders (Smylie et al., 2002).

Teachers need to assume some of the roles and responsibilities that were previously the domain of the principal (Muijs & Harris, 2003a). "Those persons" occupying leadership roles within the school are considered to be those who "work with others to provide direction and who exert influence on persons and things in order to achieve the school's goal" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 9). In addition,

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) consider teacher leaders as contributing to a community of teacher learners and leaders as well as influencing others toward improved educational practice. Teacher leaders understand that the major dimensions of learning in schools are as follows: (a) the learning of students, (b) learning of colleagues, (c) learning of self, and (d) learning of the community (Lambert, 2003). Central to these concepts is the use of influence to provide guidance. It has been determined that teachers describe the role of teacher leaders as “primarily around functions of helping and supporting colleagues to fulfill classroom responsibilities and improved practice” (Smylie & Denny, 1990, p. 244). Rutherford (2006) fused the components of the influential nature of leadership and the acquisition of knowledge to define teacher leadership as “when teachers intentionally transfer knowledge that influences one’s ability to meet educational objectives” (p. 62).

Teacher leaders take responsibility for inquiring about problems, researching possible solutions, answers and inventions, and implement recommendations. Traditionally, curriculum leadership has been viewed as a series of technical tasks establishing objectives, monitoring scope and sequence, choosing textbooks, and selecting appropriate tests with the principal exercising final responsibility for all decisions. Recent work has documented the ability of teachers to make major decisions about content and methods, not only individually in their classrooms, but collectively on a school-wide basis. This must be grounded in teacher autonomy that is endorsed and supported by school leaders (Lashway, 2002).

The formal leadership roles that teacher leaders assume in the instructional context of a school community have both management and pedagogical responsibilities (Muijs & Harris, 2006). This teacher leader is an important source of instructional expertise as he or she influences curriculum, teaching, and learning (Harris, 2005b; Muijs & Harris, 2003a). The instructional teacher leader incorporates three main areas of activity: (a) the leadership of other teachers through coaching, mentoring, and leading working groups; (b) the leadership of developmental tasks that are central to improved learning and teaching; and (c) the leadership of pedagogy through the development and modeling of effective forms of teaching (Harris & Muijs, 2004). A review of the literature suggests that the following positions are included under this definition: mentor, coach, subject coordinator, department head, curriculum specialist, or instructional specialist (Berry & Ginsburg, 1990; Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Harris, 2005b; Muijs & Harris, 2003b, 2006). Within the school, the instructional teacher leader performs the following functions: coaching and mentoring teachers; building and shaping curriculum knowledge; leading in-service training and staff development activities; providing curriculum and instructional resources; and engaging other teachers in collaborative planning, reflection, and research (Berry & Ginsburg, 1990; Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Frost & Harris, 2003; Harris & Muijs, 2003, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 2003; Rutherford, 2006).

Problem Statement and Research Questions

There remains surprisingly limited literature and empirical data on the leadership styles employed by instructional leaders and how their leadership styles differ from principals. The recent emergence of formalized leadership roles for teachers necessitates research in this area so that instructional leaders can determine their place in the leadership structure of a school and understand their roles more clearly (Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Pounder, 2006).

The present study addressed the problems mentioned above and helped to build upon current administrative leadership literature by examining instructional leaders in relation to principals. The

purpose of this study, therefore, was twofold: 1) describe the leadership styles of middle school principals and instructional leaders as measured by the perceptions of the teachers, and 2) compare the two types of leaders in order to identify similarities and differences. The specific research questions which guided this study were:

1. What are the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and passive) of middle school principals and instructional leaders, as perceived by teachers?
2. Do teachers' perceptions of leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and passive) of middle school principals and instructional leaders differ?

Method

Population and Research Sample

For this study, middle schools in Connecticut's District Reference Group (DRG) B and C served as the population. Connecticut is comprised of nine DRGs, ranging from Group A (the most affluent school districts) to Group I (large urban districts). Participants for the present study were drawn from seven Connecticut middle schools in DRGs B and C using a sample of convenience. The research sample consisted of seven principals, seven instructional leaders, and 114 teachers (ranging from seven to 36 per school) from these seven middle schools. Demographic characteristics for each participant included the following: a) gender, (b) level of education, (c) years of experience, and (d) years of experience in the current district.

Principal participants. The sample consisted of seven principals. Four of the seven principals were males and three were female. Four principals responded that their highest level of education was a sixth year certificate, whereas the other three principals reported that they received a doctoral degree. Six of the seven principals had 6-15 years of classroom experience, and four reported 6-15 years of experience in administration.

Instructional Leader Participants. The sample consisted of seven instructional leaders. Two of the seven instructional leaders were males and five were female. Five of the instructional leaders reported that their highest level of education was a masters degree. Five of the instructional leaders had been teaching between 6-15 years, while the other two instructional leaders had been in the profession more than 16 years. In addition, six of the seven instructional leaders had been in their role as an instructional leader between 1-5 years.

Teacher Participants. The sample consisted of 114 teachers. See Table 1 for teacher demographics.

Table 1

Demographics of Teachers

	N	%
Gender		

Male	32	28
Female	82	72
Total	114	100

Level of Education

Bachelors	16	14
Masters	47	41
Sixth Year Professional Diploma	26	23
Doctorate	0	0
Total	114	100

Years of Experience

1 -5 Years	22	19
6 – 15 Years	47	41
16+ Years	45	40
Total	114	100

Years of Experience in the District

1 -5 Years	35	31
6 – 15 Years	47	41
16+ Years	32	28
Total	114	100

After principals were asked to participate in the study via email and phone contact, a letter was sent to district level personnel to secure permission for the study. Instructional leaders were selected from those who were willing to participate. Finally, the teachers in each school were asked to participate. Those individuals who gave informed consent comprised the sample of seven principals, seven instructional leaders, and 114 teachers. Teachers completed a leadership style survey for one principal and one instructional leader per middle school. The unit of analysis for this study was the teachers, since the leadership styles of the school leaders were examined through teachers' perceptions.

Instrumentation

In response to Burns's definition of transformational leadership, Bass developed the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)* in 1985, to measure both transformational and transactional leadership styles. He intended to investigate the nature between the relationship of the styles, behaviors, and their effectiveness. The *MLQ* was conceptually developed and empirically validated to reflect the complementary dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership with subscales to further differentiate the behaviors of leaders. It has been used in empirical research studies by varied organizations, such as the military, business, government, educational systems, and non-profit organizations. The *MLQ-5X* has been revised and refined several times and is now known as the primary quantitative instrument to measure the transformational leadership construct (Den Hartog et al., 1997).

The model was originally based on preliminary results obtained by survey Army officers. They were asked to rate their superiors using the *MLQ*. The development of the *MLQ* was based on Bass's six-factor leadership model. These factors included three transformational, two transactional, and a laissez-faire or completely passive component. Although Bass demonstrated that "transformational leadership is a useful concept which can be operationalized in the context of organizations, there are several problems which make careful examination of the results obtained with the *MLQ* necessary" (Den Hartog, Van Muijen, Koopman, 1997, p. 23). One problem that arose concerning the original *MLQ* was that the components of transformational leadership could not be distinguished empirically. Other problems included item wording, lack of discriminant validity among leadership factors, and the incorporation of behaviors and attributes in the same scale. Some differences reported in prior research were attributed to the type of analyses employed, poor scale construction, restricted sampling, and varying interpretations of what constituted transformational leadership behaviors (Avolio et al., 1999). Along with testing the six-factor model in a broader and more diverse sample of respondents, Bass was also interested in "examining whether a revised version of the *MLQ* would produce a more stable and replicable factor structure (Avolio et al., 1999, p. 442).

The *MLQ-5X* underwent many transformations to address the above problems. It was revised to expand the dimensions of leadership since prior leadership research concentrated on identifying and measuring behaviors that fell into a very limited range (Bass & Avolio, 1995). The *MLQ-5X* instrument was developed from several sources, such as the *MLQ 5R*, the *MLQ Form 10*, and new items based on charismatic leadership. The components of the *MLQ-5X* had been under investigation, and subsequently, substantial amounts of empirical research support the validity of the *MLQ-5X* for transformational and transactional leadership constructs. There is evidence of content and construct validity for the revised *MLQ-5X*. Bass and Avolio included recommendations from six scholars in the

leadership field while developing the 5X version. They examined the construct validity of a broader range of leadership styles using the most commonly employed measure of transformational and transactional leadership. In addition, the leadership scales and subscales have demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency, with alpha coefficients above the .80 level. The revised instrument measured a wider and more detailed range of leadership factors, which is likely “to increase the chances of tapping into the actual range of leadership styles that are exhibited across different cultures and organizational settings” (Avolio, et al., 1999, p. 460).

The *MLQ-5X* is a 45-item instrument using the 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from very rarely or never to very frequently, if not always. The *MLQ-5X* measures a full range of leadership behaviors as perceived by the leader and the rater. The leadership scales are measured: (a) transformational leadership, (b) transactional leadership, and (c) passive leadership. Three additional scales, extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction, were added to this instrument; however, these additional scales were not used in this study.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders move followers beyond immediate self-interests, raise their need levels and energize them, and promote positive changes in individuals and entire organizations. Transformational leadership is measured through five subscales: (a) idealized influences (attributed), (b) idealized influence (behavior), (c) inspirational motivation, (d) intellectual stimulation, and (e) individual consideration. *Idealized influence* arouses followers to feel a powerful identification and strong emotion toward the leader. *Inspirational motivation* entails modeling high values as an example and clearly communicating a common inspiring vision so that followers desire to become part of the leader’s team. *Intellectual stimulation* is a behavior that encourages followers to view problems from differing perspectives with new increased awareness. *Individualized consideration* identifies the leader as a coach to provide support and encouragement for specific followers. Each subscale consists of four questions; combining the average of each subscale creates a grand mean score for transformational leadership.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leaders seek to motivate followers by appealing to their own self-interests. Transactional leadership is measured through two subscales: (a) contingent reward and (b) management-by-exception (active). *Contingent Reward* is the extent to which the leader engages in transaction of reward for performance. *Management-by-exception (active)* is the extent to which the leader arranges to actively monitor deviances from standards, mistakes, and errors in the follower’s assignments and to take corrective action as necessary. Each of the subscales consists of four questions; combining the average of each subscale creates a grand mean score for transactional leadership.

Passive Leadership

Passive leaders avoid accepting responsibilities, are absent when needed, fail to follow up requests for assistance, and resist expressing their views on important issues. Passive leadership is measured through two subscales: (a) management-by-exception (passive) and (b) laissez-faire. *Management-by-exception (passive)* is the extent to which the leader waits passively for deviances, mistakes, and errors to occur before taking corrective action. *Laissez-faire* is the extent to which the leader is

characterized by avoidance or absence. Each of the subscales consists of four questions; combining the average of each subscale creates a grand mean score for passive leadership.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question One

First, descriptive statistics for the paired samples were calculated to identify the mean, standard deviation, and standard error of the mean for each leadership style. Results of this analysis are summarized in Table 2. Next, to determine whether the distribution of scores for the leadership style variables deviated from the normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were examined. According to Huck (2008), a skewness and kurtosis statistic falling within the range of -1 to +1 indicates a reasonably normal distribution of scores. As can be seen in Table 2, these values indicated a relatively normal distribution of leadership style scores for principals and instructional leaders as perceived by the sample of teachers.

Table 2

Paired Samples Descriptive Statistics for Principals and Instructional Leaders

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of the Mean	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Pair 1							

Principal

Transformational Leadership

114

2.62

.77

.07

-.15

-.91

Instructional Leader Transformational Leadership

114

3.08

.57

.05

-.86

.50

Pair 2Principal

Transactional Leadership

114

2.19

.67

.06

.14

-.64

Instructional Leader Transactional Leadership

114

2.01

.61

.06

.01

.20

Pair 3Principal Passive Leadership

114

.96

.71

.07

.72

-32

Instructional Leader Passive Leadership

114

.57

.57

.05

1.00

.33

The standard deviations on Table 2 indicate that the teachers' perceptions of the instructional leaders were less variable across all three leadership styles compared to the perceptions of the principals. Also, the mean scores indicate that the teachers perceived the instructional leaders' as more transformational while the principals were perceived to be more transactional and passive.

Research Question Two

Three paired-samples *t* tests were conducted to evaluate whether there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and passive) of principals and instructional leaders. Teachers were the unit of analysis for the question. The independent variable was type of school leader (principal or instructional leader). The dependent variable was leadership style (transformational, transactional, or passive). Interval level data, teachers' perceptions of each leadership style for the school leaders, were collected using the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X* (MLQ-5X). Teachers completed two forms of the MLQ-5X: one for the principal and one for the instructional leader.

A strict Bonferroni correction was used to control for multiple significance tests and minimize the chance for a type I error (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995). To test each paired samples *t* test at the .0167 level, .05 was divided by the number of *t* tests. The more stringent .0167 alpha level (.05/3) was used to evaluate each pair. As evidenced in Table 3, results of the analysis indicated that significant differences existed between how teachers perceived the leadership styles of the middle school principals and the instructional leaders. For the transformational leadership style variable, the mean rating for principals ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .77$) was significantly less, $t(113) = -6.26$, $p = .000$, than the mean rating for instructional leaders ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .57$). The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two ratings was -.61 to -.32. For the transactional leadership style variable, the mean rating for principals ($M = 2.19$, $SD = .67$) was significantly greater, $t(113) = 2.61$, $p = .010$, than the mean rating for instructional leaders ($M = 2.01$, $SD = .61$). The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two ratings was .04 to .31. Finally, results of the third *t* test indicated that on the passive leadership style variable, the mean rating for principals ($M = .96$, $SD = .71$) was significantly greater, $t(113) = 5.05$, $p = .000$, than the mean rating for instructional leaders ($M = .57$, $SD = .57$). The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two ratings was .24 to .55. Therefore, the

teachers perceive that the instructional leaders are significantly more transformational than the principals, and they perceive the principals to be significantly more transactional and passive than the instructional leaders.

Table 3

Paired Sample Test for Principals and Instructional Leaders

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error of Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Principal Transformational Leadership – Instructional Leader Transformational Leadership								

-46

.79

.07

-61

.32

-6.26

113

.000

Pair 2

Principal Transactional Leadership – Instructional Leader Transactional Leadership

.18

.73

.07

.04

.31

2.61

113

.010

Pair 3

Principal Passive Leadership – Instructional Leader Passive Leadership

.39

.83

.08

.24

.55

5.05

113

.000

Discussion

Researchers and theorists today have attributed a school's success to a collective approach to leadership, with leadership responsibilities being distributed across the entire school community (Elmore, 2000; Louis et al., 2010; Spillane et al., 2004,). The domain of curriculum and instruction is no longer in the hands of one or only a few administrators. Expert teachers have been assuming formal leadership roles in these areas; they are known as instructional leaders (Harris, 2003, 2004). Although these educators are being prepared for formal instructional leadership roles within the school community, little is known about how they lead their colleagues and how their leadership styles differ from those of their administrative counterparts.

The results of this study supported other, related findings concerning the leadership styles of teacher leaders. Crowther and Olsen (1997) examined leadership approaches of 13 highly successful teachers and two paraprofessionals working in socioeconomically disadvantaged school communities, 9 of whom were employed in primary schools and 5 in secondary schools. Descriptive data only, collected from focus groups and interviews, were quantified and categorized to generate conceptualizations of their leadership. They demonstrated that teacher leaders were perceived as exhibiting leadership

qualities that were broadly transformational in nature.

Wetig (2002) supported Crowther and Olsen's findings through a case study approach in which she examined 10 teacher leaders. She investigated how these teacher leaders (a) defined leadership; (b) described the leadership characteristics needed to serve the position; (c) identified necessary professional development opportunities; and (d) classified benefits and challenges of the role. Results of initial and follow-up interviews revealed that teacher leaders assuming leadership roles outside of the classroom identified a common language in describing leadership characteristics and that these teacher leaders were viewed as transformational in nature.

This study found that teachers perceived the instructional leaders to be strongest in transformational leadership. Alger (2008) examined the self-reported transformational leadership practices of 88 teacher leaders as well as the perceptions of their school principals. The findings of that study suggested that a relative strength of the teacher leaders was challenging the status quo in their schools, an important component of instructional leadership. The teacher leaders were involved in school improvement efforts, searching for opportunities and experiments and helping colleagues to take sensible risks to improve student achievement. The author concluded that the principals rated the teachers in the top quartile for this leadership practice because they viewed this as the primary role of teacher leaders in order to support organizational change and improvements in student learning.

Although previous researchers discussed the need to empirically test and investigate the differences in the leadership of teacher leaders and administrators, it had not been attempted (Crowther & Olsen, 1997). The present study addressed this gap in the literature by investigating whether differences existed in teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles of principals and instructional leaders. Results of three paired-samples *t* tests indicated that differences did exist between middle school instructional leaders and principals. Furthermore, teachers perceived instructional leaders as exhibiting more transformational behaviors and fewer transactional and passive behaviors than their administrative counterparts. Therefore, school leaders may have different roles to play in the exercise of transformational leadership (Lucas & Valentine, 2002).

Principals have increased managerial responsibilities, yet it has been shown that teachers are more satisfied, work harder, and feel more connected to each other and their leaders when a school culture is predominantly transformational in nature (Bredeson, 1985; Chirichello, 1999; Stronge, 1993; Tarter et al., 1995). Results of the present study indicated that teachers view instructional leaders as more transformational in their role than principals so the findings imply that it is important for instructional leaders and principals to work more closely together on how to best lead the school toward continuous improvement. Rather than principals coordinating and controlling a school community through more transactional leadership practices, it may be important for principals to stimulate change by promoting multiple sources of leadership, and by willing to distribute that leadership to teachers with instructional expertise. Therefore, school leaders, including administrators and instructional leaders, may benefit from leadership training provided by higher education institutions.

Suggestions for Future Research

Additional research is needed in the area of teacher and administrative leadership with regard to the leadership structures within schools. Replication of this study is highly recommended to provide more insight and support the findings of this study. Suggestions for replication include the need for (a)

increased sample size, (b) random assignment to groups, and (c) random selection of participants. In addition, research in the area of instructional leadership should be investigated at other school levels, including elementary and high schools.

Furthermore, the complex nature of leadership prompts the need for other research designs, particularly more qualitative studies in the field. By interviewing and observing instructional leaders and principals within the natural setting, we might gain a better understanding of how they are practicing transformational and transactional leadership. More importantly, these ethnographic studies may reveal how the different leadership styles of the instructional leaders and their principals complement or perhaps interfere with school improvement efforts.

Limitations

This study was limited to middle schools from the same or similar DRGs in the state of Connecticut; therefore, results can only be generalized to middle schools in districts whose students' families are similar in education, income, occupation and need, and that have roughly similar enrollment. Randomization was not possible for the groups of principals and instructional leaders because the groups were intact and fixed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). In addition, participation in this study was completely voluntary; therefore, the researcher had no control over the teachers, principals, and instructional leaders willing to participate. There is a possibility that the teachers, principals, and instructional leaders participating in the study may have had a more positive relationship with each other than those who were unwilling to participate in the study.

References

- Alger, G. (2008). Transformational Leadership Practices of Teacher Leaders. *Academic Leadership*, 6(2). Retrieved February 1, 2011, from <http://www.academicleadership.org/article/print/transformational-leadership-practices-of-teacher-leaders>
- Avolio, B.J., & Bass, B.M. (2002). *Developing potential across a full range of leadership: Cases on transactional and transformational leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Avolio, B. J., Bass, B. M., & Jung, D. (1999). Reexamining the components of transformational and transactional leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 7, 441-462.
- Avolio, B. J., Waldman, D. A., & Yammarino, F. J. (1991). Leading in the 1990s: The four I's of transformational leadership. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 15(4), 9-16.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free-Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1997). Does the transactional/transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? *American Psychologist*, 52, 130-139.
- Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8(1), 9-32.

- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1992). Developing transformational leadership: 1992 and beyond. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 14(5), 21-27.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994a). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994b). Transformational leadership and organizational culture. *Journal of Public Administration*, 17(3/4), 541-554.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1995). *Multifactor leadership questionnaire: Manual leader form (5x-short)*. Redwood City or Palo Alto, CA: Mind Garden.
- Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., & Goodheim, L. (1987). Biography and the assessment of transformational leadership at the world-class level. *Journal of Management*, 13(1), 7-19.
- Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Predicting unit performance assessing transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(2), 207-218.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Berry, B., & Ginsburg, R. (1990). Creating lead teachers: From policy to implementation. *Phi Delta Kappan* 71, 616-621.
- Bishop, H. L., Tinley, A., & Berman, B. T. (1997). A contemporary leadership model to promote teacher leadership. *Action in Teacher Education*, 19(3), 77-81.
- Blatt, D. A. (2002). A study to determine the relationship styles of career technical directors and school climate as perceived by teachers. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 63, 12A. (UMI No. 3076358)
- Bredeson, P. W. (1985). An analysis of the metaphorical perspectives of school principals. *Educational Administrative Quarterly*, 21, 29-50.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Burns, J. M. (2003). *Transforming leadership*. New York: Grove Press.
- Chan, A. T. S., & Chan, E. H. W. (2005). Impact perceived leadership styles on work outcomes: Case of building professionals. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 131(4), 413-422.
- Chirichello, M. (1999). *Building a capacity for change: Transformational leadership for school principals*. San Antonio, TX: Annual International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED432037)
- Crowther, F. (1997). Teachers as leaders-an exploratory framework. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 11(1), 6-13.
- Crowther, F., Kaagan, S., Ferguson, M., Hann, L. (2002). *Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Teachers and teaching: Testing policy hypotheses from a national commission report. *Educational Researcher*, 27(1), 5-15.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Bullmaster, M. L., Cobb, V. L. (1995). Rethinking teacher leadership through professional development schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 96(1), 87-106.
- Den Hartog, D. N., Van Muijen, J. J., & Koopman, P. L. (1997). Transactional versus transformational leadership: An analysis of the MLQ. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 70, 19-34.
- Elmore, R. F. (2000, winter). Building a new structure for school leadership. *American Educator*, 1-9.
- Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2003). *Howto design and evaluate research in education* (3rd ed.). NY: McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Frost, D., & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership: Towards a research agenda. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 479-498.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2002). The change leader. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8), 16-20.
- Goens, G. A., & Clover, S. I. R. (1991). *Mastering school reform*. MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Goldman, E. (1998). The significance of leadership style. *Educational Leadership*, 55(7), 20-22.
- Hallinger, P. (2000). *A review of two decades of research on the principalship using the principal instructional management rating scale*. Seattle, WA: American Educational Research Association.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 329-351.
- Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 4(3), 221-239.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1996). Reassessing the principal's roles in school effectiveness: A review of empirical research, 1980-1995. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 32(1), 5-44.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980-1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9(2), 157-191.
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1985). Assessing the instructional leadership behavior of principals. *Elementary School Journal*, 86(2), 217-248.
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1986). The social context of effective schools. *American Journal of Education*, 94(3), 328-355.
- Halpin, A. W. (1966). *Theory and research in administration*. New York: MacMillan.

- Halpin, A. W., & Croft, D. B. (1963). *The organizational climate of schools*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Midwest Administration Center.
- Hargreaves, D. (2001). A capital theory of school effectiveness and improvement. *British Educational Research Journal*, 27(4), 487-503.
- Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership as distributed leadership: Heresy, Fantasy or possibility? *School Leadership & Management*, 23(3), 313-324.
- Harris, A. (2004). Distributed leadership and school improvement: Leading or misleading? *Educational Management and Administration*, 32(1), 11-24.
- Harris, A. (2005a). Leading from the chalk-face: An overview of school leadership. *Leadership, Sage publications* 1(1), 73-87.
- Harris, A. (2005b). Teacher leadership: More than just a feel-good factor? *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 4(3), 201-219.
- Harris, A., & Muijs, D. (2003). *Teacher Leadership: A Review of Research*. London: General Teaching Council.
- Harris, A., & Muijs, D. (2004). *Teacher Leadership: Principles and practice*. London: General Teaching Council.
- Heck, R. H. (2000). Examining the impact of school quality on school outcomes and improvement: A value-added approach. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 36(4), 513-552.
- Heck, R., Larson, T., & Marcoulides, G. (1990). Principal instructional leadership and school achievement: Validation of a causal model. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26, 94-125
- Hersey, P., Blanchard, K. H., & Johnson, D. E. (2001). *Management of organizational behavior* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Jung, D. I., & Avolio, B. J. (2000). Opening the black box: An experimental investigation of the mediating effects of trust and value congruence on transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21(8), 949-964.
- Katzenmeyer, M. & Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Lambert, L. (2002). A framework for shared leadership. *Educational leadership*, 59(8), 37-40.
- Lambert, L. (2003). Leadership redefined: An evocative context for teacher leadership. *School Leadership & Management*, 23(4), 421-430.
- Lashway, L. (2002, July). Developing instructional leaders [electronic version]. *Eric Digest 98*. Clearinghouse on Educational Management, College of Education, University of Oregon.
- Leithwood, K. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 49(5),

8-13.

Leithwood, K. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 30(4), 498-518.

Leithwood, K. (2000). *Understanding schools as intelligent systems*. Stamford, CA: JAI Press.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1990). Transformational leadership: How principals can help reform school cultures. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 1(4), 249-280.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1995). *Toward an explanation of how teachers' perceptions of transformational school leadership are formed*. San Francisco, CA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED386785)

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1997). Explaining variation in teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership: A replication. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(3-4), 213-231.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999a). The relative effects of principal and teacher sources of leadership on student engagement with school. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 35(5), 679-706.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999b). Transformational school leadership effects: A replication. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 10(4), 451-479.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000a). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement in school. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 112-129.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000b). Principal and teacher leader effects: A replication. *School Leadership and Management*, 20(4), 415-434.

Leithwood, K., & Montgomery, D. (1982). The role of the elementary principal in program improvement. *Review of Educational Research*, 52(13), 309-339.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham: Open University.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S. E., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences students learning*. New York: Wallace Foundation.

Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Louis, K.S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K.L., & Anderson, S.K. (2010). *Investigating the links to improved student learning: Final report of research findings*. St. Paul, MN: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota.

Lucas, S. E., & Valentine, J. W. (2002). *Transformational leadership: Principals, leadership teams, and school culture*. New Orleans, LA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED468519)

- Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2003a). Teacher leadership: Improvement through empowerment. *Educational Management & Administration*, 31(4), 437-448.
- Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2003b). Teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Educational Management & Administration*, 31(4), 437-449.
- Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2006). Teacher led school improvement: Teacher leadership in the UK. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(8), 961-972.
- Pepper, K. (2002). Making a change: The effects of the leadership role on school climate. *Learning Environments Research*, 5(2), 155-166.
- Pounder, J. S. (2006). Transformational classroom leadership: The fourth wave of classroom leadership? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 34(4), 533-545.
- Rutherford, C. (2006). Teacher leadership and organizational structure. *Journal of Educational Change*, 7(1), 59-76.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994). *Building community in schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1995). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sergiovanni, T. J., & Starratt, R. (1998). *Supervision: A redefinition*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Sherrill, J. A. (1999). Preparing teachers for leadership roles in the 21st century. *Theory into Practice*, 38(1), 56.
- Silins, H. C. (1994). *Leadership characteristics that make a difference to schools*. New Orleans, LA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED383086)
- Smylie, M. A. (1992). Teacher participation in school decision-making: Assessing willingness to participate. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 14(1), 53-67.
- Smylie, M. A. (1995). New perspectives on teacher leadership. *The Elementary School Journal*, 96(1), 3-7.
- Smylie, MA, Conley, S, & Marks, HM. (2002). Reshaping leadership in action. In Murphy, J (Ed.). *The educational leadership challenge: Redefining leadership for the 21st century*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Smylie, M.A., & Denny, J. W. (1990). Teacher leadership: Tensions and ambiguities in organizational perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26(3), 235-259.
- Sosik, J. J., Potosky, D., & Jung, D. I. (2002). Adaptive self-regulation: Meeting others' expectations of leadership and performance. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 142(2), 211-232.
- Southworth, G. (2002). Instructional leadership in schools: Reflections and empirical evidence. *School*

Leadership & Management, 22(1), 73-91.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J.B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 30(3), 23-28.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J.B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(1), 3-34.

Stewart, J. (2006). Transformational leadership: An evolving concept examined through the works of Burns, Bass, Avolio, and Leithwood. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 54, 1-29.

Stronge, J. H. (1993, May). Defining the principalship: Instructional leader or middle manager. *National Association for Secondary Schools Principals Bulletin*, 1-7.

Tarter, C. J., Sabo, D., & Hoy, W. K. (1995). Middle school climate, faculty trust, and effectiveness: A path analysis. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 29(1), 41-49.

Waldman, D. A., Bass, B. M., & Einstein, W. O. (1987). Leadership and outcomes of performance appraisal processes. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 60, 177-186.

Waldman, D. A., Bass, B. M., & Yammarino, F. J. (1990). Adding to contingent-reward behaviour: The augmenting effect of charismatic leadership. *Group and Organizational Studies*, 15, 381-394.

Western Connecticut State University (n.d.). *Doctorate of education: Instructional leadership*. Retrieved October 12, 2006, from <http://www.wcsu.edu/graduate/EDD/about.asp>

Wetig, S. L. (2002). *Step up or step out: Perspectives on teacher leadership*. New Orleans, LA: Educational Research Association. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED465742)

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research* 74(3), 255-316.

VN:R_U [1.9.11_1134]