Examination of the Effectiveness of Male and Female Educational Leaders Who Made Use of the Invitational Leadership Style Of Leadership

Gwen Burns, Ed. D.
Springfield, MO

Barbara N. Martin, Ed D
University of Central Missouri

The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the effectiveness of male and female educational leaders who made use of the invitational leadership style of leadership in their k-12 school settings. Study participants consisted of 14 principals (7 female and 7 male) and 164 teachers. While quantitative findings revealed a statistically significant difference between the usages of invitational leadership qualities in effective schools versus less effective schools, there were no differences based on gender. Follow-up interviews with teachers and principals established that teachers believed that the invitational qualities of respect and trust were the most influential leadership qualities, while principals viewed trust as the predominant influencing factor.

Introduction

As a result of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2002, educational accountability standards have increased tremendously (Stecher & Kirby, 2004). Subsequently, educational leaders are now responsible for meeting expectations unparalleled to that of previous decades (Aldridge, 2003). In response to these changing and amplified conditions of accountability, numerous

leadership models have been designed to meet the leadership needs of the past several decades (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Kezar, 2000; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2000; Spears & Lawrence, 2004; Yukl, 2006). While models such as transformational and servant leadership have served educational leaders for several decades, one comprehensive model has been created that promises to provide a positive and encouraging structure to guide today's leaders through complex times.

The relatively new model referred to is invitational leadership. The invitational leadership model was designed by William Purkey and Betty Siegel in 2002 based on invitational theory. As Purkey (1992, p. 5) articulated, "Invitational theory is a

Gwen Jeannine Burns is and elementary classroom teacher in the Springfield R-XII School District in Sprinfield, MO.

Barbara Nell Marin, is a professor of educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Central Missouri. bmartin@ucmo.edu

collection of assumptions that seek to explain phenomena and provide a means of intentionally summoning people to realize their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor." Purkey further explained, "The purpose of invitational leadership is to address the entire global nature of human existence and opportunity." Thus, this invitational leadership model is a comprehensive design that is inclusive of many vital elements needed for the success of today's educational organizations (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). As Bolman and Deal (2002, p. 1) ascertained, "The most important responsibility of school leaders is not to answer every question but serve a deeper, more powerful and more durable role." Since the current literature firmly supports the need for a change in leadership in order to adequately meet the needs of current educational institutions (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003), the need to examine a new leadership model is essential. As Halpern (2004, p.126) affirmed, "Rapid changes require new kinds of leadership—leaders who have the necessary knowledge to achieve a goal and leaders who can manage amid the uncertainty of nonstop change." The necessity for a change in leadership is further warranted based on the need for an "ethic of caring" (Grogan, 2003, p. 25). Current literature also strongly supports this need for a leadership model that is caring and ethical in nature (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Grogan, 2003; Halpin, 2003). Grogan (2003, p. 24) described leadership as being "predicated on caring about those he or she

serves." Consequently, Halpin (2003, p. 84) concluded, "Invitational leadership contributes to school effectiveness by the way in which it cares for and supports the efforts of others." Since Invitational leadership is comprehensive in nature, consisting of many positive and essentially sound educational components (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005), it may well serve as a model of leadership that will positively impact the diverse and changing needs of today's educational organizations.

As Egley (2003, p. 57) argued, "the research on the effects of Invitational Education Theory in the educational administrative process is relatively new as compared to other theories pertaining to leadership." Thus, this research attempted to find answers to the following questions: 1) Is there a significant difference between the presence of invitational leadership qualities in effective schools versus less effective schools? and 2) Is there a significant difference between the invitational leadership qualities of male and female administrators? If so, what are they?

Conceptual Underpinnings

Invitational Leadership

It has been authenticated throughout this literature review (Aldridge, 2003; Jennings, 2003; Penner, 1981; Shapiro, 1990; Stillion & Siegel, 2005) that a new day has transpired for contemporary leaders, requiring skills and knowledge exceeding that of previous needs in leadership (Caldwell & Hayward, 1998). As today's leaders seek to acquire the skills and

knowledge necessary to prove effective in current educational organizations, it becomes important to realize that there are no simple answers to achieve leadership excellence. Bolman and Deal (2002, p. 1) affirmed, "When you look at examples of effective leadership, it becomes clear that it's not related to any one style, personality, gender, or ethnicity. Many pathways point to effective leadership. But some qualities are consistent across effective leaders." The critical task is to find the combination of qualities and characteristics that will consistently provide leaders with the skills and knowledge to succeed on a regular basis. Purkey and Siegel (2003) attempted to blend leadership qualities, values, and principles when they developed the invitational leadership theory and model for inviting success from all interested stakeholders. In their book, *Becoming an Invitational Leader*, Purkey and Siegel (2003, p.1) explained, "This model shifts from emphasizing control and dominance to one that focuses on connectedness, cooperation, and communication."

The invitational leadership model seeks to invite all interested stakeholders to succeed (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Kelly et al., 1998; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 1996; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005). As noted by Day, Harris, and Hadfield (2001, p. 34), invitations are "messages communicated to people which inform them that they are able, responsible and worthwhile." These messages are communicated through "inter-personal action, but also through institutional policies, programmes [sic], practices, and

physical environments" (Day et al., 2001, p. 34).

Interestingly, invitational leadership has a highly personal and ethical component included within the constructs of the model. Stillion and Siegel (2005) articulated that invitational leaders work to establish an environment where workers are able to achieve their goals and potential while participating in the shared vision and mission of the group. The above mentioned authors further determined that "Invitational leadership intentionally creates positive physical places to work and puts into place policies that reflect the optimism of the leader and lead to trust and respect among workers" (Stillion & Siegel, p. 9).

It is important to note that invitational leadership has been created based upon four basic assumptions that exemplify invitational leaders. The assumptions are optimism, respect, trust, and intentionality. Day et al. (2001, p. 34) described these four assumptions as follows:

> *Optimism*–the belief that people have untapped potential for growth and development
>
> Respect–the recognition that each person is an individual of worth
>
> *Trust*–possessing "confidence in the abilities, integrity, and responsibilities of ourselves and others" (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, p. 12).
>
> *Intention*–a decision to purposely act in a certain way, to achieve and carry out a set goal, (Day et. al, 2001, p. 34). These four principles serve as core values to invitational leadership. Stillion and

Siegel (2005, p. 15) defined intention as "knowing what we intend to bring about as well as how we intend it to happen gives clarity and direction to our work."

Optimism is a fundamental component of invitational leadership. Social reformer, John Gardner (1990, p. 1), reflected that "a prime function of a leader is to keep hope alive." Stillion and Siegel (2005) depicted an optimistic leader as one "who can reframe problem situations as opportunities and view the impossible as merely difficult" (¶ 14).

In the midst of today's difficult challenges and high accountability standards, the characteristic of optimism could prove to be a dynamic element to success for educational organizations. Stillion and Siegel (2005) argued that "Optimistic leaders embrace both challenge and change, expecting that the outcome will be a positive one" (¶ 14). Today's educational institutions and stakeholders need to experience the positive outcomes that the value of optimism may bring.

The value of respect is one of the most innate needs of all human nature (Purkey, 1992). Purkey (1992) affirmed that "people are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly" (p. 6). Respect for others demonstrates a basic belief in the worth and value of our fellow workers, students, parents, and leaders. Showing respect to fellow organizational members "leads to an inviting, inclusive workplace where diversity is the norm and every individual can flourish" (Stillion & Siegel, 2005, ¶ 12).

The value of trust is closely related to respect. Purkey and Siegel (2003, p.12) defined trust as "having confidence in the abilities, integrity and responsibilities of ourselves and others" Trust is a crucial element that contributes to the success of an organization. Conversely, lack of trust serves as a barrier to the development of cohesive team work and efforts. As Lencioni (2002, p. 195) observed, "Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is all but impossible." Subsequently, building trust is a critical element for any successful leader to possess.

Intentionality is another important component of the invitational leadership model. Stillion and Siegel (2005) concluded that "knowing what we intend to bring about as well as how we intend it to happen gives clarity and direction to our work" (¶ 15). Developing and maintaining specific and clear intentions facilitates the process of organizational growth and success. As Purkey (1992, p.9) articulated, "Intentionality can be a tremendous asset for educators and others in the helping professions, for it is a constant reminder of what is truly important in human service." Invitational leaders are purposefully intentional in their work and their efforts with all stakeholders.

Additionally, Purkey and Siegel (2003) postulated a specific framework by which schools can become "invitational" by concentrating on five areas contributing to success or failure: places, policies, programs, processes, and people. The authors believed that each of these elements

contributes to the creation of a positive school climate and ultimately a healthy and successful organization. The personality of a place is at once noticeable to observers. It is evident if the environment is sterile, empty, and lifeless or warm, exciting, and filled with the personalities of all those who inhabit that space. As Purkey (1992, p. 7) affirmed, "Places are the easiest to change because they are the most visible element in any environment. They [places] also offer the opportunity for immediate improvement." Since places are so visible, they are essential to promote in a positive manner, as well as being more readily managed aspects of an organization's image.

Policies is another component of success or failure in invitational leadership. Leaders must determine if their organization's policies serve only to restrict and confine, squelching all sense of individuality; or whether they create positive and productive opportunities for the organization (Fowler, 2004). Policies of schools that are successful and create a positive school culture are developed to encourage and seek a win/win result. Covey (1989) described win/win as a mindset that constantly seeks to provide mutual benefits in all human interactions. Schools that establish such policies seek to create a cooperative, rather than a competitive arena.

The establishment of attractive programs becomes yet another element in Purkey and Siegel's (2003) framework for establishing a positive and successful organization. Most often, school leaders are guilty of offering very few options and choices. According to

Hansen (1998, p.1), students often feel "disinvited in school" due to the fact that they always feel overlooked. No one cared enough to encourage their participation in sports or other school activities; they receive papers with a grade only, lacking additional comments; and their absences were rarely, if ever, noticed by their teachers. Hansen further explained that, "these students suffered from a caring disability; not enough educators cared to invite them to participate in school life" (p. 16).

Schools that possess a positive school culture appear to make great effort to provide for a variety of creative and attractive programs (Witcher, 1993). Rigorous academic courses taught by outstanding teachers help to increase the effectiveness of the instructional program, as well as raise the standards for academic achievement (Edmonds, 1979; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

Processes are yet another vital component of the invitational leadership model (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 1996; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005). In many schools, the participation process is limited to "here's the deal, take it or leave it" (Cleveland, 2002, p.1). Cleveland (2002, p.1) concluded that some leaders desire to be "presumed to be in charge" however, leaders who make the effort to establish a successful school culture seem to be much more aware of the need to include all stakeholders in as many of the decision making processes as possible. According to Hansen (1998, p. 17), "Schools that are

noted for possessing a positive school climate encourage decision making characterized by participation, cooperation, and collaboration. Students are encouraged to take responsibility, to be involved, and to speak with their own voices."

The final element of Purkey and Siegel's (2003) framework of five areas contributing to success or failure is the aspect of people. In this essential area, the most important element for leaders developing a successful school is the people who comprise the school and its many facets. People are the one resource that is most guaranteed to make a difference in creating a positive school culture. Hansen (1998, p.17) confirmed, "Investment in people results in effective change." Involving people in as many activities that require cooperation and positive results is an excellent way to help individuals become part of an effective team. It is also an outstanding starting place for developing a more positive work and learning environment. Providing people with the recognition that they have earned is critically important to the change process (Hansen, 1998). Teachers and students alike enjoy the feeling of being appreciated for a job well done. This simple truth is a fundamental need of all of humankind (Halpin, 2003; Tallon, 1997).

Yet another aspect of meeting the needs of the people in an organization is the creation of relationships (Bruffee, 1999; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Lencioni, 2002; Tallon, 1997). The formation of positive relationships is an integral part of creating a successful school. As Kelly et al. (1998, p. 62) suggested, "Every child deserves a

school that is inviting, academically challenging, and safe. The overall ambiance of the school and quality of instruction are enhanced as the school develops a 'concordant relationship' among the students, parents, teachers, and administrators."

Purkey and Siegel (2003, p. 104) refer to five P's as a means by which to invite others professionally. As the authors concluded the, "five powerful factors– people, places, policies, programs, and processes (the five P's)–are highly significant for their separate and combined influence on Invitational Leadership." Purkey and Siegel (p. 104) continued to affirm the importance of the five P's when they proclaimed, "The combination of these five P's offers an almost limitless number of opportunities for the Invitational Leader, for they address the total culture or ecosystem of almost any organization." The inclusion of the five P's significantly assists in making invitational leadership a unique and holistic leadership model (Stillion & Siegel, 2005). The researchers have included a visualization that shows the connection between the four basic assumptions and the five P's of the invitational leadership model.

Gender Issues in Leadership

The issue of gender differences in educational leadership has been studied for numerous years (Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000; Rosenbach & Taylor, 1998; Rosener, 1990; Stelter, 2002). Research has long supported the precept that males are perceived to be more competent than females when considering work-related

issues. "Earlier researchers postulated that most workers believed women to be less competent than men in the workplace" (Henderson, 1994, p. 51). Henderson (1994, p.51) further observed that male and female workers preferred male supervisors, for they "were believed to possess the characteristics of good managers—emotional stability, ability to make correct decisions, analytic ability, and the like." Henderson further found that this general preference for male leadership created a specific hierarchy of leadership. Henderson (p.52) argued, "The erroneous belief that males are more competent than female workers has resulted in a hierarchy of preferred leaders in the following descending order: (1) white males, (2) nonwhite males, (3) white females, and (4) nonwhite females."

Conversely, Krantz (1998, p.150) reported that while superiors generally preferred 'masculine' traits in their leaders, it was found that 'feminine' traits were more highly valued by subordinates." As a result of extensive gender research, Rosener (1990) established that women consistently strive to create positive interactions with fellow co-workers and followers. Rosener (p.120) further contended that female leaders "encourage participation, share power, and information, enhance other people's self-worth, and get others excited about their work."

While males have typically held positions of authority, women have slowly begun to break into upper management positions in the last several decades. "The relative scarcity of women in top leadership roles is not a new phenomenon and can be demonstrated both in national U.S. and international terms" (Stelter, 2002, p. 1). Henderson (1994, p. 58) further argued that "despite many gains, women are still grossly underrepresented in professional and managerial jobs."

Social perceptions have greatly contributed to the issues of gender in leadership. Stelter (2002, p. 1) concluded that "Where gender is perceived within the context of social status, female leaders may be perceived more negatively than male leaders." The author further articulated that "traditional perspectives of leadership center on masculine-oriented concepts of authoritarian and task-oriented behavior, then these same perspectives may contribute to a 'glass ceiling' essentially prohibiting relationship-oriented (i.e. feminine) leadership behaviors from being recognized as viable leadership behavior" (Stelter, 2002, p. 1).

As women attempt to break through this imposed glass ceiling, it is important to continue to research how men and women vary in their leadership styles. Stelter (2002, p.1) emphasized that "gender differences in leadership can be accounted for through a variety of rationale. From interpersonal relationships to social role expectations to differences in perception and styles, men and women may indeed lead differently in addition to being 'followed' differently." Most assuredly, general agreement exists that men and women will naturally vary in their leadership styles. Asbill and Gonzalez (2000, p. 58) postured that "using the command-and-control style of managing, a

style traditionally associated with males, is not the only way to succeed." While differing leadership styles are to be expected, one cannot underestimate the still prevalent propensity to stereotype based on gender. Stelter (2002, p. 1) postulated that "superiors may rely more on gender stereotypes and assumptions in describing and rating male and female leadership effectiveness and performance" than on any other standard of effectiveness.

While Rosener (1990, p.121) affirmed that "effective leaders don't come from one mold," she noted that female leaders have been forced to pattern their leadership styles, to a large degree, based on successful male leadership behaviors. Rosener (p. 123) articulated that "the first female executives imitated their successful male role models in order to get into top management." Henderson (1994, p. 52) added that "women in leadership positions are often in a Catch-22 situation: they are devalued if they display 'feminine' behaviors (nurturing, cooperative, passive) and chided when they exhibit 'masculine' behaviors (assertiveness, independence, aggressiveness)." In a more positive light, Rosener (p.124) suggested that she "sees a 'second wave' of successful women who are not adopting styles and habits of successful men, but are drawing on skills and attitudes they have developed as women."

Current research concerning gender issues in leadership suggested that, "Women… are naturally socialized towards skills in participative leadership, collaborative group management, and quality interpersonal relation…, whereas men's styles have been more described as goal-directed" (Stelter, 2002, p. 1). Rosener (1990) cautioned, however, against attributing transformational and participative leadership only to female leaders since numerous male leaders also demonstrate these positive leadership characteristics.

Rosenbach and Taylor (1998, p.56) confirmed the need to consider gender issues as "an important challenge for leadership." In the attempt to fully understand the characteristics that lead to successful leadership within today's organizations, it is imperative that gender issues be considered. Henderson (1994, p.54) observed that "the major issue is not men versus women. Instead, it is fairness for all workers regardless of their gender." Additionally, Stelter (2002, p. 1) affirmed that, "The successful organization of the future will not only understand leadership in terms of gender but also its contribution to workforce and organizational effectiveness."

Methodology

Population

The sample consisted of an *n* of 14 principals, and an *n* of 164 teachers currently employed in Missouri public schools. A purposeful sampling method, which consisted of a multi-tiered criteria process, was used to select the schools. The first criterion was geographical in nature, as we divided a Midwest state into quadrants. In order to select principals from schools considered effective in meeting high accountability standards from each quadrant, the researchers identified all school districts based on their district's performance in meeting Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) standards, which qualified the district for the label of "*Accredited for Distinction in Performance.*" We further required that the district had successfully met the MSIP standards with distinction for four or five years, assuring greater consistency of effective achievement. *Accredited for Distinction in Performance* has been defined as "districts that meet all but one of the MSIP Performance measures and all MAP and Reading standards according to the most recent Annual Performance report (APR)" (Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Website, (¶ 10). Conversely, once districts had been identified as effective based on receiving Distinction in Performance, we then identified districts to be considered less effective if they had never received recognition for *Accreditation for Distinction in Performance* status. Once we identified the districts, we then applied additional criteria by which to assure that leadership of each school could be attributed to the characteristics of the current leader. Each school ultimately chosen to be included in this study had to meet the criteria of their principal having served in their current position for an average range of three to five years. Conger et al. (1999, p. 246) supported this criterion as they affirmed that evidence supports the fact that a time frame for effective change "takes place over three to five years." After identifying the effective and ineffective schools in each quadrant and meeting the tenure of the leadership criterion, we randomly selected seven schools considered effective and seven schools considered less effective. The final criterion applied was that of gender consideration, which was necessary for the purpose of distinguishing between possible differences in leadership characteristics based on gender. Of the 14 principal surveys sent out to participating schools, all 14 surveys were returned, yielding a return rate of 100%. Of the 252 teacher surveys sent out to participating schools, 164 were returned, yielding a return rate of 65%. Finally, participants were interviewed who indicated on the *Principal Perceptions of Leadership Practices* survey or the *Teacher Perceptions of Leadership Practices* survey their willingness, using an eleven semi-structured, open-ended question protocol. This resulted in two female principals and two male principals being interviewed, along with five teachers from a stratified sample method.

Instrumentation

We modified some items found on Asbill's (2000) leadership survey for teachers, with the intent of creating a survey that would more directly fit the design of this particular study. The 44-item Likert type surveys used in this inquiry were entitled *Teacher Perceptions of Leadership Practices* (TPLP) and *Principal Perceptions of Leadership Practices* (PPLP). The teacher's survey consisted of a 44-item scale that was divided into five subscales, designed to ascertain educators' perceptions of their principal's leadership characteristics. Survey questions were selected to replicate the components of the invitational theory, as well as perceived leadership effectiveness. The subscales of *trust*, *respect*, *optimism*, *intentionality*, and *perceived effectiveness* from Asbill's (2000) survey were retained in this inquiry; however, to assure reliability of the modified instrument, a test-retest process was used. While the Asbill's survey was found to "have a .97 level of reliability, indicating a high degree of internal consistency for this instrument" (Asbill & Gonzalez, 2000, p. 18), the test-retest on the modified instrument found an alpha coefficient of .73. The consistency of the scores between the two distributions was a measure of the reliability with the correlation of the two distributions using an estimate of the reliability coefficient (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw, 1995). These correlations were Pearson Product Moment Correlations between the two sets of scores. The reliability of the 44 items was at an acceptable level of $p = .05$. Furthermore, the test-retest revealed the following alpha coefficient for each of the following subscales, *Trust*, ? = .75; Respect = .73, Optimism, $\alpha = .68$, Intentionality, $\alpha = .72$, Effectiveness, $\alpha = .76$. Thus the reliability of the five subscales was at an acceptable level of $p = .05$. These subscales were used to measure the four assumptions of invitational leadership qualities and the aspect of perceived leadership effectiveness. (See Appendix A)

Interview Protocol

Participants were asked to indicate on the survey if they would be interested in taking part in an interview to collect more in-depth information. From these responses, a stratified sample was chosen to participate in the interview phase of the study. During the interview process, open-ended, semi-structured questions were asked of the selected principals. Each participant was asked the same set of questions in the same order with flexibility to explore issues that may come to the surface during the interview (Merriam, 1998). Advantages of this type of interview included reduction of interviewer bias during the interview and facilitation of organization and analysis of the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The interview protocols consisted of eleven semi-structured, open-ended questions that were grounded in the literature (Purkey & Siegel, 2003) in the endeavor to gain enriched insight into leaders' and followers' perceptions of invitational leadership qualities and the effect on organizational success.

Data Analysis

Data analyses involved several procedures for examining both quantitative and qualitative data. In general, raw data collected are prepared for analysis and explored for preliminary understandings in conjunction with choosing the type of analyses based on the research questions and preparing the presentation of the results of the analyses. Each research approach, quantitative and qualitative, was initially analyzed separately, and then merged in the discussion of the research findings utilizing the tenets of invitational leadership.

Quantitative

A multivariate analysis of variance method (MANOVA) was used to determine if a statistical difference in each of the subscales or dependent and independent variables existed between the two categories. The MANOVA is a parametric statistical test that allows for testing of more than one dependent variable in the same analysis and identifies if changes in independent variables have a significant effect on dependent variables; thus, the use of the MANOVA test was appropriate for data analysis using the survey scores of successful schools and schools not successful in sustaining school change (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). With the schools sorted into the two predetermined groups, each score for each subscale or characteristic was evaluated for significant differences. Significance was determined at the .05 level.

Qualitative

The use of interviews contributed to the enriched description contained within this study along with subsequent triangulation of documents. The researchers constantly clarified and classified emerging themes and categories (Creswell, 2003) from the interviews. Member-checking assured that participants felt their stories were told as they had intended. Rich and thick description was used to help transport the reader to the setting of the experience. Additionally, the researchers obtained documents for analysis such as district AYP, a statistical profile of each district, and student data such as dropout rates and graduation analysis, as well as the district's report card available on the DESE website. These artifacts helped to supplement the researchers' depth of understanding of each district's organizational beliefs and priorities.

Results

Schools considered to be effective ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .43990$) on the average were led by leaders who were perceived to demonstrate consistently higher attributes of effective invitational leadership qualities than those schools considered to be less effective ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .30255$). This finding was significant, $t (173) = 4.99$, $p < .001$. Represented in Table 1 is the overall average of the leaders' invitational leadership in both effective schools and non-effective schools. The researchers' totaled and averaged the subscale answers from the survey in order to generate an average score for this overall component. (See Table 1)

Usages of Invitational Leadership Qualities in Effective versus Less Effective Schools

While an even number of Effective and Less Effective Schools were included in this study, significantly fewer Less Effective Schools responded to the survey instrument. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

To determine if a statistical difference in each of the five components of invitational leadership, or dependent variables, existed between the two categories, or the independent variables, in which the schools were sorted, a multivariate analysis of variance method (MANOVA) was used. The MANOVA is a parametric statistical test that allows for testing of more than one dependent variable in the same analysis and identifies if changes in independent variables have a significant effect on dependent variables. The data were analyzed to determine if there were differences in the survey scores for each of the invitational leadership characteristics (*trust, respect, optimism, intentionality*, and *perceived effectiveness*) between the two school groupings. A 0.05 significance level was established for all statistical tests conducted. The results achieved were as follows:

Trust

When examining the leadership characteristic of trust, participants were asked to consider the belief that faculty and staff members were responsible and capable and if the school had a climate of trust. Furthermore participants were asked to consider that if mistakes were made, were they viewed as learning experiences. Lastly participants were asked if all educators modeled values, and attitudes that encouraged others to grow. This characteristic served as a subscale on the survey and was measured by combining questions number 1, 2, 24, 26, and 35.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyze the difference between *trust* in the workplace of schools deemed effective as opposed to schools less effective. For the characteristic of trust in the work of invitational leadership, the analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,67) = 15.24$, $p < .0001$. The strength of the level of significance means that the probability of the dependent variable to occur by chance is very unlikely. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic of trust in the work of invitational principals ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .579$) than participants in less effective schools ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .440$).

Table 1

Usages of Invitational Leadership Qualities in Effective versus Less Effective Schools

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Effective Schools	108	3.9325	.43990	.04233
Less Effective Schools	70	3.6542	.30255	.03616

Note. While an even number of Effective and Less Effective Schools were included in this study, significantly fewer Less Effective Schools responded to the survey instrument. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

Respect

Questions on the survey asked participants to reflect on how individuals were treated and if negative statements were made or insensitivity was demonstrated among the faculty and staff. In addition, addressed were the aspects of offering constructive feedback for improvement in a respectful way coupled with the belief that people were more important than things or results. Reflecting on one's communications and assessing if they reached all individuals involved, was surveyed as well, along with treating each other as unique individuals. This characteristic served as a subscale on the survey and was measured by combining questions number 4, 14, 15, 16, 18, 25, 27, 36, and 37. For the characteristic *respect*, analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,67) = 14.53$, $p < .0001$. The strength of the level of significance means that the probability of the dependent variable to occur by chance is very unlikely. Participants completing the survey in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic of respect within their faculty ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .495$) than participants completing the survey in less effective schools ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .344$).

Optimism

The items on the survey related to *optimism* asked participants to consider the expectation of high levels of performance among co-workers, the demonstration of optimism during the school day and with decision-making, and the demonstration of enthusiasm for the job. Questions on the survey related to this characteristic were questions number 7, 8, and 28. The analysis found significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1, 66) = 17.85$, $p < .0001$ for *optimism* verified in the school setting. The strength of the level of significance means that the probability of the dependent variable to occur by chance is very unlikely. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic ($M = 4.37$, $SD = .535$) than

participants in less effective schools ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .422$).

Intentionality

When examining the invitational leadership characteristic of *intentionality*, participants were asked to consider the governance of policies and procedures that benefitted staff, students, and teachers. They also noted if the principal made an intentional effort to provide necessary instructional materials and to keep everyone informed about important issues. Also, participants were asked to reflect on whether opportunities for professional growth through meaningful in-service were provided, while encouraging everyone to tap their unrealized potential. This characteristic served as a subscale on the survey and was measured by combining questions number 6, 10, 12, 17, 22, 23, 31, and 34. The analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,66) = 15.22$, $p < .0001$. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic of intentionality ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .584$) than participants in less effective schools ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .425$).

Perceived Effectiveness

Lambert (2003) argued that by establishing and implementing standards and creating high expectations for student performance resulted in all children learning. To examine this characteristic, participants were asked about the effectiveness of the overall climate in their schools and how effectively the needs of individuals within the organizations. Ultimately, this resulted in the participants viewing their schools has having been positively transformed by the use of the invitational leadership within the workplace. Questions on the survey relating to this characteristic were questions numbers 38-41. Again, the analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,66) = 17.46$, $p < .0001$. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores regarding the effectiveness of their school in transforming ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .748$) than participants in less effective schools ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .662$). Table 2 illustrates the means and the standard deviations for all five of the dependent variables.

Table 2

Characteristics of the Work of Invitational Leadership

Characteristic	Effect	Power	Effective Schools			Less Effective Schools		
			N	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Trust	.178	.971	108	4.36	.579	70	4.10	.440
Respect	.180	.964	108	4.04	.495	70	3.84	.344
Optimism	.213	.986	108	4.37	.535	70	4.03	.422
Intentionality	.187	.970	108	4.28	.584	70	4.06	.425

Note: Power was computed using alpha = .05 and scores above .80 are considered as very strong. While an even number of Effective and Less Effective Schools were included in this study, significantly fewer Less Effective Schools responded to the survey instrument. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

During the course of the interview process, the voices of study participants supported numerous quantitative findings. As the means of the subscales were analyzed, the research that educators in effective schools were much more likely to perceive that being optimistic within a trusting school environment probably occurred because they held to a collectively vision (intentionality). The educators in less effective schools viewed trust and intentionality as characteristics needed in a school to be effective. One survey respondent said of the principal, "It is January 7th, and my principal has not visited my room once. I feel he does not stick to school policies when dealing with discipline issues. He is too soft." Another interviewee articulated, "There is no real rhyme or reason as to the 'how' things get done around here. It is rather hit and miss, I'm sorry to say."

Conversely, one comment from an effective school setting was, "Our current principal is a very capable leader. She has good communication and organizational skills. She leads with respect for the individual so that all feel they are valued and can be successful." A particularly moving interview session rendered the following response, "My principal is highly effective. Good leadership is intentional. Just as a ship needs a captain, a school needs good leadership to move from good to great. A leader should be proactive, compassionate, and willing to be a servant to others."

When principals who were considered to be effective in their leadership endeavor were asked how they implemented the invitational leadership qualities of trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality, one

leader succinctly stated, "Each of these qualities are pivotal to the creation of a team that works. I try to consistently demonstrate each of these qualities to my staff members. You never know what any given person is going to need on any given day, so you must be demonstrating these positive characteristics on an ongoing basis in order to build a strong foundation for success." Similarly, one principal noted, "I believe if I exhibit each of these characteristics on a consistent and daily basis, my staff will feel better about what they do and therefore they will be more productive, which has to be good for kids."

Next, an independent–samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate if a significant difference existed between the invitational leadership qualities of male and female leaders. This test was found to not be significant, *t* (175) = -.365, *p* = .716. The invitational leadership qualities of male administrators (*M* = 3.80, *SD* = .33922) on the average received similar scores concerning the usage of invitational leadership qualities as did their female counterparts (*M* = 3.83, *SD* = .43237). Additional comparison of the means revealed no appreciable difference in the usage of invitational leadership qualities based on the gender of the administrator (see Table 3). An overall average for the component of gender is represented in Table 3.

Table 3

Invitational Leadership Qualities Based on Gender of Principal

	N Teachers	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Male Principals	98	3.8008	.33922	.05734
Female Principals	80	3.8294	.43237	.03628

*Note. A*n even number of male and female principals were selected from Effective Schools and Less Effective Schools to be included in this study. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

As the researchers sought to find themes among the transcripts of interviewees, two themes became notably clear: *Trust is essential, it is all about people*

Table 4

Subscale Findings for Invitational Leadership Qualities Based on *Gender Differences*

Subscale	Variable	N Teachers	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Trust t (171.433) = 3.386 p = .001	Male	98	4.24	.420	.071
	Female	80	4.26	.571	.048
Respect t (175.130) = 3.138 p = .002	Male	98	4.00	.359	.061
	Female	80	3.96	.471	.040
Optimism t (169.164) = 4.604 p < .001	Male	98	4.18	.419	.071
	Female	80	4.25	.543	.046
Intentionality t (173.586) = 3.008 p = .003	Male	98	4.18	.463	.078
	Female	80	4.20	.556	.047
Perceived Effectiveness t (175.130) = 3.138 p = .002	Male	98	3.94	.645	.109
	Female	80	4.00	.817	.069

Note. An even number of male and female principals were selected from Effective Schools and Less Effective Schools to be included in this study. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

Educators were very clear that the invitational quality of trust was one of the most important when considering the creation of organizational success, regardless of gender. One teacher interviewee succinctly stated, "If a leader doesn't have the trust of their staff, they will not be an effective leader." Based on interview results and survey written comments, it appeared clear that educators are also strongly affected by the presence or absence of the leadership characteristics of optimism and intent or vision as implemented by their leaders. One interviewee elaborated, "I don't feel my principal respects us nor even feels we can make a difference, so I feel ill at ease every time I am in his presence." Conversely, one survey participant wrote, "My principal, she is always positive and treats each person with respect. Feeling respected for what I do means the world to me." Another participant noted, "The whole school feels we can make a difference so we do!"

Without hesitation, interviewees responded with the belief that people are the central aspect that must be attended to and be

considered. Principals and teachers agreed that the way people are treated comprises a significant component that contributes to the success or failure of an organization. One teacher commented, "I feel our principal is very effective because she puts people first, above all else. She takes the stance that if your people aren't happy, nothing productive is going to happen." Similarly, a principal remarked, "The most important thing in any organization is the people. Relationships are the cornerstone to everything that takes place in my organization." When asked about the most important factor to address when building an effective organization, yet another principal answered simply, "People, people, people. That's what it's all about!" Another principal noted, "Because we all feel we are in it together and can make a difference, I believe we do."

Conclusions

This data set first confirmed that there were significant differences between the usages of invitational leadership qualities in effective schools versus less effective schools. The significance levels were, in fact, so compelling that it is reasonable to suggest that the principals leading in those schools found through the MSIP process to be more effective, ascribe to invitational leadership behaviors on a regular basis. It was further established through written comments and follow-up interviews that perceptions of these leaders were consistently more positive and affirming than the perceptions of leaders in schools that were determined to be less effective. Perhaps one teacher interviewee put it best

when she concluded, "I've worked for effective principals and I've worked for ineffective principals. Without a doubt, everything that the effective principal does is more people-oriented and positive in nature. The ineffective principals seem to always just be putting in their time." Thus, the consistent use of invitational leadership tenets was found to assist in the creation of a successful and healthy organization.

In addition, the researchers sought to determine which characteristics of invitational leadership teachers and administrators viewed as the most present in contributing to an overall effective school or organization. When asked what aspect they considered most influential in contributing to an overall effective school, teachers and principals overwhelmingly agreed that "people" within an organization was the most influential factor to consider when seeking the establishment of any successful organization. While the other factors of places, policies, programs, and processes were addressed, it was fascinating to observe that each respondent offered the same answer to this question; people are the most influential element in an organization. It is important to note that regardless of the background of the teachers and principals, effective or less effective schools, each firmly believed in the factor of people.

Finally, this investigation revealed that quite simply, effective leadership behaviors will always prove effective, regardless of the gender of the leader. The interviewees praised the efforts of effective leaders, regardless of gender. Leadership characteristics considered to be effective

and helpful in the creation of successful organizations were not based on the gender of the leader, but rather on the leader's effective behaviors exhibited.

While numerous researchers (Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000; Rosenbach & Taylor, 1998; Rosener, 1990; Stelter, 2002) have discussed at length the differences that exist between the leadership styles of men and women, the results from this study did not support that belief. The findings from this study can be transferable to the supposition that effective leadership qualities should simply be considered effective, regardless of the gender of the leader. It is not difficult to envision that male and female leaders might well ascribe to such positive leadership attributes as establishing trust among their organization's members, convey respect for their employees, express encouragement, or compliment a job well done. Indeed, positive and effective leadership behaviors remain positive and effective, regardless of the individual demonstrating them.

Subsequently, it seems reasonable to infer that effective leadership takes on many facets, as Rosener (1990, p.121) suggested, "effective leaders don't come from one mold." When seeking to create a healthy and successful organization, the most critical aspect to consider is the implementation of effective leadership skills. As Stelter (2002, p. 1) affirmed, "The successful organization of the future will not only understand leadership in terms of gender but also its contribution to workforce and organizational effectiveness."

Implications for Practice

Since the invitational leadership theory "is believed to be a process for improving schools" (Asbill, 2000, p. 109), an important implication for practice would be for school districts to pay close attention to the tenets of invitational leadership, applying them accordingly to their educational setting, perhaps even selecting candidates based on their beliefs regarding the use of such characteristics.

In addition, an extensive review of literature and written comments and interview results from this study strongly support the belief that principals have the power to positively affect the creation of an effective learning organization. Thus we are suggesting that the invitational leadership theory be utilized at the university level to assist in the training of aspiring leaders. In so doing, future leaders may be educated in the skills and knowledge necessary to acquire leadership behaviors and qualities that can positively transform an organization.

Yet another implication for practice may be derived from the invitational leadership's assumption of intentionality (Stillion & Siegel, p. 9). It is recommended that all leaders become well versed in the issue of intentionality. Intentionality has been defined as "a decision to purposely act in a certain way, to achieve and carry out a set goal, (Day, et. al., 2001, p. 34). Founders of the invitational leadership model, William Purkey and Betty Siegel, articulated that "Intentionality is at the very heart of Invitational Leadership. Of the four principles, intentionality plays the

paramount role in Invitational Leadership because it is the element that gives any human activity purpose and direction" (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, p. 19). It is additionally advocated that active use of intentionality be initiated at all levels of an organization.

Based on the findings of how influential the aspect of people are to the creation of a successful and healthy organization, it is essential for school leaders to work to develop the positive people skills and necessary communication skills to maintain the necessary level of treatment that members of an organization deserve. Steps should be taken to assure that people within an organization are recognized for their contributions and treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that in order for effective organizations to be created and maintained, positive leadership skills that are grounded in the invitational leadership model should be highly considered by leaders. We further argue, based on our findings, that reflective practices on one's leadership skills and people skills should be assessed frequently in order to maintain optimal benefit for the organization. Further implications for practice should include not only educational institutes, but the application of invitational leadership principles to the business world, as well.

In conclusion, data from this investigation have substantiated the need for teaching and understanding the model of invitational leadership as espoused by Purkey and Siegel (2003). Perhaps by utilization of a new framework by which schools can become "invitational" by concentrating on five areas contributing to success or failure: places, policies, programs, processes, and people (Purkey & Siegel), leadership will transcend models and theories previously utilized (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Day, et. al., 2001). Moreover, based on the findings in this study, it is our opinion that the invitational leadership model should serve as a means to achieve positive results in effective leadership. Halpin (2003, p. 84) articulated that "invitational leadership contributes… by the way in which it cares for and supports the efforts of others." The reviewed literature and study results support the belief that the invitational leadership model should serve as a positive source to help prepare educational leaders, regardless of gender, for the challenges they face in creating effective and successful educational organizations.

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Appendix A

Teacher Perceptions of Leadership Practices
TPLP

*Instructions***:**

Please rate your principal by selecting the response for each item which best describes your own perceptions of his or her leadership behaviors. Mark only one response per item.

Directions: For items, 1 – 37 please answer the following questions by placing an "X" in the box that best matches your level of agreement with the statement.

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Demonstrates a belief that faculty and staff members are responsible and capable					
2	Creates a climate of trust					
3	Makes a special effort to learn names					
4	Uses sarcasm, name-calling and negative statements					
5	Often causes others to feel stressed					
6	Facilitates policies, and procedures which benefit staff, students, and teachers					
7	Demonstrates optimism					
8	Expects high levels of performance from co-workers					
9	Is resistant to change					

10	Makes an intentional effort to provide necessary instructional materials					
11	Creates a climate for improvement through collaboration and shared decision-making					
12	Remains informed about important issues					
13	Encourages cooperation rather than competition					
14	Assures that all necessary communications reach those concerned					
15	Treats faculty and staff as though they are irresponsible					
16	Expresses appreciation for faculty and staff's presence in school					
17	Provides opportunities for professional growth through meaningful in-service					
18	Offers constructive feedback for improvement in a respectful manner					
19	Cares about co-workers					
20	Takes time to talk with faculty and staff about their out-of-school activities					
21	Listens to co-workers					

22	Communicates expectations for high academic performance from students					
23	Encourages staff members to tap their unrealized potential					
24	Views mistakes as learning experiences					
25	Shows insensitivity to the feelings of faculty and staff					
26	Models values, attitudes, and beliefs that encourage others to improve their skills/abilities					
27	Believes that people are more important than things or results					
28	Demonstrates a lack of enthusiasm about his or her job as a principal					
29	Fails to follow through					
30	Appears to view the principalship as a position of service to others					
31	Makes an intentional effort to treat others with trust and respect					
32	Delegates authority and responsibility when appropriate					
33	Is impolite to others					
34	Has a sense of mission which he or she shares with others					

35	Delegates responsibilities to provide learning opportunities					
36	Expresses appreciation for a job well done					
37	Treats each co-worker as a unique individual					
38	How do you classify the overall work effectiveness of your school?					
39	How do you rate your school's effectiveness compared to other schools you have worked in?					
40	How do you rate your principal's effectiveness in meeting the job-related needs of the faculty and staff?					
41	How effective has your principal been in positively transforming your school?					

Please circle one:

42. I am a: 1. Male   2. Female

43. Please express your general observations about the leadership behaviors demonstrated by your current principal.

44. Please express any specific comments about the effectiveness of your current principal as a leader.

Any additional comments: