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A Mixed methods exploration of principal communication and school climate

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A MIXED METHODS EXPLORATION OF PRINCIPAL COMMUNICATION AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

by

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ABSTRACT

A Mixed Methods Exploration of Principal Communication and School Climate

by

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Mixed methods triangulation research design was used in order to explore the relationship between principal communication and school climate. The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and interview protocols on principal communication were administered to principals and teachers at three elementary schools each having between 700-1000 students in an urban school district consisting of approximately 300,000 students. Each school had between 80-100% Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), was designated Adequate according to No Child Left Behind Act (2001) as published in the 2009-2010 School Accountability Reports, and had a principal that had been assigned to that school for a minimum of two years. Data collection with the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was administered to a total of 90 teachers and three principals. Interviews were conducted with the principal and five teachers from each of the three schools. Results indicated relationships exist between principal communication and school climate. Specifically, findings revealed a relationship between the utilization of face-to-face communication channels, positive reinforcement, and school climate.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is dedicated to my girls. To my wife, Bethany, your encouragement and support during this process has been unprecedented and the primary necessity allowing both of us to embark on this journey. To my daughters, Addison, Kendall, and Payton, your existence gave me the motivation needed to begin and complete this process. I hope to provide each of you with the opportunity to chase your dreams, just as I have been given. I love you.

I would like to thank my Mom (Nancy), my Dad (Ron), my Brother (Grant), and my Sister (Ashley), you have loved and believed in me since the day I was born, even when at times I did not have the same belief in myself.

Sincere appreciation is extended to my dissertation committee chairperson, Dr. Pamela Salazar. Your patience, vision, support, and belief in my abilities were invaluable as I worked through this process. With much appreciation, I acknowledge my dissertation committee for their expertise and willingness to help whenever needed, Dr. Patrick Carlton, Dr. James Hager, and Dr. LeAnn Putney. I wish to recognize my cohort colleagues who provided scholarly conversations and camaraderie throughout this process. I would like to thank all of the great people and educators I have been fortunate enough to know. You continue to inspire how I approach both my life and my work.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

_The climate of a school may be compared to the air we breathe, we ignore it until it becomes noticeably offensive (Friedberg, 1999, p. 1)._ 

Leadership behavior has been studied since the beginning of the twentieth century when the Classical Theory of management emerged (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). During this era, also known as the scientific management movement, managers were more concerned with getting the job done than with the well being of their employees (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Hersey and Blanchard (1977) explained the role of leaders during this time by stating, “The main focus of the leader was on the needs of the organization and not on the needs of the individual” (p. 96). The leader of an organization has a significant impact on the success of the organization. Fiedler (1967) argued leadership practices are crucial in explaining and predicting corporate achievement. Mott (1972) stated leadership is important to group or team achievements. Bennis and Nanus (1985) wrote the success of corporate accomplishment is based upon the leader(s) in charge. This also holds true with the principal of a school. The U.S. Senate Committee Report on Equal Education Opportunity (U.S. Congress, 1970) identified the principal as the single most influential person in a school by stating, “In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. He or she is the person responsible for all activities occurring in and around the school building. It is the principal’s leadership which sets the tone of the school, the climate for teaching, the level of professionalism and morale for teachers, and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become” (p. 56). In addition, the Committee explained if a school is a
vibrant, innovative, child-centered place, if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching, if students are performing to the best of their ability, one can almost always point to the principal’s leadership as the key to success. Marzano, McNulty, and Waters (2005) examined 69 studies involving 2,802 schools, approximately 1.4 million students, and 14,000 teachers. Correlation was computed between the leadership behavior of the principal in the school and the average academic achievement in students. Findings indicated the leader can have a dramatic influence on the overall academic achievement of students. Cotton and Savard (1980) found specific leadership behaviors appeared to have a positive impact on student achievement. Effective school leadership substantially boosts student achievement. Leithwood (1994) determined effective principals who offered rewards, resources, and personnel interaction with teachers create a supportive atmosphere that contributed to student success. According to Fullan (1998), the leadership of the principal has been believed to be a key in the successful implementation of reforms that have positively impacted student achievement.

The concept of organizational climate was developed in the late 1950’s when variations of work environments were first studied by social scientists (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). One way leaders influence organizations is by helping shape the climate of the organization. Within schools, Thacker and McInerney (1992) found principals play a key role in the effort to improve school climate. Deal and Petersen (1990) stated school leaders are models, potters, poets, and healers of shaping school climate. A school’s climate is a reflection of the principal’s leadership. Likert (1967) reiterated in effective schools the principal not only helped establish the atmosphere by his or her leadership style but also followed a leadership style that created both a
supportive atmosphere and cooperation. Winter and Sweeney (1994) stated leadership style was related to school climate in that the principal was the key person in a school for establishing and maintaining a positive school climate. Stringer (2002) explained the impact of leadership practices on organizational climate by stating, “At least 50% of the variance in work group climates can be attributed to variance in the day-to-day practices of those who manage the work groups” (p. 101). He described a statistical regression analysis of a climate database conducted with George Litwin by stating, “We found that we could predict up to 67% of the variance in climate by looking at a relatively small number of leadership practices. For the technically oriented reader, this is a correlation of .82, which is almost unheard of in the behavioral sciences. Even when we looked at the effect of leadership practices on climate two years later, we can still predict 50% of the variance in the total climate scores by focusing only on leadership practices in a regression study” (p. 101).

Organizational climate had been linked to organizational success in a wide array of businesses. Williams (1998) surveyed 40 United Kingdom manufacturing companies and compared climate with performance. He found most of the climate variables are both positively and significantly related to each other, and to organizational performance with strong positive correlations on almost all climate and performance measures. Watkins (2001) conducted climate surveys at 10 bottling plants belonging to some of the world’s largest soft drinks companies. He stated, “The results showed the plants with the most favorable working environments were also the most profitable. This confirmed what a large body of research had already demonstrated: that organizational climate, how it feels to work in a particular environment, the atmosphere of a workplace, makes a difference
in organizational performance” (p. 52-53). Gray (2000) conducted extensive interviews with 44 managers from 17 organizations, all major well-known names, in a total of seven industry sectors, public and private. Informants were asked to discuss the last completed project in which they were involved, and from their comments an analysis was made of the organizational climate in which the work took place, and of how successful the project had been. Results show a clear linkage between organizational climate and the success, assessed in a variety of different ways, of the work being done. Litwin and Stringer (1968) examined climate as an empirical reality in an attempt to study the behavior effects of three different leader-induced atmospheres. One of their more surprising findings were stated as, “The climate itself proved more powerful than previously acquired behavior tendencies, and it was able to change the observed behavior patterns of the group members” (p. 36). In addition, as stated by Stringer (2002), “In other words, the climate, in this case created by different leadership styles, has a powerful impact on performance” (p. 3). Within schools, Purkey and Smith (1983) determined a schools primary task is student achievement and note researchers have labeled the schools that did make a difference in student achievement as effective schools. Levine and Orstein (1993) stated student achievement is the criterion used to judge schools as effective. Research provides a link between school climate and student achievement. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) stated there is evidence that organizational climates are related to school performance outcomes including student achievement.

Literature provides a link between leadership behavior and organizational climate. Literature also provides a link between organizational climate and the success of an organization. Stringer (2002) explained these relationships by stating, “What the boss of a
work group does is the most important determinant of climate. The boss’s behavior drives climate, which arouses motivation. And aroused motivation is a major driver of bottom-line performance” (p. 99). Stringer continued by stating the day-to-day practices of the boss have a powerful and lasting impact on climate, and they contribute significantly to organizational performance – both good and bad. Within schools, these relationships also exist. Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) identified specific factors the school principal can manipulate to have a positive influence on student achievement. The leadership style principals used to govern the building and build a strong climate were important predictors of student achievement. Deal and Petersen (1990) found characteristics common to effective schools include strong leadership, a climate of expectation, an orderly but not rigid atmosphere, and effective communication. In addition, the presence or absence of a strong educational leader is the climate of the school and attitudes of teaching staff can directly influence student achievement.

One type of leadership behavior is leadership communication. Covey (1989) stated, “Communication is the most important skill in life” (p. 237). Lawler, Hall, and Oldham (1974) stated, “The communication pattern(s) used by the organization has an immediate impact upon the individual’s life within that same organization and may be a vital, yet currently unexplored, aspect of organizational climate” (p. 153). Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, and Weick (1970) found climate dimensions are related to organizational communication dimensions such as accuracy of communication, as both dimensions assess characteristics of work procedures. Cotton (2003) identified 25 categories of principal actions positively affected several student outcomes. She described one of these categories as communication and interactions. In addition, of the remaining 24 categories,
nearly every one also involved some aspect of this overarching responsibility of communication. Halawah (2005) found school climate was positively associated with principal’s communication effectiveness.

This study explores principal communication and school climate. The foundation of the study lies on the following points:

1. Leadership behavior impacts organizational climate,
2. Organization climate impacts organizational success,
3. Leadership communication impacts organizational climate.

Problem Statement

Organizations today utilize significantly different lines of communication as experienced the past (Baker, 2002). Prior to the invention of the telegraph in 1837, communication was limited to the distance a person could shout or see and was restricted to the speed of a person, a horse, or a boat. Advancements in technology have revolutionized the way we communicate with one another. Leiner, et al. (2009) stated the invention of the telegraph, radio, and computer set the stage for unprecedented integration of capabilities. These inventions allowed for vast amounts of information to be distributed quickly, over greater distances, and with large numbers of people. Technological advancements have changed the types of communication taking place in organizations today. Weisband (2008) stated, “Many leaders today communicate regularly with individuals, with their team members, and with larger organizational units at a distance” (p. 5). Reeves (2006) acknowledged the increasing use of technology in communication, yet urges the importance of holding on to the non-technological side of
communication. He described communicators in today’s organizations as

“Simultaneously high tech and high touch, maximizing their reach through technology, as they optimize their effectiveness with the encouragement, appreciation, and nurturing that only a personal handshake, hug, note, or the spoken word can provide” (p. 59-60). The American Psychological Association (APA) (2008) stated, “Cell phones, iPhones, BlackBerrys, e-mail, instant messaging, twittering, and texting, which are an integral part of the MySpace generation’s lives, shape everyday attitudes, values, and relationships in fundamental ways” (p. 454). The APA (2008) explained there is no doubt new technologies have advanced the human capacity for rapid communication in unprecedented ways. However, rapid social change often has negative benefits. The APA noted, “Perhaps because of the speed of change associated with recent technologies, the full nature of their impact on people’s social lives is still unclear” (p. 455).

One key influence on this change is the invention of the Internet. Leiner, et al. (2009) stated, “The Internet is at once a world-wide broadcasting, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location” (p. 21). This development ultimately led to the use of e-mail as a significant organizational communication tool. Today, information that prior to the Internet would have been exchanged through verbal interactions or written messages is transmitted immediately through cyberspace. While e-mail provides employees the opportunity to transmit information quickly, it also does not provide the communicators the ability to use non-verbal cues as a form of communication. Expression, expressive behavior, and body language are non-existent while communicating through e-mail messages.
The problem set forth in this study is based upon the changes in organizational communication as caused by technological advancements and the impact of principal communication on student achievement via school climate.

Significance of the Study

Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) explained effective communication might be considered the glue that holds together all other responsibilities of leadership. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) described leader communication by stating, “Leaders spend more time communicating than doing any other single activity; yet studies summarized show that many need to develop their ability to communicate more effectively. This may result from the complexity of interaction between leader and follower, as well as the nature of the training that the average person receives” (p. 327). Within schools, literature outlines the connection between principal communication and school climate. Deal & Petersen (1990) stated characteristics common to effective schools include strong leadership, a climate of expectation, an orderly but not rigid atmosphere, and effective communication. The primary measure of success in schools is student achievement. Literature provides a link between school climate and student achievement. Salazar (2008) stated, “High impact schools maintain a climate that is conducive to serious work and learning” (p. 34).

The significance of this study is based on the importance and impact communication has on success within organizations. Principal communication impacts student achievement via school climate. Research shows student achievement is impacted by school climate. Literature also reveals school climate is linked to principal
communication. Therefore, how a principal communicates with staff members impacts the overall success of the school by impacting the climate of the school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore principal communication and school climate.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the research related to leadership/principal behavior, organizational/school climate, and leadership/principal communication. Specifically, the conceptual framework is based upon the following relationships:

1. Leadership behavior impacts organizational climate,
2. Organizational climate impacts organizational success,
3. Leadership communication impacts organizational climate.

Research Questions

1. What are the communication behaviors of principals as perceived by the teachers and principal?
2. What is the climate of schools as perceived by the teachers and principal?
3. What relationship, if any, exists between principal communication behaviors and school climate as perceived by the teachers and principal?
Methodology

Mixed methods triangulation research design is used as a methodology. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained this type of research by stating, “As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies” (p. 5). Creswell and Plano Clark explained the central premise as the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provide a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Creswell and Plano Clark explained triangulation as being used when a researcher implements the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight.

Sample Selection

Research was conducted at three elementary schools each having between 700-1000 students in an urban school district consisting of approximately 300,000 students. Purposeful sampling was used to determine the elementary schools. All three elementary schools shared similar demographic information (total students, ethnicity subgroups, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) subgroup, limited English Language Proficiency (ELP) subgroup, Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) subgroup, transiency rate). Specifically, this included a low socio-economic status (80%-100% Free and Reduced Lunch) and designated Adequate according to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). These criteria were determined using the 2009-2010 School Accountability Summary Report published at www.nevadareportcard.com. In addition, the principal of the school must have been
serving as principal of that school for a minimum of two years. Creswell (2007) described purposeful sampling by stating, “The inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem” (p. 125).

Data Collection Procedures

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was used to measure school climate. Hoy and Tarter (1997) explained the OCDQ-RE is best when administered in a faculty meeting. Hoy and Tarter also stated, “It is probably advisable to have someone other than the principal in charge of collecting data. It is important to create a nonthreatening atmosphere in which teachers give candid responses” (p. 19).

Interviews were conducted to analyze each principal’s communication behaviors. Interviews were conducted with two teachers from the primary grades (K-2), two teachers from the intermediate grades (3-5), and one specialist teacher (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, Literacy, Etc.) at each school. Two similar protocols were used, one for teachers and one for principals. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) described the procedures for interviews by stating, “Conduct a semi-structured interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe the interview” (p. 130). In the interviews, all teachers and principals were asked similar questions with follow up questions as needed. The researcher tape recorded all interviews and took notes as needed. Interviews were conducted starting on the same day the OCDQ-RE was administered and continued into the next days as needed. Interviews took place on site at each individual school campus in a closed door one-on-one meeting format.
Definition of Terms

*Communication*: The act or instance of transmitting a verbal or written message.

*Communication channel*: The medium used to transmit a message.

*Communication message*: The information transmitted during communication.

*School climate*: The personality of the school.

*Open climate*: The distinctive characteristics of the open climate are cooperation, respect, and openness that exist within the faculty and between the faculty and principal.

*Engaged climate*: The engaged climate is marked, on one hand, by ineffective attempts of the principal to lead, and on the other hand, by high professional performance of the teachers. The principal is rigid and authoritarian (high directiveness) and respects neither the professional expertise nor personal needs of the faculty (low supportiveness).

*Disengaged climate*: The disengaged climate stands in stark contrast to the engaged climate. The principal’s leadership behavior is strong, supportive, and concerned. The principal listens and is open to teachers’ views (high supportiveness); gives teachers the freedom to act on the basis of their professional knowledge (low directiveness); and relieves teachers of most of the burdens of paperwork and bureaucratic trivia (low restrictiveness).

*Closed climate*: The closed climate is the antithesis to open. The principal and teachers simply go through the motions, with the principal stressing routine trivia and unnecessary busywork (high restrictiveness) and teachers responding minimally and exhibiting little commitment to the tasks at hand (high disengagement).
Supportive principal behavior: A behavior that reflects a basic concern for teachers. The principal listens and is open to teacher suggestions. Praise is given genuinely and frequently, and criticism is handled constructively. The competence of the faculty is respected, and the principal exhibits both a personal and professional interest in teachers.

Directive principal behavior: A behavior that is rigid, close supervision. The principal maintains constant monitoring and control over all teacher and school activities, down to the smallest detail.

Restrictive principal behavior: A behavior that hinders rather than facilitates teacher work. The principal burdens teachers with paperwork, committee requirements, routine duties, and other demands that interfere with their teaching responsibilities.

Collegial teacher behavior: A behavior that supports open and professional interactions among teachers. Teachers are proud of their school, enjoy working with their colleagues, and are enthusiastic, accepting, and mutually respectful of their colleagues.

Intimate teacher behavior: A behavior that promotes cohesive and strong social relations among teachers. Teachers know each other well, are close personal friends, socialize together regularly, and provide strong social support for each other.

Disengaged teacher behavior: A behavior that signifies a lack of meaning and focus to professional activities. Teachers simply are putting in time in nonproductive group efforts; they have no common goals. In fact, their behavior often is negative and critical of their colleagues and the school.
Limitations

1. The study was limited to the principals and teachers that were surveyed and interviewed and cannot be assumed the findings in this study can be extended to other principals and teachers.

2. The study was limited to the three elementary schools within one urban school district and cannot be assumed findings in this study can be applied to all elementary schools or school districts.

3. The study was limited to one school year and cannot be assumed findings in this study can be applied to all school years.

Summary

Leadership behavior has been identified as being influential on school climate. Troisi (1982) clarified all studies on effective schools show the association between the leadership of the principal and school climate. The primary measure of success in educational institutions is student achievement. Researchers have identified school climate as being influential on student achievement. Good and Brophy (1987) determined high expectations and a commitment to high student achievement are a part of a pattern of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors recognized as school climate. Communication is a type of leadership behavior in any organization, including a school. Halawah (2005) found better school climate was expected in schools were effective communication between school principals and teachers existed.

The relationship between principal communication and school climate is explored in this study. The foundation of the study lies on the following points:
1. Leadership behavior impacts organizational climate,
2. Organizational climate impacts organizational success,
3. Leadership communication impacts organizational climate.

The next chapter uses literature and research to provide more background on the previously stated points. Subsections include: leadership/principal behavior, organizational/school climate, leadership/principal communication, and climate measures.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Leadership behavior impacts organizational climate. Bailey (1988) found a relationship between leadership styles of principals in West Virginia and school climate. Bailey concluded in schools where principals emphasized relationship behaviors there was a positive relationship to school climate. Organizational climate impacts organizational success. Williams (1982) reported a correlation between teacher perceptions of climate and student achievement. Leadership communication impacts organizational climate. Muchinsky (1977) found dimensions of communication are related to both perceived climate and job satisfaction.

Leadership/Principal Behavior

The initial step in outlining the influence of leadership behavior on organizational climate is to define leadership. According to Terry (1960), “Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives” (p. 493). Tannenbaum, Weschler, and Massarick (1961) defined leadership as interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specialized goal or goals. Koontz and O’Donnell (1955) noted, “Leadership is a process of influencing people to follow in the achievement of a common goal” (p. 435). Hersey and Blanchard (1993) revealed leadership as the process of influencing activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation.
Literature implies a relationship between leadership behavior and school climate. Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (1987) explained principals should create a school climate that improves the productivity of both staff and students and that the leadership style of a principal can foster or restrict teacher effectiveness. According to Haymon (1990), a positive relationship between school climate and leadership style was found using a sample of elementary schools. In addition, Cey (1993) found a strong, positive relationship between the principal’s leadership style and organizational climate in twenty secondary schools in Michigan. Gibb (1969) discussed authoritarian and participative leadership styles in relation to school climate, noting authoritarian leaders were characterized as having high control. In contrast, the participative leader joined in creating a climate in which he or she had no need to impose control because healthy group controls emerged from the group process as needed. In addition, Valesky, Etheridge, Nunnery, Horgan, and Smith (1992) noted a democratic leadership style produced a better school climate than an authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership style in his study using a sample of seven inner city high schools in Memphis, Tennessee. Bulach (1994) examined the influence of the principal’s leadership style on school climate and student achievement by using 20 principals and 50 teachers in Kentucky elementary schools. Findings indicated school climate scores were high in each leadership style consisting of supporter, controller, promoter, and analyzer.

Questionnaires based on the San Diego County Office of Education Effective Schools were used by MacGregor, Mendel, and Watson (2002) to study the leadership behaviors of elementary principals compared with school climate. Leadership behaviors were
categorized into directive, collaborative, or non-directive styles. Results indicated teachers who perceived their principals as having a collaborative leadership style also perceived their schools as having the most positive school climates, the next highest climate ratings were schools with principals perceived as non-directive, and the lowest school climate ratings were schools with principals perceived as directive. In addition, research by Williamson (2007) used the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) and the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) to determine the relationship between school climate and leadership style in urban Title I elementary schools. Quantitative data was gathered from 323 Title I elementary teachers and 19 Title I Principals in 19 urban Title I elementary schools. Findings indicated a relationship between leadership style and school climate. Williamson noted, “A positive relationship and open communication between the principal and teacher is essential to a healthy and open school climate” (p. 92).

Whereas most studies have shown a relationship between leadership and organizational climate, others found no relationship exists. Decker (1989) found no relationship between leadership style and school climate in 80 elementary schools in Iowa. In addition, Anderson (1993) found no relationship between leadership style and school climate using a sample of 57 urban, suburban, and rural schools in New Jersey.

Organizational/School Climate

The initial step in analyzing the factors associated with organizational climate is to review the existing definitions of organizational climate. Some authors refer to behavior while defining organizational climate. Walsh and Shay (1993) found climate actually
refers to the human behaviors occurring within the organization. Hoy and Miskel (2005) described organizational climate as “The set of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influence the behaviors of each school’s members” (p. 185). Stringer (2002) defined organizational climate as “A relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of an organization that is experienced by its members, influences their behavior, and can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics of the organization” (p. 8). Schein (2004) defined climate as the feeling conveyed in a group by the physical layout and the way in which the members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, or with outsiders.

Some authors refer to the impact of behaviors on specific objectives of the organization. According to Wertheimer (1971), climate is defined as “The aggregate of attitudes of members of the school institution toward each other, toward their joint efforts and objectives, and toward the constraints and opportunities they meet there” (p. 527). In addition, Kottkamp (1984) suggested the organization consists of shared values, interpretations of social activities, and commonly held definitions of purpose to make up the climate.

Researchers have divided climate into variables, subsystems, or dimensions in order to define the components of organizational climate. Owens and Valesky (2007) explained organizational climate is the product of four variables, or subsystems: ecology, milieu, organization, and culture. The following information on each variable, or subsystem is:

- Ecology-building and facilities, technology, pedagogical inventions.
- Organization-communication patterns, decision-making patterns, hierarchy.
• Milieu-race, ethnicity, gender, motivation, leadership, skills, socioeconomic levels, status.

• Culture-assumptions, values, norms/beliefs, ways of thinking, behavior patterns, artifacts (p. 200).

Tableman and Herron (2004) used a comprehensive model consisting of four dimensions to describe climate. Each of their four dimensions is defined in reference to a positive climate. The four dimensions presented by Tableman and Herron included:

- A physical environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning;
- A social environment that promotes communication and interaction;
- An effective environment that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem; and
- An academic environment that promotes learning and self-fulfillment (p. 3-4).

Organizations across the world are consistently analyzed in order to determine factors influencing success. Researchers have determined organizational climate is linked with organizational success. Stringer (2002) stated, “Climate is both objective and subjective in that it’s an objectively measurable expression of people’s subjective perceptions of their work environment. The assumption underlying the concept of organizational climate is that the way people feel about where they work has a powerful impact on how they work and how hard they work. Climate determines the performance of an organization” (p.1).

Organizational climate has been defined and explained in terms of variables, subsystems, and dimensions. Now, the relationship between school climate and the primary measure of success within schools, student achievement, will be explored.
School Climate - Student Achievement

In order to explore the relationship between school climate and student achievement, literature often refers to the negative impact climate can have on student achievement. Frieberg (1998) indicated even though school climate can be a positive influence on the health of the learning environment it can also be a barrier to learning. Urban (1999) described the importance of school climate by stating, “Unless students experience a positive and supportive climate, some may never achieve the most minimum standards or realize their full potential” (p. 69). Hoyle, English, and Steffy (1985) also noted, “School climate may be one of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional program. Without a climate that creates a harmonious and well functioning school, a high degree of academic achievement is difficult, if not downright impossible to obtain” (p. 15).

Along with identifying the negative impact climate can have on student achievement, authors have also identified the positive impact school climate can have on student achievement. Stenson (1985) stated school climate is the total of the forces to which the individual responds in the school environment. He continued to stress the importance of school climate by stating, “A warm, positive climate contributes greatly to the productivity of an institution” (p. 54). Epstein (1983) reported school climate influences the achievement, behavior, and attitudes of students and staff. According to Hoy, Tarter, and Bliss (1990), long-term improvement in academic achievement was related to schools with strong academic emphasis within the context of healthy and open climates. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) examined the specific component of teacher empowerment and school effectiveness in 86 New Jersey middle schools. They concluded there is
evidence organizational climates are related to school performance outcomes including student achievement. In addition, Freiburg (1998) stated aspects of school climate, including trust, respect, mutual obligation and concern for others’ welfare can have a powerful effect on educator’s and learner’s interpersonal relationships as well as learner’s academic achievement and overall school progress. More recently, Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002) noted, “A healthy school climate is imbued with positive student, teacher, and administrator interrelationships. Teachers like their colleagues, their school, their job, and their students are driven by a quest for academic excellence” (p. 39).

Haynes and Comer (1993) studied school climate in high-risk urban environments of New Haven, Connecticut. Findings indicated a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success. Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood, and Wisenbaker (1978) concluded the relationship between school climate and student achievement is stronger for African American students than for White students. Williams (1982) reported a correlation between teacher perceptions of climate and student achievement. Thacker and McInerney (1992) found a school district that based the change process on nine characteristics of effective schools, including instructional leadership and school climate, could change academic culture and significantly improve student achievement. Thacker and McInerney found principals played a key role in this effort.

Anderson (1982) conducted a thorough meta-analysis review, including over 200 references, of research on school climate. In a review of 40 major studies between 1964 and 1980, Anderson found a majority of studies reported a positive relationship between school climate and student achievement.
Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) tested a causal model explaining the way principals influence student achievement. This model measured how frequently principals implemented specific instructional leadership behaviors. Fifty-six principals and 332 teachers participated in the study, concluding principals in high achieving schools involve teachers in the instructional design, protect the staff from external forces (community and central office), and communicate school goals clearly. Shared decision making, monitoring technology, and teaching strategies affected the students’ performance. Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides found the results of this research confirm principals affect student achievement through instructional organization, school governance, and school climate.

Nichols (2007) used the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) in two elementary schools to study the relationship between school leadership, school climate, and student performance. Findings indicated a statistical significance between school climate and student performance. She stated, “Leadership and teacher behaviors influenced the learning environment in schools. Leadership approach, teacher empowerment, and a climate focused on collaboration are the three driving factors related to student performance outcomes” (p. 68).

Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) studied the effects of principal leadership on student achievement in 87 U.S. schools. The results indicated there was no direct effect of leadership styles on student achievement, but the results do suggest there is an indirect relationship between school climate and student achievement. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis stated, “The findings suggest that elementary school principals who are perceived
by teachers as strong instructional leaders promote student achievement through their influence on climate” (p. 543).

Leadership/Principal Communication

Leadership behavior has been identified as impacting school climate. In addition, organizational climate has been identified as being influential on student achievement. This section will analyze one specific type of leadership behavior researchers have linked with organizational climate and organizational success, leadership communication.

The first step in analyzing the impact of leadership communication is to provide some background information regarding the definitions, styles, and types of communication. DeFluer, Kearney, and Plax (1993) described human communication as a relational process of transmitting information during which source individuals initiate messages using symbols, signs, and contextual cues in ways that similar understandings are constructed by the receiving individuals. In earlier research, Barnard (1938) suggested communication is more than just an element of an organization, because organizations come into being only when people are able to communicate to organize activities accomplishing goals. Hoban (1973) stated, “Communication is simply shared meanings between people” (p. 12).

Style is commonly used to describe communication. Since style of communication is considered important in some persuasive models, the affect style has on people must be a measure of communication effectiveness (Stech, 1984). As noted by Norton (1983), communicator style has a powerful impact upon others. Individuals make use of more than one style, and the combination of styles work together to impact others. Norton
found each particular communication style was dependent upon context, situation, and time. Context refers to the interactive stage and settings, while situation refers to the people and their purpose within the context. Time can vary from different hours in the day to a broader context of time spanning from youth to old age. Communicator style had 10 components, (a) dominant, (b) dramatic, (c) contentious, (d) animated, (e) impression-leaving, (f) relaxed, (g) attentive, (h) open, (i) friendly, and (j) precise that revealed an overall communicator image (Norton, 1978). Additionally, Norton (1975) found 9 of the 10 style variables formed two large clusters. One cluster, consisting of the attentive, friendly, and relaxed subscales, Norton labeled passive. The other cluster included the dominant, dramatic, animated, and contentious, open, and impression-leaving variables. Norton labeled this cluster as active because the variables stressed doing, sending messages, and being talkative. A person generally communicates in either the active or passive style.

Verbal and non-verbal communication has been identified in research as being instrumental in the communication process. Mehbarian (1971) studied interpersonal communications and concluded seven percent of meaning is from the receivers interpretation or perception of your words, or what you say, 38 percent is conveyed by their perception of your voice, or how you say what you say, and approximately 55 percent comes from their interpretation of your nonverbal signals. In addition, Harris (1993) stated, “Understanding occurs when a listener fully comprehends the other person’s frame of reference, point of view, and feelings regarding a subject” (p. 239).

Researchers have also focused on the dynamics of one-way and two-way communication. According to Salazar (2008), high impact leaders create processes that
foster two-way communication rather than channels that direct the flow of information in only one direction. As noted by Walton (1989), a two-way conversation contains four different messages: (1) he means to say something and thinks he did, (2) she heard it this way, (3) she means to say something and thinks she did, and (4) he heard it this way. The best procedure is to ask the other person to interpret the message into personal language so the message is clear and complete. According to Argyris (1982), when communication is one-way from the top it is “Model I” communication leading to “Single loop learning.” When information is controlled from the top there is limited provision for feedback, which prevents the organization from benefiting from the input of subordinates in the organization. The preferred method of communication is called “Model II.” A Model II organization uses communication to allow the members of the organization to participate in the change cycle, which is called “Double loop learning.” In this type of organization, information is freely shared and the subordinates are able to participate in the changes made. Communication in this type of organization is not a tool for control, but a tool for growth. Schmuck and Runkle (1985) defined one way communication as being initiated by the speaker and terminated at the listener. Examples of this type of communication could be lecturing in a class or an announcement over a public address system. Benefits include a lack of unnecessary information being passed with an emphasis on efficiency and goal achievement. Clampitt (2001) identified a flaw with one-way communication by stating even if the message sender effectively articulates an idea; it does not necessarily guarantee it will be understood as intended. In addition, he identified two faulty assumptions in explaining the continued reliance on one-way communication. First, the receivers are seen as passive information processors. Instead of being passive processing
machines, however, people actively reconstruct messages and create their own meanings. Second, words are seen as containers of meaning. He stated, “Language works against this assumption. For example, meaning depends on how the words are used, the context in which the statement is made, and the people involved. Words do not serve so much as containers of meaning as stimulators of meaning” (p. 344). Two-way communication consists of all participants in the process initiating and receiving messages. Burbeles (1993) described four types of individual dialogue as conversation, inquiry debate, and instruction. Two-way communication can improve the communication process by reducing the major disparities between information or the idea received and the one intended.

Barnard (1938) referred to the four conditions needed to be met before communication can be superior as: (a) the message is understood, (b) it is believed to be in accordance with the mission of the organization, (c) the receiver considers the message to be compatible with his personal interest as a whole and (d) he is able to comply with it (p. 168).

Literature refers to the interpersonal components of communication. Norton (1978, 1983) developed an interpersonal theory of communication that dealt not only with what was communicated but the way it was communicated. The term interpersonal communication refers to concepts central to the theories of Roloff (1981), McCroskey, Larson, Knapp (1971), and DeVito (1976). In addition, Skrapits (1986) explained interpersonal communication has the following characteristics: a relational context, knowledge of one’s relational partner, transmission of various symbols, and a functional purpose. This concept means “A symbolic process between two or more people, bound
by a certain relationship, whereby each provides for the exchange or negotiation of resources” (p. 17).

Leadership Communication - Organizational Climate

The relationship between leadership and organizational communication indicates communication plays a significant role in the leadership process through goal-setting, implementation, evaluation, and feedback (Hollander, 1978). Fox and Schwartz (1965) related effective communication to effective leadership in that good communicators were equally good principals, while ineffective communicators were not. Leadership style depends upon whether the leader is task oriented or people oriented (Stech, 1984). Stech suggested the major characteristic present in relationships were dominance-submission and friendliness-hostility. Dominance is synonymous with task orientation, while friendliness is a sign of person orientation. Stech noted the two factors are important facets of leadership and leadership communication.

Researchers often refer to people-oriented leaders while analyzing the relationship between organizational communication and organizational climate. Blake and Mouton (1978) found people-oriented leaders tended to have more intense communication activities. Whereas people-oriented leaders used the informal communication system more frequently than task-oriented leaders, they used formal systems less frequently. People-oriented leaders dealt with social matters, politics, and personal elements in their informal talk. In addition, people oriented leaders suppressed negative attitudes and conflicting material and use of third party gossip to get criticism through. Positive upward communication and a sense of humor were characteristics of people-oriented leaders who were more likely to place personal items on bulletin boards and put stories
about people in newsletters. In addition, Bradley and Baird (1977) found people-oriented leaders encouraged individual work, encouraged teamwork, and were receptive to subordinates. The people-oriented leader stressed integration, promoted harmonious relations, provided interdepartmental information, and encouraged participation. These communicators laughed often, were encouraging, talked often, and were active. People-oriented leaders also were admiring, showed concern, and were comfortable. These leaders listened, were approving, were attentive, and were dramatic (Bradley and Baird, 1977).

Muchinsky (1977) used an organizational communication questionnaire, an organizational climate questionnaire, and the Job Description Index (JDI) to examine the relationship between organizational communication, organizational climate, and job satisfaction. Sampling consisted of 1,160 employees of a large public utility. Findings indicated respondents who have a positive feeling about communication within the organization also have positive feelings regarding the organization’s psychological environment, management in general, and the way employees identify with the organization.

Principal Communication - School Climate

Research indicated correlation between principal communication and school climate. Specifically, researchers have focused on the impact of the principal’s communication within the school. McCallister Roberts (1998) found principals spend up to 90% of their time communicating. Accordingly, Smith and Andrews (1989) stated the principal, as a communicator, displayed behavior that communicated the school purpose that then translated into programs and activities. Smith and Andrews (1989) found the whole
educational system, which includes the principal of a school, continuously transmits messages of expectations and worthiness to students and their parents. Fullan (1991) noted successful principals used six strategies. These included: (a) strengthened the school culture, (b) used a variety of mechanisms to stimulate and reinforce change, (c) fostered staff development, (d) engaged in direct and frequent communication about norms, values, and beliefs, (e) shared power and responsibility, and (f) used symbols to express cultural values.

McEwan (1998) stated instructional leadership was comprised of traditional management and a human component. Traditional management consists of planning, time management, leadership theory, and organizational development, while the human component consists of communicating, motivating, and facilitating roles of the principal. McCallister Roberts (1998) explained not only what a principal communicates, but also the way a principal communicates affects almost every aspect of the organization. Sargent and Miller (1971) noted task oriented leaders had more total communication, had more negative social-emotional emphasis, had more attempted task answers, and had more talk answer emphasis. Stech (1984) also found two-way communication and more frequent communication are more common in people-oriented leaders than task-oriented leaders. People-oriented communication is concerned with timing, keeping the channels open, and soliciting messages from others.

Sergiovanni (2000) noted, “School climate and relationships are obviously affected by the organization and communication in the school, school climate lies at the center” (p. 100-101). As explained by Schein (1993), “The learning culture must be built on the assumption that communication and information are central to organizational well-being.
and must therefore create a multichannel communication system that allows everyone to
connect to everyone else” (p. 370). Hoy and Forsyth (1986) found the principal’s
communication style regarding interacting with teachers as one element of school
climate. The three dimensions of principal-teacher interactions were supportive, directive,
and restrictive principal behavior. When a principal displayed supportive behavior,
genuine concern for teachers was revealed. With directive behavior, the task-oriented
principal showed little consideration for the personal needs of teachers. A principal who
hindered rather than facilitated the work of the teacher by establishing impediments to
work used restrictive behavior. The type of interactions helped determine the climate of
the organization.

Studies often indicate the negative effects of ineffective organizational
communication. Donaldson (1991) researched his own high school principalship by
surveying staff members regarding communication. He analyzed both direct and indirect
forms of communication finding a discrepancy between how he saw himself and how his
staff members saw him. In addition, he stated, “In general, staff communication with me,
in nearly all forms, occurred less than daily and often less than weekly. For someone who
projected himself as an active principal, this feedback was startling. If I did not
communicate often verbally, through what medium was I leading the school” (p. 51)? As
noted by Blase and Blase (2004), ineffective or ill-timed communication from the
principal can cause anger, resentfulness, and discomfort on the part of teachers. Principal
insincerity and behavior on the part of the principal that teachers regarded as unfair
caused increased teacher anger, frustration, and a sense of futility, teachers also lost trust
in their principals. Wolcott (1973) did a yearlong ethnographic study in an elementary
school finding negative comments from teachers regarding the principals ineffective or inadequate communication caused confusion or stress. In addition, one teacher said, “Ed does not spell things out clearly enough as to his expectations, particularly along the line of structure” (p. 290).

A meta-analysis of 35 studies was done by Kramer (1993) on effective school-site leader behaviors. He found expertise in communication was associated with effective leadership and principal leadership related to student achievement.

Lucietto (1977) used the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) to find correlations between principal’s styles in LBDQ and language characteristic patterns with dimensions of Initiating Structure and Dimensions of Consideration. Patterns of behavior manifested themselves in speech. The principal who used the communication strategy of clarifying what had been said demonstrated a behavior that led teachers to infer the principal was high in Consideration. Clarifying language provided a means of distinguishing principals as people-oriented that made teachers feel more accepted and secure. Lucietto found the use of self words, such as “I” and “Me,” and attempt words, such as “Try” and “Effort,” also distinguished between high and low Initiating Structure and high and low Consideration styles.

The Evaluation of School Climate (The Evaluation Center, 2005) and a principal’s communication survey were used by Halawah (2005) to study the relationship between effective communication of high school principals and teachers. He used 555 students and 209 teachers in the Abu Dhabi District. Findings indicated school climate was positively associated with principal’s communication effectiveness. In addition, significant differences were observed between males and females. Specifically, he found
communication between principals and teachers in male schools was more effective than in female schools.

Rafferty (2003) surveyed 503 teachers, counselors, and library-media specialists in thirteen counties in the western portion of Ohio. He used the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Secondary Schools (OCDQ-RS) and the Communication Climate Inventory (CCI). Means for five subtests of the OCDQ-RS calculated for each aspect of school climate to compute an openness index ranging from the most open climate and the most closed climate at each school. Rafferty explained the results by stating, “The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the positive relationship between school climate and upward communication patterns, and suggest school climate can be improved by increasing upward communication opportunities to influence the day-to-day aspects of school life” (p. 68).

Pomroy (2005) interviewed 22 teachers and three principals in small Maine elementary schools regarding their perception of principal communication and its impact on their perception of school climate. Data were analyzed to determine congruity between teachers and their principals and communication behaviors appeared to link to climate factors. Findings supported the proposition that principals’ patterns and styles of communication shape teachers’ conception of the professional climate. In addition, Pomroy (2005) stated, “The findings of this study indicated that principals and teachers do not always have the same views of the principals’ communication behaviors or the climate of the school” (p. 199).

Kirby and Bogotch (1996) conducted a study to determine the types of information principals and teachers used in school based management reform sought, utilized, and
valued. Information use and dissemination played a critical role in creating positive school climate, since lines of communication need to be clear and open. Kirby and Bogotch learned information use is significant in defining roles of the teachers and principals, and the teachers became more collaborative, which resulted in teachers wanting more information. In collaborative environments, principals will assume the role of information provider. As an information provider, principals promote staff development. Kirby and Bogotch also found greater information access enhanced shared decision making and valuing of shared decision making by teachers. Findings showed schools that had high levels of shared decision-making had high teacher job satisfaction.

In order to analyze the relationship between communication style, school climate, and student achievement, McCallister Roberts (1998) sampled 350 K-12 teachers in West Virginia. Findings indicated a link between principal’s communication style and school climate. Specifically, the relationship between passive communication and school climate indicate that where principals exhibit communication that is friendly, attentive, and relaxed, the teachers perceived their schools climates as being positive. In addition, the principal’s communication style positively correlated with climate indicating the importance of the principal’s overall communication to the teacher’s perception of school climate.

Changes in Communication

Organizations today utilize significantly different lines of communication as experienced in the past (Baker, 2002). Prior to the invention of the telegraph in 1837, communication was limited to the distance a person could shout or see and was restricted to the speed of a person, a horse, or a boat. Advancements in technology have
revolutionized the way we communicate with one another. Electronic mail, instant messaging, voice mail, facsimile, audio and video conferencing, and the Internet have decreased the amount of face-to-face communication and increased the amount of electronic communication existing within our organizations. This change allows for vast amounts of information to be distributed quickly, over greater distances, and with large numbers of people. These technological advancements have changed the types of communication taking place in organizations today. Weisband (2008) stated, “Many leaders today communicate regularly with individuals, with their team members, and with larger organizational units at a distance” (p. 5). Reeves (2006) acknowledged the increasing use of technology in communication, yet urges the importance of holding on to the non-technological side of communication. He described communicators in today’s organizations as “Simultaneously high tech and high touch, maximizing their reach through technology, as they optimize their effectiveness with the encouragement, appreciation, and nurturing that only a personal handshake, hug, note, or the spoken word can provide” (p. 59-60). The American Psychological Association (APA) (2008) stated, “Cell phones, iPhones, BlackBerrys, e-mail, instant messaging, twittering, and texting, which are an integral part of the MySpace generation’s lives, shape everyday attitudes, values, and relationships in fundamental ways” (p. 454). The APA (2008) also explained there is no doubt new technologies have advanced the human capacity for rapid communication in unprecedented ways. However, rapid social change often has negative benefits. The APA (2008) noted, “Perhaps because of the speed of change associated with recent technologies, the full nature of their impact on people’s social lives is still unclear” (p. 455).
Climate Measures

Researchers have developed numerous measurement tools to determine the climate or culture of an organization. For the purpose of this study, the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) will be used. The OCDQ-RE was developed from the original Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ), therefore, both of these questionnaires will be reviewed.

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ)

Halpin and Croft (1962, 1963) developed the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) in order to map and measure the domain of the climates of elementary schools along a continuum from open to closed (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991, p. 10-11). Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp explained, “The instrument is composed of 64 Likert-type items that teachers and principals use to describe the interaction patterns in their schools. The items are short, simple, descriptive statements that measure eight dimensions of organizational life. Four of the dimensions or subtests refer to characteristics of the principal as leader” (p. 11). The eight dimensions are as follows:

Characteristics of Faculty Behavior

1. Disengagement refers to the teachers’ tendency to not be “With it”, that is, “To go through the motions” without commitment to the task at hand.

2. Hindrance refers to the teachers’ feelings that the principal burdens them with routine duties, committee work, and other unnecessary busy work.

3. Esprit refers to the morale growing out of a sense of both task accomplishment and the satisfaction of social needs.
4. Intimacy refers to the teachers’ enjoyment of warm and friendly social relations with each other.

Characteristics of Principal Behavior

1. Aloofness refers to the formal and impersonal principal behavior; the principal goes by the “Book” and maintains social distance from subordinates.

2. Production emphasis refers to close supervision. The principal is highly directive and not sensitive to faculty feedback.

3. Thrust refers to the dynamic behavior in which the principal attempts to “Move the organization” through the example the principal personally sets for teachers.

4. Consideration refers to warm, friendly behavior by the principal. The principal tries to be helpful and do a little something extra for the faculty (p. 14).

The development of the OCDQ was prompted on four factors: (1) schools differ markedly in their “Feel”; (2) morale does not adequately capture this difference in feel among schools; (3) talented principals who take jobs in schools where improvement is necessary often are immobilized by a recalcitrant faculty; and (4) the notion of the “Personality” of a school is intriguing in itself (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991).

Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991) stated, “Halpin and Croft take the position that how the leader or group really behaves is less important than how its members perceive it. It is their perceptions of behavior that motivate action. Hence, the organizational climate of a school is the faculty’s consensus represents a dependable index of ‘what is out there’ and is instrumental in influencing organizational behavior” (p. 13).
As established by Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991), the distinctive character of the open climate is having a high degree of thrust and esprit and low disengagement. The combination of the two indicates an open climate; the principal leads by example (thrust), providing the proper blend of direction and support depending on the situation. Teachers work well together (esprit) and are committed to the task at hand (low disengagement). Because of the “Reality-centered” and considerate leadership of the principal as well as the faculty commitment, there is no need for burdensome paperwork (hindrance), close supervision (production emphasis, or impersonality) and numerous rules and regulations (aloofness). Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp stated, “Leadership develops easily and appropriately as needed. The open school climate is preoccupied with neither task achievement nor social needs, but both emerge freely. In brief, behavior of both the principal and faculty is authentic” (p. 16).

The closed climate is the antithesis of the open. Thrust and esprit are low and disengagement is high. The principal and teachers simply appear to go through the motions (disengagement), with the principal focusing on routine trivia and busywork (hindrance), rules and regulations (aloofness), and unconcern (low consideration). Teachers respond with minimal levels of morale (low esprit) and commitment (high disengagement). The principal’s ineffective leadership is seen in authoritarian and controlling behavior (production emphasis), formal declarations and impersonality (aloofness), as well as lack of consideration and unwillingness to provide a dynamic personal example (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). They stated, “These misguided tactics, which are not taken seriously by the faculty, produce teacher frustration and
apathy. They lead to an atmosphere of ‘game playing’ in which the behavior of both the principal and teachers pervades the school” (p. 17).

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools was developed by using Halpin and Croft’s Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ). Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991) described the reason for developing the OCDQ-RE by stating the following about the OCDQ, “Questions about the reliability and validity of both items and subtests persist. Conceptual problems are also abound; there is a lack of underlying logic to the framework; the meanings of some of the dimensions are vague; the climate continuum is ambiguous and likely not a single continuum; and the perspective excludes students. Finally, the unit of analysis in the development of the original OCDQ was the individual; the appropriate analytic unit is the school” (p. 26).

Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991) explained the first step in revising the OCDQ was to appraise the existing items in the OCDQ by examining Halpin and Croft’s (1962, 1963) rotated item factor matrix for the original 64 items in their instrument. Factor loadings for all items within each subtest were scrutinized. Items with low factor loadings either were discarded or revised. Eventually 24 of the 64 items were discarded. The instrument was then broadened by writing items focused on students and teacher-student interaction. Specifically, items were written to measure pupil control behavior of teachers and academic press of the school. All items were developed using the following criteria:

a) Each item reflected a property of the school;

b) The statement was clear and concise;

c) The statement had content validity; and
d) The statement had discriminatory potential (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, p. 26-27).

Thirty-eight elementary schools were sampled for exploration and refinement of the instrument. Sampling included urban, suburban, and rural schools consisting of 10 or more teachers. Researchers collected data from four teachers selected at random in each school. Final factor analysis resulted in six emerging dimensions in two general categories. Three dimensions described principal behavior and three depicted teacher behavior (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp summarized the six dimensions as follows:

- **Supportive principal behavior** reflects a basic concern for teachers. The principal listens and is open to teacher suggestions. Praise is given genuinely and frequently, and criticism is handled constructively. The competence of the faculty is respected, and the principal exhibits both a personal and professional interest in teachers.

- **Directive principal behavior** is rigid, close supervision. The principal maintains constant monitoring and control over all teacher and school activities, down to the smallest detail.

- **Restrictive principal behavior** is behavior that hinders rather than facilitates teacher work. The principal burdens teachers with paperwork, committee requirements, routine duties, and other demands that interfere with their teaching responsibilities.

- **Collegial teacher behavior** supports open and professional interactions among teachers. Teachers are proud of their school, enjoy working with their
colleagues, and are enthusiastic, accepting, and mutually respectful of their colleagues.

- Intimate teacher behavior is cohesive and strong social relations among teachers exist. Teachers know each other well, are close personal friends, socialize together regularly, and provide strong social support for each other.

- Disengaged teacher behavior signifies a lack of meaning and focus to professional activities. Teachers simply are putting in time in nonproductive group efforts; they have no common goals. In fact, their behavior often is negative and critical of their colleagues and the school (p. 32).

Seventy elementary schools in New Jersey were sampled to demonstrate the stability of its factor structure, to confirm the validity and reliability of its subtests, and to explore its second-order factor structure (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp explained the results strongly supported the factor structure uncovered in the pilot study. The items loaded on the appropriate subtest and generally loaded highly only on one factor. Moreover, the reliability scores for the subtests for the new data set remained high. The alpha coefficients are found in Table 1.

Finally, comparison was made between the factor loadings on the six factors for the pilot data and for the final data set. The results were remarkably similar. The factor structures for both data sets were virtually identical.
Table 1.

**OCDQ-RE Reliability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Reliability (alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The OCDQ-RE has two general factors: one measuring the openness of teacher interactions and the other a measure of principal leadership behavior openness. These two factors are independent, this makes it possible to have a school with an open principal and closed teacher relations or vice versa (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). Four contrasting school climates are possible:

- Open climate. The distinctive characteristics of the open climate are cooperation, respect, and openness that exist within the faculty and between the faculty and principal. The principal listens and is receptive to teacher ideas, gives genuine and frequent praise, and respects the competence of faculty (high supportiveness). Principals also give their teachers freedom to perform without close scrutiny (low directiveness) and provide facilitating leadership devoid of bureaucratic trivia (low restrictiveness). Likewise, the
faculty supports open and professional behavior (high collegial relations) among teachers. Teachers know each other well and typically are close personal friends (high intimacy). They cooperate and are committed to teaching and their job (low disengagement). In brief, the behavior of both the principal and teachers is genuine and open.

- Engaged Climate. The engaged climate is marked, on one hand, by ineffective attempts of the principal to lead, and on the other hand, by high professional performance of the teachers. The principal is rigid and authoritarian (high directiveness) and respects neither the professional expertise nor personal needs of the faculty (low supportiveness). In addition, the principal is seen as burdening faculty with unnecessary busy work (high restrictiveness). Surprisingly, however, the teachers simply ignore the principal’s unsuccessful attempts to control, and conduct themselves as productive professionals. They respect and support each other, are proud of their school, and enjoy their work (high collegiality). They not only respect each other’s professional competence but they like each other as friends (high intimacy). The teachers come together as a cooperative unit engaged and committed to the teaching-learning task (high engagement). In brief, the teachers are productive in spite of weak principal leadership; the faculty is cohesively committed, supportive, and engaged.

- Disengaged climate. The disengaged climate stands in stark contrast to the engaged climate. The principal’s leadership behavior is strong, supportive, and concerned. The principal listens and is open to teachers’ views (high
supportiveness); gives teachers the freedom to act on the basis of their professional knowledge (low directiveness); and relieves teachers of most of the burdens of paperwork and bureaucratic trivia (low restrictiveness). Nevertheless, the faculty reacts badly; teachers are unwilling to accept responsibility. At best, the faculty simply ignores the initiatives of the principal; at worst, the faculty actively works to immobilize and sabotage the principal’s leadership attempts. Teachers not only dislike the principal but also do not especially like each other as friends (low intimacy) or respect each other as colleagues (low collegiality). The faculty clearly is disengaged from their work. Although the principal is supportive, flexible, and non-controlling (i.e., open), the faculty is divisive, intolerant, and uncommitted (i.e., closed).

- Closed climate. The closed climate is the antithesis to open. The principal and teachers simply go through the motions, with the principal stressing routine trivia and unnecessary busywork (high restrictiveness) and teachers responding minimally and exhibiting little commitment to the tasks at hand (high disengagement). The principal’s leadership is seen as controlling and rigid (high directiveness) as well as unsympathetic and unresponsive (low supportiveness). These misguided tactics are accompanied not only by frustration and apathy, but also by suspicion and a lack of respect of teachers for the colleagues as well as the administration (low intimacy and non-collegiality). In sum, closed climates have principals who are non-supportive, inflexible, hindering, and controlling, and a faculty that is divisive, apathetic, intolerant, and disingenuous (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991, p. 39-41).
Research indicates climate is determined by perception. According to Cornell (1955), the concept of organizational climate is defined as, “A delicate blending of interpretations or perceptions as social psychologists would call it, by persons in the organizations of their jobs or roles in relationship to others and their interpretations of the roles of others in the organization” (p. 222). In addition, Argryis (1957) described an organization, “All formal and informal activities including the behavior of all participants” (p. 239). Argryis wrote it is important to recognize all individuals view reality through their own set of personality determined glasses. Litwin and Stringer (1968) implied perception is a critical factor of climate and defined it as, “A set of measurable properties of the work environment based on the collective perceptions of the people who live and work in the environment and demonstrated to influence their behavior” (p. 1). Since climate is determined by perception, the OCDQ-RE will be used as the measurement tool for this study.

Summary

Research indicates leadership behavior impacts organizational climate. Researchers have also shown organizational climate impacts organizational success. Specifically, within schools, authors have provided a relationship between the impact of principal communication on school climate and the impact of school climate on student achievement. In this chapter, literature and research were used to provide a background of these relationships. In addition, it is demonstrated that the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) is an appropriate measurement tool for the purpose of this study. The following chapter provides
methodology on this study that explores principal communication and school climate. Subsections include: research questions, sample selection, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and summary.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods triangulation research design was used as a methodology. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained this type of research by stating, “As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies” (p. 5). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained the central premise is the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provide a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Creswell and Plano Clark explained triangulation as being used when a researcher implements the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight.

One data collection instrument was the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). Two interview protocols were used, one for teachers and one for principals. These interview protocols are related to principal communication.

Research Questions

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and two interview protocols related to principal communication were used to answer the following three questions:
1. What are the communication behaviors of principals as perceived by the teachers and principal?

2. What is the climate of schools as perceived by the teachers and principal?

3. What relationship, if any, exists between principal communication behaviors and school climate as perceived by the teachers and principal?

Sample Selection

Research was conducted at three elementary schools each having between 700-1000 students in an urban school district consisting of approximately 300,000 students. Purposeful sampling was used to determine the elementary schools. All three elementary schools shared similar demographic information (total students, ethnicity subgroups, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) subgroup, limited English Language Proficiency (ELP) subgroup, Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) subgroup, transiency rate). Specifically, this included a low socio-economic status (80%-100% Free and Reduced Lunch) and designated Adequate according to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). These criteria were determined using the 2009-2010 School Accountability Summary Report published at www.nevadareportcard.com. The principal of the school also had been serving as principal of that school for a minimum of two years. Creswell (2007) described purposeful sampling by stating, “The inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem” (p. 125).

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was administered during a staff meeting to all teachers present (approximately 25-40) and the principal on day one of data collection. The interview
protocols on principal communication were administered to five teachers and the principal at each school. Therefore, 90 teachers total were sampled for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and 15 teachers and three principals total were sampled for the interview protocols. Two teachers from the primary grades (K-2), two teachers from the intermediate grades (3-5), and one specialist teacher (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, Literacy, Etc.) were sampled from each school. The 15 teachers were chosen from the group of teachers completing the OCDQ-RE. One question asking for volunteers was on the Survey Informed Consent in order to select interview participants. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated, “A common practice among mixed methods researchers is to select the same individuals for both the quantitative and qualitative data collection, so the data can be more easily converged or compared. Selecting different individuals will introduce personal characteristics that might confound the comparison” (p. 119).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted using concurrent timing. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated, “Concurrent timing occurs when the researcher implements both quantitative and qualitative methods during a single phase of the research study. This means that the quantitative and qualitative data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted at (approximately) the same time” (p. 81).
The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was used to determine principal openness, teacher openness, and school climate. Hoy and Tarter (1997) explained the OCDQ-RE is best when administered in a faculty meeting. Hoy and Tarter (1997) stated, “It is probably advisable to have someone other than the principal in charge of collecting data. It is important to create a nonthreatening atmosphere in which teachers give candid responses” (p. 19). The researcher administered the OCDQ-RE in a staff meeting consisting of all teachers present. The principal completed the OCDQ-RE in a one-on-one setting consisting of the principal and the researcher.

**Principal Communication Interview Protocol**

Interviews were conducted to analyze each principal’s communication behaviors. Interviews were conducted with two teachers from the primary grades (K-2), two teachers from the intermediate grades (3-5), and one specialist teacher (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, Literacy, Etc.) at each school. Two similar protocols were used, one for teachers and one for principals. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) described the procedures for interviews by stating, “Conduct a semi-structured interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe the interview” (p. 130). In the interviews, all teachers and principals were asked similar questions with follow up questions as needed. The researcher tape recorded all interviews and took notes as needed. Interviews were conducted starting on the same day the OCDQ-RE was administered and continued into the next days as needed. Interviews took place on site at each individual school campus in a closed-door one-on-one meeting format.
Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis consisted of equal weighting. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) described equal weighting as both the quantitative and qualitative data having equal emphasis within a study. In addition, data sets were merged. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained this type of mixed method data analysis by stating, “The data are merged when the researcher takes the two data sets and explicitly brings them together or integrates them. Researchers can merge the two data sets during the interpretation, by analyzing them separately in a results section and then merging the two sets of results together during the interpretation or discussion phase” (p. 83).

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was analyzed to determine principal openness, teacher openness, and school climate. The responses to the OCDQ-RE vary along a four-point scale defined by the categories, "Rarely occurs", "Sometimes occurs", "Often occurs", and "Very frequently occurs" (1 through 4, respectively). Hoy and Tarter (1997) suggested scoring each item for each respondent, and then an average school score for each item is computed by averaging the item responses across the school, the school is the unit of analysis. For example, if School A has 15 teachers responding to the OCDQ-RE, each individual questionnaire is scored and then an average score for all respondents is computed for each item. Thus the average score for the 15 teachers is calculated for Item 1, Item 2, and so on. The average school scores for the items defining each subtest are added to yield school subtest scores. The six subtest scores represent the climate profile for the school.

Hoy and Tarter (1997) shared the following steps needed to score the OCDQ-RE:
Step 1: Score each item for each teacher with the appropriate number (1, 2, 3, or 4). Be sure to reverse score items 6, 31, and 37.

Step 2: Calculate an average school score for each item. In the example above, one would add all 15 scores on each item and then divide by 15. Round the scores to the nearest hundredth. This score represents the average school item score. You should have 42 average school item scores before proceeding.

Step 3: Sum the average school item scores as follows:

Supportive Behavior (S)=4+9+15+16+22+23+28+29+42
Directive Behavior (D)=5+10+17+24+30+34+35+39+41
Restrictive Behavior (R)=11+18+25+31+36
Collegial Behavior (C)=1+6+12+19+26+32+37+40
Intimate Behavior (Int)=2+7+13+20+27+33+38
Disengaged Behavior (Dis)=3+8+14+21

These six scores represent the climate profile of the school (Hoy & Tarter, p. 22).

Table 2.

OCDQ-RE Mean and Standard Deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
<th>Std. Deviation (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Behavior (S)</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>04.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive Behavior (Dir)</td>
<td>19.34</td>
<td>03.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Behavior (R)</td>
<td>12.98</td>
<td>01.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial Behavior (C)</td>
<td>23.11</td>
<td>02.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Behavior (Int)</td>
<td>17.23</td>
<td>02.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged Behavior (Dis)</td>
<td>06.98</td>
<td>01.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hoy and Tarter (1997) stated, “You may wish to compare your school profile with other schools. In doing so, we recommend that you convert each school’s score to a standardized score. The current database on elementary schools is drawn from a large diverse sample of schools in New Jersey” (p. 22-23). The average scores and standard deviations for each climate dimension are summarized in Table 2.

Hoy and Tarter (1997) listed the steps for computing standardized scores for the OCDQ-RE:

Step 1: Convert the school subtest scores to standardized scores with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100, which we call SdS scores. Use the following formulas: SdS for S=100 X (S-23.34)/4.85+500. First, compute the difference between your school score on S and the mean of 23.34 for the normative sample (S-23.34). Then multiply the difference by 100 [100 X (S-23.34)]. Next, divide the product by standard deviation of the normative sample (4.85). Then add 500 to the result. You have computed a standardized score (SdS) for the supportive behavior subscale (S).

Step 2: Repeat the process for each dimension as follows:

SdS for D=100 X (D-19.34)/3.20+500
SdS for R=100 X (R-12.98)/1.55+500
SdS for C=100 X (C-23.11)/2.69+500
SdS for Int=100 X (Int-17.23)/2.14+500
SdS for Dis=100 X (Dis-6.98)/1.26+500

Hoy and Tarter (1997) stated, “You have standardized your school scores against the normative data provided in the New Jersey sample. For example, if your school score is 600 on supportive behavior, it is one standard deviation above the average score on
supportive behavior of all schools in the sample; that is, the principal is more supportive than 84% of the other principals. A score of 300 represents a school that is two standard deviations below the mean on the subtest. You may recognize this system as the one used in reporting individual scores on the SAT, CEEB, and GRE” (p. 25). The range of these scores is presented below:

If the score is 200, it is lower than 99% of the schools.
If the score is 300, it is lower than 97% of the schools.
If the score is 400, it is lower than 84% of the schools.
If the score is 500, it is average.
If the score is 600, it is higher than 84% of the schools.
If the score is 700, it is higher than 97% of the schools.
If the score is 800, it is higher than 99% of the schools.

Hoy and Tarter (1997) stated there are two other scores that can be easily computed and are usually of interest to teachers and principals. Recall that two openness dimensions were determined in the second-order factor analysis of the OCDQ-RE. Accordingly, the two openness measures can be computed as follows:

Principal Openness = \((SdS for S)+(1000-SdS for D)+(1000-SdS for R)) / 3

Teacher Openness = \((SdS for C)+(SdS for Int)+(1000-SdS for Dis)) / 3

These openness indices are interpreted the same way as the subtest scores. That is, the mean of the "Average" school is 500. Thus, a score of 650 on teacher openness represents a highly open faculty. We have changed the numbers into categories ranging from high to low by using the conversion chart in Table 3.

Results for each school will be displayed on the graphic organizer shown in Figure 1.
Table 3.

*Openness indices conversion table*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Score range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Above 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>551-600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>525-550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Above Average</td>
<td>511-524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>490-510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Below Average</td>
<td>476-489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>450-475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>400-449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Below 400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal Openness

Teacher Openness

- Open
- Disengaged

Engaged
- Closed

Principal Behavior:  
- Supportive Behavior
- Directive Behavior*
- Restrictive Behavior*
- Openness of Principal Behavior:

Teacher Behavior:  
- Collegial Behavior
- Intimate Behavior
- Disengaged Behavior*
- Openness of Teacher Behavior:

*Reverse Scored in Composites

Figure 1. OCDQ-RE Openness Index Example
A case analysis was conducted using transcribed interviews to develop domains and taxonomies based on emerging themes. Creswell (2007) described this type of data analysis by stating, “Data analysts go through the data (e.g., interview transcriptions) and highlight ‘significant statements,’ sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Next, the researcher develops clusters of meaning from these significant statements and themes” (p. 61). These emerging themes were called domains. Within each domain, subgroups or taxonomies were developed based upon emerging themes within each domain. This process was repeated for three themes of interview questions. These themes were communication channels/messages, communication strengths/challenges, and communication impact. Results for each school were displayed on the graphic organizer shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Interview Protocol Domains/Taxonomies Example
Cross Case Analysis-Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)/Principal Communication Interview Protocol

Cross Case Analysis consisted of displaying the results of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and interview protocol domains and taxonomies on a series of matrices. One matrix was made for each school and each theme of interview protocol questions.

These matrices were used to analyze similarities and differences within each school, themes for interview protocol questions, and Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Openness Score:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Openness Score:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Index:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomy 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomy 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomy 3:</td>
</tr>
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<td>Supporting Quotes:</td>
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<td>Domain 2:</td>
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<td>Supporting Quotes:</td>
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<td>Taxonomy 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomy 3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. OCDQ-RE/Interview Question Matrix Example
Summary

Mixed methods triangulation research design using the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and an interview protocol for teachers and principals was used to explore the relationship between principal communication and school climate. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated, “The most common and well-known approach to mixed methods is Triangulation Design” (p. 62). Sampling included 90 teachers for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and 15 teachers and three principals for the interview protocols. Data analysis consisted of a statistical analysis of the OCDQ-RE and domain and taxonomy analysis of the interview protocols. The following chapter provides findings of the study. Subsections include: demographic information, results by school and themes of interview protocol questions, results by research question, and summary.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore principal communication and school climate using both quantitative and qualitative data. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained this type of research by stating, “Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (p. 5). This exploration was based on the following research questions:

1. What are the communication behaviors of principals as perceived by the teachers and principal?
2. What is the climate of schools as perceived by the teachers and principal?
3. What relationship, if any, exists between principal communication behaviors and school climate as perceived by the teachers and principal?

Data collection involved three elementary schools each having between 700-1000 students in an urban school district consisting of approximately 300,000 students. The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and interview protocols on principal communication were administered to principals and teachers.

Findings are displayed by school. Each school has a figure displaying results for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), figures displaying the domains and taxonomies for themes based on interview protocol questions, and a matrix displaying both the results for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and the domains and
Result - School A

The 2009-2010 School Accountability Summary Report indicated School A had 719 students, consisting of 369 male, 350 female, 38 Asian/Pacific Islander, 506 Hispanic, 94 Black/African American, 77 White, 77 Students with Disabilities (IEP), 406 Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), 582 Students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL), and 37.1% Transiency Rate. In addition, School A was designated Adequate according to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001).

Demographic Information

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was administered to one principal and 38 teachers from School A. The interview protocol was administered at School A with one principal, one kindergarten teacher, one second grade teacher, two third grade teachers, and one music specialist teacher.

The principal of School A taught between 16-20 years, has been a principal between 0-5 years, has been at her current school for 6-10 years, is female, and is between 51-60 years old.

The teaching staff of School A consisted of five (13.16%) kindergarten teachers, five (13.16%) first grade teachers, four (10.53%) second grade teachers, three (7.89%) third grade teachers, three (7.89%) fourth grade teachers, three (7.89%) fifth grade teachers, and 15 (39.47%) specialist (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, Literacy, Etc.)
teachers. School A teachers consisted of five (13.16%) teachers who have been teaching for 0-5 years, 11 (28.95%) teachers who have been teaching for 6-10 years, 11 (28.95%) teachers who have been teaching for 11-15 years, six (15.79%) teachers who have been teaching for 16-20 years, one (2.63%) teacher who has been teaching for 21-25 years, one (2.63%) teacher who has been teaching for 26-30 years, and three (7.89%) teachers who have been teaching for 31 or more years. School A teachers consisted of 19 (50%) teachers who have been at School A for 0-5 years, 11 (28.95%) teachers who have been at School A for 6-10 years, five (13.16%) teachers who have been at School A for 11-15 years, three (7.89%) teachers who have been at School A for 16-20 years, zero (0%) teachers who have been at School A for 21-25 years, zero (0%) teachers have been at School A for 26-30 years, and zero (0%) teachers have been at School A for 31 or more years. School A teachers consisted of seven (18.42%) male and 31 (81.58%) female teachers. School A teachers consisted of seven (18.42%) teachers who are 20-30 years old, 12 (31.58%) teachers who are 31-40 years old, 10 (26.32%) teachers who are 41-50 years old, eight (21.05%) teachers who are 51-60 years old, and one (2.36%) teacher who is 61 years old or older.

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools

The results from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) for School A are displayed in Figure 4. The School A principal openness score is 485, which is considered slightly below average. This score is based on a supportive behavior score of 511, a directive behavior score of 504, and a restrictive behavior score of 553. The School A teacher openness score is 540, which is considered above average. This score is based on a collegial behavior score of 539, an
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Openness</th>
<th>Engaged</th>
<th>Closed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged</td>
<td>X</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher Openness</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Behavior:</th>
<th>Supportive Behavior</th>
<th>511 (Slightly above average)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directive Behavior*</td>
<td>504 (Average)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Restrictive Behavior*</td>
<td>553 (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness of Principal Behavior:</td>
<td>485 (Slightly below average)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Behavior:</th>
<th>Collegial Behavior</th>
<th>539 (Above average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intimate Behavior</td>
<td>639 (Very High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disengaged Behavior*</td>
<td>557 (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness of Teacher Behavior:</td>
<td>540 (Above average)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reverse Scored in Composites

Figure 4. School A-OCDQ-RE Openness Index

A principal and five teacher interviews were analyzed by themes of interview questions in order to determine emerging themes. These themes were used to create domains and taxonomies.

intimate behavior score of 639, and a disengaged behavior score of 557. These scores revealed School A has an engaged climate on the openness index.

Interview Protocol

School A interview results are displayed on Figures 5, 6, and 7. One principal and five teacher interviews were analyzed by themes of interview questions in order to
Figure 5 displays School A results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Channels/Messages. The Q-Sort was utilized to determine the taxonomies for the Channel effectiveness domain. Two other interview questions were utilized to determine the Face-to-face and Non face-to-face domains. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers on the Q-Sort: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.

Figure 6 displays School A results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Strengths/Challenges. Principal and teacher interviews were utilized in combination to determine domains and taxonomies.
Figure 6. School A – Interview Protocol-Communication Strengths/Challenges

Figure 7. School A – Interview Protocol-Communication Impact

Figure 7 displays School A results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Impact. Principal and teacher interviews were utilized in combination to determine the domain and taxonomies.
School A results for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and the interview protocols on principal communication are displayed on Figures 8, 9, and 10. Figures display the principal openness score, teacher openness score, climate index, the theme of interview questions being analyzed, domains for each theme of interview questions, taxonomies for each of the domains, and supporting quotes for each of the taxonomies in two of the three matrices.

Figure 8 displays School A results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Channels/Messages. The Q-Sort was utilized to determine the taxonomies for the Channel effectiveness domain. Two other interview questions were utilized to determine the Face-to-face and Non face-to-face domains. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers on the Q-Sort: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.

Figure 9 displays School A results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Strengths/Challenges. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.

Figure 10 displays School A results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Impact. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)
Principal Openness Score: 485
Teacher Openness Score: 540
Climate Index: Engaged

Teacher Questions:
Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.
What subjects does your principal generally communicate through the following channels? For example, what types of information does your principal communicate during staff meetings?
To what extent does your principal get his/her message communicated effectively through the channels above?

Principal Questions:
Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.
What subjects do you generally communicate through the following channels? For example, what types of information do you communicate during staff meetings?
To what extent do you feel you get your message communicated effectively through the channels above?

Domain 1: Channel effectiveness
Taxonomy 1: Most effective-typed memo (P), small informal meetings (PT), individual informal meetings (IT)/(IT), staff meetings (IT)/(ST)
Taxonomy 2: Least effective-e-mail (P), text messages (PT)/(IT), intercom (PT)/(ST), voicemail (IT)

Domain 2: Face-to-face
Taxonomy 1: Staff meetings-district information, scheduling, assessment, data, personal topics, negative personnel topics, professional development, curriculum, positive personnel topics
Taxonomy 2: Small group-student concerns, curriculum, scheduling, assessment, positive personal, negative personal information
Taxonomy 3: One on one-observation/evaluation discussion, assessment, student information, parent information, personal information, socializing

Domain 3: Non face-to-face
Taxonomy 1: E-mail-celebrations, grading information, policies, scheduling, student information, procedures, professional development opportunities
Taxonomy 2: Typed-memo-positive recognition, report card/lesson plan review
Taxonomy 3: Telephone-absences

Figure 8. School A – OCDQ-RE/Communication Channels/Messages Matrix
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)
Principal Openness Score: 485
Teacher Openness Score: 540
Climate Index: Engaged

Teacher Questions 2:
What do you see as your principal’s strengths as a communicator?
What do you see as your principal’s biggest challenges as a communicator?
Principal Questions:
What do you see as your strengths as a communicator?
What do you see as your biggest challenges as a communicator?

Domain 1: Strengths

Taxonomy 1: E-mail use
Supporting Quotes: “Her way of doing things through e-mail. She is fairly apprised at that” (PT). “She does a lot of e-mail so there is a lot of e-mail through our icon” (IT). “I think probably the main strength would be she uses e-mail frequently and we all have to read our e-mails twice a day so she can be sure the information gets through” (PT).

Taxonomy 2: Easy to talk to
Supporting Quotes: “She is easy to talk with. I don’t think there is any issues I can think of that I couldn’t go to her. She always has an open door” (ST).

Taxonomy 3: Listening
Supporting Quotes: “Probably listening” (P).

Taxonomy 4: One on one communicator
Supporting Quotes: “She has strengths as a communicator when you are one on one discussing something with her. She has strengths letting you know the next step” (IT).

Domain 2: Challenges

Taxonomy 1: Keeping staff happy
Supporting Quotes: “Keeping the staff happy is a challenge” (PT).

Taxonomy 2: Not open to staff suggestions/input
Supporting Quotes: “The fact that she will ask for suggestions and then won’t be receptive to what is being said back, she is not open to the suggestions if they are not answers she is looking for” (IT). “Her inability to hear what she doesn’t want to hear. Sometimes it doesn’t get through, she sort of filters out stuff” (IT).

Taxonomy 3: Message received by all
Supporting Quotes: “Making sure that everybody gets the message. That is really hard on e-mail, you don’t get tone, you don’t get body language, none of that is there” (P).

Figure 9. School A – OCDQ-RE/Communication Strengths/Challenges Matrix
| Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)  
Principal Openness Score: 485  
Teacher Openness Score: 540  
Climate Index: Engaged |
|---|

**Teacher Questions:**
- In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
- In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
- In what ways do you think your principal’s communication affects the relationships he/she has with you and other teachers?

**Principal Questions:**
- In what ways does your communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
- In what ways does your communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
- In what ways do you think your communication affects the relationships you have with teachers?

**Domain 1: Climate-Relationships**

**Taxonomy 1: Not open to staff suggestions/input**

Supporting Quotes: “When people go to her with a concern and she pushes her own agenda, you get to the point you don’t want to communicate because you are so sick of being shut down. If you are not communicating to open ears and they are really closed, you can’t go further without open lines of communication. I feel like staff aren’t willing to speak up for fear of consequences by watching it happen to others or having remarks and things come back to them. Some people don’t mind and others fear retaliation” (IT). “The communication affects the moral, when the staff feels like they can’t be heard and see changes based on what they have suggested” (IT).

**Taxonomy 2: Treats everyone like professionals**

Supporting Quotes: “She treats everybody like a professional” (ST).

**Taxonomy 3: Teachers not happy/frustrated**

Supporting Quotes: “Many teachers are upset and we are not happy. It seems like there is a lack of support.” “Can increase the frustration level, get a little burnt out” (PT).

**Taxonomy 4: Inconsistent criticism**

Supporting Quotes: “When she criticizes one teacher we all feel it. If she has a one on one with a teacher and she appears to be being unfair to that one teacher, the word gets out and we all think, oh, is that coming to me next” (IT)? “I feel the criticism she makes to another teacher could have applied to me, it was something I was doing as well. So why did the other teacher get criticized and not me. It should have come to me as well” (IT).

**Taxonomy 5: Not enough time**

Supporting Quotes: “I think sometimes they think there is not enough time with the principal and they need it. It is another stressor” (P).

**Taxonomy 6: Lack of explanation with decisions**

Supporting Quotes: “The decision was never explained. Lots of her decisions affect the way I feel. You don’t feel like a valued colleague” (PT).

**Taxonomy 7: Lack of trust**

Supporting Quotes: “I feel like there is less trust, you don’t know what you can go to her with. You don’t know what you can tell her. There is definitely a lack of trust, a certain sense of what did I do wrong, why is it this way” (PT).

*Figure 10. School A – OCDQ-RE/Communication Impact Matrix*
Result – School B

The 2009-2010 School Accountability Summary Report indicated School B had 937 students, consisting of 486 male, 451 female, 22 Asian/Pacific Islander, 823 Hispanic, 58 Black/African American, 28 White, 46 Students with Disabilities (IEP), 598 Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), 917 Students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL), and 37.7% Transiency Rate. In addition, School B was designated Adequate according to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001).

Demographic Information

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was administered with one principal and 26 teachers from School B. The interview protocol was administered at School B with one principal, two second grade teachers, two fifth grade teachers, and one music specialist teacher.

The principal of School B taught between 6-10 years, has been a principal between 6-10 years, has been at her current school for 6-10 years, is female, and is between 41-50 years old.

The teaching staff of School B consisted of two (7.69%) kindergarten teachers, five (19.23%) first grade teachers, five (19.23%) second grade teachers, zero (0%) third grade teachers, three (11.54%) fourth grade teachers, five (19.23%) fifth grade teachers, and six (23.08%) specialist (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, Literacy, Etc.) teachers.

School B teachers consisted of 16 (61.54%) teachers who have been teaching for 0-5 years, three (11.54%) teachers who have been teaching for 6-10 years, two (7.69%) teachers who have been teaching for 11-15 years, zero (0%) teachers who have been teaching for 16-20 years, three (11.54%) teachers who have been teaching for 21-25
years, two (7.69%) teachers who have been teaching for 26-30 years, and zero (0%) teachers who have been teaching for 31 or more years. School B teachers consisted of 18 (69.23%) teachers who have been at School B for 0-5 years, five (19.23%) teachers who have been at School B for 6-10 years, two (7.69%) teachers who have been at School B for 11-15 years, zero (0%) teachers who have been at School B for 16-20 years, zero (0%) teachers who have been at School B for 21-25 years, one (3.85%) teacher who has been at School B for 26-30 years, and zero (0%) teachers who have been at School B for 31 or more years. School B teachers consisted of four (15.38%) male and 22 (84.62%) female teachers. School B teachers consisted of 15 (57.69%) teachers who are 20-30 years old, six (23.08%) teachers who are 31-40 years old, three (11.54%) teachers who are 41-50 years old, one (3.85%) teacher who is 51-60 years old, and one (3.85%) teacher who is 61 years old or older.

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools

The results from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) for School B are displayed in Figure 11. The School B principal openness score is 539, which is considered above average. This score is based on a supportive behavior score of 508, a directive behavior score of 594, and a restrictive behavior score of 298. The School B teacher openness score is 513, which is considered slightly above average. This score is based on a collegial behavior score of 506, an intimate behavior score of 600, and a disengaged behavior score of 566. These scores revealed School B has an open climate on the openness index.
### Principal Openness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Openness</th>
<th>Principal Openness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Disengaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Principal Behavior:
- Supportive Behavior: 508 (Average)
- Directive Behavior*: 594 (High)
- Restrictive Behavior*: 298 (Very low)
- Openness of Principal Behavior: 539 (Above average)

#### Teacher Behavior:
- Collegial Behavior: 506 (Average)
- Intimate Behavior: 600 (High)
- Disengaged Behavior*: 566 (High)
- Openness of Teacher Behavior: 513 (Slightly above average)

*Reverse Scored in Composites

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**Figure 11.** School B – OCDQ-RE Openness Index

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**Interview Protocol**

School B interview results are displayed on Figures 12, 13, and 14. One principal and five teacher interviews were analyzed by themes of interview questions in order to determine emerging themes. These themes were used to create domains and taxonomies.
Figure 12 displays School B results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Channels/Messages. The Q-Sort was utilized to determine the taxonomies for the Channel effectiveness domain. Two other interview questions were utilized to determine the Face-to-face and Non face-to-face domains. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers on the Q-Sort: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.

Figure 13 displays School B results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Strengths/Challenges. Principal and teacher interviews were utilized in combination to determine domains and taxonomies.

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Figure 13. School B – Interview Protocol-Communication Strengths/Challenges

Figure 14. School B – Interview Protocol-Communication Impact
Figure 14 displays School B results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Impact. Principal and teacher interviews were utilized in combination to determine the domain and taxonomies.

**Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools/Interview Protocol**

School B results for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and the interview protocols on principal communication are displayed on Figures 15, 16, and 17. Figures display the principal openness score, teacher openness score, climate index, the theme of interview questions being analyzed, domains for each theme of interview questions, taxonomies for each of the domains, and supporting quotes for each of the taxonomies in two of the three matrices.

Figure 15 displays School B results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Channels/Messages. The Q-Sort was utilized to determine the taxonomies for the Channel effectiveness domain. Two other interview questions were utilized to determine the Face-to-face and Non face-to-face domains. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers on the Q-Sort: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.

Figure 16 displays School B results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Strengths/Challenges. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)
Principal Openness Score: 539
Teacher Openness Score: 513
Climate Index: Open

Teacher Questions:
Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.
What subjects does your principal generally communicate through the following channels? For example, what types of information does your principal communicate during staff meetings?
To what extent does your principal get his/her message communicated effectively through the channels above?

Principal Questions:
Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.
What subjects do you generally communicate through the following channels? For example, what types of information do you communicate during staff meetings?
To what extent do you feel you get your message communicated effectively through the channels above?

Domain 1: Channel effectiveness
Taxonomy 1: Most effective-small formal meetings (P), individual formal meetings (PT)/(IT), staff meetings (PT), e-mail (IT), individual informal meetings (ST)
Taxonomy 2: Least effective-voicemail (P), typed-memo (PT), text messages (PT), intercom (IT)/(IT), staff meetings (ST)

Domain 2: Face-to-face
Taxonomy 1: Staff meetings-curriculum, professional development, upcoming events, personal praise, socializing, positive/negative student information, assessment, positive/negative personnel information, positive parent information, procedures
Taxonomy 2: Small group-grade level issues, professional development, teaching improvement support, curriculum, assessment, positive/negative student/parent information, observation feedback, interviewing teachers
Taxonomy 3: One on one-expectations, support, evaluations, teacher development

Domain 3: Non face-to-face
Taxonomy 1: E-mail-scheduling, district information, tutoring opportunities, negative feedback
Taxonomy 2: Typed-memo-positive letter to staff
Taxonomy 3: Hand-written-thank you note, great job note after observation, observation feedback

Figure 15. School B – OCDQ-RE/Communication Channels/Messages Matrix
**Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)**

Principal Openness Score: 539  
Teacher Openness Score: 513  
Climate Index: Open

**Teacher Questions 2:**
- What do you see as your principal’s strengths as a communicator?  
- What do you see as your principal’s biggest challenges as a communicator?

**Principal Questions:**
- What do you see as your strengths as a communicator?  
- What do you see as your biggest challenges as a communicator?

**Domain 1: Strengths**

**Taxonomy 1: Expectations clear/positive/direct/straight to the point**

Supporting Quotes: “It is important to tell teachers why you are doing what you are doing” (P). “I don’t believe in just dictating and not explaining why” (P). “She knows what her expectations are and she is able to voice those in a positive way” (PT). “She is direct in what she wants, she is not around the bush, she tells it how it is and I like that” (PT). “She is always clear in her expectations. When she tells us the expectation, she is very clear in what she wants” (IT). “She is pretty straight to the point with everything she says, she doesn’t beat around the bush. You pretty much know what she wants pretty clear” (IT).

**Taxonomy 2: Presence in staff meetings**

Supporting Quotes: “I think she definitely commands attention in staff meetings. I have been in other places where everyone is not paying attention. Everyone listens when she communicates” (ST).

**Taxonomy 3: Problems handled promptly/face-to-face**

Supporting Quotes: “If problems arise, she has us come in her office and talk for a little bit” (ST).

**Domain 2: Challenges**

**Taxonomy 1: Time/availability**

Supporting Quotes: “I am not able to attend all meetings for questions they may have” (P).

**Taxonomy 2: Unapproachable/intimidating**

Supporting Quotes: “She is maybe a bit unapproachable, intimidating. Some people don’t approach her because of that” (IT).

**Taxonomy 3: Communicating information/deadlines on time**

Supporting Quotes: “A lot of times those expectations come late or they don’t come through good channels. A lot of times things are communicated at PLC (Professional Learning Community Meetings) and our department chair is not the best at getting that information to us. So we don’t know why things are happening or not until it is too late” (IT).

**Taxonomy 4: Staying on topic**

Supporting Quotes: “I would say with staff meetings, and maybe it is because they are spur of the moment, we all ramble sometimes, but I sometimes actually miss what we are talking about” (ST).

*Figure 16. School B – OCDQ-RE/Communication Strengths/Challenges Matrix*
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)
Principal Openness Score: 539
Teacher Openness Score: 513
Climate Index: Open

Teacher Questions:
In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
In what ways do you think your principal’s communication affects the relationships he/she has with you and other teachers?

Principal Questions:
In what ways does your communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
In what ways does your communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
In what ways do you think your communication affects the relationships you have with teachers?

Domain 1: Climate-Relationships

Taxonomy 1: Consistency
Supporting Quotes: “I have been at schools where no one knows what is going on and I like how she addresses, I want to see this on your wall with everybody, very consistent” (PT).

Taxonomy 2: Creates team/staff alignment
Supporting Quotes: “I think by her having her staff meetings and actually being there, it makes everybody on the same team, the staff is team oriented” (PT). “The way she interacts with everyone really sets the mood for the day” (PT). “I think for the most part, she is good at letting us know what is going on and she is very proud of her staff” (IT).

Taxonomy 3: Focuses on next step/future
Supporting Quotes: “If there is a concern she has, we know we need to fix that quickly to get back on track. She doesn’t make us feel bad about it, she says, here is where we are, lets boost it up. She doesn’t dwell on the past” (PT).

Taxonomy 4: Looking for approval/respected/honest
Supporting Quotes: “When I receive positives I feel like the best teacher in the world. It means a lot” (PT). “We are all looking for her approval” (ST). “The way she communicates goes hand in hand with the level of respect people have” (ST). “She is always honest” (PT).

Figure 17. School B – OCDQ-RE/Communication Impact Matrix

Figure 17 displays School B results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Impact. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.
Results - School C

The 2009-2010 School Accountability Summary Report indicated School C had 723 students, consisting of 395 male, 328 female, 37 Asian/Pacific Islander, 526 Hispanic, 54 Black/African American, 103 White, 70 Students with Disabilities (IEP), 336 Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), 597 Students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL), and 34.7% Transiency Rate. In addition, School C was designated Adequate according to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001).

Demographic Information

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) was administered with one principal and 26 teachers from School C. The interview protocol was administered at School C with one principal, two second grade teachers, one third grade teacher, one fourth grade teacher, and one library specialist teacher.

The principal of School C taught between 16-20 years, has been a principal between 0-5 years, has been at her current school for 6-10 years, is female, and is between 51-60 years old.

The teaching staff of School C consisted of five (19.23%) kindergarten teachers, five (19.23%) first grade teachers, one (3.85%) second grade teacher, two (7.69%) third grade teachers, four (15.38%) fourth grade teachers, one (3.85%) fifth grade teacher, and eight (30.77%) specialist (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, Literacy, Etc.) teachers. School C teachers consisted of five (19.23%) teachers who have been teaching for 0-5 years, six (23.08%) teachers who have been teaching for 6-10 years, nine (34.62%) teachers who have been teaching for 11-15 years, two (7.69%) teachers who have been
teaching for 16-20 years, four (15.38%) teachers who have been teaching for 21-25 years, zero (0%) teachers who have been teaching for 26-30 years, and zero (0%) teachers who have been teaching for 31 or more years. School C teachers consisted of 16 (61.54%) teachers who have been at School C for 0-5 years, eight (30.77%) teachers who have been at School C for 6-10 years, one (3.85%) teacher who has been at School C for 11-15 years, one (3.85%) teacher who has been at School C for 16-20 years, zero (0%) teachers who have been at School C for 21-25 years, zero (0%) teachers who have been at School C for 26-30 years, and zero (0%) teachers who have been at School C for 31 or more years. School C teachers consisted of two (7.69%) male and 24 (92.31%) female teachers. School C teachers consisted of three (11.54%) teachers who are 20-30 years old, 12 (46.15%) teachers who are 31-40 years old, five (19.23%) teachers who are 41-50 years old, five (19.23%) teachers who are 51-60 years old, and one (3.85%) teacher who is 61 years old or older.

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools

The results from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) for School C are displayed in Figure 18. The School C principal openness score is 591, which is considered high. This score is based on a supportive behavior score of 640, a directive behavior score of 479, and a restrictive behavior score of 389. The School C teacher openness score is 545, which is considered above average. This score is based on a collegial behavior score of 555, an intimate behavior score of 559, and a disengaged behavior score of 477. These scores revealed School C has an open climate on the openness index.
**Interview Protocol**

School C interview results are displayed on Figures 19, 20, and 21. One principal and five teacher interviews were analyzed by themes of interview question in order to determine emerging themes. These themes were used to create domains and taxonomies.

Figure 19 displays School A results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Channels/Messages. The Q-Sort was utilized to determine the

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**Figure 18.** School C – OCDQ-RE Openness Index

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<th>Principal Behavior:</th>
<th>Supportive Behavior</th>
<th>640 (High)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directive Behavior*</td>
<td>479 (Slightly below average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restrictive Behavior*</td>
<td>389 (Very low)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness of Principal Behavior:</td>
<td>591 (High)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Behavior:</th>
<th>Collegial Behavior</th>
<th>555 (High)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intimate Behavior</td>
<td>559 (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged Behavior*</td>
<td>477 (Slightly below average)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness of Teacher Behavior:</td>
<td>545 (Above average)</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

*Reverse Scored in Composites*
Figure 19. School C – Interview Protocol-Communication Channels/Messages

Figure 20. School C – Interview Protocol-Communication Strengths/Challenges
taxonomies for the Channel effectiveness domain. Two other interview questions were utilized to determine the Face-to-face and Non face-to-face domains. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers on the Q-Sort: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.

Figure 20 displays School A results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Strengths/Challenges. Principal and teacher interviews were utilized in combination to determine domains and taxonomies.

Figure 21 displays School A results for the interview protocol theme of Communication Impact. Principal and teacher interviews were utilized in combination to determine the domain and taxonomies.
School C results for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and the interview protocols on principal communication are displayed on Figures 22, 23, and 24. Figures display the principal openness score, teacher openness score, climate index, the theme of interview questions being analyzed, domains for each theme of interview questions, taxonomies for each of the domains, and supporting quotes for each of the taxonomies in two of the three matrices.

Figure 22 displays School C results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Channels/Messages. The Q-Sort was utilized to determine the taxonomies for the Channel effectiveness domain. Two other interview questions were utilized to determine the Face-to-face and Non face-to-face domains. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers on the Q-Sort: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.

Figure 23 displays School C results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Strengths/Challenges. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.
Teacher Questions:
Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.
What subjects does your principal generally communicate through the following channels? For example, what types of information does your principal communicate during staff meetings?
To what extent does your principal get his/her message communicated effectively through the channels above?

Principal Questions:
Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.
What subjects do you generally communicate through the following channels? For example, what types of information do you communicate during staff meetings?
To what extent do you feel you get your message communicated effectively through the channels above?

Domain 1: Channel effectiveness
Taxonomy 1: Most effective-staff meetings (P), individual informal meetings (PT), e-mail (PT)/(IT)/(IT)/(IT)/(ST)
Taxonomy 2: Least effective-intercom (P)/(PT)/(PT), text messages (IT), individual formal meetings (IT), phone (ST)

Domain 2: Face-to-face
Taxonomy 1: Staff meetings-district information, scheduling, professional responsibilities, curriculum, goals, positive feedback, negative feedback, data analysis, assessment, professional development, student information, school wide changes, student achievement
Taxonomy 2: Small group-assessment, curriculum, data analysis, staff concerns, student progress, budget
Taxonomy 3: One on one-personal issues, observation feedback, evaluations, retention, attendance issues, student concerns, professional development, scheduling

Domain 3: Non face-to-face
Taxonomy 1: E-mail-scheduling, grade level information, items to turn in, permission to do things, professional development opportunities, student information, parent information, agendas
Taxonomy 2: Typed-memo-weekly memo, agendas
Taxonomy 3: Hand-written-thank you notes, positive feedback, birthday cards
Taxonomy 4: Text messages-absences, just to say hello
Taxonomy 5: Telephone-out sick, see how she is doing

Figure 22. School C – OCDQ-RE/Communication Channels/Messages Matrix
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)
Principal Openness Score: 591
Teacher Openness Score: 545
Climate Index: Open

Teacher Questions 2:
What do you see as your principal’s strengths as a communicator?
What do you see as your principal’s biggest challenges as a communicator?

Principal Questions:
What do you see as your strengths as a communicator?
What do you see as your biggest challenges as a communicator?

### Domain 1: Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 1: Informal, casual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes: “She comes across in a friendly, informal way so it doesn’t feel like she is attacking you” (PT). “The casual and peer feeling, it doesn’t feel like an authority” (PT).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 2: Open to suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes: “She is always open to hearing suggestions” (PT).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 3: Direct, clear expectations, straightforward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes: “I think she is pretty straightforward. We know what she wants and where she stands on things” (PT). “She is very clear on her expectations” (IT). “She is pretty clear on expectations” (IT).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 4: Explains mindset/thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes: “The fact that she tells us what she is thinking, where she is coming from, the mindset” (PT).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 5: Friendly, approachable, warm, encouraging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes: “She comes across in a friendly, informal way so it doesn’t feel like she is attacking you” (PT). “She is approachable and she will tell you how it is” (IT). “She is very warm and encouraging” (ST).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Domain 2: Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 1: Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes: “Finding time, you can’t be at everything” (P).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 2: Gets off topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Quotes: “Sometimes she gets off topic, but we cause her to get off topic so it is really not her fault” (IT).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 23. School C – OCDQ-RE/Communication Strengths/Challenges Matrix*

Figure 24 displays School C results for the OCDQ-RE and the interview protocol theme of Communication Impact. The following coding was utilized to identify interviewee answers: (P) Principal, (PT) Primary Teacher, (IT) Intermediate Teacher, and (ST) Specialist Teacher.
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)
Principal Openness Score: 591
Teacher Openness Score: 545
Climate Index: Open

Teacher Questions:
In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
In what ways do you think your principal’s communication affects the relationships he/she has with you and other teachers?

Principal Questions:
In what ways does your communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
In what ways does your communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
In what ways do you think your communication affects the relationships you have with teachers?

Domain 1: Climate
Taxonomy 1: Supportive staff
Supporting Quotes: “The staff is very supportive of each other. The camaraderie is surprising” (P).

Taxonomy 2: Willing to listen to concerns/issues/suggestions, willing to help fix problems
Supporting Quotes: “She is willing to listen to your point, consider it, and decide if it is valid and something she wants to do or not” (PT). “The fact that she is so open and we can come to her with our concerns and issues within the grade level helps because everyone knows that they have someone to go to and not going to be told to just deal with it. She will do what she can to help fix the situation” (IT). “I think because she is so open it helps. I think everyone feels like they could go talk to her at anytime” (IT).

Taxonomy 3: Positive, encouraging
Supporting Quotes: “I think it helps us realize that we can be successful and encouraging” (IT). “I think she has a lot of positive relationships” (PT). “I feel motivated when she is the way she is with encouragement” (ST). “The staff is very positive about her” (ST).

Domain 2: Relationships
Taxonomy 1: Treats people like professionals
Supporting Quotes: “I know she treats me like a professional” (PT).

Taxonomy 2: Lets staff know she appreciates them
Supporting Quotes: “She does little things for her staff just to let us know we are appreciated” (PT).

Taxonomy 3: Team feeling
Supporting Quotes: “There is definitely a feel that we are all in this together and we are here to help each other” (PT). “I think you feel like you are part of a team” (IT).

Taxonomy 4: Happy teachers, buy in from teachers
Supporting Quotes: “I am so happy she is my principal. It is a really good relationship. She is our friend but we respect her” (IT). “People are happy with her and we like coming” (IT).

Figure 24. School C – OCDQ-RE/Communication Impact Matrix
Results by Research Question

Three research questions were established for this study. The previously displayed results of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and two interview protocols related to principal communication will be used to answer each research question.

**Research Question 1: What are the communication behaviors of principals as perceived by the teachers and principal?**

Interview protocols revealed the communication behaviors of principals as perceived by the teachers and principal. Specifically, differences were identified in School A, B, and C regarding the channels, messages, strengths, and challenges related to communication.

The School A staff felt memos, individual or small group meetings, and staff meetings were the most effective channels of communication. School B felt individual or small group meetings and e-mail were the most effective channels of communication. School C felt staff meetings, individual informal meetings, and e-mail were the most effective channels of communication.

Regarding the least effective channels of communication, School A chose e-mail, text messages, intercom, and voicemail. School B chose voicemail, memos, text messages, intercom, and staff meetings. School C chose intercom, text messages, individual formal meetings, and the telephone as the least effective channels of communication. This revealed two discrepancies; School A felt memos were one of the most effective forms of communication, while School B felt memos were one of the least effective forms of communication. School B and School C also chose e-mail as one of the most effective...
forms of communication, while School A felt e-mail was one of the least effective forms of communication.

Interview protocols revealed the School A principal communicates a significant number of messages through non face-to-face channels such as e-mail and holds very few staff meetings. The School B principal communicated a significant number of messages through face-to-face channels such as staff meetings, individual meetings, and small group meetings. In addition, the School B principal utilized hand written messages. The School C principal used face-to-face channels as a primary communication method. These included staff meetings and small informal meetings. The School C principal also used hand written messages. These results indicated significant differences between Schools A, B, and C in the use of communication channels. The School A principal utilized non face-to-face communication channels while the School B and C principals utilized face-to-face communication channels as their primary method of communication. The School A principal did not utilize hand written messages and the School B and C principals did use hand written messages as a communication channel.

The School A staff felt one of their principal’s strengths as a communicator was her use of e-mail. One School A primary teacher stated, “I think probably the main strength would be she uses e-mail frequently and we all have to read our e-mails twice a day so she can be sure the information gets through.” The School B staff felt one of their principal’s strengths as a communicator was her ability to be clear, straight to the point, and direct. One School B primary teacher stated, “She is direct in what she wants, she is no around the bush, she tells it how it is and I like that.” The School C staff felt one of their principal’s significant strengths as a communicator was her ability to be direct,
communicate clear expectations, and be straight forward. One School C primary teacher stated, “I think she is pretty straight forward. We know what she wants and where she stands on things.” These results again align the School A principal’s use of non face-to-face communication channels and the use of the School B and School C principals’ use of face-to-face communication channels.

The School A staff felt their principal’s most significant challenge relating to communication was her not being willing to listen to suggestions. One School A intermediate teacher stated, “The fact that she will ask for suggestions and then won’t be receptive to what is being said back, she is not open to suggestions if they are not answers she is looking for.” The School B staff felt their principal’s most significant challenge was her availability to attend all meetings. The School B principal stated, “I am not able to attend all meetings for questions they may have.” The School C staff felt their principal’s most significant challenge was time to attend all meetings and getting off topic. The School C principal stated, “Finding time, you can’t be at everything.”

Research Question 2: What is the climate of schools as perceived by the teachers and principal?

The Organizational Climate Description for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) revealed the climate of schools as perceived by the teachers and principal. Specifically, differences were identified in School A, B, and C climates.

School A had a climate index of engaged. This index is made up of a principal behavior score of 485, which is considered slightly below average, and a teacher behavior score of 540, which is considered above average. Hoy and Tarter (1997) defined an engaged climate as “The engaged climate is marked, on one hand, by ineffective attempts
of the principal to lead, and on the other hand, by high professional performance of the teachers. The principal is rigid and authoritarian (high directiveness) and respects neither the professional expertise nor personal needs of the faculty (low supportiveness). In addition, the principal is seen as burdening faculty with unnecessary busy work (high restrictiveness). Surprisingly, however, the teachers simply ignore the principal’s unsuccessful attempts to control, and conduct themselves as productive professionals. They respect and support each other, are proud of their school, and enjoy their work (high collegiality). They not only respect each other’s professional competence but they like each other as friends (high intimacy). The teachers come together as a cooperative unit engaged and committed to the teaching-learning task (high engagement). In brief, the teachers are productive in spite of weak principal leadership; the faculty is cohesively committed, supportive, and engaged” (p. 18). It should be noted that discrepancies exist between Hoy and Tarter’s definition of an engaged school climate and School A’s scores. For example, Hoy and Tarter described an engaged climate as having a low supportive behavior score and School A had a slightly above average supportive behavior score. In addition, Hoy and Tarter described an engaged climate as having a high directive behavior score and School A had an average directive behavior score.

School B had a climate index of open. This index is made up of a principal behavior score of 539, which is considered above average, and a teacher behavior score of 513, which is considered slightly above average. Hoy and Tarter (1997) defined an open climate as, “The distinctive characteristics of the open climate are cooperation, respect, and openness that exist within the faculty and between the faculty and principal. The principal listens and is receptive to teacher ideas, gives genuine and frequent praise, and
respects the competence of faculty (high supportiveness). Principals also give their teachers freedom to perform without close scrutiny (low directiveness) and provide facilitating leadership devoid of bureaucratic trivia (low restrictiveness). Likewise, the faculty supports open and professional behavior (high collegial relations) among teachers. Teachers know each other well and typically are close personal friends (high intimacy). They cooperate and are committed to teaching and their job (low disengagement). In brief, the behavior of both the principal and teachers is genuine and open” (p. 17). It should be noted that discrepancies exist between Hoy and Tarter’s definition of an open school climate and School B’s scores. For example, Hoy and Tarter described an open climate as having a low directive behavior score and School B had a high directive behavior score. In addition, Hoy and Tarter described an open climate as having a low disengaged behavior score and School B had a high disengaged behavior score.

School C had a climate index of open. This index is made up of a principal behavior score of 591, which is considered high, and a teacher behavior score of 545, which is considered above average. Hoy and Tarter (1997) defined an open climate as, “The distinctive characteristics of the open climate are cooperation, respect, and openness that exist within the faculty and between the faculty and principal. The principal listens and is receptive to teacher ideas, gives genuine and frequent praise, and respects the competence of faculty (high supportiveness). Principals also give their teachers freedom to perform without close scrutiny (low directiveness) and provide facilitating leadership devoid of bureaucratic trivia (low restrictiveness). Likewise, the faculty supports open and professional behavior (high collegial relations) among teachers. Teachers know each
other well and typically are close personal friends (high intimacy). They cooperate and are committed to teaching and their job (low disengagement). In brief, the behavior of both the principal and teachers is genuine and open” (p. 17).

Research Question 3: What relationship, if any, exists between principal communication behaviors and school climate as perceived by the teachers and principal?

Interview protocols on principal communication and the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) revealed relationships between principal communication behaviors and school climate as perceived by teachers and the principal within Schools A, B, and C. The following relationships were identified:

- The School A principal used predominately non face-to-face communication channels and scored 485 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the below average range. In addition, School A scores revealed School A had an engaged climate on the openness index.
- The School B principal used predominately face-to-face communication channels and scored 539 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the above average range. School B scores also revealed School B had an open climate on the openness index.
- The School C principal used predominately face-to-face communication channels and scored 591 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in
the high range. School C scores also revealed School C had an open climate on the openness index.

- The School A staff did not identify their principal as using positive reinforcement on a consistent basis and scored 485 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the below average range. In addition, School A scores revealed School A had an engaged climate on the openness index.

- The School B staff did identify their principal as using positive reinforcement on a consistent basis. Specifically, she utilized hand written notes during each observation and periodically in their mailboxes to recognize accomplishments and progress and scored 539 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the above average range. School B scores also revealed School B had an open climate on the openness index.

- The School C staff did identify their principal as using positive reinforcement on a consistent basis. Specifically, she utilized staff meetings, informal meetings, and hand written notes to recognize accomplishments and progress and scored 591 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the high range. In addition, School C scores revealed School C had an open climate on the openness index.

- The School A staff identified their principal’s primary strength as her ability to use e-mail and scored 485 on principal openness on the Organizational
Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the below average range. School A scores also revealed School A had an engaged climate on the openness index.

- The School B staff felt their principal’s primary strength as a communicator was her ability to be clear, straight to the point, and direct and scored 539 on principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the above average range. In addition, School B scores revealed School B had an open climate on the openness index.

- The School C staff felt their principal’s primary strength as a communicator was her ability to be direct, communicate clear expectations, and be straight forward and scored 591 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the high range. In addition, School C scores revealed School C had an open climate on the openness index.

- The School A staff felt their principal’s primary challenge regarding communication was her unwillingness to listen to suggestions, which would align with a specific portion of Hoy and Tarter’s (1997) definition of an engaged climate, “The principal is rigid and authoritarian (high restrictiveness) and respects neither the professional expertise nor personal needs of the faculty (low supportiveness)” (p. 18).
Summary

Three principals and 90 teachers at three elementary schools each having between 700-1000 students in an urban school district consisting of approximately 300,000 students were sampled using the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and interview protocols on principal communication in order to explore principal communication and school climate.

The next chapter combines research and the previously displayed results to summarize, discuss results, and conclude the study with recommendations for future study.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem set forth in this study was based on the changes in organizational communication as caused by technological advancements and the impact of principal communication on student achievement via school climate. The significance of this study was based on the importance and impact communication has on success within organizations.

Principal communication impacts student achievement via school climate. Research shows student achievement is impacted by school climate. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) found there is evidence that organizational climates are related to school performance outcomes including school climate. In addition, literature revealed school climate is linked to principal communication. Halawah (2005) found school climate was positively associated with principal’s communication effectiveness. Therefore, how a principal communicates with staff members impacts the overall success of the school by impacting the climate of the school. The purpose of this study was to explore principal communication and school climate. The conceptual framework of this study was based on the research related to leadership/principal behavior, organizational/school climate, and leadership/principal communication. Specifically, the conceptual framework was based upon the following relationships:

1. Leadership behavior impacts organizational climate,
2. Organizational climate impacts organizational success,
3. Leadership communication impacts organizational climate.
Limitations for this study include:

1. The study was limited to the principals and teachers that were surveyed and interviewed and cannot be assumed the findings in this study can be extended to other principals and teachers.

2. The study was limited to the three elementary schools within one urban school district and cannot be assumed findings in this study can be applied to all elementary schools or school districts.

3. The study was limited to one school year and cannot be assumed findings in this study can be applied to all school years.

Mixed methods triangulation research design was used as a methodology. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained this type of research as a methodology involving philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies.

Research was conducted at three elementary schools each having between 700-1000 students in an urban school district consisting of approximately 300,000 students. Sampling consisted of three elementary schools with a low socio-economic status (80%-100% Free and Reduced Lunch) and designated Adequate according to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). The principal of the school also must have been serving as principal of that school for a minimum of two years. These criteria were determined using the 2009-2010 School Accountability Summary Report published at www.nevadareportcard.com.
The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ RE) was used to measure school climate. Interviews were conducted to analyze each principal’s communication behaviors.

Findings were displayed by school. Each school had a figure displaying results for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), figures displaying the domains and taxonomies for themes based on interview protocol questions, and a matrix displaying both the results for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and the domains, taxonomies, and supporting quotes for themes of interview protocol questions. Findings revealed relationships between principal communication behaviors and school climate as perceived by teachers and the principal within Schools A, B, and C.

Discussion of Results

Halawah (2005) found a relationship between school climate and principal communication. Results for this study support the work of Halawah by revealing relationships between principal communication and school climate. These relationships specifically involved non face-to-face communication channels, face-to-face communication channels, the use of positive reinforcement through varying communication channels, and school climate.

Results indicated relationships between the principal’s use of non face-to-face and face-to-face communication channels and school climate. For example, the School A principal used predominately non face-to-face communication channels such as e-mail and held very few staff meetings. School A also scored 485 for principal openness on the
Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the below average range and had an engaged climate on the openness index. To support the School A principal’s use of non face-to-face communication channels, the School A staff felt one of their principal’s strengths as a communicator was her use of e-mail. The School A principal’s frequent use of e-mail and its resulting in a below average principal openness score and engaged school climate can be related to Argyris’ (1982) “Single loop learning” and a portion of Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp’s (1991) definition of an engaged school climate. For example, Argyris explained “Single loop learning” as information being controlled from the top and there being limited provision for feedback, which prevents the organization from benefiting from the input of subordinates. In addition, Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp described an engaged climate as the principal not respecting the professional expertise of the faculty. The School A principal’s use of e-mail provided limited provision for feedback and created an engaged climate which is marked by the principal not respecting the professional expertise of the faculty. These findings indicated the School A principal’s use of the non face to communication channel of e-mail may be directly related to the engaged school climate and below average principal openness score.

In contrast, School B scored 539 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the above average range and had an open climate on the openness index. Additionally, contrary to the School A principal’s use of non face-to-face communication channels, the School B principal used predominately face-to-face communication channels such as staff meetings, individual meetings, and small group meetings. Similar to the School B
principal, the School C principal used predominately face-to-face communication channels such as staff meetings and small informal meetings. School C also scored 591 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the high range and had an open climate, just like School B, on the openness index. Argyris (1982) described “Double loop learning” as an organization where information is freely shared and the subordinates are able to participate in the changes made. This aligns with the School B and School C principals’ utilization of face-to-face communication channels along with Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp’s (1991) definition of an open school climate. Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp defined an open climate as when the principal listens and is receptive to teacher ideas. The School B and School C principals’ use of face-to-face communication channels allow information to be shared between subordinates and created an open climate that is marked by the principal listening and being receptive to teacher ideas. These findings indicated the School B and School C principals’ use of face-to-face communication channels might be directly related to the open school climate, above average, and high principal openness scores.

Results indicated the principal’s use of non face-to-face communication channels such as e-mail might be less favorable in creating an open school climate as revealed on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and interview protocols on principal communication. In addition, results revealed the principal’s use of face-to-face communication channels such as staff meetings, individual meetings, and small group meetings may be more favorable to creating an open school climate. Mehbarian (1971) studied interpersonal communications and concluded seven
percent of meaning is from the receivers interpretation or perception of your words, or what you say, 38 percent is conveyed by their perception of your voice, or how you say what you say, and approximately 55 percent comes from their interpretation of your nonverbal signals. Based on the findings of Mehbarian, non face-to-face communication does not allow the receiver of the message to fully analyze the perception of the communicator’s voice and also does not allow the receiver of the message to interpret nonverbal signals. This could explain why a less favorable climate is achieved in a school where a principal communicates primarily through non face-to-face communication channels and why a more favorable climate is achieved in a school where a principal communicates primarily through face-to-face communication channels.

Results indicated relationships between the principal’s use of positive reinforcement and school climate. For example, the School A staff did not identify their principal as utilizing positive reinforcement and scored 485 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the below average range and had an engaged climate on the openness index. The lack of positive reinforcement identified by the School A staff aligns with a portion of Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp’s (1991) definition of an engaged school climate. For example, Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp explained an engaged climate principal has no respect for the personal needs of the faculty. These findings indicated the lack of positive reinforcement used by the School A principal may be directly related to an engaged school climate and below average principal openness score.

The School B staff scored 539 for principal openness on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which fell in the above
average range, had an open climate on the openness index, and identified their principal as using positive reinforcement on a consistent basis. Specifically, the School B principal utilized hand written notes during each observation and periodically in their mailboxes to recognize accomplishments and progress. The School C staff also identified their principal as using positive reinforcement on a consistent basis. Specifically, she utilized staff meetings, informal meetings, and hand written notes to recognize accomplishments and progress and scored 591 for principal openness, which fell in the high range and had an open climate on the openness index. The use of positive reinforcement identified by both the School B and School C staffs align with Williamson’s (2007) research and Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp’s (1991) description of an open school climate. For example, Williamson (2007) shared a positive relationship and open communication between the principal and teacher is essential to a healthy and open school climate. Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp described an open school climate principal as giving genuine and frequent praise and as being respectful to staff members. The School B and School C principals’ use of positive reinforcement allowed for positive relationships with staff members and created an open climate marked by a principal giving genuine and frequent praise. These findings revealed the School B and School C principals’ use of positive reinforcement may be related to an open school climate, above average, and high principal openness scores.

These results indicated if positive reinforcement is not used on a consistent basis by the principal, it might be less favorable in creating an open school climate. In addition, results revealed if the principal used positive reinforcement on a consistent basis through channels such as hand written notes, informal meetings, and staff meetings, it might be
more favorable to creating an open school climate as revealed on the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE).

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

Results for this study revealed relationships between principal communication and school climate. Conclusions are based on the results and analysis of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and interview protocols on principal communication. These conclusions include:

- Principal communication is related to school climate.
- Utilizing primarily non face-to-face communication channels as a principal may lead to a less open school climate.
- Utilizing primarily face-to-face communication channels as a principal may lead to a more open school climate.
- Not utilizing positive reinforcement as a principal may lead to a less open school climate.
- Utilizing positive reinforcement as a principal may lead to a more open school climate.

The conclusions of this study revealed the importance of further research on the relationship between principal communication and school climate. In addition, results of this study revealed the impact technological advancements such as e-mail can have on communication in schools, therefore, impacting school climate. Limited research has been done on the impact of technological communication on school climate. Future studies should specifically analyze the communication channels being utilized by both
teachers and principals and how the use of those communication channels impacts school climate. A thorough analysis on the use of e-mail and other non face-to-face communication channels and its impact on school climate is needed. Due to the consistently evolving state of technological advancements impacting communication, replicating this study will more than likely produce varying results in the future. As communication changes, so does its impact on school climate, and consequently, student achievement. As technological communication becomes more embedded in how organizations function, research on how these changes impact organizational climate and organizational success will become even more beneficial. Ultimately, even though technological advancements may allow school employees to communicate in a more time efficient manner, the consequences of this efficiency is yet to be thoroughly explored.

Summary

The U.S. Senate Committee Report on Equal Education Opportunity (U.S. Congress, 1970) described the principal as the single most influential person in a school. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) described the importance of leader communication by stating leaders spend more time communicating than doing any other single activity. Technological advancements are allowing principals and teachers to communicate more often through non face-to-face channels of communication, such as e-mail. The American Psychological Association (APA) (2008) explained there is no doubt new technologies have advanced the human capacity for rapid communication in unprecedented ways. The APA continued by stating rapid social change often has negative benefits. The APA noted, “Perhaps because of the speed of change associated with recent technologies, the
full nature of their impact on people’s social lives is still unclear” (p. 455). Reeves (2006) acknowledged the increasing use of technology in communication, yet urged the importance of holding on to the non-technological side of communication. Reeves described communicators in today’s organizations as simultaneously high tech and high touch, maximizing their reach through technology, as they optimize their effectiveness with the encouragement, appreciation, and nurturing that only a personal handshake, hug, note, or the spoken word can provide. Rafferty (2003) found a clear relationship between school climate and communication patterns within a school. Muchinsky (1977) found dimensions of communication are related to climate. Therefore, how a principal communicates within a school impacts the climate of the school.

This study supported the existing research by finding a relationship between principal communication and school climate. Unique aspects of this study included the use of a mixed methods approach and specifically analyzing communication strengths and challenges, communication channels, and the impact of communication. The researcher also analyzed how these aspects of communication related to the climate of three urban elementary schools. Findings added to the current body of research related to principal communication and school climate. Specifically, findings reinforced the importance of principal communication and the need to further explore and potentially train administrators on being conscience of the impact their communication has on school climate. As an educational system, this research can be used to help inform all educators ranging from school district leaders to site based administrators on the importance of principal communication. Due to the constantly evolving technological advancements impacting communication, the need for exploration and training in the area of
communication will only increase with time. This study reminds us no matter what technological tools exist to make communication more convenient, educators are in the human business, and therefore, human contact can never be sacrificed without a price.
APPENDIX I

PERMISSION LETTER TO USE THE OCDQ-RE

Hi Reece--

You have my permission to use the OCDQ-RE in your research. Just download the scale, copy it, and use it [www.waynekhoy.com]. Be sure to give appropriate acknowledgement.

Best wishes.

Wayne
Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor of
Education Administration

hoj.16@osu.edu
www.waynekhoy.com

On Jun 17, 2010, at 5:50 PM, Reece E. Oswalt wrote:

Hello Dr. Hoy,
My name is Reece Oswalt. I am a fourth year doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Currently, I am preparing a mixed methods dissertation on principal communication and school climate. For this study, I would like to use the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)? Please let me know if this is possible and/or if any further steps need to be taken in order to acquire permission to use this document?
Sincerely,
Reece Oswalt
Assistant Principal
Forbuss ES
799-6840
APPENDIX II

PRINCIPAL DEMOGRAPHIC/OCDQ-RE SURVEY

Part I: Demographic Information

1. How many years did you teach?
   - 0-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21-25 years
   - 26-30 years
   - 31 or more years

2. How long have you been a principal?
   - 0-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21-25 years
   - 26-30 years
   - 31 or more years

3. How long have you been at your current school?
   - 0-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21-25 years
   - 26-30 years
   - 31 or more years

4. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

5. What is your age?
   - 20 - 30
   - 31 - 40
   - 41 - 50
   - 51 - 60
   - 61 or older
**Directions:** The following are statements about your school. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rarely Occurs</th>
<th>Sometimes Occurs</th>
<th>Often Occurs</th>
<th>Very Frequently Occurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The teachers accomplish their work with vim, vigor, and pleasure.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Teachers' closest friends are other faculty members at this school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Faculty meetings are useless.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The principal goes out of his/her way to help teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The principal rules with an iron fist.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teachers leave school immediately after school is over.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Teachers invite faculty members to visit them at home.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>There is a minority group of teachers who always oppose the majority.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The principal uses constructive criticism.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>The principal checks the sign-in sheet every morning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Most of the teachers here accept the faults of their colleagues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teachers exert group pressure on non-conforming faculty members.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The principal explains his/her reasons for criticism to teachers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The principal listens to and accepts teachers' suggestions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The principal schedules the work for the teachers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Teachers have too many committee requirements.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Teachers help and support each other.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Teachers have fun socializing together during school time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Teachers ramble when they talk at faculty meetings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The principal looks out for the personal welfare of teachers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The principal treats teachers as equals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The principal corrects teachers' mistakes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Administrative paperwork is burdensome at this school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Teachers are proud of their school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Teachers have parties for each other.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The principal compliments teachers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The principal is easy to understand.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The principal closely checks classroom (teacher) activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Clerical support reduces teachers' paperwork.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>New teachers are readily accepted by colleagues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Teachers socialize with each other on a regular basis.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The principal supervises teachers closely.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>The principal checks lesson plans.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Teachers are burdened with busy work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Teachers socialize together in small, select groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Teachers provide strong social support for colleagues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>The principal is autocratic.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Teachers respect the professional competence of their colleagues.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>The principal monitors everything teachers do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>The principal goes out of his/her way to show appreciation to teachers.</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX III

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC/OCDQ-RE SURVEY

Part I: Demographic Information

1. What is your current position?
   o Kindergarten
   o First Grade
   o Second Grade
   o Third Grade
   o Fourth Grade
   o Fifth Grade
   o Specialist (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, Literacy, Etc.)
   o Other _________________

2. How many years have you been teaching?
   o 0-5 years
   o 6-10 years
   o 11-15 years
   o 16-20 years
   o 21-25 years
   o 26-30 years
   o 31 or more years

3. How long have you been at your current school?
   o 0-5 years
   o 6-10 years
   o 11-15 years
   o 16-20 years
   o 21-25 years
   o 26-30 years
   o 31 or more years

4. What is your gender?
   o Male
   o Female

5. What is your age?
   o 20 - 30
   o 31 - 40
   o 41 - 50
   o 51 - 60
   o 61 or older
Part II: Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE)

**OCDQ-RE**

**Directions:** The following are statements about your school. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rarely Occurs</th>
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<td>42.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
My name is Reece Oswalt and I am a graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I am here to conduct a study related to principal communication and school climate. There are two phases to this study and meeting. The first is an interview on principal communication. The second is a survey on school climate which will be administered in this meeting after the interview. To begin with, I would like for you to sign two Informed Consent forms allowing me to conduct and tape record our interview and allowing for me to administer the survey. As you know, you have approved this study. Please be assured that this interview and survey are confidential. No specific comments you make or answers you give will be shared with anyone. The only exception to this is my dissertation chair, Dr. Pamela Salazar. When the report of this study is written, no names will be used when discussing the contents of the interviews or surveys.

I would like to talk to you today about your communication. By talking to you and other principals and teachers, I hope to learn more about principals’ communication with teachers and how it affects the school. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.

2. I would like to ask you some questions about your communication behavior. What do you see as your strengths as a communicator? Can you give some examples?

3. What do you see as your biggest challenges as a communicator? Can you give some examples? What circumstances or people are most challenging for you? In what ways do you and/or your teachers respond to these challenging situations?
4. What subjects do you generally communicate through the following channels? For example, what types of information do you communicate during staff meetings? (Fill in chart below)

Give list of messages, read the channel and fill in message box with coding below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channels</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Formal Meetings (2+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Informal Meetings (2+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Formal Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Informal Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercom</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Typed-Memo</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand-Written</td>
<td></td>
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<td>E-mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text Message</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voicemail</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. To what extent do you feel you get your message communicated effectively through the channels above?
   *Can you give some examples?*

6. In what ways does your communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
   *Can you give some examples?*

7. In what ways does your communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
   *Can you give some examples?*

8. In what ways do you think your communication affects the relationships you have with teachers?
   *Can you give some examples?*

**Bold = Read by interview**

*Italics = Potential follow up questions/information*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Channels:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Message:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Meetings</td>
<td>Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Formal Meetings (2+)</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Informal Meetings (2+)</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Formal Meetings</td>
<td>Positive Student Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Informal Meetings</td>
<td>Negative Student Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Positive Parent Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercom</td>
<td>Negative Parent Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typed-Memo</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<td>Hand-Written</td>
<td>Socializing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>Positive Personal Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Message</td>
<td>Negative Personal Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voicemail</td>
<td>Positive Personnel Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative Personnel Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My name is Reece Oswalt and I am a graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I am here to conduct a study related to principal communication and school climate. To begin with, I would like for you to sign the Informed Consent form allowing me to conduct and tape record our interview.

A large part of the principal’s work involves communicating. I would like to talk to you today about your principal’s communication. By talking to you and other principals and teachers, I hope to learn more about principals’ communication with teachers and how it affects the school.

As you know, your principal has approved these interviews. Please be assured that this is a confidential interview. No specific comments you make will be shared with anyone, including your principal. The only exception to this is my dissertation chair, Dr. Pamela Salazar. When the report of this study is written, no names will be used when discussing the contents of the interviews. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. Before I ask you any questions, I would like you to prioritize the following communication channels in order from most effective to least effective. Please keep in mind that there is no correct order.

2. What do you see as your principal’s strengths as a communicator? 
   Can you give some examples?

3. What do you see as your principal’s biggest challenges as a communicator? 
   Can you give some examples? 
   What circumstances or people are most challenging for your principal? 
   In what ways does your principal and/or teachers respond to these challenging situations?
4. **What subjects does your principal generally communicate through the following channels?** For example, what types of information does your principal communicate during staff meetings?
(Fill in chart below)

*Give list of messages, read the channel and fill in message box with coding below.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channels</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Formal Meetings (2+)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Informal Meetings (2+)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Formal Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Informal Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typed-Memo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hand-Written</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text Message</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voicemail</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. To what extent does your principal get his/her message communicated effectively through the channels above?
   Can you give some examples?

6. In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact the climate of the school?
   Can you give some examples?

7. In what ways does your principal’s communication behavior impact you and other staff members?
   Can you give some examples?

8. In what ways do you think your principal’s communication affects the relationships he/she has with you and other teachers?
   Can you give some examples?

Bold = Read by interview
Italics = Potential follow up questions/information
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Channels:</th>
<th>Message:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Small Formal Meetings (2+)</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
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<td>Curriculum</td>
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<td>Individual Formal Meetings</td>
<td>Positive Student Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Informal Meetings</td>
<td>Negative Student Information</td>
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<td>Phone</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercom</td>
<td>Negative Parent Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typed-Memo</td>
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<td>Negative Personnel Topics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Misc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VI

INFORMED CONSENT-SURVEY (PRINCIPALS)

UNLV

University of Nevada Las Vegas

Department of Educational Leadership

TITLE OF STUDY: A mixed methods exploration of principal communication and school climate

INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. Pamela Salazar (Reece Oswalt)

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 702-895-1971 (702-480-1261)

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore principal communication and school climate using both quantitative and qualitative data.

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit the following criteria: Principals/teachers (18 + years of age) in elementary schools with 80-100% Free and Reduced Lunch, made Adequate Yearly Progress, and have a principal that has been at the site for a minimum of two years.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Fill out a survey on demographics/school climate.

Benefits of Participation
There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn more about principal communication and school climate.

Risks of Participation
Minimal risk is involved in this study. There is a chance you may become uncomfortable when answering some questions.

Cost /Compensation
There is no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take approximately 15 minutes. Your compensation will include breakfast.
Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Pamela Salazar (Reece Oswalt) at 702-895-1971 (702-480-1261). For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794 or toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality
All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time, the information gathered will be shredded.

Participant Consent:
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

_____________________________  ______________________
Signature of Participant        Date

_____________________________
Participant Name (Please Print)
APPENDIX VII

INFORMED CONSENT-SURVEY (TEACHERS)

UNLV

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

Department of Educational Leadership

TITLE OF STUDY: A mixed methods exploration of principal communication and school climate

INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. Pamela Salazar (Reece Oswalt)

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 702-895-1971 (702-480-1261)

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore principal communication and school climate using both quantitative and qualitative data.

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit the following criteria: Principals/teachers (18 + years of age) in elementary schools with 80-100% Free and Reduced Lunch, made Adequate Yearly Progress, and have a principal that has been at the site for a minimum of two years.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Fill out a survey on demographics/school climate.

Benefits of Participation
There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn more about principal communication and school climate.

Risks of Participation
Minimal risk is involved in this study. There is a chance you may become uncomfortable when answering some questions.

Cost/Compensation
There is no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take approximately 15 minutes. Your compensation will include breakfast.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Pamela Salazar (Reece Oswalt) at 702-895-1971 (702-480-1261). For questions regarding the
rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794 or toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality
All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time, the information gathered will be shredded.

Participant Consent:
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

________________________________________  ____________
Signature of Participant                              Date

________________________________________
Participant Name (Please Print)

The second phase of this study consists of an interview taking approximately 15 minutes on principal communication. Would you be interested in participating in these interviews?

○ Yes
○ No

If yes, what grade level do you teach? __________
APPENDIX VIII

INFORMED CONSENT-INTERVIEW (TEACHER/PRINCIPAL)

UNLV
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS
Department of Educational Leadership

TITLE OF STUDY: A mixed methods exploration of principal communication and school climate
INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. Pamela Salazar (Reece Oswalt)
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 702-895-1971 (702-480-1261)

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore principal communication and school climate using both quantitative and qualitative data.

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit the following criteria: Principals/teachers (18 + years of age) in elementary schools with 80-100% Free and Reduced Lunch, made Adequate Yearly Progress, and have a principal that has been at the site for a minimum of two years.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Participate in an interview on principal communication and school climate.

Benefits of Participation
There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn more about principal communication and school climate.

Risks of Participation
Minimal risk is involved in this study. There is a chance you may become uncomfortable when answering some questions.

Cost/Compensation
There is no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take approximately 15 minutes.
**Contact Information**
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Pamela Salazar (Reece Oswalt) at 702-895-1971 (702-480-1261). For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794 or toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.

**Voluntary Participation**
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

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All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time, the information gathered will be shredded.

**Participant Consent:**
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

__________________________________________  ___________________  
Signature of Participant                      Date

__________________________________________  
Participant Name (Please Print)

I agree to be audio taped for the purpose of this research study.

__________________________________________  ___________________  
Signature of Participant                      Date

__________________________________________  
Participant Name (Please Print)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Reece Oswalt

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Dissertation Title: A mixed methods exploration of principal communication and school climate

Dissertation Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Pamela Salazar, Ed.D.
Committee Member, Patrick Carlton, Ph.D.
Committee Member, James Hager, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, LeAnn Putney, Ph.D.