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ABSTRACT

This study explored how the leadership behaviors of an elementary principal in establishing school climate affects teacher productivity and teacher behaviors in the school. In addition, the facets of security and strength were explored as the underlying premise to school climate. The Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised was administered to five urban Connecticut schools as part of the selection process for the study. Three schools were selected, two that scored on that questionnaire as having an open climate, and one that scored with a closed climate. A qualitative analysis was done that included observations, interviews, and field notes. Results indicate that the qualitative investigation of school climate provided a much different picture than the questionnaire showed. Results show that the determining factors for school effectiveness and school climate were dependent on the facets of security and strength in the administrator, especially security. Principal strength and security were the factors that had most impact on the collegiality and engagement of the faculty. (Contains 1 table and 10 references.) (Author/SLD)

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The Interaction of Leadership and Climate in Three Urban Schools

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The Interaction of Leadership and Climate In Three Urban Schools

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore how the leadership behaviors of an elementary principal in establishing school climate affects teacher productivity and teacher behaviors in the school. In addition, the facets of security and strength were explored as the underlying premise to school climate.

The Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised was administered to five schools as part of the selection process for the study. Size was determined by enrollment. Three schools were selected. Two scored as having an open climate and one having a closed climate based on the questionnaire. A qualitative analysis was done which included observations, interviews, and fieldnotes.

Results indicated that a qualitative investigation of a school climate provided a much different picture than the results of the questionnaire. The results demonstrated that the determining factor for the effectiveness of the school and the climate of the school were dependent on the facets of security and strength, particularly the facet of security.

The study concluded that strength and security, particularly security, were factors that impacted on the leadership behaviors of the principal in establishing school climate and that continued investigation into these facets is indicated.

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The Interaction of Leadership and Climate In Three Urban Schools

Christine J. Villani, Ed D.

During the winter of 1993-1994 a qualitative dissertation study was conducted investigating how the leadership behaviors of an elementary principal in establishing school climate affects teacher productivity and the self-esteem and academic achievement of students in four suburban schools. Four suburban schools were selected from ten based on the results of the Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). The schools selected for the original study were as follows: one large school with a closed climate, one large and one small school with an open climate, and one small school that bordered on having a closed climate. Size was determined by enrollment. An enrollment of under 300 was considered small and one over 350 was considered large.

Principal, teachers, and students were interviewed on more than one occasion and field observations were held. The role of the principal was explored in terms of vision and communication, the role of the teacher in terms of collegiality and engagement, and the response of the students with regard to learning and self-esteem.

The original results indicated that regardless how a school scored on the questionnaire, a qualitative investigation provided a different picture. The results demonstrated that security and strength in an administrator was the determining factor for the effectiveness of the school whether or not the leadership behaviors were closed or open. Security and strength also impacted on the collegiality and engagement of the faculty. In other words, a school that scored as having a closed climate and had a strong and secure leader in actuality had faculty that created an open sub climate of collegiality and engagement that was as effective as the school whose climate was

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open and also had a strong and secure leader. A school that lacked the qualities of strength and security yet had scored as being open on the questionnaire was chaotic in structure and the environment lacked engagement or collegiality.

The issue of self-esteem and academic achievement was not clear in the original study. The study concluded that strength and security were factors that impacted on the leadership behaviors of the principal in establishing school climate and that further investigation into these facets were indicated.

Purpose And Procedures

In the winter and spring of 1996 the 1993-1994 study was duplicated with three urban schools in Connecticut utilizing the research methodology of the original study. Urban schools were selected because of the potential difference the facets of inner city life may have on the leadership behaviors of the principals in these schools. In addition the original study was done on suburban schools and a potential difference was sought between urban versus suburban schools.

The purpose was to explore how the leadership behaviors of an elementary principal in establishing school climate affects teacher productivity and teacher behaviors in the school. In addition, the facets of security and strength were explored as the underlying premise to school climate. The issue of self-esteem and academic achievement were not revisited in this study due to the tenuous results of the first study.

The Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised was administered to five schools as part of the selection process for the study. Size was determined by enrollment. Given the difference in numbers between suburban and urban schools, a small urban school was a school whose enrollment was under 450 and a large urban school was one whose enrollment was over 450 students.

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Climate is determined by the leadership behaviors of the principal and teacher behaviors as outlined by the the Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised found in Open Schools, Healthy Schools (Hoy et al., 1991). The leadership behaviors of the principal are supportive, directive and restrictive. The teacher behaviors are collegial, intimate, and disengaged.

An "open" climate is marked by a principal who demonstrates high supportiveness, low directiveness, and low restrictiveness. The teacher behaviors are marked by high collegiality, hign intimacy, and low disengagement.

A "closed" climate is represented by a principal who exhibits low supportive, high directive, and high restrictive behaviors. The teacher behavior is high disengagement, low intimacy, and low collegiality.

Therefore the characteristics of the schools were one that was large and had an open climate, one that was small and had an open climate, and one that was large and had a closed climate.

Qualities Investigated

Principal

The role of the principal was investigate by looking at the qualities of vision and communication. In addition the qualities of strength and security were investigated based on the results of the original study. These variables were examined to see if they correspond to the actual climate of the school and what effect these qualities have on teacher productivity and teacher behaviors. Do the principals view their school as a place of continual growth, and are they supportive of this? Or do the principals regard their schools as needing strict control and whose goals and objectives are established by them? Is the principals' vision aligned with the climate of the school?

In an open climate a principal's vision consists of clear goals for the school.

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The goals are reasonable, realistic, and consistent with the needs of the organization, and are readily accepted by the staff. Personnel are used effectively with a good match between the needs of the individual and the demands of the school. The principal, teachers, students, and parents work cohesively, and change is brought about in a positive manner, whereas in a closed climate the goals are not clear and are generally not accepted by all. A lack of cohesiveness may be the result of the controlling and rigid beliefs of the principal (Hoy et al., 1991).

Communication is an important aspect in establishing the climate of a school. A school with an open climate has a principal who respects teachers, values their opinions, and seeks their assistance in the decision making process, whereas a school with a closed climate has a principal that does not communicate openly with his staff, but rather dictates what he wants done and maintains control over all aspects of the school organization (Hoy et al., 1991).

Principals who are secure are able to move their staff in goal-directed endeavors, increase their productivity, and have the ability to pursue self-improvement. Principals who are secure create opportunities for their staff to collaborate and share authority with them which in turn enhances the share sense of purpose, trust, and value (Rosenholtz, 1989). The variable of security was explored with regard to its impact on the actual climate of the school.

Principals who are strong have a conviction in their philosophy and seek to protect their staff in uncomfortable situations. Principals who are strong are able to stand up for their beliefs, buffer their staff from outside criticism or disagreement, and their views permeate the school climate (Villani, 1996). The variable of strength was investigated with regard to its impact on the characteristics of the school and the effect it had on teachers.

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Teachers

The role of the teacher was explored by investigating the variables of collegiality and engagement. Collegial behavior is demonstrated by teachers who are supportive of one another. They openly enjoy professional interaction, are respectful and courteous of each other's needs. Teachers who are collegial are accepting, enthusiastic, and cohesive (Hoy et al., 1991).

Engaged teacher behavior is reflected by high staff morale. Teachers are proud of their school. They are not only concerned about each other, but are committed to the well-being and success of their students. They are friendly with students, and are optimistic about the ability of each student (Hoy et al., 1991).

The two variables of collegiality and engagement were investigated in relation to school climate and t he impact of principal's behaviors on the teachers' behaviors were investigated.

Procedures

Sample Selection and Participants

This study was conducted in a large urban school district in Connecticut. The sample consisted of three elementary schools: one large and one small with a profile of an open climate and one large with a profile of a closed climate were investigate. The determination for the open or closed profile was utilized through the completion of the Organization Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools: Revised (OCDQ-RE) by Hoy et al. (1991), found in Open Schools, Healthy Schools. The questionnaire was administered to five randomly selected schools in the district and the selection was based on the largest and smallest schools which scored with an open profile and the largest which scored highest on a closed climate.

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The 42 items of the OCDQ-RE define the six dimensions of behavior. The questionnaire takes approximately 10 minutes to administer and is done in a group setting such as a faculty meeting. The answers are on a 4-point Liket like scale. Each item is scored by assigning 1 to rarely occurs, 2 to sometimes occurs, 3 to often occurs, and 4 to very frequently occurs. For items that are reverse scored a 4 is assigned to rarely occurs, a 3 to sometimes occurs, 2 to often occurs, and a 1 to very frequently occurs. There are only three items that are reverse scored because they reflect a negative statement.

Each item is scored for each teacher in the school. An average school score for each item was then computed in order to yield the six subtest scores. These six subtest scores comprise the climate profile of a given school.

Once the three schools were selected, the sample from each of the three schools consisted of the principals and four to six teachers. To ensure confidentiality, participants were not identified by name in any part of the research. Upon completion of the study, participants were offered an abstract of the study.

Entry

The researcher met with the Superintendent and requested access to survey five elementary schools in order to determine the sample and requested permission to study the sample upon selection. The principals received a letter notifying them of the study and the permission obtained to do the study. Once the sample was selected, participation was voluntary, and each person was given the opportunity to deny the request to take part in the study. In a gesture of reciprocity for the stakeholders (Guba & Lincoln, 1985), the researcher agreed to give a copy of the completed study to the Superintendent and the Principal.

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Interviews

Interviewing is a process that allows the researcher to elicit meaning as perceived by the participant. The dialogue that occurs may result in unexpected findings which lead to the emergence of new themes to be tested and pursued. As themes emerge, they are evaluated by asking the participant how it relates to his experience. The researcher compares and contrasts the information that is collected through the generation of verbal discourse (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

In this study the principal of each school along with four to six teachers were interviewed at their convenience. The interviews were conducted before and after school, during lunch, free periods, or during a set appointment time that may have been requested. The interviews were conducted in two phases.

Phase I interviews focused on the participants' feelings about the climate of the school, the leadership behaviors of the principal, the behaviors of the teachers and their own feelings of achievement. Phase I data served as the basis for refocusing and refining relevant areas for the questions in Phase II interviews. Therefore, the Phase II interviews probed more deeply into the issues that surfaced during the Phase I interviews.

Extensive notes were taken during the interviewing. The interviews were also tape recorded in order to ensure accuracy and minimize the errors that may have occurred from note taking. After each interview the tape was transcribed and analyzed. The analysis of the initial interviews guided the interviewing for the following session.

Observations

Observational data provides a description of the setting being studied, the activities that take place in that environment, the people who participate in the

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activities, and the meaning of the setting, activities, and their significance to those people (Patton, 1980). Observation enables the researcher to modify categories and provide meaningful analysis to the problem under study. Through observation, the researcher may absorb tremendous information which at first may seem irrelevant but may prove to be valuable in clarifying perspectives. As an observer, the researcher is better able to avoid misleading and meaningless questions. Finally, the impressions obtained through observation are generally more reliable in classifying participants' subjectivities and orientations than the information based on questions in a questionnaire or interview (Huberman & Miles, 1988).

In this study the participants were observed at their school site in an attempt to ascertain the climate of the school and its effect on the participants. These observations allowed the for seeing the setting as the participants view it, grasp its climate, and provide information regarding the here and now experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

Documentation

In order to provide a balance analysis of the school climate and its impact on the staff many types of data must be gathered and integrated. School documents such as mission statements, objectives, calendar of events, attendance records and brochures provided a look at what is not directly observable. Documents give direction for asking important questions during the interviewing process (Patton, 1980).

Documentation provides a source of data that is free from the "researcher effect," since the records reflect what occurred prior to the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Document data were integrated with the information collected from interviews and observations for analysis with regard to the school climate.

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Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Limitations of the Study

Analysis and Interpretation

A method of recording known as fieldnotes was employed for this study. Fieldnotes are descriptive records of observations, interactions, and activities that take place. Fieldnotes allow the researcher to return tot he setting by reading over descriptive notes which contain direct quotes and which detail the researcher's insights and interpretations. This enables the development of a working hypothesis regarding the setting and the researcher's feelings and reactions to what is happening (Patton, 1980).

Data analysis is the process of taking the interview transcripts, observations, fieldnotes and additional documentation and systematically analyzing the materials in order to increase the understanding of them so that the discovery may be presented to others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This method allows the researcher to fill the gaps and test emerging hypotheses during analysis which generates strategies for better collection of quality data (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

In this study the data was collected and codes developed in order to facilitate the analysis. Codes are categories that enable the researcher to retrieve and organize the information into particular segments (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Through coding patterns and regularities are identified as well as topics within the data. After the data are collected and coded, the codes are clustered which sets the stage for the emergence of the major themes of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Limitations of the Study

Generalizations from the finding of this study are limited to populations with similar characteristics. Since the populations is limited to one large and one small

school with and open climate, and one large with a closed climate from an urban school district in Connecticut, cautions should be noted in generalizing the results.

Since this study was not longitudinal, the researcher only had view of the participants opinions during the winter and spring of 1996.

The methodology may impose limitations due to its less structured and more fluid approach of interviewing. Interviewing allows for in-depth questioning by the researcher, but the emphasis of the questions may vary due to the different responses during individual interviews. In addition, participants may not respond according to the manner in which they act, but rather how they wish to be perceived.

In addition, observations were part of the data collection. Unstructured observations can lead to problems in defining constructs, noticing all events, and recording all observations. However, structured observations can lead to distortions and inadequately captured interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

Attention must also be paid to avoid bias and selective exposure which can skew interpretations of observations and interviews. The researcher avoided becoming too involved in the study and losing objectivity.

Findings

The schools were selected based on the results of the Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised (Hoy et al., 1991). Out of the 5 schools surveyed, the largest most open and smallest, most open were selected. In addition the largest most closed was chosen. The principal behaviors, teacher behaviors, and overall climate score were tabulated for each of the four schools. Following the formula provided by Hoy et al. (1991), a standard score was tabulated for each of the three principal behaviors: supportive, restrictive, and directive. A standard score was also tabulated for each of the teacher behaviors: collegial,

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intimate, and disengaged. The overall climate score was obtained by tabulating the standard scores for the principal behaviors and the teacher behavior. A standard score of 500 is considered average. Therefore, anything above 500 is high for openness and anything below 500 is low for openness. The range for principal behaviors in this study was from 450 to 675. The range for teacher behaviors was 380 to 650.

Table 1

Standard Scores for Each of the Three Schools

School	Principal Behavior	Teacher Behavior	Size
One	675 (high)	550 (high)	small
Two	600 (high)	650 (high)	large
Three	450 (low)	380 (low)	large

Field observations were done in each school. The principal and four to six teachers in each school were interviewed. Interviews were conducted per subject. The following are the findings and interpretation of the study.

School One

School One is an urban school in Connecticut with a population under 450. On the Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised, School One had a standard score of 675 for principal behaviors and 550 for teacher behaviors which is indicative of an open climate (see table 1). These scores indicated a principal who was highly supportive, collegial, and not restrictive or directive. The teacher behaviors indicated a staff that was highly collegial, intimate, communicative,

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engaged and involved with one another and their school.

The field observations done revealed a welcoming and inviting school. From the moment the researcher entered the building people were polite, friendly, and engaging. They were enthusiastic to share their comments regarding their school. Student work was proudly displayed throughout the hallways and there was a mural outside the main office that had been done by the fifth and sixth grade students, principal, and teachers. Teachers as well as students who were not being interviewed stopped to chat with researcher regarding their school.

On each of the occasions that the researcher visited the school, classroom doors were generally open and teachers comfortably went to one another's classrooms to share or gather information. Each classroom was unique in its own way and although the teachers were following a set curriculum the teaching style of each of the teachers was different and apparently accepted. No matter what the teacher's particular style, the classes were stimulating and engaging. Several students asked the researcher to visit his or her classroom and would talk excitedly about their school. The climate of the school based on the field observations revealed a school that was warm, engaging, stimulating, open, and supportive.

Principal. Based on the questionnaire the principal was viewed as being supportive, collaborative, and collegial. In interviewing her she was a strong and secure individual who had taken the time to understand the make-up of her school and the needs of her staff and students. She had a vision and was committed to it. She appeared to be very self-assured and confident in her beliefs. She also was very participatory and supportive of her staff. She described herself as someone who viewed change as only being able to occur if it came about in a collaborative manner.

> I see where my school should be headed and I've discussed it with my staff. I listen to them....they may agree with me or not which is fine as long as we are all working toward the collective vision. I am sure of what I am doing... I guess I'm just secure about my leadership.

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This was confirmed by her teachers. She was viewed by her staff as being supportive, collaborative, engaging but most of all secure and strong.

> She believes in what she is doing you have to respect that...she doesn't force her beliefs we collaborate and come to a mutual understanding...she respects us and is very sure of what she is doing...she never falters...a true professional.

As another teacher stated:

> I am delighted to work with and for her...she's a woman of conviction real secure in her vision for the school...it's so easy and delightful to work in such an environment.

A third teacher reported:

> She has supported me in all my endeavors. She is encouraging and supportive. She believes in what she is doing...it's amazing even if central office disagrees with her she sticks to he beliefs...one strong and self-assured lady.

The principal at School One was viewed by all who the researcher spoke with as being very supportive, collegial, caring, collaborative, secure and strong. She had a vision and was committed to making it a reality. She set high expectations for everyone and helped them to achieve them. Her commitment to her beliefs seemed to be what set her apart from other principals.

Teachers. The teachers appeared highly collegial, engaged, intimate, and supportive of one another. The interviews indicated that this was the general consensus.

> This is a great place to work...we all get along we may not always agree but there is mutual respect...I love being here and so do the kids...It's a real learning environment.

The researcher discovered that the longest a teacher had been in this building had been 10 years. The demands of a large urban district appeared to require constant shifting of class locations thereby shifting of staff. The staff credited the

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principal with maintaining a cohesive structure despite the turn around.

> It's a great staff...A great place to work and that is due to the efforts of V. She keeps us all together keeps reminding us that we have a mission and we are all on the same ship...We all get along...We share times outside of school as well as inside...We are there for each other.

As another teacher put it:

> It's a friendly place...we all get along and respect one another. We are a community a community of learners...everyone works side by side.

Throughout the interviews there were constant statements made reflecting the positive, secure, strong, and supportive nature of the principal. In addition the - statements the staff made regarding one another was always filled with mutual respect and collegiality.

School Two

School Two is also an urban elementary school in Connecticut. It has a population of approximately 484 making it qualify as a large school. On the Organizational Climate Questionnaire For Elementary Schools- Revised, School Two had a standard score of 600 for principal behaviors and a score of 650 for teacher behaviors (see table 1), indicating an open climate. This would mean that the principal was high in supportiveness, low in directiveness and restrictiveness, and the teachers were intimate, collegial, and engaged.

The field observations done by the researcher indicated upon first impression a rather friendly building. Student's work was on display throughout the building and just about every space was covered with student work. However within a short amount of time the feeling of the building began to become chaotic. Children were walking through the halls unescorted. Some of the older students were running from place to place without any regard for any other individual that may be in the hallways.

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Teachers would step out into the hallway if they were looking for one of their students and merely signal the child to come back to the class almost oblivious to the students who were running in the hallways.

The classrooms also appeared chaotic. Some teachers would go across to one another's rooms seeking help and assistance leaving their classroom totally out of control. Other teachers kept their classroom doors locked and the researcher had to knock in order to gain admission. One class in particular the researcher visited on four different occasions at varying times. Each time the students were dancing to rap music in the back of the room and the teacher merely stated that it was their free time. This was one of the teachers who maintained a locked classroom door.

The students in the upper grades appeared to treat the school as one large playground. Even the students in the primary grades engaged in play activity once they were away from their classrooms. The researcher did not witness any children being escorted to special classes but rather led by a line leader. The only time the teachers appeared to walk their students to a destination was a lunch time. Overall School Two had an overly friendly and chaotic environment.

Principal. At School Two the principal scored high for openeness, meaning that he was highly supportive and was not directive or restrictive. In interviewing the principal, his perception of himself as a leader was one of support and collaboration.

> I believe in giving them my full support, they have the freedom to do whatever they wish provided of course that they cover the curriculum...I try to be a friend to all of them and the students.

When questioned about his vision for the school he replied:

> I don't have a particular vision it's more a shared vision that has been put together by everyone on the staff. That's what I mean by our being a team.

The teachers seemed to have a perception of the principal that was more lazier faire. They commented on his ability to manage the budget well, secure supplies in a

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timely fashion, and his good public relations skills with parents. They viewed him as a good natured individual but felt no sense of leadership.

> He agrees with whatever we want...basically I have total freedom but no guidance. He lacks a certain strength and conviction that you see in other administrators. I mean he's nice and all but it's a though I am my own boss.

Another teacher commented:

> I like not having to be told what to do but it would be nice to have some structure. B.'s a nice individual and means well but I don't think he's too secure about what he's doing.

Similar statements were made by other teachers that were interviewed. It appeared that although the principal viewed himself as supportive and collaborative the teachers viewed him as someone without any strength, conviction, or security as a leader. Basically his supportiveness was ineffective.

Teachers. At School Two the teachers scored high on open behaviors indicating intimacy, collegiality, and engagement as a staff. Based on the interviews and field observations, it appeared to the researcher that the staff seemed friendly and cooperative. They were observed actively engaged in conversation with one another regarding students and curriculum. Even the teachers who kept their classroom doors locked were very responsive when another teacher appeared at their door.

> We all get along with each other. There is a mutual respect so that we do not step on each others toes yet we are always willing to help one another out with a problem.

> The teachers at this school have to be supportive of one another. I mean B. is a nice guy but he seems to lack strong leadership so we have to depend on one another...at times we feel chaotic among ourselves because we're not sure which way to go.

The principal confirmed the perceptions that the teachers had regarding one another.

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> They are a cohesive group. They get along with one another both in and out of school and seem to willing to help each other any time. They seem to like one another and respect each others differences.

The researcher questioned the teachers further regarding statements that indicated chaos even among them.

> Well, how do I explain it...I mean we know what our jobs are but at times there are problems and we need guidance. B. responds with having us discuss it as a staff which is great, I mean I want to be part of the team but he doesn't come into a meeting with any clear vision. Without vision I guess what we have is chaos...B's just not sure of himself, nice guy but not sure of himself.

Overall, the teachers seemed to display open behaviors. They were collegial and intimate with one another. They were supportive of one another and engaged as a faculty. They viewed their principal as a nice individual who believed in team work but his lack of strength and security in his leadership abilities left them at times with a rather chaotic environment.

School Three

School Three is an urban school in Connecticut with a population of over 590. On the Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised, School Three had a standard score of 450 for principal behavior and 380 for teacher behaviors which is indicative of a closed climate (see table 1). These scores would indicate that the principal was high in directiveness and restrictiveness, and low in supportiveness. The measure would also show that the teachers are disengaged, lack intimacy and collegiality.

The field observations done by the researcher revealed a school that was situated in what was considered an unsafe area in this city. Therefore the building was locked and there was an intercom system coupled with a security guard. Once the researcher gained admittance an old but rather aesthetic building was revealed

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The building was exceptionally clean and student work was displayed on the various bulletin boards throughout the schools. The hallways were quiet at all times. Children were not seen wandering and classes were escorted with reminders that they had to be silent when walking from one place to another. The doors to the classrooms were generally closed yet inside each classroom children's work was displayed on most available space. The environment appeared to be very orderly and disciplined. There was a sense of a organization and common rules that were followed by all.

Principal. In a school where the climate is closed, the leadership behaviors of the principal are restrictive and directive. The principal may be dictatorial and maintain a tight control over the staff. In addition he may burden the staff with unnecessary paperwork and is not supportive of the efforts of his faculty. In interviewing the principal of School Three some definitive statements were made regarding his style of leadership.

> I keep order. Order and organization are important or else there is chaos. We work as a team...I listen to what they have to say but the ultimate decision generally becomes mine after all I'm accountable to the higher ups.

The principal showed the researcher the procedure book he had developed for his school. He did not consider them rules per say but organizational procedures that would keep the school running smoothly. He was secure in his belief that a school had to be highly organized in order for it to be effective.

> If you have chaos nothing is going to happen educationally. The first step to an effective school is having order and common rules and procedures that everyone follows...everyone knows where they stand...they know to come to me for the final decision. I am comfortable with my style...I believe it works best...no reason to change anything.

The teachers who were interviewed were quick to point out the tight structure that the principal had created and his conviction to his style.

> He's secure in his beliefs no doubt about that. He comes across as a very strong individual. He keeps a tight rein on things but then again at least we know where we stand...it'd be nice if he was more of a team player.

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There was little indication that the principal was close to his staff though he seemed to appreciate their efforts even if he did not approve of everything.

> He keeps his distance and has to have final say on most things. Yet he constantly thanks us for the job we're doing and tells us how terrific we are...many times we do our own thing after discussing it among us...there are loopholes to his procedures so not everything gets his approval we make sure that the major issues go through him but day to day operations we do our own thing in our classrooms.

Overall School Three revealed a principal who was seen as being highly organized, structured, and in control. He maintained a distance from his staff and tended to lack supportiveness yet appreciated their efforts and constantly told them so both verbally and in writing. He was secure and strong in his beliefs and his vision constituted a school that was well organized and disciplined.

Teachers. The climate of the school is comprised of the leadership behaviors of the principal coupled with teacher behaviors. Generally, in a closed climate the teachers are apathetic, isolated, and intolerant. In School Three, based on field observations and interviews that did not seem to be the case. Although the majority of the classroom doors were closed and the teachers were not seen interacting during academic time there was a tremendous amount of collegiality and sharing that took place in the faculty room and during recess times.

In a school with a closed climate, a researcher would expect to find productivity to be poor, if the style of the principal was dictatorial. In addition, the apathy of the teachers would result in their being isolated from one another. However when asked to describe their relationships the responses indicated a level of collegiality and intimacy that was not immediately noticeable and would not be expected in a closed climate. As one teacher stated:

> We all get along and support each other. We share things during lunch and our free periods it's hard to do it any other time since we try to stick to the structure that W. has set up.

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Another teacher pointed out:

> The interactions among the staff are wonderful. We follow W.'s so called procedures but work among ourselves...we're basically a very happy group and get along with each other rather well.

Another teacher concurred:

> I've been here for ten years and they are a great group to work with. We share many ideas and help each other out. I enjoy working with them.

Even the principal commented on the collegiality of his staff:

> They all seem to get along with each other which is terrific. As long as the job gets done and procedures are followed I'm satisfied.

Overall the teachers in School Three displayed a collegial and supportive relationship among themselves despite how they scored on the questionnaire. Their collegial relationship seemed to be confined to specific times of the day due to the highly structured and discipline environment that the principal had established. However they seemed to understand his style, accept it, and managed to create their own supportive sub climate.

Interpretation And Analysis

The majority of the research on school climate indicates that the climate is based on the perceptions held by the teachers regarding the leadership behaviors of the principal (Halpin & Croft, 1962; Hoy et al., 1992; Stern & Steinhoff, 1965). In particular, the research done by Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp indicates that a school with an open climate will be an effective school where teachers are collegial, intimate, engaged, and productivity is enhanced. The three schools for this study were obtained by administering the Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Elementary Schools-Revised. Each of the three schools has been described and each one of them was uniquely different. Regardless of how they scored on the questionnaire,

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field observations and interviews revealed a different picture.

Principals

The most apparent difference was in School One and School Two, where both schools scored high in openness. The principal and the teachers in both schools achieved high scores for open behaviors indicating that they would be highly supportive and low on directiveness and restrictiveness. Both principals viewed themselves as being supportive, collegial, and collaborative. They did not view themselves as being restrictive or directive. However the principal at School One was effective and had created an open climate whereas the principal at School Two was ineffective and had created a chaotic environment.

The principal at School One described herself this way:

> I am firm in my beliefs and in the vision that I have set for the school. I believe in working as a team and listening to my staff after all they are educated professionals who have excellent ideas. We operate as a family, supporting each other every single day.

The principal at School Two did not have a clear vision and saw his role as being friendly and supportive:

> I give them as much freedom as I can. Let them make their own decisions. I like to keep things as friendly as possible.

If the climate of the school is based on the perceptions that teachers have with regard to the principal's behaviors than one would expect that in a school with an open climate the teachers would perceive the principal as being supportive, collegial, and collaborative. They would not describe someone who was directive or restrictive. This was the view that the teacher held of the principal in School One. The teachers described her as someone who was strong and secure in her convictions. She was viewed as being supportive, collegial, and a team player.

> V. is wonderful to work with. You have to admire someone with such strength and vision yet who is willing to listen to you and respects your ideas. It is

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> wonderful to work with such a person. We all know where she is coming from and have no fear or intimidation in talking with her about anything.

However the principal in School Two although viewed as friendly was seen as someone without .y strength or security in relation to his position as a leader. This only led to a chaotic environment.

> He's a nice person and he'll support anything you want to do but he supports everyone without any clear idea as to where this school is going. It's as though he's not sure of himself. Nice person but not very strong.

Another difference can be seen in the principal in School Three as opposed to the principal in School Two. The principal in School Two scored high for closed behaviors indicating that he was dictatorial and restrictive. Yet his strength and conviction in his leadership style led to a very structured environment where the teachers knew exactly the position he was coming from and respected that.

> He's definitely certain about his leadership style. No question, he's in control and we all know it. Somehow it works, I mean we understand him and we manage to work among ourselves in an extremely supportive way.

Whether or not a principai displayed leadership behaviors characteristic of an open or closed climate did not appear to be the determining factor for establishing a healthy and effective school. The two themes which permeated the successfulness of open or closed leadership behaviors where security and strength.

Strength One of the themes that permeated the success of a principal's leadership behaviors was strength. It appears that strength indicated the ability for a principal to stand up to his beliefs and style of leadership regardless of what others said. In School One where the principal scored high for open behaviors she was viewed as being a strong and secure individual. In examining the theme of strength the researcher was told that she never backed down from her beliefs.

> "If someone says she's wrong, she listens but never backs down from her underlying vision and belief for the school. It's wonderful.

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In School Two the principal came out on the questionnaire as having open leadership behaviors however field observations and interviews revealed that he was an extremely friendly fellow whose support lacked any visions or beliefs on his part. This led to a very chaotic environment where the teachers felt helpless and in need of guidance.

> He's a nice fellow, I've said that before...it's just that at times I feel like I;m working in a three ring circus. The man cannot make a decision. He thinks that by allowing us to make all the decisions he's being supportive.

> He's a nice guy. I mean pleasant, right there in your corner, but things around here are simply chaotic.

The principal in School Three was also seen as a strong leader. However, his leadership behaviors on the questionnaire came out closed. His directive and restrictive manner did not lead to an environment that was closed but rather was open. He was in control and made the decisions and the staff knew this. They accepted it, respected his strength, worked within the confines of his decisions and created their own sub climate of collegiality, intimacy, and engagement.

Security Principals who are secure are able to move their staff in goal- directed endeavors, increase their productivity, and have the ability to pursue self-improvement. Principals who are secure create opportunities for their staff to collaborate and share authority with them which in turn enhances the shared sense of school purpose, trust, and value (Rosenholtz, 1989). As the teachers in School One pointed out;

> She's committed to us as a family. She has a firm belief in her capabilities and her vision for this school. This enables her to work with all of us. It has created a real family atmosphere. She has excellent rapport with all of us including students and parents.

The Principal in School Two also scored high on the questionnaire for open behaviors as a principal. This would indicate that he was highly supportive,

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collaborative, and collegial. However, when it came to these areas, the view held by the teacher was that the principal was extremely friendly but lacked the ability to have vision or make any clear decisions. If anything they viewed their principal as someone without security and strength who was creating a chaotic environment.

> He is a nice individual but he does not seem secure in the role of leader. He just does not seem to be going in any particular direction and gives us more freedom than we need. I mean it is an extremely chaotic place.

Another teacher stated:

> If he only had belief in himself I think he could do a terrific job as principal but he seems to lack any strength or conviction.

Uncertain or insecure principals are unable to help teachers solve problems. The principal who is insecure may be unwilling to relinquish control so that the teachers may help themselves or feel he needs to protect a false image of security (Rosenholtz, 1989).

The principal at School Three was very secure in his directive and restrictive style of leadership. This style was effective and he saw no need to change it. He believed in organization, discipline, and making the final decisions. The teachers accepted this in him and created their own collegial climate in which there was enough autonomy as to alleviate the pressure of a directive style of leadership.

Teachers

Hoy et al (1991) state that a principal who displays open leadership behaviors may be able to create open behaviors in teachers, thereby creating an open climate. A principal with closed leadership behaviors may foster a closed climate creating closed behaviors in teachers. Teacher collegiality and productivity may be influenced by the climate established by the school principal (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Hoy et al (1991) state that the climate of the school may be determined by the

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administration of their questionnaire. In School Three, the climate of the school, based on the questionnaire was closed. The principal was directive and restrictive as discussed in the previous section. The teachers also scored low for openness with a standard score of 380 which would indicate that the teachers would be disengaged, lack collegiality, and intimacy. However, based on the interviews and the field observations the teachers were very engaged and collegial with one another. They respected their principal's strength and security in his leadership style, although directive, and developed their own sub climate of collegiality, intimacy, and engagement. When asked about their relationships with one another the comments were quite positive:

> We are a family. We get along with each other and support each other. We may have a leader who is rather, how do you say, in charge, but it has not deterred us from being close.

> I have always felt a tremendous kinship to the people here. We work well together. We listen to each other and support one another.

Regardless of how the teachers in School Three scored on their questionnaire they had a sub climate that was supportive, collegial, and engaging. This openness among the teachers was not immediately apparent when entering the building because of the tight organizational structure. However, these teachers had formed their own sub climate that was very open despite the fact that they worked for someone who was dictatorial.

School One also had teachers who were very collegial and engaged. The difference between these teachers and the teachers in School Three is that the principal in School One had scored high for openness and was a strong, secure, supportive, and collaborative leader. School One appeared to demonstrate the ideal working relationship that schools would want to strive for. It was an open environment where the teachers and principal were engaged, supportive, and collegial. As one

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teacher stated:

> This is a great place to work. Everyone works together having the children's best interests at heart...our principal V. is a strong leader but she is a team player she's part of us.

Another teacher commented:

> I wouldn't want to work anywhere else. This is what a school should be like. I've been in the ones that make it difficult to do your job.

School One was a very cohesive school. The staff worked well with each other in supportive and collegial manner with complete respect for the principal. They felt comfortable in their environment and in working with their administrator. The cohesiveness of a school is based on the affective relationships and these relationships create attachments that lead to involvement and interaction (Rosenholtz, 1989).

The teachers in School Two had also scored high for open behaviors indicating collegiality and engagement. However, the field observations and interviews revealed a staff who although friendly and supportive of one another had difficulty remaining engaged and collegial due to the chaotic structure of the environment. As one teacher put it:

> We all get along and try to support one another but at times we just can't. I mean we don't know which direction to go in, how can you support one another when there is no clear direction from the administrator.

It appeared that although the teachers wanted to be more collegial and engaged with on another the lack of direction from the principal created a chaotic environment.

Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the leadership behaviors of elementary principals and the effect these behaviors have on establishing school

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climate. The study also sought to investigate the characteristics of strength and security as the underlying premise in establishing climate. In addition the study investigated the influence the principal behaviors had on teacher behaviors and productivity.

The study took place in three urban elementary school in Connecticut. The schools were chosen from a larger sample of 5 urban elementary schools through the use of the Organizational Climate Questionnaire For Elementary Schools-Revised by Hoy et al. (1991). The selection of the schools was made based on the results o the questionnaire. The researcher was looking for minimally one school with an open climate and one school with a closed climate. In addition size was determined by the enrollment figures of each school. An enrollment of under 450 constituted a small school, whereas an enrollment of over 450 was considered large.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, three schools were secured. School One was a small school that indicated an open climate. School Two was a large school that indicated an open climate and School Three was a large school that indicated a closed climate.

For each of the three schools selected, the researcher conducted field observations that involved observing classrooms, teacher interactions, the principal, and students. In addition, diligent notes were made regarding the overall atmosphere of the school.

Each principal and four to six voluntary teachers from each school were interviewed twice. The interviews were tape recorded with the participants' permission. Additionally, various documents from each school were reviewed and integrated into the observational notes.

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Summary and Conclusions

Hoy et al (1991) indicate that a principal who is highly supportive, collegial, collaborative, and who is not directive or restrictive creates an open climate within his/her school, whereas a principal whose leadership behaviors are very directive and restrictive fosters a closed climate. These leadership behaviors influence teachers and the combination of principal and teacher behaviors constitutes the type of climate that exists within each school. These behaviors according to Hoy et al. (1991), are easily measured through their climate questionnaire.

Principal Behaviors and Influence

This study discovered that the results of the questionnaire represent a one time glimpse at the climate of the school. Field observations and interviews demonstrated a picture that was quite different from the responses to the climate questionnaire.

This study revealed that supportiveness, collegiality, and collaboration did not necessarily constitute an open school climate. It appears that security and strength as a leader determines the effectiveness of a principal who is supportive, collegial , and collaborative.

In addition, security and strength in a leader also determines the effectiveness of someone who is directive, and restrictive. A principal with closed behaviors who exhibits strength and security in his/her leadership style potentially influences the staff to band together and create their own sub climate that is open and reflective of being collegial, engaged, and intimate.

The principal in School One scored high on the questionnaire for open behaviors. She was supportive, collegial, and collaborative and viewed as being strong and secure with her leadership style and vision for the school. This strength and security fostered an open environment whereas the principal in School Two, who

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was viewed as being supportive and collegial, was weak and uncertain of himself. His staff perceived him as being friendly but not having any direction thereby fostering a chaotic environment.

The principal in School One in her strength and security influenced her teachers in establishing and maintaining an intimate, collegial, and engaging relationship. Throughout the interviews teachers commented that her certainty in herself fostered the nurturing, collegial, and supportive environment that they worked in.

The principal in School Two lacked strength and security thereby being unable to give any direction to his faculty. The result was an environment that was chaotic and left the teachers vacillating between attempts to be supportive of one another and aloofness because of the poor influence from the principal's behaviors.

Another strong and secure principal was the principal at School Two. His strength and security in being directive, restrictive, and dictatorial resulted in the staff creating their own sub climate that was intimate, supportive and collegial. The staff understood his style, respected his conviction in being directive and restrictive, yet formed their own sub climate that resulted in positive relationships with one another.

Overall, the influence that a principal had on the behaviors of the teachers was not necessarily dependent on whether the principal displayed open or closed behaviors. Whether the principal was strong and secure was a major influence on the behaviors of the teachers and the overall climate of the school.

Teacher Behaviors

This study also sought to investigate the teacher behaviors of collegiality and engagement in relation to the establishment of the school climate. In addition, the study examined the influence of principal behaviors on teacher behaviors. The

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findings of this study indicate that how the teacher behaviors impact on the climate of the school depends on the the effectiveness of the principal's behaviors. The effectiveness of the principal behaviors is dependent on whether the principal is strong and secure, or weak and insecure.

The principal in School One had created a climate that was open and effective based on her security and strength. She was able to influence the teachers and foster a collegial, engaged, supportive, and intimate environment. The teachers maintained an intimate, engaged, and supportive relationship with one another. This, in turn, assisted in fostering an effective open climate in their school.

The principal in School Two was weak and insecure. Although a very friendly individual, he was too supportive. He allowed the teachers to do as they please without any direction or conviction. The result was a chaotic environment. The teachers vacillated between being collegial, intimate, and engaged with one another because of the lack of direction from a weak and insecure principal. The result was a school whose environment was chaotic.

However, the teachers in School Three were collegial, intimate, and engaged with one another despite the fact that the principal was directive, restrictive, and dictatorial. The principal was strong and secure in these behaviors and the teachers accepted and respected his position. They created a sub climate that was open, collegial, supportive, and engaging. However, these collegial interactions were not sufficient enough to permeate the closed behaviors of the principal. Therefore, two separate climates existed, a closed climate in the presence of the principal and an open sub climate among the teachers.

Overall, the interactions and the behaviors of the teacher influenced the climate of the school only to the degree that the principal was able to influence the teachers. The principal's influence was dependent on whether there was strength and security

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with regard to principal behaviors.

The results of this study have indicated for a second time that the factors of strength and security are an influence with regard to the establishment of school climate and the influence on teachers and their interactions. The study revealed that the open behaviors of collegiality, collaboration, and supportiveness alone do not constitute an open, effective climate. A principal who demonstrates closed behaviors of restrictiveness and directiveness and who is strong and secure may influence his teachers toward creating a sub climate that is open and effective.

The results indicated that the facets of strength and security had the same impact on an urban school population as it did on the suburban population in the initial study. These issues of strength and security can not be ignored. These factors appear to impact on the climate of the school and the behaviors of the teachers and should continue to be investigated. The climate of a school has importance with relation to teacher productivity which in turn may impact upon the educational quality that the students receive. Therefore to ignore the results from two separate studies that indicate the factors of strength and security with regard to principal behaviors would be remiss.

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