

DISSERTATION

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND HOW THEY  
IMPACT TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

Submitted by

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## ABSTRACT

### TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND HOW THEY IMPACT TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

This study focuses on leadership styles of principals and how perceptions teachers hold of such leadership styles impact their job satisfaction. The research concentrated on how teachers perceived their principal's leadership style, and the specific principal leadership behaviors that enhance teachers' job satisfaction. The research was guided by these three questions: how do U.S. teachers perceive principals' leadership styles, what are the different leadership styles principals' uses, and what determines goodness and fit between principal leadership style and teacher job satisfaction? The Best Interpretive Qualitative Method was used to develop four core themes and twelve subthemes. The sample population consisted of teachers, which also included multiple educational disciplines within that population. Evidence for my claims comes from interviewing twelve teachers at four schools and using the basic interpretive method of analysis. Interview results showed principals with positive and collaborative styles create a positive environment in schools. Teachers talked more about different styles based on their relationships among the teachers and principal, and also about their expectations of what a principal should be, not specifically about what their principal's main leadership style may have been. Teachers generally expected principals to know about all aspects of their school, while still giving teachers autonomy and freedom to make good decisions in classrooms. Teachers wanted a strong leader who can make clear and consistent decisions, while earnestly considering all opinions involved. They also wanted a person with high moral character and someone whose integrity and intellect they respected.

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## Dedication

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To the Malaysian Ministry of Education, I hope this small contribution will bring a huge paradigm shift for Malaysian education in the future.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This dissertation focuses on principal leadership style and how teachers' perceptions of these different styles impact their job satisfaction. Principal leadership styles will be viewed from the context of the principals' behaviors and how these behaviors translate to teachers, students, and staff of the school. It is my belief that if a principal is able to practice a positive leadership style, it will in turn help bring a positive learning climate to the school. Teachers will feel more comfortable and thus have higher job satisfaction. If the opposite is true, then teachers' job satisfaction can be expected to decrease.

Teachers play the main role in ensuring that student performance increases every year since they are in charge of the classroom and the curriculum (Saravia-Shore, 2008). To ensure teachers are able to play this role, they need support and motivation that is most often affected by the principal at the school. Furthermore, teachers will normally be satisfied with their job if they have a good relationship with the principal(s) of their school, are offered the highest possible salaries, and are involved in the decision-making process at their school.

Job satisfaction is an important facet of people's lives and their productivity in the work place. Job satisfaction can lead to a sense of responsibility and involvement toward achieving comprehensive career goals and contributing to the productivity of an organization (Harter, James, Schmidt, Hayes, & Theodore, 2002). The issue of job satisfaction among workers is not only a factor in industry and business, it is also a concern among teachers. Satisfaction has been described as an effective state that is influenced by interactions between workers, personal characteristics, values and expectations of employees, and organizational environment (Muellar & McCaskey, 1990).

School effectiveness often points to high performing schools found in most countries around the world such as: the United States, Malaysia, the European Union, Japan and South Korea. Criteria for these schools are based on student achievement, with references to effective principal leadership styles, school culture and ethos, and the rankings of the schools themselves in their respective countries (Holsinger & Cowell, 2000). In the United States, two types of effective, high performing and diverse schools include International Baccalaureate Schools (IB) and Charter schools. These schools typically have high levels of performance in student achievement and have a diversity of students from different cultures and backgrounds (Parents for Choice in Education, 2011). Similarly in Malaysia, under National Key Result Area (NKRA) policy, Cluster schools and Residential schools currently represent high performing and diverse schools. Evans (1998) showed that factors, such as low salaries and status, growing class size, and drastic changes in the educational system, contribute to an “epidemic” of dissatisfaction within the teaching profession. In recent years, job satisfaction was found to be inversely related to such withdrawal behaviors as tardiness, absenteeism and turnover (Yousef, 2000). De Witte et al. (2005), state that excellence within any organization is linked to increased productivity and organizational effectiveness, which in turn are related to employee job satisfaction.

Employees experience job satisfaction when their needs are met, and in turn, the employer will realize greater job satisfaction when its employees are achieving high levels of productivity. Success of schools often depends on how effectively principals use their leadership (Gerhardt, 2004). Competent leadership covers a wide range of knowledge in the management aspects of the school including: office management; curriculum management; staff development; motivating the administrators, teachers, school staff, and students; having a good relationship

with the school community neighborhood; and trying to improve the performance of students at their school.

Fisher (2005) notes that all schools should be able to excel if the principal's leadership style is a positive influence. Normally, principals' leadership styles are seen in their behaviors and how they interrelate with teachers, students, parents, and other school staff. If the principal has an effective leadership style, he or she can engender a positive climate in the school. Teachers, students, staff, and parents will come to feel more comfortable and satisfied with their children's educational experience. However, if the principal is ineffective, then the opposite may equally hold true (Ron, 1992).

This dissertation seeks to examine teacher job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions of different principal leadership styles. This research takes place at four schools in the Poudre School District in Fort Collins, Colorado. In this study, teachers will share their perceptions of how principal leadership styles impact their job satisfaction.

## **Study Background**

As noted previously, several researchers have examined variables such as: teacher salaries, status, increases in class size, changes in the educational system, tardiness, and absenteeism and turnover rates as indicators of teacher job satisfaction (Evans, 1998; De Witte, Buitendach, & Rothmann, 2005; Yousef, 2000). These studies show that job satisfaction is an important facet of having a productive educational system. Directly related to a teacher's job satisfaction is the effectiveness of the principal's leadership style.

Tatlah, Uzma and Ishtiaq (2010) suggest that the success of a school often depends on how effectively a principal can use an authoritative leadership style, while competent leadership also covers a wide range of knowledge in the management aspects of a school. Heller, Clay, & Perkins (1993) discuss the relationship between a principal's leadership style and teacher job satisfaction when teachers were least satisfied with the financial aspect of teaching and also most satisfied with their co-workers and general working environment. Specifically, their job satisfaction was related to their principals' friendliness, warmth, support and rapport with the teachers, and it was also dependent upon the principals' attitude in general.

Since the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 in the United States, public education and the manner in which principals lead has changed dramatically (Paige, & Gibbons, 2003). Along with the passage of NCLB has come a heightened sense of accountability that falls upon administrators and teachers, and this new education model is based on the industrial production model, which has proven to be insufficient (Parkinson, 2008). NCLB aims to have students move steadily towards a high level of achievement and promises to hold schools accountable for providing all children a good education. Sunderman, Tracey, Kim, & Orfield (2004), have been highly critical of NCLB, stating that teacher performance is solely evaluated on test scores according to federal guidelines, with nothing else counting as a measure of teacher success, making it a poor method for delivering education and assessing teacher performance.

NCLB (2001) asks teachers and school administrators to shift their priorities from having little accountability towards a more complex job description outlined in the federal legislation. Bracey (2002) states that this new paradigm is difficult for late career teachers to accept, who have been educators for years and have established pedagogical philosophies. NCLB is also

challenging for school districts and administrators who must ensure students are adequately prepared for the workplace or higher education (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio 1997; Burns, 1978). This research seeks to find a model of effective principal leadership and interaction in which the performance of teachers is elevated based on a positive interaction.

### **Researcher's Perspective**

The concept for the topic of this dissertation came from the desire to contribute to the Malaysian Ministry of Education 2020 goal that requires positive collaborative efforts between the principal of a school and its teachers.

For almost 20 years, I have been involved in the field of education as a primary school teacher, secondary school teacher, and as a lecturer at the Teacher Institute of Education Malaysia. As a result of my years of experience, I believe that the results of this research on principal leadership styles impacting teachers' job satisfaction will have a direct impact on organizational management in Malaysian schools, and schools in other developing countries.

From my perspective as a teacher, the current education in Malaysia has been exemplary in terms of its direction and long-term strategic planning. These planning efforts have trickled down to most schools, making a more effective system in a relatively short amount of time. Malaysia continues to evolve, both politically and culturally, since gaining independence in 1957. These changes have been even more dramatic since Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, implemented his *Vision 2020* for all aspects of the government, including the education sector (Education Planning and Research Division, 2008)

*Vision 2020* creates an education center in the government that fulfills the wish to make Malaysia a regional education leader. One of its goals is to explore different types of education



and to make education a national resource critical to Malaysia's growth. Another goal is not only to absorb and master the new technologies but also to be technologically innovative and to better manage change. The ultimate goal is to have Malaysian students on par with the best students from around the world.

When discussing change and shifts in the organizational climate in Malaysian education, it is important to visit not just the political aspects and goals of the legislation but all aspects of the knowledge discipline. Malaysia hopes to produce individuals who are well-rounded, with all prerequisite characteristics for a successful life. These characteristics include diligence, self-assurance, resilience, and having a positive attitude. These characteristics can lead students to successful ventures in their niche areas and bring forth the best in their social circles. It is my belief that this part of human resource development is critical if Malaysians are to elevate the nation to a level of excellence and development.

Malaysia has created a four-columned task structure to help spur drastic change in this new political era. In April 2009, Malaysia announced its wish to develop a unique synergy related to the Malaysian Multi-ethnic "People first, performance at principle." Its mission is to bring forth different human resource elements for future developmental planning.

In January 2010, the government constructed the Government Transformational Program (GTP) and has identified the National Key Result Area (NKRA) as an important component of the program. This policy increases performance and effectiveness of public sector services and has raised the goals for economic development of the private sector. The Economic Transformational Program is another component of the plan designed to make Malaysia a nation of high-income salary earners. This will be implemented through the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan that aids in the execution of the Malaysian Government's developmental programs.

In Malaysia, the NKRA concept aims to improve students' academic performances and to empower all students using the *Vision 2020* mantra. There are four imperatives in the NKRA policy based on the experiences of the world's top performing school systems. These imperatives include pre-school, numeric and linguistic fluency, principalship, and high-performing schools. The Malaysian educational system hopes to be able to educate its next generation with all of these education concepts.

These long-term plans were put forth to improve the leadership potentials and skills for future generations of Malaysians. This new economic plan focuses on education, entrepreneurial skills, and institutional reformation. Like first-world nations, Malaysia's government believes education is a key factor in developing intellectualism and a better life and work skills. Since the introduction of the NKRA policy, there has been hope that this will facilitate more effective leadership and improve administrations in the field of education in the future. This will be a key policy as Malaysia begins the transformative approach of developing new generations of potential leaders in the field of education.

### **Problem Statement and Purpose of Study**

This study seeks to investigate and examine the main factors for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers. Specifically, this study focuses on leadership styles of principals and how perceptions teachers hold of such leadership styles impact their job satisfaction. The principal, as the leader of the school, can significantly influence the attitudes of the staff and how the school functions with his or her attitudes and behaviors. Thus, this research will concentrate on how teachers perceive their principal's leadership style, the specific principal leadership behaviors that enhance teachers' job satisfaction, and the differences in principal leadership style across the schools sampled.

The four principals I worked with directly as a teacher mostly used a form of the situational leadership style, and this was done in a democratic and positive way. Good collaboration among administrators demonstrates their leadership skills to the teachers.

Several researchers (Olsen & Anderson, 2004; Ingersol, 2003) believe that teacher job satisfaction plays an important role in teachers being highly productive educators. However, many teachers will leave their positions for reasons such as poor salary, poor administrative support, and specifically the ineffective or poor leadership style of their principal. Reforms in educational policies, such as NCLB in the U.S and NKRA in Malaysia, are putting increased pressure on teachers and administrators. As a result of these reforms, high demands have been imposed on principals to increase the results of their teachers and students, often making for a more stressful and difficult workplace for teachers.

Thus, principals play a key role as the primary leader of a school and will greatly influence all aspects of the functions of the school with their behaviors, personal characteristics, and also biases (Loeb, Kalogridges & Horng, 2010). Because a principal's leadership style has so much influence over many aspects of a school's functions, I will be specifically looking at principal leadership style. In order to accomplish this, I will examine teachers' perceptions of principal leadership styles and leadership behaviors that may lead to enhanced job satisfaction. This will begin with an analysis of how the administrator's leadership style impacts the school climate and creates positive job satisfaction for both teachers and administrators at that school.

It is my hope that results of this study will be useful in helping principals in Malaysia, to work more effectively with teachers and administrators. This study is particularly timely given Malaysia's new NKRA education policy to create high-performing schools with effective

leaders. The NKRA policy in Malaysia is taking initial steps to map out the future of education in the country, considering not only who will implement these changes, but also how their outlined goals will be accomplished.

### **Significance of Study**

In the current U.S. education system, under NCLB, principals are required to play a central role in providing effective leadership for successful outcomes (NCLB Act, 2001). This is similar to the situation that is currently proposed in Malaysia through the NKRA Act. Principals play a critical role as change agents in creating positive working conditions for teachers, and enhancing student motivation.

It is my belief that perceptions of teachers regarding principal leadership styles are critical because teachers and principals work together closely, and teachers are directly affected in terms of their job satisfaction. If we can better understand teachers' perceptions about principal leadership styles, we may be better able to facilitate the implementation of the NCLB and NKRA programs.

### **Methodology and Setting**

The study methodology will use a Basic Interpretive Qualitative approach because it allows interpretation based on interviews to understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they ascribe to their experiences (Merriam & Associates, 2002). This study includes interviews. The purpose of this study is to explore the role that principal leadership styles may play in teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction. At this stage in the research, the principal's leadership styles will be generally described along with their actions and responsibilities.

The schools in this study are in the Poudre School District in Fort Collins, Colorado. Most of the principals in this district were nominated for their positions by the school district and school board. The teachers have, minimally, a bachelor's degree in education and teacher licensure.

### **Potential Study Limitations**

This study was limited to schools in one school district in the United States and teachers who have a minimum of one year of experience with the same principal. While the focus was on IB and Charter high schools because they tend to be highly successful, this was not included as a variable in the study.

My interviews were limited to 90 minutes with three teachers at each of the four school sites. The focus of the interviews was the teachers' perceptions of principal leadership styles and the resulting impact on job satisfaction.

The researchers' English language abilities was another limiting factor. As an international student working in his third language, it was difficult to understand what the teachers said upon the first review. It took four or five repetitions, listening to each audio-taped interview, to understand the real conversation. Also, a second person was used to help in the transcription process.

Timing was a limiting factor. The process to get approval for the interviews was difficult and time consuming. There was a three-month wait between approval and data collection due to the summer break. Then, coding was done two months after the transcribing process.

## **Definition of Terms**

Initial research identified seven differing principal leadership styles (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003):

Instructional leadership refers to leaders that support and develop teacher skills. The leader has knowledge of different curriculums and forms of instruction and guides teachers in leading. The leader also holds teachers accountable in instruction implementation.

Transformational leadership refers to leaders that do not support or emphasize empowerment within their teachers. There are four important dimensions in transformational leadership style (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). These include having consideration for teachers, being able to inspire and motivate, promoting intellectual stimulation, and considering highly individualization.

Transactional leadership refers to a process in which there is an evolution among the leader and the follower where the leader is not interested in the follower's concerns or needs. These leaders have certain skills and expect respect when leading in the organization.

Situational leadership refers to a series of four leadership characteristics that deal with differing levels of task versus relationship (i.e. telling (high/low task-relationship), selling (high/high task-relationship), participating (low/high task-relationship), and delegating (low/low task-relationship)).

Autocratic leadership refers to giving full empowerment to the leader with minimal participation from the followers.

Democratic leadership refers to a situation where there is equal work among leaders and followers.

Laissez-Faire leadership refers to a leadership style in which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions.

Job satisfaction refers to teacher and principal job satisfaction and derived from positive and/or negative relationships between principals and teachers and among administrators themselves.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is the descriptive, introductory chapter that focuses on my research question, background of the study, methodology and setting, along with leadership definitions, and the significance of the study. It also briefly discusses the NCLB policy and the newly implemented Malaysian policy of the NKRA from the Ministry of Education, which focuses on principalship.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature. It begins with a review of the related literature on leadership theories, the concept of leadership styles, and principal leadership styles. I also discuss and explain job satisfaction theories, teacher job satisfaction, and the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction.

Chapter 3 describes the qualitative methodology, which starts with a general perspective of the research context participants, the instrument used, the procedures for data collection and analysis of data, and lastly, the trustworthiness of the data collected.

Chapter 4 presents my analysis and findings from the interview of teachers using the Basic Interpretive Qualitative Approach. It also presents the data collected from the teacher interviews. A brief description of each school and teacher is given. The inductive analysis will be

broken into four core themes with associated sub-themes, which will be explored in detail using the teachers' own words. Next, I will explore the three research questions with the data collected.

Chapter 5 concludes the discussion on principal leadership style and its effect on teachers' job satisfaction. The chapter begins with a discussion of how well the literature reviewed in chapters two and three fit the results of the data collected in chapter four. These results will then be interpreted using the four main themes developed in chapter four. This is followed by the conclusions taken from the data. Recommendations and implications for the Malaysian Ministry of Education will be given for how to implement these conclusions into a real-world setting to increase teachers' job satisfaction. Limitations of the study and possible future research will then be addressed. Chapter 5 concludes with an epilogue giving personal reflections of the experiences that have led the researcher up to this point.

One of the most important aspects of the conclusions in this study will be the implications for the Malaysian Ministry of Education's effort in reaching their *Vision 2020* goals and the policies to be outlined in NKRA in the future. Malaysia is attempting to identify items in the educational system it wishes to change in order to improve student outcomes. These changes will be based upon four imperatives that the world's top performing school systems currently use. These imperatives include a focus on pre-school, numeric and linguistic skills, principalship, and having high-performing schools.

It is hoped that these imperatives will ensure every child's success and will hold schools accountable for student academic performance. To do so, Malaysia will need to invest in their educational leaders, and attract and develop top teachers (Ministry of Education, 2008). The Malaysian Ministry of Education seeks to rebuild the character of principals in the system so



they may act as agents of change. In this era of decentralization, where local governments manage the education sector autonomously, the educational system in Malaysia must be set on a better path in terms of its relevance to regional interests and national interests. School management currently has a tendency towards School Based Management (SBM) where schools must increase community participation to improve their quality and efficiency. The autonomy of education in the context of SBM must be established with respect to accountability to the entire community-parents, students, and the central and local governments alike.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

To gain greater insight into the history of principal leadership styles and their impact upon teachers' job satisfaction, this chapter examines the literature in the context of different educational systems. Part of this review's focus is to examine the perception of the relationships between leadership styles and job satisfaction in the United States and Malaysian education systems. There are problems with both systems; however, I believe that new paradigm shifts in educational systems in both countries will lead to improved leadership styles in the future. Productive organizations usually have good managers who bring a solid leadership style to the table, and this often aids in providing job satisfaction and motivation to the staff (see McCarthy, 2012).

Since NCLB was passed in the United States in 2002, principals have stepped up to play a lead role in effectively providing leadership for everyone in their school. This has helped to ensure successful outcomes in the classroom (Paige, & Gibbons, 2003). This situation is similar in Malaysia with the passage of the NKRA Act. Here, principals play a critical role as agents of change in creating positive conditions for teachers and students, thus enhancing everyone's motivation to succeed. In *The Role of a Principal* (n.d), the authors discuss how principals hold an important role, and part of their job duties include having increased responsibility to create a successful school with successful teachers and students. In addition to managing and guiding the school to overall success, principals also have additional, generalized responsibilities in having a physically functioning school.

### **Current Educational System**

In the past decade, the educational system in the United States has undergone dramatic changes. These changes came about with the adoption of the NCLB Act of 2001 (NCLB 2001),

which was directly related to the United States federal government deeming the current educational system insufficient to meet the demands of producing quality graduates for placement into the workplace or in higher education. There is now a heightened sense of accountability being placed on teachers' and principals to get children to perform to higher academic standards. This system is based on the industrial production model, which has proven to be insufficient (Parkinson, 2008). NCLB aims to have all groups of students move steadily toward a higher level of academic achievement, with a promise to society to hold all schools, principals, and teachers responsible for providing a quality education. Sunderman et al. (2004) have been substantial critics of NCLB, stating that teacher performance is solely evaluated by federally established guidelines outlining children's test scores, with nothing else counting as a measure of teacher success.

NCLB requires teachers and school administrators to shift their priorities to meet the demands of this act. Bracey (2002) states that these types of transitions can be very difficult for late career teachers, who have been educators for years and have established working pedagogical philosophies. It is also challenging for school districts and administrators, who must ensure that all students are adequately prepared to pass federally mandated tests (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio 1997; Burns, 1978). Thus, a principal may be forced to change his or her leadership style to accommodate this academic setting.

These situations occurring with NCLB are not only happening in the United States but also in Malaysia and other developing countries such as: China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and India with other goals and programs. In each of these countries, new education policies are targeting the sustainability of school effectiveness through principals, teachers and other

professional staff (Tam & Cheng, 2007). Teachers in these countries are facing annual reviews of their performance, and Mok (2003), describes this concept in the following way:

There are many challenges ahead, not the least the better alignment between education aims and QA focus; between what is expected to be measured and what is being measured; between external and internal review; between the methods for monitoring and expertise (and) support given to schools; and between effort spent of review exercise and expected outcomes. (p. 956)

This statement demonstrates that there is an expectation to improve results, and principal will be examining everyone's effort to ensure that these goals are met. To achieve these goals, it will be important for teachers to have a sense of purpose and satisfaction, and principal's leadership styles will play an important role. Huber (2004) supports this assertion by showing that the quality of leaders plays a key role and has a large effect on the quality of the school's results:

In most of the lists of key factors (or correlate) that school effectiveness has compiled, "leadership" plays such an important part, so much so that the line of argument starting with the message "school matter, schools do make a difference" may be legitimately continued: "school leaders matter, they are educationally significant, school leaders do make a difference. (p.699)

In looking at the role of leadership styles, Spector (1996) and Stamps (1997), use the concept of an attitudinal variable that measures the degree to which employees enjoy their profession. Various aspects of employee's job performance are directly correlated with positive work values, high levels of employee motivation, and lower rates of absenteeism, turnover and

burnout (see also: Begley & Czajka, 1993; Chiu, 2000; Tharenou, 1993). These ideas align with *Teaching to Teach* (2000), a study that reported on new teachers' feelings about their profession. Although 96 percent of the respondents in their study stated they loved teaching, 20 percent would not choose the profession again if they were given the chance to start over. Only 68 percent reported that they were in fact getting some satisfaction from teaching. The *Teaching to Teach* study showed that teachers and administrators are willing to share their perceptions of how principal leadership styles directly impact teacher job satisfaction.

In another study, Richards (2003) examines long-term teacher/principal relationships and job satisfaction. Teachers who have worked for long periods of time with the same principal tend to be able to work closely with that principal. These teachers come to feel comfortable with their principal and his or her leadership style, and this long-term interaction can improve the level of satisfaction between the teachers and the principal. Hughes et al. (1999) believe that creative and transformational leaders create a positive relationship between teachers and principals, which affects everyone's overall job satisfaction.

Heller et al. (1993) take a conflicting viewpoint. They discuss a situation where the relationship between a principal's leadership style and teacher job satisfaction may not be as much of a factor in a school setting. In some cases, when teachers are least satisfied with the financial aspect of teaching and the most satisfied with their co-workers, Heller et al. did not find that job satisfaction was related to the principal's leadership style. Instead, teacher job satisfaction was related to the principal's overall friendliness, warmth, support and rapport with the teachers. Job satisfaction was also dependent on the individual follower's personality traits. This coincides with Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) research stating that the theory of leadership should be based on specific situations and on follower characteristics, not on an overall style.

Unfortunately, these researchers did not include an overview of situational and transformational leadership styles in their studies. Furthermore, the teachers' general relationship with their principals did affect their feelings in the workplace.

Principals play important roles as leaders of the school and influence different functions within the schools with their behaviors, personal characteristics, and biases. Some researchers believe that these leadership styles may be linked to specific personality types. Psychologists Avolio and Howell (1992) found that attitudes of both leaders and followers are important in the prediction of job satisfaction. Thus, this research will examine the teacher's (followers) and principal's (leaders) perceptions concerning the leadership styles of the principal's effect on overall teacher job satisfaction.

### **Teacher perceptions**

The manner, in which teachers perceive the conditions of their workplace, including their relationships and interactions with students and co-workers, is an important part of understanding how satisfied they are, which directly affects productivity. It has been demonstrated that new teachers, those without job experience, have higher expectations of themselves and their principals (Rogg et al., 2001). As these teachers progress and receive praise for their work from their principal, their job satisfaction increases (Doran et al., 2004). At this point in their careers, teachers may feel extra motivation and will trend toward taking on extra job responsibilities (Sheridan et al., 1984). These positive attitudes expressed by the teachers are partially the result of the principal's transformational leadership style.

Bass and Avolio (2000) found that leaders who use a transformational leadership style, which lead to positive changes in those who follow, can create significant changes within

schools and create a positive learning environment. The influence that principals possess in relation to teacher perceptions of the workplace environment is thus critical for success. However, not every principal is prepared to take on these types of challenges in the school.

Woods and Weasmer (2004) found that some principals attempt to shy away from challenges in the workplace and do not confront teachers with problems they may observe. This failure to influence poor behaviors or attitudes may be seen as a failure within the leadership structure, leading to a lack of trust and job satisfaction.

### **Principal's Role**

As noted many times in this study, principals play an important role as leaders of the school and they influence different functions within the schools with their behaviors, personal characteristics, and biases. Many researchers (Hughes, 1999; Matthews & Crow, 2010; McEwan, 2003; Newberry, 2005; Smith & Piele, 2006; Ubben et al. 2001) have attempted to define different characteristics of a successful principal. Though there is a wide range of characteristics listed by these researchers, there are several commonalities. Most importantly, nearly all of these studies list the following characteristics as being important: the principal as a learner, planner, visionary, politician, advocate, organizational developer, manager, leader, and agent of change. Though these characteristics are described in slightly different manners, they all demonstrate that an effective principal must embody characteristics that enable him or her to adapt to different situations.

### **Leadership Theory**

A leader is broadly defined as a “person who has commanding authority or influence” (Merriam-Webster, 2005). However, many studies relating to leadership styles (e.g., Stogdill,

1974; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bass & Stogdill, 1990), lack a clear definition of the parameters of leadership. Those researchers that do define leadership tend to do so in context of their individual perspectives and the aspects of the phenomenon of most interest to them (Yukl, 1989). This section examines different positive leadership characteristics from the literature to create a description of how leaders can get the most out of their followers.

One factor which influences an effective leadership style centers on the relationship between leader and follower. Guthrie and Reed (1991) note that these relationships depend upon several factors, including: the personal characteristics of those involved, how the leader interacts with the followers, and the situation at hand. Short and Greer (2002) took this a step further, stating that these relationships depend on situational favorableness, task specificity, leader-member relations, leader personality, and group maturity.

The ability of the leader to establish an organizational vision, to motivate and inspire others to embrace this vision, and go on to achieve these goals is possible if solid relationships are formed (Guthrie and Reed, 1991). Thus, effective leadership can translate into teacher job performance, commitment to educational goals from all involved, goal attainment, and group growth (Walsh et al., 1992). Donaldson (2001) embodied this sentiment with the following statement: “leadership satisfies a basic function for the group or organization. It mobilizes members to think, believe, and behave in a manner that satisfies emerging organizational needs, not simply their individual needs or wants” (p. 2). With leaders who embody these characteristics, it is possible for schools to meet the new demands thrust upon them by school board decisions and from state and federal governments. When a school’s principal embodies all of the positive characteristics listed above, motivation and teacher job satisfaction increase.



## Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

An examination of the factors that encourage individuals to be successful and satisfied is key to understanding what methods leaders should use to motivate their staff. In a study of engineers and accountants in Pennsylvania, Herzberg (1959) found that the factors related to job satisfaction were very different than those causing job dissatisfaction. Herzberg believes that there are motivating factors and hygiene factors that lead to dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959; Dinham & Scott, 1998). Based on these factors, he created the theory of motivation-hygiene that explains why workers are dissatisfied with their jobs (Table 2-1).

Table 2.1 - Factors Affecting Job Attitudes

<b>Factors Leading to Dissatisfaction</b>	<b>Factors Leading to Satisfaction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Company policy</li><li>• Supervision</li><li>• Relationship with leader</li><li>• Work conditions</li><li>• Salary</li><li>• Relationship with co-workers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievement</li><li>• Recognition</li><li>• Work itself</li><li>• Responsibility</li><li>• Advancement</li><li>• Growth</li></ul>

Within this theory, Herzberg discusses employees' attitudes about their work and what creates job satisfaction. Herzberg defines two types of individuals in this theory—satisfier/motivators and dissatisfier/hygiene factors. He notes that satisfiers describe themselves in terms of their relationships, how they relate to how co-workers act, and general work conditions (Table 1). Satisfiers tend to work well with their principals and other co-workers,

which leads toward professional growth. Conversely, dissatisfiers define themselves in terms of the context of particular situations and how people act in such situations. They are highly concerned with job security, company policies, pay, and personal achievement. Within both categories, if the proper conditions are not met, workers will end up dissatisfied in the workplace. If psychological growth is achieved, then satisfaction will ensue.

In a similar vein as Herzberg, Maslow (1954) developed a theory of various human needs and how people pursue these needs. These needs are described in Table 2.

Table 2.2 - Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Types of Need	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physiological</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Love and Belongingness</li> <li>• Esteem</li> <li>• Self-actualization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thirst, hunger</li> <li>• Security, protection</li> <li>• To escape loneliness, love</li> <li>• Self –respect, the respect others</li> <li>• To fulfill one’s potentialities</li> </ul>

Maslow identified five types of needs (Table 2) and stated that once one of these sets of needs is met, then they will no longer act as motivation. If a leader can identify which needs a follower has yet to fill, he or she can then use that knowledge to their advantage as a motivating cause. As these needs are met, followers need to be motivated in different ways, and it is up to an astute leader to identify the methods by which they may continue to motivate their followers. Followers will only advance when their needs are completely satisfied.

## **Principal Leadership Styles**

Principals play a pivotal role in leading their school in a positive and, one can hope, an academically successful manner. Teachers and staff tend to feel more comfortable if their principal understands their role in the school and will respond to the principal if they are motivated and inspired. For this study, it is important to understand different leadership styles employed by principals, especially when it comes to directing teachers and making major decisions that affect the school.

Because the leadership roles in a school's system are so important to the success of a school, it is not surprising that very few researchers have written in opposition of the concept of leadership abilities as they relate to principal-teacher interactions. From my own experience in different academic settings in Malaysia, I know first-hand that a good principal leadership style is important for a positive teaching environment, and this is playing out with Malaysia's NKRA policy in the school systems.

Fullan (2004) states that leadership styles have five main characteristics, including: having moral purpose, allowing for change processes, developing rational skills, and being able to achieve consistency in the workplace. If a principal is to shift the educational paradigm in a school, he or she must exude these characteristics in order to foster change and not dwell upon systems that are no longer functional. Goldman (1998) believes that these different leadership styles are deep-seated, learned behaviors.

Similarly, McBer (2000) found that leadership styles are greatly influenced by the emotional intelligence of each leader, and include attributes such as: being coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching. These six emotional

intelligences allow a principal to lead the school with soul and not merely guide teachers as if they were robots.

The study of leadership styles and their subsequent results is an important component of this study. I will briefly examine some of these leadership styles and how researchers have interpreted their effectiveness in the workplace.

Bass and Avolio (1997) found that transactional leadership can be extremely effective. However, if both transactional and transformational leadership are used together, there is a greater amount of effort given from the followers, and there is in turn higher workplace effectiveness and higher teacher job satisfaction. Additionally, Shieh et al. (2001) noted that leaders must understand the social environment of the school and must realize the needs of their employees. To meet these needs, the transactional leadership style is able to set rewards for good performance that in turn provides constructive feedback to the employee (Bass, 1999).

Using transactional leadership, the leader can motivate followers with higher goals instead of immediate self-interest, for achievement and self-actualization rather than safety and security (Murray & Feitler, 1989). Leaders give followers the capacity to develop higher levels of commitment as they relate to the organizational goals of the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Burns (1978) describes transactional leadership as one person taking action to contact another for collaboration in making something of value. The leader must satisfy the needs of his or her followers with these “valued things” and provide needed services to followers if he or she wishes them to accomplish independent objectives (Barker, 1990).

For the remaining portion of this chapter, the focus will be on several specific styles of leadership. These styles include situational, transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire.

### **Situational Leadership**

Situational leadership, as defined by Hersey and Blanchard (1988), is a theory of leadership style that states that there is no single best style of leadership. Situational leadership is task-oriented and defined around four characteristics: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. The directing characteristic is based on one-way communication, where the leader defines the role of the individuals/followers based upon specific tasks. Generally, there is little to no importance placed upon relationships, and this can be an effective leadership style when subordinates lack motivation. Principals can use this style when giving directions or instructions to teachers and when supervising staff at the school. This style is suitable when dealing with a teacher who is in their first year of teaching and is someone who requires more attention and supervision. (Edutopia , 2011).

The coaching style is also oriented around tasks, but it also focuses on relationships. There is two-way communication between the leader and followers, and this often allows for greater buy-in from the followers toward the leader's ideals or instructions. Principals can use this style to explain their decision-making process and at the same time continue to direct individuals on tasks. This leadership style is best suited for teachers that have two or three years of experience at the school. (Chell, 1995)

The supporting style focuses less on tasks and more on relationships. A principal can use this style when making decisions together with teachers and school staff.

Finally, the delegating style focuses neither on tasks nor relationships. The leader allows the followers to take on greater responsibilities and is only involved to monitor their progress. This style is most effective when the teachers and staff are very experienced and highly motivated to do well.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Burns (1978) created a theory of transformational leadership that describes leaders as being an inspirational guide to teachers and staff to achieve a higher level of morale and motivation at work. These leaders can alter the workplace, encouraging collaboration and raising the role of the follower to leader. Transformational leadership is “the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organizational members and build(s) commitment for the organization’s mission, objectives and strategies” (Yukl, 1989, p.24).

Transformational leadership refers to leaders who do not support nor emphasize empowerment within their teachers. There are four important dimensions in transformational leadership style (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass 1985) such as having consideration for the teacher, having inspirational motivation, promoting intellectual stimulation, and making individualization a priority.

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional Leadership refers to a process where there is an evolution among the leader and the follower, where the leader is not interested in the follower’s concerns or needs (Bass and Avolio, 2003, 2004). These leaders have certain skills and expect respect when leading in the organization. They tend to believe that followers are motivated by rewards or punishments. If a

follower does something good, they are rewarded; if they do something wrong, they are punished.

### **Democratic Leadership**

Democratic leadership refers to a situation where there is equal work among leaders and followers. According to Goldman (2002), democratic organizations typically have the following six characteristics: policies are determined by a group of organizations, technical and job performance measures are discussed so they are understood by all, leaders provide advice to members in regards to implementing tasks, members are free to choose with whom they work, the group determines the distribution of tasks, and leaders try to be objective in giving praise and criticism

Goldman (2000) states that leaders using a democratic style of leadership build consensus through participation, but these leaders also expect a higher level of excellence and self-direction. From my own experience I have observed that these leaders have time to listen and share ideas with their followers. They also tend to be more flexible and are responsive to one's needs. They are able to motivate teachers to participate in decision-making and are respectful.

### **Autocratic Leadership**

Autocratic leadership refers to a system that gives full empowerment to the leader with minimal participation from the followers. Yukl (1994) found that autocratic leaders tend to have the following five characteristics: they do not consult members of the organization in the decision-making process, the leaders set all policies, the leader predetermines the methods of work, the leader determines the duties of followers, and the leader specifies technical and performance evaluation standards.

Since this style of leadership usually only involves one person deciding, it permits quick decision-making. Although the autocratic style is relatively unpopular, in certain circumstances it can be an effective strategy, especially when the leader is short on time and when followers are not productive.

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership**

Laissez-Faire leadership is when leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions. With this style, freedoms are fully determined by group goals, techniques, and working methods. Leaders rarely intervene. Laissez-faire style is described by Zervas and Lassiter (2007) as the most effective style, especially where followers are mature and highly motivated.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction theory is used in this research to further define the variable of worker happiness. The importance of worker job satisfaction is a universal issue and not specific to the education sector (Cheng, 1994). Teacher and principal job satisfaction is derived from positive and/or negative relationships between principals and teachers and among administrators themselves. As leaders in the schools, principals should play a positive role in the workplace and ensure that teachers will be satisfied in their profession. The principal must understand his or her own role and how these can positively affect teachers in the workplace. If these individuals do not work in unison, teachers may not be motivated or committed to the school (Ladd, 2009). As such, an important facet of this research focuses on how teachers are motivated.

Gunn (1984), on the contrary, studied how differing types of motivation relate to an individual's workplace behavior, but not to job satisfaction. However, it is my assertion that



motivation is strongly correlated with job satisfaction and that leadership styles and workplace hygiene factors contribute to teachers' and principal job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959; Sergiovanni, 1967). With this in mind, two competing theories of job satisfaction will be discussed.

### **Teacher Job Satisfaction and Perceptions of Leadership Styles**

Job satisfaction is an important part of worker productivity in many work sectors. Hongyin (2007) found that teacher job satisfaction is greatly affected by the overall attitude of the public toward teachers and their working conditions. Teachers who are not satisfied in the workplace are more likely to leave the profession (Choy et al., 1993). If teachers can receive support from their principal and from local parents, if they are involved in the decision-making process, and if they work within a positive school climate and culture, they are more likely to succeed and remain in the profession (Lumsden, 1998).

The second part of this topic revolves around how teachers' perceptions of leadership styles impact their job satisfaction. According to Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, the word perception is defined as "a capacity for comprehension." It is defined at dictionary.com as the "recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli based chiefly on memory." Using these meanings, I will examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principal leadership styles.

The perceptions of teachers and principals are important regarding leadership styles because these two groups work closely together and the impact of these leadership styles on teacher job satisfaction should be of concern. If we can better understand the perceptions of

teachers and administrators about these different leadership styles, it will be more effective way to implement NCLB and NKRA programs.

## **Summary**

This chapter focused on theories related to principal leadership styles and how teacher perceptions of these styles affect their job satisfaction. In this chapter I gave additional background on the newly implemented education acts (NCLB and NKRA) in the United States and Malaysia and described how these pieces of legislation affect the relationship between teachers and principals. I discussed different types of schools and the differing administrator roles working in each. I also discussed several different leadership styles and then went on to examine these in relation to theories of job satisfaction. All of these factors are inter-related and are pivotal for understanding if principal leadership styles have a direct effect on teacher job satisfaction, and subsequently have an effect on how well children learn in a school system. However, the teachers in this study did not use the same terms for leadership styles that were used for this literature review. Therefore, the results will be discussed using the language of the teachers rather than focusing on leadership styles presented in the literature review.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Overview

In this chapter, I will discuss the pilot study conducted in Malaysia, the study site and design, how I conducted interviews, and finally my approach to the data analysis. This chapter will conclude by examining the trustworthiness of the data, any ethical considerations, and how this study further contributes to the field of education.

The methodology for this study is a Basic Interpretive Qualitative approach. Several researchers have discussed the benefits of using such a qualitative approach because it allows for interpretations, based on interviews, of how individuals infer their own experiences, how they construct their worldviews, and the underlying meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam-Webster, 2002). Lichtman (2006) states that qualitative research provides a deeper understanding of the human experience, while Denzin (1994) describes this approach as a “methodological revolution” that is taking place and allows for a more interpretive investigation. Qualitative researchers are deeply interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed and how they make sense of their world. For all of the above reasons, I have chosen to proceed in a similar manner (Merriam, 2002).

The methodology for this study was based on other Basic Interpretive Qualitative research (Merriam, 2002) because I feel it is important to understand how teachers and principals comprehend different workplace situations. This sentiment is summarized by Miles and Huberman (1994) in the following statement: “Words, especially when they are organized into incidents or stories, have a concrete, vivid, meaningful flavor that often proves far more convincing to a reader, other researchers, policy makers and practitioners” (p.1).

Merriam (2002) also states that with the Basic Interpretive Qualitative approach, a researcher will not only understand the meaning of the participants, but will also gain a better perspective in the styles of differing data collection methods, such as interviews, observations and document analyses. Based on this triangulation, the Basic Interpretive Qualitative approach enhances the trustworthiness of the data gleaned from the research.

There are three primary characteristics of Basic Interpretive Qualitative research including: how the researcher will strive to understand the meaning(s) behind how individuals construct their worldviews and experiences, the view that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis, and the Basic Interpretive Qualitative approach is an inductive investigative process and the product of a qualitative inquiry.

### **Research Questions**

Three primary research questions guide this study.

1. How do U.S. teachers perceive the principal's leadership style?
2. What are the different leadership styles that principals use?
3. What determines goodness and fit between a principal's leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction?

### **Researcher's Philosophy**

In this study, I use a basic interpretive approach to examine the subjective world of principal leadership styles. These subjective worlds provide insight into how the teachers perceive, experience, and construct their philosophies about the impacts of their position on others' job satisfaction. Berg (2004) states that these leadership styles have implications on the

decisions made in the research process, including one's choice of methodology. The approach selected for this study, the Basic Interpretive Qualitative approach, is rooted in constructivism, making it the most appropriate method.

Constructivism is guided by the principal that learning and understanding result in the search for meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach will illuminate the principal's leadership style as perceived by teachers, who themselves are actively constructing their experiences and needs in relation to job satisfaction. Qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon from the participants' point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) and this research study seeks to bring these perceptions to the forefront.

### **Pilot Study**

Before conducting this study in the United States, I conducted a pilot study of three different high performing schools in Malaysia: an elite school, a cluster school, and a residential school. In that study, I examined the perceptions of leadership styles and teacher job satisfaction. The pilot study further informed the direction of the investigations for this study in the United States.

The pilot study in Malaysia allowed me to see, in practice, some of the different leadership styles and behaviors of the three Malaysian school principals and how they encouraged teachers and other administrators in regards to job satisfaction. This study established a foundation upon which I could examine and interpret leadership styles in other countries and how successful, or unsuccessful, they may be when it comes to improving teacher job satisfaction.

### **Principal interview questions of pilot study.**

The interview questions for the principals in the pilot study were:

1. What is your academic background (years, degree etc)?
2. What is your teaching background?
3. What goals have been achieved at your school, specifically, since you took your position?
4. Please describe, in detail, your leadership style.
5. Please describe, in detail, your decision making style? Please provide an example of a decision you have made in the last 30 days.
6. Please describe the “power” (autonomy) that has been given to cluster school principals. Please provide an example.
7. Describe your school culture.
8. Describe your school’s work climate.
9. How would you describe your relationship with the students in your school?
10. How would you describe your relationship with the teachers in your school?
11. Please describe your role as an agent of change and your role as leader in your school.
12. Please describe your vision and mission as an administrator. In addition, please describe this from an objectives and goals perspective.

### **Teacher interview questions of pilot study.**

The interview questions for the teachers in the pilot study were as follows:

1. What is your academic background?
2. What is your teaching background?
3. Please describe your relationship with your administrators (principal, vice principal and counselor).
4. Please describe and discuss your principal's leadership style.
5. Please describe and discuss your principal's decision making style
6. Please describe and discuss the "power" (autonomy) that has been given to your principal. Please provide an example.
7. Describe your school culture.
8. Describe your school climate.
9. How would you describe your relationship with the students in your school?
10. How would you describe your relationships with other teachers in your school?
11. Please describe your responsibilities as a teacher. Please give specifics.
12. Please consider and discuss the following: Is your principal following the current vision and mission of your school? In addition, do you believe your principal has both a short-term and long-term vision and mission, and is it communicated throughout your school?

## **Study Design**

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of principal leadership style and how it impacts teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction. The schools in this study are located in the Poudre School District in Fort Collins, Colorado and are International Baccalaureate (IB) and Classical Charter schools. Most of the principals in this district were nominated for their position by the school district and/or school board. The teachers have at minimum a bachelor's degree in education and teacher licensure.

Work began by sending correspondence to several principals in the United States asking for their permission to do a pilot study and data collection. Likewise, I sought permission from the Malaysian Ministry of Education to conduct a similar pilot study in Malaysia. I intend to do a follow-up trip to Malaysia to do further documentation and data collection on the effects of the newly implemented NKRA policies on teacher job satisfaction.

## **Study Site**

A portion of this study was conducted in four schools in the Poudre School District in Fort Collins, Colorado. There are several reasons why these local schools were chosen for this study. First, I had easy access to these schools and a good working relationship with the principals. The fact that I had a good rapport with these principals is important, because for this study the principals act as "gatekeepers" for access to teacher interviews. Second, I am conducting this research at Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins, Colorado, making these schools easily accessible. Because of the proximity of the subject schools to CSU, conducting this research has proven to be extremely cost effective.

Once a school district was decided upon, I had the task of narrowing down which schools would be included in the study. The intent was to focus on schools that are either an IB or



Charter schools because they tend to be successful models. In the end, one IB elementary school, one IB middle school, one IB high school, and one Charter school were included in this study.

I took extensive field notes in all aspects of this study, as according to Glesne (2006), field notes are “primary recoding tools of the qualitative researcher” (p.55). The field notes were used for multiple purposes. I used these notes to sift through the data regarding the background of the participants, the locations of the observation, events and activities conducted by principals and teachers, and conversations (Glesne, 2006). Additionally, these field notes developed into “a place of ideas, reflections, hunches, and notes about pattern(s)” (Glesne, 2006, p.55). As recommended by Bogdan and Bilken (1992) and Glesne (2006), field notes included a descriptive memo and served as a reflexive journal for the researcher.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this study was collected through in-person interviews. The interview questions used were open-ended to allow for the opinions of the teachers about the leadership styles of their principal and how this style impacts their job satisfaction to be revealed.

### **Interviews**

In order to augment the field observations and notes, a series of questions for principals and teachers were created. The questions allow the participants to make personal statements about, not only their academic background, but also about their own leadership style(s) and how they may respond to different leadership styles.

Understanding the results of these interviews was done in the following context: 1) understanding the purpose for collecting the information, 2) the information is collected for who/what, 3) how the data are ultimately used, 4) how were the questions asked, 5) how accurate

were the responses, and finally 6) what is the benefit to the participants of the study (Patton, 2002).

At the four schools selected in the Poudre School District, interviews were conducted with three teachers who have at least one year of teaching experience at the same school with the same principal. The principals at each of the schools were also interviewed.

All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. These interviews were then transcribed verbatim. With this data, it was possible to identify the participant's themes, thoughts, opinions, and feelings about the questions.

The section on professional background focuses on the amount of teaching experience and also each participant's general teaching experiences at his or her current school. The second part looked at general principal leadership styles, the goodness and fit of principal leadership styles that positively impact teachers' job satisfaction, and principal leadership styles that negatively impact teacher job satisfaction. It was my hope that asking teachers both "how" and "why" questions would provide a deeper understanding of the effects of the positive and negative leadership style taking place in the school and its subsequent effects.

**Teacher interview questions:**

***Part A: Background (five questions):***

1. What is your academic background?
2. What is your teaching background?
3. Please describe your relationship with your principal?
4. How many years have you worked with this principal?

5. How would you describe your satisfaction as a teacher?

***Part B: Specifics about leadership style and impact to job satisfaction:***

1. Please describe and discuss your principal's leadership style.
2. How does the leadership style of a principal affect your feelings about teaching?
3. Which aspect of leadership style do you believe best supports the educational goals of the school?
4. What principal leadership styles best fit with your job satisfaction?
5. What can leadership do to improve your job satisfaction?
6. What responsibilities does the school leadership have to assure your job satisfaction?
7. How would an ideal principal lead your school and improve your satisfaction?

**Data Analysis**

Marshall and Rossman (1990) note that the qualitative analysis involves attempts to: comprehend the phenomenon under study, synthesize information and explain relationships, theorize about how and why the relationships appear as they do, and reconnect the new knowledge with what is already known:

Qualitative data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data.

(p. 111)

Each of the interviews was summarized using the Basic Interpretive Qualitative technique. The qualitative analysis involves: an attempt to comprehend the phenomenon under study, synthesize information and explain relationships, theorize about how and why the relationships appear as they do, and reconnect the new knowledge with what is already known (Ary et al., 2006, p.490).

The data analysis was conducted in accord with the Constant Comparative Method of data analysis (Creswell, 1998). The CCM uses three types of data encoding (open, axial, and selective) to gain insight into the participant's answers.

In open coding, each meaningful unit of the interview is coded and, at this stage, initial categories of information about principal leadership styles are formed. I examined the collected data, categorized information, reduced the data into smaller themes, and divided the data into segments that allowed me to look for categories and themes.

With axial coding, central phenomena are identified through the exploration of the interrelationship of categories. To assist in this effort, the open codes are organized into more abstract categories, for example, causal conditions and consequences. The axial codes were used to develop a conceptual framework for the study.

The transcribed interviews are available for review from fellow methodologists at CSU to help ensure the accuracy of the information presented. Furthermore, my academic advisor at CSU and fellow methodologist have peer reviewed the transcripts of the interviews. The methodologist also reviewed the field notes, descriptive memos, and reflexive journal. This

feedback helped to develop a better understanding of how to proceed, as well as how to improve the overall method of data collection.

### **Trustworthiness of the Data**

In any qualitative research design, it is important to verify the trustworthiness of the data collected. Creswell (1998) lists eight verification procedures that need to be considered in the trustworthiness section of any research project.

The first is peer review or debriefing. Here, there are external checks of the research process. Also, the data was reviewed by colleagues and by dissertation committee members. This study also uses an experienced researcher to conduct a peer-review and also reread the interviews to lessen the possible threat of biases and aid with data analysis.

Second is the negative case analysis. I revised the initial hypotheses until all cases fit, doing this late in data analysis. At this stage I also eliminated any outliers and exceptions from the data.

Next, researcher bias needs to be clarified. This study ensures that any readers of this research understand the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that may impact the inquiry. This was done by commenting on past experiences, biases, prejudices, or any other factors that have shaped the interpretation and approach to the study. This information is presented in Chapter 1 under "Researcher's Perspective."

This study also conducted member checks, which solicit informant's views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations. A description of the process was written about in chapter 2 under "Study Design," wherein the participants and setting under study was described in detail. Creswell (2003) suggests using a "rich, thick description to convey the findings"

(p.196), as a method for increasing trustworthiness. This presents the participants' stories through "descriptive vignettes" and allows the reader the opportunity to enter into the teachers' and administrators' points of view and hear from them the stories with their own ears.

Finally, there was an external audit. This allowed for an external consultant to examine both the processes and the product of the account, assessing their accuracy. The consultant may review the purpose statement, the research questions, and general perspective to ensure there are no problems with the study.

To supplement Creswell's methods for ensuring data trustworthiness, I also used a method of bracketing to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. "Bracketing allows the experience of the phenomenon to be explained in terms of its own intrinsic meaning, not one imposed on it from without" (Merriam, 2002, p.94). By bracketing the ideas that have been formulated and presented, I demonstrate that this study is necessary, worthy, and well informed.

Through all of these venues, I hope that the information contained herein is accurate, trustworthy, and thus, useful.

### **Ethical Considerations**

For almost all studies involving human participants, it is necessary to gain the approval to conduct the study from the researcher's Institutional Research Board (IRB). After completing the IRB procedure, researchers also must complete paperwork to gain authorization by the subject school district to do the study and collect data in the schools. Once approval was granted by the school district, a list of the names of teachers and principals that could be involved in the interview process was obtained. A simple and brief explanation of the study was given to the

proper authorities and the principals of the schools, who then helped select the teachers who met my criteria for being interviewed.

I also provided a letter of consent to the participants to ensure honesty. This letter discussed general information about the study and sought permission to ask questions. The letter also gave the participants adequate time to consider their decisions to participate in the research, stated that this is a voluntary agreement to participate in the study, and noted that participants may withdraw at any time from the study for any reason.

### **Contribution to the Field of Study**

One major goal of this study is to contribute useful, implementable knowledge to the Malaysian Ministry of Education about different leadership styles and how they can impact teacher job satisfaction. The analysis will hopefully illustrate some of the strengths of the systems in place in the United States that can in turn be used in Malaysian schools. This study will illuminate effective school system leadership and will help the Malaysian Government implement the NKRA policy and the Vision 2020 goals.

Finally, I hope to publish the results of this study in a peer-reviewed journal and present it to the Malaysian Ministry of Education, and all school principals, teachers and administrators in Malaysia.

### **Summary**

In this chapter the methods by which the data was collected, how this data was interpreted, and the manner in which reliable and trustworthy data was verified were presented. To ensure that the research and methods were adequate, I worked closely with my academic advisor and methodologist. The theoretical information from Chapter 2 was utilized to support

the data collection methods and how to analyze, interpret and process the data collected. This process allowed for the investigation of any gaps that might have existed in the methods, and in turn worked to identify any deficiencies in the research.

The review of methods and data processing techniques in this chapter should provide a narrative of the nature and significance of the problems faced in the data collection process and further demonstrates the need for this type of study, especially in Malaysia. Reasonable arguments supporting the methods and the design of the study have been presented herein so that it is possible to disseminate the findings of this study to others.



## Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

### Outline of the Chapter

This study seeks to investigate and examine the main factors for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers. Specifically, this study focuses on leadership styles of principals and how the perceptions that teachers hold of such leadership styles impact their job satisfaction. The principal's attitudes and behaviors, as the leader of the school, can significantly influence the attitudes of the staff and how the school functions (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Thus, this research concentrates on how teachers perceive their principal's leadership style, and the specific principal leadership behaviors that enhance teachers' job satisfaction.

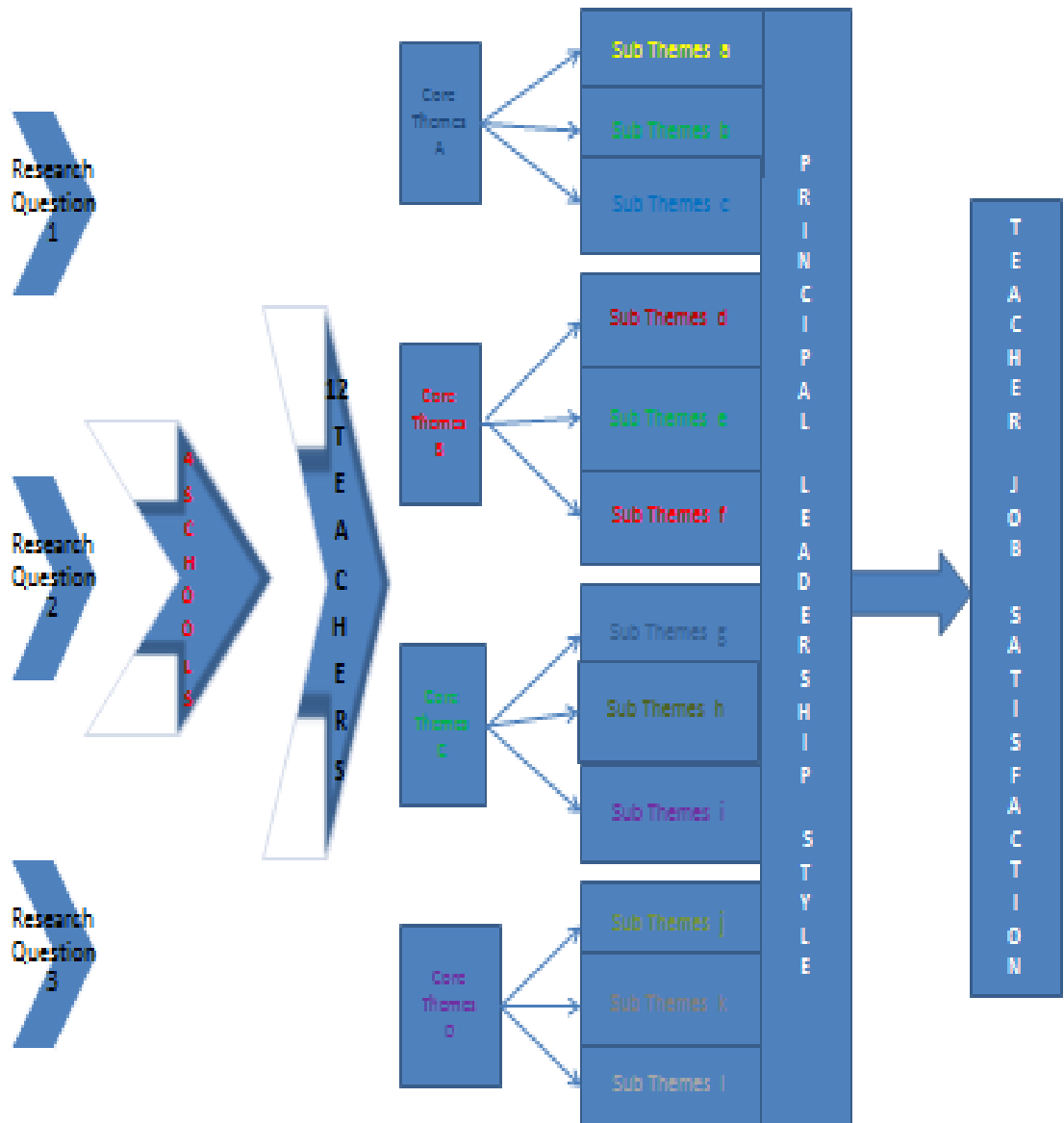
As previously stated, the three primary research questions guided this study are: how do U.S. teachers perceive the principal's leadership style, what are the different leadership styles that principals use, and what determines goodness and fit between a principal's leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction?

Data for this study was collected through interviews. The interview results revealed teachers' opinion about the leadership styles of their principal and how this style impacts their job satisfaction.

The qualitative research and data represented in Chapter 4 were compiled from twelve individual interviews. The sample population consisted of teachers from four different schools, representing three different levels of education (elementary school, middle school, and high school), which also included multiple educational disciplines within that population. Each of the teachers had one or more years of experience with the principal they described. The evidence for

my claims consists of the dialogue from these interviews and the basic interpretive method of analysis.

Table 4.1 - Description of research questions, responses, analyses, and interpretation.



## **Description of Schools**

### **School A.**

School A is one of three charter schools in Fort Collins, Colorado. Charter schools are defined by the following characteristics: publicly funded schools of choice, usually established by a group of founders, site-based management, focused on one specific philosophy, and created for a defined purpose. School A is free and publicly funded on a per pupil basis and has open enrollment through a lottery system. It was opened in 2001 and teaches all grades from kindergarten through high school. According to U.S. News and World Report using 2006-2007 data, School A was ranked the fifteenth best high school, fourth best charter school, and fourth best open-enrollment high school in the United States in. Total enrollment for the school is 770 and the high school has 208 students in 2011.

### **School B.**

School B was built in 1964 and is located in Fort Collins, Colorado. It is one of five high schools in the Poudre R-1 School District. About half of the students come from rural areas while the remainder lives in the city of Fort Collins. The attendance area is approximately the size of Rhode Island. Current in 2011 enrollment is 1,800 students. About 30 percent of students qualify for federal assistance, and about ten percent of students are English language learners. It is home to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. The IB program can be found in 141 countries. Poudre School District is authorized to offer the full IB continuum of education. The IB curriculum mandates that students study a wide range of subjects concurrently, including Language Arts, a World Language, History and Geography, Science, Math, and a sixth subject in the arts or other areas of student interest.

### **School C.**

School C is a middle school, offering grades sixth through eighth, in Fort Collins, Colorado. It houses the IB Middle Years Program. Total enrollment is 520 students in 2011. The building is divided into three smaller grade level “pods.” Each pod consists of its own level that houses students, lockers, classrooms and teachers. Shared space includes visual and performing arts classrooms, computer labs, and a technology/robotics classroom. All students have access to common space such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, and auditorium. School C’s grade level teacher teams collaborate to create an advisory structure to support every student in the school. Students are taught on a block schedule, which requires students to attend language arts and math every day.

### **School D.**

School D is an IB World School in Fort Collins, Colorado. It was authorized to offer the IB Primary Years Program in 2000. Distinctive characteristics of this program include the concepts of trans-disciplinary themes and an international student profile. It is designed for all children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Total enrollment is 425 students. Fifty five percent of students chose to be enrolled by the ‘school of choice’ program, while 20 percent are international students from 28 different countries.

## **Description of Participants**

### **Teacher 1.**

*Academic and teaching background.*

Teacher 1 has a bachelor's degree in political science from a liberal arts school in Pennsylvania, and has been teaching for approximately eleven years. Teacher 1 began teaching at School A two years ago. She teaches an elementary style sixth grade, which means she teaches all subjects except science. Teacher 1 started teaching part time in student services, which means working with students who have learning disabilities or are struggling in their classes. She helped with reading, writing, and study skills. Teacher 1 then moved into the classroom, teaching eighth and ninth grade history at an Eastern boarding school. After teaching for about six years, Teacher 1 moved to Dallas, Texas and taught sixth-grade humanities at an all-boys private school.

***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 1 is given a lot of autonomy and flexibility with day-to-day lesson plans from Principal A. They do not have a large amount of daily contact. Principal A trusts the teachers to do a good job in the classroom until proven otherwise. Teacher 1 said that if they want to do something far out of the box or make a major curriculum change, then they are expected to speak with Principal A, but otherwise they enjoy the freedom and trust of the principal. Principal A sits in on the classroom a few times per year to evaluate the teachers. He gives feedback about the class promptly, and tells the teachers what he appreciated and then makes any suggestions. He is very clear that his door is always open and he's willing to talk to the teachers if they have any questions or are bothered by something. Teacher 1 takes this opportunity occasionally and is generally satisfied by the results. Principal A leads frequent faculty meetings, and Teacher 1 participates in them.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 1 is very satisfied with her job and she loves the curriculum at School A. She feels challenged and also feels the students are challenged as well. She is excited to teach a curriculum that is deep and rich. Teacher 1 feels supported by the administration. Specifically, Teacher 1 feels that the administration wants a teacher in the classroom and not a babysitter or disciplinarian, so it is not her job to handle trouble-makers. Teacher 1 feels this system works well and that she always gets a lot of support.

## **Teacher 2.**

### ***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 2 has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a bachelor's degree in education. She has taught for five years, all at School D. Teacher 2 has been a fourth and sixth-grade teacher, a gifted and talented teacher, and is currently a fifth-grade teacher.

### ***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 2 believes she has a healthy and strong relationship with Principal D and feels there is open communication. Teacher 2 has worked for Principal D for four years.

### ***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 2 is one hundred percent satisfied as a teacher as a whole and there is nothing else she would rather do. While Teacher 2 said there are things that can be improved about the job, she enthusiastically believed she was teaching at the exact school and grade level that was a perfect fit.

## **Teacher 3.**

***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 3 teaches Latin and Ancient Greek language and history. Learning Greek and Latin started in high school, and then Teacher 3 majored in classics at a Catholic University in Massachusetts. This meant studying Greek and Latin every semester and also spending a semester abroad in Rome. This was followed by a master's degree at the University of Chicago in humanities.

Teacher 3 was then hired at a small, private school in Rhode Island to teach Latin. He spent three years developing the program, then decided to move to Colorado. He landed a job teaching Latin in a Colorado Springs charter school. He taught the same class six days a week. While Teacher 3 expressed frustration about the lack of variety, he also said it enabled him to develop a clear teaching style and way of presenting the language. Teacher 3 then taught for a year at a traditional public high school in Colorado Springs. After that experience, Teacher 3 was hired at School A and started the Latin program from the ground up.

***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 3's relationship with Principal A started ten years ago when Principal A was still a teacher. They both taught the same course of classical literature to ninth-graders when Teacher 3 began teaching at the school. They started a book group together and spent evenings together discussing books, how to teach, and how to do it better. Teacher 3 was on the committee that chose to hire Principal A four years ago. Teacher 3 said that the relationship had to change because Principal A went from being a colleague to a boss, but very little really did change. He feels completely comfortable going into Principal A's office anytime to ask him about anything. Teacher 3 said Principal A is approachable and a great listener. Principal A puts down what he

is doing and gives the teachers full attention when they come into his office. Teacher 3 feels he can go in and talk to Principal A's office any time of day and for any issue and the principal handles it quickly. Teacher 3 likes Principal A's style and feels he is efficient, the faculty meetings are focused, he is a fair boss and strong leader, and someone to look to for how to be a better teacher.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 3 feels lucky to have a job that he enjoys so much and gives him so much satisfaction. He said there is nothing he would rather do.

**Teacher 4.**

***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 4 has a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from a small liberal arts school. He is currently in the midst of a master's degree from a local university. The program is a mathematics teacher leadership program focused for secondary math teachers. Teacher 4 came to School A immediately after earning a bachelor's degree and has been teaching for six years.

***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 4 worked with Principal A for three years as a colleague and then for three additional years working under him as principal. They are on friendly terms and Teacher 4 respects Principal A. He feels he can talk to the principal about teaching, and their families are acquainted on a social level.

***Job satisfaction.***



Teacher 4 loves his job, though not every aspect, and is very happy.

### **Teacher 5.**

#### ***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 5 has a bachelor's degree from Colorado State University in English. She began substitute teaching for five years and spent one semester as a long-term substitute teacher in a high school. She also taught one semester of English and Math at a junior high. Teacher 5 has been teaching English and Drama at School C for six years. For the first year, Teacher 5 was a paraprofessional writing coach.

#### ***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 5 calls her relationship with Principal C mutually respectful. Principal C was a mentor to her about how things should be run, how to get things done, and other useful training. Teacher 5 has worked for Principal C for four years.

#### ***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 5 said they have learned a lot and she has grown as a teacher. She appreciated all the training and advice but still felt stress and anxiety about wanting to do the right thing and do a good job. She felt like she was never quite sure if she was doing well enough.

### **Teacher 6.**

#### ***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 6 has a bachelor's degree in Recreational Therapy and a master's degree in Special Education from Connecticut universities. Teacher 6 spent ten years in Special Education

as a specialist for children with learning disabilities. It is his second year teaching sixth-grade English at School C.

***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 6 worked with Principal C for three years. He said they have a good relationship with a common vision and he respected Principal C for her work ethic and talents. He said that School C was losing a lot of students to schools of choice but Principal C improved the school and marketed the school to the community and changed the negative perception.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 6 is happy with his job and feels that last year was his best year in education when he moved to regular education in sixth-grade English. He has been able to work collaboratively with another teacher. He said he definitely feels pressure, but he enjoys the students and the job.

**Teacher 7.**

***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 7 is a graduate from School B and is now in his sixth year teaching in the Social Studies department at the same school. He began his undergraduate degree at a junior college and then transferred to a four-year university and majored in American history. He then received his teaching certificate and is currently finishing an Educational Leadership Master's degree through a local university.

***Relationship with principal.***

Principal B was Teacher 7's teacher and football coach when he attended School B. Principal B was an assistant principal when Teacher 7 began teaching six years ago. He has worked under Principal B for three years while he was assistant principal and now for three years as principal. He describes their relationship as "awesome." Teacher 7 does not feel ready for an administration role, but said he would do it if Principal B wanted him to because of their relationship and how much he respects the principal. While this is the only school he has taught at, he believes in the administration team and thinks they are highly supportive of the teachers.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 7 said there was nothing more satisfying than teaching. While teachers don't make much money, he said this was a positive thing in a way because it keeps people from doing it for the wrong reasons. He loves teaching because he thinks it is the best way to have an impact on future generations, regardless of their country of origin. He said, "Satisfaction is more important than money."

**Teacher 8.**

***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 8 received a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics with a concentration in Education in 2005 and has been teaching ever since. Teacher 8 also finished up a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from a local university as well. He started student teaching at School B. He was hired the following year to teach math and AVID, a support class to get students on track for college. It is his seventh year teaching at School B.

***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 8 shares a close professional and personal relationship with Principal B. Teacher 8 coached basketball when Principal B was an assistant principal and football coach. Principal B was never Teacher 8's evaluator during this time; now, Teacher 8 has worked directly for Principal B for two years. Teacher 8 describes Principal B as personable and approachable. He feels he can bounce ideas off of the principal and know that he will listen and be responsive. Principal B provided encouragement, advice and support for Teacher 8 as he pursued his educational leadership degree, despite knowing that Teacher 8 might someday leave the school. Principal B's support has encouraged Teacher 8 to pursue other things and become a leader in his own right.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 8 is highly satisfied working at School B. He knew he wanted to work there immediately after student teaching. He feels that the support, encouragement, and leadership that is given to the teachers makes it a great place to work. He said the administration is very trusting of the teachers, and at the same time, holds everyone accountable to do their job to the fullest.

**Teacher 9.**

***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 9 has a bachelor's degree from a local university in History, and is almost done with a master's degree in School Library Media Specialist through another local university. It is Teacher 9's sixth year teaching. His first three years were spent at a High School in Fort Morgan teaching every history subject. Teacher 9 is now in his first year teaching computer classes after teaching history for two years at School C.

***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 9 describes his two-year relationship with Principal C as very good. He said they connect on technology and that is why he was likely hired. Principal C puts a lot of importance on technology and she liked what he did with it while teaching History. They do not have a social relationship outside of school.

***Job satisfaction.***

Being a teacher has its ups and downs for Teacher 9, but it has more highs. He described the highs coming when the kids are responsive and engaged in the lesson and are excited about learning, while the lows came from flat lessons. While he always has good days with the faculty and principal, he bases the overall quality of his days on how it goes with the students.

**Teacher 10.**

***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 10 has a liberal arts degree from a California university. She now works at School C but started teaching in California to second-graders for about five years, then Kindergarten and third grade. Teacher 10 has been teaching for 21 years.

***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 10 and Principal C share a positive professional relationship characterized by mutual kindness and high expectations. Principal C is always willing to help solve any problems with children or parents. They have worked together for four years.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 10 had extremely high job satisfaction when she started but feels the government involvement has made it more difficult. She feels that the standards are fine but that more and more gets added without more time to address them. This makes it harder to reach kids because of the pace and variety. She still loves teaching and still gets excited by the children, but she thinks the high expectations are hard on them.

Teacher 10 feels that the government has thrown a lot of expectations onto schools with the No Child Left Behind laws but no funding to accomplish them. She noted that when her school received an ‘excellent’ rating, their funding was taken away, while the reason they scored so high was from that additional funding.

#### **Teacher 11.**

##### ***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 11 has two bachelor’s degrees, one in communication and one in elementary education with Spanish from an Illinois university. She is currently finishing a master’s degree in English Language Linguistics and Bilingual education through an online program. Teacher 11 first taught fourth grade for five years, then pre-school in Switzerland for two years, and has now been teaching English Language Arts at School D for five years. Teacher 11 has taught for over ten year’s total.

##### ***Relationship with principal.***

Teacher 11 described her three-year relationship with Principal D as being “pretty good.” She feels Principal D is “supportive and approachable,” but sometimes feels she is not trusted or respected for her knowledge of the job.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 11 loves teaching and finds it rewarding, noting that the kids teach her a lot. She feels that teaching isn't valued enough in our society as demonstrated by the lack of adequate pay. She continues to teach for the other rewards, not the money.

**Teacher 12.**

***Academic and teaching background.***

Teacher 12 has a bachelor's degree in Spanish with a teacher certification in Spanish from a local university. She also has a master's degree in teaching English as a second language. Teacher 12 is a certified Spanish, as well as an English Language Acquisition teacher and has been at School B for nine years. Teacher 12 has been teaching in Poudre School District for ten years.

***Relationship with principal.***

Prior to working with Principal B for two years as a principal, Teacher 12 also worked with Principal B when he was assistant principal. She describes their relationship as "very open and comfortable." Principal B is supportive of her program and needs and he is "easy to approach." She admires Principal B as a person for his honesty and directness.

***Job satisfaction.***

Teacher 12 loves teaching, but feels "undervalued," not at the school administration level but at the district level and by the community. She feels that teachers are becoming seen as the "bad guys" and her feelings about teaching are becoming more pessimistic and frustrated. Every

year, she said that “teachers are asked to do more with less.” She feels highly satisfied with the staff at School B and feels supported by the administration. While the paychecks are never satisfying, she became a teacher to make a difference and help kids.

## **Thematic Results**

The inductive analysis of the interviews produced a thematic structure consisting of four core themes with associated sub-themes. *Communication* is the first core theme, with the following sub-themes: a) good communicator, articulate, can clearly communicate vision, b) good listener, and c) can clearly communicate expectations. *Democratic leadership* is the second core theme, with the following sub-themes: d) autonomy in the classroom, e) transparency, and f) democratic leader; visionary. The third main theme reflects *trust and respect*, with the following sub-themes: g) trust in the teachers to perform/little micromanagement, h) trust in teacher’s professionalism, and i) respect for the principal and from the principal. The last core theme is *support*, with the following sub-themes: j) is an advocate for the school and staff members, k) continually supports and encourages the staff members and students, and l) relationship driven; with students and staff members. The following analysis explores each of these themes in more detail.



## Thematic Structure

### A) Communication.

Table 4.2 - Core theme and sub themes for communication



The teachers in this study overwhelmingly agreed that communication between teacher and principal, and between the district levels to the teacher through the principal, is vitally important. For this study, the core theme of communication is broken into three sub-themes of: a) being an articulate communicator who can clearly communicate the principal's vision, b) being a good listener and c) the ability to clearly communicate expectations. While these sub-themes can overlap, teachers' answers will be explored through these categories.

*a) Articulate, good communicator, clearly communicate vision.*

This sub-category analyzes how well a principal can speak and be articulate with teachers. A good principal can convey a vision of how the school should be run effectively to the teachers. The teachers in this survey showed that it is not only words that make an articulate and good communicator, it is also the tact with how these words are spoken that is also important to teacher's job satisfaction.

Teacher 4 described a communicative principal as, "Someone that can articulate the vision of the school, the purpose of the school, [...] we have a very clear philosophy at our school here, and clear aims and clear means for our aims." Teacher 4 said the principal also must articulate this vision, not only to the teachers, but to the community and the rest of the faculty as well. A principal needs "That rhetorical flare to get everyone on board."

Despite feeling that he is underpaid, Teacher 4 is satisfied with his salary because there is clear communication from the board through the principal. He said, "I am convinced that the school is paying me the most that it can and that the school is valuing the faculty in doing everything they can to increase our pay when it is possible." If communication were not as clear, pay could be a source of dissatisfaction for this and other teachers at the school.

Teacher 6 said that transparency and communication are the most important qualities for an effective leader. He said, "You can never communicate too much with people, whether it's with staff, students, parents – having all levels on board is huge, and it all comes down to effective communication." Teacher 7 said something similar, "More communication from leaders will always improve job satisfaction with teachers." While Teacher 7 was satisfied with his principal's level of communication, he said, "I think every educational leader can do a better

job at communicating the changes taking place, communicating this is where we're headed and why."

***b) Good listener.***

Teacher 7 pointed out that while it is good for a principal to be a good communicator, listening is the other half of effective communication:

Communication goes both ways; obviously, it can't be a one-way street. Good educational leaders are good listeners as well as good speakers and are good at communicating what they're after, but at the same time they must be able to communicate to their teaching staff where they're coming from so that they can be effective.

Teacher 8 praised Principal B's ability to listen and quiet leadership style:

He is a very silent leader; he's not one that's trying to get recognition. He's very quiet and listens, and he absorbs everything around him before he makes a decision. You can tell he earnestly listens when you're talking to him, he takes it in, and he evaluates all side of the situation before he makes a decision. He's a great listener. When I say that he's a silent leader, silent just means that he listens before he speaks. The communication with the staff is great. [...] He's a very eloquent speaker and doesn't say anything lightly. There's nothing flippant about what he says; it's very thought-out. If he's going to say it, you want to listen because it will be impactful.

Teacher 3 also liked that he was sure that Principal A was listening:

I find him to be very approachable; he's a great listener. As soon as I walk into his office, he puts down what he's doing and gives me his full attention. I can go in there any time of day when he's free, and any time there's been an issue, he deals with it quickly.

Teacher 11 did not feel the same way about her principal's listening skills, "Sometimes I feel like our principal is listening, but she's not really hearing what we're saying. She might have us all tell her how we feel, but she's not using that information." This lack of communication meant that "Sometimes the expectations aren't clear or realistic."

*c) Can clearly communicate expectations.*

All the teachers felt that one of the most important messages a principal must communicate is the expectations for the teachers' performance. Teacher 11's comments demonstrate that clear communication, both speaking and listening, is important so that expectations can be fully understood, but she felt this was not always the case for her. Not only must expectations be clear, Teacher 11 explained it is important for a principal to do this in a non-autocratic way. She said:

It's important to be a clear communicator with expectations and more of a guider or facilitator, not a king or queen. It's important to be more collaborative because we are a big part of this ship [...] and if we're in charge of getting it where it needs to be, then we need to be on the same page of how to get there, what direction we need to take.

Teacher 5 also explained that she expected any principal she works for provide clear expectations and support in meeting them:

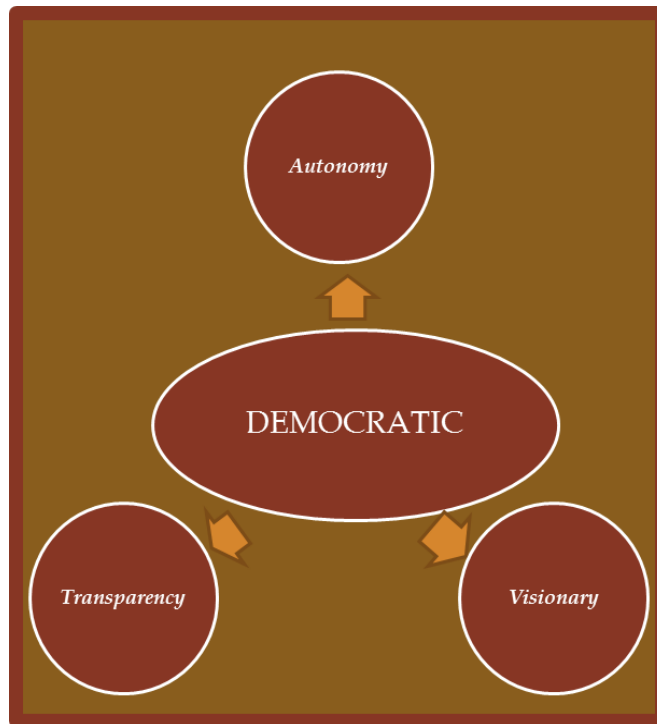
Be clear about what's expected, provide support, if a teacher couldn't do what was expected, then to help them get there, and to trust the staff. They must also know the general population, the public, what's going on there so that any issues that might affect the school would be addressed.

Teacher 12 felt a lack of strong communication between the administration and teachers affected her job satisfaction. This came from the administration not being clear and firm on what was expected. She said:

They need to say that certain things aren't in the best interest of the staff or students, and take a firmer stance. There needs to be more communication with teachers about how teachers are doing, if they can handle all of this, and the emotional and social needs of the teachers.

## B) Democratic leader.

Table 4.3 – Core theme and sub-themes for democratic leader



The second main theme looks at how a principal leads the teachers and staff. Do principals use an inclusive and democratic style or is it more autocratic and dictatorial? It seems most teachers do not break leadership styles into simple democratic or autocratic terms. Teacher 8 said, “Autocratic and democratic aren’t common terms in this district, maybe even this state. I learned about them this year, but they’re not thrown around among teachers.” Instead, this theme is broken in to three sub-themes: d) Autonomy in the classroom, e) Transparency, f) Democratic Leader; visionary.

*d) Autonomy.*

This sub-category explores the individual freedom and decision-making power a principal gives teachers in the classroom. While all of the teachers surveyed expressed a need for clear and specific expectations, they also want some level of freedom to accomplish these expectations. Most said freedom in the classroom led to more creativity and higher job satisfaction.

Teacher 1 spoke at length about the level of autonomy Principal A allowed:

[Principal A] gives us a lot of autonomy, so, in a way, we don't see a lot of each other because when he hired me, his expectation was that I was fully qualified and that I am a professional. Unless he knows otherwise, he believes and trusts us to do a good job in the classroom. So we have a lot of autonomy and flexibility with day-to-day lesson plans. If there are major curriculum changes, or I want to do something that's really out of the box, I know that I should go and speak with him about it, but I enjoy the freedom and the trust that he has in me as a teacher. I like the flexibility and the freedom and the feeling that I get from my principal, that I am trusted and that he believes in me. That gives me a lot of confidence to be creative and challenge myself as well as challenging the students; take some chances.

Teacher 1 said Principal A's approach was to hire people he believed were professional and then give them autonomy. Teacher 1 said, "I think that is an ideal situation as a classroom teacher, and he exemplifies this quality."

Teacher 4 described the level of autonomy and trust from the principal and administration he wanted in a similar way, "Give me the freedom and say we trust you as an intelligent adult

with good judgment to do things correctly. If we see problems we will come to you with them, but otherwise we will give you that freedom to operate as I see fit for my classroom.”

Teachers want autonomy, but they also want support. Teacher 8 explained the benefits of his principal’s approach:

He leaves us alone in the sense that he trusts us and we’re going to go forward with it, but there’s always follow up, saying “What do you need? How can I help you in this; how can I support you in this?” It gives me the courage to take risks and to explore different options, which then, for me individually, being able to do what I want in the classroom is phenomenal because I know that they trust me if I want to try something new.

Teacher 10 expressed some dissatisfaction from a lack of freedom, She said, “[Principal C] micromanages us, which, as professionals, we could have a little more freedom; she could trust us a little more.”

*e) Transparency.*

This sub-category is about how honest and straightforward the principals were with the teachers. Teacher 7 explained the importance of transparency:

I think it’s very important for educational leaders to be transparent with what they do, and be honest and open and up front with everything that’s happening above and below them. It’s a difficult position to be in because you’re having the district leadership put certain requirements on you, and you have to sell stuff to your staff that you don’t necessarily believe in. But I think it’s important to be transparent and let them know where things are coming from and be honest with them. It’s a fine line to balance – being



honest with them and still being politically correct in your job. It's very similar to current leadership. So transparency is huge to me.

*f) Democratic leader; visionary.*

This sub-category relates to how well the principal is able to make the teachers feel included in the decision-making process. A democratic leader is the principal who uses a democratic style of leadership who builds consensus through participation, and who also expects a high level of excellence and self-direction. These kinds of leaders have time to listen and share ideas with their followers. They also tend to be more flexible and are responsive to one's needs. They are able to motivate teachers to participate in decision-making and are very respectful. A visionary leader describes how well the leader thinks "out of the box" for the school's future.

Teacher 2 praised Principal D's democratic leadership style:

We always discuss big decisions together and we always are allowed to have our input. Obviously, like any democratic society, our choices aren't always what we get, but we have our say and I think we're heard. And that's very important to know that we're heard whether we get our way or not, that's democracy, and that doesn't always happen. But that's a really powerful piece of the school and her leadership.

Teacher 4 explained the importance of democratic leadership from the principal and other teachers:

It's clear among ourselves that some folks know a lot more than the rest of us, but at the same time everybody is equally respected, their opinions are valued, and it is assumed that everyone is a highly intelligent individual. I think that supports one of the goals of the school, to create a sort of intellectual community among the faculty in a tight knit

community that then I think overflows into the classrooms. If you have a lot of satisfied intellectuals teaching then they are going to do a better job, which is my understanding.

Teacher 5 explained that schools need different leadership styles based on what condition the school was in. He felt that when his school was faltering, it needed someone to come in and make decisions and take charge. But, once the school was turned in a positive direction, a democratic approach became more effective:

Sometimes it depends on the stage that the school is in. When our school was really faltering we needed someone to come in and make decisions in order for us to progress and now that we have a solid staff here and we have more students in the building and our school is in a better place I think now we can have a leadership style where the staff can be more involved in making decisions; more of a democracy and less of a dictatorship.

### C) Trust and respect.

Table 4.4 – Core theme and sub-themes for trust and respect



Trust and Respect comprise the third main theme. This theme is explored further by examining it in three sub-themes: g) trust from the principal in the teacher's ability to perform, h) trust in teachers professionalism, i) respect for and from the principal.

#### ***g) Trust by the principal in the teacher's ability.***

Trust seems to be interrelated with autonomy, as a principal is likely to give more autonomy to teachers they trust and teachers are more likely to respect principals who give them autonomy.

Teacher 4 described Principal A following the idea that “I trust all of you because I hired all of you because I think you are intelligent and because I think you can do the job and so now let’s do it.” Teacher 4 said he liked the trust that Principal A gave him, “He tends to trust me to do my job and does it well. He trusts that I am making good decisions, at the same time he observes classes and things like that.”

Teacher 2 discussed trust being important to her job satisfaction and more trust would raise her satisfaction. She said, “Trust us a little bit more and trust that we as teachers know what we’re doing and let us do that. Most of the time that is the case and she trusts us to manage ourselves.” Specifically, she wanted trust from the administration by:

Allowing us to make curriculum decisions based on what we know about our kids. As a country we buy these curriculums, and they’re one-size-fit-all curriculums, and our kids aren’t one-size-fit-all, and we kind of get shoe-horned into these curriculums that we’re supposed to use that don’t work for our kids all the time.

Teacher 8 said there was mutual trust with Principal B and the administration, “They are very trusting of the teachers, but at the same time I cannot just sit by. They trust me and hold me accountable to do my job to the fullest.” He also trusts the principal, “I know I can trust him when a decision is made that he has looked at all the different outcomes, looked at all the parties – the students, the teachers, the school – and how it’s going to affect them, and he usually chooses the best way to go forward for all of them.” Teacher 8 gave an example of this mutual trust in implementing a new math program for students who were failing.

Principal C impacted teacher 10’s job satisfaction because she didn’t feel completely trusted in her abilities:

I feel like I'm a good teacher, but I'm not quite sure she trusts me because she has to be at every meeting. I do have full range in here, but when she walks in I get nervous that I might not be doing what I'm supposed to. Part of it is that I don't know her feelings. With my last principal, I would get nervous, but I also knew that she thought I was a good teacher and trusted me. It's that trust that I'm not quite sure of because of the micromanaging. I have been teaching for 21 years.

She probably does trust us; I just don't feel it. Maybe she could show it a little differently and not be at every meeting. She's always right there. Some teachers feel afraid to take the next step because they're not sure what she'll think, so they don't know where to go. If they don't feel like she totally trusts them, they can't just go and take the next step.

Teacher 11 said she felt supported by Principal D and could always approach her with a question or problem, but didn't always feel trusted or respected for her knowledge of the job:

Sometimes we feel we're not a part of the decision making process. Sometimes we use the word micromanaged – every five minutes we're supposed to be doing something. Sometimes we don't feel respected. I know how to do my job; I don't need to be told what to do every five minutes. That sometimes brings feelings that you're not respected or valued as a professional, and it can lead to distrust, mistrust. I don't think that's the intention, but that's how it feels. I don't think that's what she means to happen, but it's what ends up happening. The feelings are negative, unfortunately.

*h) Trust in teachers' professionalism.*

This sub-category explores the principals' trust in the teachers' professionalism. This category largely overlaps with trust in teachers' abilities. Most of the teachers talk about trust from the principal being very important because they are not expecting to be controlled 100 percent of the time by the principal during school hours. They need full trust from the principal for their decision making in the class room and sometimes during the staff meetings. Trust creates a good climate in schools, especially in the relationship among principals and teachers. Teachers feel more comfortable and satisfied at school if the principal trusts their professionalism without any doubt.

Teacher 6 listed trust in his professionalism as important to job satisfaction, "I want someone who is going to have a certain amount of trust in me to do my job and to treat me as a professional." Teacher 8 said that trust in his professionalism was also important to job satisfaction:

Being a satisfied teacher means that I'm being acknowledged as an educator as well as for the things we're doing well. With [Principal B] not expecting me to do something he wouldn't do, it gives me the courage to take risks and to explore different options, which then, for me individually, being able to do what I want in the classroom is phenomenal because I know that they trust me if I want to try something new.

Teacher 4 said that Principal A's trust made him want to be a better teacher:

He puts so much confidence in me and trusts that I can do the job well, then I want to rise to meet those expectations. It gives me a feeling more that teaching has an expertise and art behind it. That it's something that is worthwhile that I put all my effort into. It tends

to elevate the position in my mind because he has an elevated view of what I am capable of.

Teacher 9 said it was important for principals to understand that teachers have lives outside of the building, with families and other activities, and not have a 24-hour-a-day expectation at school. He said, “I’m not saying to show up at eight and leave at three every day, but know that we have lives and trusting us to be professionals is important.”

Teacher 11 did not feel fully satisfied about these out of school expectations:

Sometimes it’s expected that you’re going to work late or come to a function after school. When you have your own kids with their activities, it’s difficult. I think it’s her job to be really clear with the expectations and help us work as a team and take advantage of each other as resources.

***i) Respect for and from the principal.***

This sub-category explores the aspect of respect, both for the principal from the teachers and from the principal towards the teachers. Mutual respect seems to be an underlying key factor in a principal and teacher relationship. Teachers want to respect their principal’s moral character and intellect, while also wanting to feel that the principal respects their knowledge of the job and decision-making abilities.

Teacher 1 was quoted at length about Principal A’s trust and autonomy in the autonomy section. He also discussed his respect for the principal because he felt that Principal A still related to the teachers, while he felt some administrators were too far removed from the classroom:

At the same time, he himself is a teacher in the classroom, and I know a lot of principals aren't, and I think we all respect that, that he still understands our situation because he himself is teaching in the classroom whereas a principal who is only an administrator and was maybe twenty years ago a classroom teacher sometimes they lose contact or understanding of what it's like to be a classroom teacher.

Obviously, we have a respect for the position, but at the same time he is certainly more one of us. He is a very humble person if you get to know him. He doesn't come across as being demanding, he doesn't act like he is superior to the teachers. He is very respectful; he commands respect, but at the same time he's not arrogant about his position. I feel respected by him, and I don't feel as if he talks down to the faculty. I feel less distance from him than from somebody who walks around with the badge "I'm the principal and I'm better than you and you need to follow what I say all the time." That would be a turn off to me. He's not that way at all.

At the same time, it's very clear, though, that he's the decision maker, and he's not afraid to make a hard decision because just like a teacher can't be friends with their students; there needs to be some distance there, some level of authority and therefore some respect that goes upward. There is with him, and he's able to make the hard decision when he needs to and it's very clear that he does. I don't feel that he's arrogant about it, and that lack of arrogance is important.

Teacher 3 also spoke of his respect for Principal A, but he gave an example from a previous school where the principal was not respected:



When the principal stood up to address the group, nobody stopped talking. There were still conversations going on at the tables. The lack of respect that people would continue to talk while the principal addressed them really surprised me. As I got to know that principal I really understood why. She didn't command the faculty's respect, they didn't regard her as an intelligent person, and the school had such problems with discipline and lack of rigor that principal, to me, wasn't even there.

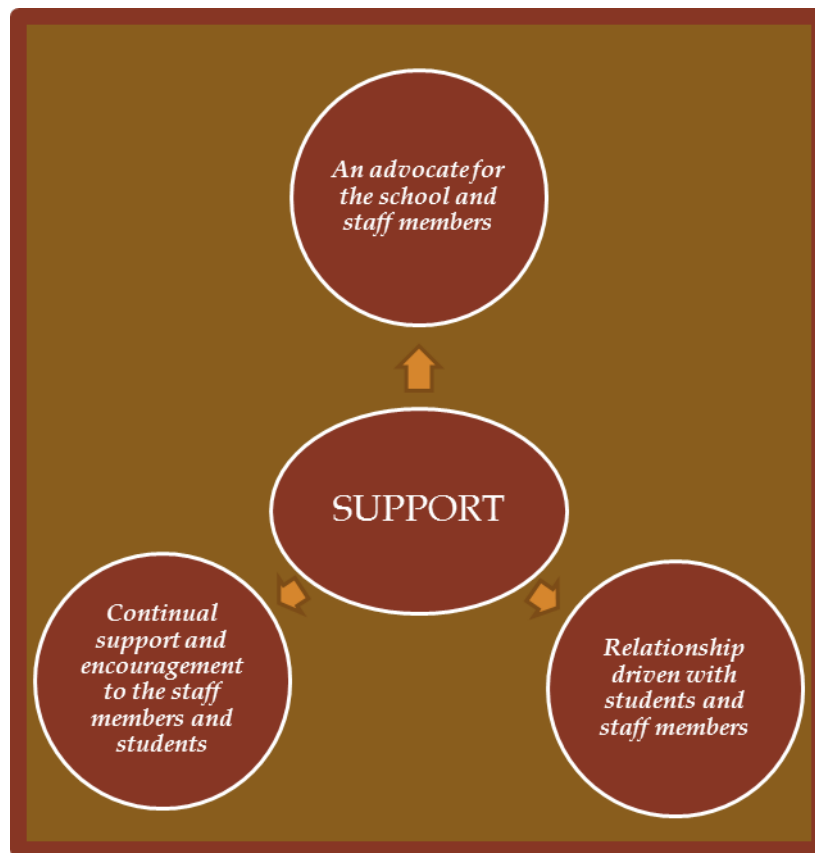
Teacher 3 also gave a good description of what he looked for in a principal and explained the importance of respecting the principal if he were going to change schools:

I like a strong leader that I can rally behind, support his person, and don't question his ability. I like the feeling of 'liking' my principal. When I don't respect a principal, I am embarrassed by the school. If I were interviewing looking for different schools, I would be looking into the principal to see if it is someone I can be proud of. It's important to know that the figurehead has to represent the quality of the school. If I am adding quality to the school, I don't want a principal that I think less of. It is very important to me to respect my principal as a good human being, as an intelligent human being, and that I depend on a leader to be someone who is going to give me a sense of pride.

Teacher 5 felt her relationship with Principal C was mutually respectful, "She was a mentor to me about a lot of things, how certain things should be run, how to get things done, and she provided a lot of training that was very useful to me." Teacher 5 said that while she was able to work with a little more trusting relationship with the principal that was not the case with the whole staff. She said, "Me, I was fine; it ultimately didn't affect me, but other staff members didn't feel trusted to have a say because with a visionary some people want more of a say."

## D) Support.

Table 4.5 – Core theme and sub-themes for support



Support is the last main theme and looks at how much the teachers feel supported by the principal. Teacher 6 said, “Teachers do perform better when they are satisfied and feel supported by the principal.” This support is broken into three sub-themes: j) the principal as an advocate for the school and staff members, k) continual support and encouragement to the staff members and students, l) relationship driven with students and staff members.

*j) An advocate for the school and staff members.*

This sub-category focuses on how well the principal is an advocate for the school and staff members. The principal must present the best face and market the school to the community, and the principal must also support the staff and be their advocate to the district level.

Teacher 6 talked about how School C was not seen as a good school, but Principal C is working to change the perceptions:

An ideal principal is someone that is going to get out in our community, markets our school, and promotes our school. There are many bad misconceptions in our community about our school and we need someone that is going to go out and invite them to come to take an active role in their school instead of choosing away.

Before [Principal C] came in we had a lot of our students choosing to go to other schools who lived in this neighborhood; some of our really high achieving kids were choosing to go other places for different reasons. One of our goals as a school was to get the kids who live in this area to come back to our school and show them that this is a good place to go. With her leadership style, she really promoted the school well to the community. I think she promoted [School C] better than any principal ever had. She took a school where students were leaving year after year, and when she came in, that was the major issue: How do we make [School C] not be the bad school; how do we show them? [...] In the last three years we've seen numbers just go up, and students from all over the city are choosing to go here.

Teacher 7 thought that Principal B's leadership style was very similar to how his own style would be if he were a principal. He added, "Maybe that's the modeling I've witnessed

that's effective, and I see how that works and that's what I want to do as a principal." Teacher 7 spoke about the importance of a supportive administrative team, "As an administrative leader, I would want to make sure that I am supporting my staff in doing what's best for my staff first. If they don't feel supported by me, then they're not going to run through walls for me and do what I need to get done."

He felt that he was getting this support from his school and it made him work harder:

Because of their support for what I do, it makes me work harder to strive to help students be successful and help them achieve more because I know I'm going to have support from my admin. It makes me work harder. If there were no support from my administration, then I would have some negative feelings about teaching. I don't think I would come to work every day to help students achieve their goals if I don't feel supported from the top. If I had issues with a specific student, whether it be disciplinary or support through conversations I was having with parents for them that weren't going positively, those are the kind of things I would not feel hesitant about going to our admin about.

I think support, creating a culture and climate where we know that we have full backing from our admin team and we know that they support what we do in our classroom, and they have our backs. That culture and climate are very important to creating an effective environment for teaching, so I think that's the number one responsibility – creating the perception for teachers that the admin is behind them and supports them. At times, it feels like, with educational leaders, they are supporting staff, but sometimes the staff doesn't perceive that they are being supported. It almost matters

less what's in actuality than the teacher's perception. The teacher's perception is everything, whether you're being supported or not, if you don't feel like you're being supported, you're not doing your job. So perception is huge. Teacher's perception and the belief that they feel they are being supported is as important or more important than if they are actually being supported or not.

Teacher 2 felt that Principal D's leadership style was best for her school and she felt supported:

Her leadership style of being in the know of everything – not the micromanaging piece, but being open and aware of everything that's going on – best supports what's going on in the school and also brings us together as a school because she knows all of the details that are going on, so it brings us together as a community. We know that she takes very seriously her responsibility of being our mentor, our support system at the district level.

Teacher 10 praised Principal C for her efforts to support the teachers to implement new materials and giving them time to work it out. She also said that Principal C was good at getting the resources that the teachers need:

Our principal is really good getting what you need; she is great with the new reading series and standards. She's been phenomenal with the resources, and that's very important. She is wonderful in that. She's very supportive, and she'll figure out a way to get money if you need it. I like a principal who thinks of the kids first; that's very important, and she definitely does. That's why we're here; if it's best for kids, do it. And she definitely supports us in that.

*k) Continual support and encouragement to the staff members and students.*

This sub-theme looks at how principals provide continual support and encouragement to the staff members and students. The type of support and encouragement needed seems to vary widely and principals must know what is appropriate for the moment.

Teacher 1 mentioned the support he received from the administration with trouble-makers, which allowed him to focus on teaching. He said:

It's not my job to handle that; my job is to be teaching the other students who are not the trouble-maker, and we remove the trouble-maker and send them to the assistant principal. And that's works quite well, and I get a lot of support that way.

Teacher 3 said that affirmations of a job well done when merited increased his job satisfaction. He said:

I appreciate when a principal sees my students are doing well. When I respect my principal, I respect my principal's opinion so I appreciate hearing I am doing a good job. So I like a leader who is paying attention to what I'm doing and will both affirm and offer suggestions for improvement.

Teacher 4 said he felt encouraged by his principal because he was provided resources:

He provides subscriptions to mathematical journals, not because it is helpful in the classroom, but helpful to me as a learner. He encourages us to talk with one another, collaborate on projects; he does everything in his power to avoid divisiveness, to try to keep teachers from competing against each other.

Teacher 8 talked about how Principal B supported his professional advancement, even if it might be detrimental to the principal in the long run because the teacher may leave the school.

Teacher 8 said:

As I've pursued my educational leadership degree this last year [Principal B] provided a lot of great encouragement, advice and support for me as a leader knowing that someday I might leave the school. He has supported me fully in that and has encouraged me to pursue other things to become a leader in my own time.

Teacher 8 was moving more into a leadership role with the support of Principal B at their school, which may one day lead to Teacher 8 becoming a principal. This kind of support gave Teacher 8 high job satisfaction and motivation to advance his career; he didn't feel like it was "Me versus the administrative team." He thought Principal B was doing a good job of "trying to bring out the good things and highlight the potential and also understand the negatives and help us work through that. But he really focuses on the positives."

Teacher 12 thought that Principal B's collaborative nature and willingness to hear different opinions and ideas supported the goals of the school. She said:

I think if our goal is to educate every child every day, then we need to have a leader who values and wants to hear from the teachers in the classroom—what their ideas and their opinions are. But, we can't separate administration from teaching. We all have to be on the same boat because we all sink or swim together. If you talk to any student in this building about [Principal B], they all love him; they really do.

*1) Relationship driven with students and staff members.*

The principal is the most important and highest officer at the school level in his or her role as leader, administrator, and school manager. The principal must excel at building relationships with the students and staff. In the context of an effective school, the teacher is 'empowered' through the principal to realize they are an important asset to the school. This helps to prevent pressures and excessive constraints between the teachers at the school, which leads to higher job satisfaction, which makes the teachers want to work to their highest potential.

A lot of tension has occurred in commercial and industrial areas over recent decades, and other areas like education could not escape from it also. School principals are in a similar position as middle managers in a commercial setting, and under similar pressures. They also act as shock absorbers in the educational system between the higher levels of management and the teachers. Principals are considered the heart of a school, and they must try to create an environment among the employees of camaraderie and team building. This pattern increases satisfaction, creating a working environment that is exciting and indirectly increases the performance of teachers and staff.

Teacher 8 spoke about how Principal B tried to build relationships with his staff and each other:

He encourages us to celebrate each other. He brings that out in the staff meetings as well. He builds the personal relationships; we're more than just the teachers in the classroom; we have things that are going on outside of school. Every year he invites us over to his house for a barbeque to start the school year and hang out and relax, to kick the year off right. There's a real camaraderie between the administrative team and the teachers.



Teacher 4 had a personal relationship with Principal A that seemed to work well:

We are on friendly terms, I respect him, I can talk to him about things I teach, and our families are acquainted and have had a lot of good conversations in social settings. We are certainly on friendly terms and well acquainted.

Teacher 7 described Principal B as being more concerned about relationships than anything else:

If students feel that you don't care, then they're not going to care what you know. That same thing is true for [Principal B]; it's more than just a profession to him. When I have conversations with [Principal B], most of the time it's concerning education and what I do here at school, but some of the time it has nothing to do with education and it's about my life or his life outside of school. It's more holistic, and that's a good thing. I think he's open to new ideas, and he's open to his teaching staff trying new things and not being afraid to fail; not being satisfied with failure, obviously, but it's okay to fail because that's how we learn.

## **Analysis of Research Questions**

### **How do U.S. teachers perceive the principal's leadership style?**

Some people think a principal is someone who sits in an office and gets a big paycheck. Others see the principal working long hours and as a servant-leader. The teachers in this study had a wide range of perceptions of their principals, but none of them saw their principal as someone who sits in their office all day and gets paid. Principals were expected to know about all aspects of their school, while still giving teachers autonomy and freedom to make good decisions in the classroom. Teachers wanted a strong leader who made clear and consistent

decisions, while earnestly considering all opinions involved. Teachers wanted a person with high moral character and someone whose integrity and intellect they respected.

Unfortunately, the United States and public education in general have a negative view right now, in part due to a lack of active leadership. The perception is that there are people who have just worked their way up the bureaucratic ladder; teachers who are just taking the next step to become a principal, not because they are the most effective teachers and leaders. This has been part of a decline in student achievement and put a negative spin on public education.

The district in this study seems to be special, in that each leader is fully engaged and is there because they truly want to be a leader and do what is best for the school. There are many districts, however, particularly in the inner cities, poor rural populations, and other places without money, where the principals are not the best leaders for the school. They are appointed due to 'politics' or simply career advancement. People seem to be seeing this a lot, and it certainly creates a negative spin for the public.

There does seem to be some reform occurring, particularly in private education (Belfield & Levin, 2002). Public education is also stepping up in some locations and working to return to a place where students can learn and remove those leaders who aren't truly effective (Belfield & Levin, 2002). They are trying to put people in charge who want to lead students, create a safe environment and an institution of learning rather than simply a building where kids come and are babysat for the day.

### **What are the different leadership styles that principals use?**

In the beginning of the study, I thought teachers would give many types of principal leadership styles during the interview, but, I found the perception from teachers to be different

than what I was originally thinking. Teachers talked more about different styles based on the relationship among the teacher and principal, and also about their expectation of what a principal should be, not specifically about what their principal's main leadership style may have been.

Effective principals have multiple leadership styles, but one will always stand out. It is the style that the principal does not possess. Effective principals must know their weaknesses and put people around them whose styles will support their weaknesses (McEwan, 2003). One effective technique from McEwan (2003) seems to be to perfect one leadership style and build a great team with the other styles. It is common at many schools to have a focus of a team versus only a principal; so, not only must the principal be effective, but the whole administrative team must work well together.

According to Hannay (2009), the leadership style must also fit the building or culture it is in. If a principal walked into a culture like School B, where the servant leadership style works really well, and tried to turn it into an autocratic style, he/she would get a lot of rebuke from the staff. Meanwhile, as Teacher 6 discussed, sometimes a struggling school works best under a strong leader who makes all the decisions according to their vision. The staff or district usually chooses the principal for the school; in order for them to find an effective principal; they must evaluate the best leadership style for that building. If their style doesn't fit best, they can adjust, but it could lead to many problems. While all leadership styles are important, it is not going to come from one person. It will come from a principal who is smart enough to get those different people on their team working together.

**What determines goodness and fit between principal leadership style and job satisfaction?**

From this research, it clearly important that the teacher and principal can see each other's leadership style. Teachers have leadership styles, too. Even if the teacher cannot explicitly see them, they are there. Being able to recognize the way one individual goes about something versus another is crucial. While both ways may be great, they may likely differ but have the same goal in mind. A good fit finds a way to use these differences to strengthen the team rather than create confrontation.

If principals have only one style and are not willing to work with another leadership style, they will lose teachers (Mendez-Morse, 1992). Some teachers prefer the supportive, caring principal, others like the servant leader, while others want a vocal leader who is always talking about the latest book and the newest trends. The principal needs to understand what the teachers need, and while they don't have to be an expert in that style, they need to be able to at least give that teacher a hint. No principal is going to be able to satisfy every person on the staff with their leadership style, but they must be able to understand what they need and put the correct person or leader in their department who will help create teacher satisfaction.

For example, School B has so many layers of leadership that all leadership styles can be filled, they have: the principal, his leadership team, three deans of students, and all the department heads. While it is possible this could crumble into a bureaucratic jumble, it works effectively at School B. Principal B is good at identifying specific people who can help support teachers in the places that he is not as strong with a specific leadership style.

## **Summary**

The framework for the study was the Basic Interpretive Qualitative approach following Merriam (2002). Four schools were selected in the Poudre School District, interviews were

conducted with three teachers at each school who have at least one to three years teaching experience at the same school with the same principal. These interviews were transcribed verbatim. Each of the interviews were then analyzed using a constant comparative strategy (Corben & Straus, 1991).

With this method, participants' thoughts and opinions were categorized using open coding to label each meaningful unit of the interview. Initial categories of information about principal leadership styles were formed into four core themes with three associated sub-themes for each core. Communication was looked at under the sub-themes of: a) being an articulate and good communicator, b) good listening, and c) ability to clearly communicate expectations. Democratic Leadership was examined with the three sub-themes of: d) autonomy in the classroom, e) transparency, and f) democratic leader; visionary. Trust and respect was divided into: g) trust in the teachers to perform/little micromanagement, h) trust in teacher's professionalism, and i) respect for the principal and from the principal. Support had three sub-themes of: j) is an advocate for the school and staff members, k) continually supports and encourages the staff members and students, and l) relationship driven; with students and staff members.

In contrast to what might be expected, teachers did not report the types of principal leadership styles that were described in the literature review. Instead, teachers talked more about different styles based on the relationships they had among the teachers and principal. They also talked about their expectations of what a principal should be, not specifically about what their principal's main leadership style may have been. These results will be looked at more closely in chapter 5, but will be briefly summarized now. Teachers generally expected principals to know about all aspects of their school, while still giving teachers autonomy and freedom to make good

decisions in the classroom. The teachers wanted a strong leader who can make clear and consistent decisions, while earnestly considering all opinions involved. The teachers wanted a person with high moral character and someone whose integrity and intellect they respected. The teachers generally had high job satisfaction and high satisfaction with their relationship with their principal. The only negative comments related to some of the teachers feeling like their principal did not trust in their abilities or knowledge of the job, which led to the perception of micromanagement or lower autonomy.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **Discussion**

This chapter concludes the discussion on principal leadership style and its effect on teacher's job satisfaction. The chapter begins with a discussion of how well the literature reviewed in chapters two and three fit the results of the data collected in chapter four. These results will then be interpreted using the four main themes from chapter four. Recommendations will be given for how to implement these conclusions into a real-world setting to increase teachers' job satisfaction and limitations of the study will also be discussed.

One of the main purposes for this study is to use what was learned about American teachers' job satisfaction in relation to principals' leadership styles for improving education through the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Implications from the study for the education ministry and recommendations for the ministry's Vision 2020 will also be elaborated. The sixth section will discuss possible future research that can be done as an extension of these findings and the seventh section summarizes the final findings of this study. Lastly, the epilogue will discuss my personal journey up to this point.

### **Discussion of Goodness and Fit of Literature**

The research and literature review were guided by these three questions, as noted previously: (1) How do U.S. teachers perceive the principal's leadership style; (2) what are the different leadership styles that principals use; and (3) what determines goodness of fit between principal leadership style and teacher job satisfaction?

The literature reviewed strongly supported the view that principals play a pivotal role in leading their school in a positive and academically successful manner, or in a negative and

detrimental way (see Chapter 2, see also: Hughes, 1999; Matthews & Crow, 2010; McEwan, 2003; Newberry, 2005; Smith & Piele, 2006; Ubben et al. 2001). The literature supported the view that teachers and staff tend to feel more comfortable if their principal understood the teachers' role in the school and would respond to the principal if they were motivated and inspired. For this study, it was important to understand different leadership styles used by principals, especially related to directing teachers and making major decisions that affected the school.

Some researchers believed that leadership styles might be linked to specific personality types. Psychologists Avolio and Howell (1992) found that attitudes of both leaders and followers were important in the prediction of job satisfaction. Guthrie and Reed (1991) noted that leader and follower relationships depend upon several factors, including the personal characteristics of those involved, how the leader interacts with the followers, and the situation at hand. Short and Greer (2002) took this a step further, stating that these relationships depend on situational favorableness, task specificity, leader-member relations, leader personality, and group maturity. Guthrie and Reed (1991) found that the ability of the leader to establish an organizational vision, to motivate and inspire others to embrace this vision, and go on to achieve these goals is possible if solid relationships are formed. Thus, effective leadership can translate into teacher job performance, commitment to educational goals from all involved, goal attainment, and group growth (Walsh et al., 1992).

Many researchers (Hughes, 1999; Matthews & Crow, 2010; McEwan, 2003; Newberry, 2005; Smith & Piele, 2006; Ubben et al. 2001) have attempted to define different characteristics of a successful principal. Fullan (2004) states that leadership styles have five main characteristics, including having moral purpose, allowing for change processes, developing



rational skills, and being able to achieve the consistency in the workplace. If a principal is to shift the educational paradigm in a school, he or she must exude these characteristics in order to foster change and not dwell upon systems that are no longer functional. Goldman (1998) believes that these different leadership styles are deep-seated, learned behaviors.

Similarly, McBer (2000) found that leadership styles are greatly influenced by the emotional intelligence of each leader, and include attributes such as being coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching. These six emotional intelligences allow a principal to lead the school with soul and not merely guide teachers as if they were robots.

Though there was a wide range of characteristics listed by these researchers, several commonalities emerged. Most importantly, nearly all of these studies listed the following characteristics as being important: the principal as a learner, planner, visionary, politician, advocate, organizational developer, manager, leader, and agent of change. Though these characteristics were described in slightly different manners, they all demonstrated that an effective principal must embody characteristics that enable them to adapt to different situations. When all of the positive characteristics listed above are embodied by a school's principal, motivation and teacher job satisfaction are expected to increase.

The NLCB act required teachers and school administrators to shift their priorities to meet the demands of this act. Bracey (2002) stated that these types of transitions could be very difficult for late career teachers, who had established working pedagogical philosophies. It would also challenge school districts and administrators, who were responsible to ensure that all students are adequately prepared to pass federally mandated tests (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio 1997; Burns, 1978). Thus, a principal may be forced to change his or her leadership style to

accommodate this academic setting. These added pressures require the principal to examine everyone's effort to ensure that these federally mandated goals are met. This means that to achieve these goals, it is important for teachers to have a sense of purpose and satisfaction. Again, this comes from the principals and their leadership styles. Huber (2004) supported this assertion by showing that the quality of leaders played a key role and had a large effect on the quality of the school's results.

In the pilot study done in Malaysia, I examined the leadership styles of eight principals from Cluster Schools in Kelantan state and analyzed the climate and culture of the administrators and the schools. I concluded that the Cluster School principals studied had mostly excellent leadership qualities, and for real improvement to take place in the larger sector of Malaysian education, principals in the Daily Schools should model these principals' leadership style. If these principals are taken as role models for all the school principals of Malaysia, a positive impact on the schools' educational climate and culture will be obvious and the purpose of the government will be more successful.

From these previous studies, the original intention of this study was to examine different leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. However, the teachers in this study were not familiar with these terms for understanding leadership styles. Instead, they spoke about trust and communication and what developed into the four core themes discussed in Chapter 4. This decision followed my methodology discussed in Chapter 3 of using the Basic Interpretive Qualitative method, which allows qualitative researchers to understand the meaning people have constructed and how they make sense of their world, using their own words. It was also felt that the teachers' own understandings would be more beneficial to my main goal of improving Malaysian educational policy once I return.

## **Teacher Job Satisfaction and Perceptions of Leadership Styles**

Job satisfaction has been determined to be a key part of worker productivity in many work sectors. Various aspects of employees' job performance are directly correlated with positive work values, high levels of employee motivation, and lower rates of absenteeism, turnover and burnout (also see Begley & Czajka, 1993; Chiu, 2000; Tharenou, 1993). Hongyin (2007) also found that teacher job satisfaction is greatly affected by the overall attitude of the public toward teachers and their working conditions. Teacher 3 said his job satisfaction came from doing what he knew was right and from having success and improvement with the students. While he said that his satisfaction should come from good test scores, he said he also needed to feel proud of his school and principal.

Meanwhile, teachers who are not satisfied in the workplace are more likely to leave the profession (Choy et al., 1993). Teacher 10 expressed a lack of trust from her principal and micromanagement, which she felt made some teachers afraid to evolve as leaders because they were unsure of what the principal might think.

Lumsden (1998) found that if teachers received support from their principal and from local parents, if they were involved in the decision-making process, and if they worked within a positive school climate and culture they were more likely to succeed and remain in the profession. This study supported Lumsden. The teachers felt comfortable working under different principal leadership styles as long as they felt supported, respected and involved. One teacher talked about how they have had prior principals who made decisions by committee and worked closely with the staff on making decisions, but their current principal was more of a top-down leader who made the decisions and policies for the school. Despite this, the teacher was satisfied because the principal "left the teaching to the teachers" and strongly supported them.

Another teacher discussed how their principal shared in the decision-making process, though the principal sometimes made their own decision on the matter regardless. The teacher was satisfied because they did feel involved in the process and said that if they did not feel a part of it, then it would be hard to accept a decision that someone else has made for them without their consideration. Primarily, the only negative statements about the principals in the study were feeling left out of the decision-making process and being micromanaged.

Richards (2003) examined long-term teacher/principal relationships and job satisfaction. It was found that teachers who worked for long periods of time with the same principal tended to be able to work closely with that principal. These teachers came to feel comfortable with their principal and his or her leadership style, and this long-term interaction improved the level of satisfaction between the teachers and the principal.

Teacher 3 has worked with the same principal for over ten years, also prior to the current principal being hired for the job. He feels completely comfortable talking to the principal at any time about any subject. Teacher 3 has extremely high job satisfaction and feels lucky to have such a great job. Meanwhile, Teacher 10 has taught for over twenty years, but has only spent the last four years with her current principal. While she feels like she can work with her principal, she feels micromanaged and that her knowledge is not fully respected. Teacher 10 said that while she started with extremely high job satisfaction, it has been lower recently. While most of the stated reasons for the lower job satisfaction came from the No Child Left Behind Act, there does seem to be a connection.

Hughes et al. (1999) asserted that creative and transformational leaders create a positive relationship between teachers and principals, which affects everyone's overall job satisfaction.

Teacher 3 said that his principal is a good example for how to become a better teacher. The principal is efficient, focused, fair, and a good leader, which makes him enjoyable to work for.

### **Conclusions and Significance of Findings**

*Trust and respect* was the core theme that was brought up the most by the teachers in this study and seems to be the most important to job satisfaction. The teachers wanted to be trusted in the classroom to do a good job and they wanted flexibility with day-to-day lesson plans. At the same time, it was understood that principals should hold teachers accountable and try to drive them to grow as teachers. They wanted a principal that not only builds personal relationships with the teachers but also helps to build a team atmosphere and camaraderie among the entire staff. They wanted their principals to trust their knowledge of the job; to have their opinion respected. They also wanted to respect their principal's knowledge of teaching and what was occurring in their school. They wanted to trust that the principal has considered all sides and outcomes when making decisions.

The teachers wanted their principal to command respect by their actions and decisions, not by simply acting superior or talking down to the staff. Most of the teachers felt that respect for the principal was extremely important to job retention and that a lack of respect brought feelings of embarrassment for the entire school. They felt it was important to respect the principal as a good human being as well, someone that will give them a sense of pride. They wanted a principal who was a good role model and mentor, not only to the students, but for the teachers as well.

Primarily, the only negative criticism of the principals in this study came from a lack of trust in the teachers. Whether or not the principals did trust the teachers' ability was not as

important as the principals' ability to convey that they trust the teachers. Teacher 10 felt she was a good teacher after having over twenty years of teaching experience, but because her principal had to be at every meeting, she felt that her abilities were not fully trusted. While if the principal were asked if Teacher 10 was truly trusted, the answer would likely be affirmative, the principal was not doing enough to allay the teacher's perception. This led to some of the teachers feeling like they were not respected or that they did not know how to do their jobs and feeling that they were micromanaged, which could lead to distrust and negative feelings.

The second most important core theme was *support*. Support was broken down into three lower levels of being an advocate for the school and staff, continually encouraging the staff and students, and by building personal relationships. Teachers needed to feel supported on multiple dimensions by their principal to do a good job.

They want to be backed up in the classroom with the students. Most teachers did not want to be disciplinarians and wanted the principal and other administrative staff to handle disciplinary problems. They also wanted support and back-up in their relationships with parents, particularly if those relationships were not going positively. They wanted to present a consistent voice and not be undermined to either students or parents. When there is new teaching material, they want time to implement the material and a space allowed for tweaks and improvements. They wanted principals to help provide the resources needed to be successful in the classroom and to grow individually as learners and teachers. They wanted to be supported to advance as teachers and sometimes to other administrative positions. Without these resources and an opportunity to grow, teachers feel they cannot do their job to its fullest. Teachers also want to hear words of encouragement and to receive positive reinforcement about things they are doing right. When a teacher is not meeting a goal, they want the principal's support in trying to reach

the goal, not negativity or threats of disciplinary action. The teachers wanted the principal to build a culture in the school that is safe, supportive and fun, for the entire staff and students.

Teachers also expect that the principal is an advocate for the school off the grounds as well. They want a principal who positively markets the school, presents a good appearance to the community, and tries to grow a positive reputation in the community. They want the principal to be their advocate and voice to the district and higher levels of the educational structure. And, they want the principal to fight for the highest salaries possible for teachers.

The third most important theme in the study was *communication*, though it is through communication that all of these other attributes are actually conveyed. This theme was looked at with three aspects: being an articulate speaker, being a good listener, and being able to clearly communicate teachers' expectations.

Principals must be able to articulate the vision and purpose of the school and have a very clear philosophy that they convey to the students, teachers, and community. Principals need to have some rhetorical ability to motivate those around him or her to accomplish this vision and get everyone on board. The most important aspect of conveying this vision is for the teachers to be absolutely clear about their own job expectations. If expectations are not clear, teachers cannot be confident they are doing their job to the fullest and it can lower their satisfaction. They can feel listless and without direction. If teachers have realistic but challenging goals and the support to reach them, then teachers will strive to accomplish these goals, grow as educators, and not require micromanagement to synthesize what needs to be done to meet these goals.

Principals can demonstrate that they value teachers through their communication; they must support their teachers in actions and words. Teachers can work more effectively with the

other staff members if they all have the same vision and direction. Principals are responsible to make the teachers and other staff members move in the same direction. They need to be visible and interact with the students, teachers and parents, and not be perceived as always working behind a closed door in their office. This presents an uninviting environment and also speculation about what is occurring behind the wall. Whereas, being out in the open and communicating with all levels of the program encourages trust and also keeps the principal knowledgeable and informed about all aspects of the program as well.

Many changes are taking place in the educational system and teachers have fears and concerns about these changes, particularly long-tenured teachers. Principals must communicate as much as possible about these changes to the teachers to allay some of these fears. It is important to not simply dictate what the changes are, but to explain why they were changed and how it will make teachers more effective and where the school is headed with these changes.

Being a good speaker is not enough; however, effective listening is also vital to communication. If teachers don't feel listened to, they don't feel respected, and with a lack of feeling respected comes many other problems that affect job satisfaction. Principals must also be good listeners because they need to know when to implement suggestions from teachers, who often times are more closely connected to a given situation and therefore have good opinions for how to improve certain aspects of the school or curriculum. Listening is also vital to understand when a teacher might need help, either professionally or personally. People often do not ask for help directly, it sometimes requires keen listening to understand what the problem is and how to resolve it.



The last core theme was categorized as *democratic leadership*. This looked at how a principal leads the teachers and staff. The category was divided into autonomy in the classroom, transparency, and how the principal is able to make the teachers feel included in the decision-making process.

While all the teachers in the study expressed a need for clear and specific expectations, they wanted a level of freedom to accomplish these expectations. Most said that this freedom led to more creativity in the classroom and higher job satisfaction. It also made the teachers feel their professionalism was trusted and their knowledge respected. When teachers felt confident they were trusted, it made them want to challenge themselves and their students more and to grow as individuals.

Teachers said that transparency was important to them. Most said they want their principals to be straightforward with them and to not withhold information. While it may be a difficult position to be the intermediary between the district administration and the teachers, requiring the principal to sell the teachers on policy they may not necessarily believe in themselves, it is important to be honest with the teachers and explain where the policy is coming from. Teachers feel more respected and included in the decisions when transparency is high. Conversely, when transparency is low, teachers feel they are not trusted and they feel decisions are dictated to them, leading to low satisfaction.

Teachers needed to feel included in the decision-making process. While most understood that the principal sometimes had to make tough decisions that were unpopular, they wanted to know that their voice was factored into the result. Even if it was not the desired result, most teachers said they could respect the result under those circumstances. Teachers want to know

their opinions are valued. Teacher 5 made a good point about how different schools may need different leadership styles based on what condition the school was in. He felt that when his school was faltering, it needed someone to come in and make decisions and take charge. But, once the school was turned in a positive direction, a democratic approach became more effective.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited to schools in one school district in the United States and teachers who have a minimum of one year of experience with the same principal. While the principals were highly cooperative, they did act as gatekeepers by deciding who I was allowed to interview. While the focus was on IB and charter high schools, this is not included as a variable in the study. The study also did not include a low performing school or traditional model high school in the sample. The sample data also cannot be generalized to the entire population of the United States because it was limited to only one, highly functioning, school district.

Another limiting factor was the researcher's English language abilities. As an international student working in his third language, it was difficult to understand what the teachers said upon the first review. It took four or five repetitions with the audiotape to understand the conversation completely. Also, a second person was used to help in the transcription process.

Another factor was timing. The process to get approval for the interviews was difficult and time consuming. There was a three-month wait between approval and data collection due to the summer break. Then, the coding was done two months after the transcribing process.

However, the results created an understanding of the goodness and fit required by teachers to get high job satisfaction. These results will be difficult to implement into the

Malaysian Ministry of Education's policy but the ideas will develop as the researcher increases his involvement with the ministry.

### **Implications for Malaysian Ministry of Education**

The results of this study have helped to further the understanding of the relationship between principals and teachers and teacher job satisfaction. Principals play a key role in guiding teachers to be their best and motivating them so that they have high satisfaction in their jobs. Malaysia is an excellent country to experiment with these findings as it tries to implement reform within the Ministry of Education. In the early 1990s, The Malaysian Ministry of Education began to explore new ways to improve and advance the educational system in this emerging country. The end goal is an extended plan called "Vision 2020", which is aimed at improving all aspects of the country including education. A main theme in the educational part of Vision 2020 is to address the diversity of student needs in the country and learn from the successes of more developed countries.

Malaysia is an example of how a country, through direct goals and strategic planning, can achieve progress in its educational system in a short period of time. As the colonizers of Malaysia, the British influenced the early education policies. Malaysia has taken important steps towards improving its educational system since independence in 1957, and even more dramatically since Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohammad implemented his Vision 2020:

Since independence, education in Malaysia has undergone tremendous changes and development. From a diverse and fragmented system of education based upon communal needs, it has evolved into an education system that strives to build a united nation according to the Malaysian mould. Malaysia aims to produce a competitive society that is

strong, united and resilient in facing challenges and adversity. (Education in Malaysia, 2008, p.3)

The ultimate goal is to create a hub of education and develop the country into a regional education center for Southeast Asia. The main mission of the state in education is to explore the sciences that will become a critical national resource, and gain the capacity to not only absorb and master new technologies, but to innovate and be at the forefront of technological changes. Another main goal is also to have Malaysian students equal to the best students in the world.

The current policies surrounding education in Malaysia are modeled after policies in South Korea and Japan. In the middle 1980's, Malaysia's Prime Minister, Mahathir, began to envision new strategies for educating its citizens. Through this vision, the idea of a "Look East Policy" emerged. This involved sending undergraduate students to Japan and South Korea to study Eastern pedagogy and technology and bring that knowledge back to Malaysia. The present day goal is to begin merging the ideas from Eastern policy, pedagogy, and technology with ideas from the West. Vision 2020 would like to begin to collaborate with the United States and look at policies in the West and how this can improve Malaysia's current educational system. These goals were primary objectives to the researcher and it is hoped that this study will help to accomplish these national goals.

Currently in Malaysia, the educators are taught by the Teachers Education Division in the Ministry of Education to follow the pedagogy of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Despite these teachings, educators are forced to fill the school's exam requirements and, consequently, abandon much of the teachings of Maslow and Bandura.

One aspect of the United States pedagogy that Malaysia would like to adopt is to move from a system where students simply memorize content to a system where students can be more creative and use more problem-solving strategies. This seems very possible, from the interviews of the teachers in this study, when teachers are allowed to use their own creativity and problem-solving skills in their classrooms. This study supports the idea that teachers who are allowed this freedom have higher job satisfaction and are motivated to teach at their highest abilities.

It is also important to reevaluate and implement improvements in policy, pedagogy and leadership in the Malaysian educational system, in particular, to address the need for a strong national identity while meeting the diverse needs of students. Malaysia is a unique country in Southeast Asia because three dominant races live harmoniously together, including Malay, Chinese and Indian cultures. In addition to cultural diversity, there is also a diversity of religions including Muslim, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity. The government, in particular the Ministry of Education, respects the needs of this diverse student population in school situations and wants to continue evolving the education syllabus to acknowledge and respect the diverse needs of each student. This is similar to the circumstances in the United States, where the required coursework addresses the challenges of diverse student needs while maintaining a strong American identity.

The Razak Report of 1956 can be considered a basis for the development of the national education system. Razak's report in *Education in Malaysia* (2008) found the following:

The most important challenges facing the new nation after independence were unity and democratization of education. The process of consolidating the diverse school systems

into a cohesive national education system, with the national languages the main medium of instruction was initiated during this period. (p10)

Currently, Malaysian schools have different goals across the country, which interferes with national identity. In attempts to create a unified system and thus a unified nation, a committee within the Malaysian Ministry of Education was formed to review the way schools operate and make the necessary improvements. The Education Act of 1961 was drafted based on the findings of the Razak Report of 1956, and the Rahman Talib Report of 1960, which emphasized the use of national language as a language of unity. The intent and purpose of the Education Act of 1961 was to unify races in Malaysia, but in practice, it was difficult to achieve this objective. For example, Malays live in the villages and the coast; Chinese live in the mining regions and Indians live in the rubber plantation areas. This geographical and cultural divide makes it difficult to integrate the diverse populations.

Fowler (2009) agrees there are two big steps to adopt a new policy in any organization. First is to recognize the problem and the second is to create and implement a solution to introduce the new changes. As part of the required content and coursework in the Educational Leadership, Renewal and Change Program, much of the core ideas in the classroom focused on United States educational policy. It is hoped that these experiences and this study can help shape and implement new policies in Malaysia because it is clear that policy change is necessary for implementing a new and improved educational system.

In order to streamline the education system in the current globalized world (Education Planning and Research Division, 2008), it is undeniable that schools and education play an important role in the construction and establishment of a national and united people. Indirectly,

this new policy should strive to create Malaysian community, unity, and integration as envisioned by the National Principles. Since the 6<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister began leading Malaysia, he had a clear vision to get all the races to think of themselves as one community, known as “1 Malaysia” policy. 1 Malaysia is a concept to foster unity among Malaysians of all races, based on several key values that should be the practice of every Malaysian. It's not a new policy separate from the policies of the government before it, rather it is complementary to the approaches available to strengthen the unity and ensure stability, to achieve higher progress and development for the people and country. This sense is based on the argument that to achieve developed nation status as inspired by Vision 2020, the most important condition is that a strong and stable country will only be achieved when its citizens are united.

1 Malaysia appreciates and respects the principles of the Federal Constitution and the ethnic identities of all races in Malaysia, and regards it as an asset or advantage. 1 Malaysia emphasizes acceptance among people of various races, in which a people accept the uniqueness of other people for us to live together in mutual respect as citizens of a country and adopted by all levels of society. In April 2009, Malaysia has announced that everything would depend on the unique synergy that is provided for the multi-ethnic people of Malaysia. "People first, achievement of priority" is a mission to put the improvement of human resources from all aspects of planning for the future development of Malaysia.

In January 2010 the government also has formed the Government Transformation Programmed (GTP) and has identified the National Key Result Area (NKRA). This policy is designed to encourage the increase in efficiency and effectiveness of services by the public sector and to encourage economic growth through the private sector. The Economic Transformation Program is planning to build high-income communities, creating a continuous

and inclusive nation. This would be achieved under the eight Strategic Reform Initiatives (SRIS). This is a comprehensive action under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, which describes the smooth implementation of the ten government development programs.

People are influenced by the way of thinking or the culture of their country. Therefore, culture and values need to be further strengthened to be in line with the aspiration of progress as reflected in Vision 2020 and the strategy of the National Education Mission. In order to ensure the success of the National Mission, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has prepared a comprehensive development of the Master Education Plan (EDMP), 2006-2010, which outlines the plans and policies to make education more relevant for the national level with current and future needs of the context of student diversity. This study increases the data available for the government to implement these changes. Any gaps or deficiencies in education should be addressed and considered more carefully in the future.

It is hoped that this research into principal leadership style will provide a positive impact to Malaysian teachers and principals attempting to implement the reform of NKRA policy and Vision 2020 for the future. It is a large task to change these relationships, but perhaps these findings will positively impact teachers' job satisfaction. While this will be challenging, it is imperative to bring these findings back to Malaysia and experiment further with principal and teacher relationships.

### **Recommendations for Malaysian Ministry of Education**

In over three years, I have studied the United States experience and perspective on educational leadership and I have realized that Malaysia needs to change, especially regarding principals in the schools. The Malaysian education system needs more reframing of the



organization of management and leadership if it is to bring a distinctive vision and produce unique work in the future.

I now believe that Malaysian principals currently do not distribute and share authority and power among other administrators as effectively as needed. After collecting the outcomes from the study, I would like to propose this as an important change in Malaysian Ministry of Education leadership. Every principal in Malaysia could aim to achieve high performing school status by working more as a team. This study concluded that trust and respect are the most important aspects in principal leadership style and its impact on teachers' job satisfaction. The teachers in this study felt most respected when their opinions were listened to and considered. One recommendation from the study is to improve two-way communication and decision-making so that teachers feel more respected, which leads to higher job satisfaction.

In terms of leadership, school principals need to adopt leadership styles that are best fitted to their unique situation. Principals need to know their weaknesses and develop a staff that is strong in aspects where the principal may be weaker; so that the team is stronger than its individual parts. When applying Gilley's (2005) management theories to the educational system, it is clear that not all leaders are good at managing; therefore, not all principals will be skilled at managing their school. A principal needs to be persuasive, supportive and communicate effectively among teachers. This is needed to cooperate and effectively implement organizational change and drive a new culture within that school. If a principal is not effective at this, then they should develop a leadership team that is effective, and not try to ignore their weakness or to smooth it over with authoritative force.

Change is a fact of life—i.e.—the environment changes, situations change, and what is right in a given moment can also change. It is important for leaders to be open to change;

directed change can take place through choice. People can choose to be different and then actively implement a change. In order to successfully change an organization, it is the management that must have the influence and commitment to the changes. While this sounds like a simple idea, it is in fact very difficult and takes work with long-term goals in mind. It isn't an easy process; it is constantly being bombarded by a world that reinforces the current identity structure or is shaping the identity structure in a different way than is desired. It also isn't always successful. The second important recommendation from this study is for principals to develop a mindset that is open to changes. In the Porchaska and DiClemente Stages of the Change model, there are six stages in this kind of active change process. These are: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and relapse (Young, 2008, pp.356-357).

Gilley (2005) listed the roles and responsibilities of a change leader, among the important roles are: visionary, inspirer, supporter, problem solver and change manager. This requires coordinating the change effectively by clear goals and expectations. The NKRA policy is focusing the space for change in Malaysia, which will be good for principals' understanding the interactions with their teachers, which will hopefully increase teachers' job satisfaction. Perhaps this study can help to focus NKRA policy further.

In the era of decentralization as it is today, where the education sector is largely managed autonomously by local governments, the educational environment in Malaysia must be upgraded to a better direction in terms of relevance to regional interests and national interests. School management currently tends towards School Based Management (SBM). In this context of SBM, schools should increase community participation in its management to improve quality and efficiency. Nevertheless, the autonomy of education in the context of SBM should be done by always maintaining accountability to the community—including parents, students, as well as

central and local governments.

While decentralization and autonomy of education are the right directions, the leadership of school principals needs improvement and empowerment. While previously it was recommended that principals can improve their leadership by being more inclusive with their teachers in the decision-making process, another recommendation is to give the principal more empowerment to manage the school as he or she sees best. This means an increase in the functional ability of principals to manage the duties, authority, and responsibilities within the school.

Lastly, Malaysia needs to improve its human resource development. I believe that this will be a very difficult task. To produce good Human Resources Management (HRM), especially in the Malaysian educational environment, leadership must begin with the top level of management in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education (MOE). In regards to this objective, the MOE Human Resource Division should explore converting from a conventional education provider to a model that is more business oriented. Organizational change means that education providers should develop future workers based on competencies needed and follow the specific model. By doing that, the future employee is ready with the skill set required and competent to be competitive workers.

The goal of HRM is to help an organization to meet strategic goals by attracting and maintaining employees and also to manage them effectively. The key word here perhaps is “fit,” i.e. an HRM approach seeks to ensure a fit between the management of an organization’s employee, and the overall strategic direction of the organization (Miller, 1989). HRM comprises several processes that together are supposed to achieve the above mentioned goal. These

processes can be performed in an HR department, but some tasks could also be outsourced or performed by other divisions in the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

Cumming and Worley (2005) also see that performing appraisals, collecting and disseminating performance data to improve work outcomes, is also important. With the information collected, HRM can facilitate career counseling, provide information about the strength and diversity of human resources in the Malaysian Ministry of Education, and link the employee performance with rewards. Through employee relations, the MOE should try to redefine the image and minimize the perception that Human Resource Development (HRD) or HRM is the policy police of the organization.

### **Future Research**

Of particular interest for the researcher's own purposes is to study educational leadership in Malaysia. While this study was useful and informative to its stated goals, many more future studies and questions linger. I would like to study in more detail how the culture and climate at the schools relate to principals' leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction. Second, more research into the connection of principal leadership style and the effectiveness of the school and also studying principal leadership styles and its effects on organizational change could bring useful information to Malaysian policies. Last, I would change some of the questions in the interview for future research. For example, rather than ask "what principal leadership styles best fit with your job satisfaction?" a better question would be, "What principal leadership style best fits with your school's climate and culture?" Also, rather than ask, "How would an ideal principal lead your school and improve your satisfaction?" a better question would be, "How would an ideal principal change your school and increase your satisfaction?" These questions

would help to explore the direction of my future research as stated above and develop NKRA policy.

Further ideas for research and experiments after returning to Malaysia include leadership education, the involvement of females in education, and collaborative school projects.

Leadership education is not something new to Malaysia, as there is a place called the Perdana Leadership Foundation, where people from different backgrounds can study and learn about leadership from the foundation. Malaysia's past Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir Mohammed, set it up in 2003 with the aim of preserving, developing and also disseminating materials. Previously this leadership foundation has not been affiliated to the Ministry of Education, my hope would be to explore the ideas from this foundation with the outcomes of my research for the ministry.

Part of the Vision 2020 plan is designed to achieve economic prosperity on the level of Japan and South Korea; this requires female participation in the work force. Malaysian females are emerging as leaders at many levels in education sectors recently, but it is still not the focus of researchers in Malaysia. I hope to conduct future research exploring the increase of involvement of women as leaders in the education sector and how the policies of the ministry impact women in education. The Malaysian government should explore the factors that are making females drop out of the workforce at a time when Malaysia needs them most. All of these improvements need to be addressed for Malaysia to make real progress towards becoming a nation of excellence, glory and distinction.

Another area for future study is the Malaysian Vision Schools. As previously noted, Malaysians are multiracial people and a diverse country with respect to ethnicity, culture and

religion. The aim of the vision schools established by the Ministry of Education is to bring together children from different ethnicities, races and languages. The Vision School in the Malay language is known as “*Sekolah Wawasan.*” It is intended to be a school where students learn together without regard for race or religion, where students respect each other and share the school facilities and other activities in school. Vision schools are a relatively new school design concept. It was created with three different ethnic groups and medium instruction of Malay, Chinese and Tamil in the same school. As the first project under the Seventh Malaysia plan (1995 – 2000), seven vision schools were planned. Future studies could analyze these schools to see if their goals are being met and see what aspects are successful and could be implemented for schools across Malaysia.

Another interesting possibility for future research would come from collaborative projects between Malaysian and United States schools. Much could be learned from these collaborations, not only among the teachers and students involved, but by educational researchers who study these interactions. The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. This should also be a goal for Malaysian schools as well. One possible way to achieve these goals could be a collaborative book study. Students from both schools would read the same or a similar book written in English. Both groups of students would contribute to a web-based wiki to discuss and reflect on specific questions for each chapter. Teachers would help facilitate on-going writing projects back and forth to share life and reading experiences. This experience would allow students the opportunity to be exposed to students from another culture; it would also be an authentic experience for Malaysian students to practice their English.

Another collaborative project idea could include both schools researching an environmental issue together. This could be started by students “shadowing” their pen pals for a day to see the educational process in the respective countries. This would be followed by three days of authentic scientific work in the local community. During the fieldwork, students would work together to analyze the data collected. These collaborative projects would be supportive of the NKRA policy as it would help facilitate high-level learning and provide an excellent authentic educational challenge to a high performing school and American students will benefit because they will have the opportunity to do authentic scientific work in a different country. The benefits of this type of collaboration could be studied in both countries.

It is a goal to develop a long-term relationship between schools and universities, in Malaysia and the United States. The schools could return each year to do different academic and leadership studies. Developing intercultural awareness is an ongoing goal for the Malaysian school and university community. Schools and universities could develop a long term relationship with organizations outside of the United States as well.

## **Summary**

This research focused on leadership styles of principals and how the perceptions that teachers hold of such leadership styles impacts their job satisfaction. The principal’s attitudes and behaviors, as the leader of the school, can significantly influence the attitudes of the staff and how the school functions. Thus, my research concentrated on how teachers perceived their principal’s leadership style, and the specific principal leadership behaviors that enhance teachers’ job satisfaction.

The Best Interpretive Qualitative Method was used to develop four core themes and twelve subthemes. The sample population consisted of teachers from four different schools, representing elementary, middle and high school, which also included multiple educational disciplines within that population. The evidence for my claims consists of the dialogue from these interviews and the basic interpretive method of analysis. The interview results showed that principals with positive and collaborative styles create a positive environment in the school.

While the original intention of the research was to look at specific leadership styles and see which ones most impacted teachers' job satisfaction, the teachers talked more about attributes of their relationships among the teachers and principal, and also about their expectation of what a principal should be, not specifically about what their principal's main leadership style may have been. Since one of the main reasons to conduct the study was to improve Malaysian educational policy and because the Best Interpretive Qualitative method was used, the results of the data were shaped into four core themes that the teachers repeatedly talked about in their relationship to their principal. The results showed that, more important than specific leadership style, teacher job satisfaction was more based on these four core themes. The answers the teachers gave and the themes developed are believed to be more beneficial to shaping policy than simply studying different academically defined leadership styles.

The four core themes in order of importance based on the interviews of this study are: trust and respect, support, communication, and a democratic leadership style. Generally, teachers expected principals to know about all aspects of their school, while still giving teachers autonomy and freedom to make good decisions in the classroom. The teachers wanted a strong leader who can make clear and consistent decisions, while earnestly considering all opinions involved. The teachers wanted a person with high moral character and someone whose integrity



and intellect they respected. The teachers generally had high job satisfaction and high satisfaction with their relationship with their principal. The negative comments related to some of the teachers feeling like their principal did not trust in their abilities or knowledge of the job, which led to the perception of micromanagement or lower autonomy. In addition, some teachers mentioned a desire for greater respect and support from central administration and the larger community.

## **Epilogue**

I began my teaching career at a young age. I got an order from Ministry of Education to be a teacher in a rural area in Pahang State called SK.LKTP Mempaga 2 primary school when I was 20 years old. From the beginning, it was very difficult. My job was to teach music for rural area students who did not have a background in music and their parents also did not encourage their kids to study music, as they wanted their children to merely concentrate on exam subjects. After a month, my students were starting to like the style of my teaching. I knew as a music teacher that I needed to be more effective and colorful. I needed to be fun, with more games during the lessons and its work. After a year, the people of the community and school accepted me as a music teacher. This was a wonderful moment and a highlight of my early teaching career, to take this difficult teaching challenge and to earn acceptance from the community.

After three years of being a teacher, I applied for a scholarship to further my study. I was lucky because former Prime Minister Tun Mahathir had launched the Look East Policy during that time. He wanted to send more Malaysian students to Japan, not only for studying but also to learn about the work ethic of the Japanese people. I was selected from 600 teachers who interviewed to be among twenty students to go to Japan.

I was in Japan for five and a half years, from the middle of 1994 to March 2000. Not only did I get my first degree, but I gained a partner in life, two children, and many amazing experiences working part-time at a pump station. I also began to seriously get involved with the Malaysian Student Association and I used these opportunities to visit all around Japan and Europe. I trusted Mahathir's policy and sending me to Japan. I still remember his advice to us, "In Japan you are not only studying but you are also a small ambassador for Malaysia." I believed it and acted accordingly. I went back to Malaysia with my wife and kids in March 2000. I was given a post at the Science Secondary Boarding School, Pasir Puteh, in Kelantan State as a Japanese language teacher.

In 2003, I began study for a master's in Educational Management at Malaya University, in Kuala Lumpur. Every Thursday I took a night bus to Kuala Lumpur, which took twelve hours to arrive, and every Saturday night I took the same bus back home so that I could be at my school on Sunday morning. I did this every week for two years until I successfully graduated in 2005.

Two years after graduating with a master's degree, I received a promotion offer from the Ministry of Education to become a lecturer at the Kelantan State Teacher Training Institute. It was an amazing surprise to receive that opportunity. Even though it was sad to leave the rural school, I accepted the offer. I began teaching students who had finished high school and entered this institute to get a degree in education and a teacher's license.

A year later, I got another unexpected opportunity from the Ministry of Education to work on a PhD in the United States. We were advised by the scholarship division to pursue our PhD degree in the United States because we could obtain more educational leadership content

with more frequent lecturers and internship programs available. It wasn't even in my dreams to get a PhD when I started as only a certificate teacher. My first thought was to thank God, then my mom and dad, as they always trusted my abilities and gave their support. From the time I started in 1989 as a rural elementary school teacher, until I flew to the United States to work on a PhD took twenty years. The Ministry of Education has continuously given me opportunities to learn more and upgrade my profession.

This has been a chance of a lifetime for me. The guidance, supervision, and expertise I have received in the United States have greatly assisted my studies in educational leadership. All the experiences in Japan during my undergraduate studies, teaching experiences in primary, secondary and at the Teachers Trainee Institute, and finally the experience gained during my studies in United States, have surely strengthened my chances of becoming a good leader in the future. To be an effective leader, theory is not enough; I also must dig into all the knowledge based on the experiences of my studies and work experiences. I hope to become a specialist in educational leadership and management to implement new ideas in the Malaysian system of education and also to be a good leader in the future.

#### POEM OF LIFE

Life is but a stopping place,  
A pause in what's to be,  
A resting place along the road,  
to sweet eternity.  
We all have different journeys,  
Different paths along the way,  
We all were meant to learn some things,  
but never meant to stay...  
  
Our destination is a place,  
Far greater than we know.  
For some the journey's quicker,

For some the journey's slow.  
And when the journey finally ends,  
We'll claim a great reward,  
And find an everlasting peace,  
Together with God!

- Author unknown

I was inspired to continue to teach knowing that I was able to make a difference in people's lives. I love my position as a primary and secondary school teacher and lecturer at the Teacher's Trainee Institute. I realize that as teachers we cannot change or fix everyone, but if we can help one child, isn't it all worth it? I don't regret becoming a teacher and don't think I ever will. I feel quite satisfied with my career as a teacher. There is a common phrase in Malaysia that if one teaches good knowledge to people, then millions of good knowledge will come to your kids. I trust this saying. I feel happy when students feel good with me in the classroom. I am not only a teacher, but also would like to be a father-type mentor or be their good friend. It is hard to make everybody happy with us but once we show our honesty in life, people will realize it!

Working as a teacher feels suitable to my life. When I am in the surroundings of the school, I feel so comfortable and so much empathy for my students. I always imagine that if I am doing good things for my students, other teachers also will do the same things for my own children in their schools. My mother has always been my role model, especially for being a good teacher. I can always remember back to what she did for me while I was in school. She taught me discipline in doing homework and structure with studying. I now do the same things for my students and my own children at home when I help them to do homework. .

My mother and father are my best role models. I believe they are extraordinary individuals, despite the fact that my father was only a driver in the police department and my mother does not know how to read or write. Their parenting styles were highly effective; both of them motivated me to excel academically and to be a good Muslim. My father always had a big dream; he wanted me to study hard to be a good and wealthy person in the future. My father passed away twelve years ago but I can feel that he is satisfied with my achievement just as he hoped. He could see how bright my future was before he died.

My mother-in-law also provided much encouragement for me while pursuing my PhD in the United States. She always motivated me when I was not very sure about my decision to come to the United States. She was a schoolteacher for almost 25 years and ended her career as a principal. She was extremely excited when she learned that I was going to do research about education and specifically on principalship. I remember how she would write a letter to me every week with motivating words to give me confidence in this journey. We shared ideas about education in the United States compared to Malaysia and she loved to hear about my experience with American principals and schools during my research.

She passed away in May 2011, but she is still in my heart. I received her last letter one month before her death. In the letter she wrote almost ten pages sharing her thinking about education in Malaysia and her role as a teacher and principal. I still keep the letter, as I think it is the best letter I have received from her and I never expected that it would be her last letter to me. In one of the paragraphs she wrote about her hope for my life and study in America, “Rozi, I hope what I wrote for you is what you really need to help you in your studies. I pray you do well for your exam and may Allah guide you to success, Amin! Take care of your health. Love, Mak!”

I came to Colorado State University under the sponsorship of the Malaysian Ministry Of Education. As a member of the pioneer group sent to America to pursue our PhD, it was a great honor to study here with the large goal of bringing back valuable knowledge from the United States educational system. It is my sincere hope to do just that. Even though the cultures are different, the spirit that I learned from the American education perspective and community is the best.

I would like to thank my sponsorship, Malaysia Ministry of Education, Colorado State University, specifically the School of Education, my committee members especially my advisor, Prof. Dr. Timpson, methodologist, Prof. Dr. Banning, Assistant Prof. Dr. Alina Waite, Assistant Prof. Dr. Jennifer Cross, the International Office Program for always giving me a chance to lead programs, Kathy Lucas and Neda Amidon for always preparing paperwork for me, my previous advisor, Dr. Ellyn Dickman and finally to my family, especially my mom for her prayers for my success in this journey, and my backbone in the United States, my wife and four children.

I have a vision in my life and in my dreams: to be a good leader in an educational organization. There is still a long journey ahead for me, but by taking the steps that I am taking now, I am sure that I making my dream come true.

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## Appendices

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## Appendix A: Malaysian Ministry of Education approval letter



BAHAGIAN PENGURUSAN SEKOLAH BERASRAMA PENUH  
DAN SEKOLAH KLUSTER  
KEMENTERIAN PELAJARAN MALAYSIA  
ARAS 3 & 4, BLOK E2, KOMPLEKS E  
PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN  
62604 PUTRAJAYA

Fax : 03-888493

KPM(BPSBPSK)201/018(32)  
29 DISEMBER 2009

**"1MALAYSIA: RAKYAT DIDAHULUKAN, PENCAPAIAN DIUTAMAKAN"**

Mohd Rozi bin Ismail  
PT 1000, Jalan Binaraya 3  
Taman Binaraya  
16109 Pasir Tumbuh  
Kelantan Darul Naim.

Tuan,

**KEBENARAN MENJALANKAN KAJIAN DI SEKOLAH-SEKOLAH KLUSTER  
NEGERI KELANTAN, KEMENTERIAN PELAJARAN MALAYSIA**

Dengan hormatnya saya merujuk perkara yang tersebut di atas.

2. Untuk makluman, Bahagian ini tiada halangan untuk tuan menjalankan kajian bertajuk *A Study of Leadership Styles and Decision Making of Principals in Kelantan Cluster Schools as Perceived by Teachers* di Sekolah-sekolah Kluster Negeri Kelantan.

3. Sehubungan itu, pihak tuan dimohon mengemukakan senaskah laporan akhir kajian setelah selesai untuk simpanan Bahagian ini.

Atas kerjasama pihak tuan terlebih dahulu diucapkan berbanyak-banyak terima kasih.

Sekian, dimaklumkan.

**"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"**

Saya yang menurut perintah,

**(ASHAH BINHI SAMAH)**

Pengarah  
Bahagian Pengurusan SBP dan Sekolah Kluster  
Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.

s.k. 1. Pengetua  
SMS Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra

2. Pengetua  
SMS Machang
3. Pengetua  
SMK Dato' Ahmad Maher
4. Pengetua  
Maktab Sultan Ismail
5. Pengetua  
SMKA Naim Lil Banat
6. Pengetua  
SMKA Wataniah
7. Guru Besar  
SK Zainab 2
8. Guru Besar  
SK Zainab 1

*ud/meor/291209.*

**Appendix B: Pilot study**

21 DEC 2009  
 TIMBALAN KETUA PENGARAH PELAJARAN MALAYSIA  
 SEKTOR OPERASI PENDIDIKAN  
 KEMENTERIAN PELAJARAN MALAYSIA  
 PUTRAJAYA

**Colorado State University**

School of Education  
 1588 Campus Delivery  
 Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1588  
 (970) 491-1963  
 FAX: (970) 491-7241  
 www.soc.caahs.colostate.edu



December 2009/January 2010

Dear Participant,

My name is Mohd Rozi Ismail and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the School of Education, College of Applied Human Sciences. I am working with Dr. Ellyn Dickmann at Colorado State University. She is the principal investigator for this project.

We are conducting a research study on leadership styles and decision making to see how culture affects the autonomy rule as perceived by teachers. The title of our study is: A Study of Leadership Styles and Decision Making in Kelantan Cluster Schools as Perceived by Teachers.

I would like you to participate in two interviews which will be recorded both on video and audio. In addition, I will ask your permission to take your photo for my research records or obtain a recent existing photo. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time.

All data (recordings, photos, video and audio tapes, transcripts, data files, etc.) will be destroyed after the study. There are no risks to your job, salary, or to any of your students. While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain additional knowledge regarding the dominant leadership style and decision making of the principal in clusters (in the USA, known as charter schools) as perceived by teachers. Also, your participation will assist with future collaborations between Malaysia and the USA.

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in this research study, but as researcher(s) we have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential risks.

If you have any questions, throughout this study please contact one of the following individuals:

Ellyn Dickmann, Associate Professor, Colorado State University

Principal Investigator  
 Sekolah Bersepadu Daerah Dan Sekolah Kluster  
 Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia  
 Fort Collins, Colorado, USA  
 ellyn.dickmann@colostate.edu, 970.491.4062

<input type="checkbox"/>	Timbalan Pengarah SBP
<input type="checkbox"/>	Timbalan Pengarah KLUSTR
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	KPP <u>Dasek &amp; Kemiri</u>

Catatan:  
Mohd rozi  
Surat keberoran

29/12

*Handwritten signatures:*  
 Rgk SBP 8k  
 Jala Wuslean & Saadu TK

TKPP Sektor Operasi Pendidikan  
 27/12/09

5/27/1

## Appendix C: IRB Approval

PROTOCOL  
Social, Behavioral & Education Research  
Colorado State University  
Protocol # 11-2693H Date Printed: 02/02/2012



*Knowledge to Go Places*

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**Protocol Title:** Teachers' Perceptions of Principal Leadership Styles and how they Impact Teacher Job Satisfaction

**Protocol Status:**  
APPROVED

**Date Submitted:**  
05/12/2011

**Approval Period:** 06/24/2011-05/31/2012

**Important Note:**

This Print View may not reflect all comments and contingencies for approval. Please check the comments section of the online protocol. Questions that appear to not have been answered may not have been required for this submission. Please see the system application for more details.



**NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH**

**DATE:** June 27, 2011  
**TO:** Timpson, William  
Banning, James, Lucas, Kathy, Lehmann, Jean, Ismail, Mohd Rozi  
**FROM:** Barker, Janell, , CSU IRB 2  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Teachers' Perceptions of Principal Leadership Styles and how they Impact Teacher Job Satisfaction  
**FUNDING SOURCE:** NONE  
**PROTOCOL NUMBER:** 11-2693H  
**APPROVAL PERIOD:** Approval Date: June 24, 2011 Expiration Date: May 31, 2012

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: Teachers' Perceptions of Principal Leadership Styles and how they Impact Teacher Job Satisfaction. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

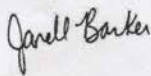
If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Janell Barker, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1655 [Janell.Barker@Colostate.edu](mailto:Janell.Barker@Colostate.edu)  
Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381 [Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu](mailto:Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu)

Barker, Janell



Barker, Janell

Includes:

Approval is to recruit up to 12 participants with the approved recruitment and consent material. The above-referenced project was approved by the Institutional Review Board with the condition that the approved consent form is signed by the subjects and each subject is given a copy of the form. NO changes may be made to this document without first obtaining the approval of the IRB.



## **Appendix D: Request to conduct a research**

### **COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

#### **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

209 Education Building  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1588  
Voice: 970.491.6317  
FAX: 970.491.1317

May 19th, 2011

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH**

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to seek permission to conduct research in your school. I am exploring the teachers' perceptions of principal leadership styles and how they impact teacher job satisfaction at three schools in the Poudre School District. The research is a qualitative study and will require participants to be interviewed once for a duration of 45 – 90 minutes. The participants of this study will include the principal and three teachers in every school selected. At the four selected schools in the Poudre School District, interviews will be conducted with teachers who have at least one to three years teaching experience at the same school with the same principal.

All interviews will be recorded using a digital recorder. You are assured that all responses will remain confidential and published results will only identify not by your name. This interview guide meets all the requirements for the protection of respondent privacy and confidentiality and is approved by the Colorado State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). There are no known risks for participating in the study.

As your participation will require honest and sincere responses, all the information provided will be treated with the confidentiality that it deserves. You can also contact me via email or phone for your consent. Should you have any inquiries, you may call me at my number.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

Mohd Rozi Ismail

Advisor's name

**William Timpson**

**Professor**

**phone: 970.491.7630**

**email: William.Timpson@ColoState.EDU**

**address: 105E Education, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1588**

Student's Name:

**Mohd Rozi Ismail**

**PhD Candidate**

**Educational leadership, Renewal and Change Program**

**500W, Prospect Rd, 22A**

**Fort Collins, CO 80526,**

**Phone ; 970-492-9267**

**E-mail : rojisensei2@yahoo.com.my**

## Appendix E: Model cover letter

My name is Mohd Rozi and I am a doctoral student at Colorado State University in the School of Education. I am conducting a study titled: *Teacher Perceptions of Principal Leadership Style and How They Impact Teacher Job Satisfaction*. The Principal Investigator is William Timpson, School of Education and the Co-Principal Investigator is James Banning, School of Education.

We would like you to participate in one interview, which will be tape-recorded. We estimate that each interview will require approximately 45 to 90 minutes. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, know that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty.

All recordings will be destroyed after the study. There are no risks to the job, salary, the students etc. While there are no direct benefits to you, I hope to gain useful knowledge that I can take back to the Malaysian Ministry of Education about leadership styles and how they can impact teacher job satisfaction. The findings will hopefully identify strengths in the United States that might prove useful in Malaysian schools as we attempt to implement new goals and vision.

There are no known risks to taking part in the study. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

If you have any questions, please contact

- a. [William.Timpson@ColoState.EDU](mailto:William.Timpson@ColoState.EDU) (PI and Advisor) 970.491.7630
- b. [James.Banning@ColoState.EDU](mailto:James.Banning@ColoState.EDU) (Co-PI and Committee member) 970.491.7153
- c. [rojisensei2@yahoo.com.my](mailto:rojisensei2@yahoo.com.my) (Co-PI) 970.492.9267
- d. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at CSU, 970-491-1655.

Sincerely,

William Timpson (PI), Professor  
James Banning (Co-PI), Professor  
Mohd Rozi Ismail (Co-PI), Doctoral Student

## Appendix F : Poudre School District approval letter

Mohd Rozi Ismail,

Please consider this document as formal approval for you to conduct research within Poudre School District based on your application materials originally received 5/26/11. Research project name: "Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Leadership Style and How They Impact Job Satisfaction"

- \* Date of project: Between May 2011 and May 2012 (If additional time is needed to complete the study, please notify me via email).
- \* I would like to add two conditions: 1) It is requested that the researcher provide PSD an electronic copy of the project summary at the end of the project, and 2) if you decide to submit an article for publication, please provide an electronic version of the article to PSD when completed.
- \* Priority consideration for future research partnerships with PSD will be given to individual researchers that have a demonstrated track record of submitting final reports for PSD consideration.
- \* Please feel free to use this email in your correspondent with PSD schools and personnel regarding this research project.

Thank you for considering Poudre School District as a research partner. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, and I look forward to reading your findings.



Dwayne Schmitz, Ph.D.

Poudre School District

Research and Evaluation Coordinator

(970) 490-3693

[dschmitz@psdschools.org](mailto:dschmitz@psdschools.org)

**Appendix G: Consent letter for pilot study**



**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

**Colorado State University**

**TITLE OF STUDY: Teacher's Perceptions of Principal Leadership Styles and How They Impact Teacher Job Satisfaction**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** *William M. Timpson, Ph.D.*

*Professor*

*School of Education*

*Colorado State University*

*Fort Collins, CO USA*

*970-491-7630*

*William.Timpson@ColoState.EDU*

**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** *Mohd Rozi Ismail*

*Graduate Student, Ph.D. Program*

*School of Education*

*Colorado State University*

*Fort Collins, CO USA*

**WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?** *Teachers with 1-3 years' teaching experience, and who have worked three years in a row with the same principal are needed for this study because it is their job satisfaction that is the principal point investigation of the study.*

**WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?** *Mohd Rozi Ismail, Ph.D. student Educational Leadership, Renewal and Change, Colorado State University for dissertation research.*

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?** *The purpose of the study is to collect data through interviews to document how teacher job satisfaction is related to principal leadership styles.*

**WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?** *Country: United States. State: Colorado. Location: Poudre School District. The study will last one year, beginning in the spring of 2011. Interviews will take place at a location and time that is convenient for you.*

**WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?** *You will be interviewed by the Co-Principal investigator, Mohd Rozi Ismail once. The interview will be audio taped, and will last between 45 and 90 minutes.*

**ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?** *To be included in the study, you must have 1-3 years' teaching experience with the same principal.*

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?** *There are no known risks or perceived discomforts to participants.*

**ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** *There are no known direct benefits to you for participating.*

**DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?** *Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.*

**WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?** *Only the principal investigator and the co-principal investigator.*

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the



---

Name of person providing information to participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Research Staff



## **Appendix H: Interview Questions**

The following questions will drive this research:

1. How do U.S. teachers perceive the principal's leadership style?
2. What are the different leadership styles that principals use?
3. What determine goodness and fit between a principal leadership style and teacher job satisfaction?

15 Questions

Part A – Background (5 questions)

Part B – Specific about principal goodness and fit and leadership style and how it is impact to job satisfaction (7 questions)

Setting

School A

School B

School C

School D

Participants

Participants 1

Participants 2

Participants 3

Participants 4

Participants 5

Participants 6

Participants 7

Participants 8

Participants 9

Participants 10

Participants 11

Participants 12

Each interview will last between 45 and 90 minutes.

The interview will be audio taped.

Part A – Background (5 questions)

6. What is your academic background?
7. What is your teaching background?
8. Please describe your relationship with your principal?
9. How many years have you worked with this principal?
10. How would you describe your satisfaction as a teacher?

Part B – Specific about leadership style and impact to job satisfaction (7 questions)

1. Please describe and discuss your principal's leadership style.
2. How does the leadership style of a principal affect your feelings about teaching?
3. Which aspect of leadership style do you believe best supports the educational goals of the school?
4. What principal leadership styles best fit with your job satisfaction?
5. What can leadership do to improve your job satisfaction?
6. What responsibilities does the school leadership have to assure your job satisfaction?
7. How would an ideal principal lead your school and improve your satisfaction?