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A Mixed-Methods Study: Principals' Perceived Leadership Styles and Ability to Lead During a School Violence Crisis

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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A MIXED METHODS STUDY: PRINCIPALS' PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLES

AND ABILITY TO LEAD DURING A SCHOOL VIOLENCE CRISIS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Joyce Herod Henderson

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Title: A Mixed-Methods Study: Principals' Perceived Leadership Styles and
       Ability to Lead During a School Violence Crisis

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        Our schools are considered a place of safety for learning, however, the unfortunate

reality is that schools may face crises and violence. Leadership styles vary among school

leaders and provide the framework for handling daily challenges. This mixed-methods

research design was used to investigate the individual leadership styles of public school

principals from twelve counties in southwestern Pennsylvania and their experiences with

and preparedness for incidents of school violence. Quantitative data were collected using

the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism, and

a brief demographic questionnaire. Using SPSS, descriptive statistics summarized the

survey data and further data analysis used an independent-samples t-test to compare

preparedness for school violence and leadership style. A statistical significance was not

found between the two groups. Qualitative data were collected through personal interviews

and provided descriptions of personal leadership styles, school violence experiences,

preparedness for and effective leadership during crises. Although some interviewees stated

no personal experience with an act of school violence, each understood the threat potential,

the expectation to respond, and the unfortunate reality that may await them. From the data

analysis, findings from the study revealed that building relationships is important for the

general welfare of students and staff, that violent school incidents regardless of location

have an effect on the general sense of preparedness for a similar event, and that school

leader's leadership style affects the climate and culture of the school. When a school crisis occurs, the responsible, skilled, professional leadership in our schools is, and always will be, the first level of defense against any threat that has the potential to harm children. The conclusions confirm that schools are safe places. Leadership is the key.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path." Proverbs 3:5-6

With every step of this journey, I have been blessed by so many who gave of their time, patience, and professional skills to direct my development as a researcher to meet this goal. I thank Dr. Valeri Helterbran for her guidance, encouragement, support, and high standards of performance. An excellent role model for success, I arrive at this point because of her dedication, devotion, and personal investment of time and effort in my professional development. The lessons she taught about patience have sustained me throughout this process. I thank Dr. Crystal Machado, who, in my opinion personifies the definitions of professor, teacher, and true scholar. Her professional interest in advancing my understanding and guiding me along the path has been a wonderful learning experience. She has encouraged me to always consider options I would otherwise have missed. I also thank Dr. Shirley Johnson, who has devoted her life to students of all ages, providing opportunities to develop the professional qualities necessary to be an effective teacher, life-long learner, and principled leader. Her generous, kind spirit guided and encouraged me to stay the course and become more than I could ever have thought. She always believed that I would accomplish this goal. She is an amazing lady and I am blessed to have her in my life.

Beyond the classroom walls, I am grateful for the encouraging words and prayers of family and friends who supported me. I am also blessed by my daughters, Emily and Laura, who always supported my progress and encouraged me to "just get done." Their love and inspiration will always be my joy. My love for them and pride in their

accomplishments are unending. To Doug who is my rock; his steadfast support, resolute

devotion, and positive encouragement throughout this journey will always be cherished.

His love sustains me. I could not have done this without him by my side.

Finally, to honor the memory of my parents, Richard R. Herod and Ruth B. Herod, I

thank them for providing a life time of love, teaching me about walking in faith, inspiring a

passion for learning, and instilling a desire to achieve and strive for the best. My mom was

a teacher and a strong, intelligent, and talented lady. Her love, beauty, smile, and grace

touched many people. I miss her. My father was an educator and a self-made businessman

who demonstrated through his professional life honesty, integrity, generosity, and

compassion for all whom he served. He taught me about the principles by which he lived,

faith, perseverance, and service before self. An accomplished musician he listened with a

critical ear, always encouraging perfection with a tilted head and raised eyebrow. A

driving tenet of his was, "If it is to be, it is up to me." His devotion to family, God, and

community made him truly a great father and role model. Dad left a distinguished legacy;

he is the giant on whose shoulders I stand. With this degree, I honor his memory.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"A successful attack is one we are not ready for" (Grossman, 2012).

Background

Violence among juveniles was a pervasive problem in American public schools during the 1970s and 1980s, however, the decade between 1990 and 2000 was the most violent in the history of America's schools (Daniels & Bradley, 2005, p. 29). During this time, the people of the United States witnessed tragic images of violent school events from across the nation as more than 300 school-related violent deaths occurred on or near schools in America (National School Safety Center, 2010, p. 47). School killings in Olive Hurst, CA, Edinboro, PA, Moses Lake, WA, Union, KY, Pearl, MS, and others left communities shaken; parents and children suddenly feared for their safety at school (Donahue, Schiraldi, & Zeidenberg, 1998, p. 3). The student-on-student school violence became an inclusive reality for all schools in America. When incidents of school violence strike they resonate, because many times the perpetrators are students who were undetected as children-at-risk.

In order to make public schools safer, the response by the federal and state governments resulted in legislation and policies beginning with the 1994 Safe Schools Act and the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 and zero-tolerance policies. Subsequent to the Safe Schools Act of 1995 (Act 26), the 1997 amendment (Act 30) mandated school districts to report statistics on school violence incidents, weapons, alcohol, drugs, and tobacco possession to the Department of Education. Additionally, school districts were required to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement agencies to create

crisis intervention plans and school violence prevention programs to deter future incidents (Center for Safe Schools, 2007). Through the development of these programs and preparedness plans, school leaders had a framework for emergency and crisis response to help ensure the safety of their students and schools (Trump, 2011, p. 3). Although the policies were in place, the surge of school violence in 1999 through 2001 was beyond belief.

The nation was spellbound and horrified with the enduring images created by the 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO. These and the other school shooting incidents that occurred re-focused the public's attention on the issue of school violence. With the almost monthly high profile cases that seemingly became nightly news items, "a level of fear among students, parents, educators and communities was generated" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002, p. 11).

Despite the headlines, a different challenge to keeping children safe occurred the morning of September 11, 2001, the fourth day of the new school year for New York City public school students. At the time of the first attacks on the World Trade Center, there were more than 6000 students attending the seven public schools, Pre-K to Grade 12, within the vicinity of the World Trade Center (Bartlett & Petrarca, 2002). Jackson, Susser, and Hoven (2002) related the effects of September 11, 2001 on the school children:

> The events of that day had a profound effect on these children. Some
> lost parents in the attacks; 1493 students lost someone in their family.
> Others watched events unfold from their school room windows.
> Elementary school children at Public School 89, located one and a half

blocks away from Ground Zero, witnessed the airplanes crashing into the

towers. Their teachers [were] in charge of evacuating them, ushering them

to safety, and learning that they could run only as fast as their slowest student.

(Jackson, Susser, & Hoven, 2002, p. 1)

As the thousands of children and adults from the schools in the area closest to the

World Trade Center witnessed total mayhem, the 1.1.million New York City school

students were evacuated. "Miraculously, not one child or teacher was killed or injured,

and all eventually made it to their homes safely" (Bartlett & Petrarca, 2002, p. xi). School

emergency plans for the New York City School System were in place; however, no

amount of planning would have prepared them for the magnitude of the tragedy which

occurred. International terrorism had come to America's shores.

Threats Targeting Children at Home and Abroad

To further complicate the situation following the events of September 11, 2001, a

plausible threat to America's children came into public consciousness as a credible danger

and distinct possibility. Al-Qaeda spokesperson, Suleiman Abu Gheith, wrote a three-part

article titled, "In the Shadow of the Lances," justifying a terroristic fight against America.

His quote and most notorious passage from the treatise supported this warning:

We have not reached parity with them [Americans]. We have the right to

kill four million Americans -two million of them children- and to exile twice

as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands. Furthermore, it

is our right to fight them with chemical and biological weapons, so as to

afflict them with the fatal maladies that have afflicted the Muslims because

of the [American] chemical and biological weapons. (Gheith, 2002, p. 2)

International war and terror have throughout time, victimized the citizenry. Over the past four decades, terrorist attacks abroad, specifically targeting children, have become more common. These violent acts include bombings of schools, attacks on school buses, taking children as hostages, suicide and car bombings near schools, all with the intent to maim or murder the children; these incidents represent an increasing trend in mass casualty attacks. By examining these violent acts against children, the vulnerabilities of U.S. school children may be better understood (Baray, 2007, p. 2). Combined with other internal and external threats, policy decisions, and global military engagement, among counterterrorism experts, the belief that America will be attacked again is just a matter of time (Roberts & Lawrence, 2007; Ruffini, 2006; Ryan & Thomas, 2010; Stackelbeck, 2011; Trump, 2011; Walker, 2001). However, "the federal government has never fully, openly, and proactively addressed the threat of terrorism to our schools" (Trump, 2011, p. 1).

The 2003 National Advisory Committee on Children and Terrorism Report states that each school day 53 million children and young people attend more than 119,000 public and private schools where 6 million adults work as teachers or staff (Trump, 2011, p. 127). Consequently, more than 20 percent of the U.S. population can be found most weekdays, Monday through Friday, in schools between early morning and late afternoon, September through May. School buses transport and school buildings house basically the same number of children at the same location in easily identifiable facilities, transported by mostly yellow buses that follow planned routes and schedules. Combine this information with the expectation that schools are welcoming, easily accessible, relatively unprotected, and with limited low level physical security; schools clearly fit the definition

of a soft target (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, pp. 64-65).

For more than a decade after Columbine, the news has been intermixed with reports of additional violent American school incidents, both school-age and post-secondary where over one hundred innocent students have been victimized leaving horrific scenes and many unanswered questions (National School Safety Center, 2010; Ruffini, 2006, pp. 163-168). For most communities, the prevalent belief that "it can't happen here" dramatically changed and each incident left the affected communities devastated (Booth, Van Hasselt, & Vecchi, 2011; Kupietz, 2005; Philpott, 2008; Rabiner, 2012; Trump, 2001).

School Safety

Keeping students and schools safe is a responsibility primarily assumed by the leadership of the school. School officials are charged with deciding how to create a safe, yet amicable environment without unduly sacrificing freedoms. This is done in part by creating an effective and well-rehearsed school-wide crisis management plan, developing intervention strategies, minimizing the occurrence of violence through proactive protocols, and handling the crisis when it occurs (McAdams & Foster, 2008; Trump, 2010). The value of a school safety plan is to provide the framework necessary to identify potential problems affecting students and school personnel that may go undetected without the watchful eye of trained school personnel (Skiba et al., 2000). The challenge to keep children safe is a daunting task; everyone is responsible for keeping communities safe and within these, the schools and the children (Trump, 2007). For the purpose of this study, the term 'terrorism' will be defined and discussed as a method to instill a feeling of vulnerability to be safe and create a sense of fear in people that motivates a change in daily routines and behaviors. Incidents of school violence can instill the feeling of fear and create

a sense of vulnerability that may alter a person's behavior, whether it is an act of intimidation through bullying or physical violence, the intent or action to negatively affect the life of a person instills fear.

Regardless who the perpetrators are, whether they are students who target other students or adults who intend to maim or kill school children, it is human nature for individuals to deny, or at least avoid thinking about the occurrence of a possible tragedy in their schools or communities. The challenge then is how to prepare for the unimaginable horror of an attack on our children and schools without conceding to fear or denial. Familiar statements made after incidents of student-on-student violence or other catastrophic violent events echo the disbelief that school violence could not happen in their schools (Trump, 2011).

The unfortunate reality of twenty-first century American life is that, "It [violence] *can* happen here, wherever the setting, and that preparedness and mitigation, are essential steps to strategic interventions and managing violent incidents when they occur" (Ruffini, 2006, p. 159). This action was demonstrated during the 2012 attack at Chardon High School, OH, where an 18 year old student shot and killed three students, wounding three others. Under the principal's leadership, the students' and teachers' practiced, prompt reactions and use of their school crisis management plan had prepared them for the appropriate responses to this tragedy, limiting the bloodshed, protecting the students, and reuniting them with their parents (Johnston, 2013).

School leaders in anticipation of the unpredictable violent actions of students or aforementioned threats, need to prepare their crisis intervention plans for such attacks while the perspective is undistracted and responsive. In the book, *Innocent Targets*, Dave

Grossman (p. xviii) suggests that through rational informed discussions and without giving way to unreasoned fear, a balanced common sense, all-hazards approach to crisis planning is possible. With this information, school safety, threat preparedness, crisis intervention, and recovery may enhance principals' crisis leadership effectiveness and better ensure students' welfare. "It is our moral responsibility to keep those kids safe" (Dorn & Dorn, 2007, p. xviii).

Overview of the Study

Our nation's schools are considered a place of safety for learning; however, the unfortunate reality is that schools may face crises and violence. Parents are provided reasonable assurances that their children are safe while under the supervision of responsible professional educators (Essex, 2011, p. 110). School administrators are the chief executive officers, the leaders responsible for the total operation and climate of the entire school. On a daily basis, school leaders assume the responsibility to establish a safe environment for all and maintain a setting that is conducive for students to grow academically, socially, physically, and in other ways. However, there are no guarantees that a school will be completely safe from crime, violence, or disaster (Della-Giustina, Kerr, & Georgevich, 2000; Petersen, 1997).

Acts of violence committed by young people are not unique to schools; violence can occur anywhere. From the mid to late twentieth century, student-on-student violence became familiar news reports; however, as the violence escalated due to the political, legal, educational, and social changes occurring, parents began to fear for the safety of their children. During the 1960s and 1970s, primarily in urban schools, increased gang activity infiltrated schools, resulting in student-on-student violence from crime and control issues

(Greenough, 2004). Most school violence incidents continued to occur in urban and inner-city schools through the 1980s, however, a change in the scope and frequency of school violence occurred in the late 1990s. Violent acts, planned and calculated, now emerged in greater frequency in suburban, middle-class neighborhoods; a newer venue for school violence was created.

Since the 1990s in the United States, as a result of the increased frequency of school related violence, the public's reaction has affected American school law, policies, and practices. Some believe that the answer is increased government regulation, while others focus on examining the social and psychological implications of youth violence, concentrating on classifiable symptoms and seeking to identify the root causes (Cornell, 2006; Gregory, 2010; Ruffini, 2006). Pinpointing the root causes of school violence is difficult and results from a layering of causes and societal risk factors. The 2002 U.S. Secret Service Safe School Initiative Report noted that, in a number of the school violence cases studied, the attackers had experienced severe bullying and harassment, which was determined to be a motivating factor for the attacks at school (p. 14). Additionally, after Columbine and again after Sandy Hook, unconfirmed reports identified the attackers each as a "video-game devotee" (Bauder, 2012, p. 1; Grossman & DeGaetano, 1999). Attention focused on media violence as a contributing cause, connecting its influence in desensitizing children to the horror of killing, priming the attackers "to see killing as acceptable" (Grossman & DeGaetano, 1999, p. 7).

School leaders' perspectives concerning the troubling behaviors and characteristics of the threats within the schools provide the warning signs, vulnerable populations, and socio-cultural risk factors of drugs, weapons, bullying, and victimization. The escalation of

aggression in youth and the "differentiation between reactive and proactive aggression have emerged" (McAdams & Foster, 2008, p. 88). For over a decade since Columbine, the effect these changes in school climate have on the school principals' leadership roles and their ability to perform their job, challenges their decision making process and their subsequent actions to minimize the carnage of a violent attack (Cornell, 2006; Linzer, Sweifach, & LaPorte, 2008; McAdams & Foster, 2008). As reported in the research by McAdams and Foster (2008), a national survey of school administrators found that over the past twenty years, the frequency of proactive aggression, a pre-meditated response to an often misperceived threat, among middle and high school students had doubled and at the elementary school level, tripled. The impact on and views of school leaders decision making due to the increasing aggression in schools was presented. In an international qualitative study conducted with fourteen international focus groups of health care employees by Linzer, Sweifach, & LaPorte (2008), the effect of acts of terrorism on social service agency personnel was reported. The findings indicated that when a disaster occurs, feelings of doubt and ethical conflict occurs as a result of the decisions made during the triage process, despite that the decision was correct. A conclusion was that ethical uncertainty in decision making should be expected during disaster recovery.

Incidents of student-on-student school violence, acts of domestic terrorism perpetrated at schools, and other threats to our schools and children from outside our borders, underscore the urgency for school leaders to define their roles during a crisis and identify the next steps to help better provide a safe school environment (Bruner & Lewis, 2004; Trump, 2001). The health and welfare of students in crisis situations is dependent upon the school leadership and emergency preparedness.

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The impact of Columbine changed the landscape of the school safety

profession forever, causing many schools to play "catch-up" with decades

of neglect in security and emergency planning, while setting a new

threshold for best practices in school safety. (Trump, 2004, p. 2)

When a school is attacked, the illusion of safety disappears, the anticipated number of

victims is maximized, and the intense feeling of failure to protect the children among the

adults may evoke strong emotional responses (Dorn & Dorn, 2007).

Sandy Hook is much like 9/11. It didn't matter where you lived in the

United States, your occupation, whether or not you have a child or a

spouse. This terrorist attack represented a deep personal loss for all.

All members of our society both near and far from Newtown, CT, are

directly affected. Our nation lost its breath trying to make sense of a

senseless act when 20 first-grade students in class and six educators

were slain…the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre is the current

"game changer." (Gaffney, 2012, p. 3)

School leaders must prepare for unpredictable and seemingly unavoidable events and

through their leadership style, be able to handle the human dimensions of a crisis.

Leadership is the primary element to ensuring school safety (Klann, 2003; Trump, 2008).

The leadership style of each administrator is determined by personal experience

and choice. The confidence to manage any emergency or violent school incident is based

on the principal's ability to lead and have people follow (Helm, 2010). When a crisis or

school violence incident occurs, the assumption is that the procedures, the protocols, the

actions to be followed as identified in the school crisis management plan will be followed.

School leaders during natural and human-caused disasters, crises, and emergencies assume leadership roles as defined by many variables (Lashway, 2003). However, "nothing tests a leader like a crisis" (Klann, 2003 p. 1); the same could be said for a crisis management plan.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to examine whether Southwestern Pennsylvania public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles relate to their preparedness for a school crisis and their effective implementation of the school's existing crisis management plan.

Research Questions

This mixed methods study will address the following questions:

1. What are public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles?

2. What relationship exists between public school principals' preparation for acts of violence in schools and each perceived style of leadership (laissez faire, transactional, and transformational)?

3. What are public school principals' perceptions of their response to school violence?

4. How does the importance placed on crisis plan development and implementation by public school principals align with their self-identified perceived leadership styles?

5. What link exists between public school principals' descriptions of their perceived style of leadership and perceived effectiveness of leadership during school crises?

Through the research study, the findings related to these questions may provide a better

understanding of principals' perceived leadership styles and how they influence their

perception of school violence, their ability to lead during school crises, and the

development and implementation of the crisis management plan.

Significance of the Study

The challenge to keep our children safe is a daunting task; Americans must engage

in keeping communities safe and within these, the school children (Trump, 2007). "One

of the greatest threats to the safety of our children remains violence perpetrated by fellow

students in school" (Ruffini, 2006, p. 159; Trump, 2007). The intermittent U.S. news

reports of violent and sometimes deadly school related incidents provoke memories of

previous school tragedies, rekindling the sense of vulnerability and the heartbreaking loss

of young lives. "Every day, millions of parents hug millions of kids, their most precious

possession … trusting us to keep them alive. This is the most important thing any society

can do; protect our young" (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, p. xx).

Researchers have revealed that a principal's leadership style can be vital in

determining a school climate (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005;

Goldman, 1998; Hallinger & Hausman, 1992; Pepper & Hamilton-Thomas, 2002).

Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005), stated that principals can

establish productive working environments for teachers and positive learning

environments for students. In the research study, "School Leadership Study: Developing

Successful Principals" the examination of eight pre- and in-service programs identified the

key elements for developing effective strong leaders so that the process can be replicated

in other school leadership development programs. Goldman (1998) as a staff developer

for the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project asserts in the article, *The Significance of Leadership Style,* that the school leader's values and beliefs and subsequently the leadership style are reflected in the school's climate and culture. Working in many schools and with the principals, the conclusion was that the institutional and educational practices of faculty and staff are an expression, stated or unstated, of the leader's values. Additionally, Pepper and Hamilton-Thomas (2002) research described the effect on school climate when the style of leadership changed from authoritarian to transformational leadership style. Using an auto-ethnographical research approach, the school principal recorded attitudinal and behavioral changes when confronting school issues. With input and support from staff and community, the effect of the change in leadership style on the school climate was found to be a more positive, caring, learning and working environment. The primary conclusion of the study was that leadership style affects the school climate. Hallinger and Hausman (1992) found in the four-year longitudinal case study on the changing role of principals in schools of choice, that role expectations for principals included the development of collaborative and public relations skills to enhance their instructional leadership and outreach to school-community partnerships. This research focused on principals and the importance their leadership styles and skills have on the welfare of students and the school community.

In crisis situations, school and public safety officials nationwide proactively pursue prevention programs, security measures, and emergency preparedness protocols to prevent an attack in their schools. Attacks like the 1999 Columbine High School, 2005 Virginia Tech University, and the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacres were unimaginable and changed school safety practices and protocols forever. Across the

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nation, school leaders engaged in intense scrutiny of their existing school systems' crisis management plans, re-defining preparedness, prevention, response and recovery procedures. School crisis management plans and safety programs are valuable because they shed light on potential hazards toward students and school employees that may otherwise go unrecognized (Bouleris, Collett, Mauntler, & Ray, 2003; Trump 2004).

This research study is significant because responsible, skilled, professional leadership in our schools is the first level of defense against any threat that has the potential to harm school children. This study offers school principals the opportunity to identify and describe their own leadership styles, provide insight into the leadership practices that support principals' roles during crises, reflect on their decision making processes, and consider how to better prepare for and manage during a school crisis.

More significantly, this study's findings may establish a need to examine the principal certification program curricula to include crisis leadership, crisis prevention plan development, and to provide essential information and relevant skills for preparedness and intervention strategies. Finally, this study will add new information to the education field and provide opportunities for future research in the areas of school safety and leadership.

Theoretical Framework

The education of children is by its very nature a moral activity and the students' welfare, the primary responsibility. Consequently, school leaders are challenged daily to connect leadership theory and practice to the critical social issues in order to provide a safe learning environment for all children (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Starratt, 2004).

Educational leaders must be morally responsible, not only in preventing and alleviating harm but also in a proactive sense, of who the leader is, what the

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leader is responsible as, whom the leader is responsible to, and what the

leader is responsible for. (Starratt, 2004, p. 49)

School leaders are educated in the competencies of administration knowledge,

performance, and professional disposition. Professional dispositions involve the basic

constructs to include the moral character and values of the leader, the professional ethics

that influence the leader's vision, and the leader's commitments and behaviors toward

students, colleagues, families, and communities (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Dempster,

Carter, Freakley, & Parry, 1998; MacDonald, 1999; Shipman, Queen, & Peel, 2007).

Above all other leader capacities, school principals' ability to model ethical and moral

practices should be germane to school leadership.

Leadership is the "key to managing school safety" (Trump, 2008). Traditional

leadership styles specifically attend to the different traits and behavior patterns of leaders,

initially focusing on the qualities that distinguish leaders from followers and concentrating

on the leaders' operational strengths that promote excellence and success (Robertson,

2004).

This mixed-methods study will integrate moral leadership as a theoretical

foundation in examining two components: 1. leadership styles as related to school crisis

leadership; and 2. schools' crisis intervention plans. With moral leadership as a guide for

school leaders, the ability to manage the potential threats of school violence, domestic

terror and international terror is contingent upon the principals' ability to lead during a

school crisis. The researcher believes that the principal's style of leadership influences the

preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery from incidents of violence. Figure 1

depicts the graphical representation of the theoretical framework for the research study.
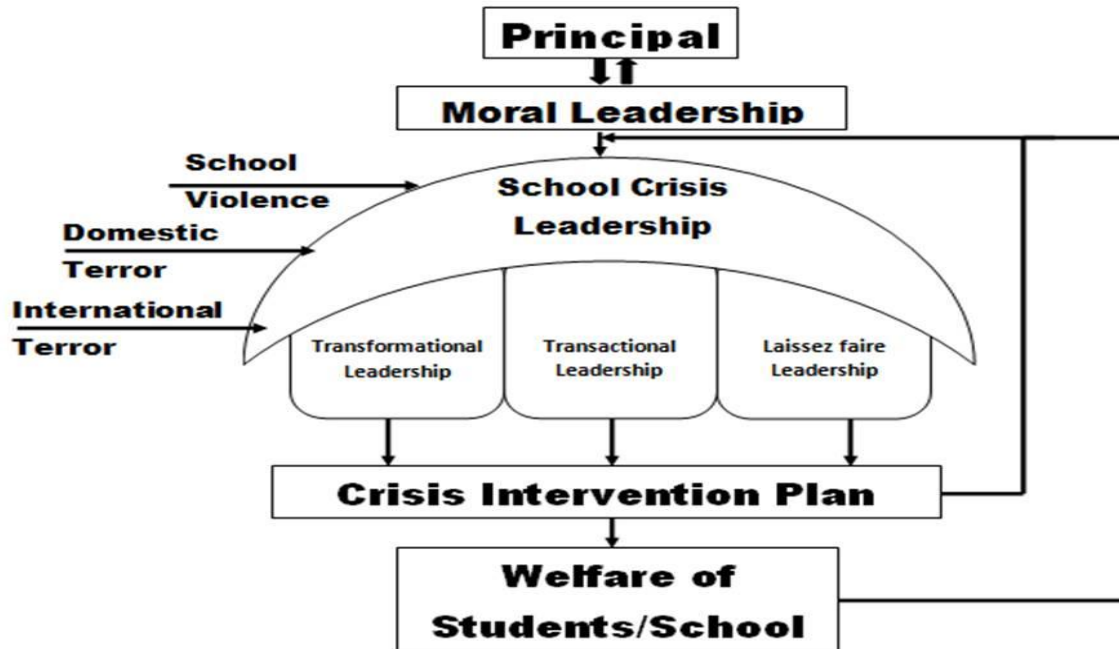
Figure 1. The theoretical framework for the research study.

Keeping schools and students safe is a responsibility primarily left to the leadership of the school. School leaders provide a safe school environment by acknowledging the potential threats of school violence, developing intervention strategies, and managing the crisis when it occurs (Dufresne & Dorn, 2007; McAdams & Foster, 2008; Trump, 2010). School leaders' conduct, guided by professional ethics, moral principles, leadership styles, and personal integrity, provide the unity and coherence to serve in the best interest of the students (Edwards, 2001; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Starratt, 2004). For school leaders, the moral, ethical, and legal responsibility is to keep all students and school personnel safe (Dorn, 2007). When school leaders commit to providing a safe and welcoming school environment, the basis for the development of plans and protocols to achieve this goal is possible (Daniels & Bradley, 2005; Ruffini, 2006; Trump, 2010).

Leadership

"Administrators, who want to lead, have to realize that they are called to a higher standard" (Starratt, 2004, p. 61). Leadership theorists of the twentieth century assert that educational leaders need to model moral and ethical practices, representing the values and motivations of both leaders and followers (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Dorn, 2007; Greenfield, 2004; Gregory, 2010; Kohlberg, 1981; Maslow, 1970; Starratt, 2004).

> We need heroes, people who can inspire us, help shape us morally,
>
> spur us on to purposeful action--and from time to time we are called
>
> on to be those heroes, leaders for others, either in a small, day-to-day
>
> way, or on the world's larger stage. At this time in America, and in the
>
> rest of the world, we seem to need moral leadership especially, but
>
> the need for moral inspiration is ever present. (Coles, 2001, p. xvii)

Contemporary theories examine other variables such as individuals' leadership decision making styles, responsive interpersonal influence, the ability to foster leadership in others, and ultimately, shared leadership that involves inclusive participation of diverse groups (Anello, 1992; Bosworth, 2011; Burns, 1978; Gardiner, 2006; Maldonado & Lacey, 2010; Starratt, 2004).

Traditional and contemporary leadership theories may be viewed as a continuum and provide an evolutionary structure for understanding the progression of theories in the twentieth century (Tng, 2009). Many leadership theories exist and can vary from autocratic to facilitative. For the purposes of this study, the following three contemporary leadership styles were selected for their distinct qualities that identify the decision making, problem solving, and motivational methods: 1. laissez faire, 2. transactional, and 3.

transformational. Following is a brief description of these styles of leadership. Chapter

two will include a more comprehensive definition and delineation of leadership styles.

Leadership Styles

Laissez faire leadership is a style characterized by an absence of formal

leadership and complete freedom for followers to make decisions. This leadership style

can be effective in situations where group members are highly skilled, motivated and

capable of working independently. Leaders minimize their involvement in the decision

making, even though they may remain available for consultation and responsible for the

outcome (Lewin, Lippit & White, 1939).

Transactional leadership exemplifies leaders who are concerned with maintaining

the normal course of operations, is more of a managerial style, and based on an exchange of

services for reparation. The leaders' command and control accompany the defined

structure, requirements, and a well-understood formal system of rewards or retributions.

Transactional leadership is effective in managing emergency situations with the leader

having established clear guidelines and expectations to be carried out in a defined manner

(Hargis, Wyatt, & Piotrowski, 2011).

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership whose leaders have a strong set

of internal values and beliefs and are effective in motivating followers (Fitch, 2009, p. 30).

"Transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human

conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming

effect on both" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Vital to the success of principals' leadership is the

need to develop decision making an ethical and efficient approach (Hoy & Miskal, 2007).

Research suggests that values inform actions and that decision making practices

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of school leaders and their strategies are developed through their personal value systems and from pedagogical perspectives (Dempster, Carter, Freakley, & Parry, 1998; MacDonald, 1999). Dempster, Carter, Freakley, and Parry (1998), stated that in an effort to promote understanding of principals' ethical decision making and values-driven leadership in a time of diminished constructive educational planning, a project was designed to address the new norm, the issue of crisis management in schools. They reported that a general agreement found in investigations of school administration personnel is that educational leadership is values-driven and that many professions, including teaching, have a moral element. MacDonald (1999) reported from the qualitative study of twelve western Canadian junior high school principals that school violence was not viewed as a problem, but was a symptom of unfulfilled needs that could be met by the school. Through the principals' personal beliefs and the use of school resources, problems were prioritized and interventions determined. A school violence crisis, however, "quickly exposes a leader's hidden strengths, core weaknesses, and whether the leader has what it takes to function effectively when the heat is on" (Klann, 2004, p. 1).

Crisis Management Plans

"A crisis sets its own timetable; the time for planning is over" (Klann, 2003, p. 41).

Prevention is possible when school personnel notice that something is out of the ordinary within or around the school (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). Because school violence is an abomination to the educational process, the possibility of an incident demands a comprehensive crisis management plan with well-trained personnel performing well-defined, well-executed protocols that will help ensure the safety of students

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(Jimerson, Nickerson, Mayer, & Furlong, 2010; Madero, 2005).

An effective method of crisis plan preparation is the development of procedures where students and staff respond without hesitation during a disaster. Under the requirements and standards of federal and state emergency agencies (i.e. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Incident Management System (NIMS), Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), Pennsylvania Incident Management System (PIMS)), school building safety plans and procedures need to be individually developed, trained, and tested since no individual model strategy fits all schools and school community situations (Trump, 2007).

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code states that every school district and child-care facility is required to create a comprehensive disaster plan in accordance with the guidelines developed by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. In 2008 the state of Pennsylvania, through a sub-committee of the Safe Schools Advisory Committee, developed an "All Hazards" School Safety Planning Toolkit. Considered a "living document," (p. 3) a term used to describe an evolving and dynamic document that may be changed over time, the toolkit provides guidelines and includes standard procedures to school districts to plan for natural and human-caused disasters, crises, and emergencies (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, 2009).

Success in preventing school violence is proactive and preemptive (Grossman & Christensen, no date; Madero, 2005). In order to serve in the best interests of the students, in crisis situations, school and public safety officials across the nation proactively pursue prevention programs, security protocols, and emergency preparedness measures to prevent an attack in their schools.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will be used:

al-Qaeda : The Arabic word is translated as, "the base;" the loosely organized disparate, militant Middle East network that developed into a borderless de-centralized terrorist movement (Goodrich & Sackie, 2010, p. 94).

Domestic Terrorism: Section 802 of the USA PATRIOT Act (Public Law No. 107-52) re-definition of domestic terrorism is when "a person engages in an act dangerous to human life that is a violation of the criminal laws of a state or the United States, if the act appears to be intended to (i) intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping. Additionally, the acts have to occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States and if they do not, may be regarded as international terrorism" (Department of Homeland Security, 2002).

First Responders: The term includes local and state fire, police, and emergency medical personnel providing access to reliable, interoperable communications to assist those in need during emergencies.

Leadership Style: Defined as a manner in which a leader influences others in the organization.

Moral Leadership: Moral leaders are defined as those who have a positive, lasting effect or influence on others and the world (Roepke, 1995).

Persistently Dangerous Schools: The No Child Left Behind legislation allows parents to transfer their students if schools are determined to be excessively violent and dangerous.

This classification is based on definitions created by each individual state; a well-intentioned law lost in the politics of implementation (Trump, 2011).

School-associated Violent Death: The "fatal injury (e.g., homicide, suicide, or legal intervention) that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school, during school, or on the way to or from a school-sponsored event" (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010).

School Climate: School climate describes the culture of the school and the behaviors of the principal, the teachers, and students at the building level. The positive school environment is characterized as welcoming and conducive to learning, where students are and feel safe everywhere (Tableman & Herron, 2004).

Soft Target: Defined as a "person or thing that is relatively unprotected or vulnerable" (Oxford University Press, 2001; Dorn & Dorn, 2011, pp. 64-65).

Targeted School Violence: Described as student-on-student violent acts or crimes that occur in schools or at school functions are those in which the perpetrator or victim is known or is identifiable prior to the intended act (Daniels and Bradley, 2005, p. 29).

Terrorism: Defined and discussed as an action or set of actions to instill a feeling of vulnerability and create a sense of fear in people that motivates a change in behavior and routine. Incidents of school violence can instill the feeling of fear and create a sense of vulnerability that may alter a person's behavior, whether it is an act of intimidation through bullying or physical violence; the intent or action to negatively affect the life of a person instills fear.

The Enemy at the Gate: Perpetrators not known to the school personnel and have a suspicious interest in the organizational operation of the school and who threatens to

attack our children and schools, for the purpose of this study will be defined as 'the enemy at the gate' (Gangale & Dudley-Rowley, 2004).

The Enemy Within: Perpetrators who are "known (or knowable)" to school personnel for acts or actions bringing a negative response from students, teachers, administrators, or authorities (Cullen, 2009).

Youth Violence: Defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person, group, or community, with the behavior likely to cause physical or psychological harm (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002, p. 5).

Limitations of the Study

A limitation to this study is that it will be conducted within a defined twelve county geographic area of southwestern Pennsylvania, limiting generalizability. From these counties, the sample will include only the public school principals who volunteer to participate in the study from only the site-approved school districts in this geographic area. The larger the sample population the more one can generalize the results within the identified population or to a state as a whole. The question of generalizability from this sample is a limitation.

Another limitation to the study is that inherent biases may be introduced in gathering data through the use of a survey based on the individuals' self-perceptions of their leadership styles and preparedness for incidents of school violence. Robins & John (1997) found a positive bias in people's self-perceptions in the absence of an absolute standard. Additionally, by using a survey that requires self-disclosure, limitations may occur because individuals who respond voluntarily to surveys have an interest in the subject matter and are motivated to participate (Bordens & Abbott, 2004).

Summary

Chapter I provides an overview and purpose of the research study, examines the matter of school violence, and the collective significance of school principals' leadership style in preparation and response to potential school violence or international threats against American children. The research is significant because responsible, skilled, professional leadership in our schools is, and always will be, the first level of defense against any threat that has the potential to harm school children. Every school day, principals provide parents a sense of security and reasonable assurance that their children are safe while under the supervision of responsible professional educators (Essex, 2011, p.110).

Our nation's schools are considered a place of safety for learning. The unfortunate reality is that violence perpetrated by fellow students in school remains one of the greatest domestic threats to the safety of children (Ruffini, 2006, p. 159). The confidence to manage any emergency or violent school incident is based totally on the strategic interventions established, planned, and practiced (Klann, 2003; Ruffini, 2006; Trump, 2011). This study will examine whether the ability for school leaders to respond, recover, and adequately restore the school climate to an optimal learning condition after a school violence event is dependent upon principals' leadership styles and the rehearsed execution of a comprehensive crisis intervention plan.

Chapter II offers a review of the literature as it relates to each variable in the research questions. Presented in four sections, the review will provide, 1. an overview of the progression of school violence in America, 2. the theoretical framework that informs the study, 3. the related school leadership theories and styles, and 4) the school leaders'

response to potential acts of school violence and the development of intervention

protocols for school crisis intervention plans.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter II offers a review of the literature as it relates to each variable in the research questions, presented in four sections. After an overview of the topic, the first section provides a historical account of the progression of school violence in American schools including relevant studies and research about school order and safety. References to pertinent information regarding the potential threats and justification to harm America's children are reported. The second section provides a description of the theoretical framework that informs the study and includes relevant theorists of virtue ethics, moral leadership, and school climate. The third section will address school leadership and related leadership theories and styles. Concluding the review of literature for this study, the fourth section focuses on responsive leadership to school crises and the development and implementation of school crisis intervention plans.

School Violence: An Overview

"Violence is generally defined as the use of force toward another that results in harm" (Henry, 2000, p.17). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2010) and the Center for the Prevention of School Violence (2002) provide information regarding youth violence and the value of using a consistent definition in order to monitor youth violence incidents, examine the development of trends, and the magnitude of youth violence. The article references Dahlberg and Krug (2002, p. 5) definition of interpersonal violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person, group, or community that results in or has the high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation." Based upon the

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demographics of the population, school violence is inherently an issue of youth violence that involves persons characteristically between the ages of 10 to 24 years and can occur in many forms (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011, p. 1; Cornell, 2006, p. 11; Dahlberg & Krug, 2002, p. 5).

Violence in American schools did not begin with the murderous acts of the 1990s (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Greenough, 2004, Henry, 2000; Moore, Petries, Braga, & McLaughlin (2003). According to Blumstein and Wallman (2000) the surge in juvenile homicides perpetrated in schools more than doubled during the late 1980s. In the early 1990s youth violence was attributed to the burgeoning societal issues of an expanding juvenile drug culture and gangs with access to guns (Cornell, 2006, p. 11). Adolescents, in general were perceived as unprincipled and violent, an anomaly that could conceivably affect the future of American society. Over the course of the decade, even with the decline in juvenile crime statistics attributed in part to increased legislation regarding school discipline policies on weapons and drug possession (Blumstein & Wallman, 2000), the advent of the media's real-time portrayal and visual accounting of the school shootings and violence substantiated the public's perception that America's schools were no longer safe havens (Algozzine & McGee, 2011; Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010; Cornell, 2006; Maeroff, 2000).

According to Algozzine and McGee (2011), their study explored and compared the reported data by the middle and high school administrators in the North Carolina *Annual Report on School Crime and Violence* and perceived violence among middle and high school teachers, parents, and students in public schools (pp. 93–95). The findings revealed that the relationship between the data reported and perceived violence in public

schools in North Carolina were low (p. 94). The public's perception of school violence

varied notably to the existing data of violent school incidents, highlighting the well-

publicized events at Columbine High School and Virginia Tech University. Additionally,

in the book, *School Violence: Fears versus Facts*, Cornell (2006, p. 23) writes, "Despite

the overall safety of American schools, and the improvements that were observed from

1995 to 2003, a high profile incident can radically change public perceptions." Maeroff

(2000) in an informational analysis brief focused on the power of visual media and the

effect of school violence on the public's perception of safe schools. Addressing a

symbiotic relationship of the media and reporting aberrant behaviors, he contends that "the

intensive coverage of a few high profile shootings may mislead the public into thinking

that violence in schools is pervasive" (p. 5).

Historical Overview: Trends and Snapshots

According to Cornell and Mayer (2010), school violence is a recurrent problem

that has troubled society throughout the history of education, with early descriptions of

student violence found in clay tablets of Mesopotamia, 2000 B.C. (p. 7). The nature of

school violence has for centuries evolved throughout educational history. From the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, actions of some male adolescent students from rural

schools aggressively challenged school authority that occasionally resulted in deadly

consequences. In the early twentieth century, where students in urban schools sought

dominance in criminal syndicate power struggles, concerns about school order and safety

in public schools were justified. The weapons-of-choice changed from "fists and sticks to

chains and bats to knives and guns" (p. 2) as individual acts of violence within the school

system evolved into group and gang violence provoked by intolerance and need for control (Cornell and Mayer, 2010; Graves, 2007; Henry, 2000).

As schools became less autonomous and more assimilated into the local and state bureaucracies controlled by Boards of Education and state government mandates, the type of school violence also changed (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Greenough, 2004). For example, the most violent mass murder of children in American school history was committed on May 18, 1927, in Bath, MI. Andrew Kehoe, a school board member, sought revenge on Bath's citizens by targeting their children for the foreclosure of his farm due to his inability to pay the increased tax caused by the building of the new school. His violent behavior and pre-meditated actions to destroy the school building and its young people was evident in the magnitude of the explosives planted in the school basement, made of dynamite, set to detonate after the school day began. Accounts of this tragedy reported the deaths of 45 people, 38 of which were children, and 58 others seriously injured in America's first school bombing (Bernstein, 2009).

Since 1894 and throughout the first half of the 1900s, American public school systems were operating as racially "separate, but equal" as mandated through the interpretation of the 1894 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. During the 1930s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Charles Hamilton Houston was appointed as the first Special Counsel of the NAACP. From 1935 to 1940, using an "equalization strategy," Houston filed two notable lawsuits demanding that facilities provided for black students be made equal to those available to white students. In *Murray v. Maryland* (1936), the desegregation of the University of Maryland's Law

School was accomplished and in *Gaines v. Canada* (1938), the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of the Law School at the University of Missouri. In 1950, Thurgood Marshall, having replaced Houston as the Special Counsel for the NAACP, won two cases involving the desegregation of graduate schools in Texas and Oklahoma. In *Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court's unanimous ruling stated that "separate but equal" was not necessarily true in education and that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment had been violated, respectively. These two Supreme Court decisions set precedence for the desegregation of public schools. With the 1954 *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*, the Supreme Court decision to overturn the *Plessy v. Ferguson* mandate, the Constitutional rights to equal protection under the law and assuring that the states' separate educational programs were equal were now law (Cozzens, 1998).

However, after the 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision, segregationists targeted black youths, attempting to dissuade and block them from attending their local public schools and to stop the desegregation of schools. The hostile resistance to school desegregation and racial tension ran extremely high during the 1950s and 1960s, driven by prejudice, intimidation, and protests. Violent actions against school children of all ages were condoned by some high level government officials who used the full arsenal of their political positions in an effort to maintain segregation. The 1957 high profile example of this defiance of the *Brown v Board of Education* law involved the "Little Rock Nine" integration attempt where the Arkansas National Guard was instructed by Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus, to keep all blacks out of Central High School. To break the stalemate, federal troops were sent to Little Rock by President Dwight Eisenhower to

protect and guard the black students as they attempted to enroll and attend their

neighborhood school. This was a historical victory for desegregation of schools. Another

example of desegregation defiance happened in Birmingham, AL, where local officials

and the media focused attention on the highly publicized 1963 Birmingham Children's

Crusade. The peaceful crusade of protest was met with water cannons as black high

schools students were bombarded with water from high- pressure fire hoses while other

children were attacked by the city's police dogs, all witnessed by a shocked nation on the

evening news. The pathway for progress to integrate the public schools was a violent

experience. Many children, students and adults lost their lives in the struggle for equal

opportunity for an education for all students (Cozzens, 1998; Klobuchar, 2009).

The violence on school campuses continued as one of the worst school shootings

in U.S. school history occurred in 1966 in Austin at the University of Texas. The

perpetrator, referenced as the "Clock Tower Sniper," was an engineering honor student

who reined terror on the campus with an arsenal of weapons, killing 16 people and

wounding 31 others. The incident was credited with the "Birth of S.W.A.T", the special

weapons and tactic teams (Snow, 1966, p. 2). Additionally, from 1964 to 1970, the

college campus disturbances and student civil unrest were in protest for and against

domestic and political policies, war, and equality. This period ushered in an era of

change, activism, international conflicts and calls for cultural and political revolution by

individuals and groups whose impact still can provoke contentious debate (Borum,

Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010; Cornell & Mayer, 2010).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, poor urban neighborhoods and schools

experienced a rise in gang activity and access to firearms mainly among black and

Hispanic students. The violence was seemingly random, senseless, and deadly, and typically classified as an inner-city problem (Cooney, 2012; Curwin, 1995). Garbarino (1999) and Maeroff (2000) argued that response to youth violence was structured by race and class, describing the murders of students-by-students in urban and inner-city Houston, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, and other large urban schools, as under-reported in the national news.

The U.S. Congress' response to the perceived rise of school violence resulted in federal legislation like the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act of 1986, the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990, the 1994 Safe Schools Act, and the revised Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1996. The politicians believed that through the mandated interventions and by simply declaring that schools were safe, drug-free and gun-free zones, they would be (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Trump, 2011).

The "School-Associated Violent Deaths in the United States: 1992-1994" (Kachur et al., 1996) was the first nationwide study of violent school deaths, examining 105 cases of violent school deaths. The study concluded school-associated violent deaths were more common than formerly believed. The leading cause of school deaths was homicide and firearms were used for the majority of cases. The victims and perpetrators were mostly young (ages 16-17 years) male secondary students. The study found that students of minority and ethnic backgrounds in urban schools had the highest risk of dying at school (Cooney, 2012; Kachur et al., 1996).

However, even with the federal and state legislation, mandates, and policies in effect, the pervasive threats of school violence continued as more deadly incidents of school violence dominated the media, generating a sense of vulnerability. The media

disparity of school violence reporting became reality as an unrestrained press accentuated the "breaking news" of school violence committed in suburban and rural schools where the perpetrators were middle-class white teenagers. The school shootings in Paducah, KY, Pearl, MS, and Jonesboro, AR, facilitated-an attitude that schools may be unsafe. As a result, in 1998, an executive order by President Bill Clinton required the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice to prepare, for the first time, an annual report on school safety (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

To support this mandate, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA), authorized through the 1994 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title IV, provided financial support to state and local grants for school and community sponsored programs to prevent youth violence, alcohol abuse, and other drug use. School districts and communities in Pennsylvania and other states nationwide seized the opportunity to react to the federal directive using SDFSCA funds and invested time and effort to establish local drug and violence prevention programs for all students, improve response procedures to ensure safe, orderly academic learning environments, and reassure school boards and the communities that public schools were safe places for children (Kupietz, 2005; Madero, 2005; Schlozmann, 2002; Smeaton & Waters, 2008; Trump, 2000 & 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

During the late 1990s, the nation was horrified by the tragic events of the Columbine High School Massacre on April 20, 1999. The assailants of Columbine indicated in their writings that their motivation for the massacre was personal and retaliatory. The pre-meditated domestic terrorism perpetrated by students on an

unsuspecting school population created a paradigm shift in the planning and protocols of school security preparedness (Trump, 2004).

> The impact of Columbine changed the landscape of the school safety
>
> profession forever, causing many schools to play "catch-up" with decades
>
> of neglect in security and emergency planning, while setting a new
>
> threshold for best practices in school safety. (Trump, 2004, p. 2)

The litany of school violence incidents and murders from 1996-2001 dominated the images and reports of the shootings and carnage left by the perpetrators (Anderson et al, 2001; Greenough, 2004; Henry, 2000; Ruffini, 2006). Motivated by the limited data available regarding the actual characteristics of the school-associated violence events of the late 1990s, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in collaboration with the Departments of Education and Justice, designed a new research study as an extension of the previous CDC study (Anderson, et al., 2001).

The "School-Associated Violent Deaths in the United States, 1994 to 1999" study (Anderson et al., 2001) is the only known systematic examination of the school violence incidents during this timeframe. The objectives were to "collect information on all school-associated violent deaths, determine an estimate-of-risk, assess the national trend of the school-related deaths from 1992 to 1999, identify common traits of the events, and describe risk factors for both victims and perpetrators" (pp. 2695-2696). Analyzing the data collected from the police crime reports and a structured interview with the school principal, the findings revealed that from 1994 to 1999, 220 events resulted in 253 deaths. During this timeframe, single-victim incidents significantly decreased, however a disturbing finding noted multiple-victim incidents significantly increased. Information

prior to the violent event was communicated in various forms, and many of the perpetrators were bully victims and had expressed suicidal behaviors. Patterns of behaviors and risk factors were identified through the study about this type of crime. Recommendations for intervention and prevention programs for at-risk students were provided (Anderson et al,, 2001, pp. 2695-2702).

However, the public fear spawned by the high profile events and the unfortunate loss of young lives, perpetuated concern about school order and galvanized public perception that schools could be dangerous places (Cornell, 2006). A resultant public mandate was that school policy, safety protocols, and disruptive student behaviors needed immediate resolution. School district administrations, responding to the perceived threat without research and credible appraisals of the actual threat, retreated to simple solutions and implemented well-intentioned security policies and other procedures to foster a safe school image (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010; Brooks, Schiraldi, & Zeidenberg, 2000; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Greenough, 2004; Trump, 2004).

The transition into the twenty-first century, with the Columbine High School Massacre and the other previously identified school shooting travesties as a backdrop, the nature of school violence combined the urban, inner-city, gang-related aggression with the suburban, middle class "pre-meditated acts of terrorism" (Greenough, 2004, p. 2). The killings continued through the decade and beyond as another four states and the District of Columbia were highlighted in the news because of school shootings and children dying (Ruffini, 2006).

School shootings are no longer random anomalies. With more than one-half of the U.S. suffering from the pain and anguish of kid-on-kid

and kid-on-teacher violence, it appears that America has a growing

epidemic on its hands: child domestic terrorism. (Ruffini, 2006, p. 168)

In an effort to identify and classify potential perpetrators of school violence, the

U.S. Departments of Education and Justice requested the U.S. Secret Service to study

school violence. Among the list of findings from the study's report, "The Final Report

and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School

Attacks in the United States," a relevant discovery revealed that incidents of targeted

violence at school are rarely sudden or impulsive acts. Students perpetrating deeds of

violence in school carefully select their targets, plan the details of their actions, and then

may share the plan with others while the intended victims are unaware of the impending

threats. However, many times the planned attacks were thwarted by teachers, principals,

or classmates who intervened. The report concluded that there is no single motivation for

school killings or one type of student who becomes the assailant. This study's discovery

created a broad field of perpetrators and constraints identifying those assailants who

would harm others at school (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002; Ruffini, 2006; Vossekuil,

Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002).

In 2003, the National Research Council (NRC) investigated deadly school violence

cases between 1992 and 2001. The study, "Deadly Lessons: Understanding Lethal School

Violence" (Moore, Petries, Braga, & McLaughlin, 2003) concluded that inner-city

violence stemmed from known issues of drugs, poverty, and racial segregation. The study

also established that suburban and rural school shootings were personal and retaliatory,

provoked by a sense of victimhood, a motive often reported by the media in the aftermath

of a violent school incident as was the case at Columbine High School (Cooney, 2012).

The research study by Ferguson, Coulson, and Barnett (2011, pp. 11-12), attempted to identify potential assailants and predictive elements to prevent school violence acts. Conclusions from the study, "Psychological Profiles of School Shooters: Positive Directions and One Big Wrong Turn", mirror the findings of the 2002 U.S. Secret Service study. The results reveal that school violence is most likely perpetrated by people who have a history of antisocial personality traits, suffer from undiagnosed mental health problems, have a history of attempted suicide or a documented history of depression, and tend to obsess about individuals or society-at-large who have wronged, bullied or persecuted them.

> These individuals seethe with rage and hatred and despondency, until
> they lash out at individuals or a society they believe has done them
> great wrong. Mental health, as well as our failure to address it as a
> society is at the core of these events. (Ferguson, 2012, p. 1)

The 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School Massacre in Newtown, CT, was committed by a 20 year old man who reportedly exhibited the above-mentioned antisocial personality traits provoked by a sense of victimhood. Allegedly an act of vengeance, the carnage created, the notoriety gained, the innocence lost, and the pain inflicted, creates the need in the media to immediately identify the rationale and motivation for the violence. As in the Columbine High School shootings where the media's attention focused on external influences like the pop-culture music, movies and video games, the public demand for answers centers again on external factors of video games and gun control. Rather than directing attention and understanding to the perpetrators' internal factors such as depression, undiagnosed mental health problems, or antisocial personality traits, the

media's refrain promotes child protection through more legislation and government control interventions. The Sandy Hook tragedy provides an opportunity to recognize the need for a mental health system and school-based psychological services to identify, understand, and provide facilitations for at-risk youths showing signs of psychological distress. Intervention and prevention strategies would help reduce incidents of school violence (Ferguson, 2012). In working toward the common goal of keeping our schools and communities safe, the highest priority is to keep the children safe (Cornell, 2011; Dorn & Dorn, 2007; Ferguson, 2012; Ferguson, Coulson, & Barnett, 2011).

Schools as Safe Places

Perception is reality for many parents who define schools as violent and unsafe. In Cornell's (2006), *School Violence*, the focus was on the fear-based reaction to the high profile and publicized school shooting incidents and school violence of the 1990s and the misconception that schools are dangerous places. The media's persuasive accounts and intense images undermined the reality that schools are basically safe places for children (Cornell, 2006; Dorn & Dorn, 2011; Jimerson, Hart, & Renshaw, 2012; Mayer & Furlong, 2010; Trump, 2011).

Objective studies have shown repeatedly that schools are safe places,
and the level of violence in schools is actually much lower than suggested
by both news reporters and academic researchers, both of whom have
exaggerated the severity and pervasiveness of the problem. (Cornell, 2006, p. viii)

The Departments of Education and Justice in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have, since 1992, collected data regarding school-associated violent deaths. The School-Associated Violent Death Study (SAVD) provides

the most recent data available in order to identify trends in school violence and assist in advising preventive measures. School-associated violent death was defined in the study as a "fatal injury such as homicide, suicide, or legal intervention) that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school, during, or on the way to or from a school-sponsored event" (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Following is a listing of the findings from the SAVD:

- Violent deaths at school account for less than one percent of the homicides and suicides among children ages 5-18.

- The rates of school-associated student homicides decreased from 1992 to 2006; however, from 2007 to 2010, the rates have remained relatively stable.

- From 1999-2006, most school-associated homicides included gunshot wounds (65%), stabbing or cutting (27%), and beatings (12%).

- Among students who committed a school-associated homicide, 20% were known to be victims of bullying and 12% were known to have expressed suicidal thoughts or engaged in suicidal behavior.

- Most school-associated violent deaths occur during transition times, for instance, immediately before the beginning of school, immediately after the school day ends, or during lunch time.

- Violent deaths are more likely to occur at the start of each semester.

- Nearly 50% of homicide perpetrators gave some type of warning signal, for example making a threat or leaving a note prior to the event.

Additionally, according to Jimerson, Hart, and Renshaw (2012), two major national studies, the 2009 "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) and 2009

"Indicators of School Crime and Safety," provide corroborating evidence that supports the "favorable trends regarding crime, safety, and harm indicators" (p. 3). The data from these studies indicate that schools implementation of school security measures has effected a decline in the extreme types of student victimization.

A team of faculty and graduate students from the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia conducts research on effective methods and policies for youth violence prevention and school safety. The Youth Violence Project report addresses statistics that assess violence in schools on the national level, providing data indicating trends over time with regard to 1. serious violent crime rate (1994-2007); 2. the homicides in U.S. schools (1992-93 to 2009); 3. juvenile violence (1993-2007); and 4. the percentage of students threatened or injured with a weapon at school (1993-2007). The following data were reported:

1. Violent crime in schools has declined dramatically since 1994. Rate is defined as crimes per 1,000 students. The annual rate in 2007 (4 per 1,000 students) was less than half of the rate in 1994 (13 per 1,000 students).

2. Since the early 1990s, the rate of homicides on school grounds dramatically declined from 42 per 1,000 students in 1992-1993 to 1 per 1,000 students in 2009. A disruption in the downward trend was noted during the late 1990s with the increased number of school shooting events. A dramatic decline in juvenile arrests for homicides was 3,284 in 1993 to 1,011 in 2007. Multiple factors responsible for the decline were suggested.

3. The overall percentage of students threatened or injured was identified as "relatively stable" since 1993; males are twice as likely as girls to be involved.

Other sources provided evidence of trends in school violence over time that contradict the media's portrayal of the perceived upsurge of serious school violence events and that schools were violent and dangerous during the 1990s:

- Cornell (2006) and the 2007 National Center for Education Statistics data showed that student victim statistics were in decline since 1994.

- The 2006 Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey, provided evidence of a 60% decline in the annual victimization trend defined for students, ages 12 to18 years of age.

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (2012, January), from 1994-2000, noted a 74% percent downward trend in violent juvenile crime for persons less than 18 years of age in the U.S.

- The 2008 School-Associated Violent Deaths Surveillance (SAVDS) Study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, documented that less than 1% percent of all homicides among school-age children happen on school grounds or on the way to and from school.

Recent statistics regarding school violence from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009) may indicate a decline in the frequency of school violence. However, recent research indicates that there is still ample reason to be concerned about the ever-present potential for a threat of school violence to be realized at any time. Unfortunately, the insidious nature of school violence incidents, however intermittent, continue to dominate the headlines when they occur, re-energizing the sense of vulnerability, influencing the perception that safeness of schools is still in question (Booth, Van Hasselt, & Vecchi, 2011; Cornell, 2006; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Daniels & Bradley, 2005;

Greenough, 2004; Trump, 2001; Venzke, 2002). Although violence against children has

no political, geographical, or ethical boundaries and has existed for centuries, this study

will focus on violent incidents and actions targeting children and schools limited to the

late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Threats Targeting Schools

In the book, *Innocent Targets: When Terrorism Comes to Schools*, Dorn and Dorn

(2011) explain that the importance to investigate and study the international violent acts

and threats against school children, teachers, and schools around the world, may be a

motivation to evaluate and understand the vulnerabilities of American students and

schools. "The possibility of a mass murder of school children by terrorists is very

real…terrorists have been able to see the impact school violence has already had in

America" (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, p. xvii). Section 802 of the USA PATRIOT Act (Public

Law No. 107-52) re-definition of domestic terrorism is when "a person engages in an act

dangerous to human life that is a violation of the criminal laws of a state or the United

States, if the act appears to be intended to (i) intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii)

influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the

conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping. Additionally,

the acts have to occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States and

if they do not, may be regarded as international terrorism" (Department of Homeland

Security, 2011).

The question remains, "Why schools?" The targeting of harmless innocent

children is an act against society perpetrated in the most vicious way, causing the most

pain possible (Ferguson, 2012). As previously noted in Chapter 1, on a daily basis, 53

million school-age students, attend over 119,000 public and private educational institutions, along with the six million teachers and staff employed by the school systems (Trump, 2011, p. 127). Transportation is provided on highly visible yellow school buses that travel a scheduled route to and from schools every school day from August to June each year. "From day care centers to our nation's largest universities, all campuses have the potential to be targeted by terrorists" (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, p. 31).

Schools as Soft Targets

A soft target is defined as a "person or thing that is relatively unprotected or vulnerable" (Oxford University Press, 2001; Trump, 2011). America's schools clearly fit the definition of a soft target because of the low level physical security, especially in the primary and elementary schools, the vulnerability of school buses as easy targets, and school personnel providing a friendly welcoming environment to students and parents. School populations also provide the venue "for terrorists to create a mass casualty event with large numbers of young children as victims" (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, p. 61) that will elicit a strong emotional response. As high-visibility targets, the immediate media coverage will provide the images and a voice for the attacker's motivation (p. 65).

However, there are factors that impede aggressors from targeting schools. An attack on children can potentially alienate the people, organizations, or governments that support and provide financial assistance, weapons, or refuge, needed to sustain their operation. An attack on children can detract sympathizers from their cause. Another reason is the potential severity or underestimation of the targeted government's response to the attack on the children would increase counterterrorism activities (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, pp. 61-62).

> We have to go after this with an attitude that terrorism will happen again.
>
> It is not the question of *if* anymore, but the question of what the next event
>
> is going to be. By preparing for the "*imaginable*", we prepare for the
>
> "*unimaginable*". (Thomas, 2004, p. 50)

The distinct possibility of another attack exists; schools must be prepared (Trump, 2007). School safety should be recognized as an ongoing concern that deserves more systematic and sustained attention, and reliance on evidence-based practices rather than sporadic, crisis-driven responses to high profile incidents (Cornell & Mayer, 2010, p. 13).

Theoretical Framework

"Moral leadership emerges from, and always returns to, the fundamental wants, needs, aspirations, and values of the followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 4).

In this study, the theories of ancient philosophies of Confucius and Aristotle and the life of Jesus Christ provide the academic framework of moral leadership and the concept of virtue ethics that are still relevant today. Additionally, the study reviews the contemporary theorists, as well as theories that define and support the implications for moral school leadership.

Virtue Ethics

As a leadership philosophy, Confucianism focuses on the characterization of the individual believing that "rulers have to be ethical leaders having virtuous characters and attitudes" (Lee, 2001, p. 11). The premise is that leadership is an influence of persuasion through the demonstration of virtues that quietly mandates resolute loyalty and personal devotion to a leader. As a moral leader, he cultivates himself to achieve harmonic unity to become a virtuous model to his people since conviction and veneration rather than

coercion and punishment are the basis for obedience. The leader in harmonic unity has the ability to avoid extremes, to be calm, dignified, and measured in the midst of turmoil. This virtue allows them to occupy the central territory, working as the ruler in harmony and in accordance with the way of the heaven; very similar to the Christian concept of Christ-based leadership and walking with God (Greenleaf, 1977; Lee, 2001; Stark, 2005). Lee (2001) reports the styles of leadership that appear in the Confucian Analects as "hierarchically authoritative leadership" and "reciprocally humanitarian leadership" (p. 11). While different leadership theories have emerged, each theory defines the distinctive style and behaviors needed to lead followers.

The word *ethics* come from the Greek word *ethos,* more specifically translated as the distinguishing character, sentiment, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, or institution. Ethics is a systematic study of moral choices and the values which support them (Moore, 1903).

Moral theories and virtue ethics based in the Greek philosophy are most commonly associated with Aristotle. Aristotle's most important work, the *Nicomachean Ethics,* describes how his teachings tie happiness to the excellent activity of the soul. In later books, he associates excellent activity of the soul to the moral virtues and to the virtue of "practical wisdom". Aristotle identifies "the unity of virtues," those of courage, wisdom, temperance and justice, stating that to have one, the others must also exist. Aristotle, through these virtues, encouraged his students to focus on living a complete virtuous life.

Contemporary Theorists

Contemporary theorists of the twentieth century rediscovered and embraced the sages' analects. With the renewed interest in ethics and leadership, the academic theorists

of the twentieth century assert that educational leaders need to model moral and ethical

practices, representing the values and motivations of both leaders and followers (Bass,

1985; Burns, 1978; Gregory, 2010; Kohlberg, 1973; Maslow, 1970; Starratt, 2004).

Referencing the theories of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Lawrence

Kohlberg's Moral Stages of Development (Crain, 1985, pp. 118-136) a relationship

connecting the values and motivations of the two concepts would produce a powerful

capability for meaningful leadership (Nucci & Murray, 2008).

Maslow's theory, unlike other twentieth century researchers who viewed

psychology as strictly behavioral and the study of the mentally ill, was based on people

with the capacity to use their potential and capabilities. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is

one of the first humanistic theories and is commonly presented as a pyramid with five

levels. Believing that people unceasingly strive to achieve, the next level of needs in the

hierarchy becomes the motivation, assuming the lower level needs are satisfied.

The highest level, self-actualization, identifies the needs to reach personal

potential, active fulfillment and growth, more specifically, the human needs of morality,

creativity, problem solving, and acceptance of people and situations. Maslow (1970) later

explored a theoretical expansion of self-actualization to self-transcendence, the highest

hierarchical level extending to the spiritual level of which few achieve, for example

Gandhi, Mother Theresa, and the Dalai Lama. This level acknowledges the human need

for ethics, compassion, creativity, and spirituality (Clark, 2011; Nucci & Murray, 2008).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs creates the framework for Kohlberg's stages of moral

development. Kohlberg's progression of moral reasoning stages of social development

reflects Maslow's hierarchy from physical to spiritual needs.

Kohlberg's theory represents a fundamental shift forward in the social-moral perspective of the individual. Although not portrayed as a hierarchy, Kohlberg's six moral stages of development are explained through a positive progression of phases: blind egoism, instrumental egoism, social relationships and systems perspective, contractual perspective, and the highest stage, mutual respect as a universal principle. His work elaborates Jean Piaget's (1965) theory of moral development which states that children form their thinking through action and experiences which include an understanding of moral concepts such as justice, rights, equality and human welfare. Kohlberg followed the development of moral judgment beyond the ages of children studied by Piaget and determined that the process of attaining moral maturity was more gradual than Piaget's premise (Nucci & Murray, 2008).

Stage six of Kohlberg's moral development stages constitutes a theoretical endpoint, based in the ethical fairness and the resultant moral laws, the regard for life and human welfare (Clark, 2011; Nucci & Murray, 2008). Although both Maslow's and Kohlberg's hierarchies of need and values imply "uni-directionality and irreversibility," Burns (1978, p. 44) states that individuals sometimes face life changing events causing regression and progression between the stages is affected.

Moral Leadership

"Moral leadership begins with moral leaders" (Lashway, 1996, p. 5).

America's schools are moral institutions, designed to promote, teach, and meet social norms. Although schools are dedicated to the well-being of children, they need leaders who accept the moral responsibility to protect the students and adults under their supervision (Clabough, 2006). Relationships among people are at the very center of the

work of school administrators and teachers, and for this reason, school leadership is, by its nature and focus, a moral activity (Greenfield, 2004).

Since 1990, literature pertaining to educational leadership focuses on the need for ethical and moral training of school administrators, even though many aspects, duties, and responsibilities of the principal do not pertain to moral issues (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Fullan, 2003; Gregory, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1992; Strike, Haller & Soltis, 2005). A study by Beck and Murphy (1994) surveyed 42 representatives of University Council of Education Administration member institutions pertaining to the administrator programs' policies on ethical concerns for school administrators. The findings identified most universities with preparation programs offering some courses in problem solving and decision making, and 13 devoted to teaching ethics and moral leadership. As leaders, principals have a special responsibility to exercise authority in an ethical way. Until recently, ethical issues were given little attention in preparation programs with few administrators trained to deal with those conflicts (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Hoy & Miskal, 2007; Starratt, 2004). Moral theorists generally concur with regard to complex dilemmas that no ethical "cookbook" exists which provides easy answers (Lashway, 1996, p. 3). Following are suggested guidelines:

1. Leaders should have and be willing to act on a definite sense of ethical standards.
2. Leaders can examine dilemmas from different perspectives
3. Leaders can often reframe ethical issues.
4. Leaders should have the habit of conscious reflection wherever it may lead them.

Ethical conduct is comprised of internal and external controls. Internal controls focus on the personal beliefs, professional values, and ethical decision making skills of the

individual administrator. "Value judgments are moral judgments and should be at the heart of the school administrator's job" (Gregory, 2010, p. 2). As suggested by Hoy and Miskal (2007), successful administrators need to develop an ethical and systematic approach to their decision making and problem solving. "Having moral obligations to society, to the profession, to the school board, to the students, they find "it" often is not clear what is right or wrong, or what one ought to do, or which perspective is right in moral terms" (Lashway, 1996, p. 2). With regard to the institution of education, the role of ethics and its moral basis within the profession as well as the classroom focuses mainly on questions of right and wrong, rights and responsibilities, duties and obligations, and the demands made on the role of the school leader (Strike, 1998).

"Real leaders concentrate on doing the right thing, not on doing things right" (Lashway, 1996, p. 1). That advice from organizational consultants comes as no surprise to professional school leaders, whose lives are filled with difficult ethical dilemmas experienced on a daily basis (Greenfield, 2004; Lashway, 1996, p. 1). Bass and Steidlmeier (1998) suggest that the ethics of leadership rest upon three pillars: (1) the moral character of the leader, (2) the ethical values embedded in the leader's vision, articulation, and programs which followers either embrace or reject, and (3) the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue.

Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) maintain moral and ethical leadership is behavior that influences followers' values, beliefs, and behaviors so organizational objectives can be achieved through the followers. Greenfield (2004, p. 186) found that in order to handle the many daily school issues, principals' leadership styles must foster shared

commitments at the moral level in a cooperative and collaborative manner among the teachers and others in the school community, respecting them to serve the best interests of children. When challenges arise, the effect is a common consensus and the "participants do what they do because they believe it is the right thing to do" (Greenfield, 1991, p. 183). Principals who personify the vision they advocate, teach others to follow through their words and their actions (Lashway, 1996, p. 5).

The essence of human psychology is the process to investigate ourselves, examining our motivations and drive. Ethical approaches to decisions faced daily enhance personal development and establish public responsibility (Mahoney, 2008). Starratt (1994) incorporated the domains of ethical leadership to develop a multi-paradigm framework to map the terrain through the ethic of justice, ethic of care, and ethic of critique to guide decisions and actions of school leaders. Building on Starratt's work, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) added the ethic of profession to ensure that the primary consideration is to serve in the best interest of the students.

Educators make numerous decisions daily that are based on their personal code of ethics and as they support students, are encouraged to be strong and model fairness, be consistent and equitable, and maintain impartiality free from prejudice, bias, and favoritism in every decision. As decision makers, principals must also critically examine personal ideals and values, stand up for what one believes is right, and take responsibility for one's own actions, understanding that the accountability for all actions are 24 hours each day, seven days each week (Benninga, 2003; Glanz, 2008; Weaver, 2007). To be an ethical school leader is not a matter of following a few simple rules. The leaders responsibility is complex and multi-dimensional, rooted less in technical expertise than in simple human

integrity (Lashway, 1996). School principals can actualize their image as a courageous

leader by communicating personal beliefs and relying on the belief system when a crisis

threatens.

> We become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by
>
> exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage.
>
> Hence, it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated
>
> in us from early childhood; on the contrary, it makes...all the difference.
>
> (Aristotle, trans. 1962, pp. 34-35)

External controls may include laws, policies, codes of conduct, and members of the school

community. Ethics, in its basic definition, imposes a standard of behavior or code of

conduct expected of people, culture, or group in society and establishes a moral compass

to follow. Public school administrators are held accountable by school communities to act

responsibly in a professional manner ethically consistent with the Constitution, law, and

district policy (Essex, 2011). The 1981 American Association of School Administrators

(AASA) Code of Ethics offers 12 provisions regarding the standards of education and a

commitment to a set of ethical principles, a responsibility of any administrative position.

The AASA Code substantiates an expectation that educational leaders maintain standards

of exemplary professional conduct and conform to an ethical code of behavior established

for all educational leaders. The effect is that leaders' judgments are held to a defined set

of principles and their subsequent actions are moral and ethical. Notably the first standard

states that "educational leaders make the education and well-being of students the

fundamental value of all decision making."   Above all other leader capacities, school

principals' ability to model ethical and moral practices should be germane to school

leadership (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Fullan, 2003; Gregory, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 2004; Strike, Haller & Soltis, 2005).

While moral authority is practiced by many school leaders, it is not acknowledged as a form of leadership (Fullan, 2003; Gregory, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 2004). However, much of a principal's authority is moral; that is, teachers must be convinced that the principal's point of view reflects the values they support. Coercion through bureaucratic authority will seldom have a positive, lasting effect (Greenfield, 1991).

> No leader can command or compel change. Change comes about when
>
> followers themselves desire it and seek it. Hence, the role of the leader
>
> is to enlist the participation of others as leaders of the effort. The is the sum
>
> and essence not only of leading change but also of good management
>
> in general. (Stark, 2005, p. 15)

A leader interacts with, supports and motivates his followers. An understanding of human nature provides insight to human needs and assists leaders in determining avenues to interact, support, and appropriately motivates those whose cooperation is needed to accomplish goals. Above all other leader capacities, moral purpose must be the driver for school leadership (Gregory, 2010).

School Climate

"Keep kids safe and they will be able to learn" (Dolch, 2004, p. 45).

The primary moral duty of every educator is to provide excellent instruction. Teachers are intrinsically motivated and passionate about learning, offering guidance and skills to encourage student learning. The fundamental obligations of job performance become the foundation for teaching excellence. The term school climate describes the

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behavior of the principal, the teachers, and students at the building level (Tableman & Herron, 2004; Velasco, Edmonson, & Slate, 2012). The physical environment is characterized as welcoming and conducive to learning. Students are and feel safe everywhere.

School climate is a factor of a school's environment and refers to the intangibles that can impede or support learning, student development. It's also a useful term for the "feel" of a school and the way students and staff experience school each day including the physical, social and affective aspects of the school environment (Clabough, 2006; Kinney, 2009; Tableman & Herron, 2004). The involvement of the community with the school, students, and their families requires the development of a "cultural compass" to define the greater good being served and benefits everyone involved (Ferlazzo, 2010).

As school leaders and faculty strive to reform and improve students' academic performance, educational concerns encompass more than instructional change. A developing body of evidence points to school safety as an important condition for learning (Tableman & Herron, 2004). The climate of a school can have an impact on the effectiveness of a school. Some school leaders put safety first, defining school climate as "an orderly environment in which the school family feels valued and able to assimilate into the culture of the school free from concerns about disruptions and safety" (Tableman & Herron, 2004, p. 4). Safe and orderly schools are necessary so that teachers can devote their time and energy to instruction and students can engage in learning without being distracted by safety concerns (Allen, Cornell, Lorek, & Sheras, 2008; Clabough, 2006). Although school climate is a significant element of a school's academic performance, it can also reflect attitudes in such problems as bullying and student conflicts. Violence in

schools is a pervasive problem that threatens the safety of everyone and interferes with students' academic function, social relations, and personal growth.

Leadership

"In matters of style, swim with the current; In matters of principle, stand like a rock."

~Thomas Jefferson

Ethics in leadership is also vital to maintaining school safety and academic excellence as principals enforce safety rules. A safe learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff is the responsibility of school leaders. In order to make public schools safer, principals are required to report school violence statistics, develop an understanding of the motives and reasons for the violence, and create crisis intervention plans and school violence prevention programs to deter future incidents.

Perspectives concerning characteristics of the threats within the school provide the warning signs, vulnerable populations, and socio-cultural risk factors of drugs, weapons, bullying and victimization. The potential threats to our schools help school leaders define their roles during a crisis and identify the next steps to take to help better provide a safe school environment and curricular choices connecting students to societal norms (Fagan & Mihalic, 2003).

School leaders are also responsible for preparing and providing a safe school environment by developing prevention and intervention strategies, and managing the violence when it occurs (Burke, 2008; Busse, 1999). By developing a school-wide crisis intervention plan in cooperation with the local community first responders, and then testing it before an event, school leaders establish a proactive defensive attitude against the potential threats that may harm school children (Thomas, 2004).

However, the presumption that school leaders are educated, trained, and prepared to handle school emergencies and develop crisis intervention plans to respond to acts of violence against students and adults is not supported by the research. Beck and Murphy (1994), for instance, stated that little attention in school administration preparation programs was given to ethical issues and protocols to address them. Strike, Haller, and Soltis (2005) suggested that little academic preparation is offered at the university level on ethical decision making or methodology regarding conceptualizing a problem. University programs alone will never be enough to prepare principals for the daily challenges of the job. Principals manage a multifaceted organization with unpredictable demands which relatively few administrators have been trained to deal with those conflicts (Lovely, 2004; Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 2005).

Research indicates a correlation exists between principal leadership style and school climate (Clabough, 2006, pp. 21-23; Moore, 1998). The ability to establish a school environment free of violence is a priority and daily challenge of school administrators. The unfortunate reality is that schools can face crises of violence at any time. There can be no guarantee that a school will be completely safe from crime, violence, or disaster (Della-Giustina, Kerr, & Georgevich, 2000, p. 18).

As previously noted acts of violence at schools during the twentieth century involved harm to students, teachers, and principals and were most times committed by undetected students-at-risk. Importance was placed on historical events and the increased frequency of school violence during the 1990s followed by a decade with additional reports of violent school incidents, both nationally and abroad. The list of U.S. public school violence incidents against children indicated that the perpetrators are primarily

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fellow students in school who were motivated by personal issues (Johnston, 2013; Ruffini, 2004). The U.S. Secret Service identifies this student-on-student violence activity as "targeted violence" and refers to "any incident of violence where a known (or knowable) attacker selects a particular target prior to the act of violence" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). Seemingly indiscriminate acts of violence like the Columbine High School Massacre, Virginia Tech University Massacre, and Sandy Hook Elementary Massacre are viewed as random because they lack the element of conspiracy or a plan of a known group. The perpetrators are generally severely disturbed, most acting alone. Evidence has shown that careful planning over time was employed to procure and strategically carry out their acts of revenge (Grossman, 2011; Sederer, 2012).

The 2002 U.S. Secret Service Safe School Initiative Study report findings also clearly support the following conclusions:

- that there is no single motivation for school shootings or one type of student who becomes the assailant. This study's discovery creates an untenable dynamic and inhibits characterizing those perpetrators who would harm others at school.

- that the need for school leaders to purposefully connect to the students, creating through their leadership styles a school culture that emphasizes the importance of attending and listening to young people.

- that caring school personnel, for example, school administrators, teachers, counselors, and coaches and other significant adults in a student's life can play an important role in preventing violence by providing opportunities to talk.

- that when young people plan targeted violence they often tell at least one person about their plans, give out specifics before the event takes place, and obtain weapons they need.

The conclusions suggest that those in school leadership may potentially deter violence as a result of their leadership style. According to Clabough (2006, p. 3), the principal, in determining the climate and identity of the school, has the most influence.

School Leadership During Crises

Leadership can be defined as the ability to have strong influence on others; to act, follow, and call others to a higher standard (Anello, 1992; Jakes, 2007; King, 2009; Wharton, 2001). Crisis leadership involves responding and making decisions quickly in a context of threat and uncertainty, relying on personal strengths and managing the human side of a crisis (Klann, 2003). Crisis leadership models identify key themes or elements of influence that facilitate a crisis. During daily operations, leaders need to communicate, have an accurate assessment of the events, provide clarity of vision and values, and offer a sense of calm and caring. However, during a crisis, by attending to these elements immediately, effectively, and purposefully, the likelihood of containing the crisis is greatly improved (Klann, 2003; Schoenberg, 2005).

The personal and leadership attributes of a crisis leader include character, competence, and courage. A leader of character is a person with integrity, a moral conscience whose actions and words are consistent, one who treats others with dignity, and demonstrates self-control in areas of morality and moderation. A leader competent in crisis leadership and management skills instills confidence in those who follow and helps remove fear and uncertainty. A leader who is courageous is able to be truthful in difficult

circumstances, make the hard decisions, confront the realities of the situation, and accept responsibility for the risks involved (Klann, 2003, pp. 16-18). These attributes are aligned with Aristotle's virtue ethics of courage, wisdom, temperance, and justice.

Research indicates that preparation for and investing in the development of leadership skills are a requirement for effective leaders. Training for and experience of leading in high stress situations requires the leader to have a high degree of flexibility, be calm and controlled, demonstrate a level of comfort in making decisions quickly, and promote teamwork (Klann, 2003, p. x). Leaders, who understand the risks, by creating plans and responsive protocols, will perform better during and after the crisis (Garcia, 2006; Hesselbein, 2002; Schoenberg, 2005).

Attempting to minimize the occurrence of violence, gather factual information and manage the crisis when it occurs is the primary responsibility of a school leader. Linzer, Sweifach, and LaPorte (2008) support that especially during a disaster, the ethical conflict brought about through the triage process, managing the carnage and subsequent decisions is a natural and heart-breaking component of the decision making process. If the level of violence is significant (e.g., loss of life, perceived threat to the survival of those remaining, significant property damage that impedes emergency response vehicles), then the leadership needs to simultaneously respond to the events. Emotions and behaviors need to be focused on those in need and those who are attending to the needs of others. Leadership is not about serving one's personal needs and interests; rather, true leadership is about men and women in service of others. However, "nothing tests a leader like a crisis" (Klann, 2003, p. 1).

Leadership Styles

Early leadership theories focused on the qualities that distinguish leaders from followers, while contemporary theories concentrated on variables such as individual leadership styles and the ability to foster leadership in others (Bosworth, 2011). Leadership styles specifically attend to the different traits and behavior patterns of leaders and can vary from autocratic to facilitative. The styles of leadership are differentiated based on decision making processes, management procedures, and whether leaders are people-oriented.

A study by Tng (2009) provided a detailed comparative analysis between traditional and contemporary leadership theories which concentrated on identifying universal qualities of leaders. The traditional leadership theories, trait, behavioral, and contingency, were introduced as a continuum beginning with the trait theory in the 1940s, the behavior theory developed in the 1950s and the contingency approach in the 1970s identifying leadership effectiveness on organizational situations.

Coincidentally, effective school leadership research has evolved since the 1940s beginning with Trait Leadership Theory followed by Behavioral Leadership Theory during the 1950s (Tng, 2009). Hallinger (1992) found that in the 1960s, an effective principal used a Transactional Leadership style and was perceived as a manager. During the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, an effective principal's role shifted from manager to instructional leader (Hallinger, 1992; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001; Yukl, 2004). The principal as instructional leader continued to use a Transactional Leadership style with the additional responsibility to understand and focus on curriculum and instruction, working with teachers to improve instruction.

Contemporary leadership theories centered on transformational, strategic, and educative leadership theories (Lynch, 2012). During the late 1990s, an effective school leader embraced the emerging theory of Transformational Leadership, shifting from the transactional manager to a collaborative culture where leader and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2003; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1992; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001). Transformational style promotes shared decision making and empowers teachers, elevating their concerns, attending to the group rather than individual interests. The study noted that transformational leadership, influenced by Burns (1978), is related to moral leadership, appealing to the moral values of followers in order to raise awareness for ethical concerns and issues. As a transformational leader, the focus is on the organization and building the followers' loyalties and focus on the organizational objectives. The related moral leadership is likened to servant leadership where the primary focus is on the followers and the organizational objectives are secondary (Greenleaf, 1977; Jackson, n.d.; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Strategic leadership focused on the organization's mission followed by educative leadership style and culture-building.

According to Burns (1978), two leadership categories exist: transactional and transformational and distinguished between the two theories. Transactional Leadership exchanged on one thing for another, (i.e. tangible rewards for the work and loyalty of the followers). Transactional Leadership is more of a management style with behaviorism as the underlying psychology (Bosworth, 2011; Brymer & Gray, 2006; Thomas, 2003). For Transactional Leadership to work, the leader and employees must continue to share a common understanding of the importance of the leader's goals and expectations. According

to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999, p. 2), "transactional leadership is described as contingent reinforcement."

In contrast, the transformational leader engaged with followers, promoted the organization's intrinsic needs, and focused on the anticipated outcomes to advance the organization (Cox, 2001). The principal is considered to be the agent of change. "A transformational leader seeks to change schools, as we have known them, into caring, responsible, knowledge-rich, and competent centers of the community, a place where all students truly can and will learn" (Wilmore & Cornell, 2001, p. 123). Transformational Leadership is…

> that which facilitates a redefinition of a people's mission and vision,
> a renewal of their commitment and restructuring of their systems for
> goal accomplishment. It is a relationship of mutual stimulation and
> elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders
> into moral agents. Transformational Leadership must be grounded in
> moral foundations. (Burns, 1978, p. 20)

Bass theorized a third type of leadership, Laissez faire Leadership, also referred to as Delegative Leadership, which is hypothesized to occur when there is an absence or avoidance of leadership. As a result, decisions are delayed and rewards for involvement are absent. Bass and Avolio (1994, p. 4) stated, "…Laissez faire leadership is, by definition, the most inactive as well as the most ineffective according to almost all research on style…it represents a non-transaction." This style of leadership is effective when the team is highly-skilled, self-motivated, and organized. Since the leader is not closely involved, independence and freedom of thought and action are promoted, however

motivation can be affected without feedback, suggestion, or direction. Lewin concludes

that people need some level of leadership (Daniels, 2003).

<p style="text-align:center">**Crisis Intervention Planning**</p>

Continuum of Aggression and Violence

Planning and preparing for a response to a violent school incident requires "school

leaders to prepare for a continuum of threats that could potentially affect the safety of their

school at any given point in time" (Trump, 2011, p. 3).   The framework of the "spectrum

of aggressive behavior" identifies lower levels of aggression, the nonphysical behaviors

like insults, threats, peer pressure, or bullying, that may progress to higher levels of

increasing violence leading to physical aggression against property, self, and ultimately

others involving behaviors like hate crimes, rape, murder, and suicide (Silver & Yudofsky,

1992).

Supporting the concept of a violence continuum, Trump (2011) stated that on a

day-to-day basis one end of the continuum, the worst threat to maintaining a safe school

may be verbal disrespect, physically aggressive behavior, and bullying (all important

issues not to be minimized). On the other end of the continuum, threats may include a

school shooting or an attack upon our nation's schools, with a myriad of interim threats to

be managed by the principal. The threats evolve from school to school and from one point

in time to another. Planning and preparedness must evolve accordingly (p. 4).

Henry (2000) described an integrated approach to crime and deviance is called the

"pyramid of crime". The pyramid of crime is defined by three dimensions: the first

explores the relative seriousness of crime based on the harm it has caused; the second

dimension is the degree of consensus or agreement or the extent to which people accept an

<p style="text-align:center">62</p>

act as right or wrong; and the third is the severity of society's formal response. The author

contends that rule breaking varies, from minor deviances of accepted standards of

behavior, such as strange dress or appearance, skipping class, or cheating on homework, to

highly offensive acts that involve serious harm, such as physical violence using weapons

or schoolyard massacres. He suggests that such violations can be considered as a

continuous variable progressing through three measures of seriousness, ranging from low

to high (Henry, 2000, p. 21).

As principals work to create a safe learning environment, the issue of bullying is a

common experience for many students, K-12. Statistics indicate that almost 50% of all

children are bullied during their school experience (American Academy of Child and

Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011). Bullying is an unwanted aggressive behavior, a lower

level of aggression on the spectrum of aggressive behaviors (Trump, 2011). The behavior

is often repeated or has the potential to be repeated. This includes physical, emotional and

psychological behaviors such as threats, spreading rumors and physical contact. As the

bullying behavior escalates, without intervention the victims' experiences can interfere

with their academic performance as well as their social and emotional development. Dr.

Duane Alexander of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

(2007) claims that the long-term effects on those who are bullied may suffer from

depression or result in low-esteem. The bullies are more likely in later life to engage in

criminal behavior.

Since the 1999 tragedy at Columbine High School, bullying was identified as a

contributing factor to acts of school violence. The media reports after the Columbine

High School Massacre and the findings of the 2002 U.S. Secret Service Safe Schools

Initiative Report (p. 11) regarding school violence attacks identified bullying as a

significant factor in the perpetrators' decision to commit a mass murder at school. Other

school shootings like the 2006 Virginia Tech Massacre and the 2012 Sandy Hook

Elementary Massacre cited bullying of the offenders as a primary motivation to kill

innocent people. The media's claim as educators, legislators, and advocates promoted the

idea that the shooters were bullying victims seeking revenge for their mistreatment is

logical and neatly justified as a retaliatory action (Trump, 2011).

Contrary to the media's reports about Columbine's rampage school shooters'

motivation being spurred by incidents of bullying, two independent researchers, Dave

Cullen, author of the book *Columbine* and Dr. Peter Langman, author of the book *Why

Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*, conducted independent studies on school

shooters. Each concluded that the school shooters' mental health issues were the reasons

for their deadly actions. The 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary massacre ignited a discussion

of the mental health of the shooter, along with video influences and bullying.

> The idea that school shootings are retaliation for bullying is highly problematic.
>
> This is not to say the peer relationships are irrelevant…to be teased is normal;
>
> to be turned down for a date is normal. The shooters, however, were often so
>
> emotionally unstable or had such vulnerable identities that normal events
>
> triggered abnormal responses. (Langman, 2009, pp. 11-15)

For over a decade since Columbine and including the school violence incidents of

the twenty-first century, the rationale of bullying and revenge for the actions of the

criminals is now challenged by another plausible, more complex answer (Trump, 2011).

School leaders are committed to creating a safe learning environment and meeting the

needs of children. With this added dimension of potential teen mental health issues as a

primary factor in school violence, school leaders will be challenged to consider more

variables as they develop prevention and intervention strategies for the complex causes of

school violence.

Decision Making

Principals, on a daily basis, make decisions and solve problems that affect the lives

of many individuals and the function of the school building. Landis' (2009) research

identified the vital need for school principals to improve the problem solving process. To

make a distinction between decision making and problem solving, the following

definitions were used in Landis' study. Decision making is the "act of selection from

available courses of action" (p. 1). Problem solving is the "generation of those potential

options. Problem-solving is the step that occurs before the actual decision is made (p. 2).

As Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1998) suggest, little academic preparation is offered at the

university level on ethical decision making or methodology regarding conceptualizing a

problem. Although problem solving is not a prerequisite for decision making, the study

showed that training in the process of creative problem solving was recommended for

principal certification programs (Landis, 2009).

According to Hoy and Miskal (2008), essential to any successful administrator is

the need to develop an ethical and systematic approach to decision making and problem

solving. Research shows that decision making practices of school leaders and their

strategies are developed through their personal value systems and from pedagogical

perspectives (Greenfield, 2004; Landis, 2009; MacDonald, 1999; Schoenberg, 2005). The

decision making process identified by Hoy and Miskal involves five steps which include

recognizing, defining, analyzing the problem, creating criteria for resolution, and a plan of

action to initiate the plan. As noted, research shows that most influential to the decision

making process is the initial interpretation of the problem assumed by the leader.

Threat Assessments

Each school district, and every school and support facility within that district,

should assess the potential threats and prioritize their risk reduction measures. Priorities are

many times unique to the individual building in the same district. Building-specific plans

and procedures need to be individually developed, trained, and tested since no single

strategy, or compilation of strategies fit all schools and school community situations (Fein,

Vossekuil, Pollack, Borum, Modzeleski, & Reddy, 2002; Trump, 2007).

It is the uniqueness of each school, district, and school-community

that requires educators, public safety officials, and community partners

to conduct ongoing assessments and re-evaluations of their school's

security and planning for a crisis. Too often, schools put a one-time

emphasis on assessing security and creating a crisis plan, relying on

checklists or templates used district-wide rather than requiring a site-by-site

assessment and emergency plan. School safety planning must be an

ongoing process, not a one-time event. (Trump, 2011, p. 5)

Unfortunately, "inconsistent or nonexistent leadership on school safety issues, from the

district administration to each school building principal, poses one of the biggest threats to

school safety" (Trump, 2011, p. 6).

NCLB Law and Under-Reporting School Violence

The 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act established an expectation that

setting bench-marks and creating measurable goals can improve individual student academic performance and as a result "completely changed the role of the federal government and states in K-12 education" (Garrett & Brown, 2009; Shvartsman, 2009). The law also instituted mandates, mostly unfunded, for improved academic achievement, graduation rate, attendance, highly qualified teachers and school safety.

The requirement to improve school safety calls for each state's education department officials' to define the NCLB "persistently dangerous school" component. The NCLB component mandates public school choice for students that have been victims of a violent criminal offense or attend "persistently dangerous schools" (Trump, 2007; Prah, 2003). The definitions created were done so that most schools never met the criteria to be designated as such (Trump, 2011, p. 14). For example, a school in Pennsylvania with fewer than 250 students can qualify for the "persistently dangerous school" list if over a two-year period it has five dangerous incidents which may include a student bringing a knife to school. Comparing this definition with a school in California with a similar population where at least three students must be expelled for committing federal or state crimes for three consecutive fiscal years in order to be listed as persistently dangerous, provides opportunity for misrepresenting the facts (Prah, 2003). The mere existence of the definition discourages the accurate reporting of school crime and violence.

Denial of security problems by elected and administrative school officials exacerbates security problems and increases the risk of further threats. Similar problems of non-reporting, under-reporting, and denial exist with non-gang school-based crimes (Trump, 2011, p. 9). Principals may under-report crime and violence on their state reports to avoid the unseemly classification and the collateral damage imposed on school budgets

and community relationships. Perceptions of school violence vary among school administrators (Trump, 2005) and reveal that some school officials underplay the extent of violence in their schools because they believe that the public will perceive them as poor leaders if the extent of school violence became known (Garrett & Brown, 2009).

Concerns about poor reporting of school crimes and inadequate reporting practice have been cited repeatedly for more than 30 years. Efforts to improve school crime reporting have been haphazard and inconsistent across the nation, while the issue of school crime and its associated level of violence have grown to a major level of concern (p. 9). According to the American Association of School Administrators (1981), the reasons school leaders refrain from notifying law enforcement officials of school-based crimes include: avoid bad publicity, litigation, or both; fear of blame for the problem or considered ineffective in their jobs; some offenses are "too minor" to report; prefer to use disciplinary procedures; believe the police and courts will not cooperate. Over 30 years later the reasons for non-reporting remain largely the same. Reasons identifying why principals fail to report crimes may include: the administrators' practices to manage all student behaviors issues through the disciplinary protocols and that principals have limited training in distinguishing crimes from disciplinary violations. The reality is that administrators may be perceived as poor managers for not reporting crimes and for not handling problems head-on. Administrators' inaction, not action, will eventually lead to their downfall on security issues (American Association of School Administrators, 2011).

This sentiment was supported by a study conducted in 2005-2006 school year by East Stroudsburg University to provide a comprehensive, data-driven picture of the progress Pennsylvania's schools were making in meeting the mandates of the NCLB

legislation. With regard to the School Safety mandate that required schools to annually report the number and type of dangerous incidents occurring on-site. The results of the study stated that "Pennsylvania's schools' safety record continued to improve with only ten Philadelphia high schools cited as 'persistently dangerous' schools. The findings also noted that no rural schools were included on the list since its inception, and all targeted schools were located in high poverty areas. No schools with populations under 1,000 were cited in 2005-2006 (Smeaton & Waters, 2008). According to Trump (2011, p. 17), the significance of the study is the perceived positive effects and benefits of not reporting criminal actions.

The reality noted is that:

- it teaches children that there are no repercussions for committing criminal acts; schools are islands of lawlessness and potential offenses increase;

- parents get the sense that there is a lack of concern about safety at school; interferes with providing an academic environment;

- it contributes to the inaccurate and inadequate factual base regarding crimes committed, reducing the ability to develop effective intervention and prevention strategies (Trump, 2011, p. 17).

No mandatory federal school crime reporting and tracking exists in the U.S. The federal data available are limited to a collection of a handful of academic studies, based primarily on surveys…questionable data. To have incident-based federal mandatory school crime reporting combined with the failure of local schools to accurately report school crimes increases the risks of reduced federal funding for school safety. Using the questionable and limited academic survey reports, the federal government has actually

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repeatedly claimed that school crime is down nationally since 1992 (Trump, 2007, p. 5).

By down-playing the dangerous reality of a school, the result may contribute to increased violence and crime, additional discipline problems, fewer funded school safety and violence prevention programs, and increased liability for operating less safe schools. The original intent of the law may eventually create less safe schools (Prah, 2003; Shvartsman, 2009; Trump, 2010).

Comprehensive School Safety Planning

> Knowing how to respond quickly and efficiently in a crisis is critical to ensuring the safety of our schools and students. The midst of a crisis is not the time to start figuring out who ought to do what. At that moment, everyone involved – from top to bottom – should know the drill and know each other. (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 6)

Trump (2011) states that school safety is a leadership issue emphasizing that school leaders have the power to reduce risks and improve preparedness. He identifies the positive effects of a proactive safe school environment to include, improved attendance and reduced dropouts; focus on academic and not discipline; increased parental confidence, which leads to greater faith in school leaders, stable schools and communities, and a greater likelihood of support for school funding (p.20).

Trump (2011, p. 20) offered the following suggestions for school administrators to establish safety protocols to prevent problems, keep school safe, and involve students, staff, parents, and community:

- Make safety part of the school culture.

- Establish crisis-management policies that include staff training opportunities for plan implementation.

- Incorporate discussion of school safety within the school building. Include professional development time for safety planning, updating crisis intervention plans, and conducting annual school safety site assessments.

- Discuss school safety with faculty and parents as a normal part of school activities.

- Create alliances with local law enforcement officers, probation department, children services agencies, and welfare agencies that can assist in bringing resources into the educational community.

- Share information with staff members that need to know about dangerous conditions or people.

- Stay in touch with the students.

In crisis situations, emergency preparedness and well-executed implementation promote the welfare of students and school personnel. Additionally, the parents of the children in lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001, offered their own invaluable "Lessons Learned" after that tragic day (Bartlett & Petrarca, 2002, pp. 33-38). The following themes emerged from their comments regarding school safety:

- Schools must have a viable, carefully considered emergency plan, known to parents, teachers, and school personnel, ready on the first day of school.

- The emergency plan must include detailed and rehearsed evacuation procedures with several alternative destinations, a procedure for contacting parents regarding the location of their children and a procedure that will identify who may pick-up the child if the parent is not immediately available.

- Schools must have emergency contact information for each child that is immediately available.

- Schools must provide counseling in the aftermath of an emergency for children and larger school community.

- Parents and other adults in an emergency must stay calm, focused and mindful that their actions and comments will be the example that determines the children's responses. Children look to the adults for direction and guidance.

Fear is best managed by education, communication, and preparation ---- not denial. Through educating school community members to define the issues and communicating with school community members to discuss risk reduction, emergency preparedness strategies are enhanced. Preparing for both natural disasters and manmade acts of crime and violence are accomplished by taking an "all-hazards" approach to school emergency planning (Trump, 2007).

The acknowledgment by school officials of the international and domestic threats made to harm America's children is a strategic advantage in preparing for a catastrophic attack on the schools or conveyance. Such an attack would have a devastating impact on the economy if the "business" side of school operations were shut down on a large scale, and instill a lack of confidence in our school and community leadership (Trump, 2007). In this event, every family and school in America would be affected and our economy and way of life disrupted. These groups and their threats targeting children, have redefined the parameters and practices of school safety and homeland security.

According to Trump (2011), political leaders hesitate to discuss the potential of such an attack on schools for fear of creating panic among parents and surrounding

communities. With the Department of Education mandates for all schools to develop

school crisis intervention plans, the general security has improved. However, the threat

remains and school leaders need to employ at a heightened security level, the following

suggested actions:

- Ensure that teachers and support staff are trained in the school's crisis intervention
  protocols, evaluate, refine, and practice the security plans

- Be aware of and report suspicious behaviors

- Secure access to school property and develop perimeter control

- Review staffing and supervision plans be visible and be available

- Institute control protocols for visitor access to the school

- Establish designated parking for visitors

- Establish emergency communications checks within the building and with support
  first-responder agencies

- Create mobilization plans and arrange for memorandum of agreements with
  receiving organizations

- Ensure credible information and data base access security

- Identify high risk organizations, businesses, and target concerns

"The probability of a terrorist attack upon a U.S. school is unlikely; the first step toward

preparedness is admitting that the possibility exists" (Trump, 2011, p. 126).

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools

Schools and districts need to be ready to handle crises, large and small,

to keep our children and staff out of harm's way and ready to learn and

teach. The time to plan is now. (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, pp. 1-2).

The U.S. Department of Education identifies the following four phases of emergency management for its Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools program: Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. Trump (2011, p. 152) states that the implementation of these phases in the development of the school crisis intervention plan provide the framework necessary to respond to the most often asked questions by parents, attorneys and jury in the event of a school violence incident: 1. What steps were in place to prevent the incident? 2. How well were school personnel and students prepared to respond to what could not be prevented?

The value of a school safety plan is to identify potential problems toward students and school personnel that may go undetected. The responsibility to keep the environment safe is ultimately that of everyone in helping to prevent threats and potential harm. As a result of the violent school tragedies, public safety officials are taking the initiative to develop prevention programs, security interventions, and emergency strategies to prevent future violence in schools (Fairburn & Grossman, 2006).

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Safe and Drug-Free Schools strongly encourages all schools districts and schools to develop emergency management plans that align with federal, state and local efforts and agencies. Collaboration with local emergency management organizations in the development of the plans can establish interoperability between school and community agencies in a wide range of crises. As partners, they must treat threats seriously and have protocols for managing school safety. Districts and individual schools with a comprehensive plan, help school leaders to effectively assess the threat and determine its motivation and credibility (Trump, 2001).

Developing effective emergency management requires experience and the expertise of many agencies. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's National Incident Management System (NIMS) is the national unified response plan used by first responders to execute responses to all types of emergencies. The NIMS offers school districts formalized guidance and support. Additionally the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has introduced a planning process to help schools develop procedures to respond to all types of disasters, including school violence (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2013). FEMA and its state counterparts provide guidance and resources to manage incidents and support collaboration between school districts and local first responders. School Emergency Plans teams and procedures using the Incident Command System (ICS) model ensures communication, standardized procedures and responsibilities resulting in enhanced cooperation with public safety agencies and law enforcement during a crisis.

The U.S. Department of Education through the Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools, published the "Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities" which relates to the development of a safe schools plan. This document promotes the need for school officials to include county and local emergency agencies and first-responders in the creation of their prevention and crisis preparedness plans. Additionally, the guide advises an all-hazards approach to crisis management planning. "School officials need to work with the idea of partnering with emergency personnel and other stakeholders in the disaster preparedness process. How to create mutual understanding between and among stakeholders is required" (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, p. 84).

Emergency management plans, developed using the four phases of emergency management: 1. prevention-mitigation, 2. preparedness, 3. response, and 4. recovery, provide a standardized structure promoting interoperability of the school and agencies involved in dealing with a crisis. The standardized plan should include levels of response procedures for faculty, staff, and students in the event of evacuation, lockdown, or community emergencies.

Another component of the development process is to incorporate the Incident Command System (ICS) model, a management organization tool that addresses five functional areas of Command and Communication, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance. The model provides for the identification of roles, functions, and responsibilities of staff with redundant personnel identified for all positions. The essential benefit of using this model is the standardization of process and procedure, cooperation, communication interoperability, and seamless transfer of the crisis to law enforcement officers, firefighters and first responders (Trump, 2011).

Local Educational Significance

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has three broad goals for education: high student performance, high quality teaching and administration, and a safe, secure, and supportive environment for each school and every child. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Services Code, 35 Pa. C. S. §§ 7101 et. seq., states that… "Every school district shall develop and implement a comprehensive disaster response and emergency preparedness plan consistent with PEMA and other State requirements." As stated in the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, every school district and child-care facility is required to create a comprehensive disaster plan in accordance

with the guidelines developed by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) requirement was satisfied through a sub-committee of the Safe Schools Advisory Committee that created the "All Hazards School Safety Planning Toolkit" in 2008. Considered a "living document" (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, 2009, p. 3), the term is defined as and used to describe an evolving and dynamic document that may be changed over time. Consistent with the NIMS and modeled after the ICS, the toolkit provides guidelines and includes standard procedures to school districts to plan for natural and human-caused disasters, crises, and emergencies.

School violence prevention is included in the Prevention-Mitigation and Preparedness phases of emergency management planning. One of the significant lessons from the Columbine attack is that schools must treat threats seriously and have protocols in place to assess and manage threats. Determining whether the threat is credible is essential. In order to make an informed judgment call and avoid inappropriately labeling students, school leaders have a responsibility to understand the early warning signs and imminent danger indicators of potential school violence. A threat assessment can determine whether the impending danger may escalate. An advantage of the standardized safety plan requires that threat protocols be determined prior to the incident and may include working cooperatively with safety officials (Brunner, Emmendorfer, & Lewis, 2009; Sedler, 2010; Trump, 2001).

Violence prevention can also be addressed in the safety planning through conflict resolution, character education, bully prevention, and other educational enrichment programs that encourage students to talk. These approaches are extremely powerful and can transform a school's climate (Elias, 2006).

A comprehensive emergency management plan with well-defined and well-executed processes will help ensure the safety of students and can quickly and adequately restore the school climate to optimal learning conditions and the continuity of school districts' daily operations during and after a crisis. The ultimate challenge is to protect the students, keeping them safe and providing a place where they can learn and develop physically and socially without fear of harm or violence. School safety is an ever-present issue for school leaders. "Put the risk in perspective, pray that it will never happen, know that it could happen, and work with all your heart and soul to prevent it from happening. It could be your child's life that you save" (Grossman, 2011, p. xxi).

Summary

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature as it relates to the issues of school leadership, the related theories and styles that support responsive leadership to school violence, and the development of crisis management plans. The theoretical framework that informs the study includes relevant theories of virtue ethics, moral leadership, and school climate. The readings provided information about school leaders and how they are guided by moral principles, a professional code of ethics, and leadership styles. Their personal integrity, personal beliefs, and professional experience provide the ability to selflessly serve in the best interest of the students.

The literature substantiates the idea that America's schools are moral institutions, designed to promote, teach, and meet social norms. Although schools are dedicated to the well-being of children, they need leaders who accept the moral responsibility to protect the students and adults under their supervision (Clabough, 2006).

From the literature review, the understanding was established that school leaders are the first level of defense against potential threats to harm school children. They are responsible for providing a safe learning environment for all. School principals are also responsible for developing prevention strategies and intervention protocols to promote school safety with the understanding that incidents of school violence can occur at any time. Families trust the leadership of schools to keep their children safe. Schools are safe places, however the truth is that schools are a reflection of the culture where they exist and sometimes face crises. The reality is that, by knowing what to do in the event of a crisis creates the difference between orderly responses and pandemonium.

School safety plans and programs help shed light on potential hazards, an essential step toward protecting students and staff. School leaders nationwide proactively pursue prevention programs and employ security measures to prevent a school violence incident. Since no single strategy or compilation of strategies fits all schools, an effective method of emergency preparation is the development of a plan specific to the level and needs of the school. The plan then needs to be drilled by faculty, staff, and students so that when practiced, everyone can be responsive and reactive to the situation.

In crisis situations, the literature revealed the need to build specific plans and procedures addressing an all-hazards approach that is individually developed, trained, and tested in school community situations. Standardized school crisis management plans provide enhanced opportunities for providing structured interoperability with support agencies to better handle any crisis. Preparedness and well executed implementation promotes the student welfare (Bond, 2004).

Long-term stability is needed in both policy and funding for school safety. As a result of high profile school violence events, like Columbine, Virginia Tech, and Sandy Hook, school safety practices have changed forever. Legislating policies, laws, or protocols by individual incidents result in impulsive reactions, like the series of legislative "free-zone" mandates issued in the 1990s. What is needed is the thoughtful consistency and child-centered focus necessary in addressing school safety. This study may encourage school leaders to engage in intense scrutiny of their existing school crisis management plans, redefining preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery procedures, all preparing to intervene and prevent the unimaginable.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

School safety is an ever-present issue for school leaders and should be
acknowledged as an ongoing concern that warrants systematic and uninterrupted attention
rather than random, crisis-driven responses to high profile incidents (Cornell & Mayer,
2010, p.13). Violence in schools is a seemingly indiscriminate problem that threatens the
safety of everyone when it occurs.

This chapter explains the research study method and design used to examine
school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles and whether they relate to their
anticipated responses to school crisis and knowledge of crisis intervention plan
preparedness. The chapter is presented in seven sections: (a) the purpose of the study and
the research questions that guided the study, (b) the research design and rationale for using
a mixed-methods design, (c) the population and sample selection, (d) the survey
instruments and interview protocol, (e) the data collection strategies, (f) data analysis, and
(g) ethical considerations.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed-methods design study was to examine whether
Southwestern Pennsylvania public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles
related to their preparedness for a school crisis and their effective implementation of the
school's existing crisis management plan. By examining principals' leadership styles, this
study will promote understanding of the relation between the principals' perceived
responses to school crises and crisis preparedness. The two-phase sequential mixed-

methods design using both quantitative and qualitative instruments will address the
following research questions:

RQ1. What are public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles?

RQ2. What relationship exists between public school principals' preparation for
acts of violence in schools and each of three perceived styles of leadership (laissez
faire, transactional, and transformational)?

RQ3. What are public school principals' perceptions of response to school
violence?

RQ4. How does the importance placed on crisis plan development and
implementation by public school principals align with their self-identified
perceived leadership styles?

RQ5. What link exists between public school principals' descriptions of their
perceived style of leadership and perceived effectiveness of leadership during
school crises?

Research Design

According to Creswell (2008), the use of both quantitative and qualitative research
within a single study creates an opportunity to better investigate the research questions
through the data collection, analysis, and interpretation (p. 552). The potential to identify,
compare, and corroborate data trends from the combined methods will strengthen the
findings of the research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 115).

An explanatory two-phase sequential mixed-methods model was used for this
study. This design offered the opportunity to use the best aspects of each method. The
two-phase design consists of first collecting the quantitative data followed by the

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collection of the qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data.   Each phase provides clearly defined data. The fundamental picture of the research problem is established in the first phase and the qualitative in-depth inquiry data follow to refine and elaborate on the quantitative findings.

Phase one of the research study, the quantitative data collection, extended to school principals the opportunity, through a four-part survey, to assess their leadership styles and practices, to evaluate school safety measures and preparedness for an act of school violence, to consider established protocols and plans to prevent an attack in their schools, to provide demographic information, and to decide whether to participate in the personal interview. Phase two of the research study, the qualitative data collection by the researcher, was characterized by a personal semi-structured interview, an in-depth inquiry concentrating on the participants' perceptions of leadership, leadership styles, experience with school violence, preparedness for the potential threats, and anticipated responses during a school violence crisis. The responses were analyzed for emerging themes. The significance of this research focused on the school leaders and the primary responsibility as the first level of defense against threats that may potentially harm school children.

Population and Sampling Procedure

This study included twelve southwestern Pennsylvania counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The study population was represented by the 145 public school districts serving about 20% of the state's student population (US Census Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2010). Each superintendent in the 145 school districts was sent a letter (Appendix A) via email requesting site approval to conduct the dissertation research. The letter contained an embedded link for the superintendents to preview sample

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questions from the study's surveys. Two additional letters were sent to superintendents who had not yet responded, asking them to consider again granting site approval for the dissertation study. From this population of 145 school superintendents and their respective school districts, the superintendents who granted site approvals gave permission for the researcher to contact the elementary and secondary principals available to be included in the research study.

Once the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania approved the research study (Appendix B) and with the superintendents' site-approvals, a letter of invitation to participate in the research study was sent via email to this sample of school principals who were currently employed in the site-approved districts elementary or secondary schools. The sample included school building principals who were, by virtue of their position, responsible to provide a safe learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Building principals were also responsible for preparing and providing a safe school environment by developing prevention strategies and intervention protocols to promote school safety with the understanding that incidents of school violence can occur at any time, a unifying characteristic of this sampling.

This two phase sequential mixed-method study used random sampling for the quantitative part of the study and convenience and purposeful sampling for those who individually volunteered to participate in the personal interview, the qualitative part of the study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) when participants in the sample have similar experiences, the responses are provided from a framework important to advancing the narrative. These principals volunteered to participate in the qualitative personal interview by accepting the option stated in the final question on the quantitative survey.

The personal interview was the qualitative sequential activity that followed the completion of the quantitative survey.

In choosing the participants and sites, the standard of an established expectation of experience and professional practice will advance the inquiry (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Purposeful sampling ensured experienced principals by selecting no more than two volunteer representative school leaders from each of the three school levels, elementary, middle or junior high school, and the high school levels. With a small sample size, the researcher selected by each school level two individuals who were purposively sampled. If more than two principals volunteered within their respective school level, a note was offered informing the other volunteers of a waiting-list status as the number of participants for each school level subgroup had been met.

Survey Instruments and Interview Protocol

The two-phase sequential mixed-methods study examined school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles and the relationship to school violence and crisis preparedness through the quantitative four-part composite survey instrument and a semi-structured personal interview protocol (Appendix E) for the qualitative portion of the study. This in-depth inquiry will concentrate on the participants' leadership roles, experiences, perspectives, and practices related to school violence and crisis preparedness.

The quantitative portion of the study was an on-line survey instrument, the Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey (Appendix D), comprised of three individual surveys. The three instruments used to collect the quantitative data in the research study included the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X-short), the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism survey, and a researcher-created demographic

questionnaire. To collect the qualitative data, a fourth instrument, an interview protocol (Appendix E), was used with volunteer participants from the three school levels in the sample group.

The first quantitative survey, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, MLQ (5X-short) (Appendix D), is specifically designed for research and is a shortened form of the Bass and Avolio's original sixty-three item MLQ copyrighted in 1995. The MLQ 5X-short is copyrighted by and commercially available from Mind Garden, Inc., an independent psychological publishing company of leadership assessments and developmental materials. The researcher purchased a license to reproduce 250 copies of the MLQ (5X-short) instrument for the online survey using Qualtrics®, as permitted under copyright law.

The MLQ (5X-short) had forty-five Likert-style descriptive leadership statements of which thirty-six pertained to leadership behaviors and nine related to the leadership outcome factors of satisfaction, effectiveness, and extra effort. The descriptive leadership behaviors statements were associated with three styles of leaders: the transformational leader who motivates their followers to become leaders, the transactional leader who gives contingent rewards to followers, or the Laissez faire leader offered as a hands-off, non-leadership style, providing the full-range of styles from the high-order to the lower effects of leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1995). These styles measured by nine leadership scales, included the transformational leadership components factors of idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The transactional leadership factors were contingent reward, management-by-exception (active) and the laissez faire leadership style

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factors were management-by-exception (passive) and laissez faire. The MLQ 5X-short also includes three leadership outcome factors that measure extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

The principals assessed themselves through responses to the descriptive statements judging how frequently their perceived leadership aligned with the statements using a five point Likert scale (0 to 4) ranging from "Not at All" to "Frequently, if not Always." For each leadership style measured by the Likert scale responses, the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0, (IBM Corporation, 2012) program.

The validity and reliability of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was demonstrated through validation studies completed for the MLQ 5X short form. According to the literature, multiple samples were used to validate and cross-evaluate the shortened form. Also reported were the factor analysis procedures completed with the selected items that exhibited the best convergent and discriminate validities. A Goodness of Fit (GFI) index of 0.9 was determined (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Also reported were the reliabilities for the test items and for each leadership subscale which ranged from 0.74 to 0.94, well above the standard recommended for internal consistency according to the MLQ Manual (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The information available regarding the research aligns with the objectives to consistently measure the transactional and transformational leadership theories evaluated.

In the current study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient reliability statistics for each leadership subscale were reported as .894 for the transformational, .639 for transactional, and .752 for laissez faire. The transformational and laissez faire internal consistency

reliabilities were above the .7 value, an acceptable standard recommended for internal consistency. The transactional leadership internal consistency .639 changed to .642 when one test item with low-item correlation (.139) was removed however the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient remained under the standard .7 acceptable value. For scales with a small number of items (e.g. less than 10), an acceptable Cronbach alpha value may be difficult to determine. This scale had eight items. Reference to the Summary Item Statistics table reported the mean inter-item correlation as .181, with the values ranging from -.096 to .502, indicating a weak relationship among the items (Pallant, 2010, p. 100).

The second survey, the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism, was created by Dr. Daniel Della-Giustina, Department Chair, College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, Department of Industrial and Management Systems Engineering, West Virginia University, WV, for the "Terrorism and Violence in the Schools," study funded by a grant from the American Society of Safety Engineers (A.S.S.E.). The reader is reminded that the word 'terrorism' for the purpose of this study was defined and discussed as a method to instill a feeling of vulnerability to be safe and create a sense of fear in people that motivates a change in daily routines and behaviors. Incidents of school violence can instill the feeling of fear and create a sense of vulnerability that may alter a person's behavior. Whether it is an act of intimidation through bullying, physical violence, a threat, intent or action to negatively affect the life of a person, the effect is fear. The reference to 'terrorism' in this instrument was described by the author as incidents of school violence. Permission was granted from Dr. Daniel Della-Giustina, West Virginia University, WV, and the American Society of Safety Engineers to use the survey.

The initial survey was designed for public school administration, faculty, and staff in three West Virginia counties and was comprised of twenty-five "Yes" or "No" questions to assess whether their schools had emergency prevention and response procedures in place to protect students from acts of school violence and also examined intervention strategies designed to reduce incidents of violence on school property (Della-Giustina, Kerr, & Georgevich, 2000). Figure 2 lists the eight questions designed for the original study to determine the level of preparedness for incidents of school terrorism and violence of the survey respondents and their schools (Della-Giustina, Kerr, & Georgevich, 2000, p. 19). The preparedness questions follow:

1. Does your school emergency response plan include provisions for acts of terrorism? Terrorist acts could be carrying weapons in the school, comb threats, kidnapping, taking hostages, or other threats of violence.
2. Are all administrators trained on emergency procedures and what to do in the event of a terrorist act?
3. Are students informed of their role in the event of an emergency situation?
4. Are all staff members informed of their role in the event of an emergency situation?
5. Are teachers trained to observe students to watch for signed of a terrorist act?
6. Does your school conduct drills or exercises to prepare for terrorist related acts?
7. Does your school have coded alarms to warn of emergencies?
8. Does your school plan to implement a plan that deals with terrorism?

Figure 2. Survey questions to determine preparedness.

The original study using the "Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism" survey investigated the participants' knowledge of whether and to what extent preparedness procedures were in place in their schools for acts of violence. The results were analyzed to determine the knowledge and skill levels of school leaders to implement the emergency response plans. The original study (1998) findings deemed the county schools to be unprepared for acts of school violence. A follow-up study involving all West Virginia

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county school systems that established guidelines for administrators to develop comprehensive plans for all schools at every level was published in the book, *Planning for Emergencies: Planning for All Emergency Situations* (Della-Giustina, 1998).

The reliability statistics for the test questions and for the preparedness score subscale were not available from the original 1998 study conducted with West Virginia schools. Relevant to this research study regarding the eight preparedness questions and resultant preparedness score, the reliability statistics for the test items using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .617, below the .7 acceptable cut-off value. The preparedness questions internal consistency .617 changed to .652 when one test item with a low-item correlation (.012) was removed, however the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient remained below the acceptable value. Since this scale had only eight items, reference to the Summary Item Statistics table revealed the mean inter-item correlation value as .167, with the values ranging from -.143 to .438, indicating a weak relationship among the items (Pallant, 2010, p.100).

The third part of the survey was a Demographic Data Questionnaire, created by the researcher and consisted of five brief questions about the participant, his or her principal leadership experience, and the classification and level of school setting where the principal was currently employed. Three public school principals, not affiliated with the study, were asked to review the Demographic Data Questionnaire. Recommendations were incorporated into the questionnaire and once more reviewed by two other former public school principals, again with suggestions considered. The use of surveys was an appropriate means to gather data in order to describe the relationship among variables, for

example, the characteristics of a population or individual attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and practices (Creswell, 2008, p. 414).

The fourth part of the quantitative survey involved one question that offers the opportunity to the principal to participate in the personal interview, the qualitative portion of the study. The participant's response was an "Accept" or "Decline" option. In the event that more than two principals volunteer for each school level, the researcher planned, through convenience and purposeful sampling, to use the first volunteer respondents to develop understanding and provide useful information. A note informing the other volunteers of a waiting list status as the sample-size had been met for their subgroup was planned.

The researcher-created personal interview protocol (Appendix E) was guided by the study's research questions and influenced by the review of the literature regarding contemporary leadership theorists, school climate, school violence, crisis leadership, preparedness, and comprehensive crisis management strategies. The federal and state legislation which mandate the response and school violence reporting protocols were also considered. The interview protocol included an introductory question, five open-ended questions aligned to each research question with follow-up questions designed to gain additional information about the principals' perception of leadership and knowledge about school crisis preparedness, and a final question to summarize the experience.

Johnson (1997, p. 283) identified peer-review as an acceptable strategy used to promote qualitative research validity. He further explained that the credibility of the results would be increased if the trustworthiness or validity in qualitative research could be maximized. To create an opportunity to promote validity of the personal interview

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protocol, the three public school principals who previously peer-reviewed the researcher-created Demographic Data Questionnaire were asked to also review the personal interview protocol and recommend changes. Once revised, the personal interview protocol was independently reviewed a second time by the same two additional former public school principals, again with suggestions considered. The personal interviews provided open-ended responses that were recorded, transcribed by the researcher, and analyzed.

Data Collection Process

With the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Appendix B) to conduct the research study and complete the dissertation, a letter of introduction and invitation to participate in the research study and the anonymous link to access the online survey instrument were emailed to each of the principals in the site approved school districts granted by the respective superintendents to conduct the research study. The letter (Appendix C) included the dissertation title, purpose and a description of the research study design with a brief explanation of the parts of the survey, and also stress that participation in the study is superintendent approved and strictly voluntary. Assurances for safeguarding the participants' personal information and responses through the use of pseudonyms were provided along with reassurances that no negative consequences would follow if the participant withdrew from the study or chose not to participate. Withdrawal from the survey portion of the research study was easily accomplished by simply closing the browser.

The letter also included the following statement of Informed Consent, "By clicking on the embedded link below to begin the survey, you are expressing your willingness to participate in the study." This statement preceded the embedded link to the on-line survey

Qualtrics® program that accessed the study's Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey the quantitative portion of the mixed-methods study.

The Qualtrics® program through the embedded link provided anonymity of the participant's identity by encoding the principal's contact information. The principal had the opportunity to complete three of the four-part survey which included the 1. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Leader Form (MLQ 5X-short), a Likert-style survey of forty-five statements that relate to the principals' perceived style of leadership; 2. the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism survey presented as twenty-five "Yes" or "No" questions about the policies, plans and procedures in place to prepare for and respond to incidents of violence and threats of violence, and 3. a researcher-created demographic questionnaire consisting of five brief questions. These surveys were followed by a fourth part which offers the opportunity to participate in the personal interview, the qualitative portion of the study, by simply choosing the "Accept" or "Decline" option. Assurances that negative consequences would not follow if the participant chose to opt out of the interview part of the study by declining the opportunity. The principal could also withdraw from this interview by simply notifying the researcher by personal communication, email message, or by informing the researcher in person of the decision to not participate in the interview.

For those who accepted the invitation to participate in the personal interview, to ensure anonymity, the principals were provided a link to provide their name and school email contact address so the researcher could schedule a mutually agreed upon date, time, and place for the interview to be conducted. Selection of participants from each school level, elementary school, middle or junior high school, and high school for the personal interview, was accomplished by the researcher using convenience and purposeful

sampling. When more than four principals volunteered within their respective school levels, a wait-list status was offered to the other volunteers.

The qualitative data were collected by the researcher through the semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix E) to further investigate (Creswell, 2008) the participants' perceptions of leadership, leadership styles, experience with school violence, the potential threats of violence, and perceived effectiveness of leadership during a crisis. The personal interviews were conducted using an open-ended-question interview protocol to encourage in-depth unconstrained responses (Bernhardt, 2004).

The interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. Each of the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded by the researcher through emerging themes and categories (Hatch, 2002). A copy of the transcription was provided to the participants for review and comment to ensure that their responses were accurately noted. The information collected from the personal interviews and analyzed was used to refine and elaborate on the quantitative findings, providing a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2008; Hatch, 2002).

Data Analysis

As a sequential mixed-methods research study design, the quantitative and qualitative data were collected in two distinct phases, respectively. The quantitative data were collected using Qualtrics® (Qualtrics Labs, Inc., 2012) through the on-line distribution of the Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey comprised of three individual surveys, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5x-short), the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism, and a demographic questionnaire. The survey data were uploaded, compiled, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social

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Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0. The SPSS provided the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to address the principals' perception of their leadership style, research question one (RQ1) and perception of their preparedness for school violence, research question two, (RQ2). The null hypothesis stated:

H$_0$: There is no difference between the preparedness score and each of the leadership styles (laissez faire, transactional, transformational).

$$H_0: \mu 1 = \mu 2$$

Further exploration between data groups included the use of an independent samples t-test to compare each leadership style (laissez faire, transactional, transformational) and principals' preparedness for school violence incidents. The independent-samples t-test is comprised of the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and the Equality of Means Test. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances tested whether the data were obtained from populations of equal variances (Pallant, 2011, p. 206). The Equality of Means test determined whether there was a statistical significance in the mean scores for the two groups; the preparedness score (No/Yes) and each leadership style (Pallant, 2011, p. 240).

Qualitative data were collected through a scheduled personal semi-structured open-ended question interview protocol that was standardized with sequencing and phrasing of the questions. Each participant's conversational responses were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher and an independent transcriptionist (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998). The responses were formatted by interview question. The transcripts were individually sent to the participants for their review to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions (Creswell, 2008).

All responses were studied by the researcher for content and understanding using the constant comparison method, seeking common responses and key elements (Creswell, 2008). The interviewees' responses were uploaded to the NVivo 10 computer program (QSR International, 2012) for categorization and coding. The use of inductive analysis and organizing the data centered on common attributes and categories, provided the structure for the creation of themes based on the data (Mertler, 2006). Topic expressions and common phases were highlighted with similar responses grouped and categorized for further analysis. Recurring phrases and repeated behaviors were noted for frequency of occurrence. Through a long and arduous process of analysis between different types of coding to interpret data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), these persistent categories were combined into emerging themes. Subsequently, the themes identified the dominant influences that guided the principals' thoughts, words, and deeds as they carried out their responsibilities to serve and protect the students and staff. Thought-provoking statements, quotations, and pertinent information were noted and used to bring focus on the experiences and sometimes harsh realities of the principals' duties. The researcher's analysis of the qualitative data and classification of the emerging themes and categories were supported by the NVivo® 10 software program.

Ethical Considerations

The theoretical framework for the mixed-methods research study is moral leadership. Inherently, the need to offer the participants a protected, risk-free experience was understood by the researcher as a legal and ethical requirement. All participants are principals employed in public schools. They were asked to complete surveys regarding their perceptions of leadership styles and preparedness for school violence. The following

measures were provided to assure the participants that the procedures and protocols of the study protected their personal and professional responses.

Site approval permission letters informed the 145 district superintendents of the research study purpose and significance, voluntary participation of the principals, the anonymity of the principals' identities and responses, and the assurance that all information related to the school district's identity would be held in strict confidence (Appendix A). With written permission received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Appendix B) to conduct the research, the study's sample participants were advised that their participation in the study was totally voluntary and reassured that all personal and professional information would be kept in the strictest of confidence. The researcher respected and valued the time investment of those principals who participated in this study.

The survey program Qualtrics® was used to encode all data for the participants' anonymity and protection. Withdrawal from the survey portion of the study was accomplished at any time, for any reason, and without penalty by simply closing the browser. The responses were reported as aggregated data or with the use of pseudonyms. The qualitative portion of the study offered to the principals an opportunity to participate in a personal interview strictly on a voluntary basis. The choice to take part or not in this activity was a decision made with a response to accept or decline the option as presented at the end of the survey portion of the study. To insure anonymity, the principal voluntarily consented to provide contact information via a link at the conclusion of the quantitative phase of the research study. The researcher had no other means to identify interview participants.

Once the identifying information was voluntarily provided to the researcher, a mutually agreed upon date, place, and time for the interview to occur was scheduled. On the day of the interview, a signed informed consent (Appendix F) was obtained from the interview participants and their identities known only to the researcher. The interview participants were advised that the information shared would be coded using pseudonyms and could be published in educational publications or used at conferences. The interview protocol required the participants' responses to be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription, coding, and member checking. If the principal chose to withdraw, this was accomplished by personal communication, text messaging, or by telling the researcher in person of the decision to withdraw. Only the researcher knows the coding criteria and has access to this information. The research data, information, and codes will be kept in a secure location in the researcher's home for three years beyond the completion of the study and then destroyed in accordance with federal guidelines. No potential risks were identified.

Summary

Chapter III presented the methodology used to conduct the research study on school principals' perceptions of leadership styles and preparedness for school violence. The purpose of the study was to examine whether Southwestern Pennsylvania public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles related to the anticipated responses to incidents of school violence and knowledge of the school's existing crisis management plan. The study sample was taken from the population of public school principals in twelve counties in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Using a two-phase sequential mixed-method design, a survey distributed via the Qualtrics® program collected the quantitative data on school leadership styles, preparedness for incidents of school violence, and demographic information. The data were analyzed by descriptive and statistical procedures using the SPSS version 20.0 software program. The personal interviews conducted by the researcher provided the qualitative data investigating perceptions of leadership, leadership styles, and experiences with school violence, the potential threats and anticipated responses to violence during a crisis. The entire interview for each principal was audio-recorded for transcription, coding, and member checking purposes. The interview data collected were also analyzed by the researcher for emerging themes supported by the NVivo® 10 software program. The information provided from the personal interviews further explained, described, and refined the research problem.

School safety is an ever-present issue for school leaders who are the first level of defense against threats to potentially harm school children. The methodology of the research study design was to inform and enhance the understanding of the effect of school principals' leadership styles on the process to prepare for and effectively lead during a school crisis.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: DATA AND ANALYSIS

Overview

Chapter IV describes the data analysis used to examine whether Southwestern Pennsylvania public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles are related to their preparedness for and anticipated responses to school violence incidents and crises. In this sequential mixed-methods study, the school principals' quantitative data were collected and analyzed using an online survey (phase one) and the qualitative responses gathered via a personal interview protocol (phase two). This chapter provides the survey demographics first followed by the analyzed data included in phase one, quantitative, and phase two, qualitative, respectively. Each phase is structured in relation to the focus areas of leadership styles, preparedness, and effective leadership as determined by the research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1. What are public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles?

RQ2. What relationship exists between public school principals' preparation for acts of violence in schools and each style of leadership, laissez faire, transactional, and transformational?

RQ3. What are public school principals' perceptions of their anticipated response to school violence?

RQ4. How does the importance placed on crisis plan development and implementation by public school principals align with their self-identified perceived leadership styles?

RQ5.   What link exists between public school principals' descriptions of their

perceived style of leadership and perceived effectiveness of leadership

during school crises?

As a sequential mixed-methods research study design, the quantitative and qualitative

data were collected and analyzed in two distinct phases, respectively, to address the five

research questions in relation to the themes of building relationships, caring about

students, staff, and school, and understanding the threat and expectation for response.

The quantitative data were collected using Qualtrics® through the on-line

distribution of the four-part *Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey* comprised

of three individual surveys: Part I included the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

(MLQ 5X-short) which addressed research question one (RQ1); Part II involved the

Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism which provided data to discuss research question

two (RQ2); Part III consisted of a demographic questionnaire; and Part IV was a final

question regarding participation in the qualitative personal interview. The survey data

were uploaded, compiled, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0. Descriptive statistics were used to explain the

characteristics of the sample, summarize data from surveys, and provide measures of

central tendency, measures of variability, and measures of relationship (*n*, mean, standard

deviation, minimum and maximum scores, and frequency) (Pallant, 2010, pp. 53-57).

Further SPSS data analysis included an independent-samples t-test to compare each

leadership style and the principals' preparedness score for school violence incidents. The

independent-samples t-test is comprised of the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

and the Equality of Means Test.

Qualitative data were collected through personal open-ended question interviews with 14 principals who volunteered to participate in the interview by accepting the invitation in the final question (Part IV) of the online survey. The researcher selected principals from each school level (elementary school, middle school, and secondary or high school) using convenience and purposeful sampling based on the number of volunteers, classification of school setting and school level. The researcher's data analysis of the principals' answers, supported by the NVivo® 10 software program, provided insight about their perceived styles of leadership, their anticipated responses to school violence, the implementation of the building's crisis plan, and their perceived effectiveness of leadership during a school crisis, which addressed each research question. The findings from the study are reported in relation to the themes of building relationships, caring about students, staff and school, and understanding the threat and expectation for response.

Survey Demographics

Twelve Southwestern Pennsylvania counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania represented by the 145 public school districts that serve about 20% of the state's student population (U.S. Census Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2010) were included in this study. Each superintendent from the 145 school districts received a letter requesting site-approval for the research study (Appendix A). The 56 site-approved school districts provided 220 elementary and secondary public school principals available to be included in the research study. With written permission received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Appendix B) and the site-approved district superintendents, each elementary and secondary principal was

contacted via an emailed letter of invitation (Appendix C) to participate in the research study. Figure 3 provides a map of the twelve counties included in the study.

Figure 3. Map of the twelve Southwestern Pennsylvania counties

Ninety-three online *Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey*s were accessed. Identified by Qualtrics®, sixty-five surveys were 100% completed with four survey participants' completing ten to ninety percent of the survey responses. Twenty-four surveys were accessed but had zero responses due to an undefined technical issue which did not display the on-line survey questions to the respondents. The completed surveys and partially completed surveys were downloaded and used in the SPSS data analysis. Table 1 shows the completion percentage rates of the survey from Qualtrics®.

Table 1

Survey Completion Percentage (N=93)

Percent Complete (%)	N	Percent of Participants (%)
0	24	25.81
10	1	1.07
20	0	.00
30	1	1.07
40	0	.00
50	0	.00
60	0	.00
70	1	1.07
80	0	.00
90	1	1.07
100	65	69.89

Demographic Statistics

Characteristics of Survey Participants

Phase one of the study included the demographic questionnaire, Part III of the Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey, that asked the principals to provide information that involved questions about their gender, the school level currently employed, classification of their current school setting, the number of years of administrative experience, and their self-described amount of formal safety-training experiences during their administration tenures. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the survey data using frequencies as a measure of relationship. The survey respondents were comprised of 43 male principals (62%) and 26 female principals (38%) representing their school levels as high school, secondary intermediate, or secondary (30%); middle school or junior high school (19%); and elementary school, elementary intermediate school, primary school, or pre-school (51%). The following Qualtrics® graphic illustrations provided show in Figure 4 the gender of the survey participants,

followed by Table 2 indicating the school levels (elementary, middle, high school)

administered by the survey participants.
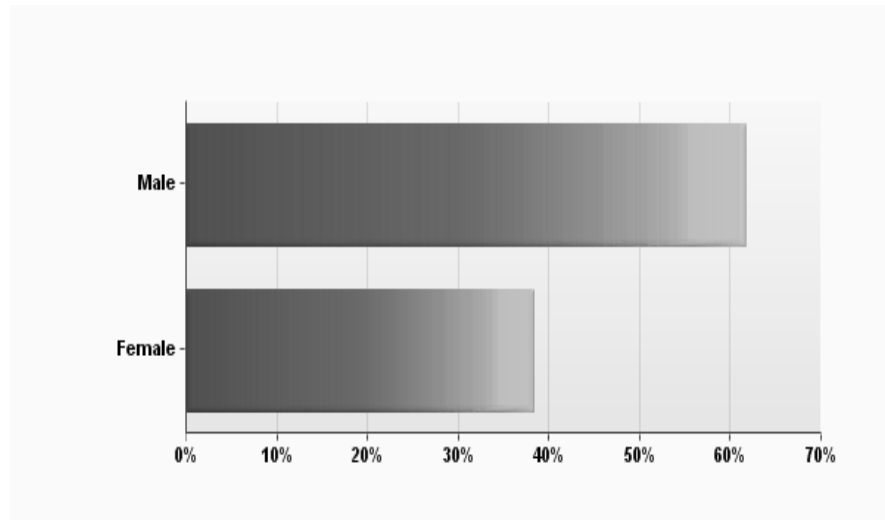
Figure 4. Illustration of survey participants by gender.

Table 2

Principals' Identified School Levels (N=69)

School Level	*N*	Percent of Survey (%)
High School / Secondary Intermediate School	21	30
Junior High School / Middle School	13	19
Elementary School / Elementary Intermediate School / Primary School / Pre-School	35	51

Using the definitions provided (National Center of Education Statistics, 2009), the

principals classified their school setting as urban (1%), suburban (37%), and rural (62%).

Figure 5 provides a bar graph indicating the urban, suburban and rural school setting

definitions and frequency classifications.
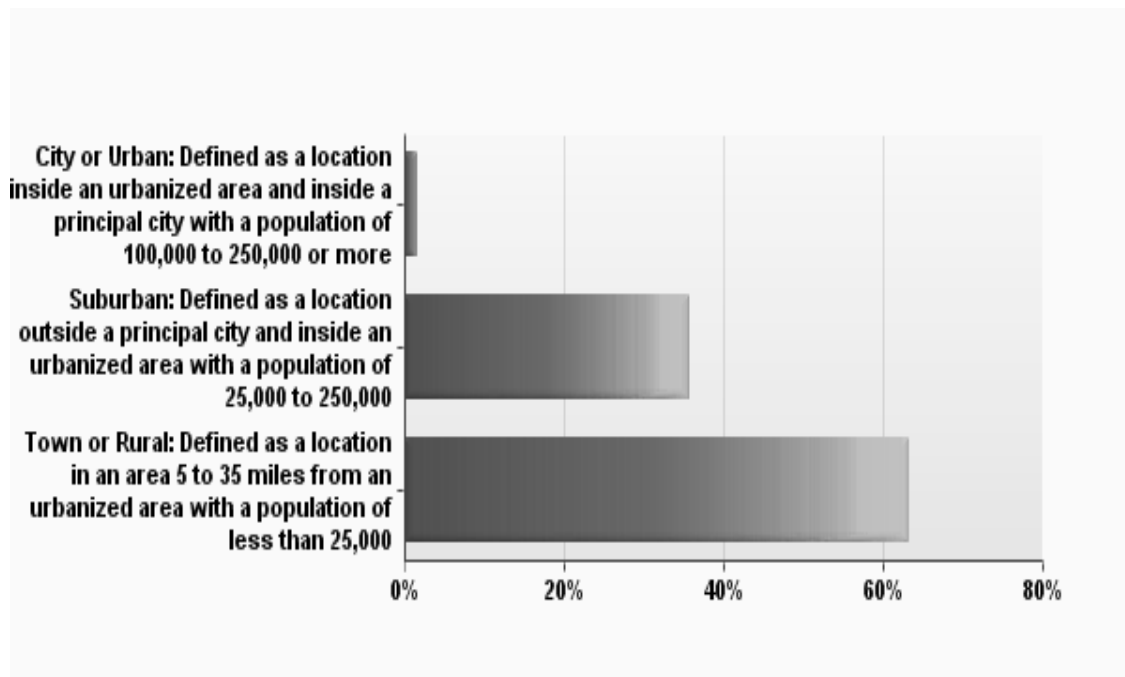
Figure 5. School setting definitions (NCES, 2009) and participants' classification of schools.

The final two professional demographics of the survey participants included the principals' number of years of administrative experience and the self-identified amount of formal training experiences during their administrative tenure. Figure 6 provides a visual depiction of the survey contributors' longevity as a public school principal: four principals with one to two years (6%), eight principals had three to five years (12%), 20 principals had six to nine years (29%), 25 principals with ten to fifteen years (36%), and 12 principals with sixteen years or more (17%) years of experience.
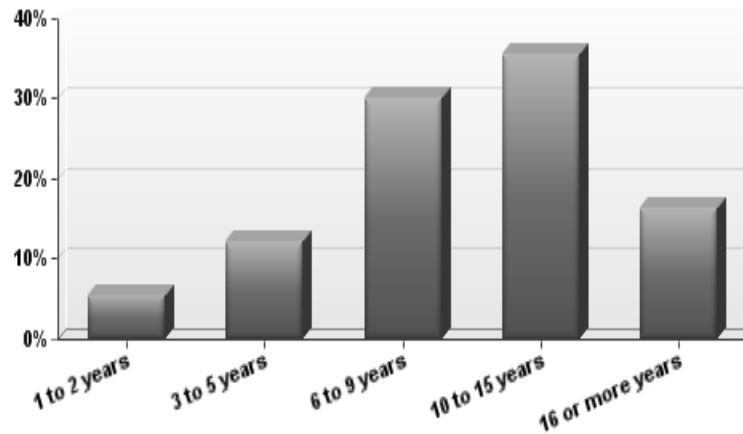
Figure 6. Principals' representation of administrative experience.

Building principals are responsible for developing prevention strategies and intervention protocols to promote school safety and provide a safe learning environment, a uniting characteristic of this group. The principals were asked to identify the amount of formal training experiences they had during their administrative time. The choices were defined in the survey as follows:

- **Substantial**: Attended multiple-day training sessions that covered numerous topics with local emergency personnel and first responders. Attended training sessions that demonstrated writing the Crisis Emergency Plan. Trained how to train others in crisis management plan development. Have had the opportunity to reflect on and revise the school district plan based on follow-up meetings with first responders and local emergency service personnel. Certified in first aid and the use of the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). Participated in School Shooter training.

- **Moderate**: Attended multiple-day training sessions that included the development and writing of the Crisis Management Plan, table-top exercises with the district

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emergency team members, local emergency personnel, and first-responders, and

training in first aid and the use of the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).

- **Adequate**: Attended the annual Intermediate Unit or Pennsylvania Training and

  Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) crisis management training for one day

  with the district's emergency team. Received instruction on developing writing and

  revising an All-Hazards-type crisis management plan.

- **Very Little**: Attended the Intermediate Unit or PaTTAN crisis management

  training for less than .5 day (4 hours). Read information in educational journals or

  books regarding crisis plans and how to write and review current safety protocols.

- **None**: No formal training experiences.

Using these options, the information depicted in Figure 7 shows that the principals self-identified their extent of training as substantial (30%), moderate (36%), adequate (21%), very little (13%), and none (0%).
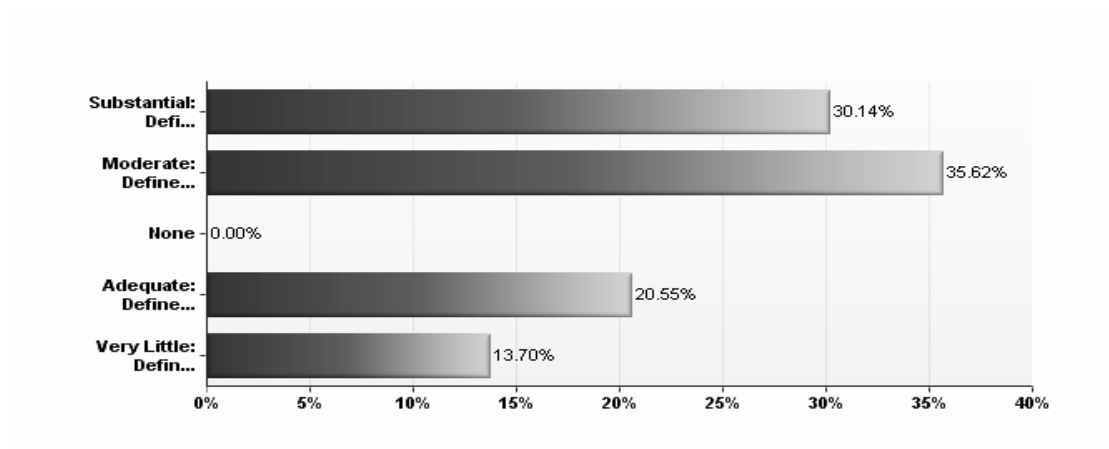
Figure 7. Principals' self-reported amount of formal crisis management training.

Quantitative analysis of data generated through the demographic questionnaire and its relation to principals' perceived leadership styles, school violence preparedness, and

anticipated response to school crises will be integrated and referenced in the findings of the study.

Characteristics of Interview Participants

Phase two of the study was comprised of the personal interviews conducted with principals who volunteered to provide perceptions of their leadership style, the development of their school crisis management plan, their experiences with incidents of school violence, the implementation of their school crisis management plan, and their preparedness and response protocols for incidents of school violence and crises. Using convenience and purposive sampling, the participants were selected from those who provided their contact information in the last question of the on-line survey.

Due to the positive response of the principals, the researcher decided to involve a larger number of principals to interview. All 17 volunteer respondents were contacted by the researcher to confirm their interest. Two elementary principals opted out of the personal interviews.

The remaining volunteer respondents represented eight of the twelve counties. The researcher purposively selected the interviewees to represent at least one from each of the eight counties and then proportionally applied the survey participants rural (62%) and suburban (37%) school settings to the group. No urban school principals volunteered for the interview. The selection process was further defined in proportion by the school levels identified from the survey, high school or secondary (30%), middle school or junior high school (19%), and elementary school (51%). All high or secondary principals in this cohort were administrators of schools with grades 7 to 12, identified as secondary school level. All middle school or junior high school level principals were administrators of

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schools with grades 6 to 8, acknowledged as middle school level. All elementary,

intermediate elementary, primary, and pre-school level principals in this group were

administrators of schools that included grades K to 6, regarded as elementary school level.

One elementary interviewee was excused from the sample because the school setting

combined with the school level percentages and county representation was already

satisfied reducing the sample size to 14 principals.

The personal interviews were conducted with 14 public school principals selected

from the survey data representing four secondary schools, three middle schools, and seven

elementary schools. The interview protocol (Appendix E) was comprised of open-ended

questions that encouraged in-depth unconstrained responses, providing a better

understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2008). Principals' perceptions of their

leadership styles, decision making behaviors, planning, and effective leadership were

fundamental discussion points of the interview sessions. Table 3 represents the respective

interviewee selections by school setting and school level.

Table 3

Interview Participants by School Setting and School Level (N=14)

School Setting	School Level		
	High School	Middle	Elementary
Rural	3	2	4
Suburban	1	1	3

To safeguard each interview participant's identity and professional affiliation, a

pseudonym using the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) phonetic alphabet

(Nath, 2001, pp. 4-28) was assigned to ensure anonymity. Other professional

characteristics listed in Table 4 identifies the interviewees' self-described leadership style,

their school level, years of administrative experience as a principal, and school setting.

Table 4

Interview Participants Professional Characteristics (N=14)

Participant's Pseudonym*	Leadership Style (Self-described)	School Level Pseudonym*	Administrative Experience	School Setting
Mr. Zulu	Collaborative	Alpha Middle	6 to 9 years	Rural
Mr. Yankee	Participative	Bravo Secondary	10 to 15 years	Rural
Mr. X-ray	Collaborative	Charlie Secondary	10 to 15 years	Suburban
Mrs. Whiskey	Situational	Delta Elementary	6 to 9 years	Rural
Mr. Victor	Collaborative	Echo Middle	16 or more years	Rural
Dr. Uniform	Situational	Foxtrot Elementary	10 to 15 years	Suburban
Mrs. Tango	Delegative	Golf Elementary	16 or more years	Rural
Mr. Sierra	Collaborative	Hotel Secondary	6 to 9 years	Rural
Dr. Romeo	Transformational	India Elementary	6 to 9 years	Suburban
Dr. Quebec	Collaborative	Juliet Middle	16 or more years	Suburban
Mrs. Papa	Collaborative	Kilo Elementary	10 to 15 years	Suburban
Dr. Oscar	Collaborative	Lima Elementary	3 to 5 years	Rural
Dr. November	Participative	Mike Secondary	3 to 5 years	Rural
Mr. Mike	Collaborative	November Elementary	6 to 9 years	Rural

* International Civil Aviation Organization phonetic alphabet

The qualitative analysis of the personal interview sessions and the relation to principals'

perceived leadership styles, school violence preparedness, and anticipated response to

school crises will be integrated and referenced in the following chapters.

Phase One Quantitative Data and Analysis

Leadership Styles

Research question one asked: "What are public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles?" Data from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) 5X-short, Part I of the Qualtrics® on-line Principals' Leadership and Violence Survey (Appendix D) were used to answer research question one. The MLQ 5X-short evaluated different leadership styles ranging from "passive leaders to leaders who give contingent rewards to followers, to leaders who transform their followers into becoming leaders themselves" (Bass & Avolio, 2004, p. 3). Leadership was examined with its relevance to work. The MLQ 5X-short developed by Bass and Avolio (1995), assessed three leadership styles (laissez faire, transactional, and transformational) through 45 Likert-style leadership statements. Thirty-six statements focused on the characteristics of the aforementioned three leadership constructs and nine related to the outcomes of leadership scores (extra effort, effective, and satisfaction). The full range of leadership styles tested provides understanding for both the lower and higher-order effects of leadership, from the most passive-avoidant style, laissez faire, to an idealized influential style, transformational. The following nine scales were used to categorize the array of responses: laissez faire, management by exception (passive), management by exception (active), contingent reward, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealized behaviors, and idealized attributes.

Using descriptive statistics to represent the principals' perception of their leadership styles and three leadership outcome factors that measure extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction, Table 5 shows the principals' data from the MLQ 5X-short.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X-short (N= 69)

Construct	N^*	Minimum**	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage
Laissez Faire	68	6.00	32	4.31	3.711	30.4
Transactional	66	18.68	32	19.12	4.398	55.1
Transformational	64	58.00	80	64.16	8.603	76.8
Extra Effort Score	68	8.72	12	9.38	1.909	68.1
Effective Score	67	13.00	16	13.25	1.957	63.8
Satisfaction Score	69	6.00	8	6.84	1.052	92.8

*Quantities of *N* less than 69 are noted as 'missing' on the SPSS output data
**The minimum scores to be considered using the 50th Percentile Values for Individual Scores are 6.0 for laissez faire, 18.68 for transactional, and 58.0 for transformational, 8.72 for extra effort, 13.0 for effective and 6.0 for satisfaction scores.

The following six histograms are graphical representations of the frequency distribution of

each leadership construct described. The bold black line identifies in each graph the

calculated mid-point (50th percentile) and minimum score values, as noted in Table 6,

using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Manual, Percentiles for Individual

Scores (p. 97). The associated frequency tables further explains the skewness of the

curves. Figure 8 shows the Laissez Faire Score frequency distribution.

Figure 8 has: Mean = 4.31, Std. Dev. = 3.711, N = 68
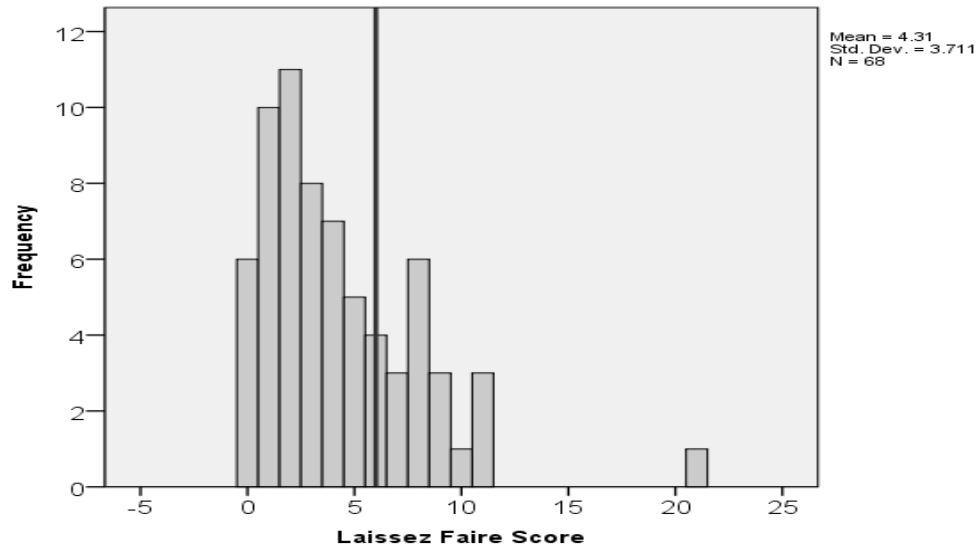
Figure 8. Laissez faire score frequency distribution.

Figure 8 shows the 50th percentile midpoint as 6.0 and that 31% of the respondents identified laissez-faire as their perceived leadership style, supported in Table 6.

Table 6
Frequency Table for Laissez Faire Scores (N= 68)

Total Score	Frequency	Percent (%)
0	6	8.7
1	10	14.5
2	11	15.9
3	8	11.6
4	7	10.1
5	5	7.2
6	4	5.8
7	3	4.3
8	6	8.7
9	3	4.3
10	1	1.4
11	3	4.3
21	1	1.4

Figure 9 shows the histogram representing the frequency distribution midpoint for the transactional score, 18.68, and a more even distribution of respondents' perceptions. Table 7 further explains the skewness of the perceived leadership style curve.

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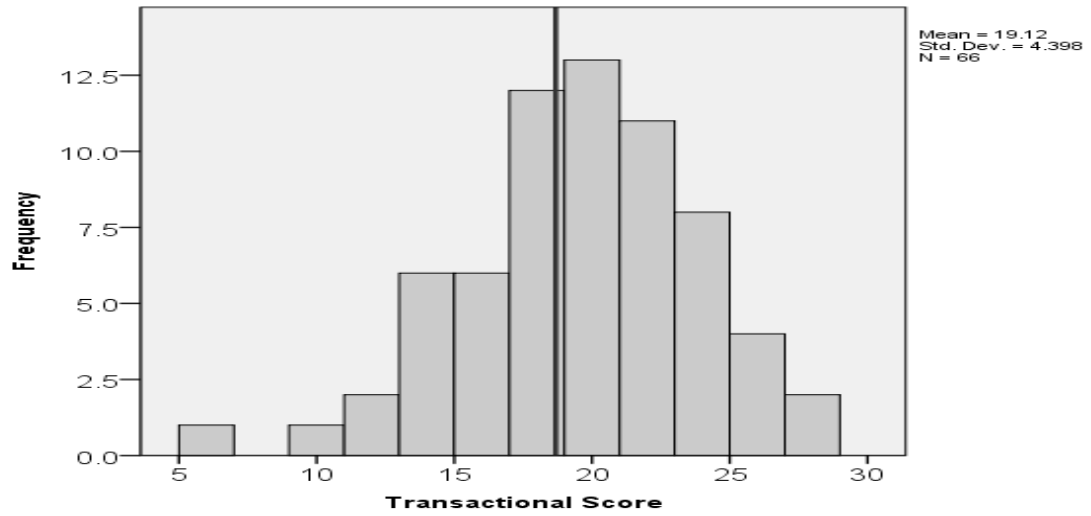
Figure 9. Transactional score frequency distribution.

Table 7

Frequency Table for Transactional Scores (N= 66)

Total Score	Frequency	Percent (%)
6	1	1.5
9	1	1.5
11	1	1.5
12	1	1.6
13	4	6.1
14	2	3.0
15	2	3.0
16	4	6.1
17	4	6.1
18	8	12.1
19	6	9.1
20	7	10.6
21	5	7.6
22	6	9.1
23	4	6.1
24	4	6.1
25	1	1.5
26	3	4.5
28	2	3.0

Figure 10 shows the histogram representing the frequency distribution for the transformational score with the 50th percentile midpoint as 58.0. The data indicate that 77% of the respondents perceived their leadership style to be more transformational.
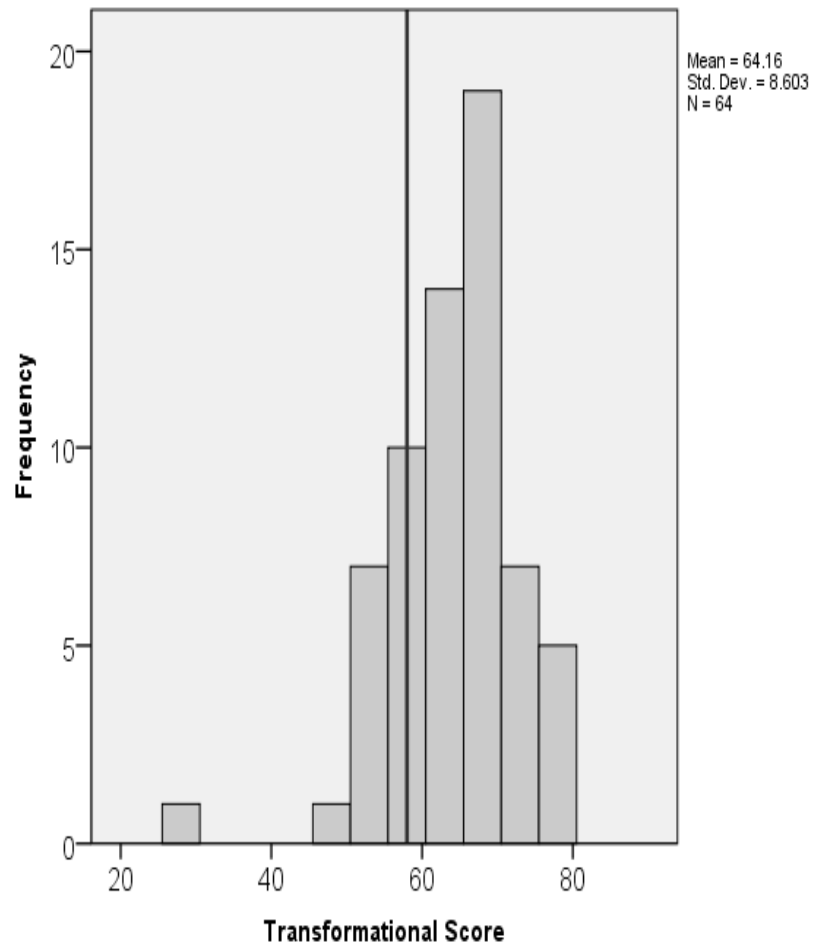
Figure 10. Transformational score frequency distribution.

Table 8 further explains the skewness of the curve through the frequency data provided.

Table 8

Frequency Table for Transformational Scores (N=64)

Total Score	Frequency	Percent (%)
28	1	1.4
48	1	1.4
52	2	2.9
53	2	2.9
54	2	2.9
55	1	1.4
56	1	1.4
57	1	1.4
58	1	1.4
59	4	5.8
60	3	4.3
61	5	7.2
62	2	2.9
63	4	5.8
64	2	2.9
65	1	1.4
66	2	2.9
67	6	8.7
68	4	5.8
69	3	4.3
70	4	5.8
71	2	2.9
73	1	1.4
74	1	1.4
75	3	4.3
77	3	4.3
78	1	1.4
80	1	1.4

"Transactional and transformational leadership are both related to the success of the group" (Bass & Avolio, 2004, p. 96). The outcomes of leadership are characterized as the "results of leadership behaviors" (p. 111). The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire measures extra effort by the leader's motivation and ability to inspire others to achieve more than expected. The effective score is determined by the leader's perceived interaction at different levels within the organization and representing the group to upper

management. The satisfaction score is quantified by the leader's perceived methods of working with others. The following histograms represent the frequency distribution of the principals' responses for the three leadership outcomes, extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. Figure 11 shows the Extra Effort Score midpoint of 8.72 and that 75% of the questionnaire respondents perceived themselves as motivational and inspiring.
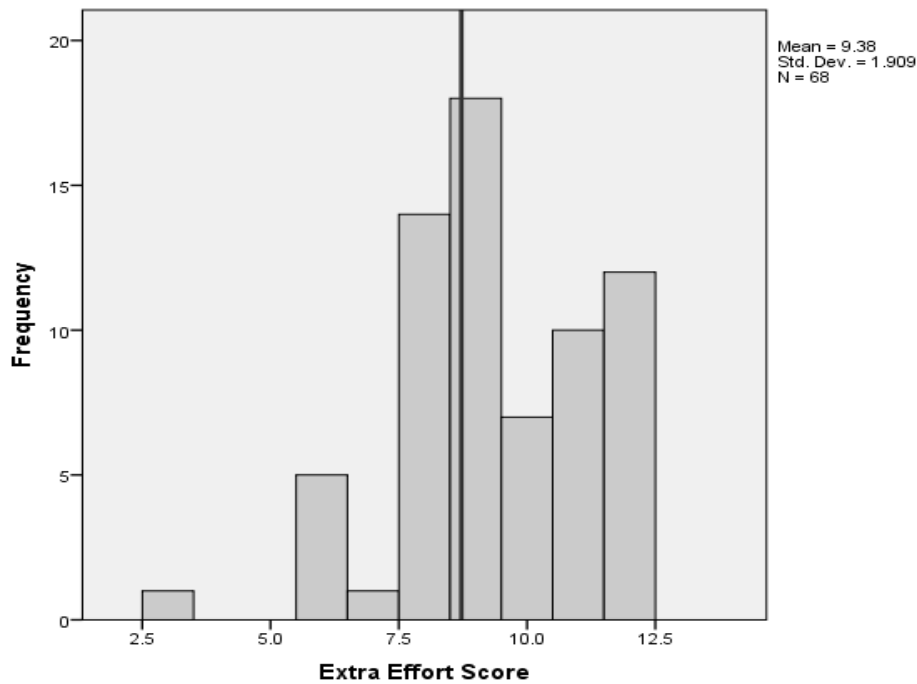
Figure 11. Leadership outcome extra effort score.

The extra effort frequency Table 9 provides the data that explain the skewness of the curve.

Table 9

Frequency Table for Extra Effort Scores (N=68)

Total Score	Frequency	Percent (%)
3	1	1.5
6	5	7.4
7	1	1.5
8	14	20.6
9	18	26.5
10	7	10.3
11	10	14.7
12	12	17.6

Figure 12 shows the Effective Score midpoint as 13.0 with 64% of the questionnaire respondents perceiving themselves as interactive at different level within the organization.
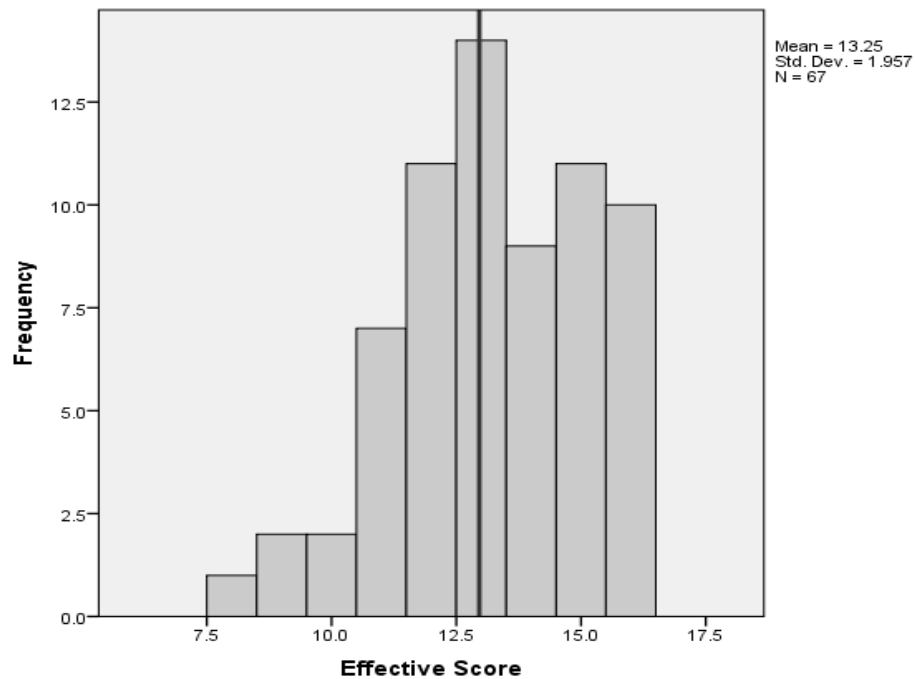
Figure 12. Leadership outcome effective score.

The frequency Table 10 provides the data that explain the effective score curve.

Table 10

Frequency Table for the Leadership Outcome Effective Score (N=67)

Total Score	Frequency	Percent (%)
8	1	1.5
9	2	3.0
10	2	3.0
11	7	10.4
12	11	16.4
13	14	20.9
14	9	13.4
15	11	16.4
16	10	14.9

Figure 13 shows the frequency distribution for the leadership outcome satisfaction score.
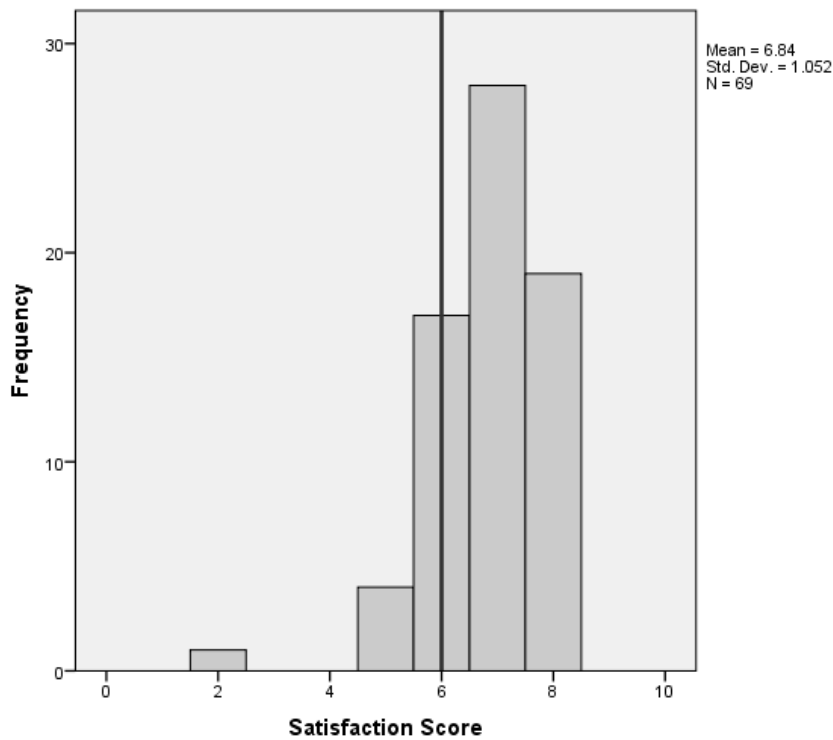
Figure 13. Leadership outcome satisfaction score.

The satisfaction score midpoint, 6.0, is depicted in Figure 13. The following frequency

Table 11 provides the data that explain the skewness of the curve with 93% of the

respondents perceived methods of working with others.

Table 11

Frequency Table for the Leadership Outcome Satisfaction Score (N=69)

Total Score	Frequency	Percent (%)
2	1	1.4
5	4	5.8
6	17	24.6
7	28	40.6
8	19	27.5

Summary

A summary of the analyzed data depicted on the previous graphs and tables regarding

research question one (RQ1) asking, "What are public school principals' perceptions of

their leadership styles?" provided the following findings:

- Figure 8 and the corresponding data in Table 6, indicated that fewer of the

  respondents' perceived leadership style to be more like a laissez faire leadership

  style (31% above the 50th percentile) than those who perceived their leadership

  style to be less like laissez faire leadership style (69% below the 50th percentile).

- Figure 9 and Table 7 data showed a more even distribution between those who

  perceived their leadership style to be more like transactional (58% above the 50th

  percentile) compared to those who did not perceive their leadership to be more like

  a transactional style (42% below the 50th percentile).

- Figure 10 and corresponding data in Table 8, indicated that the respondents perceived their leadership style to be most like a transformational leadership style (83% above the 50th percentile) compared to the respondents who perceived their leadership style to not be transformational (17% below the 50th percentile).

The three leadership outcomes scores were also portrayed graphically with supporting data tables showing the following:

- the extra effort score, which indicated the respondents' perceived ability to inspire, represented 75% above the 50th percentile,

- the effectiveness score, that showed the respondents' perceived interaction at different levels within the organization and representing the group to upper management, as 63% above the 50th percentile, and

- the satisfaction score, the respondents' perceived methods of working with others, as 93% above the 50th percentile.

The following composite graph, Figure 14, summarizes the three perceived leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez faire) data results:
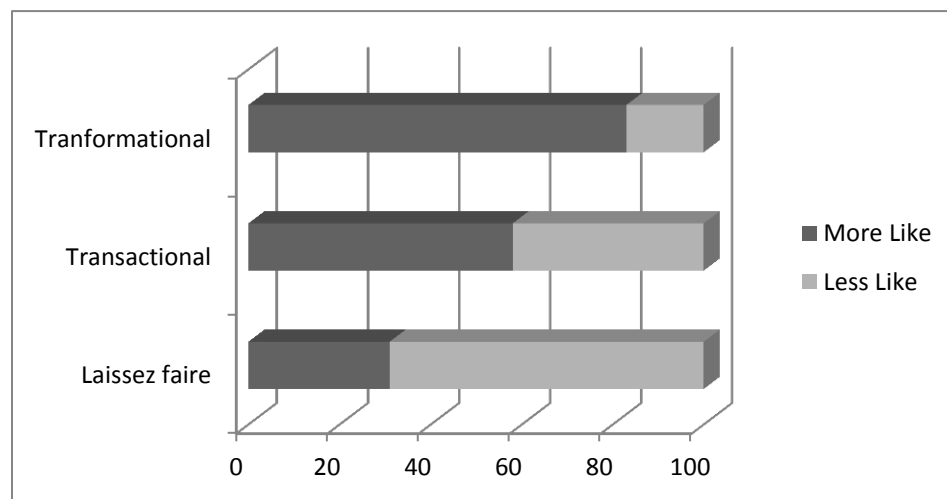
Figure 14. Summary of MLQ perceived leadership styles.

The following composite graph, Figure 15, summarizes the three perceived leadership outcome scores (satisfaction, effectiveness, and extra effort) data results:
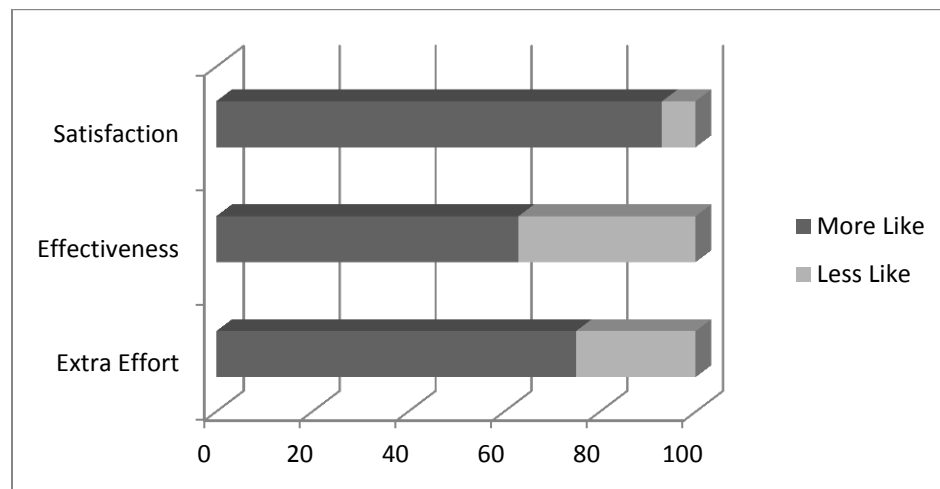
Figure 15. Summary of perceived leadership outcome scores.

Phase Two Qualitative Data and Analysis

Leadership Styles

Phase two of the study included the qualitative personal interviews held with 14 public school principals who volunteered to share their descriptions, perceptions, and experiences of their leadership styles.as determined by the research question one. The one-to-one discussions followed the personal interview protocol (Appendix E) providing opportunity for in-depth and thoughtful responses from the participants.

"Leadership style consists of a leader's general personality, demeanor, and communication patterns guiding others toward reaching organizational or personal goals" (Hoyle, 2006, p. 595). Research question one asked: "What are public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles?" During the personal interview sessions, the principals were asked to describe their leadership style.

The principals described their self-identified individual leadership styles, ideas, and expectations of themselves as well as their followers, the associated specific characteristics, practices, or methods consistent with the leadership style definition were noted. The perceived leadership styles of the principals (pseudonyms) are listed in Table 12. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) phonetic alphabet is used for the participants' pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

Table 12

Principals' Leadership Styles (N=14)

	Collaborative	Delegative	Participative	Situational	Transformational
Elementary	Mr. Mike	Mrs. Tango		Dr. Uniform	Dr. Romeo
	Dr. Oscar			Mrs. Whiskey	
	Mrs. Papa				
Middle	Mr. Zulu				
	Mr. Victor				
	Dr. Quebec				
Secondary	Mr. X-ray		Mr. Yankee		
	Mr. Sierra		Dr. November		

Each leadership style identified in Table 12 is defined and presented here.

Collaborative leadership style uses influence not authority. The collaborative leader encourages conversations, creates a positive work environment based on trust, and appreciates the co-worker who has an inquisitive mind that challenges the traditional thinking and practices (Pixton, 2009, p. 2). Eight principals identified their leadership style as collaborative.

Delegative leadership aligns with the principal's job that requires setting priorities and delegating tasks to entrusted co-workers. When the level of trust and confidence in

your ability to lead is equal to the trust and confidence in those who work for the organization, the delegative leadership style is appropriate. This style of leadership is an advanced form of leadership for those experienced in supervision (Bass, 2008).

Participatory leadership is a style of management where decisions are made with the most feasible amount of participation from those who are affected by the decisions" (Grimsley, 2011). A type of this leadership style involves subordinates who share in the joint decision making with their supervisor. Influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, participatory leadership adds a representative dimension to management.

"Situational leadership is a part of a group of theories known as the contingency theories of leadership" (McMurray & Bentley, 1986). A situational leader's effectiveness is contingent upon the leader's ability to relate to different situations and respond appropriately. Developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), this theory promotes the belief that a leader changes style based upon an assessment of the situation and is reliant on the psychological and task maturity of the leader (Grimsley, 2011).

Transformational leadership is a charismatic style of leadership used in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire in this research study. Transformational leaders are "servants to others, guiding them to create a vision for the organization. The vision will inspire excellence and create a belief system of integrity, a cause beyond oneself, diversity of thought, and inclusiveness for all races and gender" (Pixton, 2009, p. 596).

The findings associated with the principals' leadership style are described and supported by the individuals' comments, experiences, and principles of their authority, as follows:

Collaborative leadership style: Eight of the 14 principals identified their leadership style as collaborative and the descriptions of their leadership style indicated a level of camaraderie among the co-workers who voiced varying viewpoints by asking questions to challenge the decisions, not in a negative way, but to encourage the pause and the time to consider that other ideas were possible. Through this process, relationship building was a natural outcome. Mr. Victor noted that his desire was "to challenge the status quo, to inspire and motivate rather than just administer. I want it to be a sharing caring process." Supported by Mr. Zulu's comment saying that he gives "that extra effort in building relationships, because to get people to change their behaviors, they have to believe in what you are doing." Dr. Quebec continued this theme offering "we need to educate children to make sure that they know we care about them and care about their education…care about their lives." The consensus among the respondents was that building relationships with students was a strong quality of a collaborative leader.

Also identified among this group was the need for the principal to step aside and acknowledge the individual's knowledge and capabilities. As noted, Mr. Mike recognized the individuals' strengths and encouraged them to use those strengths to help the students succeed and to build the organization. As explained by Mr. X-ray, "I try to allow people to "flat-out" just do their jobs the best that they can without stepping on their toes too much. A collaborative leader needs to step aside and let others be the creators." From this dialogue the opportunity for the leader to be the challenger, the motivator, and a visionary was a compelling aspect of a collaborative style leader.

The delegative leadership style aligns with the principal's job that requires setting priorities and delegating tasks to entrusted co-workers. Mrs. Tango said, "I have always

felt my greatest strength was my ability to delegate." As a self-described good listener and a person with the ability to follow-through, her delegative style begins by listening and assimilating the feedback from the people-in-the-trenches. She thinks about the future consequences of the decisions made based on that information, makes the decision, and goes with it. She has the ability to recognize the strengths of individuals and assign duties accordingly, knowing that the tasks will be accomplished. "I think you have to take what other people have to offer because you're not strong in everything. I don't care who you are, you're not strong in everything." As a delegative style veteran administrator, her experience with co-workers commands a level of trust and confidence, and she reciprocates that trust and confidence in them.

Participatory leadership is a sharing of thoughts, ideas, and the opportunity to listen to others gives a shared ownership in the decision making and the progress made. One principal, Dr. November, described his textbook-like interaction with his staff which allowed him the opportunity to gather input from them regarding decisions that need to be made and used their input to validate the decisions he made. "I just wanted to validate where I'm going mostly. I set the goal. I know what needs to be done, however I may change my mind and incorporate more of the input from staff about how to get there." Setting goals and guiding the co-workers toward achieving those goals were practices described by Mr. Yankee's perceptions of his participatory style leadership responsibilities. He discovered that shared ideas can be beneficial to all involved.

Situational leadership by definition is reliant on the psychological and task maturity of the leader (Grimsley, 2011). As Dr. Uniform, who works to address the needs of all people involved, qualified her approach saying, "Whether they need to be nurtured

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or nudged depends on the situation. I believe it is my purpose to provide whatever it is that they need to get them where I want them to go."

Mrs. Whiskey's straight forward description is clear when she says, "I believe my style of leadership depends on the situation." Her sense of responsibility to run the school building is a combined sense of duty with all staff and support personnel when she says, "I don't think that's something I've done single-handedly." Reaching out to others requires a sense of task-maturity and a situational leader's effectiveness is contingent upon the leader's ability to relate to different situations and respond appropriately.

Transformational leaders are "servants to others, guiding them to create a vision for the organization. Dr. Romeo, in describing her style of leadership as more of a shared leadership style, said she wants to be viewed as "someone who is transformational." She revealed her method to revitalize and refocus on the organization's vision, stating that, "I walk across the hall to the kindergarten room, sit on the floor, and play with five year olds, because that brings me back to my purpose; we're here for kids." Evident in this depiction and the previous descriptions of the individuals' leadership styles is that each principal's focus regardless of leadership style is on the welfare of the students, staff, and school community.

Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Data and Analysis

Leadership Styles

After reviewing the quantitative data from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the depiction of the responses to be more or less like the leadership styles examined, some of the leadership statements seem to transcend the intended definition. A high percentage of principals identified themselves in the MLQ as more-like

transformational style leaders. However through the interviews the data offered an opportunity for other principals' non-transformational self-described leadership styles to demonstrate a strong alliance to a transformational leadership style characteristic. For example, the practice of promoting the success of the organization through the value placed on individuals' contributions was expressed by Mr. Victor's description of the school and community safety organization that included "local police officers, bankers, businessmen, parents, school administrators, teachers, and students; those who are invested and have the expertise to help lead and develop a [safety] plan that will be good for the people we serve. There is not a singleness of purpose, it's collective." Additionally, Mrs. Papa, a self-described collaboration style leader, engages the staff and "gets a pulse as to what the belief system is before instituting something new. The probability of success is enhanced since the staff is always part of the process. The strength of the school lies within the staff, the organization, and me modeling the expected behavior and outcome."

Dr. Uniform establishes high expectation for compliance with safety protocols. A transactional style quality, the opportunity to receive accolades is directly tied to the observance of the rules. Mrs. Tango, an experienced and well-respected administrator, in her delegative style approaches the responsibilities assigned in a "more-like" laissez faire hands-off style. She delegates the tasks, empowering and entrusting that the responsibility is transferred. However, when she was questioned by the members of the School Board, right after the Sandy Hook tragedy, about what she would have done, her response was personally revealing. "If that happened to me, I would do the best I could." Some things you just can't delegate. "If I knew that children were killed and I was sitting in my office,

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safe, I would have had to have gone." Mr. Yankee's collaborative leadership style becomes authoritative when he says, "I tell them that in the event of an emergency, it is their job to secure the kids, keep them calm, give an accurate accounting of them, and follow the directives of the emergency responders." Then he adds, "I don't try to lead by fear or threats, I try to get my people to believe that there is a higher cause and that's the kids." Leadership styles are seemingly inter-changeable and reflective of the values and experiences of the principal.

Phase One Quantitative Data and Analysis

Preparedness

Research question two asked: "What relationship exists between public school principals' preparation for acts of violence in school and each perceived style of leadership (laissez faire, transactional, and transformational)?" The quantitative data from the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism, Part II of the Qualtrics® online Principals' Leadership and Violence Survey was used to answer research question two. The Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism, comprised of twenty-five "Yes" or "No" questions was created to assess whether schools have emergency prevention and response procedures in place to protect students from acts of school terrorism and violence.

Reprinted with the permission of the American Society of Safety Engineers, Figure 16 lists the eight questions designed to determine the level of preparedness for incidents of school terrorism and violence of the survey respondents and their schools (Della-Giustina, Kerr, & Georgevich, 2000, p. 19).

> 1. Does your school emergency response plan include provisions for acts of terrorism? Terrorist acts could be carrying weapons in the school, comb threats, kidnapping, taking hostages, or other threats of violence.
> 2. Are all administrators trained on emergency procedures and what to do in the event of a terrorist act?
> 3. Are students informed of their role in the event of an emergency situation?
> 4. Are all staff members informed of their role in the event of an emergency situation?
> 5. Are teachers trained to observe students to watch for signed of a terrorist act?
> 6. Does your school conduct drills or exercises to prepare for terrorist related acts?
> 7. Does your school have coded alarms to warn of emergencies?
> 8. Does your school plan to implement a plan that deals with terrorism?

Figure 16. Preparedness questions from the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism.

The following narrative provides a description of the analyzed data from this study of the eight preparedness questions. Table 13 shows that 96% of the respondents identified provisions in the school crisis management plans for acts of terrorism, defined in the question as bomb threats, weapons in school, kidnapping, kidnapping, or other threats of violence. Eighty percent of the administrators identified receiving training on emergency procedures and response protocols. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents signified that staff members are informed of their responsibilities during a school emergency situation and 92% reported that students are also informed of their roles in an emergency situation. Almost 66% of the principals said their teachers are trained to observe students for specific behaviors that may lead to acts of school violence. Seventy-eight percent acknowledged conducting drills or exercises to prepare for incidents of school violence and 55% of the principals disclosed that they have coded alarms to warn of emergencies. In response to whether plans to review and revise their crisis

management plans to include potential threats of terrorism were considered, 90%

supported this activity. Table 13 displays these results.

Table 13

Preparedness Questions Data Results (N = 69)

Preparedness Questions	Percentage
1. Plan includes provision for acts of terrorism. Terrorist acts could be carrying weapons in the school, bomb threats, kidnapping, taking hostages, or other threats of violence.	96
2. Administrators are trained in emergency procedures.	80
3. Students are informed of their roles during an emergency.	92
4. Teachers are informed of their roles during an emergency.	97
5. Teachers are trained to observe and assess behaviors.	66
6. Preparedness drills for school violence acts are conducted.	78
7. Coded alarms are in place for warnings.	55
8. Review or revision of plan to included response protocols for violent acts is anticipated.	90

As required by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code (PEMA,

2008), the survey respondents' data also indicated that 100% of the schools have a written

crisis management plan guiding the responses to various emergency situations, Other

information from the survey reported that only eight percent of the respondents have

incurred acts of school violence during their tenure. Ninety-two percent acknowledged

that standard operating procedures were in place for an act of violence. Eighty-five

percent of the principals evaluated their drills for effectiveness and provided feedback to

the staff and students regarding their performance during the drill. Over 90% noted that

changes to the emergency procedures were made as a result of the drill evaluations.

Using descriptive statistics (*n*, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum

scores, and percentage), Table 14 represents the participants' preparedness score.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics of Preparedness Score for Acts of School Violence (N= 67)

	N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage
Preparedness Score	67	.25	1.00	.8041	.1836	86.9

*Quantities of *N* less than 69 are noted as 'missing' on the SPSS output data

Analysis shows that 87% of the principals have knowledge of the plans and response

protocols established to prepare for acts of school violence. A visual depiction of the

frequency distribution of the preparedness score is provided in Figure 17.
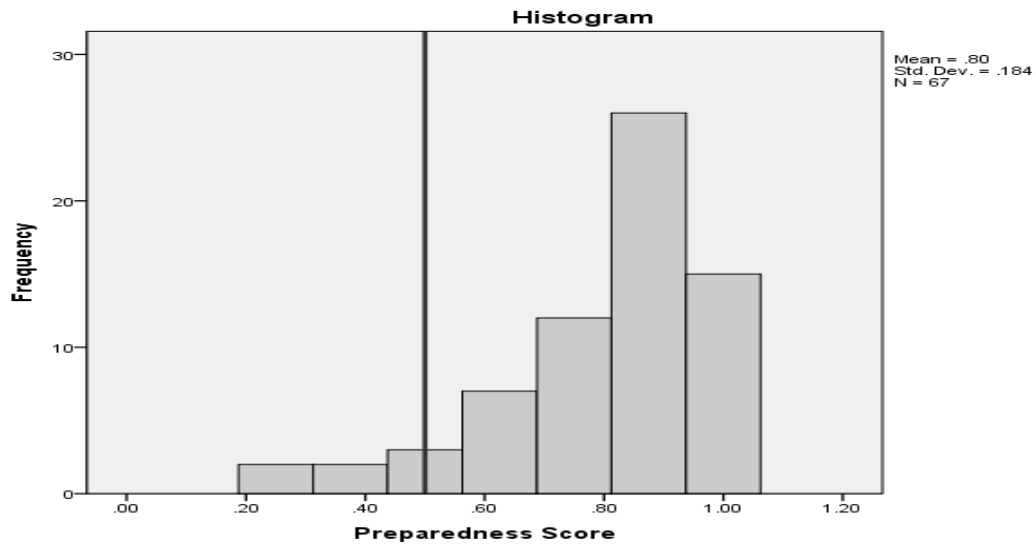
Figure 17. Preparedness score frequency distribution.

The bold black line in Figure 17 represents the 50% mid-point as a result of the "yes" or

"no" response option. Table 15 provides the frequency distribution of the preparedness

score which shows that 63 of the 67 respondents scored in the upper 50th percentile on the

preparedness questions which explains the skewness of the curve in Figure 17.

Table 15

Frequency Table for the Preparedness Score

Total Score	Frequency	Percent (%)
0.25	2	3.0
0.38	2	3.0
0.50	3	4.5
0.63	7	10.4
0.75	12	17.9
0.88	26	38.8
1.00	15	22.4

To investigate research question two, (RQ2) and examine whether a relationship existed between the principals' preparedness for school violence and leadership styles, SPSS analyzed leadership styles and preparedness score data were used. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the preparedness score with each leadership style (laissez faire, transactional, and transformational).

The independent-samples t-test is comprised of the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and the Equality of Means Test. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances tests whether the data were obtained from populations of equal variances and the variability of scores of each group were similar (Pallant, 2011, p. 206). The Equality of Means test determined whether there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for the two groups; the preparedness score (No/Yes) and each leadership style (Pallant, 2010, p. 240).

Using SPSS, the analyzed data from the independent samples t-test provide the group statistics as shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Leadership Style Group Statistics for Independent-Samples T-Test

	No (Less-like)			Yes (More-like)		
Leadership Style	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Laissez faire	.8167	.1987	45	.7738	.1511	21
Transactional	.7778	.2202	27	.8191	.1583	38
Transformational	.7614	.1625	11	.8077	.1941	52

The data provided by the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, showed the significance p-value (Sig.) for each leadership style (laissez faire p-value = .437; transactional p-value = .175; transformational p-value = .892) was greater than .05, the assumption of equal variance was not violated, and equal variances assumed.

The following histograms provide visual representations of the independent-samples t-test conducted to compare the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism Preparedness Score with each Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) leadership style, laissez faire, transactional, and transformational. The Preparedness Score response data are delineated on the x-axis of the graph. The "yes" and "no" frequency distribution data are representative of the principals' MLQ survey response to the individual leadership styles examined, as shown on the y-axis of the graphs.

Figure 18 shows the comparison of the Preparedness Score to the Laissez Faire leadership style frequency distribution data. Note that the laissez faire data was represented by almost 70% of the respondents as "less-like" laissez faire and 30% as more-like laissez faire leadership style.
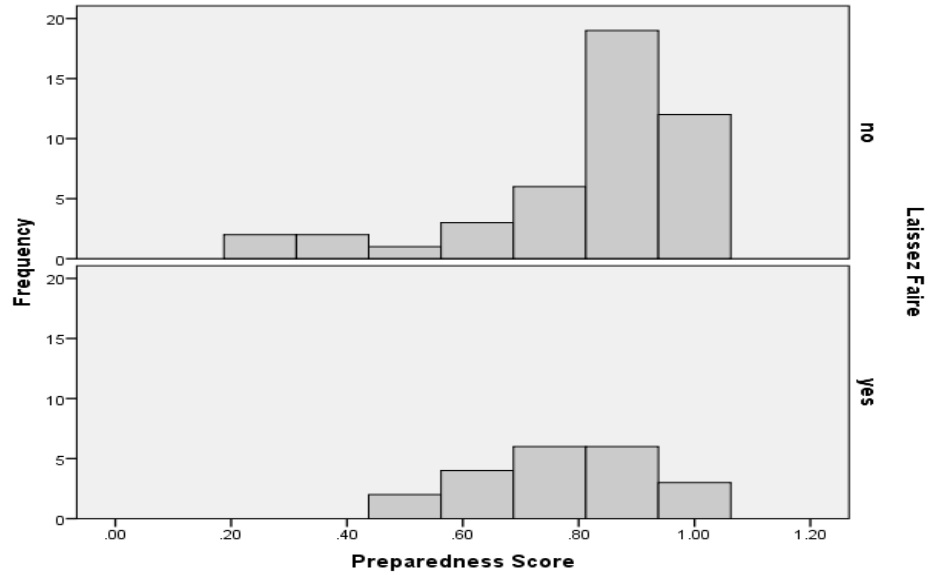
Figure 18. Comparison of preparedness score to laissez faire leadership style

Figure 19 shows the comparison of Preparedness Score to Transactional leadership style. The principals' MLQ responses were more evenly distributed between more-like and less-like the transactional leadership style.
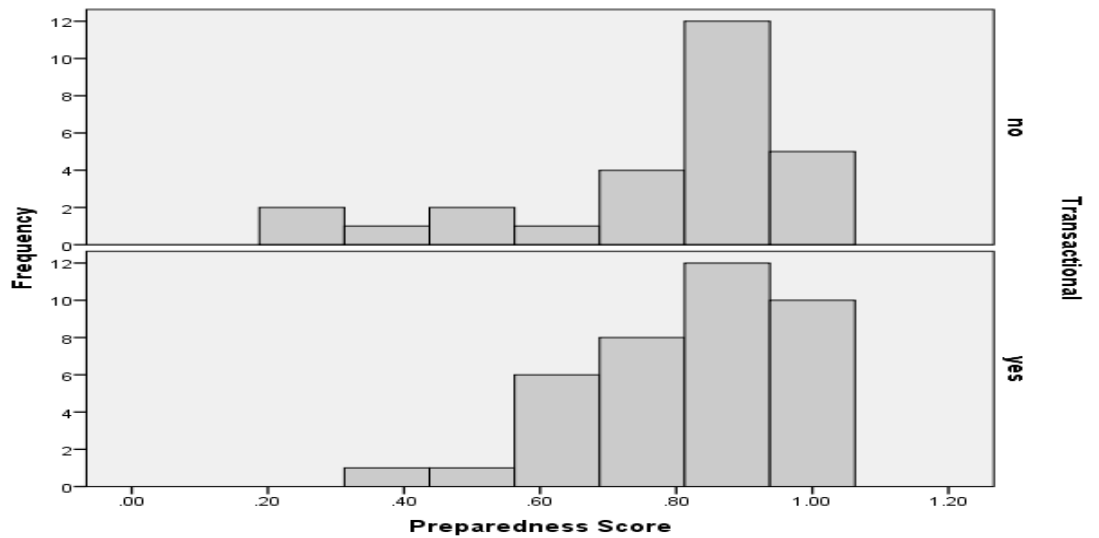
Figure 19. Comparison of preparedness score to transactional leadership style.

Figure 20 shows the comparison of Preparedness Score to Transformational leadership style. The MLQ data were represented by almost 83% of the respondents as "more-like" transformational and 17% as less-like transformational leadership style.
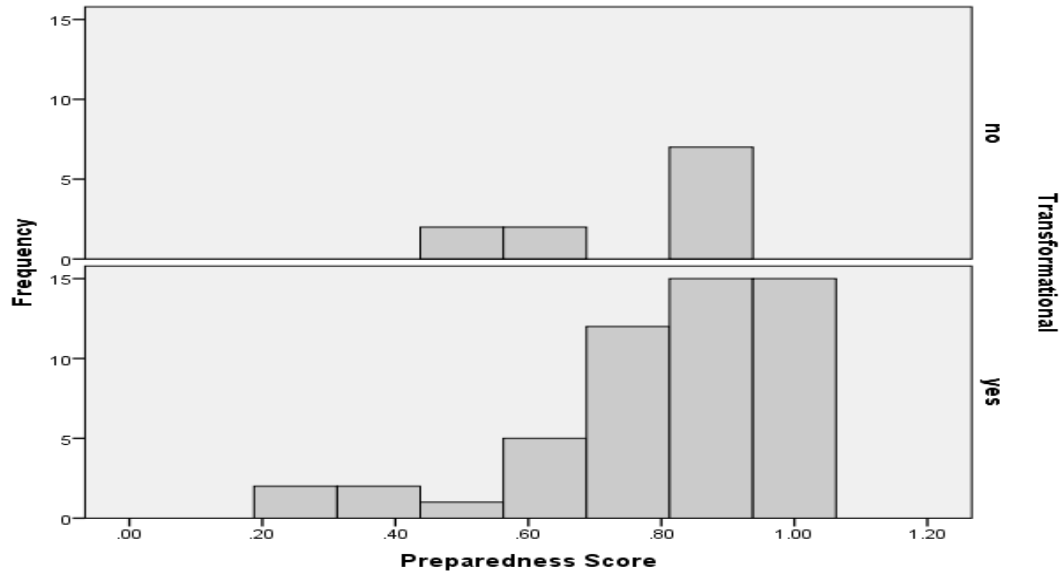
Figure 20. Comparison of preparedness score to transformational leadership style

Table 17 displays the composite data from the independent-samples t-test of each leadership style (laissez faire, transactional, transformational) and the results of the t-test for Equality of Means.

Table 17

Composite Results Independent-Samples T-Test for Equality of Means

			t-test for Equality of Means			
			Sig.		95% CI of Difference	
			p-value	Mean		
Leadership Style	t	df	(2-tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
Laissez faire	.876	64	.384	.043	-.0550	.1410
Transactional	-.880	63	.382	-.041	-.1351	.0524
Transformational	-.738	61	.464	-.046	-.1719	.0793

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The Sig. (2-tailed) p-value is greater than the .05 cut-off for each of the leadership styles (p-value = .384 for laissez faire; p-value = .382 for transactional; p-value = .464 for transformational). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the survey preparedness score for each of the leadership styles (Laissez faire, transactional, and transformational). There was no statistical significant difference in the scores for each leadership styles and preparedness score. The perceived leadership styles examined (laissez faire, transactional, and transformational) have no statistical significance to the preparedness for school violence, and therefore fails to reject the null hypothesis.

H_0: there is no significant difference between the preparedness for school violence score and each perceived leadership style (laissez faire, transactional, transformational).

Summary

The SPSS analyzed data shown in the previous graphs and tables address the research question two (RQ2) asking, "What relationship exists between public school principals' preparation for acts of violence in school and each of three perceived styles of leadership (laissez faire, transactional, and transformational)?" Using SPSS, shown in Table 14 and Table 16, the descriptive statistics preparedness score for acts of school violence and the leadership style group statistics for independent-samples t-test, respectively, the following hypothesis was provided:

The null hypothesis H_0: No significant difference exists between the preparedness for school violence score and each leadership style (laissez faire, transactional, transformational) of public school principals.

To determine whether a relationship existed between the preparedness score and each of the three leadership styles identified, an independent-samples t-test comprised of both the Levene's Test for Equal Variance and the Equality of Means Test was conducted.

Equal variances were assumed for all leadership styles since the Levene's Test for Equal Variance showed the significance p-value (Sig.) was larger than .05, (p-value = .437 for laissez faire; p-value = .175 for transactional; p-value = .892 for transformational) and therefore not significant. The t-test for Equality of Means also indicated that the Sig. (two-tailed) p-value was greater than .05 for each leadership style. "The effect size statistics, eta squared (η^2), provided an indication of the magnitude of the differences between the groups" (Pallant, 2011, p. 242). Calculating the eta squared (η^2) values resulted in: $\eta^2 = .011$ for laissez faire; $\eta^2 = .012$ for transactional; $\eta^2 = .008$ for transformational, all interpreted as a very small effect between the groups (Morgan, Reichert, & Harrison, 2002, p. 19). The conclusions from the test were that no statistical significance existed between the preparedness score for school violence and each leadership style examined (laissez faire, transactional, transformational), and fails to reject the null hypothesis.

Phase Two Qualitative Data and Analysis

Preparedness and Crisis Intervention Plans

Research question two asked: "What relationship exists between public school principals' preparation for acts of violence in schools and each of three perceived styles of leadership?" An essential component of school safety preparedness is the development of a crisis intervention plan designed to anticipate the threat and provide management of and responses to the aggressive actions to ensure the safety of life and property. The

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code requires that "every school district, in cooperation with the local emergency management agency shall develop and implement an emergency preparedness plan" as well as "disaster response plans," (Center for Safe Schools, 2013). Through the development and implementation of prevention and intervention strategies, school leaders must have a framework, a crisis management plan, for responding to the various challenges and threats that could potentially affect the safety of their students, staff, and school. Since 1995, federal legislation requires all school districts to work with local law enforcement agencies and other safeguards to support the safety of schools.

The principals, when asked by the researcher how their school emergency plans were developed, provided statements all asserting in some manner that their emergency plans were already in place when they began their current positions. With the emergency plan development complete, their responses focused primarily on their leadership roles during the review, revision, and implementation of the plan to meet the current needs of the students, schools, and mandated legal requirements. State mandated fire drills are conducted monthly and the annual county weather drill (tornado) is held in the spring. Other procedures for school campus emergency protocols (evacuation, bomb threat, shelter-in-place, lock-down, etc.) and response procedures for off campus emergency or natural disasters are reviewed with the staff at the beginning of the school year. Dr. Romeo offered that each classroom had a shelter-in-place box filled with supplies to help sustain the students during the restricted timeframe. The suggestion that in the event of an evacuation drill, the container could be modified to travel with the students was well-received.

Many principals, Mr. Zulu, Mr. Yankee, Mr. X-ray, Mrs. Whiskey, Mr. Victor, Dr. Uniform, Mrs. Tango, Mr. Sierra, Dr. Quebec, Mrs. Papa, and Mr. Mike noted the incorporation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Incident Command Model to design the response protocols. Mrs. Whiskey verified that by using the Incident Command Model, the faculty and staff have defined responsibilities. "I rely on the teachers for follow-through; it's not a one-person job." As a result the need to coordinate with the emergency response agencies is a common occurrence. Dr. Uniform stated, "Now we engage the local police, parents, kids, teachers, and administrators as members of the safety committee for each of the schools. We meet yearly to discuss issues of concern, changes and modifications to the plan. The police departments are very helpful in designing those."

In his community, Mr. Yankee is a firefighter and personally understands the importance of the interoperability among the first responders and transfer of responsibility during an event. "I usually show up on someone's worst day and accountability of all persons is critical. I emphasize to my school staff that accountability is key to any emergency or crisis situation. They need to know where everyone, every student is or where they were when last seen. Saving lives is the most important thing and knowing who is safe and who is missing is critical." Mr. Sierra further demonstrated the importance of forming community relationships and support during an in-service day activity. He planned and executed an evacuation drill involving the school staff, public organizations, and different resources in the community. "This practice experience made the possibility of an evacuation a reality for those involved. Now the policies, procedures, and expectations are known. The response from the community and parents was positive

and now we have those detailed layers of support written into our plan." The need to build relationships within the community, emergency support agencies and crisis management organizations was clearly established.

Preparedness and Ensuring School Safety

Research question three asked: "What are public school principals' perceptions of their anticipated response to school violence?" During the interview the principals were asked to describe any experience they had with school violence. They each recognized that the level of physical violence where someone aggressively comes into the building to harm students, like that at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO, Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA, and Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, CT, were not part of the experiences of many of the principals interviewed. The responses of the principals' described episodes with school violence and were clearly defined and categorized as Physical Violence or Threats of Violence.

Incidents involving Physical Violence were school violence events involving aggressive brutal physical encounters and intense situations including shootings. Two principals reported the experiences. Mrs. Whiskey discussed her incident:

Before the school day started, a phone call from a parent of a student in the

school reported that her child was shot. Knowing limited details about the

incident, Mrs. Whiskey immediately put the building on lockdown,

reducing the possibility that the violence could flow-over into school.

As more information became known, the police had the student and

captured the perpetrator. An early morning incident that began outside of

the building remained a police issue with no cross-over to the school. By

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mid-morning, the school resumed the daily school routine..

The immediate interventions and communication between school personnel and local law enforcement authorities during the incident resulted in the school resuming normal daily routines by mid-morning. The second reported incident occurred as a result of a violation of school safety protocol. Mrs. Tango reported that the incident occurred when students were not in the building. Even though the external doors were locked, an unsuspecting staff member provided the perpetrator access into the building. The gunman failed in his attempt to shoot an administrator, however in the fray, other staff members were seriously injured.

The other type of physical violence were a predictable array of student-on-student assaults. Mr. X-ray said, "When I've had fights, they've been doozies." He added:

> The incident centered on a fight, an assault on a student in a back stairwell that was hardly used. A student was attacked, knocked to the ground and was being kicked by a fellow student. Another student watching the incident, used his phone video to record the physical attack, shared it with other students, and "was kind enough to share it with us." If it's a crime outside of the school, it's a crime inside the school as well. The police were called.

Mr. Mike suggested that establishing procedures for response and recovery after an incident was needed to ensure that all involved were and would remain safe when the students returned to school.

The second category of violent incidents involved the threats of violence. Bomb threats, weapons brought to school, and cyber-bullying were listed as school violence experiences. All principals indicated similar response procedures for establishing security

and providing a safe place for the students during a bomb threat: investigate, assess the threat, evacuate if necessary, and call 9-1-1. Mr. Mike commented, "When students bring weapons to school, knives are the weapon of choice." He continued, "Every time that we do the investigation, it always seems to be something related to hunting or fishing and being in a rural area, however anytime you introduce a weapon onto school property, it is not a good thing."

Mr. Yankee relayed the following information regarding the threats made on social media and how they are creating a problem for schools. He further explained his concern regarding this issue:

"Our approach is to de-escalate the situation, isolate it, and then manage it from there. When "little Susie" is threatened on Facebook last night, whose issue is it? The cross-over into school the next day creates a problem that certainly needs attention even though formal discipline action may not be possible. So we take a proactive approach, try to de-escalate the kids and get to the root cause and keep it from becoming something more serious. Some parents get angry because they feel that we've done nothing."

Determined to be more of a safety issue than incidents of school violence, the threats of violence made toward school personnel by disgruntled or angry parents are concerning and noted by both secondary and elementary principals.

The amount of formal safety training experiences was evidenced in the principals' responses. Most expressed involvement in receiving a substantial amount of training through school district related trainings and other state and federal safety seminars and training workshops, although most of the principals interviewed said they had never

experienced a life-threatening school violence incident. The personal investment of time and effort in receiving up-to-date information and practices regarding potential threats to school safety and school violence prevention was evidenced in the information shared by these principals regarding preparedness. All of them stated that they understood the potential for threats and acts of school violence. These 14 principals acknowledged their roles in responding to the school violence situation when it occurs.

Preparedness and Intervention

Research question four asked: **"**How does the importance placed on crisis plan development and implementation by public school principals align with the principals' perceived leadership styles?" The third element of preparedness for school violence involves the reflection, review, and possible revision of the plan once the opportunity to test the protocols and procedures is exercised. To examine the importance placed on the development of an effective plan and the reflection on its operational success, the principals were asked to respond to the following question from the interview protocol, "When you hear about incidents of school violence in other schools, how does that affect your sense of preparedness for a similar incident?

With regard to the "incidents of violence in other schools," the most-often cited event by the principals was the 2012 tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. By their comments, the unfortunate reality that "It can happen here" was understood.   "Newtown was a shock." "It was unbelievable." "Newtown hit us hard." "That affected us a lot I think because it was an elementary school and because the victims were kids, babies; it made me feel like we weren't prepared at all." "A reality check, it can happen here." "A wake-up call for all." Using that event as a reference point, most

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principals reflected on their sense of preparedness for that moment when the realization hits that "it *is* happening." Many of the principals expressed a need to evaluate the actions taken by the assailant to perpetrate the crime, used this information to review their plans through a new lens, and discussed options or actions necessary to reassure their sense of preparedness to keep the students, staff and community safe. Mr. Sierra said they reviewed their plan and examined how they would respond to stop the act, slow it down, or prevent it. Mr. Zulu said the realization that "it could happen here" made him more invested in preparing for the possibility. He reviewed the plan, added options to the standard drills, and reviewed the importance of preparedness with the faculty. All of the principals said they reviewed their crisis management plans as a result of Sandy Hook conveying the inherent understanding that preparing for every possibility was impossible; however the need for a well-rehearsed response plan for this level of threat was now fundamental to their sense of preparedness.

Also considered was the extent to which a principal felt compelled to commit one's personal safety in order to ensure the safety of others was an issue. Dr. Romeo reflected on the young Sandy Hook teacher who told how she took the children into the bathroom, shut the door, and then quietly sang to them. "Like, that's not in her plan, but she did the right thing. She kept her kids calm and saved lives."

Additionally, Dr. Romeo received numerous work orders for door locks and new room keys immediately following the incident. Mrs. Whiskey said that the teachers evaluated the physical layout of their rooms and how they could better shelter-in-place to protect the children. Physical renovations or modifications to alter school buildings,

harden entry ways, windows, and doors, and upgrade security cameras and command post software were planned or in progress.

Two school districts added armed security officers in their buildings "because it gave a sense of improved security to the school community, parents, and towns." A few principals said their districts were evaluating new safety training programs for faculty and staff and others reported that the "active-shooter-in-the building" drill was planned or already completed. Mr. Zulu knowing that the activity was a drill and all actions were planned and harmless, still expressed the emotional reaction he had to hearing the gunshots in his school hallways. He said it helped him address his personal response to the impending crisis, realize that it can happen here, and become a better prepared school leader.

Common to many of these principals were their self-identified leadership characteristics, relationship building practices, and other administrative techniques used to create a safe school environment. Regarding leadership characteristics, almost all principals specifically identified being pro-active and visible in the building.

Leadership Characteristics

Mr. Victor offered the following regarding proactive response to the needs of the students and community. "Leadership is a process of acting prior to having a problem. It's better to be proactive than reactive. By establishing a school safety committee, the school and community are linked together with people invested in a safe school environment." Mr. Sierra said he participates in the EMS safety training programs and procedural workshops as a proactive effort to be prepared for the societal changes and resultant implications they may have on his ability to do his job. He then brings the information

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back to share with the staff so everyone has the latest information and will respond from the current practice. Dr. Quebec said, "You have to be proactive and learn about the new safety trends and procedures to anticipate the threats. Establishing a working relationship regarding school safety with students, staff, parents, the community, and especially law enforcement and first responders is critical. I live here and have that relationship, so when I call, they respond immediately." Dr. Uniform also highlighted her safety committee and excellent relationship that exists to support the safety of the students and school. "The officers come daily to check the doors and attempt to gain unauthorized access by tapping on the glass to get someone to respond. Every day is a test and we're ready."

The principal's visibility in the building was also noted as a leadership characteristic. Mr. Yankee described the effect of a principal's presence.

> "You never know what you stop. It's like when you're driving and you
> see a police cruiser, you take your foot off the gas pedal; it's the same thing
> with kids seeing the principal, they may put on the brakes. I am visible;
> everyone sees me."

Dr. Oscar said, "I'm visible in the building, I walk around. We operate on a see-something-say-something-to-the-office protocol."

Building Relationships

Mr. X-ray states that in addition to "visibility being critical, building relationships with students and community are equally essential. The teachers are leaders, too. They're also visible during class changes. Being seen talking to people, getting out and about, those personalities and relationships are important to security." Mr. Sierra said in his building "we see every student, every day, all day. We know everyone. There are no

strangers here." Mr. Yankee describes his parameters for building relationships within the
school community:

> "The relationship between the students and faculty is just different; you have to
> experience it, it's based in caring, caring about the individual, caring about the
> learning, and community. It's just that type of community. You set the culture
> and model it. Create the perception that school is safe because not just anyone can
> easily come in. Discipline is an opportunity to teach alternatives to behaviors, not
> just punish. Accountability is the key for any drill, any exercise, and every
> disaster."

Dr. November offered, "We have a close-knit staff. We build relationships with the
students through the co- and extra-curricular activities that connect the students to the
school." Mrs. Papa described her relationship building and communication technique:

> "I think first and foremost, we really do try to listen to what parents concerns are.
> So the first thing that I say when parents call up, "Please come on in. Let's sit
> down and talk." I always encourage them to come in and not talk about their
> concern on the phone. "I will make time for you. Let's discuss this." I have
> always had an open line of communication. I also have an open door policy;
> please come in."

Dr. Uniform reports on creating a culture that is responsive to needs. Looking out
for each other, keeping kids safe is a message received. "School climate has a lot to do
with it. Establish connections and relationships with all. Culture is the key.

Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Data and Analysis

Preparedness

The data provided by the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism identified eight statements requesting a "yes" or "no" response that resulted in the analyzed composite 87% preparedness score. The survey creator, Dr. Daniel Della-Giustina, West Virginia University, was seemingly prophetic in the pre-Columbine development of the questions for this survey. Preparedness as a practice is multi-faceted and through the qualitative discussion from the principals' interviews, a broader appreciation is developed for the yes or no items listed in the survey.

The first survey question from the subset of preparedness questions references terrorist acts and then defines them as carrying a weapon to school, bomb threats, taking hostages, etc. Each of the principals expressed knowledge of or personal experience with these acts. All school violence events to date are defined as criminal, not terrorism and perpetrators are adjudicated through the legal court system. The kinds of school violence incidents noted by the principals during the interviews (shootings, fights, assaults, weapons in schools, bullying) were similar to those listed in the question.

With regard to administrator safety training, the responses by the principals indicated that most are well-trained in the current practices and procedures for school violence events. For example, Mr. Sierra takes every opportunity to participate in EMS trainings and then shares this information with his staff. Mr. Zulu was assigned and trained as the district emergency plan coordinator which enhances his understanding of crisis intervention. Mr. Zulu also benefits from the school security officer who is a retired police officer. The knowledge and practical application of the officer's experience

provides to Mr. Zulu an operational perspective. Mrs. Papa also is invested in the training

for the district's new safety and crisis management plan. She emphasizes the importance

of preparedness by personally working with the staff and students so everyone is informed

to a level of appropriate response and performance.

All principals noted the annual practice of reviewing the crisis management plan

and all revisions, and responsibilities associated with their roles. The students are also

informed of the procedures and their responsibilities before a drill. Mr. Yankee had the

audio-visual department in his school make videos of the individual drill procedures and

then shows the specific drill responses to all students prior to the exercise.

Coded alarms as part of the building protocol emergency intervention strategy

were a mixed response from the principals.   For most of the principals, the safety plan

identified the usual coded responses (Code Red, Code Blue, Code Green, etc.) and

placards representing them were posted in rooms and around the buildings conveying the

code and structured appropriate response. Representing about 78% of the group, a higher

percentage than the survey response data for this question (66%), Mr. Victor, Dr. Quebec,

Dr. Oscar, Dr. November, Mrs. Whiskey, Mr. Sierra, Dr. Uniform, Mr. Zulu, Mr. Mike,

and Dr. Romeo all stated that they used coded alarms for emergency notification. Mr. X-

ray, Mr. Yankee, and Mrs. Papa said their transmissions over the public address system

regarding all emergency activity, were spoken in clear descriptive terms, identifying the

perpetrator, the activity, the progression of the threat in the building, and the actions

teachers needed to employ.

Every principal interviewed said their crisis management plans were always in

review. No longer is the crisis management plan a book on the shelf, but is now a

resource book for safety and survival. The opportunity to include a protocol for terrorism

was addressed. Mr. Victor, Dr. Uniform, and Dr. Quebec already have planned responses

outlined in their district's crisis management plans for "terrorism". The individual

commentaries and responses to Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy provided an opportunity

for all to review and revise procedures to assure their sense of preparedness to confront a

similar threat to students' safety.

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) provides on their

website abundant resources for school districts regarding safety information, programs,

policies, and the All-Hazards Emergency Plan, a framework for all school districts to use

in their standardized development of their district crisis management plans.

Effective Leadership

Research question five asked: "What link exists between public school principals'

descriptions of their perceived style of leadership and perceived effectiveness of

leadership during school crises?" During the personal interview sessions, the principals

were asked to respond to the following question from the interview protocol, "According

to your crisis intervention plan, if you are out of the building, how do you know the

faculty and staff will respond appropriately to an emergency?

The reactions to this question were as individual as the principals' leadership

styles. Effective leaders establish an attitude of trust through their leadership styles. The

responsibility of trust lies within the preparedness of the staff, their training, cross-training

in other's duties, and individual responsiveness to support, decide, or lead. Many

principals identified specific persons on the staff who would be responsible for the

decisions in the course of responding to the emergency situation. Others were reliant on

their staff's ability to make good decisions and step-up to become the leaders in the moment of need.

Mrs. Whiskey's response to the staff's follow-through in her absence from school said, "My staff is quick to jump-in. They are a cohesive staff and things will be taken care of, I am confident." Mr. Yankee's leadership style is evident in the shared decisions made with the guidance counselors concerning students' behaviors affecting the safety of the school. "I have extreme faith in the guidance counselors that they would make good decisions. The teachers are also the decision makers. They need to think about what to do to keep the students safe." Dr. Uniform, said, "I don't know if you ever truly can know without knowing the situation, however seeing them react in planned situations, I feel as confident as I possibly can that the staff will respond." Some principals have a defined hierarchy with experienced, trained replacements ready to step-in. Others leave the front office personnel with direction to transfer the crisis intervention and leadership responsibility to the district level.

Mrs. Papa, Mr. Yankee, and Mr. X-ray each frequently practice the drills hoping the repetition becomes procedural memory for everyone so that in a moment of fear and panic they respond appropriately to protect the students. Drills, according to Mr. Sierra, are only part of the response to a crisis. The staff and students rehearse procedures responsive to a pre-determined scenario. Then during the drill, Mr. Sierra will add variables to the scenario to encourage thinking about their reaction to a situation, because everyone will be different.

Also noted as effective leadership practices were the communication systems and methods to relay information to students and staff along with the response procedures.

Effective leadership and effective communication are symbiotic. Mrs. Papa noted that communicating with staff and getting input from them is important to determine areas of need or weaknesses in the safety plan or procedures. "Who knows better than the people working in the trenches" Mr. X-ray encouraged conversation by including safety as an agenda item for the monthly faculty meetings so they can discuss school safety issues and concerns. Mr. Mike said that communication from school that informs students and parents of the rules and expectations for behavior was great if followed by parents telling their kids why they shouldn't bring 'things' to school. By informing the followers of the primary mission, explaining the value of their contributions to that goal, and reflecting on progress made and recommendations for improvement to ensure success, trust and confidence in the leadership is improved.

Every crisis is different and requires different actions; everyone then becomes a leader. Dr. Uniform concluded, "It's a matter of the people involved and again I go back to the culture and the climate of the school; everyone is looking out for the students' safety and for one another." Acknowledging that nothing is ever 100 percent certain, the general consensus was that appropriate actions would be taken to ensure the safety of the students and staff.

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Summary of Findings

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Through the reporting of the data and analysis of the principals' responses from the study guided by the research questions, the emerging themes, building relationships, caring about students, staff, and school, and understanding the threat and the expectation for response, were able to be interconnected. Supported by the data from the study, following is a summary of the findings listed by research question:

Research Question 1: "What are public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles?

- Leadership styles are a reflection of a person's values and experiences.

- Leaders use more than one leadership style.

- Leaders care about students, staff, and school.

- Building relationships with students is important to the general welfare.

- Shared decision making benefits all involved in the organization.

- The public school principals' perceived leadership style was most like a transformational leadership style than transactional and laissez faire styles of leadership.

- The public school principals' perceived leadership style was more-like transactional leadership style than laissez faire.

- The public school principals' perceived leadership style was least like laissez faire leadership style.

- An effective leader establishes an attitude of trust and confidence with staff.

- A culture of caring for each other is important to the school welfare.

    Research Question 2: What relationship exists between public school principals' preparation for acts of violence in schools and each perceived style of leadership (laissez faire, transactional, transformational).

- Review of crisis management plans can be motivated by events elsewhere.

- Building relationships in the community and support organizations is important to school safety.

- School safety planning is always in progress.

- A high percentage of the principals' have knowledge of the plans and response protocols established to prepare for acts of school violence.

- All schools have a crisis management plan guiding the responses to various emergency situations.

- Administrators receive training on emergency procedures and response protocols.

- More principals use coded alarms to warn of emergencies.

- Students and staff members are informed of their responsibilities during a school emergency situation.

- Students and staff have the opportunity to practice their roles through emergency drills or exercises.

- More teachers need to be formally trained to observe students for specific behaviors that may lead to acts of school violence.

- Almost all review and revise crisis management plans to include potential threats of terrorism.

- No significant difference exists between the preparedness score and laissez faire leadership style.

- No significant difference exists between the preparedness score and the transactional leadership style.

- No significant difference exists between the preparedness score and the transformational leadership style.

- Collaboration with emergency response agencies is federally mandated.

- Review of the crisis management plan was at least an annual activity.

- Building relationships within the community are important.

- Safety committees represent the students and school community.

- Be proficient with training programs and procedures.

- In-service days are opportunities to practice drills and rehearse safety procedures.

Research Question 3: What are public school principals' perceptions of their anticipated response to school violence?

- Threats made on social media off campus can lead to an incident on campus.

- All threats are still threats.

- School violence was categorized as physical violence or threat of violence.

- All principals understood the potential threat of school violence.

- All principals understood the expectation to respond to all school violence.

- School leaders understand the need to respond to potential and tangible threats.

- Principal's presence can prevent potential problems.

- It [school violence] can happen here.

- Being visible as a principal is a leadership practice that has many benefits.

Research Question 4: How does the importance placed on crisis plan development and implementation by public school principals align with their self-identified perceived leadership styles?

- Incidents of violence were affected by the principal's consideration of personal safety.

- Being a school leader are both moral and ethical responsibilities.

- Violent school incidents, regardless of location, affect the general sense of preparedness for a similar incident.

- Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy affected the principal's sense of preparedness.

- Incidents like Newtown, CT, encourage efforts to renovate, physically alter, and harden school entrances, windows, and interior doors.

- Sometimes in a violent incident as Sandy Hook, school leaders pay the ultimate price in an effort to protect children from harm.

- Responsiveness to school concerns is a leadership practice.

Research Question 5: What link exists between public school principals' descriptions of their style of leadership and perceived effectiveness of leadership styles?

- The importance of preparedness for school violence must be communicated.

- The school leader's leadership style affects the climate and culture of the school.

- Communication to and among staff is essential to school safety.

Summary

The information presented in this chapter was collected as the result of the study of principals' perceived leadership styles and their preparedness for and response to school violence incidents and crises. Descriptive statistics, quantitative analysis and qualitative inquiry were used to examine the research questions which guided the study. Using a two-phase sequential mixed-methods study design, the quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed in two distinct phases using an online survey and interview protocol, respectively.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and an independent-samples t-test comprised of the Levene's test for equality of variances and the Equality of Means test to compare the preparedness score and each leadership style

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(laissez faire, transactional, transformational). A statistical significance was not found between the principals' perceived leadership styles and the preparedness score for school violence.

The qualitative data were compiled from personal interviews and provided descriptions of personal leadership styles, school violence experiences, planning and preparedness for threats of violence, and effective leadership. The findings and educational implications drawn with respect to school leadership, preparedness, and effective leadership were listed and will be summarized in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On a daily basis, school leaders must prepare for unpredictable and seemingly unavoidable events and through their leadership styles, be able to handle the human dimensions of a crisis. The first part of this chapter provides a review of the purpose and the study followed by a summary of the findings from the research. The second part will present a discussion based on the findings and the related literature. The third and final part offers recommendations for future research.

Review of the Purpose

School safety rests on the leadership of the school and the responsibility to keep children safe is inherent in the moral and ethical dimensions of the position. However, the tragic scenes of Columbine High School, Virginia Tech University and Sandy Hook Elementary School have forever become the game-changing events for school leaders required to establish a safe learning environment free from fear. "When a school is attacked, the illusion of safety disappears, and the intense feeling of failure to protect the children evokes strong emotional responses (Dorn & Dorn, 2011, p. 64).

On December 14, 2012, at Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newtown, CT, the heroes that day were all who faced a formidable challenge to protect children from harm. The school emergency plans were in place, the experienced faculty trained and duties assigned; however, no amount of planning could have prepared them for the effect of the tragedy which occurred. School leaders are confronted with the responsibility to prepare for unpredictable events, and through their leadership style, be responsive to the needs of the students, reactive to the moment, and confident that their judgment will ensure the

safety of everyone.

The purpose of this two-phase sequential mixed-methods study was to examine whether Southwestern Pennsylvania public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles relate to their preparedness for a school crisis and their effective implementation of the school's existing crisis management plan. Through the two-phase mixed methods study, this research examined the principals' leadership styles and the relation between the principals' perceived responses to school crises and crisis preparedness.

Review of the Study

From the southwestern region of Pennsylvania, with the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Appendix B), 220 elementary and secondary public school principals from 56 site-approved school districts were provided the opportunity to participate in the online survey. Following this, using a convenience and purposeful sampling procedure based on the number of volunteer respondents, classification of school setting, and school level, the qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The data, definitions, supporting graphs, and analysis of these data were provided in Chapter IV.

The quantitative data were collected using an on-line distribution of the Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey (Appendix D), comprised of four parts which included three independent surveys, The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X-short), the Evaluation Survey for School Violence, and a demographic questionnaire. The fourth part was a one-question invitation to the participants to agree or decline to accept the offer to volunteer for the qualitative personal interview.

The qualitative data were collected through a personal open-ended question interview protocol (Appendix E) with principals who accepted the invitation in the final question of the online survey. The volunteers represented eight counties. Fourteen principal interviewees who met the pre-established criteria were selected. A detailed description of this process was outlined in Chapter IV. The personal interviews were audio-recorded and conducted by the researcher in the principals' school offices on a one-to-one basis. The questions asked the principals about their perceptions of leadership style, the development, revision, and implementation of their school crisis intervention plan, their experience with incidents of school violence, their sense of preparedness for incidents of school violence and crises, and effectiveness of leadership during school crises. Data analysis of the principals' answers, supported by the NVivo® 10 software program, resulted in the identification of the emerging themes: building relationships, caring about students, staff and school, and understanding the threat of school violence and the expectation for response. The questions provided the framework needed to best appreciate the principals' perceptions, experiences, and personal investment in and commitment to the job of keeping children safe from the threats that could harm them.

Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings is structured by the research questions that guided the study. The platform for discussion will focus on the areas of leadership styles, preparedness, and effective leadership.

Leadership Styles

The first research question focused on the public school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles. In a rapidly changing world, a compelling need to meet the

educational challenges of the twenty-first century centers on the school leaders' individual

leadership styles and within that style, the ability to nurture leadership in others. The

styles of leadership are differentiated by decision making skills and the ability to empower

others to develop their individual talents and strengths. People-oriented leaders who

attend to the moral values of the group can foster an awareness of ethical concerns and

establish a culture of caring and compassion for the children they serve and for each other.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was chosen to assess school

leaders perceived leadership styles. The three contemporary leadership styles (laissez

faire, transactional, and transformational) were used to examine how frequently and to

what degree the principals engaged in specific leadership style behaviors toward their staff

members, as well as ratings of attributions. The findings from the survey reported the

public school principals' perceived leadership styles responses were least like a laissez

faire style of leadership, were more evenly distributed around the transactional leadership

style behaviors, and most like a transformational style of leadership. Additionally, the

leadership outcomes showed the principals' perceived ability to inspire others to excel, the

view of their interaction among the different levels within the organization, and the level

of camaraderie among the staff were all very positive. These findings support a trend

toward networking and interactive authority.

Additionally, the principals included in the qualitative portion of the study

provided an array of self-identified leadership styles that centered more on collaborative,

relationship-oriented styles of leadership. Although they each described their personal

style of leadership, they also identified experiences that demonstrated the incorporation of

other styles of leadership. To permit a sharing of ideas and participation in the final

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decision making with those affected by the decision, a sense of ownership was developed which benefitted the whole organization as was communicated by Mrs. Tango, Mrs. Papa, and Dr. Oscar.

Hoyle (2006, p. 595) stated, "Leadership style consists of a leader's general personality, demeanor, and communication patterns guiding others toward reaching organizational and personal goals." Dr. Uniform's comment to "nudge or nurture to get the staff where she wanted them to go" supported this idea. She added, "I think I'm able to manage and get the very best from people, and help them reach their potential, whether again it be teachers or kids or parents, whoever." Mr. Yankee also expressed his sincere belief that it was his duty to help his staff achieve their goals.

The expressed attitudes and behaviors of the principals were reflections of their personal values and experiences. Dr. Quebec's commitment to "create a culture where the students knew that the faculty and he cared about them, their education, and their success in life" was borne out of his personal high school experience of being bullied. The relationship building among students, staff, and community were common themes in the stories shared. Like Mr. Zulu commitment to building relationships with his staff, Mr. Mike and his concern for establishing the plans for recovery and students' return to school after an incident, and Mrs. Papa's school and community-based safety committees, many described their personal commitment to the welfare and safety of the students. As Mr. Sierra said, "There were no strangers in his school."

Mr. Yankee's described the climate of his school as "just different. The staff cared about the kids and the kids seem to care about the teachers. You can't describe it; you just have to experience it." Based on her own doctoral research and study, Dr. Uniform shared

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that "school leadership, the leadership style that you have, does have an impact on the whole preparedness for and hopefully, in minimizing the whole violence issue; however, I will never say, It won't happen here."   She continued saying,

The climate you establish and the connections the kids have with one another and with the adults that they're in contact with, have a major impact on what's going on in the school and the learning that's going on. I'm a strong advocate of respect and responsibility. I think the culture you establish and the climate that results from that culture makes a big difference on how things go."

An attitude of trust and confidence was established by Mrs. Tango's conclusion on leadership was that "when the staff believed your ability to lead was equal to the trust and confidence you had for them an attitude of respect was established." The feelings of trust, confidence, and respect for the faculty and staff were communicated through the expectations of performance and created a strong sense of camaraderie. The welfare of the schools was in the hands of those willing to lead with direction and purpose.

Phase One Quantitative

Preparedness

The second research question examined if relationships exist between public school principals' preparation for acts of violence in schools and each of three perceived styles of leadership (transformational, transactional, and laissez faire). Since Columbine, the approach to school safety dramatically changed with the expansion of formal safety training for school administrators, safety-plan development with local and county emergency response agencies, and the annual completion of state reports of school violence incidents. The Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism (E.S.S.T.) provided the

data to support the following findings for the preparedness score from the survey's subset of eight preparedness questions.

As mandated by federal law, all schools have a crisis management plan guiding the responses to various emergency situations. The procedure to review and revise the crisis management plan and the process to inform every one of their roles and responsibilities during a school emergency as well as practice the drills were common among the respondents to the survey.

The preparation and training of teachers to be observant of students with potential for specific behaviors that may lead to acts of school violence was acknowledged by half of the principals. A positive indication that schools were prepared for a school violence incident were supported by the data. The school leaders in this study have taken the issue of school safety seriously and responded to the legal and ethical challenges to prepare for and prevent the threats that may harm children.

To compare the preparedness score for school violence and each-of the leadership styles examined (laissez faire, transactional, or transformational) the independent-samples t-test was used. The analyzed data provided in Chapter IV showed that the significance p-value was greater than the .05 cut-off for each of the leadership styles. The findings suggested that no significant difference existed between the preparedness score and each of the three MLQ leadership styles examined (laissez faire, transactional, and transformational).

Preparedness Crisis Intervention Plans

The second research question explored the relationship between public school

principals' preparation for acts of violence in schools and perceived styles of leadership.

The principals were asked during the qualitative personal interview to describe how the

school crisis intervention plan was developed. With most crisis intervention plans

completed, the principals' responses focused primarily on their leadership roles during the

annual review, revision, and implementation of the plan to meet the current needs of the

students, schools, and new legal requirement. Meetings with district-level and school-

based safety committees to review the plans, discuss school safety issues, participate in

amending procedures, or including new protocols were a common practice.

Since the 1997 Safe Schools Act, schools were mandated to work with the local

law enforcement and support agencies, creating Memoranda of Understanding in the event

that their services were needed. The need to establish well-defined, working relationships

between schools and community organizations was important to school safety. Currently,

collaboration with the local law, 9-1-1 emergency response agencies, and with members

of the school community was a common and practiced alliance. Dr. Uniform stated,

> "Now we engage the local police, parents, kids, teachers, and administrators
>
> as members of the safety committee for each of the schools. We meet yearly
>
> to discuss issues of concern, changes and modifications to the plan. The police
>
> departments are very helpful in designing those."

In his community, Mr. Yankee, a volunteer firefighter, personally understood the

importance of the inter-operability among the first responders and transfer of

responsibility during an event.   The need to be proficient with training and drills is important to school safety, as well. He continued,

> "Accountability is an essential component of all intervention strategies,"
> Knowing where the students are ensures their safety. The faculty needs
> to know from memory some of the first actions to take during a drill
> because in a crisis we don't have time to read. Then the reunification part
> is also critical. If we evacuate, do we know who went where and with whom
> did they go?"

Additionally, proficiency training was evidenced by Mr. Sierra when he used an in-service day to practice an evacuation drill with faculty and staff following the established evacuation drill procedures. The purpose was to evaluate the weak points or find the gaps. Working with the community real time was beneficial because the experience provided the opportunity to work the plan and the details for all parties.

> "This practice experience made the possibility of an evacuation a reality for those
> involved. Now the policies, procedures, and expectations are known. The
> response from the community and parents was positive and now we have those
> detailed layers of support written into our plan. The importance of forming
> community relationships and support during an in-service day activity established
> the connections needed so that when we do need to evacuate or use their
> community buildings it's a path we've already travelled. The evacuation drill was
> planned and executed involving the school staff, public organizations, and
> different resources in the community. It was a real learning experience for
> everybody."

Expressing a personal responsibility on the issue of school safety and that building relationships within the community were also important parts of crisis planning. Margaret Spelling, Secretary of Education said, "Schools and districts need to be ready to handle crises, large and small, to keep our children and staff out of harm's way… The time to plan is now" (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, pp. 1-2).

Preparedness Ensuring School Safety

Research question three examined the principals' perceptions of their anticipated response to school violence. By acknowledging the potential for school violence, school leaders develop intervention strategies and response protocols to manage the threats and crises when they occur (McAdams & Foster, 2008; Trump, 2010).

Bullying and cyber bullying are now commonplace on and off campus. As previously described by Mr. Yankee in Chapter IV, the problem of bullying occurring now with social media and cell-phone texting and sexting, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, has a high probability to cross-over from an off campus to on campus event. Unless someone tells an adult, the problem will get worse.

Mrs. Whiskey reported an incident involving a shooting of a student outside of the campus prior to the beginning of the school day which resulted in a school lockdown. The support rendered by the local law enforcement resolved the situation by mid-morning and returned the daily school routine back to normal.

Mr. X-ray discussed the usual list of violent actions that include fights between students, bomb threats phoned-in or scrawled on the bathroom walls, bullying, and acts of cyber bullying. "If it's physical then it's usually a fight. The threats get a bit more intense and can be very harmful if not stopped." Mr. Mike reportedly asked a student whose

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behavior had increasingly become more inappropriate, "Would you do that in front of your parent?" *"In loco parentis;* I look at discipline as an opportunity to teach and potentially change the thinking of the students…to think before they act." Dr. November also offered an opinion on responsiveness to discipline and the need for consistency.

"Be responsive to potential problems and rule violations. This sends a message to the students that there are rules to follow, another message to the teachers that they are supported, and the message to the parents is that things are handled. Be consistent. I do not pick and choose who I send to the magistrate. There are rules to follow. If you are fighting, you are charged. If you bring a knife to school, I follow protocol and the school board decides intent. Have a set of rules, be responsive to violators, and be consistent with discipline."

All principals in this era of youth violence understood the potential threat of school violence. Each principal in the interview group acknowledged the likelihood for violence in their schools and the preparation efforts, plans, protocols created to prevent, prepared, respond, and recover from it. All principals acknowledged the expectation for them to respond to all potential and tangible threats.

"The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States," a relevant discovery revealed that incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely sudden or impulsive acts. Students perpetrating deeds of violence in school carefully select their targets, plan the details of their actions, and then may share the plan with others while the intended victims are unaware of the impending threats. Mrs. Whiskey said that "Everyone has a role and

responsibility in safety, from the vigilant parents that talk to the school and the vigilant students that talk to their parents and the school. We practice and make it important."

Being visible as a principal is a leadership practice that has many benefits. Whether it is the principal, teacher, or security officer, the presence of an adult can have a positive effect on school safety. Just as Mr. Yankee suggested with his example of the driving experience and the police cruiser on the side of the road, the immediate response is to take your foot off the gas pedal. The same is true with students and an adult presence, especially a figure of authority. "The kids know when they see me in the hallways what the expectations are for their behavior. I also don't hesitate to go into classrooms and have a little chat with them about girls who are mean to one another," added Dr. Uniform. Mrs. Tango said that "With the new security officers roaming the building, we'll never know what was stopped."

Preparedness and Intervention

Research question four explored how the importance placed on crisis plan development and implementation by public school principals aligned with perceived leadership styles. The principals were asked to respond to the following interview question, "When you hear about incidents of school violence in other schools, how does that affect your sense of preparedness for an incident in your school?"

Incidents of violence were affected by the principals' consideration of personal safety. The extent to which a principal felt compelled to commit one's personal safety in order to ensure the safety of others was an issue, a moral issue. School leaders are challenged daily to connect leadership theory and practice to the critical social issues in

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order to provide a safe learning environment for all children (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Starratt, 2004). With regard to moral leadership:

> Educational leaders must be morally responsible, not only in preventing and alleviating harm but also in a proactive sense, of who the leader is, what the leader is responsible as, whom the leader is responsible to, and what the leader is responsible for. (Starratt, 2004, p. 49)

The tragic loss of innocent lives was a game changer for schools and communities across the nation especially since Sandy Hook was an elementary school and 20 children were the targeted victims. Obviously shaken by the event, the responses by the principals were heartfelt and thoughtful when discussing the response of Principal Dawn Hochsprung and the assailant at Sandy Hook Elementary. Mrs. Whiskey said she didn't know if she would have responded and put her own life in jeopardy. "I have children, too. Does this job require me to leave my children motherless? I hope I never have to make that decision, because I'm not sure how I would respond." Being a school leader are both moral and ethical responsibilities. Mrs. Tango was asked by the school board members what she would have done if she had a shooter in the school like at Sandy Hook. She said,

> "That's a hard question. If that happened to me, I would do the best I could. It's terrible that you have to make those kinds of choices, but those are real. I know I couldn't sit in my office and do nothing. If one child was hurt or worse while I sat protected in my office, I could never live with that."

"Value judgments are moral judgments and should be at the heart of the school administrator's job" (Gregory, 2010, p. 2). The belief that the school leader is committed

to the welfare of students and has the responsibility to provide a safe school environment (Trump, 2011) is the basis for ensuring the security of students and schools.

Violent school incidents, regardless of location, affect the general sense of preparedness for a similar incident. When a school is attacked, the illusion of safety disappears, the anticipated number of victims is maximized, and the intense feeling of failure to protect the children among the adults may evoke strong emotional responses (Dorn & Dorn, 2007). The Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy affected the principals' sense of preparedness.

The research study by Ferguson, Coulson, and Barnett (2011, pp. 11-12), attempted to identify potential assailants and predictive elements to prevent school violence acts. Conclusions from the study, "Psychological Profiles of School Shooters: Positive Directions and One Big Wrong Turn", mirror the findings of the 2002 U.S. Secret Service study. The results reveal that school violence is most likely perpetrated by people who have a history of antisocial personality traits, suffer from undiagnosed mental health problems, have a history of attempted suicide or a documented history of depression, and tend to obsess about individuals or society-at-large who have wronged, bullied or persecuted them.

The ability to manage the potential threats of school violence is contingent upon the principals' ability to lead during a school crisis. School leaders establish a proactive defensive attitude against the potential threats that may harm school children by developing and implementing a school-wide crisis intervention plan in cooperation with the local community emergency management and first responders (Burke, 2008; Thomas, 2002; Trump, 2011).

Effective Leadership

The response to research question five included a final interview question which asked, "According to your crisis management plan, if you are out of the building, how do you know the faculty and staff will respond appropriately to an emergency?"

The importance of preparedness for school violence must be communicated. To ensure confidence in the implementation of the crisis emergency plan when the principal is out of the building, an effective method of crisis plan implementation is the development of procedures where students and staff respond without hesitation, all acting with the sole purpose to protect the students, keeping them safe, and returning them to their homes at the end of the day.

The school leader's leadership style affects the climate and culture of the school. Throughout the interviews, a consistent theme among all of the respondents to the interview question was their statement of trust, faith, and confidence in the school's staff to follow through with the established safety protocols and decision making to protect children from harm. Dr. Oscar said, "I trust my people. I have confidence that when I am not here … big instances will be handled by the people that are here and to the best of their ability. I guess that leads back to my leadership style."

Communication to and among staff is essential to school safety. Also through their consistent comments of caring, compassion, and common practice to create a culture where safety is a dominant theme, their actions as school leaders, result in a climate where respect for their authority and leadership style exists.

Conclusions

Schools are safe places. The principals' stated sense of purpose to ensure the safety of children at each school, school level, and school setting was established through their professional and personal commitment to provide a safe learning environment free from fear.

Objective studies have shown repeatedly that schools are safe places,

and the level of violence in schools is actually much lower than suggested

by both news reporters and academic researchers, both of whom have

exaggerated the severity and pervasiveness of the problem. (Cornell, 2006, p. viii)

As principals, the weight of accountability to meet the school, district, and state's mandates, to provide opportunities for the students' social and physical growth, and to always be held responsible for the health and welfare of everyone in the school are expectations these principals have wholly embraced. Although many stated having never personally experienced a life-threatening act of school violence, each of these principals understood the potential for school violence. They also understood their role to respond to any incident whenever it occurred, knowing the unfortunate reality that may await them, referencing the 2012 tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT.

However, through the framework of the interview protocol and the research questions, the findings offered some additional insights and conclusions. Every principal interviewed provided thoughtful answers and conveyed an exceptional awareness and appreciation of preparedness for school violence. They employed extraordinary methods and techniques to impress upon the staff and students that safety was important. The statement of trust, faith, and confidence in their staffs and faculty to follow through with

the established safety protocols and decision making to protect children from harm was all-inclusive. The personal interviews revealed an expanded set of self-described leadership styles to the three leadership styles examined in the study. The actions and behaviors described by the principals as they performed their duties were not exclusive to one leadership style.

Among the principals who have other than school-based professional experience, military service, firefighter experience, or other connections to business or industry, it was noted by the researcher that these principals also expressed an exceptional appreciation, understanding, and awareness for crisis intervention, prevention, and implementation. Through the drills that are conducted to encourage thinking and appropriate responses to unstated emergency conditions, their trained awareness that school violence events are thoughtful and well-planned actions, and the understanding that school leaders are the first responders, are ideas principals need to embrace.

The final conclusion was based on the demographic questionnaire regarding the self-reported amount of formal safety-training received. Sixty-six percent of the survey respondents reported a moderate to substantial amount of training. The conclusion gained from this fact is that the impact Newtown, CT, had on the school districts' mandated reviews of school safety plans, safety briefings, attendance at additional safety trainings, the new structural fortification and other modifications to school buildings, and general reaction to the event may have engaged some who might otherwise not have willingly participated, skewing the numbers. That is to say, if this survey had been administered prior to the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy, the number of respondents

identifying substantial and moderate amounts of formal safety-training would likely be fewer.

Some perceive that managing a crisis and providing leadership in a crisis are the same; they are not. The principal's ability to provide a safe learning environment is challenged by the threats from the enemies within and those who are waiting at the gate. Having an awareness of the indicators of violence and aggression and the ability to assess the potential for school violence are imperative skills the school principal needs. The resources to inform school leaders' knowledge and understanding of the potential threats and accommodate the training and skill development needed to thwart aggressive actions are available. Leadership, preparedness, and prevention are essential to purposeful interventions. As evidenced in the breaking-news reports and the communities devastated by tragic school events, the threat to harm children is real. The responsible, skilled professional leadership in our schools is, and always will be, the first level of defense against any threat that has the potential to harm school children.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

1. The leadership styles examined in this research found no statistical significance to the preparedness score for incidents of school violence. Additional research is recommended with respect to leadership style and preparedness factors for incidents of school violence. What leadership style qualities or practices are more conducive to preparing for school violence?

2. The research could be replicated on a larger scale and include all certified building administrators to encourage a larger response to the survey and a broader

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examination of perceived leadership styles and preparedness for incidents of school violence.

3. With regard to the reason why the null hypothesis was not rejected, a reflection regarding the process, instrument, and result pertinent to this part of the study allows thoughtful consideration regarding the contributory factors that may have created the "no statistical significance" between the preparedness score and each of the three leadership styles. Following are offered as points of discovery:

    o   The Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism provided eight questions that were used to determine the preparedness score. The SPSS analyzed data of this score resulted in an 87% score indicating that the principals who participated were positive in their responses to the eight questions.

    o   In reviewing the demographic survey and the question regarding the self-identified amount of formal training for safety, 44% of the same principals' sample identified their training to be adequate (21%) or very little (13%). The quandary regarding those who are administrators and identifying their experience with safety training to be 'very little' is interesting. Knowing the ethical implications, how is it possible that principals have not had at least an 'adequate' level of training?

    o   Another point is that the instrument, the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism had a Cronbach's Alpha value for reliability below the .7 acceptable cut-off value for this study. The reliability data from the original study were not available for comparison. Perhaps another instrument would offer more reliable statistics to use in the data analysis.

o Also with regard to the instrument, the forced response of either "yes" or "no" may have contributed to the higher preparedness score. If a third option of "Don't know" would be offered, perhaps the preparedness score would be different.

o The possibility that with the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy and the immediate reaction of many school systems nationwide to offer safety trainings, perhaps some administrators who would not "normally" attend such trainings were encouraged to do so. The possibility suggests that they were mandated to attend and as a result, had information not usually found in their professional development checklist.

For these reasons, the suggestion for further study with regard to the topic of leadership style and preparedness may be warranted.

4. Understanding the threat to the safety and welfare of students, staff, and community is a need for school leaders to embrace. The unfortunate reality that school children were the target and victims of aberrant thought and behaviors is not an isolated incident. The leadership of a school has a responsibility to protect and defend the lives of those in the building. The opportunity to be trained, to be aware of the threats, and to understand the value of a well-rehearsed crisis intervention plan is a skill-set for all administrators. The development of and a requirement for a safety preparedness course for principal preparation programs is suggested. The areas to be considered may include the following elements: the design of a school safety plan, the creation of school safety committees that include the emergency response agencies, school staff, and community members,

the involvement of emergency response agencies in the planning and implementation of disaster drills, the exploration of current technology available to school districts to provide cameras with accessibility internally as well as with the capability to establish external command posts in the event of an evacuation or worse, and the recovery process to facilitate a return to normal functioning after a traumatic event, a necessary component usually lacking in crisis intervention planning.

5. Attention needs to be given to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) All-Hazards Crisis Plan's Prepare, Prevent, Respond, and Recovery program. Research and information on the methods for assisting the recovery after an incident of school violence or natural disaster emergency is needed. Presently school principals' reliance on the lessons learned from others' tragic events and the professional experiences and recommendations of first responders are the primary resources available to develop response and recovery plans facilitating a return to the "new-normal" daily school routine. In an attempt to inform and educate the unfortunate human side of a tragedy, school leaders would benefit from discussing studies like the research conducted by Linzer, Sweifach, & LaPorte (2008) regarding the effect of acts of international terrorism on social service agency personnel. The findings reported indicated that when a disaster occurs, feelings of doubt and ethical conflicts occur as a result of the decisions made during the triage process, despite that the decision was correct. A conclusion was that ethical uncertainty in decision making should be expected during disaster recovery.

6. The study could be expanded to include the demographic information as comparative factors to the leadership styles. This information was available and could have provided additional insights and connections for this research and analysis.

Summary

This mixed-methods study was conducted to examine whether school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles related to their preparedness for incidents of school violence and effective implementation of their school's existing crisis intervention plan. Additional research is needed as a result of the findings of this study. School violence is an unfortunate reality in our schools. The likelihood that incidents of violence will continue requires school leadership who have an awareness of the indicators of violence, the skills necessary to assess the potential for school violence, and the ability to develop, practice, and implement crisis intervention plans. Leaders reflect their values in their actions and the welfare of the schools is in the hands of those willing to lead with direction and purpose.

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies in Education
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570 S. Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087
724-357-2400
Internet: http://www.iup.edu

February 12, 2013

Dear (insert name of superintendent):

I am a student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania pursuing a Doctor of Education degree through the Curriculum and Instructional Program in the Department of Professional Studies in Education. I am writing to ask permission to invite the principals in your district to participate in my dissertation study entitled, *A Mixed-Methods Study: Principals' Perceived Leadership Styles and Ability to Lead during a School Violence Crisis*. The research study will examine whether school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles relate to their anticipated responses to a school crisis and their knowledge of the school's existing crisis management plan.

This research is significant because responsible, skilled, professional leadership in our schools is, and always will be, the first level of defense against any threat that has the potential to harm school children. By examining principals' perceived leadership styles, this study will promote a greater understanding of the relationship between principals' responses to school crises and crisis preparedness. Having worked eleven years as a principal in public schools, I have respect for all participants' time and work demands. In conducting this research, I will not interfere with the duties of your principals in the district, nor will I interrupt the work of other district employees.

For this study to begin, site approval is required for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. With your approval to conduct this mixed-methods study, I will contact the building principals via email to invite them to participate in this study by individually responding on-line to a brief demographic questionnaire followed by two quantitative surveys. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire pertains to perceived leadership styles and the Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism relates to the participants' knowledge of procedures in place for acts of terrorism and violence. The total time commitment for participants to complete these

surveys is approximately 20 minutes.

In addition, any principal who begins the on-line survey, and then decides to no longer participate in this study may easily withdraw by notifying me via the contact information provided or by simply closing the browser. To meet the qualitative requirement of the mixed-methods study and to gain further understanding of the research problem, the opportunity of a personal interview will be offered to the principals, in which they may or may not choose to participate.

Please be assured, all information provided (including the names and responses of participating principals, schools, district, and county) will be held in the strictest of confidence. All findings will be reported as aggregated data or with the use of pseudonyms.

To give site approval for this study, please reply to me by email at j.l.henderson@iup.edu. When the IRB gives approval for this research study, I will notify you and request that you inform your principals of your approval for them to participate in the study. Upon completion, the findings of this study will be made available to you.

For your information and review, please click on the following link to take you to sample questions from the surveys that will be used to obtain the data for my dissertation. If additional details are needed, please allow me the opportunity to discuss all procedures fully with you.

Your Survey Link: https://iup.qualtrics.com/

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Primary Researcher: **Faculty Sponsor:**

Joyce H. Henderson, Doctoral Candidate   Dr. Valeri R. Helterbran, Professor
Curriculum and Instruction Doctoral Program   Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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May 28, 2013

Joyce Herod Henderson
332 Baileys Road
Bolivar, PA 15923

Dear Ms. Henderson:

Your proposed research project, "A Mixed Methods Study: Principals' Perceived Leadership Styles and Ability to Lead During A School Violence Crisis," (Log No. 13-127) has been reviewed by the IRB and is approved as an expedited review for the period of May 28, 2013 to May 28, 2014.

It is also important for you to note that IUP adheres strictly to Federal Policy that requires you to notify the IRB promptly regarding:

1. any additions or changes in procedures you might wish for your study (additions or changes must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented),
2. any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects, and
3. any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in (2).

Should you need to continue your research beyond May 28, 2014 you will need to file additional information for continuing review. Please contact the IRB office at (724) 357-7730 or come to Room 113, Stright Hall for further information.

Although your human subjects review process is complete, the School of Graduate Studies and Research requires submission and approval of a Research Topic Approval Form (RTAF) before you can begin your research. If you have not yet submitted your RTAF, the form can be found at http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=91683 .

This letter indicates the IRB's approval of your protocol. IRB approval does not supersede or obviate compliance with any other University policies, including, but not limited to, policies regarding program enrollment, topic approval, and conduct of university-affiliated activities.

I wish you success as you pursue this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

John A. Mills, Ph.D., ABPP
Chairperson, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Professor of Psychology

JAM:jeb

Cc: Dr. Valeri Helterbran, Dissertation Advisor
        Ms. Brenda Boal, Secretary

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies in Education   724-357-2400
Davis Hall, Room 303   Internet: http://www.iup.edu
570 S. Eleventh Street
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June 4, 2013

Dear (Insert principal's name here):

My name is Joyce Henderson and I am a doctoral student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a research study entitled, "A Mixed Methods Study: Principals' Perceived Leadership Styles and Ability to Lead during a School Violence Crisis*."*

With school safety as an ever-present issue for school leaders, the study will examine school principals' perceptions of their leadership styles and the relationship to school violence and crisis preparedness. This research is significant because responsible, skilled, professional leadership in our schools is, and always will be, the first level of defense against any threat that has the potential to harm school children.

With the approval of your superintendent, I am inviting you to participate in the study. Having worked over eleven years as a principal, I respect your time and understand the work demands of your position. This research will be conducted with principals on a strictly voluntary basis.

My passion centers on the challenge of keeping children safe, a responsibility primarily assumed by the leadership of the school. I am asking you to contribute your perceptions of leadership and knowledge about crisis preparedness to the study. All personal information and responses will be treated with anonymity and held in strict confidence.

If you decide to participate, the quantitative component of this mixed-methods study will be accomplished by clicking on the embedded link at the end of this letter. The link will take you to an online survey that consists of four parts and takes about 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

1. The first part is the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)* comprised of forty-five Likert-style descriptive statements about leadership.

2. The second part is The Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism survey presented as twenty-five "YES" or "NO" questions about school crisis plans, policies, and procedures.
3. The third part will ask five brief demographic questions about you, your leadership experience, and your school.

However, you are free to choose to not participate, or if you begin the study, you may choose to withdraw anytime by notifying me or closing the browser. There are no penalties or known risks associated with this study.

Additionally, to gain further understanding of the research problem and meet the qualitative component of the mixed-methods study, the opportunity to participate in a personal interview will be offered in part four at the end of the survey. Your choice to voluntarily participate or not in this component of the study can be easily accommodated with an "Accept" or "Decline" response. If you "Accept" the invitation to participate in the personal interview, as you exit the survey, a link will take you to a page so that your contact information can be provided, subsequently giving the researcher consent to contact you to schedule the interview. With your consent, the personal interview will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon day, time, and location that are convenient for you and audio-recorded to assure accuracy of data transcription.

If you decide not to participate in the personal interview, simply follow the prompts to exit the survey. Your completed on-line survey responses will be included in the data. If you choose to volunteer for the interview and then decide to withdraw, you may do so by contacting the researcher by personal communication, email message, or by simply stating to the researcher at any time, for any reason that you want to withdraw from the interview without consequence. All information will be held in confidence by the researcher and destroyed in compliance with federal guidelines.

Please be assured, all information provided including your name and responses, your school, school district and any other identifying facts will be held in the strictest of confidence. All responses will be examined only by the researcher for patterns, not individual responses, and reported with the use of pseudonyms. The information provided may be published in educational publications or presented at professional conferences.

By taking time to participate in this survey and contribute your perception of leadership and knowledge about school crisis preparedness, new information can be added to the education field and provide opportunities for future research in the areas of school safety and leadership.

Statement of Informed Consent: "**By clicking on the embedded link below to begin the survey, you are expressing your willingness to participate in the study.**" If additional details are needed, please allow me the opportunity to discuss all procedures fully with you.

To begin the research study survey, please click on the following link:
    https://iup.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cRYpk0sdDktOqI5

Respectfully yours,

Primary Researcher: Faculty Sponsor:
Joyce Herod Henderson, Doctoral Candidate   Dr. Valeri R. Helterbran, Professor
Indiana University of Pennsylvania   Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Professional Studies in Education   Professional Studies in Education
303 Davis Hall   323 Davis Hall
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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).

APPENDIX D
Principals' Leadership and School Violence Survey

Part I: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Overview

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is the first of three surveys to complete. The MLQ measures a broad range of leadership types from passive leaders, to leaders who give contingent rewards to followers, to leaders who transform their followers into becoming leaders themselves.

Provided for your review are three of the 45 Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Likert-style statements. This sample is limited to three statements due to the copyright requirements and as directed by Mind Garden, Inc.

_____

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Part I (Sample)

Questionnaire Instructions:

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word "others" may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of the individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

Judge how each statement fits you.	0	1	2	3	4
I talk optimistically about the future.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I spend time teaching and coaching.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I avoid making decisions.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Part II: Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism

The *Evaluation Survey for School Terrorism* is presented as twenty-five "Yes" or "No" questions developed to determine whether schools have policies, plans, and procedures in place to respond to incidents of violence and terrorism.

Provided for your review are the eight preparedness "Yes" or "No" questions This sample is limited due to the copyright requirements and as directed by American Society of Safety Engineers.

Preparedness Questions	YES	NO
• Plan includes provision for acts of terrorism. Terrorist acts could be carrying weapons in the school, comb threats, kidnapping, taking hostages, or other threats of violence.		
• Administrators are trained in emergency procedures.		
• Students are informed of their roles during an emergency.		
• Teachers are informed of their roles during an emergency.		
• Teachers are trained to observe and assess behaviors.		
• Preparedness drills for school violence acts are conducted.		
• Coded alarms are in place for warnings.		
• Review or revision of plan to included response protocols for violent acts is anticipated.		

From Della-Giustina, D. E., Kerr, S. E., & Georgevich, D. L. (2000). Terrorism and violence in our schools. *Professional Safety, 45*(3), 16-21. Reprinted with the permission of the American Society of Safety Engineers, publisher of *Professional Safety*

Part III: Demographic Data Questionnaire

Please answer the following five questions about you, your professional experience, and your school.

1. **What is your gender?**

   ( ) **Male**   ( ) **Female**

2. **Including this year, how many years of administrative experience do you have?**

   ( ) **1 to 2 years**   ( ) **3 to 5 years**   ( ) **6 to 9 years**

   ( ) **10 to 15 years**   ( ) **16 or more years**

3. **With regard to Crisis Management Plan development, what amount of formal training have you had during your administrative experience?**

   ( ) **Substantial**: Attended multiple-day training sessions that covered numerous topics with local emergency personnel and first responders. Attended training sessions that demonstrated writing the Crisis Emergency Plan. Trained how to train others in crisis management plan development. Have had the opportunity to reflect on and revise the school district plan based on follow-up meetings with first responders and local emergency service personnel. Certified in first aid and the use of the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). Participated in School Shooter training.

   ( ) **Moderate**: Attended multiple-day training sessions that included the development and writing of the Crisis Management Plan, table-top exercises with the district emergency team members, local emergency personnel, and first-responders, and training in first aid and the use of the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).

   ( ) **Adequate**: Attended the annual Intermediate Unit or Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) crisis management training for one day with the district's emergency team. Received instruction on developing writing and revising an All-Hazards-type crisis management plan.

( ) Very Little: Attended the Intermediate Unit or PaTTAN crisis management training for less than .5 day (4 hours). Read information in educational journals or books regarding crisis plans and how to write and review current safety protocols.

( ) None: No formal training experiences.

4. **In what school level(s) are you currently employed? Identify all that apply.**

   ( )   High School / Secondary Intermediate School

   ( )   Junior High School / Middle School

   ( )   Elementary School/Elementary Intermediate School/Primary School/
          Pre-School

5. **How would you classify your school setting? (National Center of Education Statistics, 2006)**

   ( ) City or Urban: *Defined as a location inside an urbanized area <u>and</u> inside a principal city with a population of 100,000 to 250,000 or more*

   ( ) Suburban: *Defined as a location <u>outside a principal city</u> and inside an urbanized area with a population of 25,000 to 250,000*

   ( ) Town or Rural: *Defined as a location in an area 5 to 35 miles from an urbanized area with a population of less than 25,000*

APPENDIX E

Principals' Personal Interview Protocol

Principals' Leadership and School Violence Interview

QUESTIONS and follow-up questions

1. Introduction: Please discuss your background and experience as a principal.

2. Describe your style of leadership. (RQ1)

3. Describe how your school crisis management plan was developed. (RQ2)
    o   What safety procedures are in place to handle threats or acts of violence?
    o   Describe how your faculty and staff are informed of their roles during an emergency?

4. Describe any experience(s) you have had with school violence. (RQ3)
    o   If none, why do you think you have not had incidents of violence in your school?
    o   How does a principal's leadership ensure school safety?

5. When you hear about incidents of school violence in other schools, how does that affect your sense of preparedness for a similar incident? (RQ4)

6. According to your Crisis Management Plan, if you are out of the building, how do you know the faculty and staff will respond appropriately to an emergency? (RQ5)

7. Final Words: Is there anything else you would like to add to this discussion related to school leadership and crisis preparedness?

APPENDIX F
Interview Informed Consent Letter and Form

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies in Education
Davis Hall, Room 303
570 S. Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087
724-357-2400
Internet: http://www.iup.edu

Thank you for volunteering to participate in the personal interview, the qualitative

portion of the mixed-methods research study, "A Mixed Methods Study: Principals'

Perceived Leadership Styles and Ability to Lead during a School Violence Crisis." By

examining principals' perceived leadership styles, the relationship between school

violence and crisis preparedness will encourage further research in the areas of leadership

and school safety.

The personal interview is a series of open-ended questions to further study your

perception of leadership, experiences with school violence, the potential threat of

aggression, and anticipated responses to violence. Your responses will help explore the

perceptions of leadership and how it relates to the practices and procedures established to

create a safe learning environment in order to protect students and staff from acts of

violence. The information provided may be published in educational publications or

presented at professional conferences.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw

at any time, for any reason without penalty by notifying the researcher at the contact

information below or, if the interview is underway, simply saying that you wish to end the

interview session. There are no known risks associated with participating in this

interview. All personal and professional information will be held in the strictest

confidence and the information provided will not be shared with anyone. All responses

will be examined only by the researcher for patterns and reported with the use of

pseudonyms. The interview will be audio-recorded for the purpose of transcription,

coding, and member checking. An estimated time of an hour will be needed to complete

the interview. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about the study and

allow me the opportunity to discuss any concerns with you.

Please sign the informed consent form with full knowledge and understanding of

the purpose and procedures for this interview. A copy of the consent form is provided to

you for your records. Thank you for your time and participation.

Primary Researcher: **Faculty Sponsor:**

Joyce H. Henderson, Doctoral Candidate   Dr. Valeri R. Helterbran, Professor
303 Davis Hall   323 Davis Hall
Indiana University of Pennsylvania   Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15705   Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705
724-357-2400   724-357-2400
j.l.henderson@iup.edu   vhelter@iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
(Phone: 724-357-7730).

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies in Education
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Voluntary Informed Consent Form
Personal Interview

I have read and understand the information provided. I consent to volunteer to be a participant in the research study interview. I understand that my identity and responses will be completely confidential. A pseudonym will be used for the narrative of the interview. I am aware that the information provided may be published in educational publications or presented at professional conferences. I realize that I have the right to withdraw at any time, for any reason without penalty by simply saying that I wish to end the interview session, or if after the interview, by notifying the researcher at the contact information below. The personal information I provide will enable the researcher to contact me to arrange a date and time to review the interview transcript for accuracy and interpretation.   I received a copy of the Informed Consent Form for my records.

_____

Name of Participant (Please Print)

_____

Signature   Date

_____

Phone number   Email address

I certify that I have explained to the above-named interview participant the purpose, procedures, and assurances for identity protection and response confidentiality related to this study.

_____   _____

Date   Researcher's Signature