THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINING AND EXECUTIVE

CHARTER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

A Doctoral Dissertation Research

Submitted to the
Faculty of Argosy University, Washington DC Campus
College of Business

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

by

Casandra Banks Levine

August 2013

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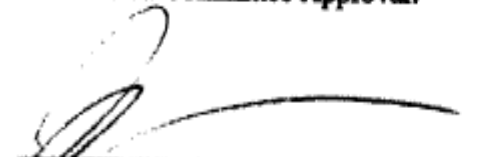the Requirements for the Degree of

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by

Casandra Levine

Argosy University

August 2013

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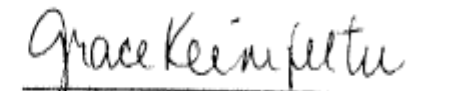Doctor of Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the business environment of charter schools in Washington, D.C. and determine whether or not there is a relationship between leadership training and the practices of executive leaders. Leadership training and executive practice is a long-standing inquiry in business research (Combs, 2007; Finkelstein, Campbell & Whitehead, 2009; Hill & Lineback, 2011; Hrebiniak, 2005; and Kouzes & Posner 2007). Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) and independents represent 42% of the school aged population in Washington, D.C. with parents opting for charters as an alternative to struggling traditional public schools. Communities at the state and local level are encountering difficulty in identifying leaders with adequate training to keep pace with all of the proposed charter openings (Colorado Dept of Ed, 2011). A quantitative design obtained the opinions of executive charter school leaders on their leadership practices using the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner 2007). Utilizing descriptive statistics, T-Test, ANOVA, Person Correlation, and Pearson Chi Square, the results determined that there was an overall statistically significant relationship between training and leadership practices. A strong correlation was seen for participants who did and did not receive training and the degree to which they were willing to press on issues related to searching outside of formal boundaries and for taking risks when results were unknown. The findings also indicated that different types of data (more qualitative samples) would be necessary to extract deeper meaning to the chosen behaviors of executive leaders, given the highly complex nature of the charter school environment in Washington, D.C.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, without whose love and care, this project would have been exceedingly difficult. I give thanks to my son, Eman Levine, my mother, Alice E. Banks, and to my father, the late Lloyd W. Banks. I also give thanks to my grandparents, the late Virginia Weston, and the late Willie Wright who both instilled in me a love of learning and homage for the Lord.

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INTRODUCTION

*"Leadership is worth the risk because the goals extend beyond
material gain or personal advancement. By making the lives of
people around you better, leadership provides meaning in life.
It creates purpose."*
<div align="right">*Heifetz and Linsky, 2002*</div>

The purpose of this research was be to examine the relationship between professional training and the leadership practices among executive charter school leaders in the Washington, D.C. charter school community. Fullan (2003) contends that directive purpose for school leaders is the most important accomplishment to be derived from training and experience, and failure to extend both purpose and competence is the Achilles heel for those leaders who are less aware.

Minnesota was the first state to pass legislation in 1991, which authorized the funding and facilitation for the creation of charter schools. The State of California was the next state to follow Minnesota's lead in the same year, and in 1992, 19 additional states signed charter school legislation. The collaborative advocacy effort that was spearheaded by educators, parents, elected officials, local businesses and community activists, has now become known as the Charter School Movement (National Alliance, 2008). At the time, many observers considered the Charter School Movement to be an experiment that would lose sustained effort and commitment over time, thus meeting an ill-fated ending. However, the charter school philosophy has been replicated across the country and continues to result in more schools opening each year throughout the United States.

        September 2011 marked the Charter School Movement's most significant

milestone as the national attendance for charter school students surpassed the two million

mark. This notable accomplishment was driven by 500 plus new public charter schools

opening for the 2011-2012 school year, which brought the total number of schools

nationally to 5,600. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) reports

this event to be the largest single–year increase ever recorded in the number of additional

students attending charter schools (2011). Showing an impressive consecutive year of

strong growth, the 2012-2013 school year began 397 additional charter schools to open,

which brought the national total to 5,997. The National Alliance (2012) also reports that

the District of Columbia has held the second spot for four consecutive years for the

largest charter school market share nationwide. Table 1 below, shows a representation of

national charter school market share rankings from the 2011-2012 school year.

Table 1

National Charter School Ranking by Market Share

Rank	School District	State	Charter Market Share	Charter Enroll	Non-Charter Enroll	Total District Enroll	Rank and Market Share in 2011
1.	New Orleans Public School System	LA	76%	32,597	10,098	42,695	#1 and 70%
2.	Detroit Public Schools	MI	41%	47,086	66,626	113,712	#3 and 37%
2.	District of Columbia Public Schools	DC	41%	31,562	45,191	76,753	#2 and 39%
3.	Kansas City, Missouri School District	MO	37%	9,954	16,610	26,564	#4 and 35%
4.	Flint City School District	MI	33%	4,706	9,606	14,312	#5 and 32%
5.	Gary Community School Corporation	IN	31%	4,549	10,221	14,770	#6 and 30%
5.	St. Louis Public Schools	MO	31%	11,155	24,665	35,820	#7 and 29%
6.	Cleveland Metropolitan School District	OH	28%	15,886	41,528	57,413	#10 and 23%
7.	Albany City School District	NY	26%	2,838	7,972	10,810	#10 and 23%
7.	Dayton Public Schools	OH	26%	5,900	16,422	22,321	#8 and 27%
7.	San Antonio Independent School District	TX	26%	15,114	44,129	59,243	Not in Top 10 and 21%
8.	Indianapolis Public Schools	IN	25%	10,690	31,998	42,688	Not in Top 10 and 22%
8.	Roosevelt School District 66	AZ	25%	3,590	10,558	14,148	Not in Top 10 and 19%
8.	Toledo Public Schools	OH	25%	8,209	24,799	33,008	#10 and 23%
8.	Youngstown City Schools	OH	25%	2,528	7,655	10,183	#9 and 24%
9.	Adams County School District 50	CO	23%	2,971	9,709	12,680	Not in Top 10 and 22%
9.	Grand Rapids Public Schools	MI	23%	4,967	17,091	22,058	Not in Top 10 and 20%
9.	The School District of Philadelphia	PA	23%	46,801	154,262	201,063	Not in Top 10 and 20%
10.	Milwaukee Public Schools	WI	22%	18,565	67,429	85,994	Not in Top 10 and 19%
10.	Phoenix Union High School District	AZ	22%	7,472	25,906	33,378	Not in Top 10 and 19%

Source: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2012)

Contrary to public opinion, the rapid rate of charter school openings does not address the public demand for charter school seats. At the conclusion of the 2012-2013 school year, the total number of students on the waitlist in Washington, D.C. was 22,130 and the national waitlist approaches the one million mark (National Alliance, 2013). Paisner (2012) also expresses concern about the lack of an adequate training pipeline for charter leaders and argues…. "with a surging national waitlist, we also cannot expect that fellowship programs, many of which are largely funded through philanthropy, will satisfy the need for more great leaders (pg. 9)."

Charter Schools Defined

Charter schools are self-governing educational agencies that are typically authorized by local school districts, educational governing boards or state educational departments. Interested parties seeking to open a charter school in the District of Columbia must file application with the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB), which will conduct an extensive vetting process to ensure that the applicant's proposal includes curriculum, governance, operations and vision that meets with high standards for a sound and fit charter school organization. The mission of PCSB is to provide quality public school options for DC resident students, a rigorous application process, effective oversight of schools, and active engagement of its stakeholders (Public Charter Schools Board, 2013). Board members are typically seasoned professionals with a broad spectrum of experience in the educational sector and are recommended by the U.S. Secretary of Education and appointed by the Mayor of Washington, D.C.

Every charter school is run very similarly to that of a business. Business operations require school leadership to manage and respond to a wide array of internal and external challenges and threats. Leadership skills that artfully draw upon great depth of ability and resource as needed to run a charter school can be found in the fifth level of leadership in Collins' (2001) theory of Level Five Leadership.   The theory rates five specific categories of leadership in organizations as outlined in Figure 1.2. Collins' original research focused on the variations of leadership capacity while studying leaders at 1,435 Fortune 500 companies over a span of 30 years from 1965 to 1995. Specifically,

Level Five Leaders are described as "builders of endearing greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will" (2001, p. 22). According to Maidique (2011), "Level-Five" leadership types are defined by their goal to build institutions within their respective industries.

In keeping with the national mandate coming out of the National Alliance for Public Charter school, it has been made clear that all charter operators must begin to shift their sights toward building charter schools as institutions within the educational sector (National Alliance, 2012). While the mandate might appear to be a lofty goal, it is also in keeping with the high expectations and rules of engagement that Level Five Leaders more frequently adopt in how they guide and lead organizations. The expectations of executive charter leaders are very much in alignment. Figure 1 below shows each leader level of ascension from the "Highly Capable Individual" up through the "Level Five Executive".
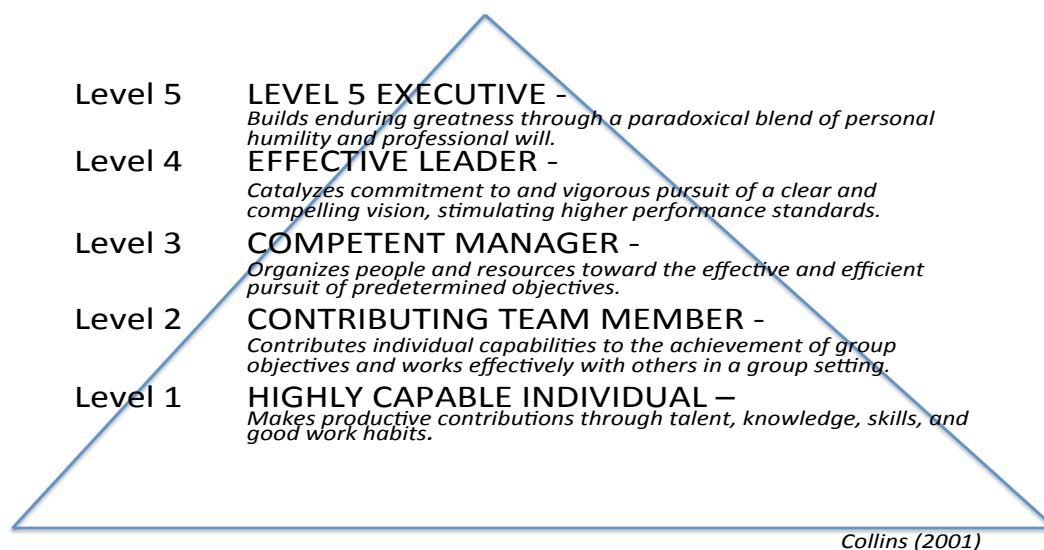
Figure 1. Level 5 Hierarchy of Leadership

Similarly, the role and responsibility of executive charter school leaders requires the same degree of depth and focus on building the school's organizational functions and quality of education for their children, through which the organization's mission is met and thus building credibility within the charter school network. Additionally, May (2007) contends that executive charter school leaders bear an added challenge of being burdened by a market-driven age of educational reform. Walters et al (2003) contend "Effective leaders understand how to balance pushing for change while at the same time protecting aspects of culture, values, and norms worth preserving (p.2)." In many instances, advocates of education reform, gage the degree to which charters have been successful in particular areas as a barometer for how to frame a political platform in driving a reform agenda (Barkan, 2012). All industries have some degree of a political climate to manage. The charter school environment is not without its share of political pressures that can stimulate growth in the organization's favor and can challenge the organization's position, which often takes a toll by way of timely exercises and resources. Mintzberg (2005) recommends that executives plan strategically to proactively defend against all potential threats by matching the appropriate strategies to current conditions.

In being independent public schools, charters are afforded the freedom to be more innovative with their programs and curriculum, while being held highly accountable for improved student achievement (DC Public Charter School Board, 2011). What also makes charter schools distinctive is that they are: tuition-free, open to every student who wishes to enroll (often on a lottery basis); non-sectarian, non-discriminatory; publicly funded by local, state and federal tax dollars based on enrollment; and abide by state and federal academic standards (National Alliance, 2008). In addition, a significant number

of leaders have attributed their school's overall success to the effectiveness of their ability to brand and market unique qualities of their theme-based programs, such as law, arts, language immersion, and leadership.

Charter schools, like most businesses have not been able to escape the glare of increasing public scrutiny. Being under such a bright spotlight has called for greater transparency on issues related to organizational leadership. While charters do enjoy a greater sense of freedom to determine their academic programs and design, their leaders face extraordinary pressure to transform leadership, operations and organizational culture into greater student success. Some view the charter academic success target as a high risk/high reward dilemma (Campbell and Gross, 2009).

High reward can come in the form of positive press coverage, greater access to in-kind and financial support, access to select organizational development opportunities, political support, and greater assistance with the arduous task of facilities enhancement. High risks combined with poor decision making can come with grave consequences as reported by Brown (2013) in which four charter schools were found to have "critical" violations of test security during the DC CAS Test in the spring of 2012. Some of the violations were identified as test tampering, providing students with answers, and using electronic devices that were prohibited. While this is a very small minority, risky decision-making can tarnish a school's brand and long-term viability. This particular story garnered front-page coverage on the Washington Post for multiple days and provided a link to the actual investigative report. Charter school executives must not only look at the immediate pressures before them to increase student performance, but must also take into consideration the overall context of their environment.

Added to the complexity of charter executive leadership, Karanxha (2013) reports that there can be great ambiguity associated with process, operation and external mechanisms that hold the charter school accountable, leaving very little room for error. Managing through the political terrain is a formidable challenge for most executive charter leaders. Baxter and Cooley Nelson (2012) argue that one of the natural outgrowths of the charter movement is the need for charters and local districts to collaborate, which requires districts "to think in radically different ways about operations, resources, and the balance that must be struck between stability and innovation (pg. 27)."

Concerns expressed by charter school opponents stem from a number of schools that have been forced to close down for reasons such as failure to make academic yearly progress (AYP) and inadequate fiscal management (DC Public Charter School Board, 2011). While the number of charter schools that have been forced to close are relatively small (less than 4% in the District of Columbia), maintaining a consistent positive image still remains a battle for some charter school organizations (DC Public Charter School Board, 2011). Follower and constituency perception of an organizational leader can greatly enhanced or detract from the overall organizational image. Drucker (2000) contends that all leaders must submit themselves to the "mirror test" and ensure that they are the type of leader that they themselves would respect and believe in. In accordance, Macgregor Burns (1978) argues that the genius of leadership comes down to how well they embody and act on the values and motivation that is representative of the organization as a whole. Kouzes, and Posner (2012) define this particular leadership practice as "Modeling", which they define to be when leaders exemplify traits and principles by which others are expected to follow.

Charter School Environment

Executive charter school leaders have a number of competing environments and multiple stakeholders in which they must be responsive to and engage. As illustrated in Figure 2 below, the internal environment consists of faculty & staff, students, parents, board members, volunteers, alumni, interns, and consultants. Then further removed from the daily operations in the external environment consist of the authorizing agency, local and national charter associations, funders and individual donors, community representatives, elected officials, governmental agencies, civic associations, the business community, higher education institutions, local and national media, and other competing charter schools.
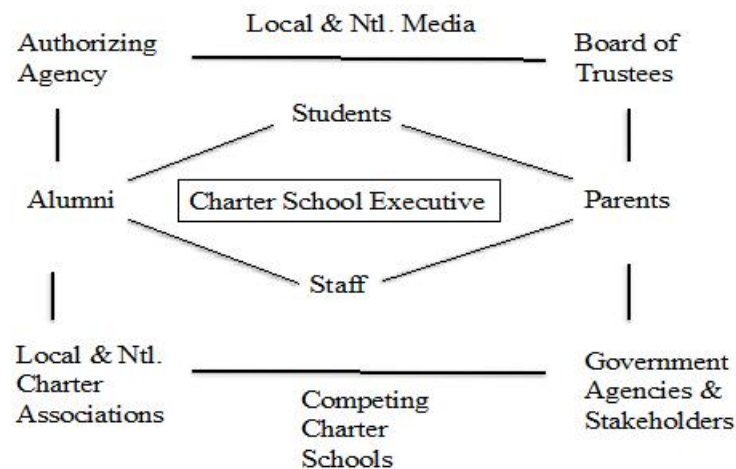
Figure 2. Charter School Environments

Porter's (2003) competitive theory designed to help executives shape organizational strategy can be employed and executed across any sector or industry and is

team. Inattentiveness to the charter school environmental analysis could be a fist step leading to school closure, loss of facilities, unfriendly merger or complete takeover.

Porter also offers three Generic Models to aid organizational leaders in making decisions to position their organization in the industry as well as to establish a path toward both relevancy and sustainability: Overall Cost Leadership, Differentiation, and Focus. Charter school education is free to the public, thus the executive cannot employ a cost leadership strategy because the premise requires that the executive is able to set a specific price for products and services that positions the organization to attract a higher paying customer base. However, strategies that target differentiation and focus could be well worth the time and effort to advance.

Potential strategies to mitigate environmental drivers:

- More formidable usage of technology to strategically engage stakeholders (bring more stakeholders into the school's daily functioning via social video media engagement to observe instruction, admin meetings, student performances, parent organized town-hall gathers) which also includes a feedback loop for commentary;

- Webinars for professional development of parents and other community stakeholders;

- Quarterly video messages from executive to all key stakeholders; and

- Consideration given to shifting some course instruction online to a blended format that offers high efficiency and reduces personnel costs. Innovative applications to controlling internal costs could position organization to emerge as a model for cost leadership.

The overall benefit to charter school executives in adopting strategies such as

Porter's could be a better understanding of their industry, heightened awareness for how to withstand turbulence, mechanisms for how to ward off competition, and an ability to translate value to their stakeholders. In accord, Beerel (2009) argues that the key test for leaders is to safeguard the organization's relevancy to be able to continue meaningful work while adhering to the organization's mission and purpose.

The original charter school legislation was adopted in Washington, D.C. as a means to stimulate completion for overall quality education and to enhance the performance of the local school district (DC Public Schools, 2012). Only a few years ago, Kirst (2007) argued that charter schools could end up as a marginal reform that only impacts a small number of students or could go in the opposite direction, with the state and local politics making the deciding factor. The District of Columbia has a unique political structure in comparison to the rest of the states. Kirst asserts a philosophy of charter school politics that matches well with D.C. as political influence (local and federal) plays a formidable role in how charters schools are able to compete.

Charter school executives often find themselves in competition from three different fronts: traditional public schools, other charter schools, and themselves. One of the elements that the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) uses for measuring charter success is to compare the overall performance outcomes for the school from year to year, with the expectation of making a steady increase. This measurement is difficult to meet at times, particularly when there have been great gains in one school year. The evaluation measurement is set to assess how much gain occurred from the previous year. Relative to competitors within the industry, Kim and Mauborgne (2005) argue that organizational executives must determine how their firm will establish value innovation

as a strategic means of distinguishing themselves within the industry by increasing their customer's value and creating a blue ocean; thus reducing the competition. Kim and Mauborgne also warn against too much focus on the competition as well as over reliance upon set rubrics that have been established in the industry as a guide to dictate strategic decisions.

There are currently 42 states, and the District of Columbia that account for 5,997 charter schools across the nation (National Alliance, 2011; U.S. Charter Schools, 2011). While still viewed as a young organization in its early growing stages, charters have vastly increased in the last decade and also enjoy strong support from Republicans, Democrats and concerned parents seeking alternatives to failing public schools and costly private schools (Butrymowicz, 2011). The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2011) reports that on average, 300-400 charter schools are authorized for opening each school year. As charter schools are also public schools and receive their funding from the same public funding streams as traditional public schools, leadership, transparency of operation and success indicators have become part of a national dialog on school reform (CRPE, 2012).

Parents and guardians of children in the District of Columbia have sought out charter school enrollment in record numbers. The first ten charter schools to open in Washington, D.C. in 1999 serviced 1,977 students. The 2011-2012 academic school year commenced with 63 charter schools servicing 31,561 students, which accounted for one third of DC school age population (DC Public Charter School Board, 2012). At the conclusion of the 2011-2012school year, the Associated Press (2012) reported that DC public charter schools confirm that 17,000 student names are on waiting lists seeking

enrollment. At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, the DC Public Charter School Board (2013) confirmed that the waitlist has grown by 23% to 22,130. The below Figure 3 provides a representation of student enrollment throughout Washington, D.C. for school year 2012-2013 by Ward and compares percentage enrollment between DCPS and charters. Wards 1, 5, 7, and 8 have the highest representation of charter schools across Washington, D.C. Wards 7 and 8 are located in the Northeast and Southeast region of Washington, D.C. Both have historical economic disparities as well as an African American population representing 96% and 92%, respectively (Neighborhood Info DC, 2012).
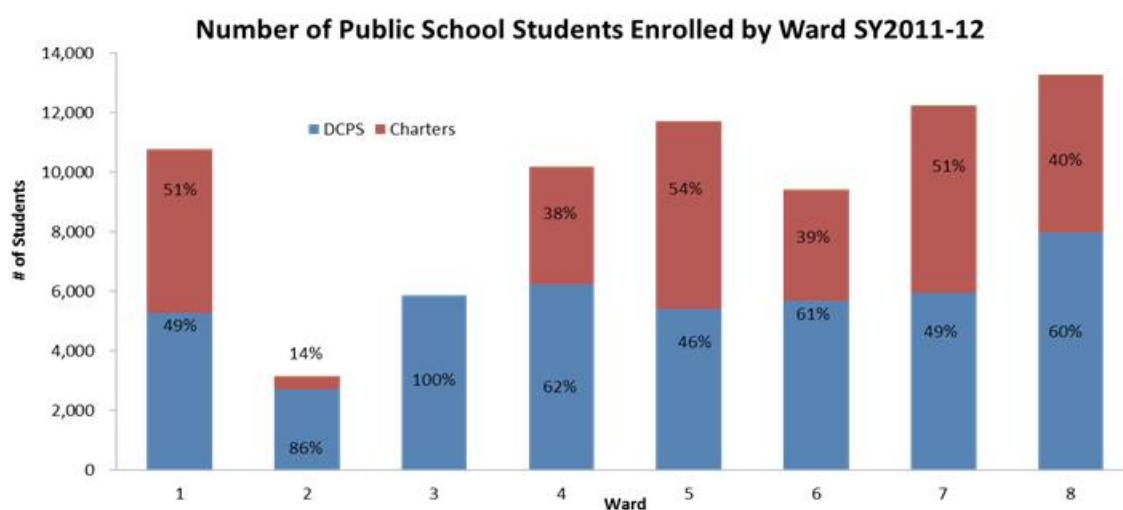
Source: District of Columbia (2013)

Figure 3. School Enrollment Comparison 2011-2012

This phenomena, of surging enrollment, required the DC Public Charter School Board to prepare to post information about waiting lists online with available openings by Ward, school and grade for parents and guardians seeking information and updates. In acknowledgement of the increasing demand for charter availability, recently transitioned Deputy Mayor for Education, De'Shawn Wright, announced new prioritized efforts to

help charter schools obtain long-term leases of unused public schools; ensuring a permanent home for high performing charters (Brown, 2012). Traditionally, it had been a very long and difficult process for executive leaders of charter to secure an opportunity in obtaining both long and short-term leases of unused, vacant buildings owned by the DCPS.

School conversions (when charter schools assume the location of a non charter school) have accounted for 18% of new charter schools that have opened in the District of Columbia. Typically this number is much smaller as conversions only represented 9% of new charter growth nationally (National Alliance, 2013). In 2008, nine Catholic schools were granted authorization to convert to charter schools. At the time, the DC Archdioceses faced extraordinary circumstances including dwindling enrollment and the impact of the 2008 economic crisis. Upon their conversion to charter schools, enrollment went up substantially for each former Catholic school (DC Public Charter School Board, 2011). Enrollment numbers play a significant role in charters being able to achieve sustainability because the school's budget is forecasted upon student headcount. The 2012-2013 per pupil funding for DC charter schools was $9,124. Charters received this level of funding for each student enrolled in their school (DC Charter Board, 2013). Student enrollment is also a significant concern for leaders of traditional public schools in Washington, D.C. Several DC public schools were closed in June 2013 by Chancellor Henderson due to low enrollment. Six of the 20 are slated to reopen as charter schools; some as early as fall 2013 (Brown, 2013; and Moulton, 2013).

Table 3 below shows a comparison for the number of charter schools in Washington, D.C. and bordering states as well as a local comparison for representative

public schools. Washington, D.C. is far outpacing their neighboring states in advancing

alternative options to education quality in the form of a charter school education.

Table 3

District of Columbia Charter School Number Comparison by Neighbor States

Charter Location	Percentage Number of Charters	All Local Public Schools
Washington, D.C.	57 (47.1%)	119
Maryland	52 (3.6%)	1,402
Virginia	4 (0.02%)	1,860

Source: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2013)

A more recent phenomenon of late is the merger of charter schools that are ranked

at a Tier III Level (lowest ranking) with a higher performing school ranked at Tier I

Level. These types of mergers are described as an opportunity for the community to

continue to have access to a high quality education while being able to retain many of the

Tier III school personnel. During the leadership transition, it is the expectation for the

new Tier I leadership to provide oversight, professional practice, and development for the

enhancement of the newly merged organizations. As part of their city-wide study, IFF

(2012) recommended to DC Mayor, Vincent Gray, that school performance and capacity

should be the beginning metric for assessing a school's viability. Based on the analysis,

DCPS schools that are assessed to be at the lowest tier should come under closure or

turnaround and charters at the same level should be closed. While receiving a lot of

pushback from local teacher's unions, the IFF Report presents a strong business strategy

and environmental analysis that provides clear metrics for which to arrive at measured decisions.

According to Hrebiniak (2005), the primary rationale for a merger is to create more value where each firm without the other is less valuable. In the case of charter schools in Washington, D.C., the weaker school would be more inclined to agree with a merger that is brokered by their authorizer to ensure the survival of their school. Hrebiniak adds that companies who come together under one umbrella are typically able to be more competitive, more efficient and are able to gain a larger market share. In the case of charter schools, being able to be more efficient at serving a greater student population is a direct means of gaining more market share.

The high demand for a charter school education in Washington, D.C. has also created greater pressure for competition; an occurrence that had for the most part remained an outside element to the charter school movement (Berman, 2008). The increased demand also places a great deal of operational presser on executive leaders to sure up more fundamental business skills to be able to make their schools more attractive to stakeholders; thus more competitive.

Presenting Problem

Problem Statement**:** It is not known how or to what extent an executive charter school leader's training is related to leadership practices in the District of Columbia.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not there is a relationship between training and the leadership practices of executive charter school leaders in the Washington, D.C. cohort of charter schools. The connection between leadership training and executive charter school leadership practice has become a focal issue of interest due

to the rate of charter school growth both nationally and for the research population.

Additionally, frequent challenges that schools encounter have to do with the ability to staff top leadership positions with qualified candidates.

In addition, the aforementioned mergers signaled a break with tradition for the DC Charter Schools Board. The Board adopted a new policy to fast-track school authorizations, which target experienced and successful Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) that have a national reputation for excellent leadership to open schools in DC (Turque, 2012). The rationale given by the Board for the new policy indicated a desire for a greater level of transparency in their commitment to respond to the increasing demand from the public for more access to charter school education in Washington, D.C. The identification of high performing CMO's to some degree lessens the greater challenge of having to identify executive charter school leaders who have both the technical and adaptive skills to run an effective charter school.

The DC Charter School Board's long range positioning strategy is very similar to how the U.S. government began to introduce agencies in the 1950's and 1960's. Several of the key agencies were the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Housing Finance Agency, and after the 2008 financial crisis, the Financial Protection Bureau will now provide oversight of large credit reporting agencies. The role of these agencies is to assist in the growth of U.S firms, but also to set standards by which they were expected to operate. All business must conceive, plan and execute strategies that enable them hold on to a competitive advantage (Marcus, 2005; De Kluyver and Pearce, 2009; and Razzetti, 2010).

It is not apparent as to the degree that current and new executive charter school leaders have been trained to respond to the increasing layers of business strategies that are being presented as the new measurement for executive charter leaders in effectively leading their organizations. Mintzberg (2005) argues that it is imperative that executives gain a penetrating awareness of their environment during the analysis in addition to factoring in multiple business theories such as perspective, position, planning, patterning and tactic.

One business strategy, Macro-Environmental Analysis, subdivides and analyzes all the variables in the external environment, which are identified as having an immediate or long-range influence on an organization's viability. The process is more commonly referred to as a PESTLE Analysis, which stands for: Political, Economic, Social/Cultural, Technological, Legal and Environment. The PESTLE Analysis is the first step in a three-stage application of developing a business strategy and is subsequently followed by an Industry Strategic Analysis and then by an Internal Strategic Analysis. The below Figure 4 provides possibilities for next steps for an executive leading his/her team through a strategic analysis.

Important Conversions After Charter School PESTLE Analysis	
External Analysis	**Internal Focus**
*Long Range View	*Short Range Deliverables
*Industry Vision	*Measurable Specifics
*Philosophical Concepts	*Action Oriented
*Sourcing Opportunities	*Problem Solving
*Risk Seeking	*Status & Innovation
*Success Orientation	*Maximize Efficiency

Figure 4. Conversion Activities Post PESTLE

        Potential candidates who seek to acquire leadership training in hope of securing a top leadership position within a charter school organization have limited options

available to them (National Alliance, 2008). Figure 5 below shows the distribution of

leadership training outlets that provide charter school leadership training. The figure also

reveals that there is only an ability to address less than 25% of the need for training.

Figure 5. Training Outlets for Charter School Leaders

Many communities at the state and local level are having difficulty identifying

leaders with adequate training to keep pace with all of the proposed charters opening

(Colorado Dept. of Ed, 2009). An additional complicating factor for the future of charter

school leadership sustainability comes with close to 60% of current charter school leaders

reporting plans for either retirement or another form of transition by 2014 (Butrymowicz,

2011). Campbell and Grubb (2008) compiled an assessment of what they termed a "new

crop" of 13 specialty-training programs that had been designed to address the unique set

of challenges in leading a charter school, as well as, to close the skill gap for those

coming into leadership positions. Findings indicated that while each of the 13 programs provided a distinctly different learning experience (in comparison to traditional leadership training programs), more efforts were recommended that trainers follow up with participants to determine whether the training program itself had an effect upon leadership performance and practices.

Ursula Wright, former Interim President & CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, contends that all charters need to plan for the eventual transitions that occur in top leadership, and the lack of focus in planning for these sorts of inevitable occurrences can place the organization at risk of achieving long-term sustainability (National Alliance, 2012).   In the same vain, Fleischer (2011) contends that businesses are highly responsible to their stakeholders in seeing to it that great care and consideration is given to a deeper analysis and approach to sustainability.

To support the National Alliance's leadership transition effort, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned a report "Succession Planning in Charter School Management Organizations." The report highlights four primary observations: Why succession planning is important; Consequences for lack of planning; The phenomena of inconsistent succession planning in charter organizations; and The value in learning from the mistakes of others. The report, case studies and an interactive organizational assessment tool were made available February 2012 and all charter schools organizations across the country are being encouraged to access the material, which is intended to assist with organizational sustainability.

In response to the increasing demand for charter school access, in addition to the higher standards being called for of Charter Management Organizations (CMOs). The

DC Charter School Board announced that it is actively seeking to establish new relationships with CMOs that have a good track record in other cities (Turque, 2012). The DC Charter School Board is seeking specific high performing CMOs that could qualify for their newly proposed streamline approval process. This new policy would greatly reduce the lengthy process that is imposed upon less experienced organizations (requiring incubation) and hopefully avail more charter school seats for the parents and guardians who face extensive waiting lists to get into a charter school.

Historical trends indicate that governing charter school boards prioritize instructional leadership as the top factor for making a hiring decision in the selection process for top executive positions. As charter schools are a very different educational institution in comparison to traditional public schools, some think that too much weight is being given to the potential candidate's record on instructional leadership. The National Alliance (2011) and research conducted by Page and Levine (1996) suggests that if charter school boards make decisions to hire a candidate whose skills are predominately that of an instructional leader to serve as their executive or overall school leader, then the board should be prepared to play a more significant role in the management of the school by providing a comprehensive strategy that also includes a fundraising plan. Configurations of this type usually do not include an executive director's position, but only a school principal who reports directly to the school's Board of Trustees. An additional key hire would be that of a strong financial manager to also lend support to school leadership. Gaps in executive leadership skills are recorded as being especially pronounced in the areas of organizational management and political savvy (National Alliance, 2008).

Table 4 below outlines a set of skills that have been presented by the National

Alliance as being important qualities that top leaders of a charter school should possess.

However, the National Alliance continues to press for national consensus to drive a

unified standard.

Table 4

Charter School Leadership Key Skills

Key Skills Required to Lead a Public Charter School	
Skill	Rational
Strategic Planning	With Board, plan and set stage for measureable short/long-term growth
Team Building	Develop and create team to implement and execute vision and mission
Advancement	Identify and secure new/multiple sources of funding from foundations, corporations, and individual donors leading to strategic partnerships.
Governance	With Board Chair, work to ensure that the board fulfills its governance functions and facilitate training for optimum performance of board, committees and individual members.
External Relations	Serve as the chief spokesperson for school by ensuring stellar representation to local civic, business and political community; the greater education reform sector; and other external constituents, including parents and families.
Financial Management	Oversee the financial systems of school, including the development of annual budget.
School Support	Provide oversight and support to academic team as needed in the areas of instruction, staff development, evaluation, hiring, HR issues and other tasks.

(Source: The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2011)

Gaps in Research

The amount of scholarly research on executive charter school leadership training is not extensive. However, there is greater demand for more research that is being driven by multiple external and internal environmental factors. Many of these scripted precepts are not often skills that are acquired or developed in the classroom and at the middle manager's level. School leaders who have ascended to charter school leadership positions after serving as a teacher, vice principal or principal have reported to require additional training in strategic planning, governance, advancement or financial management, thus pointing to the need for specific professional development opportunities. The growing concern about the high attrition rate among charter school leaders in their first three years of tenure, along with fierce pressure to demonstrate academic student performance, have emerged as a recurring element in the discussion of charter school leadership longevity (Butrymowicz, 2011).

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2008); Bassett (2001); Lambert (1998); The Broad Foundation (2008); Davies (1996); Daresh and Male (2000); Zimmer and Buddin (2007); Stiles (2005); Murphy et al (2007) and Farmer-Hinton (2006) have each researched the issue of school leadership and reported that more leadership training sources are required to fill the void and to adequately prepare charter school leaders for their role that includes not only academic administration, but also management of the internal and external environment. Survey findings by the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) indicate that close to 40% of charter school leaders have been elevated from middle management in seeking a second career in education. However, training received through Charter Management Organizations do not seem to adequately prepare the

would-be school leaders for the rigorous tasks ahead of running a charter school (PPI, 2011).

There is a wealth of foundational research on the value and importance of training new school leaders Daresh & Playko (1992); Mulford et al (2007); Zenger, Ulrich & Smallwood (2000); Smeal College of Business (2005); and Marlow (2007) as well as successful mentoring models such as Kochan (2002) and Sprague & Hostinsky (2002). However, in most of the research, focus had been aimed at preparing new leaders to take on leadership roles in traditional private or public school environments.

There are a number of recent studies (Lake and Gross, 2012; Nadelstern, 2012; and Bridgespan, 2012) that provide guidance and a fresh perspective on leadership training considered to be either easily adaptable for the executive charter school leader or already targeted specifically for this group. Each study offers insight and recommendations that Charter Management Organizations can use in areas of building professional development strategies, which lead to organizational sustainability. More details of the aforementioned studies are covered in Chapter Two under the literature review section.

Research Methods

Quantitative methodology was the primary mode of inquiry for determining whether there is a relationship between executive charter school leadership training and leadership practices. The opinion survey was distributed to 57 executive charter school leader respondents in charter schools authorized in the District of Columbia. The literature review in Chapter Two expands on charter school leadership training and contextual framing for the research project.

The research data was collected via an online survey instrument created by Kouzes & Posner (2003) titled Leadership Practices Inventory or commonly referred to as LPI. The LPI is a leadership self assessment that is aimed to measure the attitudes, feelings, and beliefs of a leader relative to how they perceive their own leadership practices. As the instrument's Likert Scale construct does not measure affective factors, the scaled measurement is most effective for self-administered surveys. It was intended that quantitative research would reveal data strong enough to make a determination as to whether participation (or non-participation) in leadership training opportunities makes a difference in the practices of executive charter school leaders and in the execution of their responsibilities. Further research possibilities could come from the development of effective succession planning and training programs designed to address charter leadership attrition and increase the pool of quality executive charter school leaders.

To ensure fidelity and transparency, the research project concentrated solely upon a quantitative methodology for data collection in which the survey instrument was administered via Internet interface. Patton (2002) argues that it is significant for researchers to demonstrate objectivity and assure the reader that the conclusions have been arrived upon by virtue of sound measures. The quantitative research methodology, strategy and application will be elaborated upon in more detail in Chapter Three.

Summary

Originated in the State of Minnesota in 1991 with a handful of other states to follow in enacting charter school legislation the following year, charter schools now serve students and their families in 42 states. Given the extraordinary growth rate of charter schools across the country, a growing concern has risen as to whether the

availability of leadership training is able to keep pace with the demands from the public

for more access to charter school education. Highlighted issues associated with executive

charter school leadership training consisted of:

- Limited training outlets for executive leadership;

- Very few charters (nationally) have executable succession plans;

- Up to 60% of current executive leadership indicate plans for retirement by 2014;

- More charters are opening each year in response to public demand (in many cases out pacing traditional public schools in major urban centers); and

- Lack of a national standard for specifications on defining executive charter school leadership.

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between professional

training and the leadership practices among executive charter school leaders in the

Washington, D.C. charter school community.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITEATURE

"School leaders must build community, work collaboratively, empower others and dig deeply to create organizational change."

University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education, 2011

The literature reviewed for this project provides an overview of scholarly research, studies and articles that have been written on the topic of professional development and training as it relates to executive level charter school leadership. An overview is followed by a segmented review application, which focuses on three key areas of literature: Charters as Businesses, Overview of Charters, and Perspective on Training. Referenced materials also focus on the charter school environment at the national and regional level, as well as the targeted sample population of Washington, D.C.

The research shows that there is a significant number of training opportunities available for increasing the pipeline for teachers to move up into administrative and second tier leadership roles (Assistant Principal or Dean) in charter schools. However, there are very few training resources available for rigorous professional development for individuals that come to the rank of an executive position within a charter school. The lack of available training modules for executive charter school leaders creates a tremendous void in the area of professional development while posing obstacles for organizational positioning and smart growth within the industry. Cermak and McGork (2010) argue that the value of training programs are measured by their ability to deliver

curriculum that reflects key business metrics and are subsequently tied to testing real-world outcomes.

In speaking to leadership responsibly for impacting on organizational growth and industry positioning, Beerel (2009) addresses the issue from a perspective of managing change. Beerel contends that the following activities are essential for the executive to be successful: 1). Identify, name and reframe new realities; 2). Move to change perspective by reality testing with stakeholders; 3). Create value by identifying adaptive challenges; and 4). Use an open system approach to frame gains and losses relative to values, meaning and behavior. In agreement, Senge (2006) argues that organizational change does not occur in a vacuum, executives must influence their entire organization as well as its stakeholders by engaging: employees, competitors, customers, suppliers, and governments. In managing the culture of an organization during times of change, Schein (2010) asserts that leaders must remain nimble and balanced in their guidance of the organization so as not to push it too far in any direction that might constrain or limit the possibilities of viable alternatives.

Orchestrating change in large organizations or large complex environments requires skill, technique and fortitude. Charter school leaders are very often defined in the same regard as a local public school district superintendent because their scope of responsibilities are very much in alignment. The executive charter leader reports to an elected board of trustees and the superintendent typically reports to an elected school district board. In each case, it is paramount that leaders examine and assess the changing elements of the environment accurately because not to do so could bring about peril. As explained by Baxter and Cooley Nelson (2012), a superintendent often runs the risk of

being dismissed if s/he seeks to bring about change within their system at a rate that is faster than stakeholders and constituency are able to absorb. In such situations, Heifetz and Linsky (2002) call the pushback a tactic by which interested parties deflect from the presenting issue or policy and make the executive trying to execute change the problem. Their reasoning for this phenomena is that people naturally resist change and are very creative about neutralizing the leader who is bringing about change by: undermining, pushing the leader aside, or completely eliminating them. Additionally, Heifetz and Linsky contend that one of the primary goals of leadership is to develop the capacity to deliver difficult news, raise awareness, and engage in tough conversations with people in a manner that can be absorbed while simultaneously inspiring them to take up and own the message.

As discussed earlier in Chapter One, passage and maneuverability throughout the charter school environment is not simple and often not clearly transparent. Heifetz and Linsky's theory on Adaptive Leadership presents a model for leadership perspective and application by deciphering whether challenges arise from adaptive issues or from technical issues. They propose that technical problems always have answers that already rest within the organization's knowledge bank of specialist and experts. In contrast, adaptive problems demand that the organization change and adapt to the pressures of new drivers from internal and external sources. Figure 6 below shows an example of how to identify adaptive and technical challenges.

What is the Work?		Who Does the Work?
	↓	↓
Technical	Apply Current know-how	Authorities/Experts
vs.		
Adaptive	Learn new ways	The people with the problem

Adapted from Heifetz & Linksy (2002)
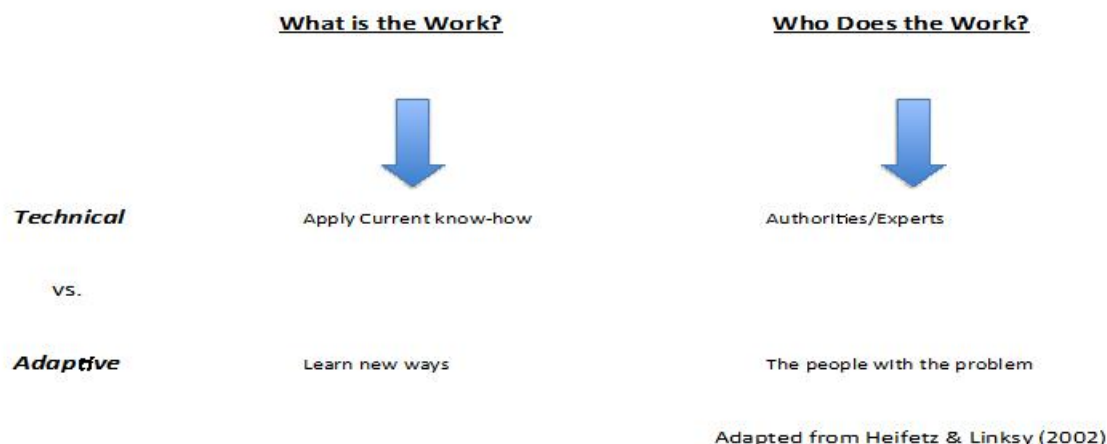
Figure 6. Distinguishing Adaptive from Technical Challenges

There has been limited research conducted on whether there is a relationship between professional development training and the leadership practices of executive level charter school leaders. The scarcity of scholarly research and the growing interest in leadership effectiveness by many charter school stakeholders identifies a need for future research.

Charter Schools as Businesses

According to Fullan (2003), there is a two-layered perspective that describes the role of effective leadership in a school environment: to help create and sustain disciplined inquiry, and to create action orientation to maintain high performance to drive the organizational mission. Effective organizational leadership is essential for the growth and sustainability of a thriving charter school. Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools are often considered to be a business because charters are wholly responsible for all of the operational support (HR, accounting, purchasing, development, etc.) that would typically funnel to schools through a local school district structure with centralized

authority. Every charter school is its own Lead Educational Agency (LEA) and is granted the scope of authority that is akin to that of a traditional school district.

A significant requirement of charter school leaders is that they must effectively embrace the role of entrepreneur in order to manage and support the operations of the school in a thoughtful and creative manner. Kelly Cadman, VP for Georgia Charter Schools Association, reports that the state-wide organization has been working very hard in developing efforts to redress the high turn over rate in its own charters, to which they attribute such factors as: governance and the heavy workload that accompanies oversight of a multi-million dollar non-profit organization (2012).   Additionally, Campbell (2010) contends that charter school leaders should use examples taken from successful nonprofit organizations in tailoring a leadership model that will be effective and well suited for running a charter school; a concept that is also supported by Senge (2006); Schein (2010); and Schwartz (2010).

Nadelstern (2012), authored a report on New York City school support networks for the Center on Reinventing Public Education and made significant observations in comparing the more traditional school districts with a centralized function to the more decentralized school districts that support higher performing schools and charters…."school districts manage a portfolio of diverse schools including traditional operation, charter operators, and nonprofit organizations, and hold all schools accountable for performance (p. 3)." The focus on a portfolio management approach (or Portfolio Network Administration) is one that is being explored more by public school district managers who seek to administer a portfolio of diverse school types in an inclusive methodology.

Nadelstern also contends that through innovation and entrepreneurialism, more effective school districts support meeting the needs of a diverse set of schools, by which school leaders have more direct control and authority over their school's budget. The District of Columbia is noted as one of 27 national school districts that have established a working system of operations, which supports Portfolio Network Administration.

Hill (1997), researcher and supporter of school effectiveness, has long held the position that in order for the charter school movement and its school leaders to be successful, partnership collaborations would have to come about between the charter schools and the school districts. He further argues that a district shift from compliance to performance management would lighten the load at the district level while also aiding the independent charter school leaders who are heavily burdened with enormous administrative responsibilities.

In taking a systems analysis approach to educational governance, Washington, D.C.'s Mayor, Vincent Gray, commissioned an extensive study by IFF's (2012) research department to look at the prospects for quality education in the District. The primary recommendations that came from IFF's finding were…. "Closing the service gap necessitates a coordinated effort between the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the Public Charter School Board (PCSB), as well as a focused implementation strategy (pg 9)." The implementation recommendations identified school mergers and closures and were met with severe pushback even in cases where schools had long standing attendance of less than 50%. Turque (2012) of the Washington Post reported that the Deputy Mayor of Education, De'Shawn Wright, encountered sharp, negative criticism of the IFF study and mounted a campaign to contain the politics that

come with changing an inefficient system to one that is efficient and serves the needs of the stakeholders.

Table 5 below demonstrates the two different leadership stances that many school districts nationally have adopted in their administration of local public education. Charters have a natural fit within a Portfolio School District, as the framework is broader and provides support for driving innovation.

Table 5

School District Vision

Traditional School Districts	Portfolio School Districts
Schools as permanent investments	*Schools as contingent on performance*
"One best system" of schooling	*Differentiated system of schools*
Government as sole provider	*Diverse groups provide schools*

Source: CRPE, 2012

Longevity and sustainability are always key organizational goals for any business. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools has set up an active blog portal that is dedicated to sharing best practices throughout the national network, which reaches close to 60,000 charter schools (Charter Leaders, 2013). While much of the content is dedicated to smart growth and sustainability, the development of the "leadership pipeline" is viewed as one of the most serious matters that the charter school movement is facing.

Charter schools leaders share many of the same responsibilities as a CEO of any business or firm in that they must effectively manage both their internal and external environments, produce measureable outcomes, actively engage a comprehensive array of

key stakeholders, service a boutique customer base and maintain healthy work/life balance (Garcia, 2011; Hawkins, 2011; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Hrebiniak, 2005; and Beerel, 2009). Mintzberg (2005) views industry benchmarking as an absolute necessity to gather the correct data to support organizational decisions for sustainability which include: Internal assessment, Practices of competitors in the industry, Adaptive and functional responses in the industry, General adaptive practices outside industry, and Mutual practices established within the industry.

Charter School Overview

The charter school community has proven to be a growing institution that continues to respond to public demand for more viable alternatives in the K-12 educational spectrum (National Alliance, 2011; Broad Foundation, 2010; DC Public Charter School Board, 2011; New York City Charter School Center, 2011). Unlike the public education system, the charter school movement has maintained a fluid state of growth. Turque (2012) foresaw the potential for the sharp incline of charter school growth and argued that it's 44 percent of the student population in Washington D.C. could soon increase by an additional seven percent.

Legislation governing charter schools differs vastly among the 42 states regarding the budget process, facilities allotment, per pupil costs, and renewal evaluation procedures (National Alliance, 2011). In addition, all charter schools are unique in that their curriculum mirrors core curriculum standards for their state while also supporting a tailored, thematic program designed to specifically address the charter's core mission. In keeping with the broad perspective on charters, a national consensus does not exist for

what the standard should be that defines executive charter school leadership

qualifications and training (National Alliance, 2008).

Many of the studies on charter school leadership can be traced back to seminal

work by Halpin and Winer (1952), who have been recognized for their early attempts in

the development of an instrument that focused solely on leadership behavior; later to

become known as the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ).   This

instrument provided a measurement of nine dimensions on a leadership scale such as

communication, initiation, domination, etc. The instrument was used widely initially, but

fell into discredit due to the instrument's frequent lack of providing statistical

significance.

Wirt and Krug (1998) collected data from 3,000 principals in a multi-state area.

Their leadership assessment instrument measured self-reported principal responses on 15

behaviors. A factor analysis of their data revealed that respondents reported five

variables with the highest frequency as presenting challenges for their role as a leader:

monitoring student progress; defining mission; managing curriculum; supervising

teaching; and promoting instructional climate.

A more recent study on school leadership by Gruenert (2005), involved 81

schools in Indiana in which a culture survey was used to investigate the relationship of a

school's culture (created by the leader) and the outcomes for student achievement. The

survey rated the following six factors: collaborative leadership; teacher collaboration;

professional development; unity of purpose; collegial support; and learning partnership.

Respondents reported collaborative leadership and unity of purpose as being the most

challenging from a leadership perspective to effect positive change.

The insights to be drawn from much of the preceding research can be taken as guiding examples as most of the studies took place in assessment or evaluation of traditional school environments and therefore cannot be applied solely to executive charter school leaders.

Currently, there is not a significant amount of scholarly research on the unique position of executive leadership within a charter school organization. The Broad Foundation (2008); the Gates Foundation (2002); and New Leaders for New Schools (2011), each have focused upon elevating the professional development of charter school leaders at the instructional leader level. However, most of the research focus was aimed at preparing new leaders to take on a leadership role in private or traditional public school systems.

While there is not a wealth of scholarly research on the topic of training implications for executive charter school leaders, studies have been conducted by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2008); Bassett (2001); Lambert (1998); Davies (1996); Daresh and Male (2000) all of which have concluded that there is a necessity for continued and sustained efforts in developing the executive leadership pool in preparation for future leaders to be able to successfully take over the reign of leading and guiding charter schools. Without a national standard that stipulates the specific requirements of a candidate to effectively operate a charter school, rigorous research is required to determine the best leadership qualities needed to sustain and strengthen charter schools for the next 20 years and beyond (Campbell & Gross, 2009; Campbell & Grubb, 2008).

Perspective on Leadership Training

Some of the few sources of comprehensive training available that addresses the modern challenges for school leadership in both the traditional public and charter school settings can be found at: Harvard University's Graduate School of Education (32 credit Master's program in School Leadership); California State University- Dominguez Hills (year-long cohort training for both current charter school principals *and* executive leaders); and Rice University's School of Business (a two-year Master's program in Business Administration/Education Entrepreneurship). Each of the training programs are able to proclaim an impressive record in tracking the charter school leaders that came through their pipeline in areas of success and leadership practice. However, the three programs combined are not able to facilitate the overwhelming need for more quality training outlets for charter school leaders, especially at the executive level. Potential candidates in pursuit of leadership training to secure a position as an executive charter school leader have limited options available to them. The looming gap for training that caters to executive leadership for charter schools is about 75% (National Alliance, 2008).

As stated at the onset of this chapter, there are multiple organizations with very solid reputations with the capacity to deliver training for charter school leaders in first and second tier roles: principals, assistant principals, deans, and curriculum coordinators. However, the literature review established that there is a considerable growing need (based on demand) to develop and provide access to training that addresses the very specific challenges that executive charter school leaders encounter. Drawing from the perspective of an entrepreneurial requirement, the role of executive leadership of a

charter stresses a unique and different set of skills, which represents a hybrid of blending exemplary practices from both the education and business sectors.

Very often, organizational leadership is viewed from the perspective of qualities related to charisma, effective communication, problem solving, likeability, trustworthiness and being of high moral standard (Kellerman, 2008). The role of the charter school leader rests heavily upon policy design and decision making that is accountable and takes responsibility for actions or an unwillingness to act. Research conducted by Ley (1999) concentrated on issues related to charter school management in rural communities by interviewing and observing 97 charter school leaders. Results of the research were transformed into a series of training modules used by the State of Idaho for rural charter school leaders. Ley placed emphasis on the development of five core elements deemed important for charter school leaders to master before being able to establish efficiency in their role: Creation of Vision and Mission; Regulatory Issues; Assessment and Accountability; Governance and Management; and Community Relations.

Similarly, the New York Charter School Center (provides support for all of New York City and New York State's 136 charter schools and serving 47,000 students), launched a 43-week Emerging Leadership Fellows Program in 2008. As described, the program is "a rigorous, yearlong program designed to take exceptional teachers and train them to become outstanding secondary leaders, i.e. assistant principals and deans of students in NYC charter schools" (New York Charter School Center, 2012). The program is intended to address long-range succession planning for New York based charter schools. The pipeline leadership training targets aspiring charter school leaders

and draws from the ranks of high performing instructional staff with an emphasis on promoting an engaging learning environment and higher student achievement. Of the 43-week program, only one week is specifically devoted to the professional development of leadership qualities & practices. The other elements of the curriculum, which are delivered in 8-week modules, focus on: assessment; observation; discipline; parents; culture; and hiring, which are a blending of internal organizational assessment components.

New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) promotes a national leadership training program called the "Emerging Leaders Program". Similar to the training program at the New York City Charter Center, NLNS provides a robust year-long model. The Emerging Leaders Program is designed for both school districts and Charter Management Organizations in the development of a teaching or instructional leadership role. As a result, this national program provides a pipeline for growth in both traditional and charter school systems and is the primary pathway into the Aspiring Principals Program (NLNS, 2011).

Other notable hybrid programs across the nation that facilitate rigorous training in adding to the pipeline of charter school leaders are: 1). Harvard Graduate School of Education's Urban Charter Schools; 2). Teach For America and the Chicago Public Schools; 3). Columbia Teacher's College, Teach for America, and the Indianapolis Public Schools; and 4). Denver Public Schools and the University of Denver's Ritchie Program for School Leaders.

Cuban (2010) contends that there is difficulty in being able to determine the exact long-range merits of leadership models, such as NLNS, in attracting young and idealistic

teachers for hard to fill posts in urban schools. He goes on to further state that arming

these young professionals with a "no excuses" mantra is actually short lived due to the

high turnover rate at the principal's position. This strategic tactic is referred to as "churn

and burn". Cuban describes "churn and burn" as a strategy that identifies highly capable

young professionals, get them highly motivated in their role that requires very long hours

and high expectations, which then typically leads to burn out within the first 2-3 years of

their appointment in the principal position. Additional attrition concerns are reported by

Zehr (2011) who indicates that Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), whose charter

management over sees close to 990 charter schools, has a higher turnover rate at the

administrative level in comparison to their public school counterparts on a national

average.

The aforementioned training outlets offer comprehensive models of leadership

development for charter school leaders who are currently in or aspire to the role of

Principals, Deans and Curriculum Developers. These training models strengthen the

management core of the primary service areas for a charter school; which is education.

However, the structure of charter school leadership requires an executive layer of

organizational management in the role of Executive Director, CEO, or Head of School

who is tasked with overseeing the political environment, fundraising/development,

branding and marketing, organizational evaluation, and compliance in meeting all

regulatory obligations (National Alliance, 2008). As such, most of the current leadership

training outlets are not designed to attend to the different type of job specifications that

are inherent in that of the executive charter school leadership position.

The executive role is a critical element in the staffing pattern of charter schools in that it assumes all of the aspects that would otherwise be rendered through the support of a local school district. The expectation of innovation and entrepreneurship are the primary components that distinguish charter school leadership from the leadership of traditional public schools. The charter school executive works closely with the school's board on strategic planning, policy, and sustainability. Fullan (2003) argues that when establishing a culture of discipline and marrying that to ethics and entrepreneurial commitment, school leaders are more often able to actualize great performance in meeting their school's mission.

Bryant (2011) offers insight on charter school leadership and the success of the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), which has become a national model for full-scale social service delivery and charter school education. The Obama Administration's 2011 budget included $210 million for the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative, which was modeled after HCZ's Promise Academy Charter Schools (US Dept. of Ed, 2012). Up to 20 one-year planning grants of $400,000 to $500,000 were awarded with subsequent, 5-year implementation grants awarded at a $5 million maximum. Continued funding for the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative has remained level.

HCZ was founded in 1991 by Geoffrey Canada, who is the organization's CEO. HCZ also opened its first charter school (Promise Academy Charter School I) in 2004 and subsequently opened it's second school soon after. In an extensive interview with Mr. Canada, Bryant cites several caveats for leadership, intended to guide a charter school to becoming well managed and outcomes driven given the entrepreneurial expectations:

- Leaders should not be afraid to have difficult conversations or make difficult decisions;

- Restructure staffing patterns that are cohesive and support change with the "right" personnel in place;

- Make commitment to consistent personal and professional development over time; and

- Stay humble.

Concurring with Canada, Fullan (2003) contends that successful school leaders also frame their personnel decisions by getting the wrong people off the bus and getting the right people in the seats; as making the right personnel decisions can be the most important asset in managing a school. Similar in thinking, Collins (2001) asserts that successful leaders never worry about issues of motivation because they have made strategic decisions about selecting the right persons that will best carry out the vision of the organization's leader.

From a broader perspective, Garcia (2011) studied charter school leaders in the State of Utah and concluded that successful charter school leaders share a common profile identified by the following core values:

- Focused on future and vision;

- Possess an entrepreneurial spirit;

- Takes calculated risks;

- Communicates effectively;

- Understands internal structure relationships;

- Builds alliances and partnerships both internally and externally;

- Values diversity while promoting knowledge and information sharing; and

- Inspires and motivates all stakeholders.

Many of these leadership variables are frequently not the skills that are acquired and developed in instructional classroom settings or in the experiences that are afforded at the middle manager's level. Many of the core executive charter school leadership skills such as vision, building partnerships, and entrepreneurialism are skills that are more often acquired through coaching or training (National Alliance, 2008; Campbell & Gross, 2010). The current trend in urban school superintendent leadership on a national level, show signs of touting the increased value of reducing old applications of centralization in favor of building partnerships that develop entrepreneurial talent to support mission-driven teams (Campbell, 2011; Hill, Menefee-Libey, Dusseault, DeArmond, & Gross, 2009; Lake & Hernandez, 2011). Given the clear evolution of educational environments, charter school leaders are best served when applying multiple layers of traditional best practices from the business industry as a compliment to their academic leadership.

Survey outcomes reported by the Progressive Policy Institute (2011) show that close to 40% of charter school leaders have been elevated from middle management in seeking a second career in education. However, also reported is that training received through Charter Management Organizations does not seem to have adequately prepared them for the rigorous tasks ahead of running a charter school as indicated by a high percentage of charter school leadership attrition across the nation. The growing concern regarding the high attrition rate among charter school leaders in their first three years of tenure have emerged as a recurring element in the discussion of charter school longevity (Butrymowicz, S. (2011). Additionally, fierce pressure to increase student academic

performance was noted as a frequent factor in evaluating leadership attrition.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2008), headed by then president, Nelson Smith, was one of the first national organizations to conduct quantitative research on the issue of executive level charter school leadership training. It had become apparent to Smith that there was a need for more opportunities to prepare leaders in assuming the positions of principal, executive director and superintendent at public charter school organizations. Their findings reveal gaps in leadership skills being especially pronounced in the areas of organizational management and political savvy. Additional findings indicated:

- Charter school boards tend to lean toward hiring leaders based upon the candidate's record in moving student academic performance (classroom or instructional leadership);

- Experience in finance, business, management or politics is often not a requirement as part of the job specifications;

- More than 25% of charter school leaders came from physical education departments: and

- Close to two thirds of the leaders were trained at universities (schools or colleges of education).

Accordingly, Campbell and Gross (2009) report the following regarding managerial perceptions of executive charter school leaders as reported from interviews with close to 400 national respondents:

- Feelings of isolation;

- Challenges in motivating staff;

- Difficulty in effectively using data collection tools; and

- Obstacles in managing internal and external environments.

Additional challenges were also reported in areas of public relations, advocacy, working with elected officials, marketing, managing brand and image, as well as getting ahead of explosive situations. In light of some of the documented challenges facing charter school leaders, Berman (2008) contends that state officials must take a greater interest in strengthening their states' charter school options and revisit their ability to utilize policy levers to increase the supply and quality of charter school leaders. Eric Premack, director of the Sacramento based Charter Schools Development Center contends that there would be two to three times as many charter schools operating nationally if the school's Board of Directors did not have to scramble to find qualified leaders (Butrymowicz, 2011). The Colorado Department of Education conducted a statewide analysis in 2009 and concluded that the charter school leadership preparation opportunities in Colorado will need to increase for the successful replication of new charter schools (Colorado Dept. of Ed, 2009).

Summary

In support of the urgent need for charter school leadership succession planning and the development of pipeline training for professionals to effectively take on the role of executive charter school leaders, Campbell (2010) reports that not many charters have a clear cut succession plan for training new charter school leaders to replace the 60% of founding charter leaders who are reporting plans for retirement leading up to 2014. An additional finding that Campbell reports on is… "Even if a school leader earns a degree at an Ivy League principal preparation program and performs at the top of the class,

chances are that leader still lacks important skills needed to manage a charter school

effectively (p. 8)." Additionally, Cuban (2010) contends that it is very difficult for

charters to find the best fit in a new charter school leader that can carry the ideological

torch, manage, politic, and lead instructionally in wake of vacancies to be left by

founding executives. The lack of a substantial number of qualified candidates and the

lack of consistent plans for succession can pose both compromising threats and

challenges for executive leadership at charters.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOLOLOGY

"A number of factors are adduced to explain how a leader is able,
through persuasion and personal example, to change the thoughts,
feelings, and behaviors of those whom he seeks to lead."
                                                    Howard Gardner, 2004

According to Lomas (2011), the simple taxonomy of business problems always break down into four major positions when framing the design of a business dissertation:

1. Problems with observation;

2. Problems with prediction;

3. Problems with planning; or

4. Problems with business theory.

For the purpose of this study, the research design centered on the prospect that there is a problem in predicting whether or not there is a relationship between leadership training and leadership practices. The ***research questions*** that were derived by this theory of inquiry are the following:

Question 1 - Are executive charter school leaders adequately prepared to exemplify high quality leadership practices in their role without having received training for an executive charter school leadership role;

Question 2 - Are executive charter school leaders adequately prepared to exemplify high quality leadership practices in their role with having received training for an executive charter school leadership role;

Question 3 - Does the current available leadership training for executive charter school leaders adequately prepare for the real-world complexities of the role?

A quantitative survey research method was used as the means of collecting data on the executive charter school leader participants in examining the relationship between their perceived leadership practices as an executive charter school leader in Washington, D.C. and prior training in their role as a school leader. The overall objective focused on the corollary relationship between executive charter school leadership training and leadership practices. Cresswell (2009) contends that a survey design can provide a quantitative description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a certain population when studying a sample of the population.

The inquiry of this research study focused on the participant's opinion related to the execution of **five core competencies** (Challenging the Process; Inspiring a Shared Vision; Enabling Others to Act; Modeling the Way; and Encouraging the Heart) for leadership as exemplified by the research of Kouzes and Posner (2007). The objective of the research was to understand whether participation in prior leadership training opportunities has made a difference in the execution of leadership practices in the charter school environment for executive school leaders. Given the complexity of the charter school environment and the limited research on the subject, it is not known how or to what extent an executive charter school leader's training is directly related to their executed leadership practice.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the available literature on executive charter school leadership practices does provide theoretical and contextual framing for the research project. In addition, through their extensive research on leadership training and assessment, Kouzes and Posner (2007) contend that there are countless differences in individual experiences in the role as a leader. However, a pattern emerged in their

research, which revealed that most individuals have similar patterns of action in response to their environment, which helps a researcher to establish a foundation or baseline for collecting data on leadership choices and behavior.

This study's emphasis was placed on the correlational aspects between variables. Importance was placed on investigating the estimate of the magnitude of the relationship between two variables; training and leadership practice (Mertens, 2005). By examining the perception of executive charter school leadership training, it was assessed that potential outcomes might be helpful in the evaluation of: 1). Effectiveness of training programs; 2). The extended benefits of programs for stakeholders; 3). Decision making related to training development; and 4). Developing metrics for a standard in the creation of executive charter leadership training.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation that was used to build a hypothesis for assessing the relationship between leadership practice and training was drawn from scholarly text, scholarly journal articles, daily news publications, independent educational research organizations, charter school authorizers and national charter school associations as presented in Chapters One and Two. All of the sources dedicated extensive time in examining issues related to charter school performance, strategies for long-range sustainability, effective organizational leadership (public and private), school reform, and/or national trends in charter school leadership. Figure 7 below is representative of the grounding theoretical applications that have framed this research project.
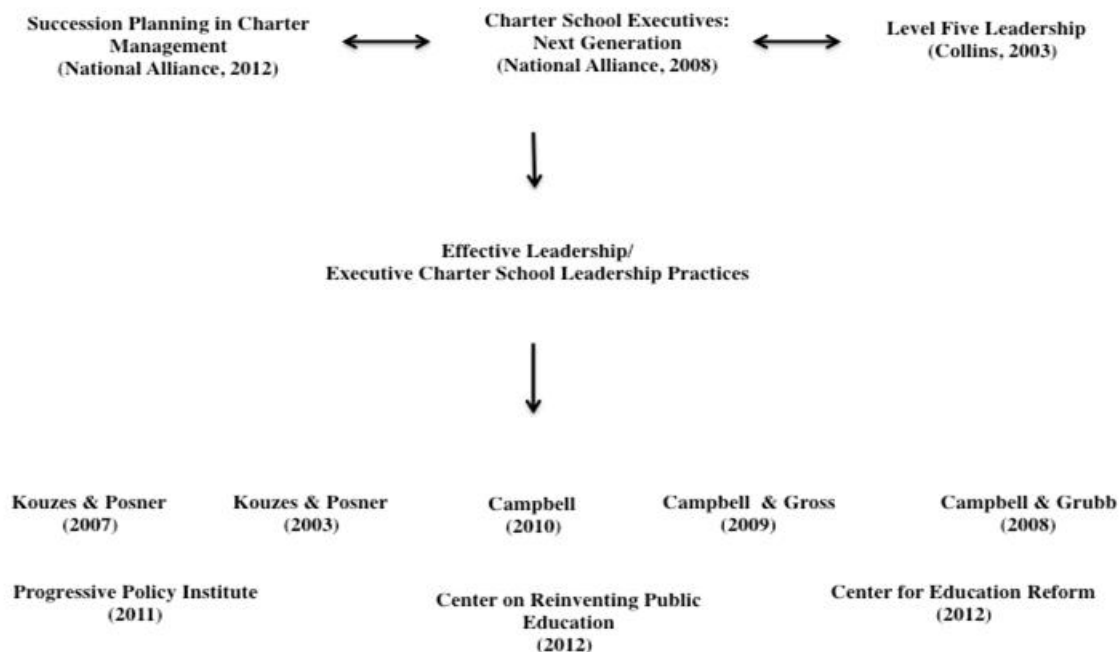
Figure 7. Theoretical Framework

The Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) was used in combination with a set of independent variables designed to determine if participants received training for their position, as well as questions about the type of training. In examining this data, it was intended to measure the relationship between and among variables. This type of design is often referred to as a descriptive survey (Alreck and Settle, 2004). It was expected that the data to be collected would lead to the recommendations as laid out in the hypothesis statement for further research and study and supported by the validity of the theoretical framework.

Additionally, the variables as laid out in the study were partly controlled by the situation because the design was exploratory in nature, which means that there is not

enough known about the subject to substantiate a definitive causality. A descriptive survey in itself cannot definitively prove causality between and among variables in a study (Steinberg, 2008). Some examples of causality are:

    *   *X causes Y* – **OR -** *Y causes X* (which is defined as a causal relationship)

    *   *X* and *Y* are caused by a third variable *Z* (defined as a spurious relationship)

However, the execution of extensive data collection can be used as evidence related to the variables in the study, and reasonably used to possibly determine support for correlations. Correlation is revealed when the data suggests that two variables are related (Alreck and Settle, 2004).

The study focused on the correlation relationship between X (executive leadership training) and Y (leadership practices). As the study was time specific, covering the period of 2011- 2013, spurious relationship evaluation would have been difficult. Spurious relationship research requires more time for data collection and additional time to consider the interaction between a third dominate variable such as the internal working environment of a charter school, external political pressures, Board of Trustee engagement, etc.

The only portion of the design that was controlled by the investigator in the context of this research project was the selection of the sample population. Beyond this aspect, there was no connection between the research questions that were posed and the variables that could be manipulated. For example, in the context of studying the sample population, it did not seem meaningful to examine the population outside of their school environment or to manipulate the intended variables.

The exploratory nature of the research design dictated that there be a relatively significant degree of flexibility. As described earlier in Chapter Two, there is not much in way of scholarly research on the subject of training and the leadership practices of executive charter school leaders. Flexibility is required in exploratory descriptive designs when not much is known about the interaction of variables being researched (Alreck and Settle, 2004).) The descriptive number or statistic was calculated from the data retrieved from the participating executive charter school leaders in Washington, D.C. (sample population). As the population parameter (all executive charter school leaders in the United States) is unknown, the statistic is a mathematical estimate based on the responses provided in the survey.

<div align="center">**Research Design**</div>

The specific mode of inquiry that was used for collecting data on the relationship between executive charter school leadership practices and training was the implementation of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). Renowned for their research and training on leadership models, Kouzes and Posner created the first design of the LPI self-assessment survey in 1995, with a new edition offered in 2001. The LPI is a behavioral assessment tool that measures leadership practices that are grounded in a transformational leadership construct which draws from the seminal works of leading theorist's ideology on transformational leadership styles: McGregor Burns, 1978; Bass, 2003; Bennis, 1989; and Schein, 2010. Northhouse (2001) contends that "transformational leadership comes with an individual that engages others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (p.132). Bass (2003) stresses that transformational leaders attend to their

followers, both inside and external to the organization, and engage them to tackle high

level needs beyond their own self-interest. McGregor Burns (1978) argues that

transformational leaders demonstrate transcendent values that target elements of equality,

justice, liberty, and collective moral well-being.

The study sought to determine the extent to which two variables had a

correlation relationship of significance and was guided by the following hypothesis

statements:

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between training and exemplary

leadership practices of executive charter school leaders.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a relationship between training and exemplary

leadership practices of executive charter school leaders.

The Leadership Practices Inventory has been implemented by varied

organizations (medical, education, manufacturing, service, etc.) in pursuit of

strengthening, advancing, and evaluating the leadership capacity within the institution

(Tourangeau and McGilton, 2004). The LPI is a 30-item, self-assessment questionnaire,

which contains five subscales for each of "The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership"

(Kouzes and Posner, 2012).   Participants were instructed to be reflective regarding the

frequency with which they think they engage in each of the thirty leadership practice

behaviors. Each subscale is comprised of six questions that are written on a 10-point

Likert response scale.   The self-assessment version of the LPI takes approximately 10-20

minutes for a participant to complete. While the 360-degree feedback version of the LPI

is also very widely used, this research project solely focused on participant self-

assessment and the opinions of supervisors, colleagues and other stakeholders were not

part of the study.

The LPI was electronically distributed to 57 executive charter school leaders (sample population) in Washington, D.C.. The 57 executive leaders oversee a total of 106 charter schools. There are several Charter Management Organizations, such as KIPP, Apple Tree, and Center City, which have multiple campuses under the one organization. In such cases, their organizational structure consists of one Board of Trustees and one executive, with multiple positions at the mid-level rank that respond to academic leadership, operations, and compliance.

The research design was intended for responses to return data that revealed a deeper analysis and understanding of how current executive charter leaders perceive their leadership practice, relative to their training, as assessed through the lens of the LPI's five dependent variables: Challenging the Process; Inspiring a Shared Vision; Enabling Others to Act; Modeling the Way; and Encouraging the Heart. Mertens (2005) argues that one of the advantages in conducting correlation research is that multiple variables can be successfully included into the research design, thus not requiring the researcher to have to manipulate variables. Evans and Mathur (2005) assert that online survey research continues to gain in popularity largely due to the flexibility, speed and convenience that is afforded the respondent. Rapid technological advances play a significant role in making the end user experience more comfortable. Additional benefits lie with the guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity for the participant and the relatively low costs for the researcher.

The following definitions are from Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Leadership Practices Inventory – Online Version Participant Training Workbook. The definitions are

detailed examples for each of the five exemplary variables identified in the Leadership

Practices Dependent Variables:

- Challenging the Process - Leaders *search for opportunities* to change the status

  quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they

  experiment and take risks. And because leaders know that risk taking involves

  mistakes and failures, they accept the inevitable disappointments as learning

  opportunities.

- Inspiring a Shared Vision - Leaders passionately believe that they can make a

  difference. They *envision the future,* creating an ideal and unique image of what

  the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion,

  leaders *enlist others* in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get

  people to see exciting possibilities for the future.

- Enabling Others to Act - Leaders *foster collaboration* and build spirited teams.

  They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what

  sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and

  human dignity. They *strengthen others,* making each person feel capable and

  powerful.

- Modeling the Way - Leaders establish principles concerning the way people

  (constituents, colleagues, and customers alike) should be treated and the way

  goals should be pursued. They create standards of excellence and then *set an*

  example for others to follow. Because the prospect of complex change can

  overwhelm people and stifle action, they set interim goals so that people can

  achieve small wins as they work toward larger objectives. They unravel

bureaucracy when it impedes action; they put up signposts when people are unsure of where to go or how to get there; and they create opportunities for victory.

- Encouraging the Heart - Accomplishing extraordinary things in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders *recognize contributions* that individuals make. In every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts, so leaders *celebrate accomplishments*. They make people feel like heroes.

Basic training information was collected and identified as independent variables. Given the limited resource availability and lack of a national training standard, the following independent variables are considered as a means for understanding the opinions of participants as related to the study.

Independent Variables:

- Received Training – Did respondent participate in a leadership training program for executive charter school leaders prior to their current position?

- Time Commitment – *Training programs all have different designs.* This variable identifies the time commitment that was required of the participant: Full-time, Part-time, or a Summer Institute.

- Length of Training – *The length of time completion for training programs varies greatly.* This variable identifies the specific amount of time that it took to complete the training program: days, weeks, months, a year or more.

- Training Cost – *Some, but not all training involves a financial commitment on the part of the participant or paid for by the employer.* This variable identifies

whether there was a cost associated with participation in training program.

- Training Delivery Model – *Instructional delivery no longer consists of only face-to-face offerings. Advancements in technology have created more options for providing distance-learning platforms.* This variable identifies whether instruction was delivered in person only, online only, or in a blended format.

Population and Sampling Procedures

The purpose of sampling is to examine part of a pre-determined population as a representation of a whole population (Alreck and Settle, 2004; Cresswell, 2009; Rhea and Parker, 2005). Sampling inquiry was be used to select potential executive charter school leader respondents from the pool of executive charter school leaders in Washington, D.C.. According to Draugalis, Coons and Plaza (2008), the proper selection of a sample population must be clearly identified and the sample should closely mirror the full target population.

Cone and Foster (2006) recommend that three questions be answered in detail when conducting survey research: Who will participate; How many will participate; and How will they be selected? All of the potential respondents in this study were selected from the available population within the charter school network in Washington, D.C.. There were 57 eligible charter school executives that were available to participate in the study for the 2012-2013 school year. This number is a reduction from the 66 executives from the previous school year as a result of attrition and reorganization of several schools.

As part of the pre-test survey inquiry, three executive charter school leaders from different schools in Washington, D.C. volunteered to provide member checking before the implementation of the actual LPI survey instrument. The three school leaders were in

agreement that the LPI instrument is one that touches upon the many leadership practices that are required to be effective in the role as an executive leader. Two of the three leaders reported that the listing of independent variables that addressed training are important because they each have the potential for unveiling key information that could be helpful later in designing and developing training programs. The third leader did not offer any specific response on the independent variables because of their association with a Charter Management Organization that provides a comprehensive on-boarding, which includes training for all personnel who transition into executive leadership positions. Additional feedback was offered for inclusion selection criteria of survey participants that mirror the responsibilities of how executive charter school leaders see themselves as well as how they are viewed by the authorizing DC Charter School Board:

- Reports directly to the school's Board of Trustees;

- Sets vision and implements strategic plan as developed in conjunction with the Board

- Functions as the school's senior administrator;

- Develops (with the Board) and oversees execution of the school's operating budget;

- Supervises instructional and operational leadership;

- Supports both Board and staff members in guiding branding, marketing and development efforts; and

- Manages all primary (internal and external) stakeholder relationships.

The DC Charter School Board aided in the facilitation of the survey distribution to each charter school by providing formal approval of the research study to be conducted in agreement with the Institutional Review Board of Argosy University and by electronically distributing the Participant Consent Letter and the accompanying survey link to their executive school leaders. A formal request letter to the DC Charter School Board (Appendix A), is on file as well as their response letter, which provided authorization to conduct the intended research (Appendix B).   Additionally, the local charter school network, the DC Association of Chartered Public Schools, extended an additional outreach to the executive leadership with an explanation of the study and its potential value. This level of support for the study was crucial as it helped to ensure that the survey reached all executive charter school leaders in a timely fashion and conveyed endorsement of the research. The support of the DC Charter School Board and the DC Association of Chartered Public Schools provided a level of transparency and validity for the research project.

Creswell (2009) argues that all researchers are bound by a code of ethical rules and principles that govern scholarly research in all disciplines; regardless of whether the inquiry is qualitative or quantitative. The email and letter of introduction that was sent out by both agencies as aforementioned also gave assurances to all participants that guaranteed total anonymity regarding their participation in the study. The letter provided a detailed explanation of the survey, participant role, LPI and the researcher's commitment to ethics and integrity.   Additionally, an explanation of how the survey information will be used was provided detailing the need and value of understanding

leadership practices in an educational charter school environment. All of the potential

participants had equal access and opportunity to take part in the survey.

Comprehensive efforts were made to ensure that data collection involved the

participation of all available executive charter school leaders, which will be discussed in

Chapter Four as referenced through the usage of Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistic.

Running this statistic prior to a full scale analysis is very important as the results provide

an indication of whether there is a need to collect more data or to proceed with analysis

because there is enough data to reasonably draw conclusions about participant's

responses to the survey topic (Steinberg, 2008).

Statistical Applications

Descriptive statistics were the primary source of data analysis. According to

Leary (2007), descriptive research defines behaviors and/or characteristics of a specific

group or subject in a systematic manner that is precise.   In order to analyze the

relationship between at least two variables (one dependent and one independent) and

among at least three variables (one dependent and two independent), researchers have to

apply a bivariate and multivariate analysis using an ANOVA and ANCOVA statistic

(Steinberg, 2008). Both the ANOVA and ANCOVA consist of a multiple linear

regression test.

The Analysis of Variance (ANCOVA) statistic was not used for this study

because the primary purpose was an examination of two variables: training and

leadership practices. Researchers seek to make determinations about the effects of

independent variables as related to dependent variables. Inferential statistics are the most

significant pathway to make clear decisions about statistical relationships between and

among variables (Cresswell, 2009). Alreck and Settle (2004) argue for the value of using inferential statistics when making generalizations or inferences about a population based upon findings from a survey sample. Inferential statistics were not used for this study as this study sought to learn about the leadership practices of a specific population without drawing any conclusions about implications for a larger regional or national population.

The Pearson Correlation Test was run on each of the five dependent variable categories from the Leadership Practices Inventory to measure against training. It was anticipated that the relationship might be linear and normally distributed. The Pearson correlation or the Pearson $r)$ is a statistic that determines the strength of a linear relationship between two variables (Cronk, 2008). Additionally, the Pearson Chi-Square was applied to the data samples to control for the degree of inconsistency between observed and expected frequencies.

Instrumentation

Reliability and validity are both qualities that have come to be associated with the Leadership Practices Inventory. The University of Georgia (2002) found the LPI survey to produce very sound psychometrics with internal consistency for the Cronbach's Alpha reporting to have a range of 0.70 to 0.84. With over a decade of testing and re-testing, Kouzes and Posner (2012) report that as measured by Cronbach's Alpha, the LPI consistently remains strong, with all scales above the .75 level. Additionally, Kouzes and Posner (1995) contend that LPI scores are independent of any hypothetically muddling variables, which supports its characteristic measures with high construct validity.

Below is a sample representation of the LPI questions, by category, that represent responses along with the item's number indicating its placement order in the survey. The actual survey instrument can be found under Appendix D.

Items #	Challenging the Process
1	I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities
6	I challenge people to try out new and innovative approaches to their work
11	I reach outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do
16	I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects
21	I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure
26	I take the initiative to overcome obstacles even when outcomes are uncertain

Items #	Inspire a Shared Vision
2	I talk about trends that will influence how my work gets done
7	I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like
12	I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future
17	I follow through on promises and commitments that I make
22	I am contagiously enthusiastic and positive about future possibilities
27	I speak with true conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work

Items #	Modeling the Way
4	I set a personal example of what I expect from others
9	I spend time and energy on making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon
14	I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make
19	I am clear about my philosophy of leadership
24	I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans & establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on
29	I make progress toward goals one step at a time

Items #	Enables Others to Act
3	I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with
8	I actively listen to diverse points of view
13	I treat others with dignity and respect
18	I support the decision that people make on their own
23	I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to work
28	I ensure that people grow in their roles by learning new skills and developing themselves

Items #	Encourages the Heart
5	I praise people for a job well done
10	I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities
15	I ask what we can learn when things don't go as expected
20	I publicly recognize people who exemplify a commitment to shared values
25	I find ways to celebrate accomplishments
30	I give my coworkers lots of appreciation and support for their contributions

Additional questions relative to training have been modified based upon a study by Campbell and Grubb (2008) on charter school leadership training programs that highlighted the multiple variables within the current programs, which provide a training source.   Data collection on leadership training program participation consisted of the following five questions:

1. Have you participated in training designed to prepare you for your current role as an executive charter school leader? Yes/No If you have answered "no" to this question, please skip questions 2-5 and go straight to the Leadership Practices Inventory Section starting with question 6.

2. What was the time commitment for your training program? A). Full-Time; B). Part-Time; or C). Summer Institute

3. What was the length of time to complete the training program? A). 1 month or less; B). 3 months or less; or C). 6 months or less; D). 9 months or less; E). 1 year or less; F). More than 1 year.

4. Was there a cost associated with the training? A). Yes; B). No

5. **How was the training delivered?** A). In Person only; B). Online only; or C). Blended Format (both in person and online)

Methodological Assumptions and Limitations

The environment that executive charter school leaders function in is one that is very fluid and organically challenging. There are a multiple array of variables that can impact the experience of an executive charter school leader: political climate, board engagement and composition, school culture, funding, facilities, media, competitors, government agencies, authorizers, alliances, and immediate surrounding community. Each element, depending on its depth and gravity, could pose formidable challenges and as such are worthy avenues of in-depth study. However, to adequately address performance outcome type issues, more of a summative application would be required, thus leading to longer-term research projects.

According to Steinberg (2008), singular elements such as performance outcomes or leadership practices alone cannot be considered to be diagnostic. Many other factors can also impact the outcomes that cannot be controlled for in this particular research model. Such factors as variations in the type of trainer, participant motivation, or training environment can impact results that would require a broader scope of data collection or an additional independent study.

Given the continued and rapid expansion of charter schools opening annually, the proposed research could offer insight into the challenges that charter school organizations face in building successful succession plans and growing executive leadership talent. As there is limited scholarly research regarding the preparation of executive charter school leaders to draw upon, this study addresses a void that is critical to charter school sustainability. Currently, the National Alliance of Public Charter School is strongly advocating for the adoption of a comprehensive succession plan for executive leadership transition to be put in place at all Charter Management Organizations nationally. The national succession plan mantra is viewed as an immediate remedy that can be implemented to get more qualified executive charter school leaders in the pipeline to be able to assume leadership in alignment with charter school growth. In doing so, the National Alliance is also hoping to stimulate dialog and resources to support the effort.

Another important consideration is to explore alternatives to using survey research methodology for the purpose of determining whether data can be obtained using a different method (Draugalis, Coons and Plaza, 2008). While the ease and facilitation in conducting online survey research has greatly improved, significant mitigating threats for the researcher still remain in the form of low response rates, skipped responses, and potential of respondents exiting without completing the survey. Performance based outcomes as derived from summative evaluations or process-based outcomes as derived from formative evaluations might be of interest to other researchers seeking more in-depth analysis of executive leadership practices. It is assumed that either may have a significant correlation relative to the effectiveness of the executive's performance as demonstrated through leadership practices (Mertens, 2005). An additional extension of

this research might also look at the same population and examine both the participant's perception of their leadership practice and the perception of others (peers, subordinates, and supervisors) in a 360 evaluation.

Summary

A quantitative survey method was used as the means for collecting data on the executive charter school leader participants in examining the relationship between their perceived leadership practices as executive charter school leaders in Washington, D.C. and prior training in their role as a school leader. The study's research design centered on the prospect that there is a problem in predicting whether or not there is a relationship between leadership training and leadership practices. Attention was given to correlational aspects of the research in placing emphasis on investigating the estimate of the magnitude of the relationship between two variables; training and leadership practice. Research questions that were explored:

Question 1 - Are executive charter school leaders adequately prepared to exemplify high quality leadership practices in their role without having received training for an executive charter school leadership role;

Question 2 - Are executive charter school leaders adequately prepared to exemplify high quality leadership practices in their role with having received training for an executive charter school leadership role;

Question 3 - Does the current available leadership training for executive charter school leaders adequately prepare for the real-world complexities of the role?

The data collection instrument that was used is the Leadership Practices

Inventory, which was developed by Kouzes and Posner (2003) and categorizes five core

leadership competencies:

1. Challenging the Process;

2. Inspiring a Shared Vision;

3. Enabling Others to Act;

4. Modeling the Way; and

5. Encouraging the Heart

This research study was granted permission by the authors to use the Leadership

Practices Inventory (Appendix C). The authors, Kouzes and Posner, have also requested

that a copy of the dissertation be made available upon completion with the intention of

disseminating portions of the dissertation via their website. The added exposure for the

research findings will be very helpful in transmitting the results of the research to a

broader audience beyond the scope of Argosy University's holdings and the local DC

Charter School community.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

> *"Correlation, not causation, is the measure of how closely
> related two things are."*
> *Nathan Green, 2012*

The research design for the study, as presented in Chapter Three, explained the

quantitative method of collecting data via an electronic survey instrument (Leadership

Practices Inventory) that was delivered to 57 executive charter school leaders in

Washington, D.C. Of the 57 executives, 40 responded to the survey. Five of the 40

respondents exited the survey prior to completing all of the questions, thus requiring that

the five incomplete respondents be eliminated. The 35 completed surveys represented a

62% response rate, which compares to an average of 50% to 70% for electronic survey

responses (Alreck and Settle, 2004). There were unavoidable gaps in data collection that

resulted in some of the 17 non-responses:

- Executives left school mid way through the school year and the replacement was
  temporary to maintain operational processes and reporting obligations;

- Executives left school mid way through the school year and the position had not
  been filled (in this case board members worked closely with the school's principal
  during interim period);

- Two new schools opened and contracted with an executive of a totally different
  school to provide oversight management for each simultaneously. While the
  executive is listed as the school leader under two separate organizations, their
  response could only be counted once; and

- Four organizations refused to participate sighting policy or their organization's long standing right of refusal because the school is its own Lead Education Agency (LEA).

Reliability

Chronbach's reliability test was used to determine internal reliability coefficients. The result of .84 was in an acceptable range and consistent with the claims of the LPI authors Kouzes and Posner (2012) and mirrored consistent findings in other scholarly studies (The University of Georgia, 2002).

LPI Reliability (reported by scholarly researchers surveying similar populations of executive academic administrators)

- School administrator respondents, test-retest reliabilities were reported to be .86 for superintendents and .79 for school principals (Roelle, 2010).

- The reliability of superintendent respondents coefficients from the LPI averaged at .87 (Redish, 2010).

- Internal reliability was consistently above the .85 level on the LPI instrument. Test-retest reliability scores were consistently above the .90 level (Hill, 2009).

Research Questions

Question 1 - Are executive charter school leaders adequately prepared to exemplify high quality leadership practices in their role without having received training for an executive charter school leadership role?

Participants who indicated that they did not receive training showed a similar leadership practices profile for four out of five Leadership Practices Categories. In each of the four categories, participants who did not receive training ranked at or above the

70th percentile, which Kouzes and Posner (2012) view as a standard demarcation for higher-level leadership practice. Challenging the Process was the Leadership Practices Category that participants without training showed a significant different practice pattern, which presented at the lower 48th percentile rate. (See Figure 4.2)

Research Question #2 - Are executive charter school leaders adequately prepared to exemplify high quality leadership practices in their role with having received training for an executive charter school leadership role?

The results showed that there was a correlation between training and leadership practice for this group who received training which demonstrated a ranking at or above the 70th percentile across each of the five Leadership Practices Categories.   (See Figure 4.2)

Research Question #3 - Does the current available leadership training for executive charter school leaders adequately prepare for the real-world complexities of the role?

The 25% of participants who indicated they received training did show a higher average in their responses to their leadership practices overall in comparison to participants who did not receive training, which allowed for clear comparison between groups. (See Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4)

Calculations for the ANOVA statistic (2-sample t-test) were done for dependent variables: "I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure" and "I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do" as representation of within group comparisons. The ANOVA results for within group variation for aforementioned questions #11 and #21, each show high levels of significance. (See Tables 4.1 – 4.4) Given the small number of participants (7 out of

35) who did participate in training, it was difficult to assess value to the varied types of training experiences as it could not be determined that any one of the data samples could have occurred at least one time in 20 possibilities (being able to render a significance of at least .05). However, a Pearson Chi-Square Test (X^2) was run to analyze the data for "goodness of fit" and to assess for the inconsistencies of data frequency. Chi-square tests the data for any statistical significance in frequency difference in two or more categories that are dissimilar and nominal (Steinberg, 2008). The result of the test showed a significance level of $p < .05$. While the results of the Pearson Chi-Square Test strongly suggest the rejection of the null hypothesis, it cannot determine the degree to which executive charter school leaders are prepared for real-world complexities as posed in Research Question #3.

ANOVA Regression Analysis

Tables 6, 7, and 8 below provide the results of the Linear Regression for Question #21 (I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure.)

The larger F-statistic of 71.058 indicates that there is a high degree of significance between training participation and Question #21 as supported by the level of significance value being less than .05 ($F(1,33) = 71.05, p < .05$) with an R^2 of .683.

Table 6

Regression Analysis Question #21: I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure.

Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.826[a]	.683	.673	.96250

Table 7

Regression Analysis: I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance

of failure.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	65.829	1	65.829	71.058	.000[b]
	Residual	30.571	33	.926		
	Total	96.400	34			

a. Dependent Variable: I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure

b. Predictors: (Constant), Participated in Executive training

Table 8

Regression Analysis: I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.571	.750		16.762	.000
	Participated in Executive training	-3.429	.407	-.826	-8.430	.000

a. Dependent Variable: I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure

Tables 9, 10, and 11 – below provide the results of the Linear Regression for Question #11 (I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.)

The larger F-statistic of 71.058 indicates that there is a high degree of significance between training participation and Question #11 as supported by the level of significance value being less than .05 $(F(1,33) = 21.87, p < .05)$ with an R^2 of .399.

Table 9

Regression Analysis: Search outside formal boundaries

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.631[a]	.399	.380	.79501

a. Predictors: (Constant), Participated in Executive training

Table 10

Regression Analysis: Search outside formal boundaries

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.829	1	13.829	21.879	.000[b]
	Residual	20.857	33	.632		
	Total	34.686	34			

a. Dependent Variable: I search outside formal boundaries for innovative ways

b. Predictors: (Constant), Participated in Executive training

Table 11

*Regression Analysis: Search outside formal boundaries*

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.571	.619		18.680	.000
	Participated in Executive training	-1.571	.336	-.631	-4.678	.000

a. Dependent Variable: I search outside formal boundaries for innovative ways

Categorical LPI Scores

As stated throughout Chapters One and Three, the purpose of the study was to explore whether or not there is a relationship between leadership training and the leadership practices of executive charter school leaders in Washington, D.C.. As shown below in Figure 8, the combined LPI score for all participants was at or above the 70th percentile mark for each Leadership Practices Category except Challenge, with a score at the 58th percentile. Figure 9 shows varied distinctions that became apparent when reviewing the data sample results for comparing responses of executive charter school leaders (with and without training) against their reported leadership practices. Executive charter school leaders with training demonstrated higher leadership practice skills over those without training in each of the five Leadership Practices Categories: 1.) Challenging the Process; 2.) Inspire a Shared Vision; 3.) Modeling the Way; 4.) Enabling Others to Act; and 5.) Encouraging the Heart. Executive with training exhibited: a slight

margin over those without training in the categories of Vision and Modeling; a modest

margin over those without training in the categories of Enabling and Encouraging; and a

significant margin over those without training in the category of Challenge.
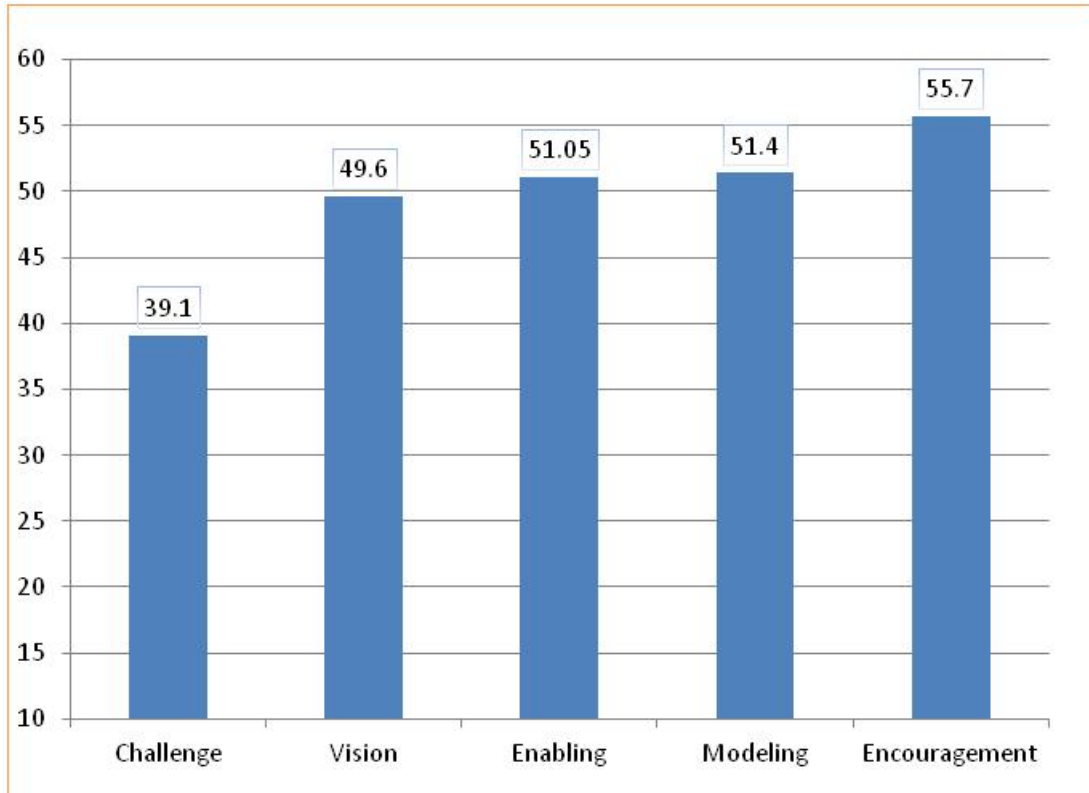
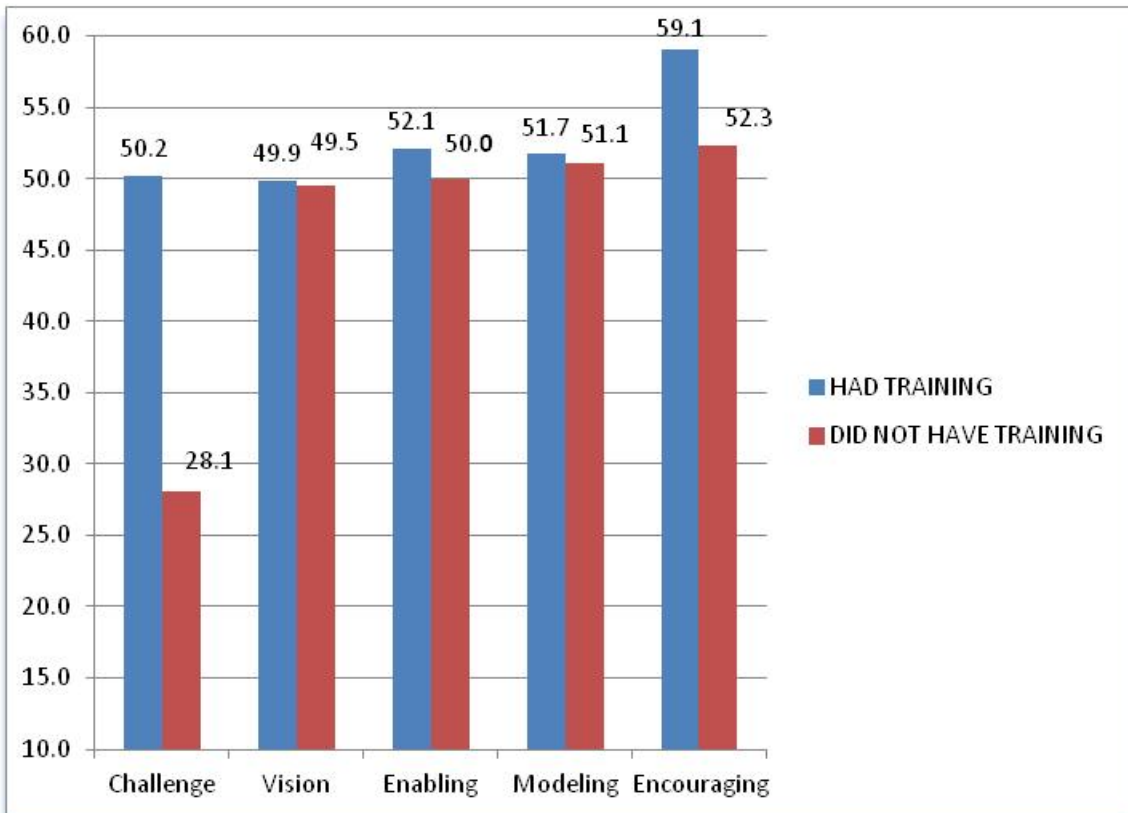*Figure 8.* Combined LPI Score by Category - All Respondents

Figure 9. LPI Score by Category & Training Participation

In analyzing the Descriptive Statistics for the category that showed the greatest degree of variance among practices, Challenging the Process, Table 12 showed that the leadership practice to have the greatest standard deviation (1.68) among all participants to be "I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure."

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for "Challenging the Process"

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Participated in Executive training	35	1.00	2.00	1.8000	.40584
I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure	35	4.00	10.00	6.4000	1.68383
Seeks out challenging opportunities	35	8.00	10.00	9.1429	.64820
I challenge people on innovative approaches	35	7.00	10.00	8.7714	.97274
I search outside formal boundaries for innovative ways	35	7.00	10.00	8.7429	1.01003
Make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions	35	6.00	10.00	8.6286	.87735
Valid N (listwise)	35				

In an effort to further understand the data sample "I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure", the sample was analyzed for participant frequency according to whether or not the participant received training. Figure 10 below represents the percentage of frequency that each respondent chose to take risks or not to take risks. Participants who received training were overwhelmingly inclined to take risks in
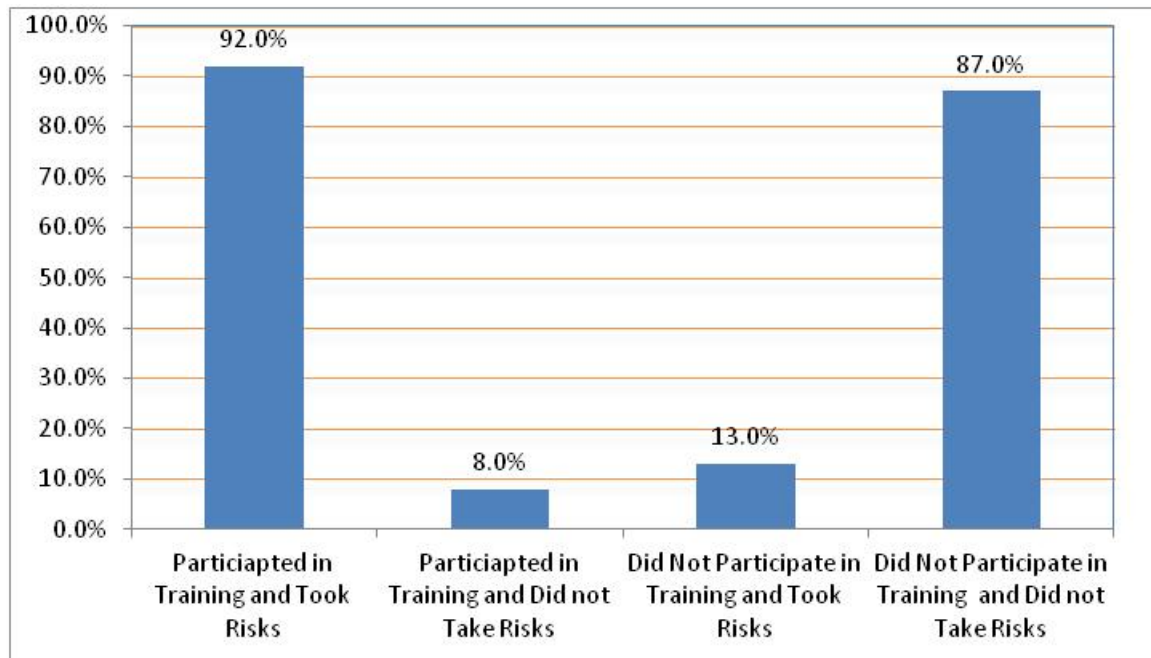
comparison to those who did not receive training.

Figure 10. Risk Taking by Participant Training

LPI Correlation Analysis

The following application of the Pearson Correlation statistic represents a

statistical analysis to locate the value of p, which is the probability of error. In order for

there to be a statistically significant difference between the measurement of training and

the practices of executive charter school leaders, the p value must be = 0.05 or less

(Steinberg, 2008). When $p= 0.05$, the measured differences between two variables only

show a **5% probability** of occurring on their own by chance. When $p= 0.01$, the

measured differences between two variables only show a **1% probability** of occurring on

their own by chance, thus the smaller the p value, the stronger the correlation. The

analysis was performed on the six data samples under the Leadership Practices Category

for "Challenges the Process" as shown in Tables 13 - 18. Four of the six data samples

resulted in a p value of = 0.01, one data sample resulted in a p value of = 0.05, and one

data sample showed no statistical significance:

Table 13 –

Question # 1 - *I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities*

Correlations

		Participated in Executive training	*Seeks out challenging opportunities*
Participated in Executive training	Pearson Correlation	1	-.335[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.049
	N	35	35
Seeks out challenging opportunities	Pearson Correlation	-.335[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.049	
	N	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between training resulted in a significant *p* value = 0.05

Table 14

Question # 6 - *I challenge people to try out new and innovative approaches to their work*

Correlations

		Participated in Executive training	*I challenge people on innovative approaches*
Participated in Executive training	Pearson Correlation	1	-.566**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
I challenge people on innovative approaches	Pearson Correlation	-.566**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between training resulted in a significant *p* value = 0.01

Table 15

Question # 11 – "I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative

ways to improve what we do"

Correlation

		Participated in Executive training	*I search outside formal boundaries for innovative ways*
Participated in Executive training	Pearson Correlation	1	-.631**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
I search outside formal boundaries for innovative ways	Pearson Correlation	-.631**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between training resulted in a significant *p* value = 0.01 *p* value of = 0.01

Table 16

<u>*Question # 16*</u> *- "I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions*

to the success of our projects"

Correlations

		Participated in Executive training	*Make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions*
Participated in Executive training	Pearson Correlation	1	-.297
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.083
	N	35	35
Make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions	Pearson Correlation	-.297	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	
	N	35	35

The correlation between training resulted in **no statistical significance.**

Table 17

Question # 21 - *I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure*

Correlation

		Participated in Executive Training	I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure
Participated in Executive training	Pearson Correlation	1	-.826**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure	Pearson Correlation	-.826**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between training resulted in a significant *p* value = 0.01 *p* value of = 0.01

Table 18

Question # 26 - I take the initiative to overcome obstacles even when outcomes are

uncertain

Correlations

		Participated in Executive training	I take the initiative to overcome obstacles even when outcomes are uncertain
Participated in Executive training	Pearson Correlation	1	-.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
I take the initiative to overcome obstacles even when outcomes are uncertain	Pearson Correlation	-.692**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
The correlation between training resulted in a significant *p* value = 0.01 *p* value of = 0.01

Rejecting the Null Hypothesis

Throughout the process of the data collection as well as through the statistical

process of analysis, observation of data samples were considered for how they might

support either of the below stated hypothesis that guided the study.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between training and exemplary leadership practices of executive charter school leaders.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a relationship between training and exemplary leadership practices of executive charter school leaders.

The results of the study showed strong statistical support to reject the Null Hypothesis, which stated there was no relationship between training and leadership practice. Five statistical applications were applied to the collected data (descriptive statistics, T-Test, ANOVA, Person Correlation, and Pearson Chi Square). Each application produced a statistically significant result of $p < .05$. Accordingly, the Alternative Hypothesis was accepted, which stated that there is a relationship between training and leadership practice. In accepting the alternative hypothesis ($\mu = d$ vs. the alternate hypothesis $\mu \neq d$), the data was also accepted as evidence against the mean, and the mean was accepted as being a true value.

Summary

The results show that there appears to be a correlation (*p*-value of at least .05 or .01) between leadership training and the executive leadership practices for most of the samples of the LPI assessment. The results also indicated a substantial degree of significance to support the rejection of the null hypothesis. Additionally, there were two data samples that emerged to show a high correlation between leadership training and executive leadership practices in the area of "Challenging the Process." There was a strong corollary relationship between participants who did participate in leadership training and who were also willing to "take risks when there was a chance for failure" as well as to "search outside of formal boundaries for innovative ways to improve."

Conversely, those who did not participate in leadership training were less likely to take

risks and to search outside of formal boundaries. The LPI survey was an online,

anonymous data collection process, thus the methodology did not allow for follow up

qualitative type inquiry as to why a participant chose a particular response.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"A scientist has to be neutral in his search for the truth, but he cannot be neutral as to the use of that truth when found....you have more responsibility, rather than less."

Baron C. P. Snow

The charter school environment in Washington, D.C. is one that is very fluid and sometimes experiences frequent and rapid structural (mergers, closures, takeovers) and policy changes; all of which bear a direct impact on the executive's charge in leading their organization. Under such circumstances, being able to manage change effectively becomes a paramount skill for the executive charter school leader. Quinn (2010) asserts that all organizational leaders must face the core dilemma of managing change, as the alternative will be to embrace a slow death of systems and productivity entropy. The review of website documents, scholarly research, testimonial, agency records, governmental white papers, and print media all seem to indicate that change is a constant element in the work environment of charter schools in Washington, D.C.

Implications for Data Results

The results showed that leaders who have not participated in leadership training reported the behavior of less risk taking when outcomes might lead to failure as well as being less inclined to search outside formal boundaries for innovative ways to improve. It is plausible to speculate that executive leaders who have not had training, may not have been exposed to skill building related to assessing industry environments, analyzing, planning and executing strategies that help them to fortify their organization's position. Another factor could be the reaction to working in a difficult environment. Many

executive leaders have witnessed their peers experience fairly protracted and public scrutiny of their professional character when calculated risks did not yield the intended results. As discussed in the Charter School Environment section of Chapter One, there have been numerous public assessments of executive charter school leaders in Washington, D.C. with some scrutiny and evaluation disseminated within the educational sector, and others printed on the front page of the Washington Post. Potentially, risk-taking behavior can be considered any number of the following:

- Changes in policy that increase accountability and require measurable outcomes
- Committing to strategic alliances with external bodies
- Incorporating innovation and change in status quo environment
- Commitment to long-range development plan

Hypothetically, the lack of training exposure in key areas can conceivably leave an executive and their organization open for unwanted threats and limited opportunities for advancement; all of which could lead an executive to be less inclined to take risks. In an effort to reduce risk, Taleb (2009) asserts that executives must show accountability and demonstrate skill in how they make decisions, which should include a balanced measure of data, evaluation and sheer instinct.

It would seem that it is a natural fit for executive leaders to embrace an entrepreneurial approach to managing their multi million-dollar operations. Successful entrepreneurs seek to manage organizational change as a means to considerably impact internal drivers such as motivation, strategy, culture, risk and evaluation (Schein, 2010; Senge, 2006; Knight, 2001; and Society for Management Accountants, 2006). All

industries are being forced to examine their strategies for sustainability and the required leadership that is going to help an organization to meet its long-range goals. Garth Saloner (2010), dean of Stanford University's Graduate School of Business contends that the school faces particular challenges in ensuring that the training of their graduate students is preparing them to address the leadership challenges ahead that demand experienced talent to effect an ever changing market.

Theoretical Observations

Executive charter school leaders in Washington, D.C. are in a unique position in the history of the charter school movement. What was once thought to be just an experiment in education reform has turned out to be a formidable force for established educational institutions to contend with. Washington, D.C. has ranked as #2 annually for the past four years for a national comparison of charter school market share versus traditional public schools. Each year, the trend of increased market share for charter schools nationally continues to show modest gains (National Alliance, 2012). The National Alliance also reports that the 2013-2014 school year will commence with a wait list of close to 1,000,000 students whose parents and/or guardians seek admission into charter schools.

The drivers that impact the internal environment of a charter school are also compelling agents that influence and, at times demand innovative approaches to change. Collins' (2001) Level Five Leadership suggests that executives possess the ability to establish lasting organizations. Executives are mindful in balancing the organization's time, energy and resources in attending to some the most challenging elements confronting charter schools:

- Executive & Staff Attrition;

- Vision & Mission Alignment;

- Organizational Culture;

- Student Achievement;

- Parent Engagement;

- Operational & Facilities Costs;

- Rising Cost of Health Care and Pension Plans;

- Human Expertise vs. Technology Innovation;

- Growing Competition; and

- Precipice for dramatic policy changes in next 4-6 years.

Another unique factor that is associated with the executive leader of a charter school in Washington, D.C. has very much to do with the geographic location being in the nation's capital. In many ways, this element adds several additional layers of external environmental influences as well as additional stakeholders that must be engaged in order to effectively manage change and lead the organization. The goal of change management is a tough challenge for an executive leader of a charter school in Washington, D.C. However, it is a mantle that must be lifted for the benefit of continued professional development as well as for the continued viability of the organization. De Kluyver and Pearce (2009) argue that politics play a paramount role as one of the key environmental factors along with other drivers such as economical, technological, and sociocultural aspects. Simpkins (2009) contends that successful leaders will have to seamlessly bridge the gap between operations and vision through diligent change management efforts.

The political environment in which the charter school executive must effectively navigate is dense and difficult (Baxter & Cooley Nelson, 2012). As discussed in the Charter School Environment section in Chapter One, there can be a host of stakeholders that have a vested interest in the success of the organization. There are also a myriad of players who have a legal or legitimate voice and audience in which to speak regarding activities concerning charter school operations in Washington, D.C. Immediate external stakeholders consists of:

- DC Public Charter School Board (current single authorizer of charters schools in Washington, D.C.);

- DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education

- DC Association of Chartered Public Schools

- Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)

- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

- Funders

Secondary external stakeholders consists of:

- Washington, D.C. Office of the Mayor

- Washington, D.C. City Council

- US House of Representatives

- Community Partners & Civic Leaders

Charter schools were ushered into Washington, D.C, by way of the Washington, D.C. School Reform Act of 1995. Under Constitutional Law, Washington, D.C. does not enjoy the full acknowledgement of official statehood as is accorded all states of the union. As a result, the United States Congress, which made charter schools a part of the

D.C. public schools system, passed the D.C. School Reform Act of 1995. Initially, the act was thought to be a way to stimulate improvement in traditional public schools while at the same time providing parents with more school choices.

Provisions in the act allowed for the creation of a second charter school authorizer, the D.C. Public Charter School Board (PCSB), and the primary being the D.C. Board of Education. Board members for PCSB are nominated by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and are then appointed by the Mayor of Washington, D.C. While the D.C. Board of Education voted in 2006 to abandon their charter school authorizing authority, there has been a significant renewed interest of late with the current Mayor, Vincent Gray, introducing legislation to give the now District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) the ability to authorize charter schools. Mayor Gray also introduced school reform efforts that have implications for both charter and traditional public schools, which also includes an avenue to open more charter schools. In addition to the new school reform legislation that was introduced by Mayor Gray, more school reform legislation was presented by D.C. Councilmember, David Catania, in the form of six lengthy education bills to be considered by the full membership (Sommer, 2013). Implications from the Catania bills for charter schools seem to point to per-pupil funding, innovative turn around for underperforming schools, lottery systems for school choice, and the extended role of the State Superintendent of Education. Mr. Graham (D.C. Council Member) who is not a member of the education committee also expressed an early interest in Catania's legislative proposal, as he too is interested in strategic planning around education reform (Simmons, 2013).

Lerner (2013) notes that the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor of Education, the Public

Charter School Board, the DCPS Chancellor, and the D.C. Council all set rules under which public schools operate, and are now again being joined by U.S. Congress as the No Child Left Behind law is about to expire in 2014. Republican Majority Leader, Eric Cantor recently visited Two Rivers Public Charter School. Members of the Republican Leadership of the House Education and the Workforce Committees also accompanied Cantor on the visit. Two Rivers is considered to be a high performing charter school, which serves an elementary school population in the Northeast section of Washington, D.C.

It was only three weeks later, July 2013, that Republican Senator, Rand Paul, convened a hearing on school choice on Capital Hill framed as "Success for our children: A forum on school choice" (Lerner, 2013). The session opened up as a beginning conversation on equity in education and options regarding school choice. Three charter schools were highlighted (DC Prep, Washington Latin, and KIPP DC) and a school voucher program, Opportunity Scholarship Program. Students and parents associated with each were on hand to testify and field inquiry relative to their experiences and opinions about quality education. Additional education representation came from: Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, Alliance for School Choice and the D.C. Charter School Board.

Lessons from the Field

As mentioned earlier in the discussion, the politics surrounding charter school education and policy in Washington, D.C. can be difficult to dissect and maneuver through. There are significant implications for charter school operations taking place at both the local and national level. There are several entities that have formal authority (as

per the D.C. School Reform Act) to present prescriptive actions relative to the future of charter school education. There are supportive membership and advocacy bodies (DC Association for Public Chartered Schools and FOCUS) that leverage power, resources and influence on the behalf of charter schools, and now the federal government has taken on a renewed interest in charter schools and the issue of school choice.

A few years ago, the Brookings Brown Center Task Group on Charter Schools released a report on the federal role in education which noted that federal involvement in charter schools had played a minor role until the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 which shifted much of the federal funding for charter schools from state distribution to national competition grants to which charters could directly apply (Croft, et al., 2010). The report also focused on the continued evolution of funding strategies for charter schools like Race to the Top, which was interpreted as the beginning of a new era for federal policy toward charter schools.

It is an opportune time for charter school executives to enhance their skills in conducting a thorough internal and external environmental analysis by taking advantage of the extraordinary amount of education policy activity that is going on. The greater the awareness of all the implications for the charter school industry, the greater the chances are for the executive to leverage that gained knowledge for the organization's benefit.

There are many reasonable strategic approaches (perspective, position, planning, patterning and tactic) that can set a clear path toward growth and sustainability for the executive's organization (Mintzberg, 2005). However, strategies begin with an environmental scan that will produce the necessary amount of data for analysis; thus, leading to an informed and cogent decision-making process. Because there is so much

activity going on in the political arena that has the potential for an immediate and long-range effort on charter school operations, it might be very helpful for charter executives to build a political development strategy much in the same way that funding development strategies are crafted. In doing so, all of the key players are reviewed for:

- How they have voted on issues pertaining to charter schools;

- Public speech content related to education reform and charters;

- Membership organizations and political committee that they sit on;

- Review of legislation associated with their name regarding charter schools;

- Assessment of political strength;

- What are the pros and cons of aligning with one particular camp or individual;

- How can the organization best deliver its case story of success to begin leveraging its brand; and

- Who are the strong opponents of charter schools that might be turned into allies;

Most of the aforementioned strategic examples that have been presented should be considered as a general application, and not prescriptive. Each charter school operation in Washington, D.C. is very unique regarding organizational structure, mission and leadership. The executive will in most cases need to work closely with the Board of Trustees to map out specific strategies because it will undoubtedly require a commitment of both time and resource allocation.

Nelson Smith, former president of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, called for a critical look at the future of executive leadership in charter school organizations on a national level in 2008 (National Alliance, 2008). The ensuing report "Charter School Executives," is one of the first scholarly studies on the subject, which revealed key concerns about limited training opportunities and critical skill gaps in the areas of business, management and political acumen. Smith's successor, Ursula Wright, expanded upon the issue of executive charter school leadership and added the expectation that all Charter Management Organizations must have a solid succession plan for executive leadership transition to ensure their organization's long-range sustainability. Both Smith and Wright appear to have been fortuitous in their visionary proclamations given the current political environment, which now calls for very specific leadership skills in testing the status quo.

One could make an argument that there is too much uncertainty that abounds in the charter school industry and more specifically in Washington, D.C. However, the circumstances actually present a perfect storm for being able to predict high probability and have high impact; the opposite of a Black Swan effect of low probability and high impact. Kouzes and Posner (2007) argue that challenge to an organization presents an opportunity for leadership greatness by effectively managing change and motivating others to excel beyond their limits. Additionally, Collins' (2001) theory of Level Five Leadership (grounded in the concept of institutional building) offers a very good perspective for executive charter leaders. By employing a Level Five Leadership framework, charter executives might guide their organization through the current

environmental climate, which calls for building organizations to last. Lasting institutions are able to weather the storms of economics, social trends and political strife.

Recommendations for Implementation

This study was designed to explore the possibility of whether or not there is a relationship between executive leadership practices of charter school leaders in Washington, D.C. and leadership training. While all of the quantitative data pointed to a statistically significant correlation between the two variables, what it did not provide is an explanation for questions such as:

- Why did executives assess their leadership practices in the manner that they reported;

- How do the varied stakeholders and the internal and external environments impact the executive leadership practice;

- If the executive did not have any training for the position of executive charter school leader, what types of prior experiences where essential to make the transition and what critical leadership behaviors were adapted to influence organizational success;

- What role does the Board of Trustees play in how the executive is able to strategically position the organization for long-range sustainability;

- In what ways do local and national politics affect the manner in how the executive develops brand messaging and image communication; and

- How do executives integrate the dual responsibilities of the executive and that of the principal in organizations that are structured for one individual to assume both roles?

The list of questions above is not exhaustive, but can be viewed as a beginning source for qualitative inquiry. There are unique and distinguishing characteristics that isolate the researcher's process in selection of qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Creswell, 2009). Steinberg (2008) contends that quantitative research requires the researcher to chiefly concentrate on collecting data that will be measureable in addition to data that can be used to make interpretations or inferences about the chosen sample population in comparison to the general population (Steinberg, 2008). This study was designed to explore the leadership practices and behaviors of a specific sample population and compare the self-reported practices against an independent variable (training). The value of conducting a qualitative inquiry would be that the researcher has the ability (and expectation) to collect rich contextual data in the form of case studies, interviews, artifacts, and observation (Patton, 2002). A qualitative application could have been helpful to answer questions that could not be addressed through a measurable design, such as attributes associated with feelings, needs and perspective.

The execution of a mixed methods approach in understanding the relationship between training and the leadership practices of executive leaders of charter schools could not only provide the measureable data samples needed, but it could also provide for a broader analysis for understanding why the executives reported on their leadership practices as they did. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) widely support the usage of mixed methods research as they view it to be the most complete and purest approach to conducting research because it incorporates several intersecting groups, which expands the research methodology.

The usage of mix methods research is growing in popularity as a means of adequately addressing research questions that contain inquiry related to uncovering

causal relationships as well as questions as to why, when and how. If a researcher is

searching for answers to questions that lay beyond correlation or causality; the blending

of quantitative and qualitative applications can potentially offer the best results. Creswell

(2009) speculates that the primary reason for the increase in the usage of mixed methods

research has largely to do with the single application of quantitative methods not being

able to always provide a thorough enough analysis for answering questions regarding the

opinion of respondents.

A secondary option for data collection could be the usage of the Leadership

Practices Inventory - 360 Degree Survey. The Self Reported LPI that was used for this

study only reported on the perceptions that each participant provided in relationship to

inquiry about their own leadership practices. Self-reporting is not always a foolproof

method for data collection and can provide skewed results depending upon how accurate

the participant is at evaluating their own leadership practice. In using the LPI – Self in

conjunction with the LPI – 360, the researcher would then have access to broader data

samples to compare and perform statistical analysis.

The additional data would come from supervisors of the executive (Board of

Trustee members in the case of charter schools), subordinates of the executive, as well as

key stakeholders. As discussed, key stakeholders could cover all the key players and

organizational entities that the executive interfaces with and engages regularly as

discussed relative to the external environment of the charter school. The broader scope

of information and data that can be collected could provide insight beyond this study to

include covariance analysis between and among groups.

Areas for Further Research

Additional research possibilities could come from exploring the development
and/or effectiveness in succession planning and leadership training programs that are
designed to: 1.) Address executive charter school leadership attrition; and 2.) Increase the
pipeline for executive charter school leaders. Some recommendations of specific
research could be the following:

1). Executive Leadership and its Impact on Organizational Performance of
Charter Schools;

2). Effective Leadership Styles for Executive Leaders of Charter Schools;

3). Implications for Charter School Boards and Their Role in Sustainability;

4). Local and National CS Politics: Perspective from an Executive Charter School
Leader;

5).The role and effectiveness of CS Authorizers;

6). Charter school autonomy: Leveraging power;

7). An evolution of charter school executive leadership

Summary

The study examined the relationship between training and the leadership practices
of executive charter school leaders. Thirty-five executives responded to an online survey
that allowed for the respondents to self-assess their leadership practices through the
Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). Of all the participants who received leadership
training prior to the commencement of their current position, each responded at the
"high" level (at or higher than the 70th percentile) for each of the instrument's five
Leadership Practices Categories. Of all the participants who did not receive leadership

training prior to the commencement of their current position, each responded at the "high" level (at or higher than the 70th percentile) for four of the instrument's five Leadership Practices Categories. The results for "Challenging the Process" showed a statistically significant variance between groups base on training. Under the "Challenging the Process" category, participants who did not receive training were less likely to "take risks when there is a chance of failure" as well as to "search outside formal boundaries for innovative ways to improve". Statistical applications resulted in high correlations between training and leadership practices across five of the six data samples for "Challenging the Process". The overall data results were strong enough to reject the null hypothesis and to accept the alternative: There is a relationship between training and the leadership practices of executive charter school leaders. The results suggest that executive charter school leaders might exhibit specific leadership practices in the area of "Challenging the Process" depending upon whether or not they have participated in leadership training prior to taking on the role as school leader.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Request Letter to Conduct Research to DC Public Charter School Board

Casandra Levine_____

127 17th Street SE, Washington, DC 20003

April 20, 2012

Monique Miller, Assistant Director
School Performance Management
DC Public Charter School Board
3333 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20010

Hello Ms Miller,

My name is Casandra Levine. I am currently working on my dissertation (the impact of training and executive charter school leadership performance). I spoke with your office yesterday to inquire about the process to request permission to conduct research in the District targeting executive charter school leaders. I was referred for follow up with you.

The Center for Reinventing Public Education has put out some significant quality reports and scholarly research on the topic. As you probably know, there is not a lot to add to the research available on the relationship between the type of leadership training received and the actual performance of executive charter school leaders. There are several institutes and programs across the country for charter school principal training, however very few for the executive level (tailored specifically for the charter school environment). For my research, I am intentionally making a distinction between principals and executive leadership (executive director, head of school, president, CEO, superintendent, etc.).

I have selected the geographic location of Washington, DC as the sole source for identifying respondents for several reasons:
• Nationally, the District has been a pacesetter in regard to advancing the cause of the Charter School Movement;
• I am now a resident of Washington, DC, having relocated five years ago; and
• I have worked as a staff member in a few different roles at different charters and have also been a consultant for a few.

The instrumentation that I'll be using is Kouzes & Posners' Leadership Practices Inventory, which is a 30-question self-assessment survey that should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete . I am hoping to administer the survey electronically. I have also received permission to use the instrument after an analysis from Kouzes & Posners' team. I have attached a copy of the signed permission letter for your review.

What I am hoping to learn from the research is whether or not there is a relationship between training and performance. If the results bear out strong associations between and among variables that would suggest a relationship, I would hope that the research could be used to stimulate the availability of increased access and resources for training executive charter school leaders.

I hope the above information has provided you with a brief snapshot. Being very new to this whole process, please advise relative to next steps. You can reach via this email address or my home number 202.543.2043.

Thank you very much and I look forward to hearing from you.............

Casandra Levine

APPENDIX B

Permission Letter to Conduct Research

DC·PCSB

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

October 24, 2012

Dr. Grace Klinefleter
Assistant Dean
College of Business
Argosy University
1550 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Dr. Klinefelter,

I am in receipt of Casandra Levine's request to conduct research on executive charter school leaders by way of an electronic opinion survey. Please accept this letter as an acknowledgement of giving Ms. Levine permission to conduct her research project.

We will be able to forward a copy of her survey link via our private list serve to advise the school leaders of the research, but are not able to formally advocate participation. To help support Ms. Levine in her efforts, we have made introductions to nonprofit organizations that are interested in the research topic and might be able to provide further assistance.

Thank you for your interest in the work that is done at public charter schools in the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

APPENDIX C

Permission Letter to use LPI

JB JOSSEY-BASS
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News

April 17, 2012

Casandra Levine
P. O. Box 15341
Washington DC 20003

Dear Ms. Levine:

Thank you for your request to use the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in your dissertation. We are willing to allow you to *reproduce* the instrument in written form, as outlined in your request, at no charge. If you prefer to use our electronic distribution of the LPI (vs. making copies of the print materials) you will need to separately contact Lisa Shannon (lshannon@wiley.com) directly for instructions and payment. Permission to use either the written or electronic versions requires the following agreement:

(1) That the LPI is used only for research purposes and is not sold or used in conjunction with any compensated management development activities;
(2) That copyright of the LPI, or any derivation of the instrument, is retained by Kouzes Posner International, and that the following copyright statement is included on all copies of the instrument; "Copyright 8 2003 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. All rights reserved. Used with permission",
(3) That one (1) **electronic** copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data be sent **promptly** to our attention; and,
(4) That you agree to allow us to include an abstract of your study and any other published papers utilizing the LPI on our various websites.

If the terms outlined above are acceptable, would you indicate so by signing one (1) copy of this letter and returning it to me either via email or by post to; 1548 Camino Monde San Jose, CA 95125. Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

Ellen Peterson
Permissions Editor
Epeterson4@gmail.com

I understand and agree to abide by these conditions:

(Signed) _Casandra Lu_ Date: _4/18/2012_

Expected Date of Completion is: _January 2013_

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APPENDIX D

Leadership Practices Inventory

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)

Instructions: You are being asked to assess your leadership practices. Below are 30 statements describing various leadership practices. Please read each statement carefully, then look at the rating scale and decide how frequently you engage in the behavior described. Following is the rating scale you will use for your responses:

1 = Almost Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Seldom 4 = Once in a While 5 = Occasionally

6 = Sometimes 7 = Fairly Often 8 = Usually 9 = Very Frequently

10 = Almost Always

As you select your response please be very realistic about the extent to which you actually engage in the behavior. Do not answer in terms of how you would like to behave or in terms of how you thinking your should behave. Answer in terms of how you typically behave on most days, on most projects, and with most people.

To what extent do you typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the number that best applies to each statement and record it in the blank space to the left of the statement. Your responses will be kept confidential.

1. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities: _____

2. I talk about future trends that will influence how my work gets done: _____

3. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with: _____

4. I set a personal example of what I expect from others: _____

5. I praise people for a job well done: _____

6. I challenge people to try out new and innovative approaches to their work:_____

7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like: _____

8. I actively listen to diverse points of view: _____

9. I spend time and energy on making certain that the people I work with adhere to

    the principles and standards that have been agreed upon: _____

10. I make it a pint to let people know about my confidence in their abilities: _____

11. I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to

    improve what we do: _____

12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future: _____

13. I treat others with dignity and respect: _____

14. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make: _____

15. I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the

success of our projects: _____

16.   I ask what we can learn when things don't go as expected: _____

17.   I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision: _____

18.   I support the decision that people make on their own: _____

19.   I am clear about my philosophy of leadership: _____

20.   I publicly recognize people who exemplify a commitment to shared values: _____

21.   I experiment and take risks even when there is a chance of failure: _____

22.   I am contagiously enthusiastic and positive about future possibilities: _____

23.   I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to work: _____

24.   I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on: _____

25.   I find ways to celebrate accomplishments: _____

26.   I take the initiative to overcome obstacle even when outcomes are uncertain: _____

27.   I speak with true conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work: ____

28.   I ensure that people grow in their roles by learning new skills and developing themselves: _____

29.   I make progress toward goals one-step at a time: _____

30.   I give my coworkers lots of appreciation and support for their contributions: _____

APPENDIX E

Institutional Review Board Certification Letter

ARGOSY UNIVERSITY.

March 11, 2013

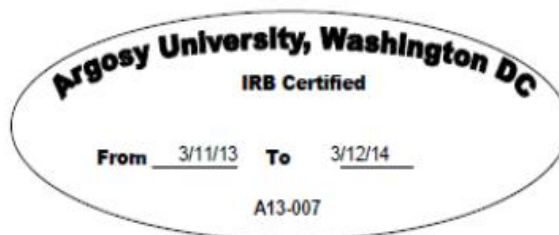Argosy University, Washington DC

Dear Ms. Casandra Levine:

   Your application that was initially received on February 16, 2013, and completed on February 25, 2013, for Argosy University, Washington DC Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification for your project, "The Relationship Between Training and Executive Charter School Leadership Practice," Research Project Number A13-007, was reviewed and certified by the IRB on March 11, 2013, for the period March 11, 2013 to March 12, 2014. You may now proceed with your research project, following the protocol and modified consent form that were certified by the IRB. If you wish to continue with your study beyond March 12, 2014, a Continuing Review Form must be submitted to and certified by the IRB.

   Your research must be conducted according to the protocol and consent form that were certified by the IRB. Any changes to the protocol (including changes in recruitment and recruitment materials) must be reported to and certified by the IRB before the changes may be implemented. You must report any adverse events or reactions to the IRB. **When the study is complete, you must submit a Project Completion Report in order to receive clearance for graduation** (these and other forms are available on the campus web site at http://www.argosydc.net/forms/index.php and in the future on the Campus Commons at https://mycampus.argosy.edu/portal/server.pt).

   Please contact our office with any questions. All future correspondence must include the IRB protocol number and the title of the study.

Sincerely,

James Sexton, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Argosy University, Washington DC
IRB Certified
From   3/11/13   To   3/12/14
A13-007

cc: Dr. Grace Klinefelter