Principals' Response to Change in Schools and Its Effect on School Climate[*]

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Abstract

In this study, the researchers examined principal behaviors related with change in school climate. That is, the manner in which principals managed change within their schools and the impact of these change behaviors on the school climate was investigated. Through use of the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003) and the Organizational Health Inventory (Fairman, 1979), principals' Usual Change behaviors were statistically significant and positively related to the Organizational Health Dimensions of Resource Utilization and Innovativeness. Moreover, principals' Needs and Stress Change behaviors were statistically significant and negatively correlated to the Organizational Health Dimension of Goal Focus. Implications of these findings are discussed.

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1 Perspective

Tremendous technological, economic, and social changes have occurred in our society over the last 20 years that have impacted the way schools function and serve students. Principals are required to provide the leadership that equips students to function and contribute in the midst of this environmental and societal change (Jazzar & Algozzine , 2007). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2003) reported that the leadership responsibilities and behaviors of principals who are referred to as change agents and as optimizers are related to improved student outcomes in schools. They defined a change agent as a person who is willing to and also actively challenges to status quo and is willing to disrupt the equilibrium within the school. Change agents are also willing to encourage innovation and protect staff members who are willing to take risks. An optimizer is a leader who uses optimism and energy to inspire and lead new and challenging change initiatives within the school. Marzano et al. suggested that to promote improved student outcomes it appears that the school principal must exhibit behaviors commensurate with the ability to respond to an environment of change. Collins (2001), in describing what he referred to as Level 5 leadership, stated that these leaders exhibit a ferocious resolve and an unbending determination to do whatever it takes to make the organization great.

2 Principals as Change Agents

Researchers have demonstrated that principals who were successful change agents all provided resources for the school, communicated effectively, and maintained a visible presence (Fullan, 1999). Fullan (2001) described effective leaders as persons who are able to embrace resistance. They see dissent as a potential source of new ideas and breakthroughs and the absence of change and conflict as a sign of decay. Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja (2000) referred to sustained balance and equilibrium as a form of death. School leaders who make an impact on student outcomes are open to change and will embrace new ideas and challenge the status quo whenever it impedes the mission of the school.

Fullan (2001) further added that the framework for leadership necessary to manage change includes: moral purpose, understanding the change process, coherence making, and knowledge creation and sharing, and relationship building. Other researchers have also offered strategies that principals can follow to implement change efforts to improve schools (Beer, Eisenstate, & Spector, 1990; Duck, 1998; Hamel, 2002; Kotter, 1996) but they did not discuss the behaviors that emerge among successful leaders involved in change initiatives and how they impact the climate of the school. Fullan (2001) summarized the key leadership aspects of change in the following manner: "The single factor most common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve" (p.5). The manner in which the principal develops relationships within the school can determine the success or failure of change.

Schlechty (2002) stated that for change to be sustained a group must be formed that can be depended on to support a course of action to produce the change effort even in the absence of the leader; "Change requires an environment where the intentions of leaders are trusted and where it is a fact, rather than simply rhetoric, that the principal wants to work with teachers rather than to work on them" (p. 49). The importance of trust and the strength of relationships within schools that succeed in change initiatives are supported by Evans (1996) who stated that the values of authentic leaders are characterized by three things: personal ethics, vision, and belief in others. When more radical change is required with in an organization, Pascale et al. (2000) believed that the organization needs leadership that embraces differences, communicates the urgency of the challenge, talks about solutions positively, and that motivates people to reach beyond themselves. The manner in which the principal responds to the demands of change and the impact that those behaviors have on the climate of the school can determine the success or failure of the change initiative as well as substantially impact the climate of the school (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In addition, Jazzar and Algozzine (2007) suggested that schools with positive climates and cultures are constantly changing as leaders reshape them to address the needs within the school.

3 Climate

School climate has been described as the heart and soul of the school and the essence of the school that draws teachers and students to love it and to want to be a part of it (Freiberg & Stein, 1999). Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1997) performed a meta-analysis where they demonstrated that school culture and climate were among the top influences in enhancing student achievement. They also stated that state and local policies, schools organization and student demographics exerted the least influence on student learning. The importance of the health of the school climate is paramount to the principal because of its direct influence on learning (Maslowski, 2001).

Unhealthy school climates are deterred from their mission and goals by parental and public demands (Hoy & Tarter, 1997). Unhealthy schools often lack an effective leader and the teachers are generally unhappy with their jobs and colleagues. In addition, neither teachers nor students are academically motivated in unhealthy schools and academic achievement is not highly valued. Healthy schools that promote high academic standards, appropriate leadership, and collegiality provide a climate that is more conducive for student success (Hoy, Tarter, & Bliss, 1990). Organizational health is defined as the organization's ability to function effectively, to copy adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow from within (Miles, 1971). In this definition of organizational health, Miles highlighted the organization's ability to change as a key component of health. The manner in which the principal interacts to change within the school and the personal behaviors that he/she exhibits in response to change is the focus of this study.

4 Leadership Behavior and its Impact on Climate

Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) proposed a different way of examining the effect of principal leadership. They suggested that principals' usual behaviors create links between the characteristics of the school's organizational and learning climate. These links to school climate are the mechanisms through which principals truly effect student and learning and are referred to as indirect effects.

Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) commented:

4.1

This perspective on indirect effects also occurs in more recent and more complex models for research into principal leadership. Leadership is no longer proposed as having a direct influence on learning outcomes but as having an indirect influence through the way it has an impact on school organization and school culture. (p. 401)

Hallinger and Heck (1998) suggested that the principal's influence has an indirect effect on learning and is mediated by their interactions with others, situational events, and the organizational and cultural factors of the school. Leithwood (1992) referred to principals as change agents and suggested that principals influence student achievement in the school through the transformation of the school culture into an environment that is hospitable to learning. In addition, Ogawa and Bossert (1995) further reported that leaders function within organizational cultures and affect the ways in which members of the organization interpret events which influence their behavior.

Maslowski (2001) stated that an association exists between leadership values, behaviors and school culture and that these leadership values and behaviors have consequences for student outcomes. In addition, researchers who are currently exploring the indirect effect of principal leadership on student outcomes have suggested that educational leadership affects the organization and culture of the school which, in turn, affects student achievement (Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). Maslowski (2001) reviewed studies in which the relationship between school culture and student achievement was addressed. Even though he argued that the studies varied in their definitions of culture and student performance, he concluded that the findings could be interpreted to mean that that the culture of the school is related to student performance. Because the school principal most effectively influences student performance through the school climate, a cautious examination of the behaviors that principals exhibit during that interaction with climate and the manner in which these behaviors influence school climate is critical. For the purposes of this study, we examined the

behavioral component of change as measured by the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003). The component of change describes how a person deals with interruptions and disruptions of significant priorities. It also characterizes how well a person tends to focus. Individuals with low change tend to focus their attention on tasks and projects without varying their attention to the task. They attend well to goals without distraction and easily compartmentalize information, data, and management responsibilities. Persons with high change are usually responsive and attentive to the needs and requests of faculty and staff. They respond well to new ideas and changes for the school, readily implement new ideas, and embrace variety (Johnson, 2003).

5 Self Awareness and Leadership

For educational leaders to manage effectively the changes that impact the culture and climate of the school in ways that promote student achievement, they must first develop a clear awareness of self and the manner in which their behaviors impact the members of the school organization (Johnson & Busch, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2001; Zaccaoro, 2001). The awareness of self gives principals an insight into their own behavioral dispositions as well as informs them on the ways they respond to individuals and changes within the school (Jazzar & Algozzine, 2007).When leaders are aware of their own behaviors and beliefs they are able to become sensitive to the needs of teachers, parents, and students (McCowin, Arnold, Miles, & Hargodine, 2000).

Regarding individual behavioral patterns, discussion about these behaviors do not seem to benefit the aspiring or practicing principal because these behaviors are the result of underlying needs and perceptions of which the person may not be aware (Birkman, 1995). Principals need the opportunity to develop this awareness and identify how these behaviors will impact their practice as well as the culture of school. These personal behavior patterns are first demonstrated through our usual behavior which is influenced by what is believed to be socially acceptable. Actions people take to be perceived as socially acceptable have been used to such an extent that it is sometimes hard to know individuals' true identities. Until individuals have accomplished the task of separating their socialized behavior from their genuine personality, then others will relate to them just as they are perceived by others. Consequently, the more socialized behavior an individual reflects, the more difficult it is for others to know the real individual (Birkman, 1995).

People often are uncomfortable about discovering the true self. So much time is spent working from behind our socialized behavior, we are very reluctant to consider the truth about ourselves when that truth is neither positive nor negative; it is just who we are. This behavior often misleads faculty and staff and causes relationships that may not produce the interactions sought by the principal and can be harmful to the climate. Consequently, it is important to determine areas of personal strengths and areas of concern. Equally important is an understanding that areas of weakness are not indicators of "bad" behaviors or tendencies. In fact, Birkman (1995) stated that understanding one's own behaviors is critical to maximizing workplace effectiveness:

5.1

A person's "weaknesses" are never a negative indication. Weaknesses simply point us to our strengths. And the sooner we discover which aspects of any job we are best suited for, the sooner we can begin to figure out why we feel the way we do about ourselves, our jobs, and other people. (p. 17)

Awareness of personal behaviors allows principals to effectively build teams from strengths and diversity rather than solely from similarities.According to Lewin and Regine (2000), relationships are not established by superficially knowing one another, but rather they are genuine relationships based on authenticity and care. To have deep regard for people inside and outside of the school, the principal must first make an effort to become self-aware and authentic.

In addition, Kouzes and Pozner (1993) stated that principals often respond to the many problems in schools unaware of the personal behavioral patterns that comprise situations. They may unintentionally exhibit behaviors that influence already sensitive situations or create unnecessary concern for faculty and staff that contribute to suspicion and mistrust. In most instances, these decisions or actions are done without

awareness of the behavior patterns underlying the decisions and the principals often wonder why the resulting outcomes of their decisions were not as they expected.

Combs, Miser, and Whitaker (1999) explained the impact of behaviors on leadership through the person-centered view in the following statement:

5.2

The person-centered view of people contends that we do not respond directly to the forces exerted on us. Instead, we behave in terms of the meanings of perceptions that exist for us at the moment we act. More specifically, people behave according to how they see themselves, the situations they confront, and the purposes they seek to fulfill. (p. 10)

Leaders act on their beliefs, especially beliefs about themselves, the faculty, staff and administrators with whom they work. Leaders work diligently toward achieving the mission that they seek to reach. Effective leaders are able to work collaboratively with their staff and stakeholders in achieving the school's mission.

6 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the underlying principal behaviors (i.e., Change Usual; Change Needs; Change Stress) regarding change with school climate. The study was designed to determine if the manner in which principals manage and respond to the demands that change presents in schools has an impact on school climate. Specifically, these researchers examined the dimensions of organizational health that were impacted by the principal's behavioral responses to change. In this study, the researchers sought to determine if relationships exist between principals' change behaviors and school climate within schools where the principal had deliberately used specific strategies to improve climate over time and within schools where principals had not addressed climate. Specifically, the researchers were interested in identifying the relationships between their usual, needs, and stress change behaviors, as assessed by the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003) and the 10 dimensions of the climate as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory (Fairman, 1979) in the two groups that comprise the total sample.

7 Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between Change Usual behavior, as measured by the Leadership Profile, and the climate of the school, as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory, in Group A?

2. What is the relationship between usual Change Usual behavior, as measured by the Leadership Profile, and the climate of the school, as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory, in Group B?

3. What is the relationship between Change Needs behavior, as measured by the Leadership Profile, and the climate of the school, as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory, in Group A?

4. What is the relationship between Change Needs behavior, as measured by the Leadership Profile, and the climate of the school, as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory, in Group B?

5. What is the relationship between Change Stress behavior, as measured by the Leadership Profile, and the climate of the school, as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory, in Group A?

6. What is the relationship between Change Stress behavior, as measured by the Leadership Profile, and the climate of the school, as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory in Group B?

8 Method

8.1 Participants

Participants were principals at 30 schools from two large Texas school districts with very diverse student populations. The first district (Group A, $n = 12$) had a long history of requiring principals to intentionally implement strategies to the climate in the school and provided appropriate resources to support that work. The second district (Group B, $n = 18$) had not participated in any effort to systematically improve the

climate. Participants in both groups were volunteers; none of the principals were required to participate by their superintendent. The number of years of experience for the participating principals ranged from 3 years to 31 years. These 30 principals constitute a 100% sample of all available principals of the total of 30 schools in these two school districts.

Demographic data collected from the 30 schools included the school's academic rating, teacher ethnicity, teacher gender, and teacher's and principal's years of service. One of the schools was rated with an Exemplary academic rating, five schools were rated Recognized, and the remaining schools achieved an Acceptable rating. The schools received academic ratings based on the results of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge Skills test given to students yearly. The majority (approximately 76%) of the teachers ($n = 2372$) participating in the study were White, followed by African Americans, and then Hispanics. Seventy-three percent of the teachers were female and 27% of the teachers were male. The majority of the principals who participated in the study ($n = 30$) were White, followed by African American, and Hispanic.

8.2 Instrumentation

The Leadership Profile (LP). To determine leadership behavior, each principal in this study was given The Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003), a questionnaire driven by the Birkman Method. The Birkman Method was selected as the core of the LP because of its more than 50 years of statistical stability and its 40 plus years of use in the business community (Birkman, 2001). The results of the questionnaire generate results applicable for leaders in education and in business. The library from which feedback is drawn for the Profile reports was fully rewritten to match leader behaviors in an educational setting (Johnson, 2003).

Within the LP, leaders answered questions on 11 distinct components that provide considerable information toward building self-awareness through three relational levels: *Usual*, *Needs*, and *Stress*. These relational scores measure how the individual is perceived by others (Usual), how others are likely to affect the individual (Needs), and how the individual reacts when needs are not met (Stress).The Usual behavior exemplifies the principal's socialized behavior when they are comfortable and free from stress. The Needs scale gives the principal an indication of his/her underlying motivations and expectations. The Stress behavior emerges when the principal's needs are not met. Principals are provided with scores for each component ranging from 1 to 99 that describes the direction of behavioral preference: (a) low, 1- 39; (b) balanced, 40 - 59; and, (c) high, 60 - 99. These scores are neither positive nor negative; they are simply reports of the principal's behavioral preferences. The specific descriptions of the components are as follows:

1. *Esteem* − this strand provides a glimpse of behavior that the principal uses when relating to individuals.
2. *Acceptance* − this strand gives the principal an indication of what behaviors might be used in relating to people in groups.
3. *Structure* − refers to the individuals use and need for system and procedures.
4. *Authority* − indicates the individual's preference for behaviors regarding directing and controlling.
5. *Freedom* − describes the use if personal independence.
6. *Empathy* −refers to how each individual involves feelings in decisions, directions, and interactions.
7. *Change* − refers to how an individual will deal with change and interruptions. How well the person tends to focus.
8. *Thought* − describes the individual's orientation to thought processes − active versus reflective orientation.
9. *Activity* − describes the person's preferred pace for action.
10. *Advantage* − this strand provides a notion of how idealistic or realistic this individual might be and how that might be portrayed to others.
11. *Challenge* − describes the manner in which the individual deals with self-imposed demands for achievement.

Aspiring and practicing principals can differentiate between their socialized behaviors and their behaviors that stem from true self (Johnson, 2003). The Leadership Profile,which is an instrument designed to identify a leader's perceptions and beliefs that drive socialized behavior, enables principals to understand better who they are and more about their personality. As a result, they develop an understanding of what motivates

them, what allows them to present their best behavior, and what causes them to feel stress. The result is generally improved decision making and interpersonal behavior, which ultimately leads to an improved school culture.

Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). In addition to the LP, each professional staff member from all of the sample schools was given the Organizational Health Inventory. The OHI was developed in 1979 as a diagnostic tool to measure the health of a school's climate by using the following components: (a) measure and monitor the internal workings of administrative units, (b) identify leadership and organizational improvement priorities, and (c) help identify leadership training needs (Fairman & Clark, 1982, p. 2). An organization's health influences, either positively or negatively, the organization's ability to achieve its stated goals. The OHI consists of 10 key internal dimensions that describe the aspects of organizational health that contribute to the culture and climate of the organization:

1. *Goal Focus*: is the ability of persons, groups, or organizations to have clarity, acceptance, and support of goals and objectives.

2. *Communication Adequacy*: is that state when information is relatively distortion free and travels both vertically and horizontally across the boundaries of an organization.

3. *Optimal Power Equalization*: is the ability to maintain a relatively equitable distribution of influence between members of the work unit and the leader.

4. *Resource Utilization*: is the ability to involve and coordinate the efforts of members of the work unit effectively and with a minimal sense of strain.

5. *Cohesiveness*: is the state when persons, groups, or organizations have a clear sense of identity. Members feel attracted to membership in the organization. They want to stay with it, be influenced by it, and exert their own influence within it.

6. *Morale*: is that state in which a person, group, or organization has feelings of well-being, satisfaction, and pleasure.

7. *Innovativeness*: is that ability to be and allow others to be inventive, diverse, creative, and risk taking.

8. *Autonomy*: is that state in which a person, group, or organization can maintain ideals and goals as well as meet needs while managing external demands.

9. *Adaptation*: is that ability to tolerate stress and maintain stability while being responsive to the demands of the external environment.

10. *Problem–Solving Adequacy*: is an organization's ability to perceive problems and solve them with minimal energy. The problems stay solved, and the problem-solving mechanism of the organization is maintained and /or strengthened.

There are 80 items, 8 for each of the 10 dimensions, that participants answer and have been validated for use in educational and business organizations (Fairman & Clark, 1982). After the administration of the OHI, a percentile score is assigned to each of the 10 dimensions followed by a representative summary percentile score which ranges for 1 to 100%.

9 Results

9.1 Research Question One

For the first research question, in which the relationship between Change Usual behavior and the 10 dimensions of organizational health were examined in Group A, statistically significant positive correlations emerged from the Change Usual component of the LP with the OHI dimensions of Resource Utilization ($r(12) = .61$, $p < .01$) and Innovativeness ($r(12) = .63$, $p < .01$). The principals' Change Usual behavior was statistically significantly related. That is, the manner in which the faculty perceives the principals' coordination of and utilization of the faculty to complete a task with minimal strain (Resource Utilization) and the manner in which the faculty perceives the principals' ability to be open to teachers' ideas and sensitive to their needs while implementing new programs or change requirements (Innovativeness) were associated.

	Change Usual	
OHI Measure	School District A($n = 12$)	School District B($n = 18$)
Goal Focus	.50	-.32
Communication Adequacy	.46	-.09
Optimal Power Equalization	.43	-.03
Resource Utilization	.61*	-.16
Cohesiveness	.55	-.24
Morale	.45	-.09
Innovativeness	.64*	-.02
Autonomy	.48	-.08
Adaptation	.54	-.04
Problem-Solving Adequacy	.56	-.25

Table 1: Correlations of Change Usual with the 10 OHI Measures Separated by School District

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

These data indicated that the principals' Usual behavior for Change accounted for approximately 37% of the variance with the OHI dimension of Resource Utilization ($M = 81.08$) and 40% of the variance with the OHI dimension of Innovativeness ($M = 76.33$). In this case, the mean Change Usual score for Group A principals was 54.75 indicating the principal's ability to be responsive to change, to be open to new ideas, and to be responsive to the ideas of the faculty.

9.2 Research Question Two

For the second research question in which the relationship between Change Usual behavior and the 10 OHI dimensions were examined in Group B, no statistically significant relations were found with any of the OHI dimensions. Thus, relationships between principals' Change Usual behaviors and the 10 OHI dimensions were unrelated for this group of principals.

9.3 Research Question Three

For the third research question in which the relationship between Change Needs behavior and the 10 OHI dimensions were examined in Group A, no statistically significant relationships were yielded. Thus, principals' Change Needs behaviors and the 10 OHI dimensions were not statistically significantly related for this group of principals.

	Change Need	
OHI Measure	School District A($n = 12$)	School District B($n = 18$)
Goal Focus	.06	-.58*
Communication Adequacy	.06	.13
Optimal Power Equalization	.10	.23
Resource Utilization	.08	-.10
Cohesiveness	.11	-.04
Morale	.03	-.15
Innovativeness	.25	.08
Autonomy	.20	.05
Adaptation	.12	-.28
Problem-Solving Adequacy	.11	-.34

Table 2: *Correlations of Change Need with the 10 OHI Measures Separated by School District*

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

9.4 Research Question Four

For the fourth research question in which the relationship between Change Needs behavior and the 10 dimension of organizational health were examined in Group B, a statistically significant negative correlation emerged from the Needs dimension of the LP Change component with the OHI dimension of Goal Focus ($r(18) = $ -.58, $p < .01$). The principals' Change Needs behavior was statistically significantly related. That is, the manner in which the faculty perceives the principals' ability to lead persons toward clarity, acceptance, and support of the goals and mission of the school (Goal Focus) was associated.

These data indicated that the principals' Needs behavior for Change accounted for approximately 33% of the variance with the OHI dimension of Goal Focus ($M = 25.72$). In this case, the mean Change Needs score for Group B principals was 63.05 indicating the principal's respond best when others do not expect their leadership to conform to usual situations or routines, when others do not expect them to maintain predictable daily routines or schedules, and when others allow them to shift their priorities as new issues or challenges arise.

	School District A		School District B	
Leadership Profile Change Factors	M	SD	M	SD
Change Usual	54.75	35.24	64.88	25.71
Change Need	44.08	33.57	63.05	32.66
Change Stress	67.08	26.01	80.16	14.73

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of School District Principals' Leadership Profiles

9.5 Research Question Five

For the fifth research question in which the relationship between Change Stress behavior and the 10 OHI dimensions were examined in Group A, no statistically significant relations were found. Thus, relationships

between principals' Change Stress behaviors and the 10 OHI dimensions were unrelated for this group of principals.

9.6 Research Question Six

For the sixth and final research question in which the relationship between Change Stress behavior and the 10 dimensions of organizational health were examined in Group B, a statistically significant negative correlation emerged from the Stress relational dimension of the LP Change component with the OHI dimensions of Goal Focus ($r(18)$ = -.62, $p < .05$). The principals' Change Stress behavior was statistically significantly related.That is, the manner in which the faculty perceives the principals' ability to lead persons toward clarity, acceptance, and support of the goals and mission of the school (Goal Focus) was associated.

	School District A		School District B	
School Climate Factors	M	SD	M	SD
Goal Focus	83.83	15.7	25.72	11.63
Resource Utilization	81.08	14.62	25.78	10.82
Innovativeness	76.33	17.92	26.50	12.43

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of School District Principals' OHI Scores

These data indicated that the principals' Stress behavior for Change accounts for approximately 38% of the variance with the OHI dimension of Goal Focus ($M = 25.72$). In this case, the mean Change Stress score for Group B principals was 80.16 indicating that principals exhibit high Change Stress behaviors when their personal needs in regard to Change are not met by others in the school. Principals responding in high Change Stress may become emotionally excitable, find themselves unable to focus on important tasks, and make decisions regarding important issues. In addition, they may seek quick fixes to problems, initiate new programs that are not needed, as well as become impatient with delays.

10 Summary

Researchers to date have recorded observable behaviors and addressed the impact of the behaviors; however, our research viewed the underlying behaviors that motivate principals to act (Johnson & Busch, 2006). Unless principals know how they will most likely respond, they are often unaware of their impact on the organization. The results of this study support this observation and will be discussed in terms of each of the relational dimensions of Change (Usual, Need, and Stress) behaviors and their impact on the organizational health dimensions Goal Focus, Innovation, and Resource Utilization. Also important is to note that Group A principals had given the OHI for approximately 10 -12 years and received training and strategies to improve the climate. As a result, their OHI scores were very high. Group B had not received any training or strategies nor had they given climate assessments and their OHI scores were low.

10.1 Change Usual

As mentioned earlier, Usual behavior is typified by our most comfortable interactions. It is the result of socialized behavior and influenced by factors such as parenting and the cultural environment. Usual behavior is the behavior that teachers see from principals when they are comfortable and not working out of their Needs (Johnson & Busch, 2006).

From the analysis of question one, we discovered that principals' Change Usual behaviors from Group A were related to the OHI dimensions of Resource Utilization and Innovativeness. The direction of principal behavior preference impacting these two dimensions was a balance of Change Usual behavior describing a principal that: (a) attends to school priorities, while attentive to the needs of people and programs; and, (b)

initiates change while able to refocus attention and move change efforts forward. In reviewing the Group B principals, there were no significant relationships to report.

The power of these results focused our attention on developing principals that understand the importance of working out of Change Usual behavior that is balanced. If such behavior is balanced, then Resource Utilization and Innovativeness are powerfully reinforced. These two OHI dimensions are inextricably linked to creating a positive climate. Resource Utilization will be high when the principal uses human resources well, especially faculty, with a minimal strain on the organization. Faculty feel healthy, neither overloaded nor idle and do not feel as though the school is working against them but rather for organizational betterment. Based on these results, the balanced blend of Change Usual behavior exhibited by the Group A principals seems to produce improved productivity and a sense of overall effectiveness. Innovativeness is clearly linked since this dimension reflects the principal's usage of faculty to respond to the environmental factors in order to move toward new goals, improve student performance, and become more differentiated over time. High Innovativeness present in a school's climate indicates that a faculty is encouraged and empowered to promote planned changes. These findings are supported by researchers who have suggested that successful change agent leaders address and develop relationships within the organization and effectively embrace resistance and change (Fullan, 2001; Leithwood, 1992) and that the atmosphere (climate) within the school will have an impact on how teachers feel and students learn (Hoy et al., 2006).

From the data, the large effect sizes generated for Resource Utilization (37%) and Innovativeness (40%) from the Pearson correlations clearly point to the contribution of the principal's Change Usual behavior to the climate of the school. It is important to mention that there is not a preferred set of behaviors that indicate better leadership in creating a school climate (Johnson & Busch, 2007). Rather, each principal's behaviors are unique and it is vital that principals understand the impact of their personal behaviors so as to proactively prevent creating problems within the school climate.

Over time, Group A principals received specific training on how to improve climate for each of the various dimensions reported on the OHI. As a result, these principals learned to work from their Usual behavior rather than allow their personal Needs or Stress to emerge and influence the climate in a possible negative way. Again, awareness of personal behavior is critical but more importantly, understanding the effect of Needs and Stress behavior is even more important.

10.2 Change Needs

Understanding the Needs relational dimension of the LP is crucial for principals to effectively utilize the results of a personal behavioral profile. Unless individuals are made aware of their Needs behavior, it is not likely that the person will recognize when they are operating from their personal needs. Needs behavior describes what an individual needs from others in order to remain in their Usual behavior. These behaviors vary from individual to individual and again, there is not one set of behaviors that is more beneficial for a leader than another. The benefit rests in the principal knowing and understanding that Needs behavior is often hidden or underlying and unless the principal understands their personal Needs, the impact can be substantial to the climate of the school.

In this study, the OHI dimension, Goal Focus, was negatively correlated with Change Needs. Goal Focus is the ability of faculty to have clarity, acceptance, and support of goals and objectives. According to Fairman and McLean (2006),

The relationship of Goal Focus to productivity is that people in an organization are more productive if: (a) they are given opportunity to participate in setting goals, (b) they know and support goals that have been established; and, (c) they receive periodic information on how well they have progressed toward reaching those goals. (p. 13)

In examining the results of Change Needs behavior for Group B, it is apparent that Goal Focus was related to Change Needs behavior. In this study, the mean for Change Needs behavior was 63.05 indicating that the Group B principals tended to need (a) opportunities to shift priorities as new interests arose, (b) frequent changes in activity, (c) nonconforming situations, and/or (d) relief from daily routine. A principal scoring a lower Change Needs profile would (a) exemplify more routine, (b) complete priorities once started,

need time to consider new ways before changing methods, and/or protect themselves from interruption. It is easy to understand how a principal with a high Change Needs profile could easily interrupt the faculties' focus on school goals and never intend disruption simply by not understanding the impact of his/her personal Needs.

For faculties to remain focused on the schools' goals, they prefer for principals to think about considering new ways of doing things before changing, create a minimum of abrupt changes, and give them an opportunity to provide input. The principals' Change Needs behaviors in Group A did not produce a relationship with climate; however, Group B Change Needs behaviors produced a statistically significant negative relationship with climate that reflected their need for changes in activity and priorities and indicated that the principals' Needs behavior for Change accounted for approximately 33% of the variance with the OHI dimension of Goal Focus ($M = 25.72$). This negative correlation reflects the principals' preference to act out of their Need behaviors rather than Usual behavior. A behavior that is comfortable and needed for the principal might also be a behavior that is counterproductive to fostering and maintaining Goal Focus for the faculty. Regardless of the principal's Needs profile, it is beneficial that they understand the impact and effectively mange his/her behavior. The principal's Change Need behaviors, whether conscious or not, has an impact on the quality of the school climate and affects student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003).

10.3 Change Stress

Change Stress also generated a statistically significant negative correlation with Goal Focus for Group B principals and accounted for approximately 38% of the variance with the OHI dimension of Goal Focus (M = 25.72); however, no relationships were present for the Group A principals for Change Stress. Group B principals generated a mean for Change Stress of 80.16 which indicates that when the Group B principals were unable to get their Needs met, they might (a) become emotionally excitable, (b) become restless for quick results and have difficulty concentrating, and (c) become annoyed with delays and find it hard to sit still. Such behavior will be clearly counterproductive to strategies needed to focus faculty on goals and assist them in maintaining focus. Again, this finding accounts for the importance of personal awareness.

As Fairman and McLean (2003) related, there are several common concerns that negatively impact faculties' levels of Goal Focus: (a) taking on new programs or activities with little regard for current goals, (b) creating the lack of relationship between faculties' goals and the leader's decision, (c) making decisions that appear to conflict with established goals and objectives, (d) failing to effectively communicate the school's goals throughout the faculty, (e) bombarding the faculty with details for a project at the last minute; and (f) failing to provide the faculty with meaningful opportunities to influence goals and/or objectives. A principal exhibiting Stress related behaviors in the high relational level ($M = 80.16$) has the clear capability to foster one or all of the concerns listed above. It is also possible for the principal to exhibit counterproductive activity that diverts the faculties' attention away from important school goals and not be aware. Fairman and McLain (2003), Hallinger and Heck (1998), and Leithwood et al. (2004) all indicated that Goal Focus and the principal's support of the mission of the school are primary contributors to a positive school climate and any stress behavior exhibited by the principal can inhibit the accomplishment of the goals.

11 Implications

A study of principals' Change propensities is extremely important in the current environment of school improvement. Without the principal's knowledge of his/her personal behaviors that might interfere with school faculty members' acceptance of the strategies intended to initiate changes in a school, change efforts can be frustrating and create conflict. An interesting notation from a review of these data is that Group A principals also had the tendency to generate a negative correlations in both the Needs and Stress domain of Change. The correlations, even though negative, were not strong enough to generate a statistically significant correlation. We believe that the training Group A principals received over time was beneficial in assisting these principals in recognizing personal Needs/Stress behaviors and implementing strategies to

prevent introducing personal behaviors that could be counterproductive. We also believe that the lack of climate improvement strategies found in Group B accounted for these principals leading from their basic personalities and made it more difficult for them to match their behaviors to the needs of the school climate.

The results of this study strongly suggest further investigations that include larger samples to determine more clearly the specific relationships that exist between principal behavior and school climate. Even though interesting and informative, the generalizability of the results of this study is limited. Until such time as these findings are replicated, readers are urged to be cautious in the extent to which they generalize to principals outside of this study. However, the results of continued investigations clearly will contribute to strategies that principals can utilize to interact more effectively with the climate of their schools to ensure healthier leaning environments.

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