Leadership's Effect on Morale

The research includes several studies that address a principal's influence on teacher morale and teacher job satisfaction. Clearly, the Principal is the key figure in raising teacher morale and commitment" (Lester, 1990, p. 274). Others have concurred that a school's leadership has a vitally important role in the total climate of the school and the morale of the school's teachers (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Butt, Lance, Fielding, Gunter, Rayner, & Thomas, 2005; Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004; Evans, 1997).

Many researchers have studied specific factors of educational leadership from practical and theoretical backgrounds to determine their effect on teacher morale. Egley

and Jones (2005) performed a study analyzing the relationships of elementary teachers and their principal. They found that *Inviting Leadership* affected teacher morale. Inviting Leadership entails a principal focusing on compassion and the respect for the individual through collaboration and mutual respect. In a much older study, Bidwell (1957) examined the role expectations that teachers had for their principals. He found that a convergence with this role theory was accompanied by job satisfaction while a divergence was accompanied by the lack of job satisfaction. These findings imply that principals who meet the expectations of teachers for their role in the school can positively affect the morale of that teacher. Similarly, Schulz and Teddlie (1989) found that teacher morale and the principal's use of *Referent Power* were correlated. Referent Power refers to the leader having traits that the follower identifies with and wishes to emulate. Additionally, Blase, Dedrick, and Strathe (1986) found that teachers who perceived their principal as exhibiting helpful traits maintained higher levels of job satisfaction.

Hipp (1997) performed a qualitative study on thirty-four teachers examining the relationship of leadership to teacher efficacy. By her use of the term, efficacy encompasses teacher morale. The study consisted of scripted interview questions designed to probe into teacher efficacy issues and principal behaviors. The following principal behaviors were found to influence teacher efficacy: modeling behavior, inspiring group purpose, recognizing teacher efforts and accomplishments, providing personal and professional support, managing student behavior, and promoting a sense of community.

Thomas (1997) performed a meta-analysis probing into leadership, leadership theory, leadership style, the effect of principal leadership and its relationship with teacher

morale. The findings supported that the principal's leadership style had an effect on teacher morale. Specifically, a collaborative leadership style had the most impact on teacher morale. That is, schools with shared decision-making were found to have higher teacher morale than schools allowing less input into decision-making.

Nguni, Sleegers, and Denessen (2006) studied the effects of *transactional* and *transformational leadership* on teacher morale. They found transformational leadership traits to have a positive correlation to teacher morale while transactional leadership traits did not. Transactional leadership motivates through simple rewards such as exchanging work for financial compensation. Transformational leadership motivates the follower to greater levels by moving beyond the exchange level to the level of self-actualization.

Evans and Johnson (1990) surveyed middle and high school teachers and found conflicting results. They concluded from their research that principal leadership did affect the stress level of teachers, but the correlation between principal behaviors and teacher

job satisfaction was not significant. They concluded from this that principals do not have much of an impact on teacher job satisfaction. It is important to note that only one group of teachers, Physical Education teachers, were surveyed in this study.

Andrew, Parks, and Nelson (1985) performed a study to determine the factors that determine morale, identify an instrument to measure morale, and produce a handbook to aid schools in improving their morale. In schools with high morale levels, principals displayed the following traits or behaviors: outgoing, friendly, organized, enthusiastic, available, fair, and a good listener. In schools with poor morale the traits or behaviors were as follows: disciplinarian, inconsistent, unsupportive, formal, and impatient.

Through the study, they developed the following list of administrative practices that maintain positive teacher morale:

- Be open and have good morale yourself.
- Communicate at many levels.
- Involve others in setting objectives, planning, and decision-making.
- Set planning priorities.
- Your job is to get things done, not to do them yourself.
- Know the values and needs of your community, your students, and your staff.
- Hold high expectations for staff, but recognize your responsibility to help them meet your expectations.
- Give recognition to those who are helping to advance the objectives of the school.
- Have written policy developed for procedures and regulations.

- Exercise your authority.

- Provide resources needed to achieve the school's objectives.

- Do your best to obtain competitive salary levels so you can obtain the very best staff.

Bhella (1982) performed a study that correlated the Perdue Teacher Opinionaire and The Principal Leadership Style Questionnaire. The study found a significant relationship between teacher/principal rapport and the principal's concern with people and production. The results indicate that a principal who shows a high level of concern for people and for the product has a better rapport as reported by the faculty.

The focuses of the final studies included in this review are directly related to the current study. The instrumentation, method of data collection, and statistical methods of

these two studies are closely related to the current study. Both of these final studies used the Perdue Teacher Opinionaire. Both used a questionnaire for leadership; the final study used the Leadership Practices Inventory as in the current study.

Hunter-Boykin and Evans (1995) examined the relationship between high school principals' leadership and teacher morale. Again, the study used the Perdue Teacher Opinionaire to collect data regarding the morale level of teachers. The instrument used to collect data for principal leadership was the Leadership Ability Evaluation. The sample for the study included 40 high school principals and 411 high school teachers. The results of the study indicate a low positive correlation between the principal's leadership style and teacher morale. An important note about the design of this study is that the principal's leadership was self-reported rather than teacher-reported.

The final study included in this review examined the relationship between

principal leadership, teacher morale, and student achievement (Houchard, 2005). The instruments used in the study were the Perdue Teacher Opinionaire, the Leadership Practices Inventory, and the North Carolina End-of-Course exams. The participants of this study consisted of the teachers who voluntarily responded. The population consisted of 134 teachers with 113 responding to the Perdue Teacher Opinionaire and 115 responding to the Leadership Practices Inventory. The population consisted of eleven administrators, but no information was included on the number of administrators who responded to the Leadership Practices Inventory. There were several significant relationships found in the study. First, the morale aspect of Rapport with the Principal correlated significantly with the leadership aspect of Enabling Others to Act and Encouraging the Heart. Next, a significant correlation was shown between the morale

aspect of Satisfaction with Teaching and the leadership aspect of Inspiring a Shared Vision and Enabling Others to Act. Thirdly, a significant correlation was shown between the morale factor of Rapport with Teachers and the leadership aspect of Enabling Others to Act and Encouraging the Heart. Next, there was a significant correlation between the morale factor of Teacher Load and the leadership factor of Inspiring a Shared Vision and Enabling Others to Act. Lastly, a significant relationship was found between the morale factor of Facilities and the leadership aspect of Inspiring a Shared Vision and Enabling Others to Act.

This review of the related literature includes several resources that show a link between the leadership of the principal and the morale of the teachers. There was also research included that showed a significant relationship between teacher morale and academic achievement. Thus, the leadership of the principal plays a vital role in teacher

morale and affects student achievement. In nearly every case, the literature shows that positive leadership traits or behaviors are accompanied by positive teacher morale; therefore, the review of the related literature implies there is a significant relationship between teacher morale and principal leadership. It is the purpose of this study to determine if this relationship is present in the specific population studied.