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Aspiring Principals' Perspectives about Teacher Supervision and Evaluation: Insights for Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

Bret G Range
University of Wyoming

Courtney McKim
University of Wyoming

Ian M. Mette
University of Wyoming

David J. Hvidston
University of Wyoming

This qualitative study sought to understand the views of aspiring principals about teacher supervision and evaluation issues, including their perceived definitions of each, as well as concerns about performing either duty in their first administrative role. Thirty-two educational administration graduate students enrolled in an instructional leadership class participated in on-line instruction on teacher supervision and evaluation. Findings indicated participants understood the concept of formative supervision but were less clear when defining teacher evaluation. Specifically, aspiring principals used many terms associated with supervision as a role of principals when evaluating teachers. Participants' primary concerns with completing supervision and evaluation requirements during their first administrative job included having adequate time to be an instructional leader, and being able to deliver constructive feedback to low-performing teachers to influence and improve instructional practice quickly. Recommendations for university preparation programs that train pre-service principals are included.

Introduction

As university preparation programs train aspiring principals to respond to accountability mandates, the pressure to equip aspiring principals with the skills necessary to become catalysts for school improvement becomes increasingly important (Duncan, Range, & Scherz, 2011; Hernandez & Roberts, 2012; Risen & Tripses, 2008). This statement is especially valid in light of researchers who argue

teacher ineffectiveness is the greatest determinant to increased student achievement (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). As a result, it is logical to assume principals indirectly impact student achievement by leveraging their leadership responsibilities to hire, support, and develop effective teachers (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Moreover, principals impact instructional change in schools by encouraging teachers' reflective practice, providing feedback to teachers about instruction, and creating school environments that exhibit positive instructional climates (Fink & Markholt, 2011; Ing, 2009). Through policy reform, legislators have echoed the nexus between principal leadership and teacher effectiveness and the call for well-prepared principals who can navigate schools' complex problems (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009; No Child Left Behind Act, 2002; Sappington, Baker, Gardner, & Pacha, 2010).

However, researchers postulate that although improving, curricula and methods at over 500 colleges and universities who train principals remain incongruent to school district needs and to the demands of the principalship (Levine, 2005; Mitgang, Gill, & Cummins, 2013). Orr (2006, 2009, 2011) has written extensively on this topic and explains public criticisms surrounding graduate programs in educational leadership center on candidate selection, focus, content, rigor, and retention. Orr (2006) found model principal preparation programs included revamped organizing principles, new methods by which to deliver program content, improved pedagogical practices, structured internships, and partnerships with school districts and businesses for more extensive learning opportunities.

One critical aspect of aspiring principal training is instruction on how principals can effectively coach teachers for improvement, plan effective professional development for teachers, and understand how formative supervision and summative evaluation can improve teaching (Mitgang & Gill, 2012). Collectively deemed instructional leadership (Stiggins & Duke, 2008), educational leadership curriculum at universities and colleges should include clear delineation between teacher supervision and evaluation, yet link both into a cohesive model for teacher growth (Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004; Zepeda, 2012). In light of the above, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of aspiring principals enrolled in a graduate level instructional leadership class, specifically concerning their views about teacher supervision and evaluation, as well as how these views can be used to inform future graduate level content surrounding the instructional leadership construct.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this inquiry used elements from two bodies of literature to frame the problem, namely adult learning theory and principals' ability to influence instructional change in schools. Both adult learning theory and principals' ability to influence instructional change are influential variables as aspiring principals gain knowledge about school leadership through graduate classes. First, in regards to adult learning theory, contemporary cognitive theory suggests that relevant experiences and reflection play a crucial role in developing

how teachers think and perceive their experiences (Hammond, Austin, Orcutt, & Rosso, 2001; Smylie, 1995). As a result, it is logical to assume the views aspiring principals have about supervision and evaluation outcomes might be influenced by their associations with how supervision and evaluation is administered in the schools in which they work. Aspiring principals bring preconceived assumptions regarding instructional leadership to graduate courses and incorporate what they have learned as teachers, specifically teacher supervision and evaluation from their use of explicit classroom instruction, as well as planning holistic professional development.

Secondly, researchers argue principals influence instructional change within schools by serving as instructional leaders which encompasses three distinct, yet connected, processes; supervision, professional development, and evaluation (Fink & Markholt, 2011; Ing, 2009; Zepeda, 2013). First, principals apply formative supervision to help teachers improve their practice, and formative supervision serves as a data collection tool concerning teachers' classroom performance (Hinchey, 2010). Formative supervision is provided when principals conduct formal and informal classroom observations and provide coaching to teachers (Downey, Steffy, Poston, & English, 2010; Ing, 2009; Range, Scherz, Holt, & Young, 2011). Second, as principals supervise, they provide professional development opportunities based on teachers' needs and wishes (Zepeda, 2012, 2013). For teachers, professional development serves two purposes, namely to remediate teachers who might be lacking various skills or to enrich teachers who are meeting expectations and desire continuous improvement. Third, principals use data collected during the formative phase of supervision, including teachers' participation and acquisition of professional development skills, to evaluate teachers' effectiveness in which principals assess teachers' merit by assigning them a rating, typically called teacher evaluation (Mathis, 2012; Stronge, 2010). For principals, teacher evaluation usually serves one purpose, either performance assessment or performance improvement, and fair teacher evaluation is contingent upon objective, agreed upon standards of practice between teachers and principals (Tuytens & Devos, 2013). When supervision, professional development, and evaluation are seamlessly linked, principals' instructional leadership has the ability to impact and change teachers' instructional practice (Ing, 2009).

Supervision

Zepeda (2013) argues principals' instructional leadership encompasses the nexus of three important behaviors; teacher supervision, teacher evaluation, and teacher professional development. Teacher supervision asks principals to be concerned with teachers' needs as opposed to the wishes of the organization for individual accountability (Glickman, Gordan, & Ross-Gordan, 2005). "When the purpose of supervision is perceived as a catalytic process to help [teachers] improve their performance, it becomes quite different from when supervision is perceived to be an autocratic, top-down exercise in quality control" (Gupton, 2010, p. 87). This view indicates principals should focus on their role as a facilitator of teachers' learning and be concerned with teachers' professional reflection and development. For example, a recent report equated principals' supervisory role as the lead coach in

schools (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, & Adams, 2012), and the success of school supervision is contingent upon the ability of principals to provide just-in-time feedback to teachers, typically after classroom observations, to promote teachers' self-reflection and provide guidance in how to improve (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012; Fink & Markholdt, 2011; Zepeda, 2012, 2013).

During classroom observations, principals might collect data on various teaching indicators or might focus on a single teaching variable (Danielson, 2012b; Downey et al., 2010; Glickman et al., 2005; Zepeda, 2012). For example, Marzano (2012) provides 41 classroom indicators and teachers' behaviors principals might monitor and provide feedback about throughout the course of a school year. Because the primary purpose of supervision is teacher development, data collection must be routine, comprehensive, and specific in order for principals' to acquire a holistic picture of teachers' development stages and instructional needs. Due to the fact that frequent formative observation of teachers' classrooms is time-consuming, formative supervision literature advocates for the use of classroom-walkthroughs as the primary way in which principals collect data on teachers' effectiveness (Downey et al., 2010; Fink & Markholt, 2011). Classroom-walkthroughs are unannounced, frequent, short classroom observations by which principals collect instructional data on information which schools or school districts value (Marshal, 2012; Streshly, Gray, & Frase, 2012). Data is typically collected on classroom variables like congruence between lesson objective and practice, formative student assessments, engagement of students, and varied instructional practice.

Evaluation

Conversely, teacher evaluation "is used to make a judgment, often a high-stakes decision-whether to award a teacher merit pay or whether to continue or terminate a teacher's employment" (Hinchey, 2010, p. 6). Evaluation is driven by school district policy or state statute with mandates on its purpose and frequency of teacher observations (Glickman et al., 2005; Holland, 2006) and is concerned with simply holding teachers accountable for meeting performance standards (Delvaux et al., 2013). Evaluation typically takes place near the end of the school year and includes rating scales, narratives, or rubrics about a teacher's performance. A primary concern about school district practices that emphasize teacher evaluation at the expense of teacher supervision include: (a) teachers evaluated on what they perceive as invalid competencies, (b) teachers evaluated on as little as one classroom observation by principals, and (c) principals not formally trained in how to use evaluation tools (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Toch & Rothman, 2008). Marzano (2012), who argues data collected through teacher supervision was more complex than teacher evaluation, believes a limited set of data is required to assign merit, or evaluate the skill sets of teachers. Additionally, evaluation instruments used to collect teacher performance data must be reliable and valid (Glickman et al., 2005) and collect information that is more objective rather than subjective, void of principals' bias (Danielson, 2012b).

Although some argue that to be effective, principals should not be required to conduct both formative supervision and summative evaluation (Glickman et al., 2005; Holland, 2006), most school district are organized such that the onus is on

principals to undertake both roles. As a result, it is critical for principals to understand summative evaluations should be balanced with formative supervision (Mathis, 2012). Zepeda (2012) postulated that "teacher evaluation, if linked to supervision and professional development, can, indeed be a formative process" (p. 19). When principals are able to link supervision and evaluation outcomes to professional development, they alleviate the fear teachers feel when they know evaluation might end with a high stakes decision concerning their employment.

Professional Development

Zepeda (2012, 2013) has written extensively on how effective principals bridge the gap between supervision and evaluation, two processes that have polar outcomes through teachers' eyes, by carefully assessing and planning for the professional development needs of teachers. Professional development includes both formal and informal learning opportunities teachers engage in that positively impact their instructional performance (Devaux et al., 2013; Richter, Kunter, Klussman, Ludtke, & Baumert, 2011). As Danielson (2012a) posits, a significant piece of teachers' professional responsibility is to "be involved in a career-long quest to improve practice" (p. 24). Principals share this responsibility as they supervise and evaluate teachers and provide professional development opportunities to teachers based on teachers' desires or needs (Zepeda, 2012). Professional development might be principal directed, as in the cases of new or struggling teachers, or it might be teacher self-directed as in the case for veteran, high performing teachers. Principals have a powerful impact on teachers' professional development as they control resources needed to carry out extended learning, influence the time teachers' require to study new information with peers, and create differentiated professional development opportunities for teachers based on need (Sledge & Pazey, 2013). For example, Hargreaves (1997) found that effective professional learning for teachers included opportunities for teachers to learn collaboratively rather than in isolation and professional learning was sustained and revisited over time. Principals have direct control over such variables, because at the school level, principals allocate the time needed for teachers to collaborate and serve as catalysts who spearhead school wide professional development efforts throughout the year. Additionally, Eraut, Alderton, Cole, and Senker (1998) point to the importance of principals' leadership and teachers' professional development by illuminating workplace factors like management style and school climate as factors that hinder or enhance professional learning. Again, principals have direct influence on how they choose to supervise teachers and the learning cultures they create and support in schools (DuFour & DuFour, 2012). Finally, and most importantly, Tuytens and Devos (2011) found that principals who engaged in active leadership supervision, meaning they routinely visited classrooms and followed up those observations with feedback and goal setting, had a powerful impact on teachers' professional learning.

Obstacles to Performing Instructional Leadership

Fink and Markholt (2011) argued the primary responsibility of principals is to ensure teachers are delivering instruction that is aligned to standards, engaging to students, and leads to increased student achievement. It is logical to assume most

practicing principals understand the importance of instructional leadership, especially in light of policymakers who continue to try and intervene regarding how teachers are supervised and evaluated (Anderson, 2012). However, research routinely highlights the notion that principals spend the least amount of time during their work day engaged in activities that fit within the instructional leadership construct (Camburn, Spillane, & Sebastian, 2010; Reeves, 2006). For example, Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2009) found organizational management issues like budgeting, administrative paperwork, administering discipline, and creating schedules compromised time principals spent visiting teachers' classrooms. As Horng et al. surmised, "the relatively little time principals devoted to instruction is somewhat surprising given the research and district emphases on the principals as the instructional leader of the school" (p. 20).

Similarly, Kersten and Israel (2005) framed the problem of administrative time requirements from a different perspective and found principals spent an exorbitant amount of time supervising and evaluating novice teachers, which in turn took time away from coaching opportunities they might provide to veteran teachers. In sum, Kersten and Israel described time as a significant barrier as principals attempt to engage in instructional leadership because most supervise too many employees and evaluation tools are too cumbersome. Finally, a barrier routinely highlighted within the literature surfaces as a result of principals' responsibilities to supervise marginal or incompetent employees. In these instances, researchers report the stress principals feel supervising subpar employees causes many school leaders to simply ignore the problems ineffective teachers create (Painter, 2000; Range, Duncan, Scherz, & Haines, 2012; Zirkel, 2010).

Summary of Literature

In sum, university preparation programs are charged with developing aspiring principals, including providing them with instructional leadership skills to serve as change agents in schools they will eventually lead. This responsibility includes providing aspiring principals a framework by which to create supervisory and evaluative philosophies and an understanding of how teacher professional development links both philosophies together. As graduate students delve into instructional leadership coursework, it is important for educational leadership faculty to understand the knowledge, dispositions, and fears students bring to class about teacher supervision and evaluation, as such pre-conceived ideas about supervision and evaluation will interact with aspiring principals' responses to class curricula. After a comprehensive literature review, one manuscript was uncovered that explored similar issues to those presented in the study (Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004). Ponticell and Zepeda found aspiring principals did not differentiate between supervision and evaluation, equating both processes as the same, and viewed legal requirements of completing supervision and evaluation as the driver behind their importance. As a result, the authors used a similar lens to understand aspiring principals' views about teacher supervision and evaluation.

Context and Methods

The study took place in a Western state at a four-year university that offered a master's degree in educational administration which was required by the state department of education for students' seeking principal licensure. Data were collected from graduate students enrolled in one master's level course, entitled *Leadership for Instruction*, and data collection occurred over two semesters. *Leadership for Instruction* focuses on the principal as instructional leader and includes modules on teacher supervision, teacher evaluation, and integration of both responsibilities with professional development. In spring 2013, 14 students were enrolled in the class which followed a hybrid format because students were required to attend both face-to-face classroom meeting and participate in online discussion threads. In summer 2013, 18 students were enrolled in class and the class was taught in a completely online format.

The study followed a qualitative method and can best be characterized as phenomenological grounded in constructivism as the researchers were interested in how aspiring principals understand the phenomena of supervision and evaluation (Hatch, 2002). The study was designed to answer the overarching question, "What are aspiring principals' views of teacher supervision and evaluation?" by answering the following sub-questions: (1) How do aspiring principals define teacher supervision and evaluation; (2) What role do aspiring principals see principals having in supervision and evaluation of teachers?; and (3) What concerns do aspiring principals have concerning teacher supervision and evaluation? Data collection occurred during two semesters (spring and summer 2013) from graduate students enrolled in the instructional leadership course. To collect data, the researchers created five online discussion threads used in the online platform which accompanied the class. All 32 students consented to participate in the study and students' open-ended responses to the five questions were harvested and coded at the completion of the data collection period. To code the qualitative data, the researchers read over respondents' answers several times to get a general feel for emerging ideas and then open-coded respondents' answers resulting in complete thoughts. Next, the researchers axial coded respondents' complete thoughts to create themes by which to draw conclusions and make inferences **(**Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Findings

In order to understand aspiring principals' views of teacher supervision and evaluation, qualitative data were analyzed and the findings were categorized by supervision and evaluation. The results first highlight how aspiring principals defined supervision and evaluation and provide participants' insights into how effective principals might engage in either activity. The findings section concludes by highlighting the concerns expressed by participants as they ponder implementing supervision and evaluation during their first administrative job assignment.

Defining Supervision

When aspiring principals were asked to define effective teacher supervision, three main ideas emerged: supervision is a *frequent process culminating in timely feedback and differentiated among teachers*, supervision should be *focused on growth and improvement*, and supervision is contingent upon *building trusting relationships*. Aspiring principals perceived supervision as a *frequent process culminating in timely feedback and differentiated among teachers*. For example, one student said effective supervision is "an ongoing process that is differentiated by teacher". Another student commented that supervision should be ongoing and needs to take into account what level teachers are in their career. He further went on to discuss teachers have different needs based on where they are in their teaching career, and because of this, supervision should be ongoing and tailored to the individual. Another respondent stated supervision should start early and should consider strengths and weaknesses with the ultimate goal of learning. Overall, aspiring principals stated "one size does not fit all" when it comes to effective supervision. In regards to timely feedback, respondents believed teachers required "constant feedback on their performance". Students stated frequent feedback helps teachers "reach their personal goals and the goals the principal has given them".

Aspiring principals also stated effective supervision should be *focused on growth and improvement*. They stated the goal of supervision is to "promote professional growth in teachers" and this starts with educational leaders who expect growth and improvement. Respondents stated supervision based on growth "allows teachers to find areas to continually improve". This growth is critical in having strong teachers who are aware of the areas in which they need improvement. One important part of identifying areas of improvement is providing feedback so "teachers know exactly what principals observing" which might generate ideas for improvement. After providing feedback, principals "should suggest professional development" for areas in which the teacher could improve.

Another key idea of effective supervision is the role it plays in *building trusting relationships*. Respondents stated effective supervision should be based in a trusting relationship, because without trust, "it is hard to have a supervision process" that is effective. One component of building a trusting relationship is designing a supervision process that is "non-threatening". To do this, respondents described conversations about instruction after classroom observations that were authentic, comfortable, and safe. Another component is valuing the supervisor/supervisee relationship so teachers feel they are part of the process and are able to "think about what they would improve". Aspiring principals said "the supervision process should also be a collaborative effort between" principals and teachers so teachers feel comfortable expressing their concerns about their own instruction and appreciate working closely with principals to improve their practice. As one respondent posited, 'Teachers, being human, need to feel appreciated and respected for the important work that they do."

Principal's Role in Supervision

When aspiring principals were asked about principals' role in supervision, three main ideas emerged which discussed how principals should *supervise all teachers*

and provide feedback, *build trust and respect*, and *have knowledge of the curriculum*. Aspiring principals discussed how principals should *supervise all teachers* not just a select few. In order for this to occur, principals must "be present in teachers' classrooms often". This may require principals to "put their feelings aside" so they effectively supervise all teachers fairly. In addition to fairly supervising teachers, principals need to "provide all teachers with equal opportunities to succeed and improve" which is contingent upon *feedback* that must be given multiple times which requires principals to be in classrooms daily.

Another important component of supervision is *building trust and respect*. Aspiring principals discussed how important it to "build collegial trust and respect". Trust and respect cannot feel superficial and it must be on a "level which values the endless labor the teacher invests". One way to build trust is to provide encouragement while cultivating a relationship between teachers and principals. This relationship "should be built on commitment of continuous school improvement and of excellence". When a culture of trust and respect is built it "makes teachers feel like leadership really has concern" for teachers' continued growth.

Finally, aspiring principals touched on the significance of principals *knowing the curriculum*. When principals have an understanding of the curriculum, they are "respected by other educators". Knowing the curriculum is not only important to gain respect, but also to effectively supervise teachers. Respondents stated principals who understand the curriculum know "whether the teacher is on the right track" and can effectively supervise teachers. If principals are not aware of the curriculum, it is hard to provide a fair evaluation of teachers' talents.

Defining Evaluation

When aspiring principals were asked to define effective teacher evaluation, two main ideas emerged; evaluation should be a *formal summative* process that is *connected to professional development*. When asked to define principal evaluation, aspiring principals discussed how the process is a *formal* and *summative*. Participants discussed how "evaluation is a more summative process" compared to supervision. They defined evaluation as "a formal process through which the principal checks to see the results of his/her supervision". Since evaluations feel like a check-up on teachers, they view evaluation as having higher stakes. One way to ease teachers' fears is to utilize a formal supervision model that is linked to professional development. Once teachers have identified areas for improvement, they can decide on professional development that will benefit them. An effective evaluation process assesses the impact of professional development and allows principals to make a decision on whether "a teacher is meeting the criteria to continue employment in the district".

Aspiring principals stated one important component of evaluation is the *connection to professional development*. Participants stated teacher evaluation should offer opportunities for growth. This growth opportunity typically involves professional development and teacher evaluation should be connected to this professional development. One participant stated, "Effective evaluation is purposefully linking supervision and professional development". One way to ensure

a connection between teacher evaluation and professional development is to have evaluation tools that assess best practices. The data collected from these tools can be used to determine what professional development would benefit teachers the most. Connecting professional development to evaluation ensures teachers are provided with opportunities to improve their instruction.

Principal's Role in Evaluation

When aspiring principals were asked to discuss the role principals play in evaluation, three main ideas emerged. Aspiring principals said evaluation of teachers should be *comprehensive and focused on effectiveness*, provide *helpful feedback*, and feel *authentic*. Participants expressed teacher evaluations should be *comprehensive and focused on effectiveness*. Principals should ensure observations and evaluations are frequent. The evaluations do not need to be long, but good evaluations should show a picture of how a teacher performs on a daily basis. Evaluations "should be comprehensive, cohesive, and focused on improving teacher's effectiveness". One important component of a comprehensive teacher evaluation system is the post-observation conference. A post-observation conference allows principals and teachers to discuss what occurred in the classroom and plan next steps to improve teacher effectiveness. The end goal of a comprehensive evaluation requires dialogue between principals and teachers that leads to improvement in student achievement.

During evaluations, principals should also provide *helpful feedback*. This feedback should challenge teachers to reflect and should be given "routinely throughout the year". One participant said, "I believe an effective evaluation should also consist of immediate, valuable feedback that gives a teacher the means for growth". Respondents believed feedback should help teachers establish professional goals and evaluations should establish plans to achieve these goals.

Finally, principals should ensure teacher evaluations feel *authentic*. Evaluations should be open and honest. Being open includes being "honest about things that are going well and not going well". During evaluations, principals should build a respectful, trustful relationship which enables teachers to feel like they matter and allows principals to be open and honest during evaluations. When respect is established, both teachers and principals can focus on the goal of improving student learning. For example, one participant stated one "aspect of teachers' evaluation and observation I found the most eye opening is how important the authenticity is to the process".

Concerns

When aspiring principals were asked what concerns they had about effective teacher supervision and evaluation themes that emerged were the worry of not having *enough time* to effectively supervise and evaluate teachers, *motivating teachers*, earning *respect*, giving *timely feedback* when responding to ineffective teaching. Aspiring principals were worried how they would have *enough time* to balance both supervision and evaluation with other duties. Another concern mentioned was how to *motivate teachers*. Participants were mainly worried about

being able to motivate teachers "who are on their way out". The third concern mentioned was *earning respect* as respondents were worried about the age gap between themselves and teachers. Specifically, respondents were concerned with gaining respect from teachers who are older and possibly more experienced. Finally, respondents mentioned a primary concern was how to provide *timely feedback* and respondents worried they would not be able to give constructive feedback to low-performing teacher in a diplomatic manner.

Discussion and Conclusions

This qualitative study was designed to illuminate aspiring principals' perceptions about instructional leadership issues they will encounter as they accept their first administrative roles. Specially, the study sought to uncover aspiring principals' beliefs about supervision and evaluation, how they perceive effective principals accomplish each task, and understand their reservations about undertaking their conflicting roles. In the end, it was the researchers hope aspiring principals' insights into supervision and evaluation might help inform educational leadership university faculty as they design instructional leadership coursework.

When participants' responses are viewed through the lens of teacher supervision, aspiring principals' views align with many researchers who have described formative supervision (Danielson, 2012b; Glickman et al., 2005; Ing, 2009; Looney, 2011; Marzano, 2012; Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004). Specifically, aspiring principals' described supervision as a frequent, differentiated process based on the developmental levels of teachers and contingent upon trusting relationships between principals and teachers. As a result, participants' responses align more to a formative purpose of teacher assessment, an approach that is concerned with improvement of teaching and eliminating fear from the improvement process so teachers feel comfortable to change their practice based on feedback from principals (Delvaux et al., 2013; Gordon, 2006). In regards to feedback, aspiring principals acknowledged how important specific feedback is to formative supervision and expressed concerns they might not be able to deliver constructive, useable feedback that impacted teachers' practice. These perceptions are not unfounded as researchers have reported frequent feedback is necessary if improvements in instruction are desired (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007), yet traditional teacher assessment instruments do no assist principals in providing feedback that is actionable and specific (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Thus, many principals lack the pedagogical backgrounds and consulting skills to deliver feedback to teachers which they consider effective (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012).

Aspiring principals' description of teacher evaluation is less in-line with researchers descriptions of summative evaluation (Hinchey, 2010; Stronge & Tucker, 2003; Tuytens & Devos; 2013), and as a result, aligns with the findings of Ponticell and Zepeda (2004). Participants' described evaluation as a summative event intended to assess teachers' total performance and highlighted how evaluation should be linked to supervision through professional development, perceptions which align with evaluation literature (Gordon, 2006; Range et al., 2011; Zepeda, 2012). However, respondents used many of the key words

researchers use to describe supervision as opposed to evaluation. For example, aspiring principals used the terms *observations* and *evaluation*s interchangeably within their descriptions of evaluation, contradicting the formal definition of summative evaluation. Simply, respondents believed every time principals observe teachers' classrooms they were performing teacher evaluations. However, observations are usually viewed as formative supervision strategy principals use to collect comprehensive data when assessing teachers' total evaluation (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Ing, 2009). Additionally, participants believed a role of principals within the evaluation construct was facilitating effective post-observation conferences, even though post-observation conferences are usually associated with the clinical supervision model and a primary tool in providing formative feedback to teachers.

Participants mentioned providing appropriate feedback to teachers as a result of evaluations, which contradicts literature that equates summative evaluation to a onetime event when teachers receive their yearly merit rating. Feedback and coaching are the primary outcomes of formative supervision and neither should be associated with assigning judgment when they are shared with teachers. When these findings are synthesized with Ponticell and Zepeda (2004), they illicit a question that seems to stem from simple semantics: "Is it important for university preparation programs to distinguish between supervision and evaluation, because in practice, many school districts do not differentiate either process for practitioners?" The researchers argue it is important for aspiring principals to understand the difference between teacher supervision and teacher evaluation for one reason; graduate students who become practicing school leaders will influence policymakers who simply view teacher evaluation as a one-time, episodic event. As Range (2013) argues, policymakers “fixate on evaluation and neglect supervision” and thus they tend to allocate more resources to teacher assessment systems that label the performance of teachers rather than support resources that build the capacity of principals to deliver high-impact, formative supervision” (p. A6). As a result, preparation programs that train school leaders about the differences between teacher supervision and evaluation are educating administrators who will serve as the primary catalyst that influence reform efforts that view teacher evaluation myopically through the use of only student assessment scores. In sum, aspiring school leaders should understand total teacher evaluation as a holistic process using multiple measures to assess teachers’ performance.

In sum, how can results from this study assist university preparation programs that train aspiring principals as they develop instructional leadership curricula? First, university programs need to present a thorough explanation of how teacher supervision and teacher evaluation are different, including their polar outcomes. Programs need to instill in graduate students how important principals' supervisory role is, complete with a focus on coaching, relationship-building, and professional development. Second, because participants voiced their primary concern was having adequate time to provide instructional leadership, university programs should explicitly teach time management skills to graduate students. For example, preparation programs might have discussions about "time-wasters" during principals’ workdays through the use of journals to document actual time

spent engaged in instructional versus managerial tasks (Streshly et al., 2012). The most logical place for the use of time journals would be within the supervised internship requirements most educational leadership programs require of potential graduates (Risen & Tripses, 2008).

Additionally, programs should provide candidates with time management strategies concerning two issues which can overwhelm new principals, namely handling the volume of e-mail they receive and creating protocols to ensure meetings are action oriented and productive. Finally, aspiring principals were concerned about providing useful feedback in a timely fashion that remediated marginal teaching. As a result, university preparation program might respond in two ways. First, the primary way teachers receive feedback about their teaching is after principals' observations and many school districts utilize classroom-walkthroughs to assist principals in collecting instructional data on a variety of classroom variables for the sake of time. As a result, it is important for preparation programs to understand the classroom walk-through expectations of the school districts in which their graduates typically find employment and teach those supervisory practices within their coursework. By doing so, programs provide aspiring principals an early glimpse into the forms local school districts use to formatively supervise teachers, as well as, acquaint aspiring principals with instructional foci of local districts. Second, preparation programs should explicitly teach feedback delivery protocols to aspiring principals so they feel equipped to deliver assessment about teachers' practice. Feedback protocols should include instruction on removing personal bias after observing teachers' classrooms and interpreting observation data with teachers that causes them to reflect about their practice (Fink & Markholt, 2011; Ovando, 2005).

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Toxic Leadership in Educational Organizations

James E. Green
Georgia Southern University

While research on the traits and skills of effective leaders is plentiful, only recently has the phenomenon of toxic leadership begun to be investigated. This research report focuses on toxic leadership in educational organizations – its prevalence, as well as the characteristics and early indicators. Using mixed methods, the study found four patterns that describe toxic leaders: egotism, ethical failure, incompetence, and neuroticism. In addition, results identified a set of behaviors that suggest early warning signs of toxic leadership. In addition, recommendations include training personnel who participate in the search and selection process for leaders in schools, colleges, and universities so that they are better equipped to assess leadership potential, as well as the potential for toxic leadership.

Introduction

Leadership matters. History is graced with examples of transformative leaders – leaders who elevated the aspirations of their followers, inspired their vision, and harnessed their collective will to achieve common goals that would have otherwise been unattainable. Gardner and Laskin (2011) provided profiles of exemplary leadership by persons operating in very different fields of endeavor and by employing very different means of influence. However, history is also replete with examples of leaders who have inflicted unspeakable harm on their nations, their companies, their churches, or their schools. The global financial meltdown of 2008 is grist for gripping case studies on failed leadership in both the political and business arenas (George, 2008); and, the horrific child abuse scandals in churches (Bruni, 2013) and systemic cheating on standardized tests by school districts (Wineri, 2013) offer yet more, albeit in different types of organizations. Indeed, leadership matters.

This study explores the phenomenon of toxic leadership – leadership that causes, either abruptly or gradually, systemic harm to the health of an organization, impairing the organization from meeting its mission. In particular, the investigation focused on toxic leadership in educational organizations. The researcher employed mixed methods to determine the prevalence of toxic leadership in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as to describe the characteristics of toxic leaders. Finally, the researcher sought to identify early indicators of toxic leaders.

What We Know about Toxic Leadership

Recent and detailed documentation of abusive behavior by leaders in nearly all types of large organizations, from businesses to political states to churches, has led social

scientists to begin to study leadership from a different perspective – the dark side (Goldman, 2009; Kellerman, 2004; Kets de Vries, 1984; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Williams, 2005). Of course, dramatists and novelists have always been aware of the effects of bad leaders. From Sophocles' Creon to William Shakespeare's Richard III to Herman Melville's Captain Ahab, we have been given insight into leaders who led (or pushed) others to their destruction. Whereas the last half century has seen an explosion of research on the traits, skills, and styles of *effective leaders* (Northouse, 2010), only within the last two decades have researchers tried to describe and understand the behavior of *toxic leaders*. In the review of literature that ensues, toxic leadership is defined and the various types of toxic leaders are discussed. In addition, research on why organizations continue to have to deal with toxic leadership is reviewed.

Toxic Leadership Defined

The term "toxic leader" first appeared in 1996 (Wicker, 1996), but as yet no standard definition of toxic leadership exists. Indeed, a variety of terms that refer to the same phenomenon can be found in the literature. Kellerman (2004) uses "bad leadership," while others (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007) use the term "destructive leadership." However, "toxic leadership" increasingly is becoming the preferred label for leadership that harms an organization (whether a business, a political state, or a church). Lipman-Blumen (2009) has defined toxic leadership as "a process in which leaders, by dint of their destructive behavior and/or dysfunctional personal characteristics generate a serious and enduring poisonous effect on the individuals, families, organizations, communities, and even entire societies they lead" (p. 29). Williams (2005) extended this definition by noting that toxic leadership appears in degrees, from the clueless who cause minor harm to the overtly evil who inflict serious damage. She stated,

> At one end of the spectrum, dysfunctional leaders may simply be unskilled, unproductive and completely unaware of the fact that they are lacking in the necessary talent to lead. At the other extreme, toxic leaders will find their success and glory in their destruction of others. Be it psychological or even physical, they will thrive on the damage they can inflict on others. (p. 1)

Williams' definition suggests that toxic leadership can be both intentional and unintentional. Both, of course, are observed through a leader's behavior.

Leaders need followers; followers need leaders. Thus, any definition of toxic leadership must take into account the characteristics of the followers as well as the characteristics of the leader. Kusy and Holloway (2009) have explained that toxic leaders are able to thrive only in a toxic environment. Of course, their explanation begs the debate of which comes first, the toxic leader or the toxic environment. Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser (2007) addressed this issue when they proposed the concept of the toxic triangle: destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments. Their definition of destructive leaders emphasizes "negative outcomes for organizations and individuals linked with and affected by [destructive leaders]" (p. 176). In other words, the damage done is systemic. Piecing together the various definitions, we find two elements that define toxic leadership. First of all, toxic leaders' behavior harms (directly

or indirectly) individuals within the organization. And second, their behavior results in systemic damage to the effectiveness of the organization.

Prevalence of Toxic Leadership

Toxic leadership is not rare, by any means. Kusy and Holloway (2009) reported that 64% of the respondents in their study stated that they were currently suffering under a toxic leader. Moreover, 94% indicated that they had worked with a toxic person at some point in their careers. Some organizations apparently are worse than others. Solfield and Salmond (2003) reported that 91% of nurses reported having experienced verbal abuse that left them humiliated. In a study conducted at the Army War College consisting of senior officers with over 20 years of experience in the Army, all of the participants (i.e., 100%) had experienced toxic leadership (Bullis & Reed, as cited in Williams, 2005). Indeed, toxic leadership is not rare.

Of course, toxic leadership is found in degrees. Kusy and Holloway's description of toxic leadership (2009) makes the distinction between leaders who might have a bad day and those whose bad behavior is habitual. They asked their participants to recall someone from their professional experience whom they thought of as toxic, then rate that person on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most toxic that they could imagine. Three quarters of the persons considered as toxic registered 8 to 10. Moreover, there was an even distribution between males and females among the persons identified as toxic. In Kusy and Holloway's study, toxic behavior was found to be an equal opportunity phenomenon.

Why Do We Have Toxic Leaders?

Like Prometheus, who kept as a pet the vulture who consumed his liver, we seem to have difficulty breaking the cycles of what we know does harm to us. Toxic leadership is no different. Often, people unwittingly seek a leader who has the very qualities that result in systemic harm to their organization. Witness the times – past and present – that electorates have returned candidates to political office who previously were found guilty of corruption. Lipman-Blumen (2005), in her seminal work on why toxic leaders are able to frequently gain and hold on to power proposed five clusters of reasons. First, she cited psychological reasons, beginning with "our need for authority figures to fill our parents' shoes" (p.29). In addition, she included a "need for certainty, which prompts us to surrender freedom . . ." (p.29). Once finding ourselves in the clutch of a toxic leader, our acquiescence stems from "our fear of personal powerlessness . . ." (p.29). Lipman-Blumen theorized that the natural human condition of existential anxiety may be the source of our willingness to submit to authority figures. As she explained,

> The infinite possibilities of life, lashed to the finite limitations of inevitable death, induce two profound emotions: exhilaration and desolation. This fundamental contradiction in our human condition frames our behavior, our yearnings, our vulnerabilities, our dreams, and our strengths. (p. 50)

Lipman-Blumen suggested that, while we fear the uncertainties in life, we also are acutely aware of the possibilities. In midst of our anxiety, we harbor hope; and hope allows toxic leaders to "offer illusions: our lifeline in an uncertain world" (p.50).

One of the myths of toxic leaders, according to Kusy and Holloway (2009), is that most people will not tolerate toxic behavior by their leaders. However, their research revealed the opposite to be true much of the time. They cited two reasons. One is that the toxic leader might be a high performer; and, as Lipman-Blumen (2005) pointed out, we live in an achievement oriented society. We value *how much* is accomplished more than *how* it is accomplished. Another, cited by Kusy and Holloway as well as Lipman-Blumen, is fear of retribution. Toxic leaders are notorious for wanting to settle scores. However, not all toxic leaders are bullies. They take many forms, and often they are not readily recognizable. Some researchers have begun to work on describing the varieties of toxic leaders.

Types of Toxic Leaders

Toxic leaders are not all the same. Kusy and Holloway (2009) factored toxic leadership behavior into three types: (a) Shaming; (b) Passive hostility; and (c) Team sabotage. They explained how each of these types works in concert with one another to keep toxic leadership in place. Nonetheless, the three types lack the necessary specificity to provide a clear understanding of how toxic leadership looks in practice. Other researchers have provided more detailed lists of the behavioral traits of toxic leaders.

For example, in a study of toxic leadership in the U.S. Army, Williams (2005) identified 18 separate types of toxic leaders, along with a separate set of 18 personal characteristics. Table 1 depicts the results from Williams' research.

Table 1

Personal Characteristics of Toxic Leaders and Types of Toxic Leaders Identified by Williams

Personal Characteristics	Types of Toxic Leaders
Incompetence	Absentee leader
Malfunctioning	Incompetent leader
Maladjusted	Codependent leader
Sense of inadequacy	Passive-aggressive leader
Malcontent	Busybody leader
Irresponsible	Paranoid leader
Amoral	Rigid leader
Cowardice	Controlling leader
Insatiable ambition	Compulsive leader
Egotism	Intemperate leader
Arrogance	Enforcer leader
Selfish values	Narcissistic leader
Avarice and greed	Callous leader
Lack of integrity	Street fighter
Deception	Corrupt leader
Malevolent	Insular leader
Malicious	Bully leader
Malfeasance	Evil leader

Upon examination of Williams' two lists, one of personal characteristics and one of types of toxic leaders, one might observe that they do not appear to be discrete items. Within each of the lists, some of the items appear to be similar.

Schmidt (2008) conducted a study using a broader base of professional experience for his participants and he generated a list of toxic leader types. Using his own instrument, the *Schmidt Toxic Leadership Scale*©, he identified five types of toxic leaders: (a) self-promotion; (b) abusive supervision; (c) unpredictability; (d) narcissism, and (e) authoritarian leader. In addition, he listed specific behaviors that nested within each type. However, Schmidt's list leaves out toxic effects of a leader's ethical failures or even the leader's failure to act.

A strictly psychodynamic approach was taken by Kets de Vries and Miller (1984). Using case studies, they described leaders who do systemic damage to their organizations in terms of the various types of neuroses. They explained how organizations can take on the same characteristics of a particular type of neurosis as seen in their leader. For example, they described the paranoid leader, the depressive leader, and the schizoid leader among others. Kets de Vries and Miller's work was influential in calling attention to the need for further research on toxic leadership.

As a psychological construct, toxic leadership poses problems. As Fiedler (1993) pointed out, what might seem toxic leadership to one member of an organization could appear to be effective leadership to another. Or, what might be perceived as toxic in one

organizational culture could be considered desirable in another. For example, norms for effective leadership in a for-profit business are different than a church, which are different than a city council. Additionally, when an organization comes around to recognizing toxic leadership, often it is too late. Damage to the organizational culture is already happening and the organization's effectiveness already is in decline. Help in identifying the early indicators of toxic leadership is sorely needed.

Early Indicators of Toxic Leadership

Even though Lipman-Blumen (2005) provided a convincing explanation for why individuals are willing to follow toxic leaders, most (all things equal) would rather not. We would like to overcome whatever tendencies we have that make us vulnerable to toxic leadership. The first step, of course, is to understand the full extent of the damage that toxic leaders can inflict upon organizations. And the second step is to recognize toxic behavior when we experience it. As Kusy and Holloway (2009) noted, that is not as easy as one might think. All too often, we recognize toxic leadership after it is already causing deleterious effects of the organization. If we are to avoid toxic leadership in the first place, we need to be able to spot the early indicators. Sailors say, "Red sky in the morning, sailors take warning." What we need in the area of research on toxic leadership is the social scientist's equivalent of a "red sky." Unfortunately, the research on early indicators for toxic leadership is scant.

The difficulty in observing toxic leadership before it is too late, according to Kusy and Holloway (2009), originates in the subtlety of the toxic behaviors. Lipman-Blumen (2005) also pointed out that toxic leaders are skilled in deception. Nonetheless, Lipman-Blumen did attempt to identify the early warning signs and compiled a list of behaviors. However, the items that she listed lack grounding in empirical evidence.

Perhaps the closest anyone has come to showing how we can detect toxic leadership before it is unleashed on an organization would be the researchers who have devised instruments for assessing the relationship between leadership attributes and personality traits. Hogan and Hogan (2001) have proposed a method for predicting the derailment of management careers. Although, they have admitted that many organizations are reluctant to utilize psychological assessments (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). Indeed, they noted that most senior executives would refuse to take them.

Summary of Research on Toxic Leadership

The concept of toxic leadership eludes definition. Moreover, the behaviors associated with toxic leadership resist early identification. Researchers have described toxic leadership behaviors in various organizational contexts, although they have not as yet found reliable indicators of early stages of toxic leadership or ways of predicting it. Also, research to date has focused on business environments or the military. Toxic leadership in educational organizations – schools, colleges, and universities – has yet to be researched.

Method

This investigation utilized a concurrent, embedded mixed methods design. The quantitative phase consisted of a survey that used Schmidt's (2008) *Toxic Leadership*

Scale©, which is a 30 item questionnaire designed to observe the prevalence of specific toxic leadership behaviors. Instructions for the questionnaire asked invited participants to report whether they had any experience with a toxic leader, with a definition for toxic leadership given in the instructions. For the purpose of this investigation, the researcher created the following definition of toxic leadership:

> A "toxic leader" is any person who as a manager, supervisor, or executive impairs the effectiveness of the organization (or unit) over which he or she has responsibility, whether directly or indirectly. It helps to understand "toxic leadership" by recalling the definition of a "toxin" – an agent that, when introduced to a system, does systemic harm.

In addition, a series of open-ended questions were included that asked participants to reflect upon when toxic leadership behaviors first occurred and to describe them. The open-ended questions were designed for participants to use their own words to describe their experiences with toxic leaders, with attention given to their personal description of toxic leadership behaviors, incidents that typified toxic leadership, and the first indications of toxic leadership behaviors. The instrument was distributed via e-mail to a stratified random sample of 300 educators dispersed in all 50 states, with 150 going to educators in P-12 schools and 150 going to educators in higher education.

Results

Quantitative

A total of 51 participants responded to the survey for a return rate of 17%. Results confirmed that toxic leadership is, indeed, a prevalent phenomenon, with 90% (n=45) reporting previous or current experience with toxic leaders. Respondents to the survey were 59% female (n=30) and 43% male (n=21), and 80% of the total reported having had 11 or more years of experience working in educational organizations. Respondents were evenly divided between P – 12 schools and higher education, with 53% (n=27) from higher education and 48% (n=24) from P – 12 schools.

Responses to the individual items on the *Toxic Leadership Scale*© (2008) revealed that toxic leadership behaviors are notable for their variety and are observed with frequency. Of the 30 specific behaviors listed on the instrument, 19 were reported by over half the participants as occurring "frequently." Table 2 lists these frequently occurring toxic behaviors, which the researcher sorted into three categories after conducting qualitative analysis of the items.

Table 2

Toxic Leadership Behaviors from Toxic Leadership Scale

Egotistical behavior characteristics	**Controlling/micro-managing behavior**	**Personality**
Drastically changes his/her demeanor when his/her supervisor is present	Is not considerate about subordinates' commitments outside of work	Allows his/her current mood to define the climate of the workplace
Denies responsibility for mistakes made in his/her unit	Controls how subordinates complete their tasks	Allows his/her mood to affect his/her vocal tone and volume
Accepts credit for successes that do not belong to him/her	Does not permit subordinates to approach goals in new ways	Causes subordinates to try to "read" his/her mood
Acts only in the best interest of his/her next promotion	Will ignore ideas that are contrary to his/her own[1]	Affects the emotions of subordinates when impassioned
Will only offer assistance to people who can help him/her get ahead	Is inflexible when it comes to organizational policies, even in special circumstances[2]	Varies in his/her degree of approachability[2]
Has a sense of personal entitlement	Determines all decisions in the unit whether they are important or not	
Assumes that he/she is destined to enter the highest ranks of my organization	Varies in his/her degree of approachability[2]	
Thinks that he/she is more capable than others		
Believes that he/she is an extraordinary person		
Thrives on compliments and personal accolades		

Will ignore ideas that are
contrary to his/her own[2]

Footnotes on Table 2:

[1] Denotes an item that appears in both first and second columns

[2] Denotes an item that appears in both the second and third columns

Egotism/self-serving. Survey results revealed the strong presence of egotistical behaviors by toxic leaders, with a predilection toward self-serving goals. The average for the behaviors occurring "frequently" was 70%, with "Will ignore ideas that are contrary to his/her own" registering the highest occurrence (87% of respondents reported as occurring "frequently"). Also registering high on the scale, with respondents reporting as occurring "frequently" over 70% of the time, were "Has a sense of personal entitlement" (72%), "Thinks that he/she is more capable than others" (75%), and "Believes that he/she is an extraordinary person" (76%).

Controlling/micro-managing. Toxic leaders are also seen as controlling by their followers. The average for controlling behaviors occurring "frequently" was 61%, with "Will ignore ideas that are contrary to his/her own" (87%) as the foremost toxic behavior. In other words, toxic leaders insisted on having the last word and having their own way. Other behaviors indicative of micro-management, where respondents reported that the behavior occurred "frequently" 60% of the time or more, included "Does not permit subordinates to approach goals in new ways" (60%) and "Determines all decisions in the unit whether they are important or not" (60%). One behavior that falls into the categories of both controlling behavior and emotions is "Varies in his/her degree of approachability" (65%). This behavior is indicative of a person who seeks to control the emotions of others, as well as being unpredictable in her or his own.

Personality characteristics. Behaving with unpredictable moods appears to be another consistent pattern of behavior among toxic leaders, as reported by respondents. The average for these items occurring "frequently" was 55%, with "Varies in his/her degree of approachability" (65%) as the leading indicator. Also notable was "Allows his/her current mood to define the climate of the workplace" (55%), indicating that toxic leaders would be low on *Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test*© (2004).

Qualitative

In addition to the questionnaire using the *Toxic Leadership Scale*© (2008), participants were asked to complete a series of open-ended questions. These questions asked participants to use their own words to describe the toxic leaders with whom they had experience, as well as describe incidents that revealed the toxic leadership behaviors. A total of 36 participants volunteered additional information through the open-ended questions, and here the results proved quite informative.

Data analysis. Three stages of data analysis were performed. The first stage consisted of finding patterns that participants used to describe toxic leaders and the second stage consisted of collapsing these patterns into a smaller set of themes. In the final stage, the raw data were re-visited for the purpose of identifying early indicators of toxic leadership as reported by participants. Table 3 depicts the patterns and themes from

the first two stages of data analysis. The three themes are arranged in the order of their prominence, with egotism and ethical failure being most prominent.

Table 3

Description of Toxic Leaders: Patterns and Themes Found in Interview Data

Themes (2nd stage of analysis)	**Initial Patterns (1st stage of analysis)**
Egotism	Arrogance; Bullying; Sense of entitlement
Ethical failure	Abuse of authority – personnel decisions; Abuse of authority – misuse of resources; Lying; Avoiding responsibility by blaming others; Manipulative
Incompetence	Human relations skills – poor listener; Human relations skills – insensitive (or false sensitivity); Human relations skills – unpredictable moods; Conceptual skills – lack of focus on mission; Technical skills – poor planner (crisis management)
Neuroticism	Narcissistic; Paranoid; Bipolar; Manic; Manipulative

Egotism. In the qualitative segment of this investigation, participants corroborated their view that toxic leaders are, first and foremost, egotists. When asked to describe the toxic leader in one word, they used terms like "self-absorbed," "prima donna," "pompous," and "arrogant" with frequency. Participants also noted that the egotism of toxic leaders can show the face of the bully. As one put it, "He was always right and anyone who dared to question him paid a high price." Toxic leaders also appear to enjoy their perquisites. Several were reported as remodeling their office suites as a first order of business, and others called attention to themselves for their excessive travel.

Ethical failure. Pre-occupation with self seems to lead to ethical lapses. Issues of ethical failure appeared consistently in the participants' comments. The most frequently occurring ethical failure was lying. Indeed, lying was one of the first indications that people were dealing with toxic leadership. Whether the lies were overt or they were better characterized, as one participant phrased it, as showing "a casual disregard of facts to suit his purpose," toxic leaders saw their integrity fade in the eyes of their subordinates by playing loose with the truth. Another area of ethical failure was abuse of power, especially in the area of personnel decisions. Incidents reported by

participants included circumventing the faculty search and selection process to hire personal favorites, as well as using the evaluation or promotion/tenure process to capriciously punish those who were out-of-favor. Abuse of power also took the form of misuse of funds or property, usually in the form of excessive travel or a penchant for gourmet when entertaining. Finally, and also related to the theme of egotism, toxic leaders seem to be prone to avoid their own responsibility by blaming others whenever something went wrong. In the words of one participant, "It was never her but always someone else who got the blame."

Incompetence. "Incompetent" was cited frequently when participants were asked to describe the person whom they considered to be a toxic leader. However, none of the participants mentioned competence in the sense of professional knowledge. Rather, they were referring to the managerial skills. Katz (1955) proposed that leadership skills are of three types – technical, human, and conceptual. And, he explained, the higher one climbs on the managerial ladder the more important the conceptual skills, such as systems thinking (Senge, 1990)) and strategic planning, become. However, at all times, according to Katz, human relations skills are central to the functions of leadership.

In this investigation, the toxic leaders described by participants were considered woefully inept in human relations skills. Words like "dictatorial" and "inconsiderate" were used frequently. Moreover, poor listening skills proved to be a consistent pattern. These toxic leaders, as a pattern, insisted on dominating conversations or meetings and communication was one-way (top-down). They were also viewed as insensitive, or at least unaware of others' feelings, and unaware of how their changing moods affected others. One toxic leader was described as "very moody." In reference to Goleman's (1995) use of the term "Emotional Intelligence," this investigation suggests that there is the analogic phenomenon of "Emotional Intelligence Deficit Disorder (EIDD)." These toxic leaders displayed an inability, or at least unwillingness, to regulate their own emotions and were viewed by their subordinates as inept in reading the emotions of others. One additional aspect of managerial incompetence includes the lack of focus. "Chaotic" was used several times to describe the toxic leader. One leader was described by a participant as "All over the place . . . we never knew what the priorities were because there was a new one whenever she came back from a conference." Conversely, toxic leadership can take the opposite form; instead of too many priorities there can be none. One participant said "We were adrift . . . we had no direction."

Neuroticism. Another theme emerged from the data – neuroticism. While this analysis of data does not claim to have any grounding in clinical psychology, terms used by Kets de Vries and Miller (1984) in their book, *The Neurotic Organization*, come to mind. Comments such as "insecure" and "secretive" and "wild swings in mood" formed a pattern. Also, critical incidents reported by the participants revealed that toxic leaders have a single-minded focus on self-aggrandizement. As one participant said, "She always had to be center-stage . . . any conversation that you had with her always ended up being about her." Another reported, "With him, it was 'all about me' . . . no one else's ideas mattered." One participant described a supervisor as "sociopathic," another as "bipolar," and another used the term "paranoid." While these comments are not interpreted by the researcher in the context of clinical usage, they do suggest the intensity of the behavior by toxic leaders as perceived by their subordinates. Also, "Lack of

transparency" was a pattern, suggesting that toxic leaders have difficulty forming trusting relationships with others.

Early indicators. A key purpose in this investigation was to observe whether there might be early indicators of toxic leadership. A reliable list of early indicators might help organizations to avoid toxic leadership in the first place. Or, failing that, it might help organizations to identify toxic leadership early enough to avert a trajectory of organizational decline. Several findings emerged from participants' responses. First, of the 36 responses to the question, "How long did it take you to realize that this person was a toxic leader," all but five reported that the toxic behavior was obvious within one year or less. Moreover, half reported that the toxic behavior began to reveal itself within a few months. In only two cases, however, participants indicated that the toxic behavior was evident during the interview process. These findings suggest that toxic leaders are adept at gauging their audiences during interviews. One participant commented on the seductive qualities of the toxic leader during the interview: "He enchanted us . . . sparkling personality . . . said all the right things . . . staff heard what they wanted to hear and school board heard they wanted to hear . . . we did not see the charade until too late." Another participant's comments noted how skilled the toxic leader was during the interview: "She was too perfect in the interview . . . [but she] revealed her true self within a month." Thus, the data from this investigation provided little information for how to spot the toxic leader during the interview process. However, it did reveal that schools and colleges could be surprised by the outcome.

Notwithstanding, participants did provide useful information on how they first became alerted to the early toxic leadership once the leader was on the job. Table 4 depicts their observations, which are sorted in the same four categories previously used to describe toxic leadership (i.e., egotism, ethical failure, incompetence, and neuroticism). As noted in the previous paragraph, these behaviors became endemic within the first year and many times within a just few months.

Table 4

Early Indicators of Toxic Leadership

Egotism	**Ethical failure**	**Incompetence**	**Neuroticism**
Imperial behavior, e.g. making people wait unnecessarily long to schedule appointments	Bogus strategic planning, i.e., rush to have a "new" plan while short-circuiting the process	Rush to judgment for all decisions	Mood swings
Collecting marginally competent "yes" people for inner circle	Bogus empowerment – committees and/or task forces formed to rubber stamp predetermined priorities	Avoiding difficult decisions	
Keeps score on those who do not offer full support	Corruption of the administrator and/or faculty search and selection process	Overuse of sound bites and/or buzz words/phrases	
Dominates discussion in all meetings; does not listen to counsel	Marginalizing competent people – discrediting those perceived as opponents		
Preoccupation with projects best described as "window dressing"			
Overuse of first person pronoun ("I"); seldom uses third person "we"			
Abrasive behavior; frequent use of sarcasm, harsh criticism			
Preoccupation with the perquisites of the position			

While participants were able to identify some of the behaviors that they observed as harbingers of the toxic leadership that followed, a word of caution is necessary. The data collection procedures utilized an open-ended question; and, obviously, the observations are subjective in their nature. However, qualitative analysis of the responses revealed that toxic leaders will exhibit multiple toxic behaviors.

Discussion

Several conclusions are warranted by the data from this investigation. First, toxic leadership occurs with high frequency in educational organizations, just as it does in other types of organizations (Bullis & Reed, as cited in Williams, 2005; Kusy & Holloway, 2009; Solfield & Salmond, 2003). Moreover, the consequences are insidious – key employees are marginalized and demoralized – and progress toward institutional mission is impeded.

Further, the evidence shows that the behaviors of toxic leaders are concrete. In the open-ended responses participants described toxic leadership in terms of what toxic leaders did, especially how they interacted with others. Based on the descriptions given in response to the open-ended questions and corroborated responses to the *Toxic Leadership Scale*, four categories of toxic leadership emerged: (a) Egotism, (b) Ethical Failure, (c) Incompetence, and (d) Neuroticism. Although, reflection on the behaviors that fall within these categories reveals that they are not taxonomic. The categories overlap. For example, ethical failure has in part (if not all) its origin in egotism. Similarly, incompetence in human relations skills might reflect such a high degree of self-centeredness that no effort is given to applying them. Likewise again, manipulation of others can be an indicator of a neurotic condition and, arguably, it also is ethically objectionable. In other words these four categories of toxic leadership probably are better viewed as fields within an array of toxic leadership behaviors, and the interconnections form a complex network. A much more sophisticated research design than was the intent of this investigation will be needed to explore how these toxic leadership behaviors associate with one another.

Finally, the evidence suggests that toxic leadership is seductive. Participants reported how some were highly skilled at disguising their toxic behaviors when they interviewed for their positions. This point emerges from one of the purposes of the investigation – to identify early indicators. The only conclusion that is warranted by the evidence is that early indicators will begin to become obvious after the toxic leader is on the job (see Table 4); but prior to then they are not easily observable. Moreover, those behaviors that might be indicative of the potential for toxic leadership are going to be viewed through subjective filters.

Of course, every investigation has its limitations and this one is no exception. Given the low response rate (17%, N = 51), this study can be viewed merely as exploratory. Moreover, the emotionally charged nature of the topic probably discouraged some of those whom were invited from participating. And, some of those who did choose to participate may have used the survey as an opportunity to simply ventilate latent hostilities, rather than reflect upon their experiences. Even so, the data portray a stark reality that toxic leadership is prevalent and it conforms to observable patterns of behavior.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Indeed, toxic leadership is present in educational organizations – 90% of the participants in this investigation reported previous or current experience with a toxic leader. This incidence of toxic leadership in schools, colleges, and universities compares to the

frequency of toxic leadership reported in business, healthcare, and military organizations. The profiles of toxic leaders will vary, but the characteristics fall into a set of categories, namely, (a) egotism, (b) ethical failure, (c) incompetence, and (d) neuroticism. Also, early indicators of toxic leadership frequently surface within the first year, but they are difficult to observe in the selection process.

These points taken together argue on behalf of greater attention given to training personnel involved in the search and selection of leaders. Faculty and other administrators who assist in the screening of candidates need more knowledge of the research behind effective leadership and the methods developed by organizational psychologists for identifying persons with leadership potential. Likewise, they need to be more knowledgeable of the increasing attention given to research on toxic leadership. Indeed, there is even a case for appropriate use of qualified consultants (i.e., personnel specialists with expertise in organizational leadership) during the search and selection process.

Finally, since this investigation was intended to be exploratory in nature, the researcher is more than willing to acknowledge its limitations, previously mentioned. The findings do, however, support the need for more research into the area. Specifically, the researcher recommends an in-depth qualitative study of a sample of toxic leaders of sufficient size to attain data saturation, with three or more participants providing information on the same toxic leader for triangulation, with emphasis on clues embedded in the search and selection process.

Leadership is a paradox. The very attributes that describe effective leaders can corrode into qualities that we associate with toxic leadership. For example, "Arrogance," one of the hallmarks of toxic leadership shares much in common "self-confidence," which is a trait shared by effective leaders. But we know that they are not the same. The arrogance of a toxic leader is offensive to subordinates, but the self-confidence of an effective leader inspires trust. If members of organizations are to be any better at finding talented leaders for their organizations, they will also need to be acknowledge this paradox and become more astute at ferreting out the toxic leaders who reside in the same pool of candidates. At the very minimum, personnel who participate in the search and selection process for leaders will require training in the research from organizational psychology on methods for assessing leadership potential, as well as detecting toxic leaders in waiting.

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The Changing Landscape of Principal Preparation: An Analysis of Statewide Longitudinal Program Component Survey Results

Jennifer Friend
University of Missouri-Kansas City

Robert Watson
Missouri State University

This article examines comparative survey results for 16 principal preparation programs located in the Midwestern state of Missouri across a four-year time period from 2008 to 2012. The authors are founding members of a statewide Higher Education Evaluation Committee (HEEC), which has been meeting on a monthly basis since 2005, comprised of faculty representatives from all school leadership preparatory programs and Missouri Department of Education leaders. The mission of the HEEC is to improve all preparatory programs in order to positively impact K-12 student performance through the development of highly effective school and district leaders. This unique collaborative improvement effort resulted in a statewide initiative to administer a comprehensive program component survey to collect data from the 2007-08 and 2011-12 academic years to examine changes in preparation programs. The article explores the development of the HEEC, describes the multi-year processes for administration of the surveys, and shares recommendations to improve preparatory programs for educational leaders based upon the survey results. The dramatically changing landscape of principal preparation is apparent in the major findings: (1) online course offerings doubled in four years, (2) adjunct faculty increased 260% while full-time faculty decreased by 27%, and (3) the time to degree completion decreased as competition for student enrollment increased across the state.

Introduction

The current context for induction of new school leaders in the United States includes a variety of pathways such as graduate preparatory programs within higher education institutions, expanding alternative preparation and certification methods, and charter schools with no requirements for leaders' licensure. The demand for reform in higher education in the United States, particularly with regard to leadership preparation programs, is a call to action (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005; Wallace Foundation, 2008). In response to this call, colleges and universities strive to meet changing accreditation requirements at the state and national levels that include robust candidate and program assessment data to drive continuous improvement processes, while

operating within the context of competition with one another for quality leadership candidates and budgetary constraints in a recession economy.

Recent research studies support the critical importance of redesigning leadership preparation programs to support the development of effective educational leaders who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to positively impact student learning outcomes through their practices (Braun, Gable, & Kite, 2011; Cosner, Tozer, & Smylie, 2012; Reames, 2010). Leithwood and Seashore Louis (2011) conducted a five-year study that examined the influence of school leaders on instructional quality and student learning, finding "that leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning" (p. 3). In addition to research, national leadership standards also instigate program redesign in many states, such as the revised Educational Leadership Policy Standards (ELPS), which prompted a wave of educational leadership program re-design across states whose accreditation and licensure procedures were based upon the previous Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards (NPBEA, 2008).

In the Midwestern state of Missouri, the changing landscape of the preparation of school and district leaders resulted in a statewide collaborative effort that began in 2005 and that continues into 2014. The Higher Education Evaluation Committee (HEEC) meets on a monthly basis and includes faculty representatives from each of the 17 institutions in the state with educational leadership licensure programs, along with representatives from the state department of education. There is great diversity among the HEEC participants, who work within large and small preparation programs, and at public and private institutions. In an article describing changes in university educational administration programs, Orr (2006) stated that, "Collaboration seems to have been an important catalyst for schools of education and their programs" (p. 499). The collaboration among HEEC participants is focused on a common purpose: to support continuous improvement for educational leadership programs in order to graduate principals who positively impact student performance in preK-12 schools.

Missouri's education department requires leadership preparation programs to maintain both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to program delivery and evaluation, including: (a) admission criteria and acceptance data, (b) student demographics, (c) program attributes, including course syllabi, (d) evidence of academic progress, (e) number of completers by program area, (f) licensure examination results, and (g) graduate follow-up data. The purpose of this study was to examine the longitudinal results of a statewide program component survey. The primary research question was: How do leadership preparation programs vary across Missouri, and what program changes have taken place between 2008 and 2012? This paper examines the survey results, describes the activities of the HEEC, and concludes with recommendations based upon the findings from the program component survey.

Study Framework

The examination of leadership preparation program features is informed by the literature on effective preparatory programs and theories that undergird this work. The U.S. Department of Education (2005) published a case study of six innovative programs, identifying effective program components such as: (a) beginning and operating the

program guided by a distinct vision of effective school leaders, (b) exacting criteria for selecting and recruiting candidates, (c) a rigorous curriculum, (d) field-based experiences with project-based learning, and (e) an accelerated timeline for program completion (p. 9, 12). Orr and Orphanos (2011) found that four collective program features affected graduate leadership practices, including "instructional leadership-focused program content, integration of theory and practice, knowledgeable faculty, and a strong orientation to the principalship as a career" (p. 50). Teitel (2006) affirmed the need for connections between the courses that students are required to complete and the field experiences in which they are engaged.

There are also program features that support diversity and social justice among leadership candidates. Teitel (2006) described alternative processes for recruiting future school leaders as including "members of traditionally underrepresented groups, such as women and people of color, as well as proven leaders from other sectors" (p. 501). A study by Gajda and Militello (2008) found that districts with higher percentages of students from poverty backgrounds and students of color were more likely to lack skilled and knowledgeable leaders:

> National reports indicate that a great number of schools and districts are experiencing a shortage of a qualified pool of principal candidates. The dearth of principals is particularly endemic in districts perceived to have challenging working conditions, large populations of impoverished or minority students, low per pupil expenditures, and urban settings. (p. 14)

In addition to seeking to diversify the pool of leadership candidates, many preparatory programs adopt a conceptual framework that supports a curriculum that prepares future school leaders to be reflective practitioners and social activists in diverse educational contexts (Diem & Carpenter, 2012; Furman, 2012; Jenlink & Jenlink, 2012).

The theoretical lens through which to examine Missouri's program component survey results and the HEEC's long-standing collaborative efforts includes two elements: (a) the concept of *co-opetition* from the information technology field, and (b) neo-institutional theory. The first theoretical element, co-opetition, resulted from the merger of competition and collaboration in the field of computer technology, whereby businesses work together to promote innovation and improvement (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1997). Collaboration within a competitive environment has also been documented in descriptions of organizations functioning in a globalized world, as Friedman (2005) stated in *The World is Flat*:

> The best companies are the best collaborators. In a flat world, more and more business will be done through collaborations within and between companies, for a very simple reason: The next layers of value creation – whether in technology, marketing, biomedicine, or manufacturing – are becoming so complex that no single firm or department is going to be able to master them alone. (p. 352-53)

This concept is applicable to the dramatically changing landscape of principal preparation and the inter-institutional work of the HEEC to create more exemplary preparatory programs for educational leadership.

The second component of the framework for this article involves neo-institutionalism as a theoretical lens to explore the "institutional environment" within the state and within the peer interactions of the different institutions with educational leadership preparatory programs (Powell, 2007). A definition of neo-institutionalism within the field of sociology was provided by DiMaggio and Powell (1991):

> The new institutionalism in organization theory and sociology comprises a rejection of rational-actor models, an interest in institutions as independent variables, a turn toward cognitive and cultural explanations, and an interest in properties of supra-individual units of analysis that cannot be reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives. (p. 8)

This theory provides a lens through which to view the HEEC collaboration and communication between the preparatory program representatives from the higher education institutions, organizational changes within the institutions, and how external factors such as state policy revisions affected these programs over time.

Co-opetition in the Higher Education Evaluation Committee

The HEEC monthly meetings among the higher education institutional representatives and leaders in the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) began in 2005. Because many of the programs vied with one another for students, HEEC meetings were tinged with an element of competition. Within the first year, the HEEC members began to identify a shared purpose and understanding related to the importance of the roles that graduates would fill as principals, regardless of their choice of preparation program. The power dynamic changed as time passed, transforming competitors into collaborators through the common goal which united the participants to approach program improvement statewide in order to inspire and develop highly effective school leaders who have a positive impact on K-12 student performance in Missouri.

Gornitzka (1999) conducted a study that examined the relationship between legislative policy changes and organizational change in higher education. One of the premises of this research was that, "Organizational choice and action are limited by various external pressures and demands, and the organizations must be responsive in order to survive" (p. 7). The influence of peer institutions on one another, and the complex external and internal factors that impact survival of programs are relevant to the analysis of the program component survey results gathered through this study.

During the monthly HEEC meetings, representatives from DESE shared policy updates and provided opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback regarding changes to policies, standards, and regulations. This work led to a greater understanding of the different programs across the state, to identification of common elements found at each institution, and to connections with relevant research regarding program innovations and best practices. Ideas generated during HEEC meetings informed the fall and spring professional conference agendas for Missouri's Chapter of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), including keynote speakers and concurrent breakout sessions with professional development opportunities for faculty members, adjunct faculty, and graduate students in educational leadership programs.

One of the most important results of the co-opetition during HEEC monthly sessions was the opportunity to have a place at the table during the development of state board of education policies that impacted leadership preparatory programs. Viewed through the lens of a neo-institutional framework, the institutions within the state were not merely responsive to external changes in the institutional environment, but had a role in the creation of this environment. Throughout these ongoing developments and tensions, the existence of the HEEC provided a voice for higher education faculty in the development of new standards and assessments at the state level. The representatives from competing institutions continue to work together to support the overall success of preparatory programs statewide in order to produce school and district leaders who are well-prepared to meet the challenges of 21st Century education.

Methods

The HEEC administered the 60-question program component survey to all of the state's institutions with educational leadership preparatory programs in 2008 and 2012. The program component survey was developed by Dr. M. T. Orr and members of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Taskforce to Evaluate Educational Leadership Preparation Effectiveness in alignment with the UCEA / Learning and Teaching in Educational Leadership Special Interest Group (LTEL-SIG) graduate follow-up survey to provide parallel questions for the graduates' preparatory program to answer (see Pounder, 2012). During the first online survey administration, institutional data were self-reported for the 2007-08 academic year, and 15 out of the 17 institutions in the state completed the survey. The survey was administered a second time with 16 out of 17 institutions reporting data for the 2011-12 academic year. The program component survey requested data such as candidate and faculty demographics, degree and licensure opportunities offered by the institution, and characteristics of course content, instruction, and internship experiences. Data from the online surveys were maintained in a manner that provided confidentiality and anonymity for the preparatory programs by assigning a random numeric code to represent each institution.

Data were analyzed by faculty from two participating institutions who were founding members and former Chairpersons of the HEEC. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and visual representation of the data to assist in comparative analysis. Qualitative data were collected from open-ended survey responses and an analysis of the minutes of the monthly HEEC meetings. Qualitative analysis utilized an emergent category analysis process. "'Emergent' designs in the tradition of qualitative research suggest a process that is not predetermined" (Suter, 2012, p. 343). The purpose of the initial coding of the open-ended response survey data was to utilize pattern coding to identify categories and preliminary themes. Themes were refined through a second coding pass through the data that involved combining some categories and identifying codes as either descriptive or interpretive. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated, "Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation" (p. 69). Once the within-case analysis was complete for each program, a cross-case analysis identified common themes across the programs in the state. Creswell (2007) stated that cross-case analysis involves, "examining themes across cases to discern themes that are common to all cases" (p. 245).

The final stage in analysis was to conduct a cross-case analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from the first and second survey responses.

Survey Results

Educational Leadership Faculty Characteristics

Faculty demographics in the preparation programs in Missouri changed greatly during the four-year period. The number of full-time faculty working in educational leadership programs declined while the number of adjunct faculty reported a significant increase. In 2008, there were 98 full-time tenured, tenure-track, and clinical faculty and 73 adjunct faculty members, and in 2012 there were 71 full-time faculty and 264 adjunct faculty members facilitating coursework in preparation programs (see Figure 1). The change in the number of adjunct faculty represents a 260% increase occurring within the four-year time period. The increase in adjunct faculty was associated with an increase in the percentage of faculty of color and an increase in the percentage of male faculty. Overall faculty demographics in 2008 were reported as being 90% White, 7.6% African American, 1.2% Latino/a, and 1.2% Asian, and 36% female and 64% male. In 2012, faculty demographics in the administration programs at the state's institutions were reported as being majority White (~78%) and male (70%).

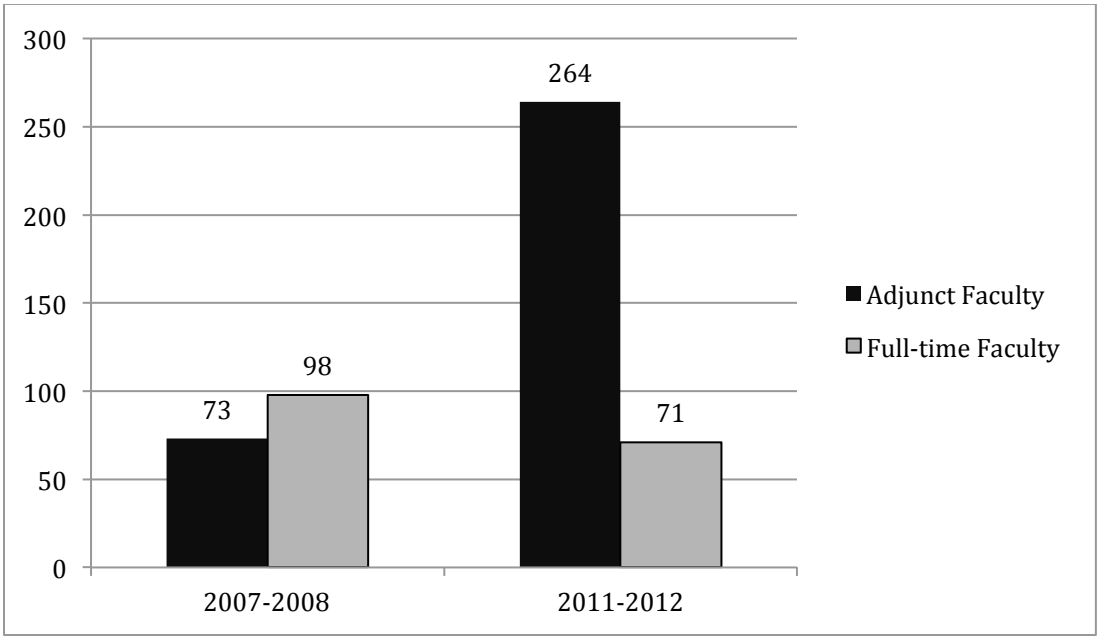

Figure 1. Total number of adjunct and full-time faculty in 2007-2008 and 2011-2012.

Degree Program Curricula and Requirements

The required course credit hours for the Master's programs for initial school-level administrator licensure varied from 30- to 39-credit hours in 2008, and from 30- to 38-credit hours in 2012, with a mode of 36-credit hours (See Figure 2). While the range of required credit hours between 2008 and 2012 remained fairly constant for degree programs leading to initial principal certification eligibility, there was a reduction in the

number of semesters for program completion. Eighty percent of programs took six to eight semesters to complete in 2008, while 83% of programs took five or six semesters in 2012. This could be attributed to the use of cohort-based models that use enrollment management and course sequencing to decrease the amount of time to degree completion.

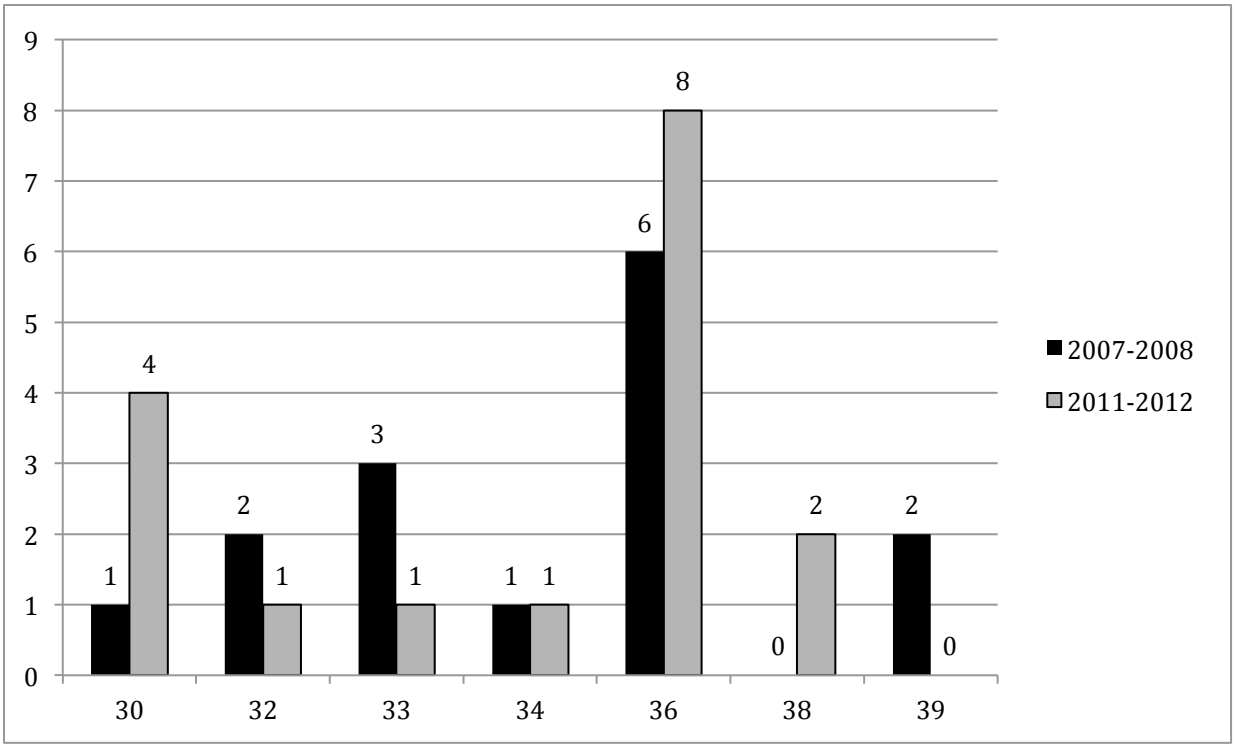

Figure 2. Number of required credit hours in Master's Degree programs in 2007-2008 and 2011-2012.

These data suggest that programs were responding to the need to be competitive with other institutions by reducing the time needed to complete the degree leading to initial principal licensure eligibility, and in some institutions by reducing the number of required credit hours.

Another changing program element was an increase in the use of defined cohorts for the entire program. A trend from 2008 to 2012 suggests that more institutions began utilizing a cohort model, which may be associated with research-supported best practices and the need for more efficient enrollment management in the declining revenue budgetary context for institutions within Missouri. In 2008, 40% of programs reported using cohorts, while 94% of programs using defined, partial, or informal cohorts in 2012 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Cohort Usage of Program

Type of Cohort	2008	2012
Defined Cohorts	13%	31.3%
Partial Cohorts	--	31.3%
Informal Cohorts	27%	31.3%
Did not use Cohorts	47%	--
Unknown	13%	6.3%

The program component survey asked institutions to report the degree that candidates earn in the educational leadership preparation program. The 2008 and 2012 data were somewhat consistent, with the exception that there were no reported earned doctorates leading to initial principal licensure in 2012 (see Table 2). This is an area that needs additional investigation to explore whether doctoral degrees leading to principal certification continue to be offered in Missouri. The survey data also indicated that certification/licensure earned within degree programs offered by institutions did not change for most of the certification/licensure areas (see Table 3).

Table 2

Number of Beginning Principal Programs by Degrees Candidates Earned upon Graduation

Degrees	2008	2012
Master of Arts/Science	3	4
Master of Education	11	11
Education Specialist	10	12
Doctor of Education	9	--
Doctor of Philosophy	3	--
Other	--	2

Table 3

Certification/Licensure Attained by Candidates across Programs

Certification/Licensure	2008	2012
Initial/provisional school building leadership	11	13
Professional or permanent school building leadership	12	10
Special education leadership	8	8
District leader	12	10

In the 2008 survey, the preparatory institutions were asked the extent to which course content emphasized programmatic elements; the greatest extent included supervision, along with organizational change, instructional improvement, curriculum and instruction, school law, social justice, and management. With regard to course content, institutions reported less emphasis on facilities, budgeting, community engagement, and research methods. In the 2012 survey, emphasis was placed on vision, using data to improve instruction, and instructional leadership, while the course content reported to have the least extent in programs included child development, adult learning, and family involvement (See Table 4).

Table 4

Selected Course Content Emphasis in Programs in 2007-2008 and 2011-2012

To what extent does course emphasize the following:		Not at all	A little	Some-what	To some extent	Extensive
Instructional leadership;	2008	5	0	1	3	5
Supervision	2012	0	1	5	3	5
Management and operations	2008	9	0	2	4	2
	2012	0	0	9	4	2
Ethical leadership	2008	8	1	0	3	1
	2012	1	0	8	3	1
Budgeting and finance	2008	13	0	2	2	0
	2012	0	0	13	2	0
Community engagement	2008	10	1	2	2	0
	2012	1	2	10	2	0
Special education and special needs students	2008	8	0	1	4	0
	2012	0	2	8	4	0
Leadership for diversity and social justice	2008	3	0	3	5	1
	2012	0	3	3	5	1
Curriculum and Instruction	2008	8	0	2	3	3
	2012	0	1	8	3	3
Educational vision	2008	6	0	1	0	4
	2012	0	1	6	0	4
Organizational change	2008	7	1	1	2	4
	2012	1	1	7	2	4
Research methods	2008	10	0	1	2	3
	2012	0	0	10	2	3
Family involvement	2008	7	2	3	2	0
	2012	2	3	7	2	0

The use of online education and hybrid class models that blend face-to-face and distance education sessions greatly increased between 2008 and 2012. The number of institutions providing coursework through distance education doubled, and the percentage

of classes offered online or through hybrid models changed from 0-50% in 2008 to 25-75% in 2012. The type of technology also changed during this four-year period. Technology use as part of program delivery saw an increase from 2008 to 2012 in the use of SMART Boards from 47% to 75%, and a slight increase in the use of online portfolio management from 33% to 37.5%. The 2012 survey included additional selections related to technology used as part of course instruction, including programmatic use of digital video (25%), online case studies (37.5%), web-based course support such as Blackboard (81.3%), and online discussion forums (62.5%).

The learning strategies and instructional pedagogies reported in program course work suggested that all areas were utilized to some extent in both 2008 and 2012 (see Table 5).

Table 5

The Learning Practices/Instructional Strategies used in Program Coursework

Strategies		A little	Somewhat	To some extent	To a great extent
Field-based projects	2008	--	--	2	13
	2012	--	--	7	9
Analysis & discussion of field-based problems	2008	--	--	5	10
	2012	--	--	9	7
Action research or inquiry projects	2008	2	--	5	8
	2012	1	3	6	6
Analysis & discussion of case studies	2008	--	--	6	9
	2012	--	--	9	7
Lecture	2008	8	--	7	--
	2012	4	7	2	2

The program survey also asked institutions to report the type of assessments used to determine the candidates' readiness for graduation from the program. The most commonly used assessment strategies were portfolio assessment and culminating projects (see Table 6 and Table 7).

Table 6

Assessment Strategies Used to Evaluate Students' Readiness for Graduation in 2008

Strategy	Not At All	A little	Somewhat	To some extent	To a great extent
Completion of a Capstone or Culminating Project	1	0	0	5	7
Final Examination or Assessment	5	0	0	7	1
Master's Thesis or Research Paper	4	1	0	6	4
Portfolio of Professional Work, Projects and Accomplishments	1	1	0	6	8

Table 7

Assessment Strategies Used to Evaluate Students' Readiness for Graduation in 2012

Strategy	Not At All	A little	Somewhat	To some extent	To a great extent
Completion of a Capstone or Culminating Project	1	0	0	0	14
Final Examination or Assessment	5	0	0	0	8
Master's Thesis or Research Paper	5	0	0	0	9
Portfolio of Professional Work, Projects and Accomplishments	0	0	0	0	15

Another finding from the survey was a significant decrease in the number of programs with formal partnerships with school districts. In 2008, 13% of program survey respondents reported no formal affiliation with school districts, while in 2012 there were 64% of programs that reported no formal affiliation with school districts (see Table 8). Institutions also reported a decrease in national accreditation affiliation, from 100% of programs NCATE or TEAC accredited in 2008 to 70% of programs engaged in national accreditation processes in 2012.

Table 8

The Number of Formal Affiliations between Programs and School Districts

Number of Programs	2008	2012
0	2	10
1	2	2
2-5	3	2
6-10+	8	0

The post-program support offered to graduates indicated a decrease in job referrals from 2008 to 2012, in addition to a decrease in job and interview assistance (see Table 9). In 2012, six institutions responded that networking with other graduates was used.

Table 9

The Post-Program Support Offered to Graduates

Support	2008	2012
Job referrals	13	7
New principal mentoring	8	8
Job and interview assistance	10	6
Other (non-specific)	1	--
Networking with other graduates	--	6

Discussion

Kottkamp and Orr (2003) stated the need to combat "deep and increasing skepticism that graduate leadership preparation programs could meet the challenge to prepare effective leaders" through comparative analysis and evaluation of programs, and connecting leaders' preparation to effective practices (p. 1). The HEEC developed and implemented a methodology for statewide data collection and evaluation of its educational leadership programs to examine the different approaches to program design and program delivery. The four-year comparison of survey results provided evidence of some remarkable changes, including: (1) online course offerings doubled in four years, (2) adjunct faculty increased 260% while full-time faculty decreased by 27%, (3) the time to degree completion decreased as competition for student enrollment increased across the state, (4) course content placed greater emphasis on leaders using data to improve instruction than on family involvement, and (5) the percentage of programs with formal affiliations with school districts declined from 87% to 36%.

Findings from the program component survey demonstrated that faculty and school leadership candidates were predominantly White and male. Research studies have addressed unique issues that females and people of color face in school leadership (Brown, 2005; Rusch, 2004). Several of the institutions are focusing on ways to address

issues of diversity through strategies related to the recruitment, interviewing, induction, and retention of faculty and students of color and female faculty and students. Additional marketing for programs has been instituted that focuses on attracting educational leadership candidates from underrepresented groups within many of the institutions. Faculty in preparatory programs are also reaching out to the local undergraduate programs, local school districts, and community leaders to find and contact potential candidates. Some institutions are also providing full and partial tuition scholarships to assist students of color and female students.

Based upon the minutes from the HEEC meetings, the collaboration and sharing of information on a monthly basis was highly valued by the faculty representatives from the different institutions. One representative stated, "We've learned so much from one another and each institution has benefitted." Another stated, "You could ask anybody in the room for anything." Although each institution has unique program components, the different institutions come together during the monthly HEEC meetings with one idea and one purpose. Yet, the findings from this study support previous research that leadership preparation programs are also influenced by their own institutional environments (LaMagdeleine, Maxcy, Pounder & Reed, 2009). Regardless of the supportive and collaborative atmosphere in the HEEC meetings that generated recommendations for program improvement, the program representatives had to adhere to the demands of their unique contexts, such as budgetary and hiring constraints, state accreditation mandates, and student preferences for program requirements and delivery.

Learning activities within the educational leadership classroom are enhanced through associated field experiences that provide candidates with the opportunity to apply learning in school settings. "Many administrative interns receive no real administrative practice at all through their internship, and yet upon completion of the internship, they are expected to be competent administrators" (Edmonson, 2002, p. 1). This logistical reality creates a situation where the classroom instructional environment may be the only forum for candidates to encounter certain elements of educational leadership. As Levine (2005) reported:

> Clinical experience tends to be squeezed in while students work full time and generally occurs in the school where the student is employed. For the most part, students described the experience as something to be gotten out of the way, not as a learning opportunity. (p. 40)

The majority of educational leadership candidates are engaged in full-time work as teachers or other educational professionals, which limits the length and nature of field experiences during preparatory programs. The program component survey results and analysis of the HEEC meeting minutes suggest future actions that educational leadership preparation programs can take to address these concerns.

Recommended Future Actions

1. Increase racial and gender diversity in educational leadership preparatory programs, and develop curricula and pedagogical techniques that support integration through "meaningful social and academic interactions among students who differ in their experiences, views, and traits" (Tienda, 2013, p. 467). Expand and strengthen formal partnerships between universities and school districts, and

maintain contact with teacher preparatory program graduates who demonstrate strong leadership characteristics to recruit educational leadership candidates from underrepresented groups. Create policies and hiring practices that encourage women and people of color to apply for faculty and adjunct instructor opportunities, and support these individuals through robust induction and mentoring programs.

2. Strengthen the requirements of the internship experience, and improve partnerships between university supervisors and district mentors to ensure that the internship in educational leadership preparatory programs provides every candidate with high-quality administrative experiences with principals who have a proven record of excellence. University faculty must provide professional development support to principals with regard to effective mentorship practices and the types of administrative activities in which candidates need experience.
3. Examine the relationship between preparatory program components (such as course content emphasis, cohort usage, and the internship experience), graduates' practices as school leaders, and the impact that graduates have with regard to increased student achievement and school improvement. There have been numerous studies since the Levine (2005) report that provide methodological models for leadership preparation programs to adapt as part of program evaluation through educational leadership graduate follow-up studies (Donmoyer, Yennie-Donmoyer, & Galloway, 2012; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Pounder, 2012).

Conclusion

Assessing the preparatory program to determine its effectiveness in preparing educational leaders who have a positive impact on their school communities is critical to the process of program improvement. Higher education institutions increasingly must meet similar accountability practices of preK-12 school improvement efforts with our educational preparation programs. Faculty, higher education administrators, state education department officials, and other policymakers and stakeholders must work collaboratively to evaluate preparatory programs utilizing a systemic data collection and analysis process to continuously improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

In Missouri, all principal preparation programs are in the process of re-designing their admissions processes, candidate assessments, and program evaluation plans in preparation to meet new accreditation guidelines. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) teacher and leadership standards have been embedded in the evaluation model and piloted during the 2012-2013 school year. Effective September 2014, all educator preparation programs for teachers and school leaders will be required to collect data, evaluate classroom and instructional leadership practices, and conduct several classroom and field-based observations documented for the new statewide gateway assessment process. Several webinars have been developed to assist schools and universities in understanding the new standards and knowledge dispositions for effective school leaders and the tiered certification system that will be introduced with new licensure assessments.

As educational leadership preparation programs continue to adapt to a changing landscape, it becomes essential to develop relationships among stakeholders who

influence the preparation and development of principals and superintendents who can effectively lead efforts to improve student learning in PreK-12 education. Collecting and analyzing data across institutional environments on an ongoing basis will be an important mechanism in the continued statewide efforts to monitor and improve program content, delivery, and outcomes. The HEEC's unique collaborative model, bringing to the table representatives from diverse institutions, the state department of education, and other stakeholders, is recommended for other states to engage in continuous improvement to strengthen the preparation of educational leaders.

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CYBERBULLYING: AN EXPLORATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' EXPERIENCES WITH CYBERBULLYING INCIDENTS IN LOUISIANA

Holly Castile
Sandra Harris
Lamar University

This qualitative phenomenological study explored school administrators' experiences with cyberbullying. The participants were secondary administrators in Louisiana public schools. Notable findings indicated that cyberbullying is a complex problem because the greatest amount of cyberbullying is occurring off-campus. This study found Facebook and other social media sites are the most common places for cyberbullying to occur; therefore, students need to be taught to use social media responsibly. Findings illustrated that female students were more likely to participate in cyberbullying, cellphones are used as a source for cyberbully, and there is a disparity between administrators regarding the effectiveness of Louisiana cyberbullying laws.

Introduction

Cyberbullying is a new twist on an old problem in education (Ackers, 2012). Bullying is a serious issue that schools across the world have been battling for decades (Accordino & Accordino, 2011). However, cyberbullying brings new complications, new laws, and a new territory that the school system must address (Willard, 2007). As a fairly new issue, the research on cyberbullying is limited, but the effects of cyberbullying are considerable (Butler, Kift, & Campbell, 2009; Grigg, 2010). In fact, several research studies identify cyberbullying as a growing problem that affects adolescents all over the world and across various cultures (Accordino & Accordino, 2011; Ang & Goh, 2010).

Research has shown that cyberbullying can occur at any time in life, but it typically peaks in middle school (Sbarbaro & Smith, 2011). Some researchers have found that females experience cyberbullying more often than their male counterparts (Ackers, 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Snell & Englander, 2010). In contrast, other researchers have concluded that there is no significant difference in cyberbullying among girls and boys (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). However, all researchers appear to agree that the effects of victimization from cyberbullying are far reaching and include low self-esteem (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010), increased chances of suicide (Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010), distress (Juvonen & Gross, 2008), anger (Burgess-Proctor, Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Ortega et al., 2012), frustration (Burgess-Proctor et al., 2010), and negative "mental health" issues (Reeckman & Cannard, 2009, p. 48).

Olweus (1993) described the act of bullying as repeatedly harassing another person and causing harm. This type of bullying can be both direct and observable or subversive and difficult to detect. In addition, bullying behaviors result from an "imbalance of power" (Violence Prevention Works!, n.d., para. 3) and when "he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself" (Violence Prevention Works!, n.d., para. 2). However, in recent years bullying has taken a new direction: cyberbullying. According to many researchers, bullying and cyberbullying are closely linked and students typically participate or experience both forms of bullying (Maher, 2008; Twyman, Saylor, Taylor, & Comeaux, 2010). Cyberbullying is the repeated harassment of someone through the use of email, texting, or other electronic means (Hinduja and Patchin, 2009). The number of students who experience cyberbullying as a victim varies depending on the study. For example, Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf (2007) found 34.5% of students reported being cyberbullied. In addition, 10% of those students admitted to repeated cyberbullying abuse. Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, and Tippett (2006) concluded that approximately 22% of students are, at one time or another, victims of cyberbullying.

As technology continues to advance at a rapid pace, school administrators are faced with the problem of disciplining not just bullying among students, but cyberbullying as well (Accordino & Accordino, 2011). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore school administrators' experiences with cyberbullying incidents.

Specific research questions included the following:

1. What experiences do school administrators have with cyberbullying?
2. What cyberbullying policies are in place at your school and how effective are they?
3. What unofficial procedures are used at your school and how effective are they?
4. What are recommendations to strengthen school cyberbullying policies and procedures?

Literature Review

Cyberbullying may be a new phenomenon, but research shows that it is growing rapidly with the change of times and technology (Accordino & Accordino, 2011; Ang & Goh, 2010; Bullock, Wong-Lo, & Gable, 2011). Cyberbullying has gained increased attention through various forms of media and is the new hot topic in education (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). The review of the literature includes the following topics: traditional bullying, cyberbullying defined, types of cyberbullying, age and gender, cyberbullies, cybervictims, bystanders, parents, schools, cyberbullying laws, and cyberbullying in the media.

Traditional Bullying

Several researchers have described bullying as a problem that has continually caused detriment to children around the world (Olweus, 1993; Ortega et al., 2012). Bullying is the repeated harassment of another person through name calling, exclusion, physical violence, creating false accusations, or any other form that causes harm (Olweus, 1993).

In addition, Olweus pointed out that a disagreement between two friends or between two people of the same strength does not equal bullying. Bullying is the most common type of violence that occurs to adolescents, and it happens most often in the form of name calling (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2011; Boulton & Underwood, 1992) and physically hitting each other (Boulton & Underwood, 1992).

Cyberbullying Defined

Although there is a great deal of research on bullying, the concept of cyberbullying is relatively new in comparison (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2011). Cyberbullying's definition transforms as new studies surface, but the fundamental elements derive from the definition of traditional bullying (Maher, 2008; Twyman et al., 2010). Hinduja and Patchin (2009) defined cyberbullying as when one person "repeatedly makes fun of another person through email or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don't like" (p. 5). Burgess-Proctor et al. (2010) pointed out that the actions must be repetitive and have malicious intent to be defined as cyberbullying; otherwise, it is online harassment. Grigg (2010) questioned the usefulness of Patchin and Hinduja's definition of cyberbullying. She remarked, "Research within this area has to propose a broader concept that embraces negative behaviours of internet and mobile phone users without current cyberbullying definitional and conceptual issues" (p. 152).

There is evidence that suggests that traditional bullying and cyberbullying are related because students are often involved in both forms of bullying (Maher, 2008; O'Moore, 2012; Twyman et al., 2010). Many students refer to acts of cyberbullying as bullying (Naruskov, Luik, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2012). However, several researchers have found that participation in cyberbullying actually occurs less commonly than traditional bullying (O'Moore, 2012; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, 2008).

Types of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullies use their cell phones as a means of sending offensive messages to others (Ackers, 2012; O'Moore, 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Reeckman & Cannard, 2009; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Out of 265 students surveyed, 88% owned a cellphone (Mark & Ratliffe, 2012). Price and Dalgleish (2010) found 19% of cyberbullying victims reported being harassed on cellphones. An example of this type of cyberbullying includes using cell phones to call and wake up their victims in the middle of the night (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). A second example of cyberbullying using cellphones includes texting obscene and threatening messages such as, "I will find you." (Mark & Ratliffe, 2012, p. 101).

Willard (2007) identified sexting as a growing issue among youth. Sexting occurs when individuals either send nude or sexually explicit images to others or forward images to cause emotional distress to the victim. Hinduja and Patchin (2012) explained the reasoning behind sexting as an attempt by adolescents to project themselves to their peers in such a way as to acquire attention and increase their public status.

The internet has become so widely available that cyberbullies have various options when harassing others (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011). Mark and Ratliffe (2011) reported that 96% of adolescents reported having the internet readily available. Social

networking sites were identified as the most common place on the internet for a student to be cyberbullied (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011). Other common types of cyberbullying included online threats, spreading of rumors, and having humiliating pictures posted. While Hinduja and Patchin (2010) reported making fun of someone online and sending harassing emails or messages as the most common types of online bullying.

Willard (2007) gave several examples of extreme cases of cyberbullying. For instance, posting a picture that would be considered private, sexual, or embarrassing is an example of cyberbullying or harassment. O'Moore (2012) reported that boys are more likely to post pictures or videos when cyberbullying because it causes a greater impact than words. Mark and Ratliffe (2011) reported YouTube as a site where videos that are disconcerting or violent are posted for others to view. Price and Dalgleish (2010) supported previous research in their report that 21% of students in their study were victimized through email, 20% in chat rooms, and over 40% in social networking sites.

Early incidents of cyberbullying occurred most often in chat rooms because that is where most school aged children would spend their time. Today**,** students spend most of their time in social networking sites where videos and pictures can be shared. These sites include places like Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2011). The new direction of cyberbullying includes interactive games on the internet, three dimensional games, virtual websites, Game Boy, PSP, DSi, X-Box 360, and PlayStation (Ackers, 2012; Cyberbullying Research Center, 2011; Mark & Ratiffe, 2011).

Age and Gender

One research study of 213 college students analyzed the victimization and behaviors of cyberbullying predominantly among girls. It found that females participate in cyberbullying more often as both the cyberbully and the cybervictims in comparison to males (Ackers, 2012; Mishna et al., 2012.; Navarro & Jasinski, 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Snell & Englander, 2010).

In contrast to the above research, several other researchers found that there is not a significant difference in the percentage of cyberbullying committed by females than males (Griezel et al., 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). On the other hand, Fanti et al. (2012) studied over 1,400 students between the ages of 11-14 and found that boys were more likely to act as all types of bullies, including cyberbullies. They were also more likely to be the victim of all types of bullying. Lindfors, Kaltiala-Heino, and Rimpelä (2012) reported that girls were more likely to be the victim of cyberbullying, but that boys were more likely to act as a cyberbully.

Side Effects

The side effects of cyberbullying can be detrimental to young adults. Researchers appear to agree that the effects of victimization from cyberbullying are far reaching and include low self-esteem (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010), increased chances of suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Schneider et al., 2012), distress (Juvonen & Gross, 2008), anger (Burgess-Proctor et al., 2010; Ortega et al., 2012), frustration (Burgess-Proctor et al., 2010), and negative "mental health" issues (Reeckman & Cannard, 2009, p. 48). Students who are bullied both at school and on the internet show greater signs of distress (Ybarra et al., 2007). Side effects of cyberbullying that includes videos or images are more stressful for

students because the incident is typically viewed by a larger audience (Gillespie, 2006; Smith et al., 2008).

Hinduja and Patchin (2010) noted additional effects of cyberbullying consisted of lower self-esteem and self-worth. Reeckman and Cannard (2009) reported that students who were victims of either traditional or electronic bullying, attempted to commit suicide at a rate twice that of other adolescents. The mental health, school attendance, and participation of students are key effects of all forms of bullying (Reeckman & Cannard, 2009). It was noted by Hinduja and Patchin (2010) that minority students had increased ideals about suicide compared to their Caucasian counterparts. In addition, students who experienced cyberbullying had double the chance of having attempted to commit suicide. The same research study found that students who participated in cyberbullying as a bully also had increased thoughts of suicide (1.5 times) compared to non-victims or aggressors.

Ybarra et al. (2007) found that cyberbullying could cause problems at school. These problems included increased suspensions, playing hooky, and bringing a weapon on campus. In addition, 20-25% of students who were cyberbullied admitted to carrying a weapon on campus. It was suggested by researchers that schools should intervene, with the help of parents, when cyberbullying occurred because of the increase in negative school behaviors. It is important to note that according to Ortega et al. (2012) boys admitted to less side effects than girls when they were the victims of cyberbullying or traditional bullying.

Methodology

This is a phenomenological research study. According to Moustakas (1994), a phenomenological study examines the experiences of people who have lived through similar scenarios. In this study the phenomenon explored was cyberbullying and how school administrators handled situations of cyberbullying on their campuses. Since cyberbullying is a relatively new problem in education, a phenomenological approach was ideal because it is "rooted in questions that give a direction and focus to meaning, and in themes that sustain an inquiry, awaken further interest and concern, and account for our passionate involvement with whatever is being experienced" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59). Moustakas (1994) detailed a progression in phenomenological research starting with immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. In addition, Pereira (2012) pointed out that in order for a phenomenological research study to be valid, the study must be rigorous, credible, and bring awareness to the phenomenon being studied.

The Participants

The population for this study consisted of school administrators in Louisiana schools that are ranked an A, B, C, or D. According to the Louisiana Department of Education website, Louisiana Believes (n.d.), schools are given a rating system consisting of letter grades, A to F based on their end of year exams in the elementary and middle schools. However, high schools are awarded their letter grade based on 50% state performance scores (End of Year Exams) and 50% of their scores is based on four year cohort graduation rates. As of 2013, the schools' scores will be based on a 150 point scale. A school that earns 100-150 points will be awarded a rating of A. A school that earns 85-

99.9 points will be awarded a rating of B. A school rated a C earns a point value ranging from 84.9 – 70, a D school earns a point value from 69.9-50, and an F school earns a point value of 49.9 and below.

This study utilized purposeful sampling. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), purposeful sampling is when the researcher intentionally selects those individuals who are going to participate in the study because they have experienced the phenomenon in question. In this study, the participants were school administrators in public schools who work in an A, B, C, or D school within Louisiana. An additional criterion was that these school administrators must have had experiences with cyberbullying on their campuses. In addition, extreme case sampling was employed in order to "provide unusual, troublesome, or enlightened cases" (p. 174). In other words, the researcher explored accounts of extreme cyberbullying cases in Louisiana and then interviewed those school administrators. The researcher also used snowball sampling. This occurs when the researcher is introduced to new participants who meet the stated criteria through inquiry and suggestions made by other participants in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Thus, the researcher asked each participant if they knew of another school administrator who had experienced cyberbullying within their school.

Each participant was assured confidentiality and was provided with pseudonyms which allowed the participants to speak freely on the phenomenon being researched without fear of retribution (Simon, 2011). For a phenomenological study, Creswell (2007) stated that the population size should be between five and 25 participants. Morse (1994) recommended that the research participants should be at least six. For this study, the researcher chose to interview eight school administrators who met the specific stated criteria.

The participants in this study were a collection of principals and assistant principals in the State of Louisiana. All of the participants were on school campuses in the 2012-2013 school year, and represented a wide range of schools: three were middle school administrators, two were high school administrators, two were administrators on campuses with grades seven to 12, and one was an administrator at a ninth grade campus. The participants in the study worked in four different parishes across the State of Louisiana. The schools ranged in size from 280 students to over 1000 students on campus. Every campus had a cyberbullying policy in place, and participants were all aware that their parish's policy was aligned with the state policy.

Data Collection

The goal of the interview process was to understand the phenomenon of cyberbullying and school administrators' experiences in handling cyberbullying. Therefore, the researcher chose individual interviews as the data collection tool. The interviews were based on the research questions and framed within a general interview protocol. However, participants were granted as much scope as needed to express their opinions freely and without researcher biases. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Each participant was provided with a pseudonym in order to afford them with a level of anonymity.

Each participant was first contacted through an email explaining who the researcher was, her background, and the research study. A second email and/or phone call scheduled the time and date for the interview. In some instances, the researcher

called several time and sent several emails to the participants before getting a response to the invitation to participate. Participants were given a copy of the interview questions in advance of the interview which lasted approximately 20-45 minutes. Before the interview began, participants signed a consent form verifying they understood their rights.

Treatment of the data

Next the researcher transcribed the interviews. The interviews were coded and grouped and labeled to reflect broader themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The findings of the qualitative research study were then expressed through a narrative discussion. A narrative description was completed based on the transcripts and field notes. The narrative descriptions included the background of the participants, the cyberbullying incidents experienced, language used by the participants to explain the cyberbullying incident, and the participants' meanings or reality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Provisions of Trustworthiness

In this study, the researcher used a variety of triangulation methods to lend credibility to the study. First the researcher used data triangulation through interviewing a wide range of participants in a variety of schools in order to increase the validity (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011).

Secondly, the researcher used peer debriefing as an external check on the research process. The researcher chose two peers to listen to the recorded interviews in order to determine if the interpretations of the researcher were precise (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In addition, the researcher conducted member checks which allowed the participants to review their transcripts and provide feedback on the interpretations made by the researcher to ensure accuracy (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Results

This study provided eight school administrators with the opportunity to discuss their personal experiences with cyberbullying on their school's campus. In addition, it allowed them to discuss what they felt were effective and ineffective policies and procedures that are in place in their district and schools. According to the interviews given by each participant, there did not appear to be any differences in perception based on gender in regards to cyberbullying. In addition, neither the grade level nor the size of the school appeared to be a factor in the type or severity of the cyberbullying that occurred. As indicated in the methodology section, all participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to assure anonymity.

Research Question One

Research question one asked participants to describe their experiences with cyberbullying in their schools. Emergent themes included the following: cyberbullying develops on social media, cellphones are a source, female students cyberbully more than males, most cyberbullying incidents happen off campus, parents want administrators to discipline students for off-campus incidents, and cyberbullying students often target school personnel.

Develops on social media. Every participant in the study stated that most of the cyberbullying incidents that are reported to the office developed on social media. More specifically the school administrators pointed out that Facebook was the root of most cyberbullying. Some administrators identified other social media where cyberbullying is occurring including Instagram and Keek. One principal jokingly stated, "I think Facebook is the devil!" Another administrator pointed out that 90% of the problems they encountered with females on their campus was caused through Facebook or a text message. Mr. McCree identified a growing problem with females harassing male students through social media.

Cellphones are a source. Most participants identified a link between cyberbullying and cellphones. Cellphones have been used to bully others through text and taking unwanted pictures and then posting them to the internet. One participant explained how a female student took a picture of another student and then posted it to Facebook with derogatory comments which led to a larger problem when students arrived at school. Mr. Thibodeaux stated that he had received reports of sexting, the sending of nude pictures on cellphones, and threats that were sent through texts. Mrs. Walker described similar experiences with students using cellphones to take inappropriate pictures and then send them to other students or post them to websites. Mrs. Vincent had reports of students using their cellphones to video a teacher outside of school. In addition, Mrs. Johnson described an incident where a stolen cellphone was used to take inappropriate pictures on school campus.

Female students cyberbully more than males. Over 50% of the participants stated that female students are the most likely to be involved in cyberbullying. Mr. Johnson stated in his interview, "I think 9th grade is the worse and girls are the worst cyberbullying. Girls cyberbully. I don't know if that's official, but girls do more cyberbullying." Mrs. Picou also emphasized that most cyberbullying incidents on her campus occurred between two female students. Mr. Thibodeaux said that most of his cyberbullying stemmed from "girl drama." While not all experiences recounted by the participants mentioned girls, specifically as cyberbullying more than boys, it is important to note that almost every incident described in this study included female students.

Most cyberbullying occurs off-campus. All participants in this study except one described incidents of cyberbullying that started off campus and were later brought to school. These incidents were brought to the attention of the administration through conflict that arose after the students returned to school, or they were notified by the parents of the students. In fact, Mrs. Picou stated that she had not encountered any cyberbullying that has occurred on campus; however, she described incidents with angry parents who reported the cyberbullying to the school. She explained, "They come back to campus, both girls are made and it becomes drama. Then it becomes Momma Drama." Mr. Thibodeaux also acknowledged that every incident that he has been made aware of has taken place away from school. Mr. Johnson explained that cyberbullying has only become a problem after the students return to school. Mrs. Wainwright agreed, "It spills over to campus because students love to talk. They love to come back and say what they saw on Facebook." Mrs. Walker pointed out that what "happened in cyberspace ends up coming to life right here."

Parents want administrators to discipline students for off-campus incidents. Most administrators agreed that parents still expect the principals and assistant principals to discipline students for their actions on the internet and using their cellphones even though those actions took place away from the school campus. Mr. Jones expressed his dismay about this, "This is a private issue. It's kind of discouraging that some of these parents think that if there is a cyber-thing between two school aged kids that the school board needs to fix this or address it." In direct contradiction, Mr. McCree stated, "Anything that we can't cover at the school that we would press charges through the school resource officer on behalf of the school and behalf of the students being harassed."

Cyberbullying students often target school personnel. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying does not only affect other students but school personnel, as well. Mrs. Walker described two incidents in her interview where the teacher was involved as a target (directly and indirectly) of cyberbullying. One incident occurred when a student videoed a teacher correcting another student and then posted the video online. The second incident occurred when a female teacher was tricked by a few male students into leaning over the desk to offer assistance with the assignment. Unknowingly, a different male student put his cellphone up her dress and took pictures of her under-garments. The students then posted those pictures. The teacher chose to resign her position due to her humiliation, according to Mrs. Walker.

Mrs. Vincent described an incident where a middle school student videoed a school teacher during the town's festival consuming alcohol and dancing. In addition, Mrs. Vincent explained how an unknown person posted the following information about an administrator on a Facebook page, "If you need to relax after a stressful encounter with certain administration at [school name], then take a right on [number] highway and visit her husband. He will hook you up."

Research Question Two

Research question two was designed to identify the school policies on cyberbullying and their effectiveness. While all administrators were familiar with state and district policies, there was a disparity on how effective these were considered. They discussed the following laws/policies related to effectiveness: Louisiana laws on cyberbullying, school cellphone policies, school code of conduct, and other use policies.

Louisiana laws on cyberbullying. Every participant in the study identified that their districts' cyberbullying policy is drawn directly from the State of Louisiana state laws on cyberbullying. One participant identified Act 861 specifically by number; but, all participants knew there was a law that had been enacted and dictated their actions regarding cyberbullying. However, their feelings on the effectiveness of the law varied. Of the participants interviewed, five felt that the law was ineffective or at best only somewhat effective. The administrators knew that the law required them to notify parents before a bullying investigation began and to give parents the opportunity to be present during the process. In addition, the administrators were aware that there is a checklist and a packet of forms that are required when a student is accused of bullying in any form.

Mrs. Wainwright described her experience with the forms. She stated:

> I have filled out the paperwork, the four and five pages of forms that are required for that and it is quite cumbersome to administrators. I understand the spirit of the law, but the way that it is actually written with its requirements is way too cumbersome.

Mr. Thibodeaux elaborated:

> It is not practical that you must contact a parent prior to having a child interrogated. In our school, we might have to wait a half a day, a whole day; we might even have to drive home because the child has no working numbers.

Mr. Thibodeaux understood the idea behind the law, but he thought administrators should have a voice. Mr. Thibodeaux commented:

> In my opinion, if you're an administrator and you don't understand all of these forms, how are you going to tell a parent or explain this to a parent? I mean, you almost have to take course work and a degree on bullying or cyberbullying just to understand.

Mrs. Walker remarked that they use the forms given by the state, but what is bullying and what is perceived as bully are not the same things. Whereas Mrs. Vincent admitted that the laws and policies are new to them and they have had little interaction with it.

Three of the administrators felt the cyberbullying policy was effective. Mr. Johnson explained, "So the new policy works if the kids let us know and if we do what we're supposed to do: document and follow procedures. I love it." Mrs. Picou stated that her district's policy read like the state's policy, and she felt that her district's policy was effective.

Mr. McCree identified a revised Louisiana statute, R.S. 14.40. This law addressed cyberbullying that occurs off campus and the rights of the schools to discipline those cyberbullying students involved. According to Mr. McCree, this statute gives the school the power to discipline students for actions taken while students are away from campus.

School cellphone policy. Most of the subjects in the study spoke about the relationship between cellphones and cyberbullying. The cellphone policies varied among the schools. Most often students are allowed to bring their cellphones to school as long as they are not seen. However, in Mrs. Wainwright's school, students are not allowed to bring them to school at all.

Mrs. Vincent's school had the most lenient policy. Her school allowed their students to bring cellphones to school and to use them in the mornings and at lunch on the quad. Three participants commented that they do not follow the cellphone policy in their district and the consequences it requires. Mrs. Walker stated that she does not suspend students if they are caught with their cellphones out at school even though it is written into their policy. She explained, "We don't do that because we wouldn't have any children here at school. That's not the reality of what happens with our children." She emphasized that students are "addicted to their technology."

Other school policies. Several of the administrators interviewed in this study identified a code of conduct that students are given at the start of each school year. This code of conduct details the rules and the consequences for violating those rules. In

addition, a few principals mentioned an acceptable use policy that regulates internet usage on campus. These policies were discussed in relation to preventative steps to reduce cyberbullying; however, the participants did not identify any of these policies as effective or ineffective.

Research Question Three

Research question three investigated the unofficial procedures that school administrators use to effectively handle incidents of cyberbullying. Emergent themes included the following as most effective: communicating with parents, providing anti-bullying contracts, talking with students informally, and meeting with students at every opportunity.

Communication with parents. Out of the eight participants in the study, six spoke of communicating with parents when incidents of cyberbullying were reported. The principals said that contacting parents was the most important part of handling cyberbullying. Mrs. Wainwright said she would bring the students in and talk with them. Then she would inform the parents of the accusations and suggest that the parents check their child's Facebook account. Mr. Jones explained that calling parents has been enough up until now. Mr. Johnson discussed educating parents during school orientation and explaining the code of conduct so parents are familiar with the rules and policies. Mrs. Picou's approach was similar to Mr. Johnson. She mentioned talking to parents at the start of school and during the first Parent and Teacher Organization meeting.

Providing anti-bullying contracts. Several teachers identified using anti-bullying contracts or no contact contracts when they were asked about unofficial procedures they utilize at their schools. Mrs. Walker described her "No Contact Contract" that she has students sign when they have a conflict. She explained:

> I have something called a 'No Contact Contract' that we ask students to sign before any punitive disciplinary action is taken. So, for example, I have two girls who were in a conflict. I am going to call one of them in and … it says I'm not going to be mean, I'm not going to tease, I'm not going to make fun of, I'm not going to pursue this in any kind of way.

Mrs. Walker expanded on the contract saying that it is the first step in the documentation process. Mr. Thibodeaux's contract is called a "Non-confrontation Agreement" that works the same way. Mr. McCree's school has students sign a bullying contract, but they are also required to attend a conflict resolution course if the situation persists after the initial contract is signed.

Talking informally with students. Most participants mentioned pulling students into their offices and having an informal discussion about the cyberbullying accusations and the consequences of their actions. Mrs. Wainwright explained, "That would just require me to bring the student in, let them know that I'm aware of it and if it continues, we will take further action." Mr. Jones stated that he would bring as many as 4, 5, or 6 students in at a time to discuss the situation in hopes of stopping the cyberbullying before it escalated.

Meeting with students at every opportunity. An additional theme that emerged was talking to large groups of students at every opportunity about cyberbullying. This includes meeting with students during their Physical Education classes, Response to Intervention time, and orientation.

Research Question Four

Research question four asked school administrators what recommendations they had to improve cyberbullying policies and procedures. Emergent themes included emphasizing cyberbullying education and increasing parental responsibility. In addition, two principals stated that they did not know what could be done to improve the current policies and procedures.

Emphasizing cyberbullying education. The most prevalent theme that emerged in research question four was the need to emphasize cyberbullying education. Education is required both on the part of the parents, students, and even school personnel. Mrs. Picou explained that, "Parents need to understand the true definition of what that means [cyberbullying], as well as, the ramifications if they allow their students to participate." Mr. Johnson suggested similarly, "You have to educate parents and again I'm going to say at least 50% of all our bullying, the parents did not help it."

Mrs. Vincent said that students need the consequences of cyberbullying "pounded into their heads every day." Mrs. Walker stated that "education is the great equalizer." Therefore, we must teach students and parents the consequences of their actions. According to Mrs. Walker, once a student posts something online, it is there forever and they don't realize the ramifications of those actions. Mr. Thibodeaux pointed out that educators need more training in handling cyberbullying and what it really consists of.

Increasing parental responsibility. The second emergent theme was increasing parental responsibility. Mrs. Wainwright explained:

> We need to have parents sign off and let them know that when those things spill over to campus, that there are going to be consequences and that their responsible for their child's behavior online. If they're going to let that child set up an account, then they need to be responsible for that.

Mr. Jones's recommendation was similar. He stated, "Well, I guess I would like to see that [the] awareness [about cyberbullying] be shifted more towards parents and less on government/school overseeing private lives that take place after 3:30."

Conclusion and Implications for Practice

A primary conclusion from this study suggests that cyberbullying is an especially complex problem for school administrators to handle. Much of this dilemma occurs because the greatest amount of cyberbullying is occurring off of the school campus. This is supported by research conducted by Smith et al. (2006). The problems occur when students return to school and the conflict follows them onto the campus and into the hallways. Since most of the occurrences of cyberbullying were instigated off-campus, it appears that students find it easier to confront others while in cyberspace than in person. This is supported by Patchin and Hinduja (2006).

Based on the findings of this study, Facebook and other social media sites are the most common places for cyberbullying to occur. Cyberbullying Research Center (2011) also reported that students spent most of their time on sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube. This could explain why most of the cyberbullying in this study occurred

on these sites. Therefore, this leads to another major conclusion of this study which suggests that students must be taught to understand and use these programs responsibly.

Today**,** students spend most of their time in social networking sites where videos and pictures can be shared such as Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2011). Furthermore, the new direction of cyberbullying includes interactive games on the internet, three dimensional games, virtual websites, Game Boy, PSP, DSi, X-Box 360, and PlayStation (Ackers, 2012; Cyberbullying Research Center, 2011; Mark & Ratiffe, 2011). This means that the problem is not going to go away and educators must face the problem of bullying that is occurring away from school, but that has ramifications on campus.

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from those findings, the researcher offers the following suggestions and implications for practitioners. Schools should create a cellphone policy that is simple, direct, and consistent in order to reduce the number of cyberbullying that occurs with the use of these devices. While eliminating the use of cellphones at school is ideal, a more pragmatic approach is that cellphone policies are reasonable and that students are educated about their use. Each school district should include an anti-bullying (no contact contract) contract into their cyberbullying policy. This will allow the students and parents to sign off that they understand that the student has been accused of bullying. In addition, each school should include within the school day an Anti-Bullying Program that includes cyberbullying. Sympathy training is a critical part of any Anti-Bullying program. This type of training will promote empathy for all students. Lastly, Louisiana legislators need to revise the current cyberbullying laws to include parental responsibility.

The limitations for this study include the small number of participants. In addition, this study is limited only to administrators within the state of Louisiana, and it is limited to administrators that worked in schools that contained middle and/or high schools. It is recommended for future research that this study be conducted with a larger sample of participants. In addition, it is recommended that the participants interviewed should include administrators from additional states. The participants in this study included four male administrators and four female administrators.

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