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Selected personality characteristics as correlates of effective school principals

Elizabeth Jean Shahmouradian

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Selected personality characteristics as correlates of effective school principals

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The College of William and Mary, 1992

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SELECTED PERSONALITY
CHARACTERISTICS AS CORRELATES
OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by

ELIZABETH JEAN SHAHMOURADIAN

A dissertation submitted in
partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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1992

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DEDICATION

This research effort is dedicated to the memory of my husband,
Edward Alex Shahmouradian, for his love, support, and encouragement.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The longevity of this research effort brought with it life events which contributed to strengthening a desire of accomplishment.

I am particularly indebted to the support and encouragement extended by Doctor G. William Bullock, Jr. who has served as my advisor throughout this project. To him I am deeply appreciative.

I owe a particular word of thanks to Doctor Lee Doerries and to my many friends and colleagues who continued to encourage me through this research effort, to other members of my doctoral committee, Doctors Joyce Van Tassel-Baska, and James M. Yankovich, to Doctor Thomas Ward, and to my typist Beth Cheney.

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Abstract
Chapter 1

Introduction

Early theoretical attempts to explain leadership in terms of personality produced a negative reaction by some researchers who rejected the importance of this human characteristic (Bass, 1981). Later research on the characteristics of leaders did indicate, however, that personality is an important variable in a person's emergence as a leader and in his ability to maintain the role. Many theorists (Roe and Drake, 1974; Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1979; Newell, 1978; and Blumberg and Greenfield, 1986) assert that leader characteristics are best explained within the context of situational demands. They agree that leader behavior and situational demands interact to determine leadership effectiveness. The research results of Sergiovanni and Starratt reveal that certain behavioral characteristics required of a leader tend to vary from one situation to another. Apparently, some successful leaders may prove ineffective when placed in a situation that imposes demands incompatible with their personality.

Crucial responsibilities of instructional leadership and effective school management are often found to be two of the many ambiguous tasks addressed daily by school principals. Even though the role of the principal is often ambiguous (Cross, 1981), expectations of community and school board members leave little doubt that the principal is expected to respond to all the demands of many constituencies served by the schools. Responsibilities of instructional leadership and effective
school management within American public schools have become even more demanding. Complex educational and organizational problems, accompanied with routine and limited resources, in addition to idiosyncratic behavior of principals, influence the success of school principals (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980). While coping daily with these stress-inducing situations, principals continue to be decision makers and conflict managers. Consonant with this work environment, Lazarus (1980) endorses a coping-type personality which allows one to manage stress-related emotions and physical responses while, at the same time, maintaining morale and continuing to function effectively. Principals who possess personality characteristics that enable them to cope with problems and positively change the environment, will also be able to handle stress and ultimately establish success. A better understanding of these characteristics seems to be an appropriate research goal.

Theoretical Rationale

An underlying assumption of this study is that principals who rate highly in the areas of human relations, instruction, management, and the implementation of change will also be strongly committed to the purpose of their work; will be in control of their actions and decisions; and will find a challenge in creating change and developing an environment conducive to learning. In other words, such principals may be viewed as effective principals.
Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) report effective principals reflect many similar personal characteristics. They have reasonable intelligence, high energy levels, strong desires to succeed, forceful and dynamic personalities, and are quick to take initiatives. Often, however, principals themselves are not clear regarding their role priorities. Many characterize themselves as instructional leaders, while others recognize that they lack the skills and knowledge needed to be effective in the instructional domain. Principals spend a great deal of their work day in direct interaction with students, teachers, and parents while only few opportunities are available for interaction and dialogue with their administrative peers. Interpersonal competence related to establishing and maintaining desired outcomes influence decisions and as a consequence is a pivotal factor in differentiating the more effective from the less effective principal.

While there is no one best stratagem to create a positive school environment, there are recurring behaviors exhibited by principals that are associated with a positive school climate and greater student achievement (Persell and Cookson, 1982). Effective principals emphasize student achievement as the primary outcome of schooling. A clear vision of long-term goals are communicated clearly to the school staff and a tone for the school is set by the administrator with high priorities given to activities, instruction, and materials that foster academic success. General discipline standards are set for the whole school by promoting an orderly and quiet atmosphere, without being
rigid and oppressive. Importance is placed on fewer non-instructional interruptions and on the simplification of administrative tasks so often assigned to teachers. Student progress is continuously evaluated in relation to instructional objectives and goals for student achievement. Frequent classroom visitation, monitoring of student progress and expectations set for the entire school are indicators of how well their students perform as compared to students in other schools. Test results are reviewed when progress seems slow and feedback is provided to teachers designed to aid progress toward achieving targeted goals. High standards of performance are established for teachers and students, and the position of administrator is used to pressure teachers to perform in the expected fashion. Teachers are not permitted to "write-off" students as non-learners particularly because of race or social class. Expectations are modeled by the behaviors of the principals. Curriculum development, the acquisition of basic skills, initiation of new programs, and resources to meet teachers' instructional needs are provided. Instructional policy is set and teaching strategies that enhance academic achievement are promoted. Management and instructional skills are balanced by effective administrators as they are constantly involved in decision-making. Carefully structured, informative professional development activities are arranged which help the staff gain access to consultants and resources. Teachers are provided with opportunities to interact for the purpose of professional
development and assistance is given to evaluate professional competence and to set goals.

The principal is a link between policy and management decision makers at the district level and the site providers of educational services. This central position, together with a critical role in leadership and instruction, brings with it a work situation which is likely to produce stress. Those who do manage to perform effectively are able to cope well with their circumstances.

Justification for Study

The increased research interest in the area of leadership has produced a large body of research which reports traits and behaviors of effective principals. Investigators have also examined activities performed within schools which affect successful outcomes (Bloom, 1976; Brookover, Beamer, Efthim, Hathaway, Lezotte, Miller, Pessalacqua, and Tornatzley, 1982), and have documented, convincingly, that steps taken in such areas as planning, developing, and evaluating results in examples that lead to school success. Most of these studies tend to cluster around instructional leadership roles. Rarely have personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge been the focus of study as variables of leader success in schools. And yet, Kobasa (1982) has suggested through her research that commitment, control, and challenge are essential personality elements for successful leadership.

Commitment allows one to believe in the trust, importance, and value of what is to be accomplished, resulting in an overall sense of
purpose in life. Control is the belief in being responsible for one's own life, understanding that stressful events are brought about and therefore something can be done about them. Challenge focuses on whether an individual uses judgment or perception as a way of life when evaluating events in terms of a set of standards or simply experiencing them. When an attitude is held using a combination of these elements, a stressful life event can be an opportunity leading to personal growth. A principal who understands the dynamics of personality study and views himself to possess the personality characteristics of commitment, control and challenge may be better able to confront the demands of middle management resulting in effective leadership.

Limitations

This is a co-relational study in which the researcher attempted to determine if a relationship exists between effective school principals and selected personality characteristics. While results of the study may suggest selected characteristics as possible correlates of effective principals, they cannot be considered adequate for establishing causal relationships between the variables.

Although twenty-five school systems throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia were selected to participate in this study, two of the larger school systems in Virginia chose not to participate in the study. This could affect the generalization of the resultant data in respect to its representation of principals.
The Principal's Rating Scale was used as a measure of effective principals as determined by directors of personnel. There is cause to question the validity of this instrument which is subjective in response (Chapter III—Instrumentation).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was selected as a measure to determine whether principals showed a preference for the dimension of judging or perceiving when attending to situations and drawing conclusions about what was perceived. Half of the cells have counts less than 5 indicating it may not be a valid test for this study (Chapter IV—Results).

In the analysis to determine the degree to which identified personality characteristics are correlates of effective school principals, the number of subjects responding was small and may not provide valid results for selected characteristics.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether identified personality characteristics are correlates of effective school principals. According to Kobasa (1982), the personality style a person develops and manifests while handling stressful situations includes personality traits of commitment, control, and challenge. Commitment allows one to believe in the trust, importance, and value of what is to be accomplished, resulting in an overall sense of purpose in life. Control is the belief in being responsible for one's own life, understanding that stressful events are brought about and therefore something can be done
about them. Challenge focuses on whether an individual uses judgment or perception as a preference affecting not only what to attend to in a given situation, but also how a conclusion is drawn about what is perceived. Through a combined use of the personality traits of commitment, control, and challenge, a principal can be effective when dealing with stressful events and use them as opportunities leading to personal growth.

The intention of this study was to determine if selected personality traits of commitment, control, and challenge are characteristics of effectively-rated principals as measured by the Purpose in Life Test, the Locus of Control Scale and the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and concepts are defined to give a clear understanding of the present study:

Effective Principals. Effective principals refer to persons who approach goals through individual commitment to an organizational vision, assume a proactive stance in the work-world environment, and satisfy the routine organizational maintenance demands in a manner that permits on-the-job time to be spent directly related to the realization of a personal vision (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980).

Human Personality. Human personality refers to the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics and thought. It is both product and
process which results in people having some organized structure while, at the same time, possessing the capability to change (Allport, 1961).

**Stress.** Stress refers to a perceptual phenomenon arising from a comparison between the demand on the person and his ability to cope. An imbalance in this mechanism gives rise to the experience of stress, and to stress response (Cox, 1978).

**Coping.** Coping refers to a behavior which is usually conscious, effortful, learned, and determined by the external environment. This behavior serves some aim and is always motivated by some deficit need (Maslow, 1970).

**Commitment.** Commitment refers to a personality characteristic through which an individual experiences life as meaningful, how much an individual feels like "somebody that matters", or how strongly an individual has developed a sense of purposeful direction in life (Crumbaugh, 1968).

**Locus of Control.** Locus of control refers to a personality characteristic through which a person believes his own destinies can be regulated and therefore behave differently from those who expect outcomes are determined by other people or luck (Rotter, 1966).

**Challenge.** Challenge refers to whether an individual uses judgment or perception as a way of life when evaluating events in terms of a set of standards or simply experiencing them (Kobasa, 1982).
Hypotheses

Based on theory and research of effective principals, the following general hypotheses were formulated:

1. Principals rated as more effective will demonstrate a higher meaning level and purpose to their lives than principals rated as performing less effectively in their professional role.

2. Principals rated as more effective will exhibit attitudes reflecting their belief that they can control their own destinies and accept that what happens to them is a result of their own behaviors and attitudes, while principals rated as less effective will exhibit attitudes that reflect their belief that what happens to them is controlled by other people or determined by luck.

3. Principals rated as more effective will demonstrate a judging attitude indicating a willingness to make prompt decisions and come to conclusions quickly and effectively, while principals rated as less effective will exhibit a perceiving attitude more associated to holding off making decisions while gathering more information demonstrating greater interest for the process by which the decisions will be made.

Overview of the Study

In Chapter 2 a review of the relevant research and literature is presented. The design and procedures employed in this study are examined in Chapter 3 which also includes a discussion of the instrumentation and methodology. The results of this study complete with an analysis of the findings are reported in Chapter 4. A discussion
of the conclusion and implications for further research and practice in the area of effective principals are included in Chapter 5.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

A review of research relating to behavioral traits as correlates of effective school principals is presented in Chapter 2. The majority of the identified studies, e.g., Barth (1988), Bennis (1989), and DePree (1989), deal with the concept of leadership and the interacting variables which characterize effectiveness. A few studies, e.g., Heuss and Psencik (1986), Gibbs (1989), and Jacobs (1989), are included to present evidence that stress is common and normal when a person takes charge and assumes the task of planning a direction for the future. Further studies, e.g., Robertson (1988), Cooper (1988), and Schmuck and Schmuck (1990), are reported to demonstrate that particular strategies used by principals offer a partial explanation for on-the-job success.

Chapter 2 is divided into three sections. The sections include discussions of leadership concepts to explain research apparent in persons who effectively engage in the course of directing and coordinating the work of group members, studies of personality characteristics found as similarities among persons emerging as successful and effective leaders, and studies of particular coping strategies adopted by effective principals as they manage stressful situations.

Concept of Leadership

Early theorists used the construct personality to explain why some persons are better able than others to exercise leadership. In
1926, Bowden equated leadership with strength of personality. A more refined definition by Bingham in 1927 described a leader as a person possessing the greatest number of desirable traits of personality and character. Bogardus (1928) later described leadership as "the creating and setting forth of exceptional behavior patterns in such a way that other persons respond to them", and refined the definition in 1934 as "personality in action under group conditions... not only is leadership both a personality and a group phenomenon, it is also a social process involving a number of persons in mental contact through which one person assumes dominance over others" (p. 3-6).

During the same years personality theorists viewed leadership as a one-way influential effect. Compliance induction theorists such as Mare (1927), Phillips (1939), and Bennis (1959) tended to regard leadership as a unidirectional exertion of influence and an instrumentality for molding the group to the leader's will. By 1949, Harding proposed twenty-one types of educational leaders, as follows: autocrat, cooperator, elder statesman, eager beaver, pontifical type, muddled person, loyal staffman, prophet, scientist, mystic, dogmatist, open-minded person, philosopher, business expert, benevolent despot, child protector, laissez-faire type, community-minded person, cynic, optimist, and democrat.

According to Bass (1960), an individual's effort to change the behavior of others is attempted leadership. However, when members actually change through reinforcement or reward, the achievement is
actually effective leadership. Blumberg (1986) reported that in 1966
Katz and Kahn focused on three types of organizational leadership
behaviors and described them as (1) the introduction of structural
change, or policy formulation; (2) the interpolation of structure, i.e.,
piecing out the incompleteness of existing formal structure or
improvisation; and (3) the use of structure formally provided to keep
the organization in motion and in effective operation. Administering
means maintaining things as they are, on the assumption perhaps that
a system will produce what it is intended to if things run smoothly.
More definitions of leadership and studies by theorists continued to
emerge. Fiedler (1967) supported an earlier attempt of defining
leadership in terms of acts, or behaviors and wrote a similar definition:
"By leadership behavior one may generally mean the particular acts in
which a leader engages in the course of directing and coordinating the
work of group members. This may involve such acts as structuring
work relations, praising or criticizing group members, and showing
consideration for their welfare and feelings" (p. 8).

The study of investigating certain personality characteristics of
effective school principals evolved through research by Polanyi (1967)
and led to the discovery that effective principals held a tacit and almost
unconscious understanding of factors related to on-the-job behavior
although they had an extremely difficult time explaining specifically
why they did what they did on the job. Newell (1978) suggested that
effective educational leadership is strongest when knowledge and
learned behaviors are used along with intuitive insight in sensing needs and providing direction in given situations. Leadership, as a phenomenon, is complex yet critical to the improvement of an organization such as a school. It constitutes a major challenge to even the most able leaders and continues an evolution through influence on goal achievement, effect of interaction, status position, role differentiation, reinforcement, and initiation of structure.

A perspective of "administration as a craft" rather than either a science or an art was advanced as a point of reference by Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) in his comments on the preparation of candidates for school principals. He wrote that school districts expect principals to do everything equally well, i.e., to provide instructional leadership, manage instructional programs and resources, administer day-to-day school operation, monitor student behavior and support teacher discipline, to manage all support staff within a school, handle inquiries and concerns of parents, and to attend numerous meetings during and after the school day. As similarities and differences were studied by Blumberg, three factors of on-the-job success of principals were identified. While these principals seemed to hold fairly idiosyncratic perspectives toward their work worlds and while these viewpoints appeared to condition their manner and style of behavior, all were (1) desirous and eager to make the school over in "their" image; (2) proactive and quick to assume the initiative; and (3) resourceful in being able to structure their roles and the demands on their time in a
manner that permitted them to pursue what might be termed their personal objectives as principals. When compared to administration, effective leadership was clearly distinguished by Blumberg and Greenfield in 1986 in an assertion that elements of vision, initiative, and resourcefulness characterize effective leaders and are openly discussed by persons with whom contact is made, especially teachers and other principals. Principals who are deemed effective possess clear goals and are highly goal oriented. When dealing with an organizational group explicit consideration of goals is undertaken by principals possessing effectiveness. Administrative-team or administrative-cabinet goals come into play and are designed to help provide consistency in the actions of various members of the team. As a principal leads, opportunities to make things happen or to create are continuously foremost. Throughout the 1950's research by Bass, Moore, Smith, and Tarnopol, however, suggested that characteristics generate personality dynamics advantageous to the person seeking responsibilities of leadership. These researchers, however, carefully point out that although personality is a factor in leadership differentiation, a return to the trait approach is not represented. Leaders emerge as successful and effective through a balance in variance between traits and situations.

Further research by Burns (1978) brought about an emphasis on leadership as an exchange process defined as a transactional relationship in which followers' needs can be met if their performance
measures up to their contracts with their leader. Burns further suggests that, as change reaches a higher order, it is distinguishable from an exchange relationship and becomes transformational leadership. In a supervisory-subordinate model the transactional leader can be described in relations with subordinates as a person who:

1. Recognizes what subordinates want to get from work and tries to see that it is obtained if the performance warrants it.
2. Presents, exchanges, and promises reward for efforts.
3. Is responsive to immediate self-interests of subordinates if these interests can be met through getting the work done.

Transactional leaders were defined by Zaleznik (1977) as managers who tend to survey subordinates' needs and set goals for them on the basis of the effort the manager can rationally expect from the subordinates. Transactional leaders do not question the goals of an organization. Rather, they concentrate on compromise, intrigue, and control. At the same time these transactional leaders assume subordinates maintain a constant motivation to support the managers' plans.

While a transactional leader may possess personality characteristics beneficial for short-term success with inexperienced followers, the transformational leader not only recognizes existing needs but also seeks to arouse and satisfy higher needs of the follower. Burns (1978) describes the transformational leader as one who motivates subordinates to do more than originally expected through
establishing a level of confidence in reaching outcomes through means of performance.

A transformation can be achieved in any one of three interrelated ways:

1. By raising one’s level of awareness, level of consciousness about the importance and value of designated outcomes, and ways of reaching them.

2. By getting subordinates to transcend self-interest for the sake of the team or organization.

3. By altering the needs' level on Maslow's hierarchy or expanding the individual’s portfolio of needs and wants (Burns, 1978, p. 20).

Transformational leadership arouses transcendental interests in followers and elevates levels of needs and aspirations. According to Bass (1985), this type of leadership may result ultimately in a higher level of satisfaction and effectiveness among subordinates being led.

Bass and others (cited in Bass, 1981) constructed survey questionnaires which were administered to 176 senior U. S. Army officers who were asked to describe their superiors. Emerging from the analyses were three transformational factors—charismatic leadership (including inspirational leadership), individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation; and two transactional factors—contingent reward and management-by-exception. In subsequent exploratory studies with educational administrators extra effort by subordinates,
perceived unit effectiveness, and subordinate satisfaction were more highly correlated with the transformational factors than with the transactional factors (p. 32).

The concept of leadership has emerged from a personality phenomenon of one-way influential effect, through an almost unconscious understanding of factors related to on-the-job behavior. It is also apparent that leadership has shifted from a unidirectional exertion of influence of molding the group to the leader's will to an active group process of shared decision making facilitated by a visionary with a hardy personality style. Leadership has become performance.

Gardner (1988) expressed the theory of leadership overlapping with the theory of management, stating that "leaders tend not only to look far out ahead, but also look out to the sides more broadly to see the context in which their system is functioning. Leaders are preoccupied with vision, values, motivation, and renewal" (p. 70). Barth (1988) stressed the importance of shared leadership and, as a principal, suggested a theory of leadership which "develops through an articulation of goals, the ability to relinquish power, entrusting decision-making authority to teachers, involvement of others when making decisions, assigning responsibility wisely, sharing responsibility for failure, attributing success to others, believing in others, and admitting ignorance" (p. 639-642).
Bennis and Nanus (1985) defined a profound difference between "management—to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct" and "leadership—to influence to guide in direction, course, action, opinion" (p. 21), but stressed that both are important. The distinction being that "managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing" (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p. 21). Ninety leaders were interviewed by Bennis and Nanus (1985) resulting in a concept of leadership which developed into four major themes:

1. attention through vision;
2. meaning through communication;
3. trust through positioning; and
4. the deployment of self through (a) positive self-regard and (b) the Wallenda factor.

Although the above strategies one and two are easily understood, three and four need more explanation. Bennis and Nanus (1985) also expressed a belief that trust was the key to organizational leadership as it implies accountability, predictability, and reliability. No less in importance was the necessity placed upon leaders knowing their worth exhibited through self. "It is necessary for leaders to recognize strengths and to compensate for weaknesses while nurturing their skills with discipline" (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p. 58-59). The Wallenda factor—named after the great tightrope aerialist—has less to do with one's judgment about self-efficacy than it does about the judgment of
the outcome of the event. Successful leadership is a fusion between positive self-regard and optimism about desired outcomes.

Bennis (1989) continued further research into leadership believing leaders are made not born and reiterated his disbelief in leadership theories. Through observations, interviews, and subscribing to the definition that leadership cannot take place in a vacuum, Bennis found that "leaders share some, if not all, of the following ingredients: leadership is a guiding vision, passion, integrity, trust, curiosity, and daring" (p. 39-41).

DePree (1989) subscribed to a belief that leadership is not a science or a discipline, but rather an art. An artful leader progresses through responsibilities beginning with defining reality and ending by saying thank you, while in between the two the leader becomes a servant and a debtor. Leadership is further described as a concept of thinking about institutional heirs and a way of thinking about stewardship, as contrasted with ownership and having the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who permit leaders to lead" (DePree, 1989, p. 10-19).

Characteristics of Effective Principals

In a review of earlier studies conducted between 1948 and 1970 on leadership traits, Stogdill (1974) wrote:

The leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving, a drive to
exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and a sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decisions and actions, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, an ability to influence other persons' behavior, and a capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand. Throughout the controversy of trait theory versus other leadership theories research findings continue to indicate that to be an effective leader one must comfortably develop a style appropriate in relation to the situation (p. 81).

A follow-up study completed by Stogdill, during the 1970's, based on 163 studies of leader characteristics resulted in a positive or significant relationship found in the surveys determined that either:

1. A given trait was significantly correlated with some measure of leader effectiveness.

2. Leaders were found to differ significantly from a sample of followers on the same trait.

3. Effective leaders were found to differ significantly from a sample of ineffective leaders on the trait.

4. High-status leaders were found to differ significantly from a sample lower-status leaders on the trait.

Physical characteristics, social background, intelligence, personality, task-related characteristics and social characteristics became clustered individual traits as reported by Stogdill in his
comparison of leader characteristics developed from the 1948 survey of 124 studies with his 1970 survey of 163 studies. From a comparison of the studies, it can be concluded that the clusters of characteristics generate personality dynamics advantageous to the person seeking the responsibilities of leadership. However, Stogdill warned against drawing a conclusion that because personality is a factor in leadership differentiation, a return to the trait theory is being promoted and rather, suggests the findings represent a sensible modification of the extreme situationist point of view (p. 81).

Stogdill (1974) indicated support for earlier findings which concluded that leaders excel over non-leaders in intelligence, scholarship, dependability and responsibility, active and social participation, and socioeconomic status. Although at one time it was believed that leadership could be explained in terms of certain traits, subsequent research findings cast serious doubts on the validity of trait theories. After examining the relationship of personality factors to effective leadership, Stogdill (1974) summarized the evidence by explaining that a person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits, but the pattern of personal characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationships to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers.

Redfern (1980) asserted that principals should be well advised to develop and engage in self-growth through leadership training seminars, participation in professional organization, and individual
reading for the improvement of leadership performance. Self-analysis is recommended as a principal reviews characteristics of insight, personal security, sensitivity, mature behavior, flexibility, and personal fulfillment. Behaviors consistent with professional intentions are exhibited through recognition that a nonpunitive quality is necessary in a leader-subordinate relationship. As leadership responsibilities become more difficult and complicated, the freedom to be arbitrary becomes greater. A principal's self-discipline and determination to care about others is often demonstrated through an ability to diagnose objectively and rationally the causes of a problem. A well-defined thread of consistency in all leadership action is evident as procedures are fit into variables which occur each day. Personal fulfillment is acquired as a principal understands the role relationship of a successful school administrator to the total educational enterprise.

Weldy (1979) noted that the use of authority may be needed in a time of crisis, but points out that most process-oriented principals do not find such use advantageous. Behavior may be viewed on the basis of either of two quite different frameworks, according to Newell (1978). A scientific phenomenon is based upon scientific findings and is nonjudgmental. An explanation is usually possible of why the behavior occurred. A behavior is viewed as a social action, when values are taken into account, and the behavior can be assessed as good or bad, the consequences of the behavior rather than an explanation of the behavior are of importance. As an effective principal determines
discipline measures to be taken, both dimensions are used alternately and in conjunction with one another.

A study reported by Grace, Buser, and Stuck (1987) of thirteen Illinois principals identified by colleagues as outstanding consisted of interviews designed to obtain the principals' views regarding: characteristics of an outstanding principal; knowledge and skills a principal must have to be successful; actions a principal takes (or might take) to influence the quality of instruction in the school; behaviors of a principal that are likely to reduce effectiveness as an instructional leader; and areas in which principals feel the most need for in-service training. The results of this study indicated that outstanding principals are knowledgeable in all areas related to the educational process such as administration, supervision, curriculum planning, and improvement. In addition, these principals were shown to have the abilities to relate to all kinds of people, to build a sense of cohesiveness and a feeling of family among staff and students, and to create a climate in which people can work productively and learn effectively. Conscientiousness, enthusiasm, sensitivity, knowledge, objectivity, and communication were also identified as characteristics of outstanding principals. Themes recurred in responses by the interviewees and led to a recommendation that programs should be initiated in which principals teach other principals on a regular basis through round table discussion.
Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) reported that principals perceive only a few opportunities for interaction and dialogue with their administrative peers and spend much of the day in direct interpersonal interaction with students, teachers, and parents. The principals' interpersonal competence, particularly those skills related to establishing and maintaining desired identities, both for the principal and for others, serves to mediate much of the principals' work world activity and as a consequence is probably pivotal in differentiating the more effective from the less effective principal. Effective principals reflect a low conceptual/technical, high human relations, orientation to their work world.

As approaches to leadership performance continued to change, Bennis (1985) headed the list of characteristics found in successful leaders with "vision" or persons maintaining the ability to translate intentions into reality. The capacity to create and communicate a compelling vision of a desired state of affairs assisted these leaders in gaining an understanding and commitment to the vision while harnessing the energies and abilities of followers to make dreams come true.

Vision continued to head the list of characteristics needed by principals in research done by Heuss and Psencik (1986). Claiming that principals are not only directly responsible for implementation of mandated legislative reforms but also must become the change agent on instructional improvement, Heuss listed vision as the first domain to be
considered when identifying effective principals. "If the principal is to remain truly a change agent, it is necessary to maintain vision which implies that the school is seen not only as it is but also as it should be" (Heuss and Psencik, 1986, p. 4). The principal is then tasked to inspire, motivate, create, and guide those involved in moving the school toward excellence. The process of change must be understood and used correctly as the principal works towards alignment of the school's purposes. Other characteristics used as criteria for identifying effective principals are "collaborative organization and leadership used by the principal to guide others through a team approach to problem solving, planning implementation, and evaluation" (Heuss and Psencik, 1986, p. 5), and people skills whereby a principal manages, supervises, understands, and manipulates in a positive way the interest groups with whom the direction of the school is shared. Effective oral and written communication, a characteristic used extensively by the principal, can communicate trust and understanding by others. Heuss and Psencik (1986) strongly agreed with Kobasa's (1982) work and found hardiness to be the fifth major characteristic found in effective principals. Challenge, commitment, and control are linked to this domain. The need for leaders to look at change as a challenge, to commit to active roles within the family and the job, and to take control of surroundings is recommended in the development of effectiveness (p. 11).

Stevens and Marsh (1987) examined the role of vision through an interview-based study of twelve elementary principals each categorized
by their supervisor as a responder, manager, or initiator type. The results of the study suggested that visions of the three principal types are different. Initiators' visions focus on school programs and are integrated with other visions held by the same principal. Visions of the responders are vague and diffused, and managers program-related visions are stronger than responders but less focused than initiators. The researchers supported a belief that "principal style can be changed through training, assistance, and monitoring but cautioned to exceeding limits as to how much change can be made within constraints of talent and temperament" (Stevens and Marsh, 1987, p. 31).

Gibbs (1989) researched one correlate of the effective schools research (1978) presenting views and concepts relating to the principal's role as an instructional leader through a combination of behaviors and acquired skills. Gibbs supported an "open style" as necessary for principals to maintain through a belief that teaching and education are open for scrutiny. However, Jacob (1989) expanded further on Gibbs' premise of instructional leadership by suggesting that the key to school improvement is to get and keep the best possible administrators. Jacobs determined the strongest principals are both efficient managers and visionary leaders and examined a list of twelve themes yielded by Selection Research Incorporation as the talent base found among the best school executives in the field.
Stress Factors and Coping Strategies

Many studies suggest the role of the principal is highly ambiguous, characterized by much face-to-face interaction with diverse groups or individuals having conflicting expectations for how principals should accomplish their work. Often, however, role priorities are not clear and some principals characterize a conception of themselves as instructional leaders, while others recognize a lack of skill and knowledge needed to be effective in this domain.

During the 1970's, clinical psychologist Levinson spent time inquiring into the dynamics of people and their work. Problems which arise in the work place, pressures that exist, the interactions which take place create conditions that compel an individual to deal with four major feelings—love, hate, feelings about dependence, and feelings about one's self image. The extent to which one is able to cope successfully with these feelings results in the demands of work becoming less emotionally toxic resulting in more optimum energy being released into the tasks at hand.

The environment created by an effective leader encourages individual development and growth. It is, however, not without frustration. There is a constant necessity to temper feelings and to instill enthusiasm in the tasks at hand, while reflecting a concern about the influence of decided actions on the fate of others. Knowles and Saxberg (1971) suggested that the leader-manager represents the central force of the organization. The extent a person in charge
assumes the task of planning a direction for the future can only be successful if needs are responded to in a way that reflects creativity by the organization's members. The effective leader must continue to strive toward being a person of vision and compassion which will merit the following of others.

Studies done by Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) supported findings that proactive coping strategies were related to the level of interpersonal competence of effective principals. It is reasonable to speculate that these strategies are most likely to be used if a principal has a high degree of interpersonal competence and if the character of the organizational situation is sufficiently ambiguous to permit reinterpretation and channeling of role demands.

While some consider stress an adaptation, it is nowhere nearly as significant an adaptation as is coping. Lazarus (1980) promoted two major functions of coping as:

1. To change the situation for the better either by changing one's own offending actions, or by changing the damaging or threatening environment.

2. To manage the somatic and subjective components of stress-related emotions, so they do not get out of hand and, therefore, do not damage or destroy morale and social function.

Although Lazarus applies the coping paradigm to individual behavior, it links directly to the daily operation of school management.
In a set of studies Kobasa (1982) presented evidence that an effective characteristic against stress is a "hardy personality style". Hardiness is characterized as an "amalgam of cognition, emotion, and action" that facilitates coping with life stress. "Commitment" as opposed to alienation, "control" as opposed to powerlessness, and "challenge" as opposed to threat are three components demonstrated by hardy persons through a belief that life is meaningful, a feeling that one can influence a course of events, and a belief that change is normal, inevitable, and a challenge to growth. Further research reported by Johnson and Sarason's study (1978) (cited in Lefecourt, 1982) supported Kobasa's theory that stress levels of change are less damaging to individuals whose locus of control is high and to persons who tend to seek out novel situations with higher levels of stimulation.

Three major problems identified as stressors by Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) in their research on effective principals were:

1. The problem of exceeding difficulty and accompanying frustration that is attached to the process of terminating a tenured teacher.

2. The problem of power and/or powerlessness that principals feel relative to prerogatives inside and outside the school.

3. The problem of the behavioral constraints that are put on the person of the principal by reason of the role expectations (p. 150).
It is further argued by Blumberg and Greenfield that the extent of emotional stress is not the test of an effective principal. If that were the case, persons could then be selected who were thick-skinned and had little or no insight into caring about their own needs. Research has also promoted the belief that effective principals could not by any stretch of the imagination be considered weak or complaining and that principals exhibit a tremendous amount of personal strength and concern for themselves and others with whom they work.

To examine how principals can cope with the stress of their jobs, Robertson’s study (cited in Robertson and Matthew, 1988) explored two questions. What are the relative frequencies and levels of intensity of selected stressors on Georgia public secondary principals and what are the strategies they use in coping effectively with stress? About 43 percent of the principals reported mental activities as their most effective coping strategy, 20.9 percent named direct coping strategies, 18.1 percent described physical activities, 17.4 percent used psychological strategies, and 2 percent indicated that destructive coping strategies, such as eating and drinking, were most effective for dealing with stress. While three-fourths of the principals reported that indirect coping strategies were used, what principals need is direct long-term coping strategies which focus on reducing the time required to complete one’s work.

Further studies by Cooper (1988) identified the occupational stressors and stress-coping preferences of 212 public secondary
principals whose schools were cited for excellence. The results of the study, similar to that of Robertson in 1986, reported that stress-coping strategies of the principals varied and were grouped into categories of consultative, workaholic, eat/sleep, exercise, time-out, recreation/passive and active. The study concluded that principals should look for ways to reduce task-based stress. Learning to identify and cope with stress can enhance a school administrator's psychological and physical well-being.

A study undertaken by Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) examined 38 elementary principals in 25 small-town districts in an effort to compare the literature trends which emphasize the complexities of being an urban principal with small-town principals to see if the principalship is viewed differently. Results of their study reported that, even in what would apparently seem ideal settings for elementary education, small-town principals' challenges were legion and with multiple day-to-day problems of student motivation, teacher improvement, and staff involvement. Fifteen of the 38 principals had developed coping strategies to deal effectively under such conditions and were trying to lead democratically. The 23 other principals were categorized as authoritarian, laissez-faire, and casual.

Walker (1990) summarized stress tolerance when he stated, "Don't become a principal if you do not have a high tolerance for stress" (p. 53). Principals reported being confronted daily with fighting, disrespect, truancy, dishonesty, stealing, defiance, accidents, child
abuse, special education, and mainstreaming. In spite of the above, Walker found that a high caliber of teaching took place through leadership capabilities and stress tolerance of exemplary principals.

The ability to think on one's feet, to see the big picture, and develop a possible plan of action are reported skills that can help eliminate stress. Exemplary principals examined in the study saw problems as opportunities, had fluent verbal skills, and the ability to delay judgment on controversial issues. They also possessed a great sense of humor, and arranged personal time when the stress-producing problems became secondary to rejuvenating the mind and body.

The central position of the principal in a school system, together with a substantial role in managing educational services, brings with it a work situation which is likely to continue to produce high levels of stress. In some instances a principal's ability to perform to the level of expectation may be severely impaired. Those who do manage to perform effectively are able to cope well with the demands of the job. Studies further report that the particular coping strategies adopted by principals considered effective seem to be a critical variable intervening between the potentially impairing aspects of situations and the actual level of on-the-job performance. Rather than a proactive confrontation toward problems encountered, effective principals believe the situation can be influenced.
Summary of Related Research

Early theorists used the construct personality to explain why some persons are better able than others to exercise leadership. Leadership theory evolved from individual influence over others, to an interaction of variables. Throughout 60 years of studying leadership roles theories have been supported, rejected, and supported again.

The principal maintains the central position in the school system and works daily in situations which bring about high levels of stress. Some perform more effectively and cope well with demands of the job. Others' abilities to demonstrate to the level of expectation are severely impaired. While psychologist Kobasa presented evidence that an effective characteristic against stress is a hardy personality style demonstrated by commitment, control, and challenge, it is suggested that effective principals will possess these selected personality characteristics in leadership roles which change the learning environment positively and result in ultimately establishing success.
Chapter 3

Methodology

A discussion of the methodology used to investigate the degree to which identified personality characteristics are correlates of effective school principals is presented in Chapter 3. The chapter includes (a) a description of the population, (b) the instrumentation, and (c) hypotheses tested.

Research Population

The research population for this study was selected from a master list of all Virginia school systems. Personnel directors were each requested to rate two to eight effective principals depending on the size of the school system which they represented. A Principal's Rating Scale devised for this study was sent to each of 25 personnel directors to assist them in rating effective principals. Of the 66 principals identified as effective, 43 returned the Purpose in Life Test, 44 returned the Locus of Control Scale, and 51 responded to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Chapter III—Instrumentation).

The Principal's Rating Scale was designed using descriptors by Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) as necessary for principal effectiveness and are linked to the personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge. The scale is an instrument which can be completed in about five minutes. Five statements, judged to be desirable, are found under each of four main headings—human relations, instruction, management, and catalyst. The statements rate
the subjects on a scale of one (less effective) to five (more effective). Each scale was scored by adding the circled number which best described the principal in each of the twenty statements. The highest possible score was 100. A mean score was determined as 83.37 which grouped 30 principals above the mean with scores that were within the 89-100 range as more effective and 36 below the mean with scores that were within the 75-88 range as less effective. Sample items include:

**Human Relations:**
1. The principal shows a high degree of interpersonal skills.
2. The principal seeks active support of his/her staff by caring for them.

**Instruction:**
1. The principal communicates high academic expectations.
2. The principal is actively involved in instructional assessment.

**Management:**
1. The principal places himself/herself in dependent-trust relationship with the faculty.
2. The principal handles student discipline effectively.

**Catalyst:**
1. The principal maintains a healthy balance while concurrently maintaining momentum and direction.
2. The principal establishes goals which are mutually satisfying to the school organization and to the individuals within the school.

Instrumentation and Methodology

Upon completion of the principal's rating scale personnel directors were instructed to distribute to each rated principal a packet that contained the Purpose in Life Test (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1964), and the Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1977). The three self-administered instruments can be completed in about an hour.

The Purpose in Life Test is an attitude scale constructed from the orientation of "logotherapy" which is a system of existential therapy, originated by psychiatrist Victor E. Frankl, intended to measure the basic concept of existential vacuum. According to Frankl (1969), the primary motive in man is the "will to meaning" through a belief that man seeks primarily to find meaning and purpose in human existence. When one fails to find a meaning and purpose which gives his life a sense of unique identity, an existential vacuum is experienced resulting in a loss of individual initiative. This state of emptiness, exhibited primarily by boredom, will, if not relieved, result in existential frustration. The aim of the test is to detect if this vacuum is present and when used for research purposes has successfully distinguished a variety of populations according to predictions based on their expected degree of meaning and purpose in life. Reliability estimates reported
by the authors show a split-level (odd-even) reliability as .81. This was 
based on a sample of 105 non-hospitalized patients and 120 patients 
tested by Frankl.

The Purpose in Life Test is divided into three parts with the 
twenty items from Part A used for research purposes. Simplified 
wording for the two extreme points of each item, and dichotomous 
choice items are structured to be understood by most adults and conform 
to the following pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>completely bored</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>exuberant enthusiastic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scoring is quite simple for Part A and consists of summing the 
numerical values circled for the twenty items. Scores can range from 
20 to 140. Interpretation of scores is objective and the manual suggests 
using the mean of 112 suggesting scores above 112 represent feelings of 
life-meaning and scores below 92 as suggesting a lack of life-meaning. 
Scores of 92 through 112 are of uncertain definition. For research 
purposes, raw scores typically are employed for correlational studies.

Construct and criterion validity were assessed by Crumbaugh 
(1968) in which it was reasoned that if the instrument measures life-
meaning, and certain groups, when compared to others, experience 
greater levels of life-meaning then those groups expected to have 
higher levels of life-meaning should receive higher Purpose in Life 
Test scores. Validity assessments, however, have been somewhat 
cumbersome. A reason for this problem may be due to having no direct
criterion for quantitative experiences of life-meaning against which to validate.

The Locus of Control Scale, according to the authors, measures the effects of reward or reinforcement on preceding behavior and depends in part on whether the person perceives the reward as contingent on this behavior or independent of it. When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following an individualized action but not being entirely dependent upon the action, then, in American culture, it is typically perceived as under the control of others. When the event is interpreted this way it is referred to as external control. If a person, however, perceives the event to be contingent upon a personal relatively permanent characteristic a belief in internal control is exhibited. From a complex 60-item scale, Rotter and associates developed a final 29-item, forced-choice test, including six filler items, appropriate for non-college adults and upper-level high school students. Subjects are encouraged, through directions, to select one statement out of two which they believe to be more true and to circle either A or B. One statement in each pair reflects the subject's belief in internal control and one statement reflects a belief in external control. The answer key shows the external choice in italics. Subjects are informed the instrument reflects a personal belief, and that there are no right or wrong answers. When both answers could be true the choice should be made to select the one more strongly believed. The subjects are also requested to respond to each item independently, not to
spent too much time on each statement, and not to be influenced by previous choices. An example of two choices would be:

A. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
B. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

Items deal exclusively with the subject's belief about the nature of the world and one's expectations of how reinforcement is controlled. A point is assigned for each external statement chosen as an answer. A total possible score would be twenty-three with lower external scores indicating the subject's belief in internal control supporting Rotter's conclusions that those at the internal end of the scale would show a more overt striving for achievement than those who felt they had little control over their environment. Two limitations are reported on the strength of this relationship:

1. There are people who have arrived at an external view as a defense against failure but who were originally competitive.
2. Internal-external control attitudes are obviously not generalized across the board and in a highly structured academic achievement situation there is probably more specificity determining response than in other kinds of situations (Rotter, 1966, p. 21).

The test is an additive instrument and items are not compared. Consequently, split-half or matched-half reliability tends to underestimate the internal consistency. Correlations reported for the
29-item scale range from -.07 to -.35. Discriminate validity is indicated by the low relationships with such variables as intelligence and social desirability while differences obtained for different types of populations are generally consistent with what was expected. A series of studies completed by Rotter provides strong support for the hypothesis that an individual who has a strong belief in controlling his own destiny is likely to (a) be more alert to those aspects of the environment which provide useful information for future behavior; (b) take steps to improve the present environmental condition; (c) place greater value on skills or achievement reinforcements and be generally more concerned with ability and particularly failures; and (d) be resistive to subtle attempts to influence future behaviors.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is described as a forced-choice, self-report inventory that attempts to classify individuals, assuming that human behavior, perceived as random and diverse, is actually quite orderly and consistent. Myers and McCaulley (1989) reported a view which assumes that the observed variability is due to certain basic differences in the way people prefer to use perception and judgment. Perception involves all the ways of becoming aware of people, happenings, or events and judgment involves all the ways of coming to conclusions about what has been perceived. "If people differ significantly in the way they perceive and how they come to conclusions, then it is only reasonable that they would differ
accordingly in their reactions, interests, values, motivation, skills, and interests" (Myers and McCaulley, 1989, p. 1).

The judging-perceiving index, one of four sections of the instrument, is designed to describe the process a person primarily uses when dealing with the extroverted part of life and is of special interest in this present study. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator can be scored by hand or by computer. Stencils are provided with the instrument and scoring instructions are printed on each of five stencils. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator has no time limit and is virtually self-administering. Instructions are printed on the front of the Indicator booklet and most of the 126 items represent a forced choice between two responses. Principals marked their answers by darkening A or B circle on the answer sheet. There are two scales on each stencil and the judging-perceiving stencil has judging on the top half and perceiving on the bottom half.

The preference score for each index consists of a letter showing the direction of preference and a number showing reported strength of the preference. The letter is considered to be the more important part of the dimension and is determined by comparing the points for each index using the higher number of points as the preference score. A preference score can be calculated by using the formula:

\[ J = 2 \times (\text{larger points minus smaller points}) + 1. \]

One of four sections of the instrument is of special interest in the present study. The judging-perceiving index is designed to describe the
process a person uses primarily in dealing with the extroverted part of life. Five stencils are provided for scoring the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and scoring instructions are printed on the stencils. Points are found and converted to preference scores for each index through a table accompanying the stencils. Principals preferring judging as an index possess an attitude which shows them concerned with decision-making, seeking closure, planning operations, and organizing activities. However, principals with scores higher in the perception index are attuned to incoming information which is either more likely to be the immediate realities or to be new possibilities. Principals operating in a perceptive attitude usually seem to be spontaneous, curious, and adaptable, open to new events and changes and aiming to miss nothing.

The authors indicated that reliability estimates were established by splitting each index into halves, taking all available item statistics into consideration and pairing the items that most resemble each other and correlate most highly. Reliabilities for Form G, used in this study, remain stable up to 25 omissions. In a University of Florida laboratory school, students grouped according to intelligence and used for the purpose of obtaining reliability factors, responded as predicted exhibiting that intelligence can be seen as a result of effective command of perception and judgment, typically have a higher reading level and may have a better understanding of the indicator vocabulary. Test-retest reliabilities showed consistency over time and when subjects
made a change in type it was most likely to occur in only one preference where the score in the original preference was low.

Through continued research, findings supported that because the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was designed to implement Jung's theory of psychological types, its validity is determined by its ability to demonstrate relationships and outcomes predicted by the theory and attempts to classify persons according to their true types. "If the instrument adequately indicates preferences then surface behaviors of motivation, values, and actions should be in the directions predicted, allowing for measurement error, stage of development, and overriding environmental pressures" (Myers and McCaulley, 1989, p. 175).

Validity of the judging attitude is reported in scales for personality variables with correlations from .59 to .40 and include order, proper/rule bound attitude, stronger superego, endurances, self-control achievement, and counteraction as judging behaviors. The scales of personality characteristics correlating with perception are from .57 to .40 and report complexity, flexibility, autonomy, sentience, blame, avoidance, reality-distance aesthetic, change as challenge, intellectual quality, and impulse extraversion as associated characteristics. In short, the three instruments selected to obtain data on effective principals are shown by their authors to be reliable and valid.
Data Collection

During the month of September, 1990, a Principal's Rating Scale was mailed to each of 25 directors of personnel (Appendix A). An accompanying cover letter explained the purpose of the study and included instructions for the completion of the Principal's Rating Scale (Appendix B). Also included in the mailing was a separate package for principals described as effective on the Principal's Rating Scale which contained a letter explaining the research project (Appendix C), the Purpose in Life Test (Appendix D), the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Appendix E), and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Appendix F). All participants were asked to return the questionnaire by October 30, 1990.

An identification number was assigned to each principal and was placed on the Principal's Rating Scale. The same number was placed on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator answer sheet and on the return envelopes. The identification numbers were used to record all data received. At no time were principals rated as effective by personnel directors identified by the researcher.

An item was included which could be completed by directors of personnel requesting a summary of the findings.

Hypotheses and Data Analysis

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:
1. Principals rated as more effective will demonstrate a higher meaning level to the purpose of their lives than principals who are rated as performing less effectively in their professional role.

2. Principals rated as more effective exhibit attitudes reflecting their belief that they can control their own destinies and accept what happens to them is a result of their own behaviors and attitudes while principals rated less effective will exhibit attitudes that reflect what happens to them is controlled by other people or determined by luck.

3. Principals rated as more effective demonstrate a judging attitude indicating a willingness to make prompt decisions and come to conclusion quickly and effectively, while principals rated less effective will exhibit a perceiving attitude more associated to holding off making decisions while gathering more information demonstrating greater interest for the process by which the decisions will be made.

Following the scoring of the Principal's Rating Scale, the Purpose in Life Test, the Locus of Control Scale, and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, subjects were divided into two categories, more effective and less effective, based on whether they scored above or below the mean rating score on the Principal's Rating Scale. Once the data had been divided into two categories, separate analyses were performed on the corresponding Purpose in Life, Locus of Control, and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator scores for each group.

The mean Purpose in Life score and mean Locus of Control score distinguished more effective from less effective principals and were
analyzed using t-tests for independent samples. To determine whether a higher percentage of principals described as more effective included more judgers than perceivers on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a chi-square analysis was performed.

Summary of Methodology

This study described three selected personality characteristics as correlates of principals considered to be effective. Data were collected using the Purpose in Life Test, the Locus of Control Scale, and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, instruments shown to be valid and reliable measures of commitment, control, and challenge respectively.

The design further involved categorization of principals rated as effective by personnel directors into two groups—more effective and less effective. Results analyzing the data determined the strength of each of the three selected personality characteristics and the correlation of these characteristics to the degree of principal effectiveness.
Chapter 4

Results

Results of the analysis of the data obtained in this study of selected personality characteristics of effective school principals are presented under each of the three hypotheses tested.

The research population for this study was sixty-six school principals identified by personnel directors representing seventeen school systems throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Using the mean score of 88.57 with a SD of 6.3 derived from the Principal's Rating Scale, thirty-six principals were rated as more effective and thirty as less effective. Of the sixty-six selected principals, forty-three responded to the Purpose in Life Test, forty-four responded to the Locus of Control Scale, and fifty-one responded to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Forty-three principals responded to all instruments.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that principals rated as more effective will demonstrate a higher meaning level and purpose to their lives than principals rated as performing less effectively in their professional role.

The scoring method recommended by Crumbaugh and Maholick in the Purpose in Life Test was the simple sum of the numerical values of twenty scaled items converted into percentile equivalents. Each item was rated on a scale of one to seven. With twenty items the highest possible score would be 140. Each subject's raw score was converted to a
percentile score using the conversion table provided. The mean of the percentile score for more effective principals was 84.7 with an average raw score of 121 and the mean percentile score for less effective principals was 82.2 with an average raw score of 119. In addition, a t-test was then conducted to determine if the differences between the two groups was significant. The test revealed no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence. As indicated by the high percentile scores, both groups of principals demonstrated a high level purpose to their lives. Further analysis of the data indicated a mean raw score for the total group of 120 and a percentile of 83.37 revealing that principals rated as more effective do not demonstrate a higher purpose to their professional lives and are not more committed than less effective principals to believing in trust, importance, and a value of what is to be accomplished. The results are found in Table 1. Hypothesis 1 was, therefore, rejected.
Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that principals rated as more effective will exhibit attitudes reflecting their belief that they can control their own destinies and accept what happens to them is a result of their own behaviors and attitudes while principals rated less effective exhibit attitudes reflecting what happens to them is controlled by other people or determined by luck.

The Locus of Control Scale shows that twenty-nine pairs of statements deal exclusively with subjects' belief about the nature of the world and how reinforcement is controlled. One statement in each pair reflected a belief in the external control and one statement reflects a belief in internal control. When reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following an induced action, but not entirely contingent upon the action it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance,
fate, or as unpredictable because of the surrounding forces and, therefore, labeled as external control. A belief in internal control is exhibited when a subject perceives that stressful events are contingent upon one's own behavior and, therefore, something can be done to control these events. Principals were asked to circle one of the two possible statements that better reflects their attitude in each pair of statements. When scoring the test, a point is assigned to each external statement. A total possible score is twenty-three. Six pairs of statements in the twenty-nine item test are filler statements and are not figured in the scoring procedure. It is assumed that the lower the external score, the more internally is the principal driven. The t-test revealed no significant difference at the .05 level in the scores of more effective and less effective principals revealing a belief in both groups that what happens is often under their control and not a result of others' behaviors. Hypothesis 2 was rejected.
**TABLE 2**

*Locus of Control Scale (n = 44)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>*Mean Raw Score</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Effective</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Effective</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 23</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*\( t = -0.89 \) (42), p. > .05*

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 stated that principals rated as more effective will demonstrate a judging attitude indicative of a willingness to make prompt decisions and come to conclusions quickly and effectively, while principals rated less effective exhibit a perceiving attitude associated with holding off making decisions while gathering more information and demonstrating greater interest for the process by which the decisions will be made.

According to scores of twenty-two principals classified as more effective, eighteen preferred to demonstrate a judging attitude and four demonstrated a preference for a perceiving attitude toward the challenges found in making decisions. While twenty-six of twenty-nine principals rated as less effective they also demonstrated a judging
attitude. Principals were rated only on the judging and perceiving dimensions of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Once a type was determined for each subject a 1 was assigned for judging and a 2 for perceiving. Cross-tab analysis was performed, resulting in chi-square showing no significant differences of distribution of either group. The data are shown in Table 3. Eighty-six percent of all respondent principals used a predominantly judging style whether they were rated more effective or less effective in performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was rejected.

**TABLE 3**

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
(n = 51)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Judging</th>
<th>Perceiving</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Effective (n = 22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(35.29)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Effective (n = 29)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>(50.98)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>(86.27)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 0.649
Level of significance is > .05
Summary

In this chapter, the findings of the study were reported based on the original hypotheses and were concerned with selected personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge as correlates of effective school principals.

More effective principals were hypothesized to demonstrate a higher purpose to their lives and a greater commitment to what is to be accomplished than less effective principals. Hypothesis 1 was rejected since the study found that of the principals rated as more and less effective there was no difference in the value or meaning they placed on their lives. Neither group was more committed to believing that what is to be accomplished can be done through a belief in trust, importance, and value as measured by the Purpose in Life Test.

More effective principals were hypothesized to demonstrate a more internal Locus of Control in their lives when compared to principals predicted to be more external in their Locus of Control. Both groups of effective principals exhibited low external scores reflecting a belief that stressful events do follow an action reflective of their decisions but, at times, these events cannot be controlled. It was found that external control dominated effective principals' belief in how reinforcement is perceived. Thus Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

More effective principals were hypothesized to demonstrate a judging attitude when making decisions thus coming to conclusions quickly and effectively as compared to less effective principals who
Effective Principals

exhibit a perceiving attitude associated with holding off decisions while gathering more information. Both groups of principals exhibited concern with making decisions, seeking closure, planning operations, and organizing activities. Perception may tend to be shut off by principals as soon as enough has been observed to make a decision. Hypothesis 3 was, therefore, rejected.

The focus of this chapter was a description of results obtained from the study and a determination of the degree to which selected personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge are correlates of effective principals. These results formed the basis for conclusions and recommendations relating to effective principals found in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which identified personality characteristics are correlates of effective school principals. A discussion of the findings follows, and conclusions are drawn on the basis of the results. Implications are suggested for further research and practice.

Findings and Conclusions

Earlier research in the area of the principalship (Bowden, 1926; Bogardus, 1928; Mare, 1927) suggested intangible elements such as personality, setting forth of behavior patterns in such a way that other persons respond to them, and a unidirectional exertion of influence for molding a group to the leader's will. These elements formed the basis on which the effectiveness of the principal was determined. Given that the principal remains the central figure within the school community, it seemed obvious to explore theories, characteristics, and behaviors which would set some principals apart from others. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) profess that while all principals make a difference, some more positively impact on teachers and community members. This study was designed to explore the selected personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge and to determine the degree to which they are correlates of effective school principals.

The first hypothesis examined the correlation of principals rated as more effective and less effective with the personality characteristic
of commitment, as identified with the Purpose in Life Test, a measurement used to examine the degree to which an individual has developed a sense of life as meaningful, considers himself as someone that matters, and has searched for a purposeful direction in life. Job satisfaction, personality, self-actualization, and subjective well-being are among the variable relationships studied by the Purpose in Life Test. Garfield (1973) argues that the Purpose in Life Test is biased by the following western philosophical perspectives: acceptance of mind-body dualism, primacy of physical over spiritual existence, and advocacy of process over status. Contrary to the predicted results the data failed to indicate that principals rated as more effective demonstrated a higher meaning to their professional lives or were more committed to achieving their goals than principals rated as less effective.

This second hypothesis examined the correlation of principals rated as more effective and less effective with the personality characteristic of control as a belief in being responsible for one's own destiny while understanding that stressful events are brought about and, therefore, something can be done to control them. Compared to principals rated less effective, principals rated as more effective did not differ significantly in the degree to which they felt control over their lives. The data reveal that compared to less effective rated principals no greater value was placed by more effective rated principals on skills or achievement reinforcements or was there more exhibited concern from
this group over ability, failure, or resistance toward subtle attempts to influence future behaviors.

The third hypothesis predicted that principals rated more effective will make prompt decisions and come to conclusions quickly and effectively. At all levels of education, administrators have large numbers of tough-minded, judging types able to exhibit strengths of organization, planning, and analysis. In the daily stress of coping with school tasks, administrators can easily become caught up in the technical aspects of the principalship and overlook the importance of creating structures that assist communication and teamwork. The nature of the principalship may attract persons who wish to control and conform to life's demands, viewing these concerns as challenges. While adapting to change can be particularly stressful to principals who are judging types, a combination of judging and perceiving would be seen as an ideal. Compared to the judging-perceiving attitudes of principals rated as less effective, principals rated as more effective showed no significant difference on the judging-perceiving dimension. Both groups of principals rated more effective and less effective used judging as a predominant style.

In conclusion, data from the present study indicated that (1) principals rated as more effective do not demonstrate a higher meaning to their professional lives or a greater commitment to believing in their goals than principals rated as less effective; (2) principals rated as more effective do not differ significantly from principals rated as less
effective in their belief that they are responsible for their own destinies and that what happens to them is a result of their own attitudes and behaviors; and (3) principals rated as more effective do not demonstrate a stronger judging attitude reflective of a greater concern for decision making, seeking closure, planning operations, and organizing activities than principals rated as less effective.

Implications for Further Research

Further research in the role of the principalship must continue. Declining enrollments, budget constraints, and high levels of leadership demands will continue to bring focus on the role of the principal. However, some will continue to single themselves out and will be reputed as being effective principals worthy of examination. It may be appropriate at this point to reiterate some of the limitations of this study in terms of future research possibilities.

1. Commitment, control, and challenge are three selected personality characteristics studied as possible indicators of effectiveness. Although the instruments used did not reflect results of significant differences between groups of principals rated as more effective and less effective, the instruments themselves may not have been of sufficient power to measure these personality characteristics.

2. Twenty-five of 131 school systems within the Commonwealth of Virginia were selected to participate in this study. The return was small and generalization of resultant data in respect to its representation of principals may not be capable of generating
conclusive results. Larger numbers of returns should be encouraged for replication of results.

3. There is no consensus in the literature as to merits of returning to the trait theory in administrative studies. As commitment, control, and challenge are only three selected personality characteristics of effective school principals, it is appropriate to study characteristics in a much larger context. In conjunction with this recommendation, more data are needed to define leadership in respect to principal effectiveness.

4. This research did not differentiate by gender. A field previously dominated by men is recently reporting nearly equal numbers of women in training programs. While the imbalance may end within the next decade, effective principal research should probably be done by obtaining and examining gender variables associated with race, age, and years of experience.

5. The present study examined principals rated as effective in two major categories, more effective and less effective. Identification of a larger number of subjects would give the researcher opportunities to examine more clusters of variables, such as most effective principals and least effective principals, and to analyze results of measurements and other variables used to examine characteristics of personality or leadership.

Further research may include examining the possible use of more reliable and better quality instruments, and the study of
leadership styles as well as personality traits. Also recommended for further research is an examination of demographic data clustered into gender variables and inquiry into categories of more effective and less effective principals.

**Implications for Practice**

Concerning the purpose and results of the present study, the following implications for practice are made.

1. To the extent that ideas for future research come from how individuals behave in the workplace it might be more productive to analyze the actual behaviors of administrators judged more effective and less effective than to rely upon indirect measures such as pencil and paper tests.

2. If subsequent research continued to fail to confirm that commitment, control, and challenge do not discriminate between more effective and less effective school administrators, then graduate training and inservice programs need to inform current and future administrators that these selected dimensions should not be used as measurements to determine who will and will not be effective.

3. If future research confirms that validity of the original hypotheses but shows that the Purpose in Life Test, Locus of Control Scale, and the judging and perceiving dimension of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator are not valid measures of the three constructs, then future and current administrators should learn to refrain from drawing conclusions from the results of the three instruments used in this study.
While most people are unfamiliar with the Crumbaugh and Maholick Purpose in Life Test, many "think" they are familiar with the Locus of Control and The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator because of their common use in educational research.

Among the implications for practice discussed, perhaps most important is that present and future educational administrators need to maintain a healthy skepticism toward intuitively valid-sounding hypotheses such as those tested in the current research.
REFERENCES


Bogardus, E. S. (1928). World leadership types. Sociology and Social Research, 12, 573-599.


Effective Principals


APPENDIX
Assistant Superintendent, Personnel  
Roanoke City School District  
P. O. Box 13145  
Roanoke, Virginia 24031

Dear:

I am currently working on a dissertation which is designed to identify personality characteristics of effective public school principals within the state of Virginia.

I would appreciate your identifying no more than 4 effective principals within your school system and completing the brief, questionnaire on each selected person. The response to the questionnaire should take approximately five minutes to complete.

After you have responded to the questionnaire, send to each identified effective principal the enclosed packet. Return the questionnaires you have completed to me before October 30, 1990 in the stamped envelope.

Thank you for your important assistance in this worthwhile endeavor.

Sincerely,

Betti Jean Shahmouradian  
(804) 253-2485
Principal's Rating Scale
(To be completed by the Director of Personnel)

Directions: Please read each statement and circle the number which best describes the principal you have identified as effective. Do not report any principal by name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Relations (challenge)</th>
<th>Most effective</th>
<th>Least effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The principal has a high degree of interpersonal skills.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal seeks active support of his/her staff by caring for them.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The principal involves faculty in decisions which are made about the whole organization.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The principal tries to cultivate parent support.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The principal focuses his/her administrative effort on the humanistic side of his/her school as an organization.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction (control)</th>
<th>Most effective</th>
<th>Least effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The principal communicates high academic expectations.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal is actively involved in instructional assessment.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The principal is continuously evaluating student progress.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The principal is viewed as the leader of the school's reading program.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The principal actively monitors programs prescribed by the central office.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management (challenge &amp; control)</th>
<th>Most effective</th>
<th>Least effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The principal places himself/herself in dependent-trust relationship with the faculty.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal handles student discipline effectively.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The principal is a charismatic leader who affects change by instilling enthusiasm in teachers.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The principal exhibits a behavior which is conscious, effortful, and learned.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The principal possesses special skills to achieve the coordination of task and the cooperation of individuals.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst (commitment)</th>
<th>Most effective</th>
<th>Least effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The principal maintains a healthy balance while concurrently maintaining momentum and direction.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal establishes goals which are mutually satisfying to the school organization and to the individuals within the school.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The principal shows commitment to being able to &quot;produce&quot; in the areas accepted by those who are led.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The principal views himself/herself as a supporter and catalyst for the continued growth of the teaching staff.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The principal shows a commitment of off-duty time to the job to achieve his/her vision of an effective principal.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, how effective do you find this principal? 5 4 3 2 1
244 North Boundary Street
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185
September 30, 1990

Dear Principal:

In recent years, the duties and responsibilities of principals within the American public schools have become increasingly more complex. Instructional leadership and effective school management, responsibilities crucial to the successful operation of a school, are often found to be only two of the many tasks addressed by principals. Coping daily with extreme levels of stress, principals continue to be decision makers and conflict managers. While pressures applied to principals are enormous, a better understanding of personality characteristics of principals would seem to be an appropriate research goal.

Under the supervision of my advisor, Dr. William Bullock, College of William and Mary, I am pursuing a study to examine personality components of effective principals which are related to the demands of their job. As a part of this research, you are asked to respond to three questionnaires. Additionally, your Director of Personnel will also respond to a questionnaire. Completed and coded questionnaire forms should be mailed back to the researcher without any names attached to the questionnaires.

If you wish not to participate, you may refuse to answer any of the questionnaires and withdraw from the project. On the other hand, if you agree to participate, complete the questionnaires and return them before October 30 in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Thank you for participating in this worthwhile endeavor.

Sincerely,

Betti Jean Shahmouradian
(804) 253-2485

Enclosures:
Purpose in Life Test
Locus of Control Scale
Myers-Briggs Type Inventory
Stamped envelope
PLEASE NOTE

Copyrighted materials in this document have not been filmed at the request of the author. They are available for consultation, however, in the author's university library.

Appendix D - 4 pages,
PIL
Appendix E - 3 pages,
Internal/External Locus of Control Scale
Appendix F - 8 pages,
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
Appendix G - 1 page,
MBTI

University Microfilms International
VITA

Elizabeth Jean Shahmouradian

Birthdate: June 6, 1940
Birthplace: Glen Cove, New York

Education:

1972-1992 The College of William and Mary in Virginia
Williamsburg, Virginia
Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Education
Doctor of Education
1967-1968 The University of Akron
Akron, Ohio
Master of Arts in Education
1958-1963 The University of Akron
Akron, Ohio
Bachelor of Science in Education

Professional:

1984 - Principal and Supervisor of Elementary Education
Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools
Williamsburg, Virginia
1974-1984 Principal
David A. Dutrow Elementary School
Newport News Public Schools
Newport News, Virginia
1973-1974 Assistant Principal
R. O. Nelson Elementary School
Willis A. Jenkins Elementary School
Newport News Public Schools
Newport News, Virginia
1972-1973 Teacher
Caesar Tarrant Middle School
Hampton Public Schools
Hampton, Virginia
1969-1971 Teacher
St. Joseph Academy
Columbus, Ohio
1967-1968 Teacher
Erwine Junior High School
Coventry Township Public Schools
Akron, Ohio
1961-1963 Teacher
Turkeyfoot Elementary School
Coventry Township Public Schools
Akron, Ohio
Abstract

A STUDY OF SELECTED PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Elizabeth Jean Shahmouradian
The College of William and Mary, July, 1991
Chairman: Professor G. William Bullock, Jr.

The purpose of this study was to examine selected personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge as correlates of effective school principals. Twenty-five Directors of Personnel were selected to identify 100 effective school principals. Two to eight principals rated as effective were selected for this research from each of the 25 school systems throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. It was hypothesized that there is a correlation between selected identified personality characteristics and principals rated as more effective by personnel directors. It was concluded that the selected personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge are not correlates of effective principals and that principals rated as more effective do not demonstrate a higher meaning level and purpose to their lives, do not believe that they can control their own destinies and that what happens to them is a result of their own behaviors and attitudes, and do not exhibit more of a judging attitude indicating a willingness to make prompt decisions and to come to conclusions
quickly and effectively. Future implications for research and practice are discussed to assist in enabling principals to use proactive coping strategies when dealing with problems, empowering them to positively change the environment and ultimately establish success.