A Quantitative Study of Leadership Practices Used by School Leaders in South Georgia

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative dissertation examined the leadership practices of educational leaders in South Georgia schools, with the purpose of identifying effective strategies that contribute to student success and a conducive school environment. Utilizing the Leadership Practices Inventory self-survey, the researcher meticulously examined the practices of both Tier I and Tier II leaders to unveil any commonalities, disparities, and potential correlations with demographic traits. By integrating theoretical frameworks such as the ripple effect theory and Kouzes and Posner's (2002) exemplary leadership practices, this research addressed a notable gap in understanding the specific leadership behaviors prevalent among educational leaders in South Georgia and their ramifications on student performance and school culture. Based on data analysis from 779 educational leaders across three Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs), the results uncovered a striking uniformity in leadership practices across various demographic categories, including tiers, genders, races, years of experience, and school population sizes. Particularly noteworthy was the absence of significant disparities in leadership practices between Tier I and Tier II leaders, indicating that leadership effectiveness is independent of hierarchical positioning. Additionally, years of experience and school population size had no significant interaction with leadership practices, highlighting the importance of prioritizing behaviors over demographic predictors in leadership development initiatives. By emphasizing the centrality of leadership behaviors in shaping successful learning environments, the study advocates for a universal approach to leadership training that transcends demographic boundaries, fostering inclusive and effective leadership practices across educational institutions.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother, Mrs. Julia Evans Andrews, and in loving memory of my dear father, Goliath Andrews, and my brother, Larry Andrews, whose unwavering support and enduring love have shaped my journey and enriched my spirit. This dissertation is dedicated to you, as a tribute to your profound influence, guidance, and everlasting presence in my life.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Leaders impact the success or failure of any organization (Naim & Lenka, 2018). Leadership practices, however, vary from organization to organization because leaders have different beliefs, values, and experiences. Many educational leaders continue to utilize a transactional leadership mindset using traditional approaches to leadership (Shatzer et al., 2014). These leaders are not interested in change but prefer little or no change. They believe that "we have been doing it this way for over 30 years." despite the outcome. Now, in an ever-evolving world, educational leaders need to examine their practices and behavior to improve student academic performance.

According to Ramkissoon et al. (2013), the school environment, its structure, nature, and orientation, can significantly influence teaching and learning. Leadership practices adopted and implemented within contemporary educational settings shape the general distribution of instruction and student engagement within the learning environment. Rathert and Kirkgoz (2017) highlighted that school leadership has an integral role in determining student academic success through the development of successful learning schedules, activities, and outcomes. Yavuz and Robinson (2018) pointed out that although educational leaders remain tasked with managing schools, the leadership practices adopted by educational leaders through their administrative initiatives highly impact teaching and learning outcomes across the learning facility. Varied perceptions of organizational and leadership practices implemented by principals significantly impact the structure and characteristics of any school environment.

Leadership styles adopted by principals and other school leaders affect the school climate. A school's climate is represented by many factors, including general academic progress, student engagement, employee satisfaction, and other relevant dynamics that shape the operation of the school. The degree of teacher commitment to, and engagement with, various learning initiatives and programs account for student performance and success in the learning activities offered by the school. One of the responsibilities of principals is to assure the instructional staff remains motivated and productive based on the leadership practices implemented within the organizational structure of the school (Rathert & Kirkgoz, 2017).

Problem Statement

Aarons et al. (2014) explained that the central leadership approach observed among educational leaders in many different schools included managing the capital and human resources required to achieve academic goals effectively. Leaders impact teachers by effectively managing resources, shaping school culture, influencing student performance and retention, attracting quality educators, and driving school improvement initiatives through their leadership practices. Additionally, current studies indicate that leadership practices positively correlate to school culture and increase student achievement (Day et al., 2016; Ojera & Yambo, 2014; Shatzer et al., 2014). Reasonably, leadership practices influence educational components such as professional development, teacher collaboration, learning, and collegial support.

The practices of educational leaders in Georgia significantly shape the strategies and approaches adopted by teachers and leaders, including principals, assistant principals, and other educational leaders (Shatzer et al., 2014). Leadership practices impact school

cultures and student performance. Teachers have been identified as the essential resource that impacts school and student performance (Ojera & Yambo, 2014). Although principals have a direct impact on teacher performance, leadership practices vary from school to school, and students' academic performance is correlated to leadership approaches—a significant predictor and measure of student outcomes (Khan & Shaheen, 2016). Sexton and Switzer (2020) posited that educational leaders play an integral role in managing capital and human resources within the school. Their adopted leadership practices directly account for the outcomes associated with teachers' engagement and students' performance. Boyce and Bowers (2018) discussed that although administrators and educational leaders adopt various actions and practices to promote academic performance within the school setting, there remains little understanding of exactly how these practices impact school leadership. The problem addressed in this research was that school leadership use many and varied leadership practices while managing their schools. Even though many of these practices are identified and recommended in the leadership literature, a proven set of practices for school leaders to rely on is lacking.

Purpose Statement

This study aimed to investigate the behavior of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia Schools by utilizing Kouzes and Posner's (2002) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) self-survey. It sought to identify any differences and similarities found between these two populations of leaders. The findings of this research can provide insights to facilitate a seamless transition for leaders moving between different contexts to determine best practices for effective leadership in South Georgia. Additionally, the outcomes of this study may contribute to enhancing leadership

development programs and curriculum in colleges and universities by informing their approaches to preparing future leaders. This study could contribute to the existing literature regarding the impact of school leadership on academic performance and school culture by mapping successful strategies to recommend for practice. The researcher might identify best practices for educational leaders to apply that could contribute to improving a positive school culture and increasing student achievement, which could be accomplished by correlating current practices to theoretical practices that result in potential improvement of student performance, graduation rates, and academic excellence in South Georgia schools.

Conceptual Framework

Although an extensive body of literature exploring the aspects of leadership within contemporary educational settings exists, theoretical explorations demonstrate the significant interconnection between educational leaders and student academic achievement outcomes. Although the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) officials continuously seek to explore and update applied leadership standards, practices, and evaluation results in Georgia, significant efforts have also been undertaken to improve learning outcomes. The theories presented in the conceptual framework for this study serve as a solid foundation for understanding the influence of leadership practices among educational leaders and their ultimate effect on school outcomes.

Although an extensive body of literature exploring several aspects of leadership within contemporary educational settings exists, knowledge regarding the actual leadership practices of educational leaders needs to be more comprehensive. Theoretical explorations demonstrate the significant interconnection among educational leaders,

teaching practices, and learning outcomes across various educational activities. The ripple effect theory reflects the standard evaluation of leadership practices adopted by educational leaders, which significantly affect implemented leadership practices (Nichols & Cormack, 2017). Guided by distinct outcomes from the educational sector, the ripple effect theory concerns results from leadership practices as demonstrated by evaluating relevant parameters such as performance, school environment, and general organizational management (Perry et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). Primary tenets of the ripple effect theory revolve around significant standards of leadership and administration, which are sought to be achieved by contemporary educational leaders.

Instructional leadership practices are required to apply appropriate practices and decisions geared toward improving the dissemination of instruction and learning activities within general classroom settings (Perry et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). The leadership practices addressed by the ripple effect theory focus on the effective management of human and capital resources required to facilitate teaching and learning within educational environments (Perry et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). Thus, leadership practices among educational leaders are expected to promote a productive school environment through endorsing professionalism, engagement, and participation.

Effective instructional leadership practices apply appropriate techniques and decisions to improve instruction and learning activities within general classroom settings. In this regard, practices among educational leaders are expected to promote a productive school environment through endorsing professionalism of leaders, engagement of teachers, and participation of students. Naim and Lenka (2018) suggested that the ripple effect framework provides leaders with various means to influence others and create

large-scale social change. Through such concepts, leaders impact positive changes that lead to acceptable societies (Horsford & Fillman, 2014). The ripple effect framework affirms that the quality of the information reflects the knowledge required to accomplish an organizational goal. As such, the ripple effect encourages educational leaders to develop a deeper understanding of their school goals, vision, and mission, aspects that reflect quality information and knowledge for followers.

Another supporting framework for this study is Kouzes and Posner's (2002) five exemplary leadership practices. Kouzes and Posner suggested these five leadership practices are helpful because they have been reported in the literature, tested through practice, and adopted by many experts who practice leadership. "Model the Way," the first leadership practice Kouzes and Posner suggested, allows leaders to demonstrate that they understand successful leadership principles. Kouzes and Posner stated that successful leaders must know who they are, what they believe, and what they value. Leaders' beliefs and values are fundamental since these beliefs shape how they act and think. The views and values, if appropriate, allow leaders to move toward the success of their organizations. Additionally, leaders demonstrating the "model the way" practices are more familiar with the overall school structure. They display by example that they live by the values that they advocate. They believe consistency between deeds and words builds their credibility as transformational leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The second model leadership practice entails "Inspiring a Shared Vision" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Leaders must possess the capacity to articulate a compelling vision and effectively implement it, as emphasized by Beckhard and Pritchard (1992) and Sashkin and Sashkin (2003). Leaders must possess the capability to formulate a coherent vision

and effectively implement ideas (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003). The most remarkable trait a leader needs to demonstrate is effectively casting a vision (Bennis, 2003). Transformational leaders demonstrate that a difference can be made by envisioning the future and creating a unique image of what their organization can become (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Visionary leaders see the end product before beginning the task (Covey, 1992), which drives everything they do. They ensure this purpose is understood by everyone within the organization. Leaders also know how they need to gain the support of others in pursuit of the vision they have cast (Thompson, 2012; Tichy, 2002). Leaders can unite people, recognize lingering challenges that may affect them, and stress the importance of a plan (Collins, 2001).

The third exemplary leadership practice is, "Challenge the Process" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Kotter (2001) noted that successful executives are more willing to take risks during their careers, and they learn from their risks. Leaders are forerunners who can see opportunities and relentlessly find ways to maximize such opportunities (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Transformational leaders are willing to change the status quo by experimenting and taking risks with new approaches (Keith & Levin, 2002). Leaders must be clear when describing the importance of change to keep others aware of the purpose of such modifications, thereby avoiding unnecessary confusion (Fullan, 2001). They understand that success does not just happen overnight. They recognize the importance of change in maximizing efforts (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Additionally, these leaders acknowledge the contributions of individuals and utilize them strategically to accomplish objectives, create opportunities for their staff, cultivate an environment conducive to taking risks, and recognize minor achievements (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Within such an environment, followers feel assured that they can express themselves without fear of negativity. This sense of autonomy fosters a drive among individuals to perform at their best due to the perceived freedom and trust afforded to them (Schlechty, 2002). Influential leaders continuously reflect and encourage others to reflect as well. A crucial part of leadership is learning from personal mistakes and the mistakes of others in and around the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Kouzes and Posner (2002) describes the fourth exemplary leadership practice as "Enabling Others to Act." Leaders who embody this practice have the skill to cultivate a collaborative atmosphere, bringing people together and empowering them to deliver high-caliber work, recognizing their crucial role in achieving successful outcomes (Peters & Waterman, 2004). Effective collaboration relies on employing the appropriate individuals (Collins, 2001), and workplaces prioritizing collaboration tend to outperform those driven by competition (Kohn, 1986).

The fifth exemplary leadership practice outlined by Kouzes and Posner (2002) is "Encouraging the Heart." Leaders who demonstrate proficiency in this practice excel at inspiring and supporting individuals within their organization through encouragement, empathy, and genuine concern. Studies indicate that individuals are more likely to invest their time and energy when they feel valued and encouraged (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). A transformational leader is essential in ensuring that people's achievements are celebrated as they are the most important people in their organizations (Moniz, 2008). Leaders give credit to others when success is achieved as a reward and accept responsibility when failure occurs (Collins, 2001). They realize the importance of recognizing and acknowledging others for their good works (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Both theoretical perspectives complement each other in understanding and analyzing leadership practices within educational contexts. The ripple effect theory offers a broader view of how leadership practices influence organizational outcomes, while Kouzes and Posner's (2002) framework provides specific guidelines for effective leadership behaviors. By integrating these perspectives, this dissertation aims to identify and evaluate the leadership practices employed by educational leaders in South Georgia schools using the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) survey. This comprehensive strategy empowers researchers to investigate how leadership techniques, school environment, and student success are interconnected, enhancing the existing literature's understanding of impactful leadership and its influence on academic outcomes.

Significance of the Study

Similarities and differences in leadership practices exist among educational leaders in South Georgia schools. Educational leaders must apply appropriate leadership practices to improve instruction and learning activities within academic settings to increase learning outcomes (Sexton & Switzer, 2020). The findings from this study may assist principals in realizing and applying best practices in educational leadership that illuminate teaching and learning and advance student achievement. The findings may also give principals a better understanding of the challenging tasks they face in an unstable, data-driven climate of change and accountability (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Knowledge gained from this study might be significant when it is used to identify effective leadership behaviors, provide professional development programs, and target the leadership practices of principals that should be reduced or eliminated, as well as practices that could increase higher performance within the school. Clarifying effective

leadership behaviors may assist principals with developing a repertoire of meaningful leadership practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Principals leading through varied approaches are more effective than predictable ones who continue to use old and ineffective leadership approaches (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Among principals, the belief about the nature of school leadership changes from a managerial model to a visionary, collegial one focused on increasing student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). A new focus in educational leadership is that every leader must implement a vision for improving schools and involve other stakeholders in the visualized school improvement initiative (Adams et al., 2017).

In 21st-century schools, educational leaders must make the required resources available to teachers, allowing them to follow the visions and initiatives necessary to improve student performance. This role requires collaborative leadership to increase improvement and job satisfaction (Boamah et al., 2018; Fullan, 2001; Hall & Hord, 2006). Before the 21st century, decision-makers tended to employ, reward, and promote principals based on the way they carried out their roles and responsibilities rather than how they used their skills and creative ability to increase the academic achievement of students or improve the level of instruction in their schools (Boyce & Bowers, 2018). Currently, many principals are initiating numerous leadership practices designed to improve the instructional process and students' overall academic performance in schools. Another significance aspect of this study is that as characteristics relating to improved instruction and increased academic achievement are identified, the principal's behaviors can be examined to determine existing relationships between the two (Bush et al., 2019).

As new educational leaders fill the principal position in local school systems, these inexperienced leaders seek to make changes in how schools operate. When new leaders accept positions as school principals, they share knowledge and provide visions for improved instructional programs and increased student achievement. A principal's leadership practices relative to improved instructional procedures and higher student achievement are the focal points of this study. Therefore, the most significant aspect of this study was determining the interconnection between educational leaders and the outcomes associated with teaching and learning across various educational activities. Principals who engage in visionary interactions with staff build bridges and work successfully to promote increased effectiveness and higher academic achievement. These are principal behaviors that lead to social change (Au-Yong-Oliveira et al., 2018).

Finally, principals need to know their own effective leadership practices to build a highly effective and collaborative team that produces a high level of academic learning and high achievement (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Findings from this study could add to the body of knowledge regarding how principals' leadership matters in making a difference in the instructional process for teachers and in students' academic achievement. Most significantly, the findings from this study could help principals implement practices to meet the challenge of attaining higher levels of instructional performance and student academic achievement in schools.

The Georgia Professional Standards defines Tier I educational leadership as entry-level certified leaders in P-12 schools. These Tier I leaders work under the supervision of a school principal at the building or school level. Before transitioning to a Tier II leader, they must have 3 years of work experience as a Tier I leader. The principal is responsible

for managing the leadership team in the building (Baker et al., 2010). Tier II educational leaders are advanced, certified personnel. They work as principals or district administrators. When Tier II leaders work in a leadership role at the district level, they have the responsibility of supervising principals. Tier II leaders provide leadership to the principals (Baker et al., 2010). The GaDOE certifies Tier I and Tier II leaders.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study, which was an examination of the leadership practices of educational leaders in South Georgia:

1. What similarities and differences, if any, exist in leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?
2. What relationship, if any, exist between the demographic traits of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia (e.g., race, gender, years of leadership experiences, and the population size of the schools) and their leadership practices, as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory?

Methodology

Although this research was designed to explore the perceived leadership practices among educational leadership in South Georgia, a relevant and applicable methodology is adopted for generating results. This research study followed a survey methodology to generate data that focused on investigating educational leaders regarding leadership practices appropriate for the potential improvement of learners' performance, graduation rates, and academic excellence within South Georgia public schools. The LPI self-survey

instrument was adopted within this research to determine the perceived practices adopted by educational leaders for disseminating leadership and administrative roles that significantly influence the development of school environments. Data collection from the study population was guided by the research questions and primary variables that reflect the influence of perceived leadership practices on school outcomes and performance in South Georgia. Throughout the implementation of the study's methodology, the acquired data represented perceptions and understandings of educational leaders regarding typical leadership practices applicable to improving the performance of South Georgia schools.

Definition of Key Terms

Achievement - Achievement is the ability to learn, improve skills, and accomplish future goals (Bemak et al., 2005).

Educational Leaders - Individuals who are in a leadership role at Tier I and Tier II levels (Baker et al., 2010).

High-Performing Schools - A high-performing school is a school where students meet or exceed the identified performance standard in academic learning tasks as measured by state standardized tests, such as the Georgia Milestones Assessments and end-of-course tests (Crumpton & Gregory, 2011).

Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) - The LKES is a leadership survey for principals, implemented by the GaDOE, about leadership strategies (GaDOE, 2015).

Low-Performing Schools – A low-performing school is one in which students do not meet or exceed the identified performance standard in academic learning tasks as measured by state standardized tests, such as the Georgia Milestones Assessments and end-of-course tests (Crumpton & Gregory, 2011).

Perceived Leadership Style – Perceived leadership style and practices encompass the process and initiatives adopted for accomplishing shared goals through individual and collective efforts (Gozukara et al., 2017).

Standard-Based Evaluation – Standard-based evaluation is an assessment process created from standards to improve desired outcomes (Chaplin et al., 2014).

Tier I Education Leaders – Leaders (e.g., assistant principals) who provide leadership at the school level under a principal (Baker et al., 2010).

*Tier II Education Leader*s – Leaders who provide leadership to other leaders at the district level (Baker et al., 2010).

Transformational Leaders – Leaders who believe that consistency between deeds and words builds their credibility (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

Visionary Leaders – Leaders who practice Inspired Shared Vision and envision the end product before beginning the task (Covey, 1992).

Organization of the Study

This researcher provided an overview of important theories, concepts, and practices as they relate to Tier I and Tier II leadership positions. Chapter II is a review of the literature. In Chapter III, the methodology is presented, including a description of methods, data source, outcome variables, and analytic procedures used in this study. Chapter IV contains the results of data collected from the survey of practicing leaders in South Georgia. Chapter V covers significant findings, conclusions, and connections.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership is defined as the ability of an individual, group, or organization to influence or guide other individuals to achieve set organizational goals and objectives (Gozukara et al., 2017). Leaders know what they need to do and how to gain the support of others in pursuit of the vision they have cast (Thompson, 2012; Tichy, 2002). Leaders can unite people, recognize lingering challenges that may affect them, and share the importance of a plan (Collins, 2001). This literature review includes current trends and practices in leadership used by educational leaders in schools nationwide as well as the impact these trends and practices have on school success. This literature review consists of the following:

1. A description of the theoretical framework for the study.
2. Effective leadership practices.
3. Educational leadership.
4. Educational leaders' practices in South Georgia public schools.
5. Current and trending practices in educational leadership.
6. Schools and teachers' influence on educational leadership practices.

The Ripple Effect Theory

Although the literature exploring the aspects of administration and leadership within contemporary education settings is extensive, knowledge regarding leadership practices of educational leaders is minimal. Theoretical explorations demonstrate the significant interconnection between educational leaders and the achievement of goals and

outcomes associated with teaching and learning across various educational activities. Although the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) officials continuously seek to explore and update applied standard leadership practices and evaluation results for South Georgia public high schools, significant efforts to improve learning outcomes require an elevated degree of leadership practices. The ripple effect theory served as a solid foundation for understanding the influence of leadership practices among educational leaders and their effect on school outcomes. The primary tenets of the ripple effect theory revolve around the standards of leadership suggested by professional leadership organizations, including the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Instructional leadership practices constitute a segment of these standards, and it is advised that principals implement suitable practices to enhance teaching within typical classroom environments (Perry et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). Further, the ripple effect theory focuses on effectively managing human and capital resources required to facilitate teaching and learning within educational environments (Perry et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). These standards and leadership practices are expected to promote a productive school environment, encourage professionalism, increase teacher engagement, and increase opportunities for student success.

The ripple effect theory examined school leadership practices and their effectiveness in increasing student achievement. Using the system's desired outcomes as a benchmark, the ripple effect theory allowed leaders to provide feedback on the effectiveness of programs, as demonstrated by the evaluation of relevant parameters such as performance, school environment, and general organizational management (Perry et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022).

Kouzes and Posner's Exemplary Leadership Practices

The existing literature on leadership supports the premises founded in the five exemplary practices of leadership. "Model the Way," is the first among the five exemplary leadership practices. Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggested that the words and actions of a leader must mesh into one leadership style, suggesting that the words and behaviors of the leader communicate meaning about their practice. For leaders to demonstrate this practice, they must know clearly who they are and what they stand for as leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The beliefs and values of leaders are important because these beliefs shape the way they act and think. The beliefs and values, if appropriate, allow leaders to move toward the success of their organizations (Maidique & Perez, 2013). The practice of "modeling the way" is evident in the description of Level 5 leaders as described by Collins (2001). Level 5 leaders are defined as leaders who believe that consistency between deeds and words builds their credibility (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). They are ambitious with a strong will but humble at the same time. They are driven to produce amazing outcomes, while sharing the praise with others. They are accountable to take the blame if they are not successful. Their greatness comes from hard work. Collins believed that leaders' modesty is seen in the work of Level 5 leaders. These leaders are about work, not just about appearance, and are more willing to sacrifice their individual time and interests to ensure their organizational goals and objectives are achieved. These leaders are very ambitious and show strong behavior traits with a combination of personal humility and a strong will.

Additionally, leaders who demonstrate the practice of "model the way" are thought to be more familiar with the overall structure of schools. Bolman and Deal (2017) stressed the significance of focusing on the overall design and the structural framework of the organization. In their description of the structural framework, Bolman and Deal emphasized the belief that configurations must be put in place to allow the workers to blend effectively to achieve a common goal. Leaders who practice "Model the Way" tend to be more focused on the organization as a whole and show great stewardship and awareness (Spears, 1995). They display by example that they live by the values they advocate. They believe that consistency between deeds and words builds their credibility as transformational leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

The second exemplary leadership practice is "Inspire a Shared Vision" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The ability to create a clear vision and carry out a vision successfully is necessary for all leaders (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003). The greatest trait leaders need to demonstrate is the ability to effectively cast the vision of the organization widely (Bennis, 2003). Transformational leaders believe that consistency between deeds and words builds their credibility (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). They are an example of leaders who practice "Inspired Shared Vision." They passionately believe that a difference can be made through envisioning the future and then creating a unique image of what their organization can become (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). A visionary leader is someone with a clear and innovative outlook, inspiring others towards a common future vision. They possess the ability to see opportunities beyond present situations and are skilled at articulating and guiding others towards realizing their envisioned future. Visionary leaders practice "Inspired Shared Vision" and envision the end product before beginning

the task (Covey, 1992). Visionary leaders believe there is a reason behind everything they do, and they ensure this purpose is understood by everyone within the organization. Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated, "Teaching a vision and confirming that the vision is shared is a process of engaging constituents in conversations about their lives, about their hopes and dreams" (p. 143).

Bolman and Deal's (2017) symbolic framework aligns with the practice of "Inspiring a Shared Vision." The symbolic framework is focused on assuring the organization provides clarity and purpose to those who make it up. Once understood by all, the clarity and purpose of the organization can paint pictures and write a story about the meaning of the organization. A leader who has the ability to understand the symbolic framework is capable of understanding that symbols and stories can bring unity to a group of people for a common good and keep the organization together during difficult times (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Based on this framework, a leader tends to be more focused on building a community (Spears, 1995) and clearly communicating a vision (Bennis, 2003; Jung & Avolio, 2000).

A transformational leader also can practice the third exemplary leadership practice, which is "Challenge the Process" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Kouzes and Posner (2002) noted that successful executives are more willing to take risks during their career, but more importantly they get to learn from their risks. These leaders are forerunners who have the capability to see opportunities and relentlessly find ways to maximize such opportunities (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Being a transformational leader is having the willingness to change the status quo by experimenting and taking risks with new approaches (Keith & Levin, 2002). Leaders, in general, must be clear when describing the

importance of change to make sure others are aware of the purpose of such change, thereby avoiding unnecessary confusion (Fullan, 2001). They understand that success does not just happen overnight. They recognize the importance of change to maximize efforts (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Furthermore, these leaders recognize peoples' efforts, and the leaders strategically use these efforts to help achieve goals, build choices for their employees, foster an atmosphere that encourages risk-taking, and celebrate small victories (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In this type of atmosphere, followers know they are free from hostile concerns or comments. This environment is characterized by freedom of choice, which promotes autonomy and drives individuals to work at a high level because of the perceived freedom and trust granted to them (Schlechty, 2002). Effective leaders continuously reflect and encourage others to reflect. A key part of leadership is learning from personal mistakes as well as the mistakes of others in and around the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The fourth of the five exemplary leadership practices is "Enable Others to Act" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). These leaders know how to unite people in a collaborative spirit and empower them to conduct quality work as they are the key to effective production (Peters & Waterman, 2004). For the collaborations to be operational, the right people must be used (Collins, 2001). Workplaces, where workers tend to compete, were seen to be ineffective when compared to workplaces that work in collaboration (Kohn, 1986). The new jobs that are being created require collaboration across and within work sectors (Friedman, 2005). Bolman and Deal's (2017) political framework recognizes that many different mechanisms in a school environment hold different aspects of power.

A leader must be able to persuade others (Spears, 1995). By allowing people to do their own job, employees are able to realize their full potential (Bryant, 2017). Bolman and Deal's (2017) political framework is based on the belief that an organization consists of diverse groups of individuals from different backgrounds and experiences who come together to make effective decisions after sharing various views. A leader has the ability to understand the importance of collaboration and negotiation together with the importance of building relationships in support of a course. Blowfield et al. (2006) stated, "An important part of leadership was creating realistic expectations for employees" (p. 14). Covey (1992) supported this idea and added that the ability to cooperate and lean on others is a quality of a great leader.

The fifth exemplary leadership practice is to "Encourage the Heart" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). These leaders should have the knowledge of lifting up those in their organization through encouragement, empathy, and care. People are willing to work long days when they feel encouraged. Leaders who encourage the heart celebrate others' achievements, as they are the most important people in their organizations (Moniz, 2008).

These leaders give credit to others when success is achieved and accept responsibility when a failure occurs (Collins, 2001). Bolman and Deal's (2017) human resource framework concentrates on investing in people as well as their needs, which aligns well with "encouraging the heart." Leaders must help their followers to find meaning in the work they do for the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2017) and they must be committed to their growth (Spears, 1995). People are always willing to follow leaders when they recognize that they are wanted and that their personal strengths and goals align with that of the organization (Covey, 1992). The quality of listening and empathy will

enhance the capability of a leader to empower others (Spears, 1995). Through empowerment and support, a leader must focus on the universal needs of employees to help them reach maximum potential (Bennis, 2003; Bolman & Deal, 2017). Reviewing different perspectives is essential to gain an in-depth understanding of the leadership practices of educational leaders, as well as how leaders relate to their followers to enhance and influence effectiveness. According to Meng and Berger (2019), employees tend to have complex needs that leaders are expected to satisfy to strengthen performance, enhance job satisfaction, and achieve set goals and objectives. Boamah et al. (2018) asserted that effective leadership plays an essential role in enabling employees to understand, cope, and manage problems.

Leadership means influencing a team or an organization to accomplish the organizational objectives, goals, mission, and vision (Zoul & Bell, 2019). The success of leadership practices manifests itself through group performance and the scope to which the organizational goals and objectives are met. Effective leadership practices encourage and enhance followers' self-confidence, encourage followers to take responsibilities, and empower followers to be innovative in decision making (Vanvactor, 2013a). Babbie (2018) posited that effective leadership practices include approaches that inspire others and challenge the process, encouraging innovation in accomplishing organizational goals.

Educational Leadership Theories

Anderson (2017) described educational leadership as the process of guiding and enlisting the talents and energies of students, teachers, and parents toward achieving common educational goals. U.S. Schools typically adopt four practices, which are (a) transformational, (b) responsible, (c) servant, and (d) distributed (Anderson, 2017).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that inspires a shared vision, which challenges the process, enables others to act, and encourages the heart to perform better and with integrity (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). According to the literature, most effective leadership approaches begin with some sense of shared vision to inspire others to achieve school success (Babbie, 2018). Effective leadership requires methods that inspire others and challenge the process, encouraging innovation in accomplishing organizational goals. Quinlan (2014) believed a transformative leadership style is appropriate in helping educators and administrators to motivate and inspire a shared vision and challenge processes to improve educational outcomes. Comprehensively, with a transformative leadership style, leaders can model how to help teachers find solutions to arising concerns and conflicts within schools and the environment (Van Oord, 2013).

Quinlan (2014) also discussed that traditionally leaders were tasked with supervising employees toward achieving assigned duties while ensuring compliance. Currently, transformative leadership is accompanied by the responsibility to push team members to get creative while striving to perform assigned tasks. In agreement with the findings, Shields (2014) reasoned that within the educational setting, transformative leadership styles enable educational leaders to allow others to act by encouraging differences and fostering participation in the decision-making process – this ensures increased motivation built on shared visions. Shields (2017) noted that educators guided by transformational leaders tend to achieve positive results. The concepts of shared vision and enabling others to act further encouraged increased student engagement within the classroom setting and other school pursuits. Consequently, transformative leaders

encourage educators to share their unique insights through increased participation and engagement by utilizing their inner personal resources and skills.

Responsible Leadership

With the increasing complexities and dynamics in daily businesses, responsible leadership includes the increasing demand to not only focus on organizational structure and stakeholders, but also focus toward the society as a whole (Martinez et al., 2020). Consequently, responsible leadership implies that principals' responsibilities include striving to create positive changes in society to address community and social concerns such as poverty, global warming, and inequalities, among other social and environmental issues. Responsible leaders are those who enable and encourage interactions with the stakeholders within the organization (Frangieh & Yaacoub, 2017).

According to Parker and Pascarella (2013), responsible leadership is crucial for educational success, especially when all students are treated equally, with increased support from educators and parents. Responsible leadership is tasked with the duty to protect students from any form of abuse or violations of freedom and rights as citizens. Connolly et al. (2019) stated that responsible leaders in educational settings are expected to eliminate immoral practices while creating a friendly and positive atmosphere that helps students master knowledge and skills. Based on the responsible leadership concept, educational leadership should incorporate models of evidence-based practices that inspire and motivate educators (Buschlen & Johnson, 2014). Responsible leadership includes the creation of positive climates and beliefs that support both students and parents to participate in an educational community aimed at achieving academic and social needs.

Servant Leadership

Boles (1992) stated that educational leaders should demonstrate servant leadership, leading by example and giving directions on best practices that promote teamwork and efficiency in the workplace. From a servant-leadership point of view, Bush (2015) and Truong et al. (2017) posited that the approach is practical for educational leaders, mainly because the efforts and focus are on students and academic performance. Accordingly, it would be the most effective to adopt in schools. The current literature suggests that, with servant leadership, leaders act as role models, leading the way to directly influence the organizational culture and structure (Bush, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Other studies specifically mentioned that the servant-leadership style is the most effective in schools compared to different potential approaches like transformational or distributed methods (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Winn et al., 2016). In another study, Berck (2010) noted a positive relationship between employees' perception of their leaders and employees' effectiveness.

According to Kiersch and Peters (2017), servant leadership maintains the responsibility of leadership to ensure the success of schools. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that teachers and other stakeholders act ethically, prioritize others, and show sensitivity to others' concerns. Servant-leaders are expected to assist others in their professional growth through an environment that increasingly enables others to act in a supportive environment (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Within education, being a servant leader means maintaining a leadership mentality that preserves and prioritizes the needs of others by modeling the way and inspiring a shared vision that ensures a commitment to educational success (Burch et al., 2015). Sexton (2020) asserted that Georgia educational

leaders practiced servant leadership as their predominant leadership style. The Georgia Statistics for 2018 indicated that Georgia ranked 30th in graduation rate for 2018 across the United States, with an overall graduation rate of 73% (Sexton, 2020).

Distributed Leadership

Ash and Pearsall (2019) suggested that in educational settings, leaders should adopt a distributed leadership approach, mainly because a distributed leadership approach builds the capacity for change and improvement. Harris and DeFlaminis (2016) and Gobby (2016) noted that the distributed leadership style is the most effective in inspiring others because it encourages others to take personal responsibility and because it creates opportunities for others.

Griffin (2015) also noted that distributed leadership practices are a practical approach in schools, mainly because it brings all stakeholders on board, thus ensuring effective in-service delivery. Bolman and Deal (2017) suggested that to enhance effective service delivery, leaders should encourage innovative practices, such as increased cognitive activation, to improve curricular activities that can significantly contribute to positive effects on students and educational outcomes. Within their survey research, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) explained that distributed leadership predicts the frequency in which educators use innovative practices to enhance cognitive activation. Claudet (2014) reviewed the literature further and discovered that cognitive activations are directly associated with empowered decision-making skills. These notions suggest that distributive leadership positively impacts teachers' use of innovative strategies and teaching practices, which empowers decision-making skills and effectively prepares students for their future.

Jones et al. (2014) posited that low empowerment implied de-professionalization, resulting in loss of power and influence for educators. Heikka and Suhonen (2019) inferred that through distributed leadership, teachers are empowered to wield more significant influence over the educational learning environment with the most effective teaching and learning strategies to improve academic outcomes. Through a distributed leadership approach, administrators and principals can challenge the processes while encouraging teacher leadership and simultaneously create leadership styles. This enables teachers to model the way by building cultures of innovation and encourage the heart by developing elements of trust with their learners (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Heikka et al., 2020). Essentially, the findings affirm that distributed leadership is effective in fostering innovation within the educational setting and is a positive predictor of innovative teaching built on cognitive activation. With this approach, principals can effectively inspire a shared vision to enable educators to develop future-ready learners supported by empowered teachers who can model the way through innovative teaching practices.

These theories encourage educational leaders to collaborate with teachers and various stakeholders to guide improvement through transformative goals. Bolman and Deal (2017) explained that educational leadership should exceed accepted administrative and management roles. Leaders who display this quality create and enact policies that drive positive changes in society through partnerships that work collaboratively with various stakeholders to promote positive educational outcomes (Jones et al., 2014). Jones et al. (2014) highlighted that educational leadership includes an influential process toward achieving set goals through shared visions and beliefs. These different leadership styles all recognize the practices of an exemplary leader, including the elements of

inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way, challenging the process, and enabling others to act. All these elements are ideal for a better future for both the schools and the students (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). These theories affirm that the western concept of educational leadership is not only complex but also diverse; educational leaders are expected to provide a normative framework founded on leadership that supports the success of all stakeholders, including the student, teacher, school, and community (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Although the need for effective leadership in schools is incontestable, there is less certainty about the leadership styles most likely to produce favorable outcomes.

Current and Trending Practices in Educational Leadership

Zappulla (2013a) explained that the current trends in educational leadership across the nation encourage leadership styles that foster positive relationships with academic leaders. Conclusions by Szeto et al. (2015) and Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) indicated that the leader-student relationship is significantly strengthened through mentorship. In addition, mentor relationships between learners and their teachers, often viewed as role models, effectively improve student performance and development (Zappulla, 2013a; Zepeda et al., 2017). The positive mentor relationships provide opportunities through which educational leaders and teachers can ensure that set academic goals, such as school mission and vision, are not only shared but remain the focus of all involved stakeholders. Effective leadership practices work toward achieving these objectives (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). The current trends in educational leadership encourage students to discover their talents by ensuring student and teacher relationships foster high performance and minimize internal conflicts between administrators and students (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017; Zappulla, 2013a; Zepeda et

al., 2017).

Globally, the current trend in leadership practice is reducing the educational structure to allow the easy flow of information and decision-making (Bush, 2015). Schools have been restructured continuously to ensure the decision-making process is simplified with less bureaucratic procedures (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017; Wilkinson, 2017). The restructuring of the education system shapes leadership practices to become more effective and faster, mainly because the decision-making process is less centralized, which increases effectiveness compared to the traditional organizational structure that is characterized by a complex and centralized decision-making process.

Schleicher et al. (2017) also noted that many organizations around the globe are moving from traditional leadership that focuses on the hierarchical structure to embracing more modern leadership styles that emphasize the enhancement of self-development and growth. Schleicher et al. stated that schools need leaders who can thrive in a collaborative and cross-functional environment. Studies suggest that reduced school structures not only decrease bureaucratic channels but also enhance communication between employees and leaders. This aspect makes the decision-making process faster and boosts employee morale (Stensaker et al., 2020; Voelkel et al., 2016). This current leadership trend supports efforts to reduce negative or ineffective school structures and increase employee satisfaction while reducing the need for excess management (Schleicher et al., 2017).

Giordano (2015) pointed out that the continuous change in technology and stiff competition in the global market has made it possible for educational leaders to make themselves and others relevant in the worldwide market. It also explains why it has become a common trend for educational leaders to go back to school to improve their

leadership skills so they can remain relevant in a changing world. Continuing education among educational leaders also ensures that students acquire relevant skills that match needs in the current global job market (Giordano, 2015; Schleicher et al., 2017).

Olin (2016) called attention to how the educational leadership field is changing as an increase in the representation of strong women brings increased results and diversity for organizations. Olin reasoned that achieving gender equality improves economic performance in schools, mainly because gender equality is associated with increased organizational performance, enhanced ability to attract and retain new talents, and improved organizational reputation. Berck (2010) found that over the recent past, educational leaders' ideologies has increasingly shifted, compelling educational leaders to develop soft skills to support their technical skills. The current leadership practices have shifted to managing diverse members from different cultural backgrounds, making soft skills of utmost importance in leadership. Traditionally, many educational institutions concentrated on hard skills; however, the current trend leans toward developing soft skills, such as emotional intelligence, creativity, adaptability, and time management (Papa & Armfield, 2018). From an organizational structure standpoint, Giordano (2015) noted that other trends in educational leaders' practices are adopting a blended leadership approach, which includes remote and flexible work and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve customer care and provide instant feedback.

There is consensus in the literature that the combination of soft skills, integration of flexible working conditions, and the adoption of AI has played a crucial role in the development of leadership effectiveness. Effective leadership includes the development of essential soft skills such as communication, interpersonal, teamwork, motivation,

analytical, problem-solving, and decision-making skills (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). Other soft skills include conflict resolution, empathy, compassion, confidence, integrity, honesty, creativity, emotional intelligence, and adaptability (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). These skills represent some of the important soft skills.

Sharafizad et al. (2011) explained that flexible working conditions are elements often found in effective leaders. Known as flextime, these conditions often provide employees options for nontraditional working arrangements to address personal needs, including working from home. Benefits of flexible working include improved work-life balance, reduced absence, and lower stress. In addition to benefits for employees, employers also benefit from greater motivation and productivity, fewer overheads, and improvement in trust and professional relationships (Sharafizad et al., 2011).

AI is the ability of machines that are controlled by machines or computers to learn and do human tasks by gathering insights from human behaviors and abilities. AI technologies in education offer smoother task management, better academic content presentation, personalized learning, easier management of tasks, and opportunities to bridge gaps in the curriculum to advance school improvement initiatives (Chatterjee, 2021). This combination of trending leadership components enhances leaders' technical skills (Chiu & Chai, 2020; Courtney, 2018; Kariippanon et al., 2018). The literature generally shows that leadership preparation programs with soft skills promotion improve leadership practices and can result in practical leadership, with increased potential to achieve job satisfaction and work performance. Opposed to conventional practices, the current trend requires leaders to have a strong desire to achieve school goals and to be expected to complete their duties satisfactorily (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016).

Gasman et al. (2015) postulated that educational leaders are expected to fill a vital role in contributing to and facilitating improvements to the school's structures and organization's overall success. Berkovich (2016) shared that educational leaders are expected to carry out their roles to ensure they adequately utilize their leadership skill sets to promote and facilitate academic achievement and the well-being of both the teachers and students. Penprase (2018) pointed out that leadership duties in educational settings focus on how leaders contribute to the progression of schools through decisional, informational, and interpersonal roles.

Abelson et al. (2016) explained that leaders must ensure that the overall teaching and learning environments and conditions are amiable and pleasant by facilitating ample teaching-learning resources accompanied by updated technologies and equipment. The literature supports the focus of leadership roles in education in order to improve teaching and learning conditions. The major task for educational leaders is to maximize learning by increasing time on a task that results in improving academic achievement and school performance (Penprase, 2018).

In terms of instructional and curriculum systems, current leadership practices require leaders to participate effectively in informing approaches and policies to facilitate improvements in schools (Gumus et al., 2018). Au-Yong-Oliveira et al. (2018) concluded that in leadership practices, educational leaders are tasked with the responsibility to contribute to the efforts to enrich and redesign the prevailing instructional systems and the curriculum. Improvements in the curriculum are regarded as the utmost progression in the educational context (Berkovich, 2016).

Aldowah et al. (2017) posited that the current leadership process is characterized

by efforts to improve teaching and learning relations and techniques, mainly because the most encountered problems in schools are challenges within the particular manners of pursuing academic achievement. It is widely perceived that an effective educational curriculum is the most impactful manner through which individuals' lives and communities can be improved (Aldowah et al., 2017). Accordingly, educational leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring improvements are made in the teaching and learning process through innovative, modern, and scientific methods (Aldowah et al., 2017; Au-Yong-Oliveira et al., 2018).

Educational leaders played a significant role in facilitating improvements in educational outcomes through the facilitation of improved teaching and learning conditions and the provision of modern and innovative technologies. These elements improve the instructional system and the curriculum, impacting personal and communal welfare beyond academic achievements (Au-Yong-Oliveira et al., 2018; Boyce & Bowers, 2018; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017; Dutta & Sahney, 2016; McGee et al., 2015).

School leadership requires a collaborative effort of principals, teachers, students, parents, and the community for the success of the school. According to Miller (2012), the primary role of school leadership is to pursue a positive relationship between classroom management and academic performance. In support of this finding, Papa and Armfield (2018) believed that classroom management, school leadership, and academic performance are the priorities of public schools in the United States. The study implies that education is a public good; therefore, failing performance affects everyone in the country. Bush and Gurr (2017) contended that instructional leadership is perceived to be the best approach to guarantee the expected academic performance of students. Bush and

Gurr (2017) and Choi et al. (2018) speculated that in schools, students' performance and educators' effectiveness are influenced significantly by instructional leadership practices or leadership quality.

Caldwell and Spinks (2020) described instructional leadership as any leadership practice that improves learning and teaching in the school community. The literature informs that the principal must perform instructional leadership practices that define the school mission, promote a positive learning culture, and manage instructional programs that lead to students' success in school and other life aspects. Khan and Law (2015) and Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) examined collaboration in schools in the United States. They suggested that collaborative teaching results in beneficial interaction that promotes the realization of the educational goals of the school. In many schools in the United States, coordinated efforts are not typical, especially in schools that still use conventional approaches to managing schools (Wolfe, 2016). Kraft et al. (2016) believed that educational leaders' major task is to build school cultures that foster collaborative functioning. They noted in their correlational study that it is the responsibility of educational leaders to increase their knowledge about what constitutes effective collaboration. Routhieaux (2015) explained within a literature review on shared leadership that the collaborative approach has been adopted widely in the United States because it allows for a valuable exchange of ideas about the work of schools to coordinate leadership efforts and teaching practices. Collaboration is associated with explicit teaching and learning goals, increased monitoring of student progress, better student achievements, and increased school operations and efficiency.

McGee et al. (2015) also noted in their research report that healthy school cultures

are essential in aiding improvements in academic and personal achievements among students and teachers. In addition, leaders have to address a diverse population of teachers and students. Bolman and Deal (2017) indicated that more collaborative traits should characterize leadership in schools to ensure students' growth and development are in accordance with state standards. Essentially, the literature indicated that educational leaders can perform their duties adequately to provide and facilitate achievement goals with coordinated efforts.

Previous studies also indicate that within schools, collaboration requires leaders not to work more aggressively but to increase their awareness of the educators and students' concerns and explore how they can provide necessary support relative to emerging issues and problems (McGee et al., 2015; Sebastian et al., 2016). Oakes et al. (2017) supported this idea and clarified that educational leaders should focus on openness. Khan and Law (2015) and Crosby and Bryson (2018) suggested those cooperative school societies do not dwell much on hard work; instead, they emphasize regular and consistent duties, commitment, and aspects of collective responsibilities.

Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) and Bolman and Deal (2017) pointed out that collaborative leadership is receiving positive teacher feedback. Collaborative leadership consists of an inclusive school atmosphere supported by cooperative principals who tend to focus on increased situational awareness of the schools' operations and mitigate current and anticipated difficulties (Oakes et al., 2017; Sebastian et al., 2016). Primarily, leaders should not employ strong measures to ensure more work. Instead, they should adopt strategies that enhance motives to work smart with increased commitment and collective responsibilities. Educational leaders should exercise shared fundamental

practices aimed at improving students' achievements.

Denhardt and Gilman (2016) suggested that influential leaders develop a positive and trusting relationship with staff, students, and the community. Ryan and Cousins (2019) found that educational leaders should assure talent management by sustaining, supporting, and monitoring the teachers, students, and other stakeholders' growth that contribute to the overall performance of schools. Leaders should develop peer mentorships to ensure leadership skills are distributed among students, teachers, and all stakeholders (Denhardt et al., 2016). Educational leaders should make evidence-based decisions, using factual data to support their choices. The approach ensures their decisions are timely, accurate, and economical (Khan, 2016; Waaland, 2016). Also, this approach allows the quality of educational systems and leadership practices to be maintained. School and systems influence the leadership practices that educational leaders use; for instance, leaders and teachers collaborate to monitor students' learning progress and improve the data and communication systems that strengthen the organization's structure and efficiency (Ryan & Cousins, 2019). This means that schools can better manage personnel by applying coherent recruitment and retention strategies that improve the morale of teachers and the performance of schools.

Successful schools and leadership can only be realized through the optimization of shared resources within the school setting and the community (Hackmann & Malin, 2019), Essentially, optimal use of school resources enhances organizational efficiency and increases the capacity to improve academic performance and school success (Hackmann & Malin, 2019; Roegman & Woulfin, 2019). Educational leaders should engage all stakeholders in crafting and monitoring of budgets to enhance the educational

system. Principals and teachers should maintain and promote a positive climate by protecting the welfare and safety of students and staff (Giordano, 2015). Lakomski et al. (2016) found that educational leaders are responsible for developing leadership programs that provide learners with outlets for capacity building within schools and communities. Such initiatives have been cited for stimulating academic growth and performance in educational institutions. The student monitoring process helps create effective routines, determine systematic approaches to assess the student's fluency, identify the student at risk, establish the rate of improvement needed to meet year-end goals, and develop a curriculum-based measurement that improves academic outcomes for all students (Giordano, 2015; Hackmann & Malin, 2019; Lakomski et al., 2016).

Effective Leadership Practices

Zappulla (2013a) noted that effective leadership practices are common in successful schools. They include such traits as acting with integrity, demonstrating competence in performing daily and routine tasks, motivating and supporting others, and speaking positively about the vision of the organization among others. Zappulla concluded that effective leadership practices are an appropriate tool that can influence and shape internal organizational cultures, norms, and practices. Accordingly, the academic performance and success of public schools in Georgia are those that employ effective leadership practices. Shaturaev and Bekimbetova (2021) suggested that in most schools, leadership practices play an indispensable role. Essentially, the leadership practices in schools are designed to offer guidance and lead the school toward achieving its set objectives, missions, and vision (Shaturaev & Bekimbetova, 2021). Göksoy (2015) suggested that success in performing leadership duties means overcoming challenges and

problems that one may encounter as a part of the daily routine. This suggestion implies that educational leaders are the individuals vested with the power and authority to fill the leadership role, as they deal with issues and problems that arise (Gençer & Samur, 2016).

Connolly et al. (2019) added that effective leadership involves guiding teachers and students toward achieving set objectives and academic goals. Canbolat et al. (2016) noted that effective leadership is one that provides students with theoretical concepts. It also gives teachers and students opportunities to hone their personal and leadership skills. Canbolat et al. proposed that the development of skills is one of the most important leadership goals. Educational leaders play an essential role in providing opportunities and supporting teachers' and students' development beyond academic achievements.

According to Quin et al. (2015) in a survey study, leadership practices relate to the combination and blending of many different skills demonstrated through the actions of leaders. Leadership accounts for establishing goals, planning, coordination, strategies resourcing, and evaluation of the curriculum and teaching practices. Alayoubi et al. (2020) concluded that educational leadership involves the participation and promotion of a positive teaching-learning process strengthened by a disciplined and orderly learning environment. In a supportive argument, Göksoy (2015) suggested that educational leaders should focus on developing professional relationships and learning, which are the influential core elements that promote effective teaching and learning. Connolly et al. (2019) and Shaturaev and Bekimbetova (2021) suggested that to assume leadership roles in schools, individuals need to possess great awareness with augmented competencies that enable them to undertake their leadership duties adequately and methodically. Farooq (2016) inferred that for effective leadership practices, educational leaders must form a

culture that promotes the development of leadership skills among teachers and students. Other researchers noted it is essential for leaders and educators to provide students with knowledge about leadership skills as well as their implementation (Dutta & Sahney, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020). Such organizational cultures are built on collaborative leadership frameworks (Gençer & Samur, 2016; Shaturaev & Bekimbetova, 2021).

Furthermore, educators are expected to improve their leadership skills and abilities through coursework taken in educator preparation programs. Primarily, this work should consist of both academic and leadership concepts on how to build elements of trust, commitment, cooperation, and promising strategies that facilitate and promote collective learning. This work should also help identify appropriate solutions to arising problems and increase coordination and organization of activities and functions (Farooq, 2016; Gençer & Samur, 2016).

Leadership Practices in Georgia Public Schools

Due to the complex nature of leadership in schools today, it is necessary to explain trends, perspectives, and empirical findings concerning leadership practices. Hill (2017) found that effective educational leaders are flexible and make changes as needed. These changes are in the best interest of the leadership teams in the schools of Georgia. Brooks and Normore (2015) and Norberg (2017) suggested that leaders adopt different but appropriate leadership styles with confidence and an open mind. This approach flexibly addresses the needs of learners (Brooks & Normore, 2015; Norberg, 2017). Irrespective of the leadership practices employed, the common goals are focused on improving outcomes and student development while instilling moral values. The findings from several studies on leadership practices in Georgia are speculative as to whether

school leaders are influential in shaping the climate and the effectiveness of the working environment for the school (Brooks & Normore, 2015; Hill, 2017; Zoul & Bell, 2019).

Zoul and Bell (2019), however, reported that leadership practices in Georgia are characterized by servant leadership. The leaders display skills in which school leadership and the school system collaborate to manage school populations. Hill (2017) found that educational leaders use a distributed leadership style that builds the capacity for change and improvement simultaneously. Kouzes and Posner (2017) discussed that distributed leadership is achieved by creating opportunities for others to lead. Based on existing evidence, it is believed that distributed leadership practices are very effective in schools, as they bring all stakeholders together through effective leadership (Brooks & Normore, 2015; Hill, 2017; Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Poister et al., 2015; Zoul & Bell, 2019).

According to Poister et al. (2015), a school's move away from traditional leadership that focuses on the hierarchical structure increases the need to develop self and others. It is important for educational leaders to use leadership practices that reduce the organizational structure and make leadership more effective and efficient because decision-making is less centralized. Therefore, decision-making is more effective and quicker as compared to the traditional corporate system which has a complex and centralized decision-making process.

Anderson and Reynolds (2015) suggested that some educational leaders in Georgia tend to experience difficulties with change, mainly because they struggle to identify and comprehend where the problems and challenges exist within the schools. Buckman et al. (2017) explained that, in such situations, adopting a transformational leadership style would be practical and beneficial; however, the transformational styles

differ from conventional approaches, so school leaders continue to exercise traditional transactional leadership styles even though the use of these transactional styles exert more pressure and demand for school success. Buckman et al. (2017) and Zoul and Bell (2019) suggested educational leaders in Georgia continue to adopt ineffective leadership styles despite greater responsibilities and increased demands for higher levels of success. In the 21st century, the transformational leadership approach tends to give educational leaders increased authority when compared to traditional leadership styles (Buckman et al., 2017; Zoul & Bell, 2019). Norberg (2017) verified that one of the main objectives and responsibilities of educational leaders is to motivate teachers and learners toward a better future by adopting modern and creative strategies for improving instruction and increasing student achievement results.

O'Connor et al. (2019) pointed out that the main issue faced by educational leaders in Georgia is the inability to transform knowledge and skills into best practices. Implementing best practices generally leads to accomplishments, changes challenges into innovation, and converts risks into rewards (O'Connor et al., 2019). One of the biggest obstacles educational leaders face in Georgia is determining creative strategies to address arising issues and problems. O'Connor et al. explained that current leaders in Georgia increase their authority as they use various effective leadership techniques. Their increasing authority often leads to increased responsibilities to influence their followers. Leaders are expected to identify and adopt creative ways to lead and influence others by developing effective strategies to convert challenges into opportunities.

A national survey by the Department of Education revealed that Georgia's graduation rate was ranked 23rd in the nation. Georgia has improved their outcomes

through increased graduation rates over the past few years (Zoul & Bell, 2019). Within a correlational study, Stewart-Banks et al. (2015) stated that because Georgia has a diverse population within its schools, more inclusive relationships and an improved school climate played a vital role in realizing this achievement. Maier et al. (2016) argued that the fair distribution of financial resources (such as funds) promoted better academic performance. School leaders were motivated to report desirable outcomes to receive better supplements based on students' performance (Maier et al., 2016).

Driven by the need to achieve better performance, educational leaders in Georgia are striving to solve problems or remove barriers that limit their schools to achieve desirable outcomes, which indicates a more inclusive leadership approach. This inclusivity tends to yield increases in performance when leaders focus on solving problems that limit student outcomes. For instance, leaders suggested that because most students in public schools come from poverty backgrounds, soliciting more funds to support low-income students motivated higher achievement and school success (Stewart-Banks et al., 2015; Tabatadze, 2015).

Taylor Backor and Gordon (2015) concluded that these factors indicated that leaders in Georgia have refocused their attention on striving and improving graduation and academic success rates among the diverse population of students with which they work, especially among the African-American students in public schools. Accordingly, the current literature informs that educational leadership practices used in Georgia focus on establishing creative ways to navigate, engage, and motivate teachers and learners to perform better, despite the underlying challenges (Stewart-Banks et al., 2015; Tabatadze, 2015; Taylor Backor & Gordon, 2015). During a review of literature, Schleicher et al.

(2017) found that leadership practices at Georgia public schools were characterized by servant leadership. School management and the school system collaborate to design and develop a standard course for managing the school population. Initially, decision-makers in Georgia's school systems did not include a battery of assessment scores for evaluating school leaders. Instead, principals evaluated school leadership based only on their quantitative nature. The quality of leadership practices should have been the basis for measuring the effectiveness of school leadership (Schleicher et al., 2017).

Research studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between a principal's effectiveness, school, culture, and student achievement (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Vanvactor, 2013b). For instance, Smith et al. (2016) conducted a quantitative study to determine the extent of school leaders' influence over reading and mathematics achievement scores. They found that leadership practices effectively increased student achievement, meaning effective leadership is a significant factor in student achievement. Several studies suggested that the high-performance rate in schools is mainly attributed to the leadership skills among academic leaders (Alayoubi et al., 2020; Brandon et al., 2018; Day et al., 2016; Dutta & Sahney, 2016; Kraft et al., 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020; Oakes et al., 2017; Stewart-Banks et al., 2015; Zepeda et al., 2017).

Green (2019) and Tolman et al. (2019) indicated that leadership techniques employed in schools can play a vital role in the administrative mistakes and shortcomings that impede the progress of public schools in Georgia. Their studies further revealed that principals tend to demonstrate poor human relations and engagement skills (Green, 2019; Tolman et al., 2019). LaFrance et al. (2020) and McBrayer et al. (2018) supported these findings and focused more on educators in roles other than school principals. These

studies indicated that both educators and principals, historically, have been identified as demonstrating poor relationship, poor communications skills, and a lack of interpersonal skills (LaFrance et al., 2020; McBrayer et al., 2018).

In yet another comparable finding, Talka (2019) and Johnson (2016) noted that educators in Georgia tend to lack vision and knowledge about the curriculum and the need for inclusivity. Talka examined the relationships between teacher turnover, student-teacher ratio, percentage of Limited English Proficient students enrolled, student absentee rate, student dropout rate, and student graduation rate. Findings from the study indicated that teacher turnover was significantly related to the other school characteristics investigated. Talka reported that the results of the study were consistent with evidence from previous studies except for the dropout rate and student graduation rate.

Johnson (2016) surveyed principals and assistant principals in Florida and Georgia schools to determine their perceptions of university educational leadership preparation and professional learning programs. The results from the survey revealed that many principals and assistant principals agreed that the university educational leadership program improved their overall preparation, specifically in relation to their knowledge of school leadership and school law. Participants in Johnson's study disagreed that leadership preparation programs assisted them in understanding how to manage school budgets: how to collect data, analyze data, use data for school improvement, identify resource issues, and improve human resources issues. Participants indicated that preparation programs should provide meaningful professional learning opportunities. The participants also preferred job-embedded learning experiences to traditional university preparation programs (Johnson, 2016).

Moreover, Williams (2017) implemented a basic interpretive study that examined the experiences of a virtual program implementation team within a rural school district in Georgia. The school district had limited resources for teachers and students to engage in virtual learning experiences. Williams interviewed six professional educators, using a three-interview series to understand their experiences as they implemented the GAVS program. Data analysis using memos, categorizing, connecting strategies, document analysis, and constant-comparative methods produced two themes. The first theme was expanding educational opportunities for students, and the second theme was integrating resources and support. The sub-themes for these two categories included school compliance with school virtual learning mandates and GAVS oversight. Based on the findings, Williams recommended prospective rural school districts implement a virtual learning program focused on program preplanning, with a special focus on employee training and the availability of technology required for an online learning platform. The greatest barrier for the participants, according to Williams, was developing new and innovative leadership practices and inviting school counseling practices to meet the demands of virtual education. Educators often exhibit favoritism in their practices. Williams concluded that in Georgia, the historical characteristics of educational leaders are tendencies of arrogance, inattentiveness, aggression, and lack of emphasis on students' and teachers' needs. To increase student access to achievement, schools across Georgia are being equipped to provide online educational programs. The Georgia Virtual Schools (GAVS) is available for all schools, but rural schools with limited resources are restricted in the implementation of GAVS.

Comparable studies on leadership pinpointed that such characteristics significantly impede the development and performance of students, undermine the careers of teachers, undermine the involvement of parents, and inhibit the success of the school as a whole (Bush et al., 2019; Shaturaev & Bekimbetova, 2021; Zepeda et al., 2017). Researchers suggested that educational leaders in Georgia were ineffective in managing the diverse demands of students, teachers, parents, and staff, which was associated with an increased loss of trust and confidence (Shaturaev & Bekimbetova, 2021; Williams, 2017; Zepeda et al., 2017).

School and Teacher Influence on Educational Leadership Practices

Existing evidence indicates that principals with leadership skills such as distributive leadership directly and indirectly promote educational systems in the United States (Moyles, 2016). For example, the ability of the leader of the school to sustain and improve organizational effectiveness depends on the principal's understanding of the needs of the school and the articulated educational needs of all stakeholders. Hill (2017), for instance, reported academic leaders improved organizational needs, resulting in improved student performance over time. Hill found that the educational policymakers using servant leadership practices enabled students, teachers, and the community to embrace transformative leadership in the public schools in Georgia and beyond. Educational leaders in public schools adopted the concept of reducing organizational structure, ensuring decision-making is faster, less bureaucratic, and simple. The attitude of teachers toward work and responsibility has improved, leading to the overall improved performance of the schools (Hill, 2017).

Current trends and practices indicate that both students and teachers have embraced the leadership practices that provide a conducive environment for learning new ideas and developing soft skills such as emotional intelligence, creativity, adaptability, and time management (Babbie, 2018). Caldwell and Spinks (2020) noted that recently schools have developed an effective organizational system that responds to the needs of the students, teachers, and the community, improving the overall acceptability of the organization in the environment in which it operates. However, whether the perceived leadership practices led to building and sustaining the right conditions for the quality of learning and teaching in all public schools in Georgia remains unclear.

Principals have improved the performance of the schools by emphasizing practices such as encouraging the use of data and research in decision-making; strategic allocation of resources to schools; changes in the student performance targets; and formulating effective teaching programs, among others (Poister et al., 2015). Schools in Georgia adopted the performance data criteria for monitoring the academic standards of both students and the schools. Teachers and other stakeholders have been involved in these processes leading to improved performance of schools in Georgia. Brandon et al. (2018) and Hackmann and Malin (2019) suggested that curriculum enhancement to integrate emotional and social learning has prepared students for leadership. Leadership practices that engage and involve stakeholders play a crucial role in improving the performance schools and the development of students, teachers, and communities. According to Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016) and Lai and Cheung (2015), the responsibility of educational leaders encompasses multifaceted elements that advance and improve schools. This, in turn, improves teaching and learning within schools.

Amanchukwu et al. (2015) explained that the use of effective professional development enhances leaders' ability to provide accurate, knowledgeable, and current leadership practices in an effective teaching and learning environment. They contended that professional learning is fundamental for principals as they participate and spearhead school improvement criteria. These leadership practices tend to reinforce principals' appropriate behaviors and expand the required learning capacity of the school (Walker & Hallinger, 2015). Dutta and Sahney (2016) explained that while focusing on expanding students' accomplishments, professional improvements are imminent as they are part of everyday practices. While focusing on improving the teaching and learning environment to achieve better academic and school outcomes, educational leaders should expand their own leadership knowledge and competencies (Walker & Hallinger, 2015).

Sun and Leithwood (2015) pointed out that educators and learners benefit from participating in processes aimed at addressing and evaluating issues that limit progressive change, which provide opportunities for educational leaders to change their beliefs. Educational leaders also tend to incorporate new worldviews and leadership methods in their practices. Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) noted that it is the principal's responsibility to provide teachers and students with adequate educational materials while creating opportunities to promote effective professional development. From the perspective that leaders should also participate in groups and processes that create and evaluate educational models, principals must also undergo some extent of training as they focus on addressing challenging issues and concerns about their effectiveness (Bush et al., 2019). Additionally, educational leaders must leverage these experiences as a lesson to fuse new ideologies and long-term learning to enhance competencies and abilities.

Educational leaders tend to have close companionships with colleagues, educators, and learners to improve efficiency and productivity. Educators are likely to draw from their experience and exchange new ideas, and they are more likely to stay longer in leadership positions (Bush et al., 2019; Dutta & Sahney, 2016). Quin et al. (2015) explained that as people work together in collaborative environments to enhance their ability to attain common goals, they often strengthen their abilities in different areas. Leithwood et al. (2020) determined that coordinated efforts play an essential role in enhancing individuals' ability to carry out their duties irrespective of their positions.

Fairman and Mackenzie (2015) explained that when educational leaders realize subordinates share their views and are working alongside them, they gain confidence. Walker and Hallinger (2015) supported this idea when they found teachers and learners collectively acquire leadership skills as they enhance their efficacy. Learning is often linked to school improvement and the creation of amiable school environments.

Overall, educational leaders become empowered by enhancing school outcomes. The literature indicates that educational leaders have an excellent opportunity to adopt new curricula and strategies. A strong relationship exists between school, academic success, and professional development (Bush et al., 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020).

Summary of the Literature

The literature indicated that leaders in schools have the responsibility of ensuring the achievement of educational goals, coordinated learning activities, and the evaluation of teaching and learning practices. The need for the development of soft skills in leadership roles has emerged as important for success. The major task for educational leaders is to be able to bring about improvements that lead to the maximization of quality

of learning, academic achievements, and school performance, which is accomplished by providing conditions that maximize student performance and improve school climate. Core elements that promote effective teaching and learning are collaborative leadership and research-based strategies. These strategies promote the improvement of instructional systems and curriculum, resulting in the ability to achieve school and system goals.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to identify the similarities and differences between Tier I and Tier II educational leadership practices in South Georgia schools as measured by data collected using the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) self-survey. Many previous researchers focused mainly on standardizing leadership practices and improving student outcomes in the districts. However, research focusing on the relationship between leadership practices and student achievement in public schools in South Georgia is limited. This chapter includes the research design, instruments, research population, data collection, and analysis procedures.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What similarities and differences, if any, exist in leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?
2. What relationships, if any, exist between the demographic traits of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia (e.g., race, gender, years of leadership experiences, and the population size of the schools) and their leadership practices, as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?

Research Design and Worldview

The research design used in this study was a survey approach to examine self-reported leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in public schools in South Georgia. The researcher gathered data using Kouzes and Posner's (2002) LPI self-survey instrument (see Appendix A) after obtaining consent to use this instrument for this study (see Appendix B). The analysis of the data obtained using LPI self-survey followed to ascertain the similarity and differences among educational leaders in the schools. Ethical considerations in this research encompassed informing all educational leaders participating in the survey about the study and providing confidentiality assurances throughout the study. The data were protected and secured on a flash drive stored in a locked filed cabinet. The participants also had to complete a consent form to participate in the research. The chosen research approach was a quantitative research methodology using numerical data to determine similar and theoretical significant differences between Tier I and Tier II educational leadership practices at South Georgia schools.

Furthermore, the researcher approached this study from a pragmatic worldview. A worldview is a set of beliefs that determine the actions taken before, during, and after the research process (Creswell, 2009; Guba, 1990). Although pragmatism is usually employed within mixed methods research, it can also be used in any research situations that require flexibility, diversity, or unconventionality in research (Creswell, 2009). The researcher discovered that previous studies about leadership practices included a variety of evidence-based methodologies. The researcher's questions focus on leadership practices, demographic backgrounds, and comparisons between different types of leaders. Given the changing nature of educational leadership and the need to base decisions on

works in real-world education, this researcher had to take actions in line with the pragmatic worldview in order to reasonably and sufficiently answer the research questions. For example, the researcher completed a graduate Educational Leadership course using Kouzes and Posner's (2002) LPI self-survey before study implementation. This provided the information needed for survey utilization as it applies to educational leadership. This additional context was necessary for effective implementation, and context is an important consideration for pragmatic paradigms (Creswell, 2009; Guba, 1990). The survey instrument allowed for the collection of practical, empirical data needed to answer the research questions. This survey was also an effective instrument to investigate transformational leadership in quantitative research.

Sample Participants

This study focused on Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia schools. The Georgia learning community was a part of the population of the study. Georgia schools have educational leaders who belong to Tiers I and II. Tier I leaders work in an educational leadership role and are required to have 3 years of work experience as a Tier I (e.g., Assistant Principals, Instructional Coaches, Department Heads, and Counselors) before transitioning to a Tier II leader. Tier I leaders include assistant principals and below, whereas Tier II leaders are principals and district-level personnel. Tier II leaders hold the position of a principal or a higher role (e.g., assistant superintendents or district superintendent). The principal is responsible for managing their administration team in the building (Baker et al., 2010). Principals are required to be certified as Tier II leaders who work as an educational leadership role at the district level. Tier II leaders provide leadership to the principals (Baker et al., 2010). Georgia's

Professional Standards Commission certifies Tier I and Tier II leaders. The main difference between Tier I and Tier II leaders is the position they hold in the school.

The population for this study consisted of 779 educational leaders from three Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) in South Georgia. Within the group, 393 were Tier I and 386 were Tier II educational leaders. The method used in the selection of the sample was a random census of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders located in South Georgia. The census reflected the geographical race, gender, years of experience, and the school population of educational leaders in each South Georgia school district. A census of all 779 leaders ensured a proper representation of leaders best suited for this study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the study was the LPI self-survey, an instrument developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002). The LPI measures the efficacy of leadership practices. The leaders were required to provide answers to 38 questions from the LPI instrument. The invention of the LPI instrument in research led to the formulation of 30 questions that could be used to measure leadership practices. The other eight questions asked in this research consisted of demographics questions.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) described the following five exemplary leadership practices from the 30 questions:

1. Model the Way – "Exemplary leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 14).

2. Inspire a Shared Vision – "Leaders inspire a shared vision. They gaze across the horizons of time, imagining the attractive opportunities that are in store when they and their constituents arrive at a distant destination" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 15).
3. Challenge the Process – "Leaders are pioneers – people who are willing to step out into the unknown" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 17).
4. Enable Others to Act – "Exemplary leaders enable others to act. They foster collaboration and build trust" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 18).
5. Encourage the Heart – "Leaders encourage the heart of their constituents to carry on" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 19).

This study involved an examination of the performance of leaders on the qualities above. The LPI self-survey instrument contained 4-point Likert scale choices for scoring (i.e., never, occasionally, frequently, and always). This information was important in describing the demographic characteristics of the respondents used for this study.

Validity and Reliability

The LPI self-survey leadership model was designed to measure transformational leadership traits (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The LPI self-survey was a useful tool for the analysis of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia schools to identify their leadership practices. This empirical instrument helped measure the similarities, differences, and relationship, if any, between Tier I and Tier II. This tool measures five leadership practices of leaders: (a) encouraging the heart, (b) enabling others to act, (c) challenging the process, (d) modeling the way, and (e) inspiring a shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The instrument has been found to be a valid tool (Kouzes & Posner,

2002), and the researcher documented the features of it to establish face validity. The large sample size counters testing threats because there are enough participants for a representative sample. Between-groups designs in research counter and control for validity issues because they address undue influences in responses. It is not possible for a Tier I leadership position to be a Tier II leadership position since the requirements are well defined. The requirements for leadership practices have also been defined within the instrument. It would be hard to ascertain differences otherwise. If the groups had the same positions during survey administration, there would be more inaccuracies in terms of how well leadership practices are measured. In terms of reliability, this instrument was tested and found to be a reliable tool with internal reliability ranging from .81 to .91 (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Kouzes and Posner (2002) indicated that Cronbach's Alpha of above .80 suggests a very strong level of reliability. The reliability of the LPI has been retested at the reliability level of .90 and above (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Data Collection

The participants received and signed consent forms via email, and data collection occurred through Qualtrics. Qualtrics, a survey platform integrated at Valdosta State University, is implemented to conduct quantitative research via survey management, data gathering, and analysis for academic investigations. Tier I and Tier II educational leaders received questionnaires with 38 questions. The researcher sent an initial email to prospective participants in February 2023 after obtaining authorization to conduct the research from Valdosta State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix C) and then send a second follow-up email. The first email contained information about the nature and extent of the research as well as instructions about how

to complete the survey items. It also included general information related to the confidentiality of participants' responses. Two weeks later, the researcher sent follow-up emails with links to the LPI instrument, similar to the first, to all non-responders as reminders for them to participate.

Data Analysis

The first research question addressed the similarities and differences between Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia School Districts. The second research question focused on the relationship, if any, between the demographic traits of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia (e.g., race, gender, years of leadership experiences, and the population size of the schools) and their leadership practices, as measured by the LPI. I uploaded the data from the survey to SPSS, Version 27.0, to prepare for data analyses. The researcher used descriptives (i.e., frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion) to present the demographic characteristics of participants. Demographics involved information about race, gender, years of leadership experiences, and the population size of the schools. To calculate the scores of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart, the researcher summed up item-responses for each subscale of the LPI. The subscale scores were measured on a continuous, interval scale. Descriptive statistics were used to present the mean, standard deviation, and range values of the LPI subscale scores. Inferential statistics answered the research questions.

Research Question 1: What similarities and differences, if any, exist in leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision,

Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?

The analysis method performed to answer the first research question was an independent samples *t* test to determine whether there were significant differences between Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in terms of the five subscales of LPI. Before conducting the independent samples *t* test, the researcher analyzed the data using Shapiro-Wilk's test to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The researcher intended to conduct independent samples *t* test if the data were normally distributed or convert the data to normal distribution using relevant transformation functions, such as the logarithmic function, in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and then perform the independent samples *t* test. If the data remained non-normal, the researcher aimed to conduct the non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U* test. An independent samples *t* test is appropriate when the focus of the analysis is to compare continuous measures between two independent groups. For this analysis, the independent variable was the classification of participants as Tier I and Tier II educational leaders. This variable was nominal (i.e., categorical) in nature. The dependent variable was the five LPI subscales. The scaled scores were classified as approximately interval for the purposes of this study. This is because a limited or lack of response for the items may not necessarily indicate the absence of a particular practice. A *p* value of less than .05 would indicate that there was a significant difference between the two groups for the LPI subscale. If a significant difference existed, further analysis of the data would help determine which group between Tier I and Tier II had significantly higher LPI subscale scores. The researcher generated descriptive statistics of LPI subscales for Tier I and Tier II educational leaders using SPSS. The researcher also compared the mean scores of the

two groups on the LPI subscale to determine if a group had a significantly higher mean. Research Question 2: What relationship, if any, exist between the demographic traits of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia (e.g., race, gender, years of leadership experiences, and the population size of the schools) and their leadership practices, as measured by the Leadership Practice?

To answer the second research question, the researcher conducted Two-Way ANOVAs to determine if significant relationships and interactions existed with the independent variable, independent demographics, and dependent LPI subscale scores. Demographic characteristics such as gender, race, years of leadership experiences, and population size of the schools were analyzed. The researcher also conducted Tukey's post hoc tests for the ANOVAs to determine significantly different group scores for each LPI subscale. A *p* value of less than .05 was used to indicate significant differences.

Summary

The researcher explained the overall design of the study, the participants, data collection methods, and data analysis strategies. Survey research was conducted in South Georgia with Tier I and Tier II leaders to gather relevant data for the research questions. The research was conducted to (a) determine similarities and differences between the Tier I and Tier II leaders in terms of leadership practice and (b) determine if any relationships existed between demographics and leadership practices in relation to the aforementioned groups. Analysis of the data required the use of *t* tests, ANOVAs, and the Mann-Whitney *U* test, as well as the generation of descriptives for comparative purposes. Chapter IV reports the descriptive and inferential results of these tests.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Multiple analyses of the quantitative data for this study yielded the results to address the research questions. The LPI self-survey was used to measure similarities and differences between Tier I and Tier II educational leadership practices in South Georgia schools. The LPI survey assesses the five best leadership practices represented by Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Each were measured using five behavioral statements on a 4-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Occasionally*, 3 = *Frequently*, and 4 = *Always*). The results of the analyses indicated a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of above 0.7, which confirmed reliability for the instrument. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeding 0.70 is generally considered satisfactory for research applications, whereas a value surpassing 0.80 is commonly favored in rigorous fields such as education (De Vellis, 2003; Nunnally, 1978). A significance level of .05 was used for all the quantitative analyses, with a 95% confidence interval.

Organization of Chapter

This section outlines the data analysis procedures applied in the order they were performed. First, the demographic information of the sample is examined. Tier I and Tier II educational leaders described their age, years of experience, educational level, ethnicity, current South Georgia RESA school employed, student population of school employed, and administrator level of the school employed. Second, the reliability

statistics of the five subscales of the LPI survey for two rounds of screening are discussed, followed by the descriptive statistics. Finally, the results of the research questions are presented. Each hypothesis is analyzed using appropriate statistical tests: independent samples *t* tests, Mann-Whitney *U* tests, and ANOVAs. Before these tests, assumptions are checked to determine the proper test based on the data distribution.

Demographics

Using an electronic LPI self-survey, the researcher collected data from Tier I and Tier II educational leaders. A census, taken by hand, documented 779 educational leaders who completed the survey among South Georgia RESAs. In total, 216 (28%) educational leaders participated. However, the number was reduced to 161 (75% of received responses) because 23 participants were neither Tier I nor Tier II educational leaders and, hence, did not meet the criteria to complete the survey. Also, 14 Tier I and 18 Tier II educational leaders did not fully complete the survey. Of the 161 participants, 60 (37%) were Tier I educational leaders, and 101 (63%) were Tier II educational leaders (see Table 1). Regarding gender, 104 (65%) were female, and 55 (34%) were male, with two unknown gender types (1%).

Among the Tier I educational leaders, 38 (63%) were female, and 21 (35%) were male, with one unknown gender type. Likewise, there were more females (n = 66, 65%) than males (n = 34, 34%) among the Tier II educational leaders, with one unknown gender type (1%). The percentage differences in gender categories between Tier I and Tier II educational were comparatively similar. As indicated by the chi-square test of goodness of fit, there was no statistically significant difference in the distribution of gender categories among the Tier I and Tier II groups (χ^2 (2, N = 161) = 0.182, p = .913).

Table 1

Demographic Data for Educational Leaders Levels

Level	% of Educational Leaders by Level	% of Gender per Level		
		Females	Males	Unknown
Tier I (Assistant Principal)	37%	63%	36%	2%
Tier II (Principal, educational leaders and/or district leaders)	63%	65%	34%	1%

Note. A tabular summary of demographic data per level.

Age Group

Overall, the majority of participants were aged 45 to 54 (n = 62, 51%), followed by those aged 35 to 44 (n = 37, 23%), 55 to 64 (n = 30, 19%), 65 and above (n = 7, 4%), and finally, those aged 25 to 34 constituted the least. The subgroup percentages by age are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Subgroup Percentages by Age

Level	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	≥ 65 years
Tier I	7%	31%	52%	10%	0%
Tier II	1%	18%	51%	23%	7%

Note. Tabular description of subgroup percentages by age.

Educational leaders aged 45 to 54 comprised most Tier I (52%) and Tier II (51%) groups. Those aged 35 to 44 were more in Tier I (31%) than in Tier II (18%). On the other hand, more Tier II (23%) educational leaders were aged 55 to 64 than Tier I (10%). Educational leaders in the youngest aged group, 25 to 34, were more in Tier I (7%) than in Tier II (1%). For the oldest group, ≥ 65 years, all (7%) were Tier II educational leaders, with no Tier I educational leader within this age group. Though the majority of both Tier I (93%) and Tier II (92%) educational leaders' groups were aged 35 to 64

years, many of Tier I educational leaders were aged 35 to 54 years. Tier II educational leaders were aged 45 to 64 years, indicating Tier I educational leaders were younger than Tier II educational leaders.

Years of Experience in Current Role

In total, educational leaders with less than 10 years of experience in their current role (43%) were predominant, followed by those with 10 to 19 years (30%), then those with 20 to 29 years (17%), and lastly, those with 30 years and above (10%). More information about subgroup percentages is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Subgroup Percentages by Years of Experience in Current Role

Level	< 10 years	10 - 19 years	20 - 29 years	≥ 30 years
Tier I	60%	27%	10%	3%
Tier II	33%	32%	21%	14%

Note. Tabular summary of subgroup percentages, sorted by Tier level and experience.

The proportion of Tier I educational leaders (60%) with less than 10 years of experience in their current role was higher than for Tier II educational leaders (33%). Similarly, there were more Tier II educational leaders (67%) than Tier I (40%) with 10 and above years of experience in their current role. This result indicates that most Tier I educational leaders were newer than Tier II.

Education Level

For the entire sample, specialists (53%) were the majority, followed by those with doctorate degrees (37%) and then those with master's degrees (10%). See Table 4 for more information. The results indicated that most educational leaders in both tiers had a specialist degree. A higher percentage of Tier II educational leaders (43%) had a

doctorate than Tier I (27%). On the other hand, a higher rate of Tier I educational leaders (17%) had a master's degree than Tier II (6%).

Table 4

Subgroup Percentages by Education Level

Level	Doctorate	Masters	Specialist
Tier I	27%	17%	56%
Tier II	43%	6%	51%

Note. Table summarizes degree information for each Tier level.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity was categorized into three: White, African American, or Other. The majority of the participants were African American (62%), followed by Whites (37%), then Other (1%). Subgroup percentages by ethnicity are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Subgroup Percentages by Ethnicity

Level	African American	Other	White	Not reported
Tier I	53%	2%	45%	0%
Tier II	66%	1%	32%	1%

Note. Breakdown of ethnicity subgroups within the Tier levels.

African Americans were the majority in both Tier I and Tier II educational leaders' groups, followed by Whites, then Other. Tier II had more African Americans (13% more) than Tier I. Tier I had a higher proportion of Whites (13% more) than Tier II. These data indicate that African Americans dominate the educational leadership teams.

RESA Affiliation

Most participants were affiliated with RESA A, accounting for 70% (n = 112) of the sample. The next largest group was affiliated with RESA B, which represented 18%

(n = 29) of the sample. The smallest group was affiliated with RESA C, which comprised 12% (n = 20) of the sample. Subgroup percentages by RESA are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Subgroup Percentages by RESA Affiliation

Level	A	B	C	Total
Tier I	78%	8%	14%	100%
Tier II	70%	18%	12%	100%

Note. RESA A, B, and C are pseudonyms for the actual RESA names, which are not disclosed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Student Population at Current School

Most of the participants were employed in schools with 550 students and above (56%), followed by those employed in schools with 250 to 399 students (21%) and then those in schools with 400 to 549 students (16%). Participants employed in schools with less than 250 students were the least (5%). Subgroup percentages by student population in the school employed are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Subgroup Percentages by Student Population in School Employed

Leader	Population of Students at Current School				RT
	Below 249	250-399	400-549	550 or higher	
Tier I	5 (8%)	10 (17%)	8 (13%)	37 (62%)	60
Tier II	5 (5%)	24 (24%)	17 (17%)	53 (52%)	99
NR	108 (10%)	106 (10%)	17 (2%)	832 (78%)	1063
CT	118 (10%)	140 (11%)	42 (3%)	922 (75%)	GT = 1222

Note. Those missing information (n = 2) were not included in the calculations for Tables 28 and 29 in Appendix D. CT = Column Total; RT = Row Total; GT = Grand Total; NR = Nonresponders.

The chi-square test of goodness of fit results revealed that the school size distributions were not significantly different from one another ($\chi^2(3, N = 161) = 2.429$, p = .488). Expected values and outcome calculations for the data in Table 7 are presented

in Appendix D. There are a total of nine tables in Appendix D that pertain to data calculations. Expected counts in relation to student population and leader tiers within Table 7 are presented in Table 28. This is further calculated in Table 29, specifically representing the process of how chi-square statistics can be derived from expected and observed counts. It was determined that what happens in the leader groups is related to what happens in the student population. Calculations for Tables 30-32 pertained to whether there was independence between leader groups and the RESA population of leaders when the leader groups were classified as participants and nonparticipants. Events that happen with the leader groups are representative of the RESA population. They are not independent outliers. Calculations for Tables 33-35 pertain to independence between leader group and RESA population when the leader groups are labeled according to tier affiliation. From the calculations, it was observed that what happened with the leaders still showed representation of the RESAs, even when leadership affiliation was based on tiers instead of participation. Leader-to-teacher ratios per RESA are provided in Table 36.

Administrator Grade Level

Based on administrator grade level, 29% of the participants were employed in high schools, 27% in elementary schools, another 27% in middle schools, 16% in district-level schools, and 1% (n = 2) did not specify the administrator grade level. Further information about administrator grade level is on Table 8. According to National Center for Education Statistics (2023) database search results, district-level administrators are likely to serve 550 or higher in student population because they represent multiple counties within a particular RESA. From looking at official district population statistics for the leaders in the study as well as RESA and county statistics from the GaDOE, the

researcher was able to assign district level administrators to the data. District-level administrators serve the needs of multiple schools, and they are labeled as district level administrators within GaDOE data. Most of them (n = 20) served a student population of 550 or higher. One was unspecified, one served a population of 250-399, one served a population of 400-549, and two served a population of below 249.

Table 7

Subgroup Percentages by Administrator Grade Level

Level	District Level	Elementary School	High School	Middle School	Not Reported
Tier I	1 (2%)	14 (23%)	21 (35%)	24 (40%)	0 (0%)
Tier II	24 (24%)	30 (30%)	25 (25%)	20 (20%)	2 (2%)
Total	25 (16%)	44 (27%)	46 (29%)	44 (27%)	2 (1%)

Note. Various subgroup percentages of leaders according to grade level.

Results From Screening

The researcher conducted two rounds of screening to examine the reliability of the survey instrument and check for violations in the assumptions testing for the different statistical tests incorporated in the study. The data included the five leadership practices measured by the LPI self-survey (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart).

Round 1 Screening

The reliability of the five subscales under the LPI survey was examined using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The threshold of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient appeared to support good reliability and internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.70$). All the five subscales representing Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart had good internal consistency; thus, all the items

representing the respective variables were retained for further analysis. The following section contains the details of the reliability tests.

Model the Way

The six items representing Model the Way latent variable revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .78, higher than .70, indicating good internal consistency. The minimum inter-item correlation was .25, greater than .15. A highly broad construct is in the .15 to .20 range, and a very narrow construct would likely be in the .40 to .50 range (Clark & Watson, 1995). An inter-item correlation of .25 has a very broad focus. The maximum inter-item correlation was .45, less than .50, which indicates there are items that do have a narrow focus. The item-total statistics are shown in Appendix E. The deletion of any item will decrease the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be lower than the current value, reducing the scale's reliability. As a result, all six items representing the Model the Way variable were reliable and retained for further analysis.

Inspire a Shared Vision

The six items representing Inspire a Shared Vision latent variable had a Cronbach's alpha of .83, above .70, indicating that the items representing Inspire a Shared Vision have good internal consistency. The minimum inter-item correlation was .24, greater than .15, indicating that the items do have very broad constructs. The maximum inter-item correlation was .68, indicating that some items have a narrow focus to the point of redundancy. From the item-total statistics table, the deletion of any item would decrease the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, reducing the scale's reliability. Hence, all six items representing the Inspire a Shared Vision variable were reliable and retained for further analysis. The item-total statistics are listed in Appendix E.

Challenge the Process

The six items representing the Challenge the Process latent variable had a Cronbach's alpha of .79, above .70, indicating that the items representing the Challenge the Process variable have good internal consistency. The minimum inter-item correlation was .21, greater than .15, indicating there are items with overly broad constructs. The maximum inter-item correlation was .56, greater than .50, indicating that some items have a very narrow focus. Checking the item-total statistics table, deleting any item would decrease the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be lower than the current value, reducing the scale's reliability. Hence, all six items representing the Challenge the Process variable were reliable and retained for further analysis. The item-total statistics are listed in Appendix E.

Enable Others to Act

The six items representing the Enable Others to Act latent variable had a Cronbach's alpha of .72, which is above .70, indicating the items representing Enable Others to Act have good internal consistency. The minimum inter-item correlation was .15, equal to .15, indicating the items represent extremely broad constructs. The maximum inter-item correlation was .46, less than .50, indicating that certain items have a very narrow focus. The item-total statistics table revealed that deleting any item would decrease the Cronbach alpha coefficient to be lower, reducing the scale's reliability. Hence, all six items representing the Enable Others to Act variable were reliable and retained for further analysis. Item-total statistics are provided in Appendix E.

Encourage the Heart

The six items representing the Enable Others to Act latent variable had a Cronbach's alpha of .86, above .70, indicating that the items representing the Encourage the Heart variable have good internal consistency. The minimum inter-item correlation was .30, greater than .15, indicating some items are neither extremely broad nor extremely narrow (i.e., hard to define). The maximum inter-item correlation was .69, greater than .50, indicating that some items have a narrow focus to the point of redundancy. The deletion of any item would decrease the Cronbach alpha coefficient to be lower than the current value, reducing the scale's reliability. Hence, all six items representing the Encourage the Heart variable were reliable and retained for further analysis. The item-total statistics are listed in Appendix E.

Round 2 Screening

Round 2 screening entailed assumptions testing for the statistical tests applied in the study – *t* tests, ANOVAs, and the Mann-Whitney *U* test. Assumptions for parametric tests encompassed checking that the dependent variable is continuous, the independent variables encompassed categorical independence; there was independence of observations; there were no significant outliers; there was a normal distribution of the dependent variable for the independent groups; and there was homogeneity of variances. Non-parametric testing (i.e., the Mann-Whitney *U* Test) did not have these assumptions.

Assumptions of t Test

For the *t* tests and other parametric tests used for this study, there were six key assumptions. All assumptions have to be met in order for the results of the test to be accurately generated and successfully interpreted. The first assumption was a continuous

dependent variable. The dependent variables included the five leadership practices (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart) represented as weighted averages of the score for the respective item measures. The second assumption was independence between tier groups. The independent variable was represented by the educational leaders' level, which constituted Tier I and Tier II educational leaders. The third assumption is independence of observations. This assumption is that participants in each categorical independent group are different, and no participant is in more than one group. The fourth assumption is that there are no significant outliers. Box plots were used to check for outliers.

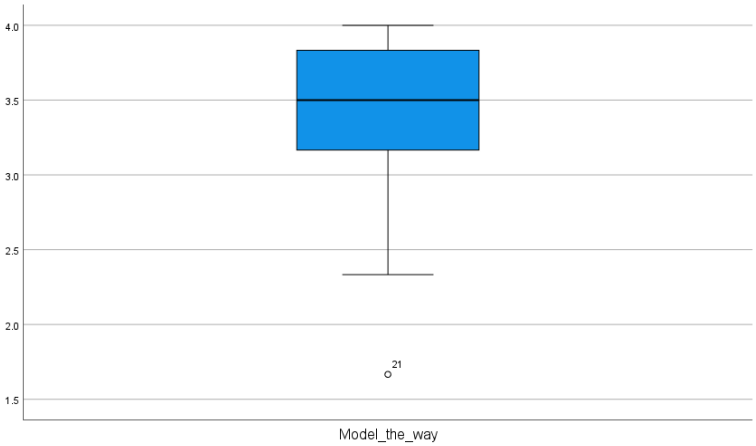
The box plot for the Model the Way leadership practice indicated one outlier, which deviated from the typical pattern of the observations. This was record number 21 in the data set, as shown in Figure 1. This record was deleted to ensure that the assumptions of the independent samples *t* test were satisfied and that this analysis was appropriate. The box plot for the Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice indicated five outliers: record numbers 21, 80, 94, 103, and 123, see Figure 2. These records were identified for deletion to ensure no outliers. Record 21 had already been identified for deletion.

The Challenge the Process leadership practice box plot indicated four outliers: record numbers 18, 21, 103, and 142; see Figure 3. Here, two additional records (18 and 142) were identified for deletion to ensure no outliers. Records 21 and 103 had already been identified for deletion. The Enable Others to Act leadership practice box plot indicated one outlier, record number 21, as shown in Figure 4. Record 21 had already been identified for deletion. The box plot for the Encourage the Heart leadership practice

indicated three outliers: record numbers 21, 52, and 123; see Figure 5. Here, one additional record for deletion was identified, record 52. Records 21 and 123 had already been identified for deletion.

Figure 1

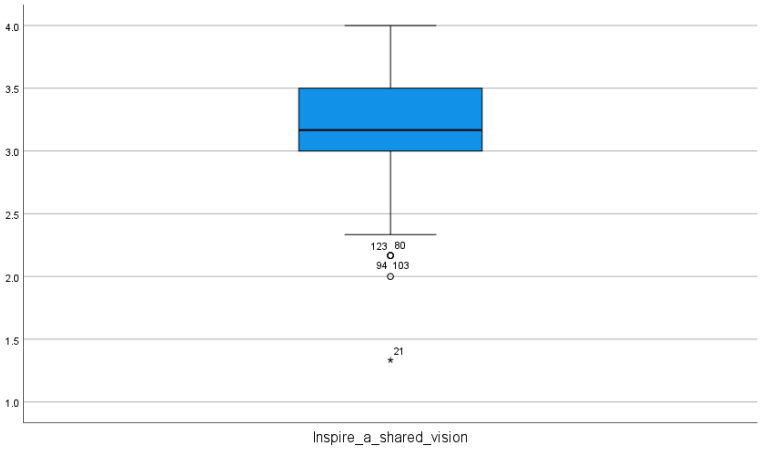
Box Plot Model the Way Leadership Practice



Note. Illustrative plot to determine outliers for Model the Way.

Figure 1

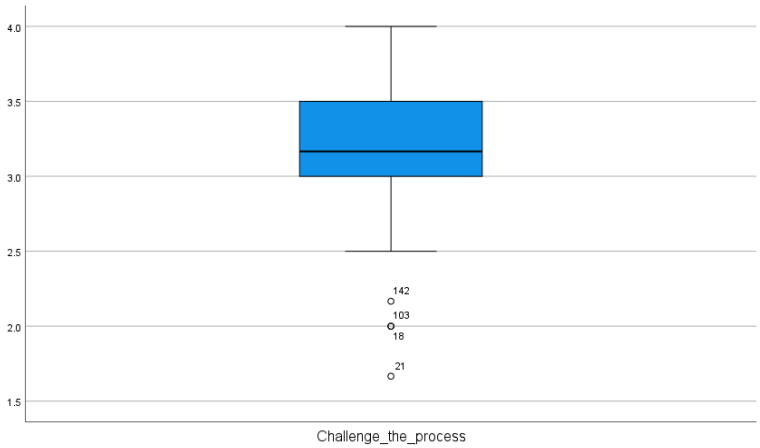
Box Plot Inspire a Shared Vision Leadership Practice



Note. Illustrative plot to determine outliers for Inspire a Shared Vision.

Figure 2

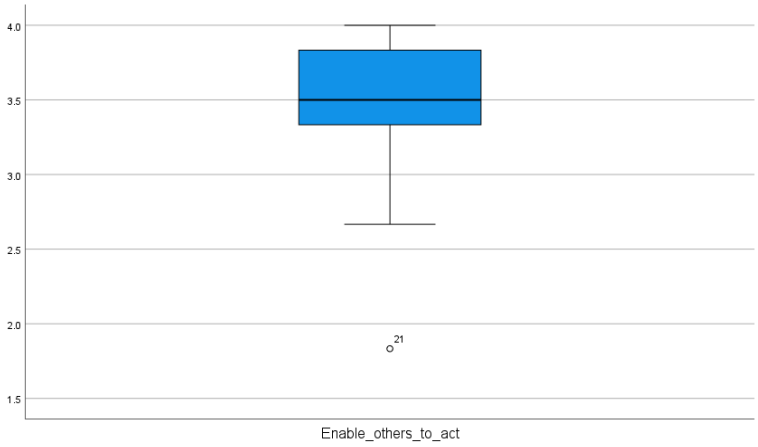
Box Plot Challenge the Process Leadership Practice



Note. Illustrative plot to determine outliers for Challenge the Process.

Figure 4

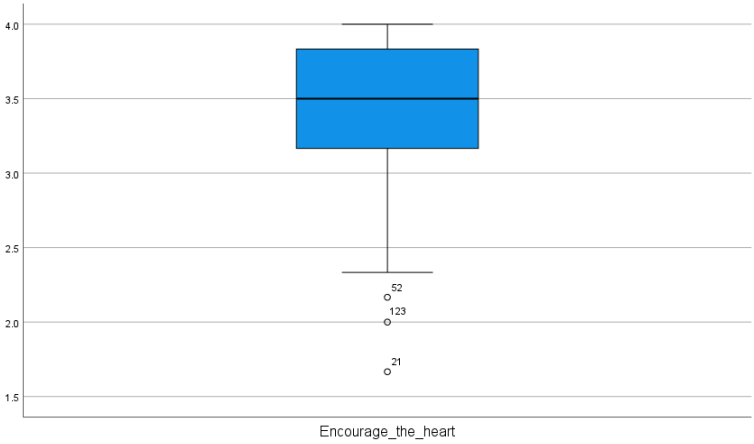
Box Plot Enable Others to Act Leadership Practice



Note. Illustrative plot to determine outliers for Enable Others to Act.

Figure 3

Box Plot Encourage the Heart Leadership Practice



Note. Illustrative plot to determine outliers for Encourage the Heart.

The fifth assumption is that the dependent variable should be normally distributed for each categorical independent group. The researcher conducted a normality check to determine whether to perform a parametric or nonparametric test. Shapiro-Wilk test is mainly used to detect normality, but it is ideal for small samples (n < 50). Other tests, which include skewness, kurtosis, z value of the skewness and kurtosis, histogram, box plot, Q-Q Plot, and P-P Plot, are recommended to test the normality of continuous data (Mishra et al., 2019). The tests used to assess the normality of the data for this study included skewness, kurtosis, and z value of the skewness and kurtosis.

The results of the normality test for the Tier I educational leadership practices (continuous variables) are shown in Table 9. The Model the Way leadership practice variable indicated non-normality (p < .05) with histograms, Shapiro-Wilk, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov, even with a kurtosis (1.07) value > 1, skewness (-.15) within ± 1. The Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice variable showed non-normality with

histograms, Shapiro-Wilk, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($p < .05$), even though skewness (-.19) and kurtosis (-.02) values were within ± 1.

Table 9

Normality Test for Tier I Educational Leadership Practices

Leadership Practice	Skewness			Kurtosis		
	Value	Std Error	*z* value	Value	Std Error	*z* value
Model the Way	-.15	.31	-.48	-1.07	.61	-1.76
Inspire a Shared Vision	-.19	.31	-.60	-.02	.61	-.03
Challenge the Process	.02	.31	.07	.15	.61	.25
Enable Others to Act	-.43	.31	-1.39	-.40	.61	-.66
Encourage the Heart	-.56	.31	-1.82	-.67	.61	-1.11

Note. Summary of normality statistics in relation to Tier I leaders.

The Challenge the Process leadership practice variable indicated non-normality with histograms, Shapiro-Wilk, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($p < .05$), even though skewness (.02) and kurtosis (.15) values were within ± 1. Enable Others to Act leadership practice variable also indicated non-normality with histograms, Shapiro-Wilk, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($p < .05$). This occurred even with skewness (-.43) and kurtosis (-.40) values within ± 1. The Encourage the Heart leadership practice variable indicated non-normality with histograms, Shapiro-Wilk, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov, even with skewness (-.56) and kurtosis (-.67) values within ± 1.

The results of the normality test for the Tier II educational leadership practices (continuous variables) are shown in Table 10. The Model the Way leadership practice variable indicated non-normality with skewness (-1.18) and kurtosis (2.48) values > 1. The *z* values for both skewness (-4.91, $p < .001$) and kurtosis (5.21, $p < .001$) were out of the range for a normal distribution, with an absolute *z* value of ± 3.29, for average-sized samples ($50 \leq n < 300$) (Mishra et al., 2019). Therefore, the Mann-Whitney *U* test was

used to examine the similarities and differences in the Model the Way leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders.

Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice variable indicated non-normality ($p < .05$). This occurred even though skewness (-.57) and kurtosis (.55) values were within ± 1. Therefore, a Mann Whitney *U* test was used to examine the similarities and differences in the Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders. Challenge the Process leadership practice variable indicated non-normality in distribution ($p < .05$). This occurred though skewness (-.58) and kurtosis (.70) values were within ± 1. Therefore, a Mann-Whitney *U* test was used to examine the similarities and differences in the Challenge the Process leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders.

Table 10

Normality Test for Tier II Educational Leadership Practices

Leadership Practice	Skewness			Kurtosis		
	Value	Std Error	*z* value	Value	Std Error	*z* value
Model the Way	-1.18	.24	-4.91*	2.48	.48	5.21*
Inspire a Shared Vision	-.57	.24	-2.36	.55	.48	1.16
Challenge the Process	-.58	.24	-2.41	.70	.48	1.47
Enable Others to Act	-1.24	.24	-5.15*	4.06	.48	8.53*
Encourage the Heart	-.86	.24	-3.58*	.85	.48	1.78

Note. Summary of normality statistics in relation to Tier II leaders.
* Indicates significant deviation from normality at the level .001.

The Enable Others to Act leadership practice variable indicated non-normality with skewness (-1.24) and kurtosis (4.06) values > ± 1, and the *z* values for both skewness (-5.15, $p < .001$) and kurtosis (8.53, $p < .001$) were out of the range for normal distribution, with an absolute *z* value of ± 3.29 for average-sized samples ($50 \leq n < 300$)

(Mishra et al., 2019). Therefore, the Mann-Whitney *U* test was used to examine the similarities and differences in Enable Others to Act leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders.

Encourage the Heart leadership practice variable indicated non-normality ($p < .05$) with histograms, Shapiro-Wilk, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov, as well as with *z* values for skewness (-3.58, $p < .001$) being out of the range for normal distribution, *z*-value ± 3.29. These data were non-normally distributed; therefore, a Mann-Whitney *U* test was used to examine the similarities and differences in the Encourage the Heart leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders.

Finally, the sixth assumption is homogeneity of variances. The researcher used Levene's Test of Equality of Variances to assess the homogeneity of variance in between-subjects assumption. Levene's Test of Equality of Variances is interpreted as follows: A $p < .05$ for Levene's test signifies that the assumption has not been satisfied, requiring either a transformation of the continuous variable to be conducted or nonparametric statistics to be applied. A $p \geq .05$ for Levene's Test confirms that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated, and a parametric test was used to compare the groups in the study (Tier I and Tier II educational leaders). Table 16 contains a summary of the test for homogeneity of variances.

As shown in Table 11 with the exception of the Inspire a Shared Vision variable, which violated ($p < .05$) the homogeneity of variances assumption, Model the Way, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart variables all met this assumption ($p \geq .05$). As a result, the Mann-Whitney *U* test was used to examine the similarities and differences in the Inspire a Shared Vision practices of Tier I and Tier II.

Summary of t-test Assumptions

Before conducting the various hypothesis testing that entailed independent sample *t* test and Mann-Whitney *U* test, Records 18, 21, 52, 80, 94, 103, 123, and 142 were deleted to ensure no significant outliers. Hypothesis testing was conducted on the remaining 153 records. The results of multivariate detailed assumption tests for two-way ANOVAs are included in the following section.

Table 11

Test for Homogeneity of Variances Results

Leadership Practice	Statistic Description	Levene Statistic	*df1*	*df2*	Sig.
Model the Way	Based on Mean	.01	1	159.00	.90
	Based on Median	.05	1	159.00	.83
	Based on Median and with adjusted *df*	.05	1	151.97	.83
	Based on trimmed mean	.03	1	159.00	.87
Inspire a Shared Vision	Based on Mean	4.84	1	159.00	.03*
	Based on Median	4.49	1	159.00	.04*
	Based on Median and with adjusted *df*	4.49	1	153.90	.04*
	Based on trimmed mean	4.94	1	159.00	.03*
Challenge the Process	Based on Mean	1.75	1	159.00	.19
	Based on Median	1.83	1	159.00	.18
	Based on Median and with adjusted *df*	1.83	1	156.99	.18
	Based on trimmed mean	1.74	1	159.00	.19
Enable Others to Act	Based on Mean	.06	1	159.00	.81
	Based on Median	.01	1	159.00	.93
	Based on Median and with adjusted *df*	.01	1	154.66	.93
	Based on trimmed mean	.03	1	159.00	.87
Encourage the Heart	Based on Mean	.17	1	159.00	.68
	Based on Median	.12	1	159.00	.73
	Based on Median and with adjusted *df*	.12	1	158.84	.73
	Based on trimmed mean	.17	1	159.00	.68

Note. Summary of results for homogeneity of variance assumption.
* indicates significant deviation from normality at the level .05.

Assumptions of Two-Way ANOVA

Multivariate Normality

Multivariate statistics, for the purposes of this study, are "methods that examine the simultaneous effect of multiple variables" (Marinković, 2008). Multivariate normality implies that the dependent variable is approximately normally distributed for each independent variable group. Skewness and kurtosis were used to check the normality of the dependent variables. All the skewness and kurtosis values for Tier I educational leaders were within ± 1, and the *z* values for both skewness and kurtosis were within the range for normally distributed z-value ± 3.29, see Table 12 (Mishra et al., 2019).

Table 12

Normality Check - Tier I

	Skewness			Kurtosis		
	Value	Std Error	*z* value	Value	Std Error	*z* value
Model the Way	-0.22	0.31	-0.71	-0.97	0.62	-1.57
Inspire a Shared Vision	0.09	0.31	0.29	-0.39	0.62	-0.64
Challenge the Process	0.22	0.31	0.70	-0.15	0.62	-0.24
Enable Others to Act	-0.48	0.31	-1.52	-0.23	0.62	-0.37
Encourage the Heart	-0.58	0.31	-1.85	-0.54	0.62	-0.87

Note. Skewness and kurtosis statistics for Tier I leaders.

Moreover, all the skewness and kurtosis values for Tier II educational leaders were within ± 1 except for Enable Others to Act (-1.09), which was slightly higher than 1. The *z* values for skewness and kurtosis are within the range for normally distributed z-value ± 3.29, see Table 13 (Mishra et al., 2019).

Multicollinearity

Variance inflation factor (VIF) values were used to check for multicollinearity. The results indicated no multicollinearity in any of the five models, see Table 14; all VIF

values were < 10, and tolerance values were > 0.1 (Schreiber-Gregory & Bader, 2018). This means that no correlations existed between the tier groups. This differs from autocorrelation, which describes correlation in a time series. Autocorrelation was not applicable to this study.

Table 13

Normality Check - Tier II

	Skewness			Kurtosis		
	Value	Std Error	*z* value	Value	Std Error	*z* value
Model the Way	-0.60	0.25	-2.41	-0.35	0.49	-0.72
Inspire a Shared Vision	-0.03	0.25	-0.11	-0.98	0.49	-1.99
Challenge the Process	-0.01	0.25	-0.04	-0.75	0.49	-1.53
Enable Others to Act	-0.20	0.25	-0.79	-1.09	0.49	-2.23
Encourage the Heart	-0.42	0.25	-1.69	-0.67	0.49	-1.36

Note. Skewness and kurtosis statistics for Tier II leaders.

Table 14

Tolerance and VIF Values

DV	Model the Way		Inspire a Shared Vision		Challenge the Process		Enable Others to Act		Encourage the Heart	
	T	VIF	T	VIF	T	VIF	T	VIF	T	VIF
LG	0.908	1.101	0.908	1.101	0.908	1.101	0.908	1.101	0.908	1.101
G	0.996	1.004	0.996	1.004	0.996	1.004	0.996	1.004	0.908	1.004
R	0.874	1.144	0.874	1.144	0.874	1.144	0.874	1.144	0.908	1.144
EY	0.851	1.176	0.851	1.176	0.851	1.176	0.851	1.176	0.908	1.176
PS	0.957	1.045	0.957	1.045	0.957	1.045	0.957	1.045	0.957	1.045

Note. Tabular representation of statistical values to determine multicollinearity. DV = Dependent Variable; Leader Group; G = Gender; R = Race; EY = Experience (Years); PS = Population of Students.

Homoscedasticity

Residual plots were used to assess homoscedasticity. The scatter plots for all models analyzed in the study indicated the presence of homoscedasticity, where the residuals were equally spread. All the assumptions for the two-way ANOVA were met.

Therefore, two-way ANOVAs were used to analyze the effect of demographic variables (i.e., gender, race, years of leadership experience, and population of students) on the relationship between leadership group and leadership practices (Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart).

Summary of Multivariate Analyses

For multivariate ANOVA assumptions, multivariate normality was confirmed through skewness, kurtosis, and Z-values for both Tier I and Tier II data. Multicollinearity was evaluated using VIF values, indicating no multicollinearity. Homoscedasticity assessment through residual plots revealed homogeneity of variances. The sections that follow contain more detailed information about assumptions and findings, sorted according to each research question.

Research Question 1

The following two sections of the chapter contains the findings associated with the research questions. Research Question 1 is as follows:

> **Research Question 1:** What similarities and differences, if any, exist in leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?
>
> **Research Question 1a:** What similarities and differences, if any, exist in the Model the Way leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory?

Research Question 1 required the use of Mann-Whitney *U* tests. They were performed to detect any statistically significant differences in the five leadership practices measured by the LPI survey between Tier I and Tier II educational leaders. Before conducting the independent *t* test, the six assumptions were checked. There were violations associated with specific practice variables, so a non-parametric equivalent to the t test (i.e., Mann-Whitney *U*) was performed.

A Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to examine whether the Model the Way leadership practice of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders differed. This test was conducted because all tests of normality were not passed for the Model the Way variable, thereby violating parametric assumptions in relation to the variable. Log transformations were performed, and the result was still non-normal. The *t-test* required parametric assumptions to hold. The results indicated that there was no significant difference ($p > .05$) between the Model the Way leadership practice of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders ($U = 3{,}331$, $z = 1.06$, $p = .29$), see Table 15. Both leader groups consistently model preferred practices in a similar fashion. The finding means that leaders, regardless of tier group, find ways to model how things are done to others, and they make that a standard part of their practice.

Research Question 1b: What similarities and differences, if any, exist in the Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory?

A Mann-Whitney *U* test examined whether Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders differed**.** There were violations in normality, and a non-parametric test was needed that sufficiently addressed the research question. In Table 16, the results indicated that there was no significant difference ($p >$ .05) between the Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders (U = 2,966, z = -.23, p = .82). In terms of inspiring a shared vision, Tier I and Tier II leaders responded that they practice this with high frequency. Both tiers show that they are role models for those in education, and they both make the effort to do this

Table 15

Mann-Whitney U Test - Model the Way

Test Statistic	Model the Way
Mann-Whitney *U*	3330.50
Wilcoxon *W*	8481.50
Z	1.06
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.29

Note. Summary data indicate results according to the grouping variable of educational leader level.

Table 16

Mann-Whitney U Test - Inspire a Shared Vision

Test Statistic	Model the Way
Mann-Whitney *U*	2965.50
Wilcoxon *W*	8116.50
Z	-.23
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.82

Note. Summary data indicate results according to the grouping variable of educational leader level.

Research Question 1c: What similarities and differences, if any, exist in the Challenge the Process leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational

leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory?

A Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to examine whether Challenge the Process leadership practice of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders differed. There were normality assumptions violated with the variables analyzed; thus, the Mann-Whitney *U* was performed for this question. Log transformations were performed, and the result was still non-normal. As summarized in Table 17, the results indicated the difference was not statistically significant ($p > .05$) between the Challenge the Process leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders ($U = 3250$, $z = .78$, $p = .44$). In other words, the results showed no significant difference in the Challenge the Process leadership practice of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders. Both groups practice this with high frequency.

Table 17

Mann-Whitney U Test – Challenge the Process

Test Statistic	Challenge the Process
Mann-Whitney *U*	3250.00
Wilcoxon *W*	8401.00
Z	.78
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.44

Note. Summary data indicate results according to the grouping variable of educational leader level.

Research Question 1d: What similarities and differences, if any, exist in the Enable Others to Act leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory?

A Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to examine whether the Enable Others to Act practice of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders differed. There were violations in normality in relation to the practice variable, and Mann-Whitney *U* was used to address

this issue. Log transformations did not correct the issue, so a non-parametric equivalent to the *t* test was needed. As shown in Table 18, the results indicated that there was no significant difference ($p > .05$) between the Enable Others to Act leadership practice of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders ($U = 3{,}270$, $z = .85$, $p = .40$). This indicates that Tier I and Tier II leaders both empower others to make decisions and act.

Table 18

Mann-Whitney U Test - Enable Others to Act

Test Statistic	Enable Others to Act
Mann-Whitney *U*	3269.50
Wilcoxon *W*	8420.50
z	.85
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.40

Note. Results of non-parametric test for Enable Others to Act.

Research Question 1e: What similarities and differences, if any, exist in the Encourage the Heart leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory?

A non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to examine whether Encourage the Heart leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders differed. Normality did not hold for the variables tested, even with log transformations; therefore, Mann-Whitney *U* was utilized instead of *t* test. The results indicated that the difference was not statistically significant ($p > .05$) between the Encourage the Heart leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders ($U = 3{,}036$, $z = .02$, $p = .98$), see Table 19. Interpretation of Finding 1.5 is that Tier I and Tier II leaders recognize and celebrate contributions.

Table 19

Mann-Whitney U Test – Encourage the Heart

Test Statistic	Encourage the Heart
Mann-Whitney *U*	3036.00
Wilcoxon *W*	8187.00
z	.02
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.98

Note. Results of non-parametric test for Encourage the Heart.

Summary of Research Question 1 Findings

Overall, the results of examining the different parts of the first research question indicated that none of the differences in the overall scores between Tier I and Tier II educational leaders had statistical significance. Hence, the answer to Research Question 1 is that no statistically significant difference was identified in the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders at South Georgia schools as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory.

Research Question 2

Findings for Research Question 2 are presented in this section. Research Question 2 is as follows:

> **Research Question 2:** What relationship, if any, exists between the demographic traits of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia (e.g., gender, race, years of leadership experiences, and the population size of the schools) and their leadership practices, as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory survey (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?

Two-way ANOVA was performed to examine the relationship between demographics and the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders.

Before conducting the two-way ANOVA, assumptions were checked. The results confirmed that the data met all assumptions, see descriptions earlier in this chapter. The assumptions included multivariate normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. The results are provided in the following sections.

Research Question 2a: What relationship, if any, exists between the gender and the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia, as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory survey (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of gender on the relationship between leadership groups (Tier I and Tier II) and the five leadership practices. Model summary results indicated that gender and leadership group explained 5.4% of the total variation in Model the Way leadership practice; 1.4% of the total variation in Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice; 3.0% of the total variation in Challenge the Process leadership practice; 4.1% of the total variation in Enable Others to Act leadership practice, and 6.5% of the total variation in Encourage the Heart leadership practice for the educational leaders. The summary is shown in Table 20.

Table 20

Model Summary – Gender and Leadership Group on Leadership Practices

Model	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Model the Way	.054	.023
Inspire a Shared Vision	.014	.018
Challenge the Process	.030	.002
Enable Others to Act	.041	.010
Encourage the Heart	.065	.035

Note. Correlational data for gender, leadership group, and leadership practices.
a. Independent Variables: Leadership Group, Gender.

b. Dependent Variables: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, Encourage the Heart.

The results of the test of between-subjects effects for the interaction between gender and leadership group are shown in Table 21. There were no statistically significant interaction effects for all the five models: Model the Way – F (1, 155) = .174, p = .677; Inspire a Shared Vision – F (1, 155) = .002, p = .961; Challenge the Process – F (1, 155) = .038, p = .846; Enable Others to Act – F (1, 155) = .372, p = .543; and Encourage the Heart – F (1, 155) = 1.077, p = .301.

There was no statistically significant interaction between the effects of gender and leadership group on all five leadership practices. The fact that there were no significant interactions between gender and leadership group, i.e., Tier I vs. Tier II, in the findings may be attributable to the challenging traditional notions of leadership being a masculine trait. Also, collaborative, inclusive, and emotionally intelligent styles, typically associated with feminine traits, are gaining recognition as equally effective.

Table 21

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Leadership Group * Gender	Model the Way	.029	1	.029	.174	.677
	Inspire a Shared Vision	.001	1	.001	.002	.961
	Challenge the Process	.008	1	.008	.038	.846
	Enable Others to Act	.045	1	.045	.372	.543
	Encourage the Heart	.259	1	.259	1.077	.301

Note. Interaction testing for leadership group and gender.

Research Question 2b: What relationship, if any, exists between the race and the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia, as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory survey (i.e., Model the Way,

Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of race on the relationship between leadership groups (Tier I and Tier II) and the five leadership practices. The results indicated that race and leadership group explained 7.7% of the total variation in Model the Way leadership practice, 8.4% of the total variation in Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice, 8.5% of the total variation in Challenge the Process leadership practice, 5.6% of the total variation in Enable Others to Act leadership practice, and 5.7% of the total variation in Encourage the Heart leadership practice for the educational leaders. The summary is shown in Table 22.

The results of the test of between-subjects effects for the interaction between race and leadership group are shown in Table 23. There were no statistically significant interaction effects for all the five models: Model the Way – F (2, 154) = 1.59, p = .207. Inspire a Shared Vision – F (2, 154) = .689, p = .504; Challenge the Process – F (2, 154) = 1.616, p = .202; Enable Others to Act – F (2, 154) = .728, p = .484; and Encourage the Heart – F (2, 154) = 1.557, p = .574.

Table 22

Model Summary – Race and Leadership Group on Leadership Practices

Model	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Model the Way	.077	.041
Inspire a Shared Vision	.084	.048
Challenge the Process	.085	.050
Enable Others to Act	.056	.020
Encourage the Heart	.057	.020

Note. Correlational data for race, leadership group, and leadership practices.
a. Independent Variables: Leadership Group, Race
b. Dependent Variables: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, Encourage the Heart.

Table 23

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Leadership Group * Race	Model the Way	.515	2	.258	1.590	.207
	Inspire a Shared Vision	.312	2	.156	.689	.504
	Challenge the Process	.620	2	.310	1.616	.202
	Enable Others to Act	.175	2	.087	.728	.484
	Encourage the Heart	.273	2	.136	1.557	.574

Note. Interaction testing for leadership group and race.

There were no statistically significant interactions between the effects of race and leadership group on all the five leadership practices. The fact that there were no significant interactions between the effects of race and leadership group, i.e., Tier I vs. Tier II, in the findings, may be attributable to the culture of an organization influencing a leadership style that is more open to diversity, promoting leadership behaviors that are not traditionally associated with any particular racial group. As a result, this influence of organizational culture could explain why the race of the educational leaders (Tier I and Tier II) did not impact their leadership practices.

Research Question 2c: What relationship, if any, exists between the years of experience and the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia, as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory survey (i.e., Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of years of experience on the relationship between leadership groups (Tier I and Tier II) and the five leadership practices. The results indicated that years of experience and leadership group explained

4.1% of the total variation in Model the Way leadership practice, 6.8% of the total variation in Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice, 4.7% of the total variation in Challenge the Process leadership practice, 5.0% of the total variation in Enable Others to Act leadership practice, and 4.1% of the total variation in Encourage the Heart leadership practice for the educational leaders. The summary is shown in Table 24.

The results of the test of between-subjects effects for the interaction between years of experience and leadership group are shown in Table 25. There were no statistically significant interaction effects for all the five models; Model the Way – F (3, 153) = .415, p = .742; Inspire a Shared Vision – F (3, 153) = .239, p = .869; Challenge the Process – F (3, 153) = .367, p = .777; Enable Others to Act – F (3, 153) = .871, p = .137; and Encourage the Heart – F (3, 153) = .923, p = .431.

Table 24

Model Summary – Years of Experience and Leadership Group on Leadership Practices

Model	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Model the Way	.041	.003
Inspire a Shared Vision	.068	.026
Challenge the Process	.047	.004
Enable Others to Act	.050	.007
Encourage the Heart	.041	.003

Note. Correlational data for years of experience, leadership group, and leadership practices.
a. Independent Variables: Leadership Group. Years of experience
b. Dependent Variables: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, Encourage the Heart.

There were no statistically significant interactions between the effects of years of experience and leadership group on all five leadership practices. The fact that there were no significant interactions between years of experience and leadership group, i.e., Tier I vs. Tier II, in the findings may be attributable to the fact that the effectiveness of

leadership practices was not uniformly influenced by years of experience. Certain practices, such as Modeling the Way and Inspire a Shared Vision, may hinge more heavily on personal attributes and communication prowess than on accumulated experience. Conversely, other practices, such as challenging the process and enabling others to act, may necessitate a deeper understanding of the organizational context and its cultural nuances, which often come with extended experience. In this study, the majority of the participants in both groups (Tier I and Tier II) had below 10 years of experience, implying that they had not acquired a deeper understanding of the organizational context and its cultural nuances, which explains why the years of experience for Tier I and Tier II educational leaders did not have an impact on their leadership practices.

Table 25

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Leadership Group * Years of experience	Model the Way	.211	3	.070	.415	.742
	Inspire a Shared Vision	.167	3	.056	.239	.869
	Challenge the Process	.221	3	.074	.367	.777
	Enable Others to Act	.683	3	.228	.871	.137
	Encourage the Heart	.693	3	.231	.923	.431

Note. Interaction testing for leadership group and years of experience.

Research Question 2d: What relationship, if any, exists between the population of students and the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia, as measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory survey (i.e., Model the Way, inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart)?

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of the current school's

student population on the relationship between the leadership group (Tier I and Tier II) and the five leadership practices. The results showed that the population of students and leadership group explained 6.7% of the total variation in Model the Way leadership practice, 10.5% of the total variation in Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice, 4.4% of the total variation in Challenge the Process leadership practice, 6.1% of the total variation in Enable Others to Act leadership practice, and 2.2% of the total variation in Encourage the Heart leadership practice for the educational leaders. The summary is shown in Table 26.

The results of a test of between-subjects effects for the interaction between the population of students and the leadership group are shown in Table 27. There were no statistically significant interaction effects for all the five models: Model the Way – F (3, 152) = 1.094, p = .353; Inspire a Shared Vision – F (3, 152) = 1.99, p = .118; Challenge the Process – F (3, 152) = .43, p = .732; Enable Others to Act – F (3, 152) = 1.894, p = .133; and Encourage the Heart – F (3, 152) = .658, p = .579.

Table 26

Model Summary – Population of Students and Leadership Group on Leadership Practices

Model	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Model the Way	.067	.018
Inspire a Shared Vision	.105	.057
Challenge the Process	.044	.006
Enable Others to Act	.061	.011
Encourage the Heart	.022	.030

Note. Correlational data for population of students, leadership group, and leadership practices.
a. Independent Variables: Leadership Group, Population of students
b. Dependent Variables: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, Encourage the Heart.

Table 27

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Leadership Group * Population of students	Model the Way	0.545	3	.182	1.094	.353
	Inspire a Shared Vision	1.341	3	.447	1.99	.118
	Challenge the Process	0.262	3	.087	0.43	.732
	Enable Others to Act	0.688	3	.229	1.894	.133
	Encourage the Heart	0.507	3	.169	0.658	.579

Note. Interaction testing for leadership group and population of students.

There were no statistically significant interactions between the effects of the student population and the leadership group on all five leadership practices. The fact that there was no significant interaction between the population of the students and the leadership group, i.e., Tier I vs. Tier II, may be attributable to the adaptability of leadership practices to accommodate different group sizes. Effective leaders can tailor their leadership approach to suit the specific needs and dynamics of the group, regardless of size. This adaptability allows leaders to effectively apply leadership practices in both large and small groups, which explains why the student population size does not impact the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders.

Summary of Research Question 2 Findings

The results of the questions and subquestions in Research Question 2 indicate no significant relationships between the demographics and practices. No significant interactions were found between the demographics or the Tiers. Hence, there were no statistically significant relationships within the data ($p > .05$).

Chapter V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Leadership practices impact educational outcomes as leaders shape the school environment and influence teaching and learning (Naim & Lenka, 2018). For instance, transactional leadership, found in some educational settings, is characterized by resistance to change, hindering progress in an ever-evolving world (Howard & Knight, 2022). Leadership styles influence the school climate, which affects academic progress, student engagement, and employee satisfaction (Chen et al., 2022). Considering leadership's integral role in developing successful learning environments, educational leaders must reevaluate their practices to enhance student academic performance (Chen et al., 2022). Embracing innovative approaches and fostering teacher motivation is crucial for navigating the complexities of contemporary education and ensuring positive outcomes for educators and students (Ramkissoon et al., 2013).

This research aimed to identify the similarities and differences in Tier I and Tier II between educational leadership practices in South Georgia as measured by the LPI self-survey, as well as uncover relationships among these practices with various demographic traits such as gender, race, and years of experience. The selected design for this research was a survey methodology to collect data from a sample of leaders using an LPI self-survey. The data were subjected to a series of statistical tests based on the central assumption that leadership effectiveness is measured in terms of behaviors and skills. The findings may have important implications for educational outcomes.

The results warranted attention for several reasons. A two-way ANOVA analysis confirmed the non-significant effect of gender on leadership practices. It thus supported modern thinking that leadership transcends traditional gendered stereotypes and follows an inclusive, transformative paradigm. Equally noteworthy was the lack of substantial interaction between race and leadership practices. This stress on the non-prejudicial nature of leadership practices, regardless of color and race, further strengthens this argument concerning universality and neutrality in effective leadership across racial boundaries within an educational setting. In addition, years of leadership did not have a statistically significant effect on the practices associated with leadership, which implies that there is no direct link between temporal experience and the quality and substance of competencies.

The research systematically demonstrates that educational leadership is not determined by ethnic background but rather by practical application. Previously, it was believed that leadership practices such as “Model the Way,” “Inspire a Shared Vision,” “Challenge the Process,” and “Enable Others to Act” might vary depending on individual and institutional factors. However, it is now recognized that these practices are consistently applied, indicating a shared understanding of effective leadership among educational leaders. The ramifications of these disclosures are numerous and do not confine themselves to the scope of this study. Still, they may affect a broader spectrum, affecting other areas such as education policies or leadership development programs. The results generate the need to reconsider current leadership training modalities, increasing emphasis on the universal application of leadership practices rather than adjustment based on demographic predictors.

Literature Review

Leadership in education is widely acknowledged as the force that drives individuals and organizations to achieve common goals (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The ripple effect theory informed the conceptual framework for evaluating leadership practices in South Georgia's public schools in this study. Aligned with standards set by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, this theory is used to evaluate leadership effectiveness through outcomes such as performance, school environment, and organizational management (Perry et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022).

Kouzes and Posner's (2002) exemplary leadership practices offer a framework for effective leadership. Model the Way – “Exemplary leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 14). The concept of "modeling the way" is apparent in Collins' (2001) depiction of leaders. These leaders prioritize aligning their actions with their words to establish credibility, as outlined by Kouzes and Posner (2011). They possess ambition and determination yet remain humble. Their focus is on achieving exceptional results, while also distributing credit to others and accepting responsibility for any shortcomings. "Inspire a Shared Vision" emphasizes the need for leaders to articulate a compelling vision, and it is observed in transformational leaders who passionately believe in making a difference (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). "Challenge the Process" encourages leaders to be innovative, recognize opportunities, and foster a culture of risk-taking and reflection. "Enable Others to Act" focuses on collaboration and empowering individuals for effective production (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Lastly,

"Encourage the Heart" highlights leaders uplifting their organization through empathy, care, and recognition of achievements (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Both theoretical standpoints synergize in comprehending and dissecting leadership practices within educational environments. The ripple effect theory offers a comprehensive perspective on how leadership practices shape organizational results, while Kouzes and Posner's (2002, 2017) framework furnishes detailed directives for effective leadership conduct. Through the integration of these viewpoints, this research endeavors to pinpoint and assess the particular leadership practices implemented by educational leaders in South Georgia schools, utilizing the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) survey. This inclusive methodology facilitates an exploration of the correlation between leadership practices, school climate, and student accomplishments, thereby enriching the existing discourse on effective educational leadership and its influence on academic attainment.

Educational leadership theories shed light on leadership practices in the educational context. Transformational leadership inspires a shared vision, challenges the process, enables others to act, and encourages the heart, fostering positive school outcomes (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Responsible leadership extends leadership duties to societal concerns, promoting positive changes beyond organizational boundaries (Martinez et al., 2020). Servant leadership emphasizes leading by example, directing best practices, and prioritizing others' needs, with evidence suggesting its effectiveness in schools (Boles, 1992). Distributed leadership involves a collaborative approach, empowering teachers and promoting innovation to enhance educational outcomes.

These leadership theories imply that effective leaders in education should collaborate with stakeholders, adopt transformative goals, and go beyond traditional administrative roles (Anderson, 2017). Bolman and Deal (2017) advocated for a normative framework grounded in leadership ideals that support the success of all stakeholders in the educational ecosystem. Although the importance of effective leadership in schools is evident, there is ongoing debate about the most favorable leadership styles for achieving positive educational outcomes.

Zappulla (2013b) emphasized the importance of leadership styles that foster positive relationships with academic leaders, highlighting the significance of mentorship programs. This mentorship not only strengthens leader-student relationships but also contributes to improved student performance and development (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017). In the global context, educational leadership is experiencing a shift from traditional hierarchical structures to more modern collaborative styles. This restructuring aims to simplify decision-making processes, increase effectiveness, and enhance communication between leaders and employees (Wilkinson, 2017). The importance of leaders thriving in collaborative and cross-functional environments is underscored, suggesting that reduced school structures lead to faster decision-making and improved employee morale.

Adopting technological advancements is crucial for educational leaders to remain relevant globally (Giordano, 2015). The changing landscape necessitates continuous education for leaders to acquire new skills and ensure students are equipped with relevant competencies for the global job market. A growing emphasis on gender equality in

educational leadership is noted, with increased representation of women contributing to improved economic performance and organizational reputation (Olin, 2016).

Soft skills have gained prominence in leadership practices, with a shift toward managing diverse members and prioritizing emotional intelligence, creativity, and adaptability. The adoption of a blended leadership approach, incorporating remote work and artificial intelligence, is becoming more commonplace to improve customer care and enhance stakeholder relationships (Giordano, 2015). This transformation in leadership practices stresses the importance of both human-centric skills and technological acumen in achieving organizational success, marking a pivotal shift in how leaders engage with their teams and stakeholders.

Flexibility in working conditions, such as flextime, is identified as a crucial element in effective leadership, providing benefits like improved work-life balance and increased productivity (Sharafizad et al., 2011). Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are playing a pivotal role in task management, academic content presentation, and personalized learning, contributing to improved leadership practices. These advancements in workplace flexibility and AI integration are reshaping leadership strategies, leading to more adaptive and efficient organizational environments.

Leadership preparation programs are encouraged to focus on developing essential soft skills, fostering effective communication, interpersonal relations, teamwork, motivation, and decision-making skills (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). Flexible working conditions and AI integration are emphasized as components reinforcing leadership effectiveness (Chiu & Chai, 2020; Courtney, 2018). In terms of instructional leadership, the current trend emphasizes the importance of leaders guiding teachers and students

toward academic goals. Collaborative teaching is seen as beneficial for achieving educational objectives, with a focus on building school cultures that encourage collaborative functioning. Leadership practices that support talent management, evidence-based decision-making, and shared fundamental practices are highlighted for effective leadership (Denhardt & Gilman, 2016).

Optimal use of shared resources within schools and communities is deemed essential for improving organizational efficiency and academic performance. Educational leaders are expected to engage stakeholders in crafting budget plans, monitoring budgets, ensuring positive climates, and providing leadership programs that stimulate academic growth (Giordano, 2015). Effective leadership practices, as identified by Zappulla (2013b), include acting with integrity, demonstrating competence, motivating and supporting others, and speaking positively about the organization's vision. These practices shape internal organizational cultures, norms, and practices, influencing the success of public schools in Georgia.

Hill (2017) emphasized the importance of flexibility among educational leaders in Georgia, highlighting the need for adaptive changes in the best interest of school leadership teams. Brooks and Normore (2015) and Norberg (2017) suggested that leaders should embrace different leadership styles, tailored to the needs of learners while maintaining a focus on improving educational outcomes and instilling moral values.

Zoul and Bell (2019) identified servant leadership as a prevailing practice in Georgia, emphasizing collaboration between school management and the broader school system. Hill (2017) also pointed to the adoption of a distributed leadership style, promoting change and improvement by creating opportunities for others to lead. Various

researchers have considered this approach effective in bringing stakeholders together (Brooks & Normore, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Poister et al., 2015; Zoul & Bell, 2019).

Anderson and Reynolds (2015) observed that some educational leaders in Georgia struggle with change, often resorting to traditional transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership, advocated by Buckman et al. (2017) and Zoul and Bell. (2019), is seen as a more effective approach in the 21st century, providing leaders with increased authority and a focus on motivating teachers and learners toward a better future. O'Connor et al. (2019) identified a key issue faced by educational leaders in Georgia—transforming leadership knowledge and skills into best practices. The need for creative strategies to address emerging challenges was underscored, highlighting the increased authority and responsibilities of educational leaders (O'Connor et al., 2019). A national survey indicated improvements in Georgia's graduation rates, attributed to inclusive relationships and an improved school climate (Stewart-Banks et al., 2015). Stewart-Banks et al. (2015) emphasized the role of fair resource distribution in promoting academic performance. Despite progress, the challenges of addressing issues related to poverty and the need for additional funds for low-income students were noted.

Schleicher (2012) highlighted the shift toward servant leadership practices, emphasizing collaboration in managing the school population. The importance of measuring leadership effectiveness based on quality rather than quantitative metrics was emphasized (Schleicher, 2012). Researchers have demonstrated a positive correlation between principal effectiveness, school culture, and student achievement (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Concerns were raised regarding administrative shortcomings in Georgia's

public schools, with principals demonstrating poor human relations and engagement skills (Tolman et al., 2019). The survey by Johnson (2016) revealed that although university educational leadership programs improved overall preparation, there were gaps in addressing specific skills such as managing budgets and data analysis. Williams (2017) highlighted the challenges of implementing virtual education in rural Georgia, emphasizing the need for innovative leadership practices. Educational leaders in Georgia were criticized for historical characteristics such as arrogance and inattentiveness, hindering student and teacher success.

Principals with distributive leadership skills were found to, directly and indirectly, promote educational systems in the United States. Leadership practices, including strategic resource allocation and data-driven decision-making, were identified as contributors to improved school performance (Poister et al., 2015). Curriculum enhancements focusing on emotional and social learning were suggested as valuable for preparing students for leadership roles (Brandon et al., 2018; Hackmann & Malin, 2019). Effective professional development was highlighted as crucial for enhancing leadership skills and expanding the learning capacity of schools (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015). Collaborations among educators and learners were emphasized as strategies for strengthening abilities and fostering successful school improvement (Leithwood et al., 2020; Quin et al., 2015). The major task for educational leaders remains to be able to bring about improvements that lead to the maximization of quality of learning, academic achievements, and school performance. This goal is accomplished by providing conditions that maximize student performance and improve school climate. Core elements that promote effective teaching and learning are collaborative leadership

and the use of research-based strategies to promote the improvement of instructional systems and curriculum, resulting in the ability to achieve school and system goals.

Methodology

The researcher analyzed the LPI self-survey responses of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia schools. The research method was quantitative, based on the LPI instrument developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002). The research questions focused on identifying similarities and differences between Tier I and Tier II leadership practices and exploring relationships between demographic traits and leadership practices.

The researcher included 779 educational leaders from three RESAs in South Georgia, comprising 393 Tier I and 386 Tier II leaders. The participants, certified by Georgia's Professional Standards Commission, were drawn from assistant principals, instructional coaches, department heads, counselors (Tier I), as well as principals, assistant superintendents, or district superintendents (Tier II). The sample represented a census of leaders in South Georgia schools, ensuring a comprehensive examination.

The researcher employed LPI by Kouzes and Posner (2002), consisting of 38 questions, including 30 questions measuring leadership practices and eight demographic questions. The five exemplary leadership practices measured were Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The LPI used a 10-point Likert scale for responses, ensuring detailed insights into leadership qualities. The LPI demonstrated validity and reliability, measuring transformational leadership traits. Internal reliability ranged from .81 to .91, surpassing

the .80 threshold considered very strong. The instrument has been retested, affirming its reliability level of .90 and above (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The researcher collected data using Qualtrics, with participants receiving consent forms via email. The researcher administered LPI self-survey, with 38 questions, and assured the participants of confidentiality. Follow-up emails were sent to the participants. Descriptive statistics presented demographic characteristics, and the LPI subscale scores were calculated. Inferential statistics, such as independent samples *t* tests and ANOVA, were employed in data analysis.

To answer the first research question, Mann-Whitney *U* tests were conducted to determine significant differences between Tier I and Tier II leaders on the five LPI subscales. Data normality was assessed using Shapiro-Wilk's test. A *p* value of less than .05 indicated significant differences. Descriptive statistics helped identify groups' LPI subscale scores. The majority of the results indicated non-significance ($p > .05$).

To answer the second research question, two-way ANOVAs were applied for gender, race, years of leadership experience, and school population to determine if significant relationships existed with leadership practices. It was also important to determine if significant interactions occurred between the demographic variables and leadership. The majority of the results indicated non-significance ($p > .05$).

Results

The LPI self-survey was utilized to measure similarities and differences in leadership practices. The survey assessed five key leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the

Heart. Reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeding 0.7, indicating satisfactory reliability for research applications in education.

Data were collected from 216 educational leaders in South Georgia RESA schools, with 161 participants meeting the criteria. Among them, 60 (37%) were Tier I leaders (Assistant Principals), and 101 (63%) were Tier II leaders (Principals, educational leaders, and district leaders). The majority of participants were female (65%), with no statistically significant gender distribution differences between Tier I and Tier II groups. The majority of participants (51%) were aged 45–54 years. Tier I leaders skewed younger, with 52% aged 45–54 years, while Tier II leaders were evenly distributed across age groups. A notable difference emerged in the years of experience in the current role. Tier I leaders had a higher proportion (60%) with less than 10 years of experience, indicating they were newer to their roles compared to Tier II leaders.

Specialists comprised the majority (53%) of the sample, with Tier I leaders having a higher percentage of master's holders and Tier II leaders having more doctorate holders. African Americans dominated both Tier I and Tier II groups, with Tier II having a higher proportion. Tier I had a higher percentage of White leaders. The majority of participants were affiliated with RESA A (70%), followed by RESA B (18%) and RESA C (12%). Both Tier I and Tier II groups indicate similar affiliation patterns. Most participants worked in schools with 550 students and above (56%). No significant differences in the distribution of school sizes were observed between Tier I and Tier II leaders. Participants were employed in high schools (29%), elementary schools (27%), middle schools (27%), and district-level roles (16%). Tier I leaders were more prevalent in middle and high schools, whereas Tier II leaders were evenly distributed.

Results From Screening

Two rounds of screening ensured the reliability of the LPI survey instrument and helped check the assumptions for statistical tests. For Round 1 screening, reliability tests for the five LPI subscales confirmed good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.7 for all subscales. Inter-item correlations and item-total statistics supported the retention of all items for further analysis as follows:

- Model the way: The subscale exhibited good reliability ($\alpha = 0.78$), with acceptable inter-item correlations.
- Inspire a shared vision: This subscale demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = 0.83$), with some items showing a narrow focus in inter-item correlations.
- Challenge the process: Reliability was established ($\alpha = 0.79$), with acceptable inter-item correlations.
- Enable others to act: This subscale exhibited good reliability ($\alpha = 0.72$), with acceptable inter-item correlations.
- Encourage the heart: Reliability was high ($\alpha = 0.86$), with acceptable inter-item correlations.

For Round 2 screening, the researcher focused on assumptions testing for the statistical tests applied. Parametric assumptions comprised of ensuring a continuous dependent variable, categorically independent groups, independence of observations, no significant outliers, normal distribution of the dependent variable for each categorical group, and homogeneity of variances. The dependent variables, representing leadership practices, were deemed continuous (i.e., approximately interval) and were represented as weighted averages of respective item measures. The independent variable, educational

leaders' level, was categorized into Tier I and Tier II. Participants in each categorical group were distinct, with no participant belonging to more than one group. Outliers were identified through box plots. Normality checks involved skewness, kurtosis, and *z* values. Out of 153 records, normality was confirmed for most variables. Levene's Test of Equality of Variances was applied to assess homogeneity, with the exception of Inspire a Shared Vision. The assumption was violated, necessitating the use of Mann-Whitney *U* test. Eight records were deleted initially to eliminate outliers, and hypothesis testing was conducted on the remaining 153 records.

Research Questions

Research Question 1a on Model the Way Leadership Practice

A Mann-Whitney *U* test found no significant difference ($p > .05$) in Model the Way leadership practice between Tier I and Tier II leaders. Participants' responses showed that both tiers set high standards, led by example, and modeled effective teaching practices with high frequency.

Research Question 1b on Inspire a Shared Vision Leadership Practice

A Mann-Whitney *U* test revealed no significant difference ($p > .05$) in the Inspire a Shared Vision leadership practice. Participants' responses showed that both tiers created a vision for the future, motivated others, and empowered contributions with high frequency.

Research Question 1c on Challenge the Process Leadership Practice

A Mann-Whitney *U* test revealed no significant difference ($p > .05$) in Challenge the Process leadership practice. Participants' responses showed that both tiers embraced

change, encouraged innovation, and fostered a supportive environment for new ideas with high frequency.

Research Question 1d on Enable Others to Act Leadership Practice

A Mann-Whitney *U* test indicated no significant difference ($p > .05$) in Enable Others to Act leadership practice. Participants' responses showed that both Tier I and Tier II leaders empowered others to make decisions, delegated authority, and contributed to the school's success with high frequency.

Research Question 1e: Encourage the Heart Leadership Practice

A Mann-Whitney *U* test found no significant difference ($p > .05$) in Encourage the Heart leadership practice. Participants' responses showed that both tiers recognized contributions, celebrated contributions, fostered motivation, and fostered engagement with high frequency.

Research Question 2a: Relationship between Gender and Leadership Practices

A two-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant interactions between gender and leadership group for all five leadership practices. Traditional gender-associated traits did not significantly impact leadership practices, suggesting a shift toward recognizing diverse leadership styles.

Research Question 2b: Relationship between Race and Leadership Practices

A two-way ANOVA revealed no significant interaction between race and leadership groups for all five practices. The organization's culture appeared to influence leadership styles more than racial differences.

Research Question 2c: Relationship between Years of Experience and Leadership Practices

A two-way ANOVA revealed no significant interaction between years of experience and leadership group for all five practices. The effectiveness of leadership practices did not uniformly correlate with years of experience.

Research Question 2d: Relationship between School Population Size and Leadership Practices

A two-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant interactions between school population size and leadership group for all five practices. Leadership practices were adaptable to different group sizes.

Implications

The study investigated the leadership practices of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in South Georgia schools and explored the relationships between these practices and demographic traits such as gender, race, years of experience, and school population size. The findings revealed several significant insights:

- Leadership practices can affect what occurs within student populations and RESA populations.
- Tier I and Tier II leaders responded in a way that indicated high, consistent utilization of recommended leadership practices.
- Tier I and Tier II leaders engage in similar leadership practices, showing there are standard leadership practices that are not exclusive to particular leadership levels.
- Gender did not have a significant impact on leadership practices, suggesting a move away from traditional gender stereotypes in leadership roles.

- Similarly, race did not significantly influence leadership practices, emphasizing the importance of inclusive leadership styles regardless of racial background.
- Years of leadership experience did not correlate with the quality of leadership practices, indicating that leadership effectiveness is not solely determined by tenure.
- School population size also did not affect leadership practices, highlighting the adaptability of leadership approaches across different school sizes.

These findings have important implications for educational leadership practice. Firstly, they suggest that leadership effectiveness is more practice-based rather than dependent on demographic characteristics. This underscores the need for leadership training programs to focus on universal leadership competencies rather than demographic predictors. Secondly, the study highlights the importance of embracing diverse leadership styles and fostering inclusive environments within educational settings. Educational leaders should strive to create an organizational culture that values diverse perspectives and promotes collaboration among stakeholders. Additionally, the findings emphasize the need for ongoing professional development for educational leaders to continuously enhance their leadership skills and adapt to evolving educational landscapes.

In practice, these findings can inform educational leadership training programs, policy development, and organizational practices. Hallinger (2016), Southworth (2023), and Spillane (2013), for instance, outlined that effective leaders set similar standards and lead by example, which aligned with the fact there were no significant differences in Model the Way. Tier I and II leaders demonstrated the values and behaviors they expected from others and consistently modeled effective teaching and learning practices.

Grubb (2015), Hallinger, and Spillane (2018) support the idea that leaders are required to create a vision for the future and inspire others to join. Planning and inspiring are standard leadership practices that work well for different types of leaders (Grubb, 2015; Hallinger, 2016; Spillane, 2018). McGee et al. (2015) and Stewart-Banks et al. (2015) further elaborate that leaders need to address diverse populations and cultures for personal and professional improvements. The idea that Tier I and Tier II leaders must take risks and encourage innovation is supported by leadership ideas from Gurian and Stevens (2018) and Hickman (2023). According to them, leaders must embrace change, embrace experimentation, and create a supportive environment where new ideas and approaches are welcomed. Olin (2016) further emphasized that effective leadership practices are more inclusive in nature and encourage gender equality, which goes against traditional leadership practices in schools. The finding that both Tier I and Tier II leaders empower others to make decisions and act is supported by Gurian and Stevens (2018), Hallinger and Heckman (2021), and Harris (2022). Hallinger and Heckman elaborate further by stating that leaders need to delegate authority, provide resources, offer support to enable others, take ownership of their work, and contribute to the school's success. The finding that Tier I and Tier II leaders make efforts to celebrate the contributions of others is supported by Harris (2022), Southworth (2023), and Spillane (2018). Southworth goes further by stating that leaders express appreciation for the efforts of others, and they create a culture of recognition and celebration that fosters motivation and engagement. By recognizing the universal nature of effective leadership practices and the importance of inclusivity, educational leaders can create environments that support student academic achievement, employee satisfaction, and overall school success. Moreover, the study

underscores the importance of ongoing research and evaluation to continually refine and improve leadership practices in educational settings.

Study Limitations

Despite the researcher's efforts to maintain consistency throughout the study, several limitations should be acknowledged by others when evaluating its findings. First, the study's data sample was smaller than anticipated. It focused solely on Tier I and Tier II educational leaders within three South Georgia Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA). Future research should include additional RESA districts to increase the sample size. Secondly, the researcher could have expanded the participant pool by proactively contacting superintendents or human resources departments to facilitate internal Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the research. While the researcher obtained IRB approval from Valdosta State University, local county school policies may have hindered external researchers from conducting studies. With survey research, a third limitation is that it is unclear how authentic participants' responses are for research purposes. Giving all participants an objective, unbiased survey mitigates some of this problem, but it cannot account for all thoughts and feelings the participants may have. Finally, offering a twenty-dollar gift card to participants could have incentivized greater participation, potentially improving the overall number of participants in the study.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on a comprehensive review of existing literature and findings of the present study, "A Quantitative Study of Leadership Practices Used by School Leaders in South Georgia," the following recommendations are proposed for future research:

- Expand the sample size by including Tier I and Tier II educational leaders from various regions within the Georgia Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA). Utilize the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) self-survey to delve deeper into specific areas of focus among educational leaders in different RESA districts.
- Survey teachers who work under Tier I and Tier II educational leaders and compare their perceptions with those of the leaders themselves. This comparative analysis could provide valuable insights into leadership effectiveness and its impact on teacher morale and performance.
- Include Tier I and Tier II educational leaders from preschool settings and higher education environments to gain a more comprehensive understanding of leadership practices across different educational levels.
- Conduct mixed-methods studies incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the topic further. Incorporating personal interviews alongside survey data could offer deeper insights into the similarities and differences observed among educational leaders in various RESA districts.
- Investigate gender differences among Tier I and Tier II educational leaders within all Georgia RESA districts through a dedicated study focusing solely on this aspect.
- Explore the influence of years of experience on leadership practices by conducting a study specifically focused on the tenure of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in all Georgia RESA districts.

- Examine the relationship between school graduation rates and leadership effectiveness by conducting a study solely focused on this metric among Tier I and Tier II educational leaders in all Georgia RESA districts.
- Investigate the impact of age on leadership practices by conducting a study dedicated solely to analyzing the age demographics of Tier I and Tier II educational leaders across all Georgia RESA districts.
- Explore how school population size affects leadership practices by conducting a study specifically focused on Tier I and Tier II educational leaders across various school population demographics within all Georgia RESA districts.

Implementing these recommendations for further research could enhance our understanding of leadership practices among educational leaders and contribute valuable insights to inform leadership development programs and policies within educational institutions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to clarify the leadership practices of educational leaders in South Georgia based on responses collected via LPI. The objective of this exploration was to determine whether personal and organizational characteristics impact how effective leadership practices are adopted in educational environments. Underpinned by the theoretical framework built around Kouzes and Posner's (2002) model of transformational leadership, this study aimed to determine whether or not the exemplified behaviors that were pointed out within such a frame, such as inspiring shared vision or encouragement heart, were consistently manifested despite demographic variables like gender, race, and tier positioning. The researcher attempted to check

whether the recognized leadership behaviors were fairly spread or varied along a spectrum, which was influenced by these variables.

The assumptions, based on an extensive literature review, indicated that there would be clear patterns of leadership behaviors associated with the above demographic strands (Leithwood et al., 2020). On the other hand, the results indicated an insignificant effect of demographics on leadership behaviors. This realization strengthens the argument that good leadership in educational environments may be less about who leaders are and more heavily backed by what they do, how they embody, and how they showcase practices deemed ideal. These conclusions do not stand alone; they intertwine into the larger fabric of educational leadership, adding subtle notes to what is currently known about effective leadership. Drawing the strands of this research together, this chapter delivers a potent message: Leadership is a choreography of practices, an orchestra of powerful behaviors, which when used everywhere, is likely to improve learners' educational lives regardless of leader identity. This chapter not only concludes this research but also provides an entry point to further investigation in the area, calling upon researchers, educators, and policymakers to pursue how effective leadership practices can excel within education.

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APPENDIX A:

Survey Instrument

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE® A Wiley Brand

BY JAMES M. KOUZES & BARRY Z. POSNER

INSTRUCTIONS:

Write your name in the space provided at the top of the next page. Below your name, you will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the rating scale on the right, ask yourself:

"How frequently do I engage in the behavior described?"

When selecting your response to each statement:

- Be realistic about the extent to which you actually engage in the behavior.
- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
- DO NOT answer in terms of how you would like to behave or in terms of how you think you should behave.
- DO answer in terms of how you typically behave on most days, on most projects, and with most people.
- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving yourself 10s on all items is most likely not an accurate description of your behavior. Similarly, giving yourself all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.
- If you feel that a statement does not apply to you, it's probably because you don't frequently engage in the behavior. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower.

For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the box to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement. *Every* statement *must* have a rating.

The Rating Scale runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

RATING SCALE	1–Almost Never 2–Rarely	3–Seldom 4–Once in a While	5–Occasionally 6–Sometimes	7–Fairly Often 8–Usually	9–Very Frequently 10–Almost Always

When you have completed the LPI-Self, please return it to:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you.

LPI: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY SELF

Your name: _____

To what extent do you engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement.

1.	I set a personal example of what I expect of others.	
2.	I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	
3.	I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.	
4.	I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.	
5.	I praise people for a job well done.	
6.	I make certain that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon.	
7.	I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.	
8.	I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	
9.	I actively listen to diverse points of view.	
10.	I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.	
11.	I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.	
12.	I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	
13.	I actively search for innovative ways to improve what we do.	
14.	I treat others with dignity and respect.	
15.	I make sure that people are creatively recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects.	
16.	I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance.	
17.	I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	
18.	I ask "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.	
19.	I involve people in the decisions that directly impact their job performance.	
20.	I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	
21.	I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	
22.	I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	
23.	I identify measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward.	
24.	I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	
25.	I tell stories of encouragement about the good work of others.	
26.	I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.	
27.	I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	
28.	I take initiative in anticipating and responding to change.	
29.	I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	
30.	I get personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments.	

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LPI: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY SELF

APPENDIX B:

Letter of Approval to Use the LPI

Letter of Approval to Use the LPI

From: Sims, Gabriel <gsims@wiley.com>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 12:36 PM
To: vandrews07@yahoo.com
Cc: Brickley, Nicole <nbrickley@wiley.com>
Subject: LPI approval

I am approving your use of the LPI. Please read the approval letter carefully, as it is a legally binding document. You are responsible for understanding and following this document. Nicole will be processing your payment and then I will be providing you with a copy of the LPI

Leadership Practice Inventory Self-Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 **Introductory Summary**

The leadership practices of educational leaders in South Georgia significantly shape the strategies and approaches adopted by leaders, including the principals, assistant principals, and other educational leaders. Leadership practices impact school cultures and student performance. Leadership practices vary from school to school and student's academic performance is directly correlated to leadership approaches – a significant predictor and measure of student outcomes. Educational leaders play an integral role in managing capital and human resources within the school. Their adopted leadership practices directly account for the outcomes associated with teachers' engagement and students' performance. Educational leaders adopt various actions and practices to promote academic performance within the school setting. However, there remains little understanding of exactly how these practices impact school leadership specifically in South Georgia.

The purpose of this study is to identify the similarities and differences between educational leadership practices in South Georgia as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) self-survey. The outcomes from this study are essential for illustrating effective leadership practices, initiatives, and decisions that could improve student achievement and engagement in learning activities within general classroom settings. This study could contribute to the existing literature regarding the impact of school leadership on academic performance and school culture by mapping what is currently being practiced and what is recommended for practice. This study might reveal that educational leadership significantly contributes to school culture and student achievement. This will be accomplished by correlating current practices to theoretical practices that result in potential improvement of student performance, graduation rates, and academic excellence in South Georgia schools.

Q2 Are you a certified Tier I or Tier II educational leader?

▼ Tier I (Assistant Principal) (1) ... Neither (3)

Skip To: End of Block If Are you a certified Tier I or Tier II educational leader? = Neither

Page Break

	Never 1 (11)	Occasionally 2 (12)	Frequently 3 (13)	Always 4 (14)
1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others. (1)	○	○	○	○
2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done. (2)	○	○	○	○
3. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities. (3)	○	○	○	○
4. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with. (6)	○	○	○	○
5. I praise people for a job well done. (7)	○	○	○	○
6. I make certain that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon. (8)	○	○	○	○
7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like. (9)	○	○	○	○
8. I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work. (10)	○	○	○	○
9. I actively listen to diverse points of view. (11)	○	○	○	○

10. I make it a good point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities. (12)	○	○	○	○
11. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make. (13)	○	○	○	○
12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future. (14)	○	○	○	○
13. I actively search for innovation ways to improve what we do. (15)	○	○	○	○
14. I treat others with dignity and respect. (16)	○	○	○	○
15. I make sure that people are are creatively recognized for their contribution to the success of our projects. (17)	○	○	○	○
16. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect others people's performance. (18)	○	○	○	○
17. I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision. (19)	○	○	○	○
18. I ask "What can we learn" when things don't go as expected. (20)	○	○	○	○
19. I involve people in the decision that directly impact	○	○	○	○

their job performance. (21)				
20. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values. (22)	○	○	○	○
21. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization. (23)	○	○	○	○
22. I paint the "Big Picture" of what we aspire to accomplish. (24)	○	○	○	○
23. I identify measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward. (25)	○	○	○	○
24. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work. (26)	○	○	○	○
25. I tell stories of encouragement about the good work of others. (27)	○	○	○	○
26. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership. (28)	○	○	○	○
27. I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work. (29)	○	○	○	○
28. I take imitative in anticipating and responding to change. (30)	○	○	○	○

29. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves. (31)	○	○	○	○
30. I am personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments. (32)	○	○	○	○

Q3 To what extent do you engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response that best applies to each statement.

Q4 Current South Georgia RESA School District Employed.

▼ Chattahoochee-Flint RESA District (1) ... Southwest Georgia RESA District (3)

Q5 Age of the participate.

▼ 25-34 (1) ... 64 and above (5)

Q6 Years of Experience at current certification level in current role.

▼ Less than 10 years (1) ... 30 years and up (4)

Q7 Education level

▼ Bachelors (1) ... Doctorate (4)

Q8 Race descriptors used by the US Census Bureau

▼ White (1) ... Other (5)

Q9 Gender

▼ Male (1) ... Prefer Not to Say (3)

Q10 Population of students at current school.

▼ Below 249 (1) ... 550 or higher (4)

End of Block: Default Question Block

You are being asked to participate in a survey entitled *"*A Quantitative Study of Leadership Practices of Educational Leaders in South Georgia*,"* which is being conducted by Vincent Andrews*,* a doctoral student at Valdosta State University. The purpose of the study is to identify the similarities and differences between educational leadership practices in South Georgia as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) self-survey. The outcomes from this study are essential for illustrating effective leadership practices, initiatives, and decisions that could improve student achievement and engagement in learning activities within general classroom settings. This study could contribute to the existing literature regarding the impact of school leadership on academic performance and school culture by mapping what is currently being practiced and what is recommended for practice. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research. However, your responses might

reveal that educational leadership significantly contributes to school culture and student achievement. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. This survey and your participation are confidential. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older. You may print a copy of this statement for your records.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Vincent Andrews at ***vlandrews@valdosta.edu.*** This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

APPENDIX C:

IRB Letter

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04323-2022 **Responsible Researcher(s):** Vincent Andrews

Supervising Faculty: Dr. James Leon Pate

Project Title: *A Quantitative Study of Leadership Practices of Educational Leaders in South Georgia.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under 45 CFR 46.101(b) of the federal regulations, category 2. If the nature of the research changes such that exemption criteria no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (tmwright@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research study.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of the research study, all collected data (e.g. transcripts, data set, name/email lists, etc.) must be securely maintained and accessible only by the researcher(s) for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*

☒ *If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at tmwright@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.*

Elizabeth Ann Olphie *02.09.2023*
Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-253-2947.

Revised: 06.02.16

APPENDIX D:

Calculations for Data

Table 28

Expected Counts Approximated for Table 7 Data

	Population of Students at Current School			
Leader	Below 249	250-399	400-549	550 or higher
Tier I	(118x60)/ 1222 ≈ 5.79	(140x60)/ 1222 ≈ 6.87	(42x60)/ 1222 ≈ 2.06	(922x60)/ 1222 ≈ 45.27
Tier II	(118x99)/ 1222 ≈ 9.56	(140x99)/ 1222 ≈ 11.34	(42x99)/ 1222 ≈ 3.40	(922x99)/ 1222 ≈ 74.7
NR	(118x1063)/ 1222 ≈ 102.65	(140x1063) /1222 ≈ 121.78	(42x1063)/ 1222 ≈ 36.54	(922x1063)/ 1222 ≈ 802.03

Note. Display of expected values based on student population and Tier Level. NR = Nonresponders.

Table 29

Chi-square Calculated Numbers for Table 7 Data

Population	O-E TIER I	O-E TIER II	O-E NR	$(O-E)^2/E$ TIER I	$(O-E)^2/E$ TIER II	$(O-E)^2/E$ NR
Below 249	-0.79	-4.56	5.35	.11	2.17	.28
250-399	3.13	12.66	-15.78	1.42	14.13	2.05
400-549	5.94	13.60	-19.54	17.10	54.34	10.45
550 or Higher	-8.27	-21.7	29.97	1.51	6.30	1.12
Total	0[a]	0	0	20.14	76.94	13.90

Note. $X^2 = 20.14 + 76.94 + 13.90 = 110.98$, $p < .00001$. NR = Nonresponders.

[a] Calculated sum is 0.01.

[b]Approximate values yield different results from exact statistical values generated in SPSS. Official number is approximately 110.97. An adjustment of .01 needs to be made, where .01 is subtracted from 110.98 to get the statistical result.

Table 30

Observed Counts Based on Participation and Population

	Population by RESA			
Leader	RESA A	RESA B	RESA C	RT
Participants	112	29	20	161
Nonparticipants	312	437	314	1063
CT	424	466	334	GT = 1224

Note. Table of counts according to participation and RESA population. CT = Column Total; RT = Row Total; GT = Grand Total.

Table 31

Expected Values Based on Participation and Population

	Population by RESA		
Leader	RESA A	RESA B	RESA C
Participants	(424x161)/1224 ≈55.77	(466x161)/1224 ≈ 61.30	(334x161)/1224 ≈ 43.93
Nonparticipants	(424x1063)/1224 ≈368.23	(466x1063)/1224 ≈404.70	(334x1063)/1224 ≈ 290.07

Note. Table of counts according to participation and RESA population. CT = Column Total; RT = Row Total; GT = Grand Total.

Table 32

Chi-square Calculated Numbers for Participation and Population

Population	O-E P	O-E NP	$(O-E)^2/E$ P	$(O-E)^2/E$ NP
RESA A	56.23	-56.23	56.69	8.59
RESA B	-32.30	32.30	17.02	2.58
RESA C	-23.93	23.93	13.04	1.97
Total	0	0	86.75	13.14

Note. $X^2 = 86.75 + 13.14 = 99.89$, $p < .00001$. There is a significant relationship between the population and the leader groups in the sample. If something happens with the sample, then something is also happening with the RESA populations. The significant difference is not due to chance or error.

Table 33

Observed Counts Based on Tier Level Percentages and Population Numbers

	Population by RESA			
Leader	RESA A	RESA B	RESA C	RT
Tier I	47	5	8	60
Tier II	71	18	12	101
NR	306	443	314	1063
CT	424	466	334	GT = 1224

Note. Observed counts based on leader group and RESA numbers. Other refers to those who did not meet the requirements to be part of the sample. CT = Column Total; RT = Row Total; GT = Grand Total; NR = Nonresponders.

Table 34

Expected Amounts Based on Tier Level Percentages and Population Numbers

	Population by RESA		
Leader	RESA A	RESA B	RESA C
Tier I	(424x60)/1224 ≈20.78	(466x60)/1224 ≈22.84	(334x60)/1224 ≈16.37
Tier II	(424x101)/1224 ≈34.99	(466x101)/1224 ≈38.45	(334x101)/1224 ≈27.56
NR	(424x1063)/1224 ≈368.23	(466x1063)/1224 ≈404.70	(334x1063)/1224 ≈290.07

Note. Expected counts based on leader group and RESA numbers. Other refers to those who did not meet the requirements to be part of the sample. NR = Nonresponders.

Table 35

Chi-square Calculated Numbers for Tier Level Percentages and Population Numbers

Population	O-E TI	O-E TII	O-E NR	$(O-E)^2/E$ TI	$(O-E)^2/E$ TII	$(O-E)^2/E$ NR
RESA A	26.22	36.01	-62.23	33.07	37.07	10.52
RESA B	-17.84	-20.45	38.3	13.94	10.88	3.62
RESA C	-8.37	-15.56	23.93	4.28	8.79	1.97
Total	0[a]	0	0	51.29[b]	56.74	16.11

Note. $X^2 = 51.29 + 56.74 + 16.11 = 124.14$, $p < .00001$. There is a significant relationship between the population and the leader groups in the sample. If something happens with the sample, then something is also happening with the RESA populations. The significant difference is not due to chance or error. NR = Nonresponders.

[a] Calculated sum is 0.01 for O-E TI column.

[b]Approximate values yield different results from exact statistical values generated in SPSS. Since the total of O-E is actually 0.01 for the Tier I column sum, 0.01 needs to be subtracted from 124.14 to get an adjustment of 124.13.

Table 36

Head Counts for Leaders and Teachers for RESAs

Leaders	Count	Teachers	Count	LT Ratio
RESA A	424[a]	RESA A	3509	3:25
RESA B	466	RESA B	4827	1:10
RESA C	334	RESA C	3249	1:10
Total	1224	-	11585	-

Note. Individuals who work at the district office were recorded as having 550 or higher in student population. LT = Leader-to-Teacher.
[a] Numbers based on GaDOE Data.

APPENDIX E:

Item- Analysis Tables

Table 37

Item-total Statistics (Model the Way)

Item Description	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others.	17.16	4.84	.50	.30	.76
6. I make sure that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon.	17.44	4.20	.60	.37	.73
11. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.	17.22	4.71	.52	.30	.75
16. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect others people's performance.	17.85	3.98	.53	.31	.76
21. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	17.54	4.45	.54	.33	.75
26. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.	17.41	4.27	.54	.30	.75

Note. Cronbach's alpha information for Model the Way is presented here.

Table 38

Item-total Statistics (Inspire a Shared Vision)

Item Description	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	16.29	6.09	.56	.38	.81
7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.	16.42	6.06	.60	.41	.80
12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	16.35	5.90	.71	.57	.78
17. I show others how their long term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	16.45	5.77	.67	.51	.79
22. I paint the "Big Picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	16.12	6.29	.60	.41	.80
27. I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	15.93	6.83	.47	.28	.83

Note. Cronbach's alpha data for Inspire a Shared Vision.

Table 39

Item-total Statistics (Challenge the Process)

Item Description	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
3. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.	16.32	5.22	.52	.31	.76
8. I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	16.19	5.38	.57	.41	.75
13. I actively search for innovation ways to improve what we do.	16.29	5.00	.61	.45	.74
18. I ask "What can we learn" when things don't go as expected.	16.30	5.41	.44	.27	.78
23. I identify measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward.	16.27	5.25	.53	.31	.76
28. I take imitative in anticipating and responding to change.	16.14	5.28	.59	.39	.75

Note. Cronbach's alpha data for Challenge the Process.

Table 40

Item-total Statistics (Enable Others to Act)

Item Description	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
4. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.	17.44	3.55	.38	.22	.71
9. I actively listen to diverse points of view.	17.68	3.01	.56	.35	.65
14. I treat others with dignity and respect.	17.29	3.92	.37	.17	.72
19. I involve people in the decision that directly impact their job performance.	17.74	2.98	.56	.32	.65
24. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	17.97	3.02	.42	.22	.70
29. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	17.88	2.92	.51	.30	.67

Note. Cronbach's alpha data for Enable Others to Act

Table 41

Item-total Statistics (Encourage the Heart)

Item Description	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
5. I praise people for a job well done.	16.83	6.75	.61	.40	.85
10. I make it a good point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.	16.98	6.56	.70	.51	.83
15. I make sure that people are creatively recognized for their contribution to the success of our projects.	17.11	6.32	.69	.50	.83
20. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	17.11	5.98	.76	.60	.82
25. I tell stories of encouragement about the good work of others.	17.21	6.83	.45	.21	.88
30. I am personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments.	17.04	6.04	.74	.57	.82

Note. Cronbach's alpha data for Encourage the Heart.