The Relationship between Organizational Structure and School Performance in Selected Florida and South Georgia Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between organizational structure, as measured by the School Culture Survey (SCS), and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The purpose was also to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the organizational structure of selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The working definition of organizational structure was the framework for the "processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business" (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 140). These processes include: a) collaborative decision making, b) concern for school/stakeholders, c) continual school improvement focus, d) empowerment, e) human (needs) resources, f) intent/direction, g) leadership, h) management of excellence, i) professionalism, and j) teaming (Green, 2000b). Various researchers defined culture as the complex system of basic assumptions, beliefs, norms, values, behaviors, practices, and traditions, as well as visible artifacts that are deeply ingrained in an organization (Barth, 2004; Bosworth, 2000; Maslowski, 2001, 2006; Schein, 1993, 1996; Senge, 1990).

Six elementary schools from Florida and South Georgia, selected by convenience, participated in the study, which measured school performance by the three year average percentage of students passing the mathematics portion of the FCAT (Florida) and CRCT (Georgia). The study considered low performing schools as those with a three year average pass rate of 70% or less, and high performing schools as those with a three year pass rate of 80% or more. A *T* test of independent means determined a statistically significant difference in the organizational structure of the selected low and high performing schools with a *p*-value of .0346. A Pearson's *r* correlation revealed a

moderately strong positive correlation at the 0.7382 level between organizational structure and school performance in the selected low and high performing schools in Florida and South Georgia. The study includes a descriptive analysis outlining the details of each school's performance on the SCS. Findings may assist school administrators in identifying deficient areas within their school's organizational structure. School administrators may have interest in the high performing schools' highest rating and the largest divergence from the low performing schools.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

When congressional leaders reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as No Child Left Behind in 2001, teachers and school administrators across the country felt the pressure and accountability for increasing student achievement as never before. In only a few short years, it seemed as though everyone had "gotten into the act: politicians, parents, teachers, taxpayers, teacher-educators, social critics, journalists, and researchers—all of them passionately involved in school renewal" (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005, p. 1). This unprecedented national mandate dictated the expectation for all students to achieve grade level standards as measured by standardized testing within a 12 year window, regardless of their state of residence. Consequences for not meeting standards included significantly more retentions and schools labeled as Needs Improvement, which would allow students to opt out of attending their neighborhood school and transfer to their school of choice. Schools labeled as Needs Improvement also faced mandatory restructuring. Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) proclaimed, "This is both an exciting and disturbing time for America's schools. For twenty years we have been enduring the most intense period of educational reform this country has ever experienced" (p. 1). States were unaccustomed to so much pressure from the federal level, and many thought the federal accountability movement would subside (Hess, 2006). However, more than a decade later, the federal government

still placed consistent pressure on states and local school districts to perform. Since 2009, three major national school reform initiatives surfaced: development and adoption of the Common Core State Standards, *Race to the Top*, and the proposed Reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

The development and adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) increases the rigor of the standards for student mastery. The standards focus heavily on increasing the complexity of student tasks and texts. The CCSS Mission is

> The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012)

Adoption of the CCSS began in 2010 and, at the time of this study, all states with the exception of Alaska, Kentucky, Texas, Nebraska, and Minnesota had adopted the standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

While states adopted the rigorous Common Core State Standards, President Barak Obama's administration implemented a competitive grant program known as *Race to the Top*, which encouraged states to advance in the school reform movement and offered monetary rewards for competing in the proverbial race. Sections 14005 and 14006 of the

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) authorized *Race to the Top*. Offering $4 billion in grant reward opportunities, *Race to the Top* encompassed the following four components of school reform:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools. (U.S. Department of Education, 2011)

Both Georgia and Florida elected to participate in *Race to the Top*, but not in all districts. The Georgia Department of Education selected 26 individual school districts with which to partner for the *Race to the Top* grant based on their current achievement levels, the size of the districts, and the percentage of minority or impoverished students. More specifically, the 26 districts included 41% of the state's public school students, 46% of Georgia's students in poverty, 53% of Georgia's African American students, 48% of the state's Hispanic students, and 68% of the state's lowest achieving schools (Georgia Department of Education, 2012). Florida took a different approach by applying for and receiving a grant reward of $700,000,000 with half spent at the state level and half distributed to districts. With the grant funds in place, the state required school districts to request funds by submitting individual implementation plans aligned with Florida's application and memorandum of understanding conditions (Florida Department of

Education, 2012a). In 2011, Florida's Senate passed the *Student Success Act*, also known as Senate Bill 736, which required Florida school districts to include student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) as part of the teacher evaluation system. This Act also required districts to include a pay for performance feature in the evaluation system by 2015 (Florida Department of Education, 2012b).

Leithwood (2007) explained some educators might perceive those persons holding them accountable as not caring what they did to get positive results as long as their methods were ethical. He also charges those choosing to act on the "best available evidence" (p. 193) in regards to what works in school reform, with what he considers to be major obligations: "figuring out what that evidence is, how best to use it for your school's improvement purposes, and how to make the case for its use with your staff, parents, and other colleagues," (p. 193). The purpose of the present study was to determine whether a relationship existed between schools' organizational structures, as measured by the School Culture Survey (SCS) (Green, 2000b), and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. A number of studies linked school performance to the organizational structure or organizational health of a school (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson, Buehler, Stein, Dalton, Robinson, & Anfara, 2005; Hofman, Hofman, & Guldemond, 2002; Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Macneil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

The current study examined organizational structure using data from the SCS on six elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The study used performance numbers on state standardized assessments in mathematics to classify schools as low performing or high performing. Three low performing elementary schools and three high

performing elementary schools participated in the study and faculty members from those schools responded to the SCS. The results of the survey identified the relationship between the schools' organizational structures and school performance as defined later in this chapter. The survey includes 50 questions, which collectively measure a school's organizational structure. Green (2000b) organized the 50 questions into the following ten themes for data analysis: a) collaborative decision making, b) concern for school/stakeholders, c) continual school improvement focus, d) empowerment, e) human (needs) resources, f) intent/direction, g) leadership, h) management of excellence, i) professionalism, and j) teaming. After disaggregating and analyzing the results from the SCS to determine the relationship between organizational structure and school performance, the data could indicate whether there was a statistically significant difference in the school performance between low and high performing schools.

Statement of the Problem

Increasingly, educators use school reorganization and large investments in human capital as tools to increase school performance dramatically (Long, 2012). Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) asserted, "The average student who attends a 'good' school will have a score that is 23 percentile points higher than the average student who attends a poor school" (p. 2). Many school reform leaders suggested creating the good schools "through establishing small 'learning communities' or breaking large high schools into more manageable units of 400 or fewer students" (Brown, 2004, p. 5). Unfortunately, these efforts require large amounts of monetary, personnel, and time resources. In addition, the reform efforts focus primarily on the re-shuffling of school personnel or reorganization of instructional units within the school rather than focusing more deeply

on the way in which these elements improve or weaken the overall organizational structure (Gaziel, 1997; Main, 2009; Tarter & Hoy, 2004). While the literature on organizational structure provides evidence of a positive correlation between school performance and organizational structure, studies offer little about the relationship between specific areas of organizational structure and school performance (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Conceptual Framework

Research on reform and school improvement emphasizes organizational structure and its importance in professional decision making and school performance (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Barth (2004) proclaimed an individual school's organizational structure/culture often had a greater influence on learning than did any administrators, including principals, superintendents, school boards, and departments of education. Bosworth (2000) considered culture the "most pervasive influence" (p. 9) within schools. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) identified four major dimensions of school culture: "organizational structure," "professional orientation," "quality of the learning environment," and "student centered focus" (p. 140). They defined organizational structure as "the style of leadership, communication and processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business" (p. 140). In addition, Main (2009) noted the organizational structure of a school as "the physical layout, programming, allocation of resources, and administrative support" (p. 466). In a recent study, Byrk (2010) identified the following five organizational features that positively correlated with improved student

achievement: a coherent instructional guidance system, professional capacity, strong parent-community-school ties, a student-centered learning climate, and leadership that drove change. In addition to the research directly related to schools as organizations, the current study reviewed the literature on organizations as a whole and the concepts of organizational theory and organizational behavior. It is important to note the concept of organizational behavior within this conceptual framework because "organizational behavior has assumed that under the right circumstances people and organizations will grow and prosper together" (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 7).

In addition to the concept of organizational behavior, the work of Bosworth (2000), Byrk (2010), Main (2009), and Shoen and Teddlie (2008) formed the foundation for the study's conceptual framework. The framework examined schools as one type of organization and organizational structure as one component of a school's culture, as outlined in the work of Schoen and Teddlie (2008). The work of Bosworth (2000), Byrk (2010), Main (2009), and Shoen and Teddlie (2008) evaluated certain components of organizational structure and their relationship to school performance and student achievement. Using a detailed review of literature as a springboard, this study took a more comprehensive approach to determine the relationship between organizational structure and school performance by adding the SCS to examine fifty specific elements of organizational structure categorized into the ten themes listed previously.

Purpose/Rationale

Ott, Parkes, and Simpson (2008) suggested "Our most important collective challenge as teams, organizations and networks or organizations is to develop an increasingly sophisticated ability to creatively use leadership, learning, and adaptive

change to achieve organizational excellence" (p. 8). By analyzing and synthesizing the work of many researchers and theorists, "organization behavior has assumed that under the right circumstances people and organizations will grow and prosper together" (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 7). Within a school framework, the school is the organization and the people are the students, teachers, and administrators. The evidence of their prospering together indicates overall school performance. The SCS assisted in identifying the "right circumstances" to which Ott, Parkes, and Simpson (2008) referred. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Does the School Culture Survey evidence a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

RQ2: Does the School Culture Survey reveal correlation between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

Significance of the Study

Current standards hold leaders and educators more accountable for increased student achievement and overall school performance (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Local, state and federal accountability policies routinely include the requirement to remove principals or entire

school faculties in schools in need of "significant reform" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). This type of restructuring often creates disruptions that may impede the development of schools, have a negative impact on the climate, and cause undue stress on staff, students, and community members, at least in the short term (Long, 2012). Since restructuring practices, such as creating small learning communities or small schools (e.g., schools within schools), have become increasingly common, and the interventions in most school reform efforts require large investments of money, time and talent, (Leithwood, 2007), it is important to know the capacity and limitations of the organizational structure of schools and the impact on school performance. Various studies linked school culture and organizational structure to school performance (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Dufour and Dufour (2010) explained, "An abundance of research establishes that changes in behavior precede the changes in the assumptions, beliefs, expectations, and habits that constitute the culture of an organization" (p. 80).

The current study will support school level administrators in understanding the relationships between organizational structure and school performance and between specific elements of organizational structure and selected low and high performing elementary schools. The results of this study may also aid schools and districts in developing authentic and specific school and district improvement plans. In referencing a study by Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, and Switzler (2008), Dufour and Dufour (2010) suggested those who are

> extraordinarily effective in bringing about change . . . identify and focus on a few high-leverage vital behaviors, create new structures and revise existing structures to align with the behaviors, coach the behaviors, provide resources and rewards to reinforce the behaviors, and confront those people who fail to act appropriately. (p. 80)

The results of the present study may provide school and district level leaders with some idea of vital behaviors on which to focus to improve their school's performance.

Study Limitations

The sample size, scope, geographic region, and time limited the research design in the study. The six schools in the sample were elementary schools, which did not allow for a secondary school perspective. The study analyzed only data from schools in Florida and South Georgia due to access and convenience. For the purposes of this study, the measurement of school performance was the state standardized mathematics assessment. School performance did not include other areas of evaluation, such as performance on other content area exams, attendance rates, retention rates, or discipline rates. There were no qualitative data collected. Finally, this study examined school performance for only three consecutive years.

Operational Definitions

The following terminology is applied throughout this study.

Average Quality Point Score. The score generated by dividing the total quality points by the number of response choices (5) for each School Culture Survey (SCS) question. The score has a range from 0-100. SCS items with an average quality point

score of 70 or higher indicate a high quality area, and items with a score of 60 or below indicate an area in need of development (Green, 2000b).

County Masking. This technique masked the identities of the counties participating in the study.

Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Georgia's state mandated criterion referenced standardized test used to measure the proficiency of 3rd through 8th grade students in the areas of reading, math, science, language arts, and social studies (GADOE, 2011).

Deficient Culture. A school has a deficient culture when the average number of Total Quality Points is less than or equal to 60 on the School Culture Survey (SCS).

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Florida's state mandated criterion referenced standardized test used to measure the proficiency of 3rd through 11th grade students in the areas of reading, math, science, and writing (FLDOE, 2011).

Organizational Structure. Organizational structure is the framework for the "processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business" (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 140). These processes include: a) collaborative decision making, b) concern for school/stakeholders, c) continual school improvement focus, d) empowerment, e) human (needs) resources, f) intent/direction, g) leadership, h) management of excellence, i) professionalism, and j) teaming (Green, 2000b).

Quality Culture. A school has a quality culture when the average number of Total Quality Points is greater than or equal to 70 on the School Culture Survey (SCS).

School Climate. "The relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior in schools" (Hoy, 1990, p. 152).

School/Organizational Culture. For the purposes of this study, the definition of school/organizational culture was the complex system of basic assumptions, beliefs, norms, values, behaviors, practices, traditions, and visible artifacts deeply ingrained in an organization (Barth, 2004; Bosworth, 2000; Maslowski, 2001, 2006; Schein, 1993, 1996; Senge, 1990).

School Culture Survey. A 50 item instrument that measures the organizational structure of a school's culture in relation to ten organizational themes: a) collaborative decision making, b) concern for school/stakeholders, c) continual school improvement focus, d) empowerment, e) human (needs) resources, f) intent/direction, g) leadership, h) management of excellence, i) professionalism, and j) teaming (Green, 2000b). The first 42 items on the survey use a Likert scale for participants to rank their school's performance from 1 (Below Expectation) to 5 (Above Expectation) for each survey item. The last eight questions ask participants to give their school a *grade* on one sentence statements related to the school's organizational structure.

School Masking. This technique masked the identity of participating schools.

School Performance. In this study, the basis for judging school performance was on the average percentage of students passing the mathematics portion of the FCAT and CRCT state assessments. Low performing schools were those with a pass rate of 70% or below in mathematics and high performing schools had a pass rate of 80% or above.

Theme. A group of similar questions on the School Culture Survey (SCS) that cluster into one of the following categories: a) collaborative decision making, b) concern for school/stakeholders, c) continual school improvement focus, d) empowerment, e) human (needs) resources, f) intent/direction, g) leadership, h) management of excellence, i) professionalism, and j) teaming (Green, 2000b).

Overview of Methodology

This study was quantitative in nature. The researcher employed an independent samples *t* test and Pearson's *r* correlation to examine significant differences in and the relationship between the organizational structure of selected low performing and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. A *t* test of independent samples used the SCS Average Total Quality Point score and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test and served as analysis for the first research question. A Pearson's *r* correlation compared the Average Total Quality Point scores as measured by the SCS and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test and provided statistical analysis for the second research question. A more detailed discussion of the methodology follows in Chapter 3.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation contains five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the study, identified the purpose and significance, the research questions, limitations, and the operational terminology. The review of relevant literature on organizational structure related to the themes in the SCS and school performance make up Chapter 2. Chapter 3 reviews the methodology, population, research questions, survey instrumentation, and data analysis.

The fourth chapter contains the findings from the study and a detailed discussion of the data analysis, and Chapter 5 consists of the final discussion and summary.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between organizational structure, as measured by the School Culture Survey (SCS) (Green, 2000b), and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. National legislation requires states to provide levels of support for schools not meeting expectations in the four areas of "accountability, differentiation, interventions for schools, and schools in restructuring" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). States must provide interventions for low performing schools in need of reform, and must restructure the lowest performing schools identified as being in need of "significant reform" **(**U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The goal of providing differentiated accountability is to offer early intervention to prevent chronic low-performance, and to target intensive supports to schools with the greatest need **(**U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Researchers have little information about the relationship between specific areas of organizational structure and school performance. The review of literature created a framework for this study, which examines the organizational structure of high performing and low performing schools in Florida and South Georgia. Research noted differences at the school level had greater effects on student achievement than did differences at the classroom or teacher level (Stringfield & Teddlie, 1988); therefore, the review of the

current literature examined organizational structure at the school level rather than at the individual or classroom level. The review of literature begins by looking at the bigger picture of organizations and culture, narrows focus to schools as one type of organization, and examines organizational structure as one component of school culture. The review then explores certain components of organizational structure as they relate to school performance. Schein (1993) stated, "We have come to think of culture too much in terms of negatives and constraints instead of positive forces to be nurtured" (p. 703). The literature outlines the way in which school organizational structure has and may further the body of research related to school improvement.

Organizations

> Daft (2013) suggested we could think of organizations as tools or as an instrument used by owners and managers to accomplish a specific purpose. The purpose will vary, but the central aspect of an organization is the coordination of people and resources to collectively accomplish desired ends [. . .] An organization is not a building or a set of policies and procedures; organizations are made up of people and their relationships with one another. (p. 12)

Bennis (2000) explained people within organizations "have norms, values, shared beliefs and paradigms of what is right and what is wrong, what is legitimate and what is not, and how things are done" (p. 474). Daft (2013) added organizations are a "means to an end" (p. 12), explaining that people within an organization work toward a common goal. In a more formal definition, Daft asserted, "Organizations are (1) social entities that (2) are goal-directed, (3) are designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity

systems, and (4) are linked to the external environment" (p. 12). Green (2000a) noted that few leaders would hesitate to indicate a school is a system or organization, yet leaders did not always treat them this way. He recommended educators reflect on the question: "Do leaders treat schools as systems?" (Green, 2000a, p. 71), and then move toward using a systems approach to improve their school's performance. On the other hand, Brown (2004) cautioned educators that treating schools as organizations was no easy task "because schools are not businesses and students are not adults. Schools are far more complicated institutions, socially and politically" (p. 3).

When examining organizations and their functions, also known as organizational theory, research can trace as far back as 2100 BCE to the 282 written laws of Hammurabi, the King of Babylon, which governed an array of societal matters. Many consider Hammurabi's Code as the "first employee policy handbook" (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 11). Consequently, organizational theory is a tremendous body of work with many subsets and perspectives. Daft (2013) defined organizational theory as "a way of thinking about organizations and how people and resources are organized to collectively accomplish a specific purpose" (p. 7). He stressed it was not merely a collection of information and facts, but a way to analyze organizations more deeply (Daft, 2013).

In comparing organizational theory and organizational behavior, Daft (2013) provided the following definitions:

> Organizational theory is a macro examination of organizations because it analyzes the whole organization as a unit. Organizational theory is concerned with people aggregated into departments and organizations and

with the differences in structure and behavior at the organizational level of analysis. Organizational theory might be considered the sociology of organizations, while organizational behavior is the psychology of organizations. (Daft, 2013, p. 35)

Organizational behavior is the micro approach to organizations because it focuses on the individuals within organizations as the relevant units of analysis. Organizational behavior examines concepts such as motivation, leadership style, and personality and is concerned with cognitive and emotional differences among people within organizations (Daft, 2013, p. 35)

In addition, to the various concepts examined, each perspective brings a certain set of assumptions. Ott, Parkes, and Simpson (2008, p. 5) adapted the following from Bolman and Deal to compare the assumptions of two perspectives in organizational theory.

Table 1

Two Perspectives of Organizational Theory

Assumptions of the Structural Perspective and the Organizational Behavior Perspective	
Structural Perspective	Organizational Behavior Perspective
1. Organizations are rational institutions whose primary purpose is to accomplish established objectives; rational organizational behavior is achieved best through systems of defined rules and formal authority. Organizational control and coordination are key for maintaining organization rationality. 2. There is a "best" structure for any organization in light of its given objectives, the environmental conditions	1. Organizations exist to serve human needs. Humans do not exist to serve organizational needs. 2. Organizations and people need each other. Organizations need the ideas, energy, and the talent that people provide; and people need the careers, salaries, and work opportunities that organizations provide. 3. When the fit between the individual and the organization is poor, one or both will

surrounding it, the nature of its products and/or services, and the technology of the production process. 3. Specialization and the division of labor increase the quality and quantity of production- particularly in highly skilled operations and professions. 4. Most problems in an organization result from structural flaws and can be solved by changing the structure.	suffer. The individual will be exploited or will seek to exploit the organization or both. 4. When the fit is good between the individual and the organization, both benefit. Humans are able to do meaningful and satisfying work while providing the resources the organization needs to accomplish its mission.

(Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 5)

Further, Ott, Parkes, and Simpson (2008) suggested the "organizational behavior perspective is the most optimistic of all perspectives of organization[s]" (p. 7). They defined organizational behavior as "the behavior of individuals and groups in and around purposeful organizations" (p. 4). Based on a body of research, they suggested "organizational behavior seeks to understand human behavior in an organizational context" (p. 1) and examined the way in which individuals handle problems and opportunities within their respective organizations. The researchers suggested organizational behavior should ask questions, such as:

> Why do people behave the way they do when they are in organizations? Under what circumstances will people's behavior in organizations change? What impacts do organizations have on the behavior or individuals, formal groups (such as departments), and informal groups (such as people from several departments who meet regularly in the company lunchroom)? Why do different groups in the same organization develop different behavioral norms? (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 1)

The concept of organizational behavior identified in this section provides the foundation for the rest of this literature review and plays a major role in the conceptual framework for the study. Insights gained from research on organizational design can greatly help leaders improve efficiency and effectiveness and increase the quality of life within their organizations (Daft, 2013).

Culture

A review of the literature revealed various definitions of culture. Schein (1993) stated:

> I define culture as the sum total of what a given group has learned as a group, and this learning is usually embodied in a set of shared, basic underlying assumptions that are no longer conscious, but are taken for granted as the way the world is. (p. 705)

Other definitions also refer to underlying assumptions, such as culture as "a fairly stable set of deep tacit assumptions, beliefs, meanings, values, and dispositions shared among members of a group" (Shouse, n.d., p. 4). Covey and Gulledge (1992) determined "culture is the collective behavior of its people, and it is collective human behavior that creates or implements every element of quality" (p. 72). Despite the common elements among the definitions of culture, Schein (1993) noted persons are often unaware of culture and take it for granted because of so many shared assumptions. Macneil et al. (2009) also warned about the importance of recognizing cultural complexity due to its "unique and idiosyncratic ways of working" (p. 74).

School and Organizational Culture

For the purpose of this study, the definition of school/organizational culture included the complex system of basic assumptions, beliefs, norms, values, behaviors, practices, traditions, and visible artifacts deeply ingrained in an organization (Barth, 2004; Bosworth, 2000; Maslowski, 2001, 2006; Schein, 1993, 1996; Senge, 1990). Tomlinson and Allan (2000) agreed, "Schools are cultures governed by norms, traditions, and more" (p. 43). They suggested persons had "deeply entrenched ways of thinking about learners and learning, deeply embedded ways of 'doing school'" (p. 43). According to Bosworth (2000), "Culture is the most pervasive influence in a school, and even seemingly minor steps to create a positive culture can have profound effects on students' lives. Yet, it is frequently overlooked or taken for granted" (p. 9). In the introduction to the section on culture and change in *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership*, Barth (2004) stated, "The key to a successful school is often found in the unique attributes of its organizational culture" (p. 157). Barth (2004) further proclaimed a school's culture would influence the learning within a school far more than administrators, including principals, superintendents, school boards, and departments of education, could. Tomlinson and Allan (2000) agreed and offered that educators might not always be "conscious of the attitudes, beliefs, and habits that permeate how we think about and practice our profession, but their influence is profound" (p. 43).

Various researchers credit Waller, author of the 1932 book, *The Sociology of Teaching*, as the founder of the discussion on culture, especially in relation to schools. In recent research, definitions of school and organizational culture mimic the broader definition of culture. For example, Maslowski (2006) defined school culture as "the system of basic assumptions, norms and values, as well as the cultural artifacts, which are

shared by school members and influence their functioning at school" (p. 9). Maslowski (2006) also asserted that "basic assumptions, values, and norms" (p. 9) formed the *core* of any school's organizational culture. Senge (1990) provided a similar definition for one of his disciplines of a learning organization, which he called mental models. He stated, "Mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8). Watts (2010) affirmed, "Organizational identity is embedded in organizational culture" (p. 203), and Bosworth (2000) added that school culture referred to "the overall physical and psychological atmosphere in a school: the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that have worked well in the past and are taught to new members of the community" (p. 9). In addition, Barth (2004) defined school culture as "the complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization" (p. 160). When Collins (2001) wrote *Good to Great,* he suggested all organizations had culture, but only a few (the great ones) had a culture of discipline. He asserted a culture of discipline entailed disciplined people, disciplined thought, and disciplined action.

Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) viewed culture as "being broader and more encompassing than the institutional context" (p. 146) and noted subcultures within the school made up each school community. They also acknowledged that societal culture provided an environment in which each school could develop its own culture. Therefore, while researchers examine the culture within a school or organization, they should not neglect examining the larger societal culture.

As Gaziel (1997) indicated, organizational climate and organizational culture were prevalent in the literature related to education over the past few decades to describe the perception school members might have of the work environment. A common misunderstanding regarding school culture is that it is the same as school climate (Tarter & Hoy, 2004). The current study considered school climate a result of school culture, similar to Shoen and Teddlie's (2008) reference to school climate as a "second level of school culture" (p. 140). According to Gaziel (1997), scholars concluded organizational culture expressed perceptions more profoundly than organizational climate could. Gaziel (1997) purported culture informed climate by helping individuals define things important to them in relation to their experiences and why they might have happened. Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) supported this by noting culture "has an impact on all features of the school and its institutional system" (p. 146).

Many researchers found trust to be a major component in any organization's culture (Angelle, 2010; Bosworth, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Lencioni, 2002; Tarter & Hoy, 2004). Tarter and Hoy (2004) described school culture as being "grounded in the notion of trust" (p. 541) and they referred to a culture of trust (CT) in their research. They defined trust as "a set of shared beliefs about the faculty of a school; a school CT is the extent to which teachers believe they can trust their students, colleagues, administrators, and parents" (p. 541). Tarter and Hoy referred to a set of shared beliefs as did many others when defining school organizational culture. Others also found trust to be an important factor in school culture (Angelle, 2010; Bosworth, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Lencioni, 2002). In addition, "Mutual trust between the administration, the faculty, the students, the parents, and the community" (Angelle, 2010, p. 12) often strengthened

the organizational culture of a school. Absence of trust was the first of the five team dysfunctions identified by Lencioni (2002), and Bosworth (2000) noted, "An environment of trust is the key to creating empowered and effective employees at all levels" (p. 17). Kouzes and Posner (2007) also insisted leaders must "create a climate of trust" (p. 224) in order to foster collaboration, and to begin this process, leaders must "be the first to trust" (p. 227) others. Bosworth (2000) posited the school principal should condition the "level of trust that can occur in the school setting" (p. 17), by demonstrating trustworthiness in his or her actions and by displaying trust of others. The article *Best Principles Espouse Leadership* (2011) reported a national study found high achieving schools had principals that fostered a culture of "mutual respect and trust" (p. 63) in order to provide greater support for their teachers. Blanchard (1999) added true or "real communication is a product of trust" (p. 69).

Although previous researchers suggested principals and leadership teams influenced school culture, Wheelan (cited in Main, 2009) suggested school culture is created from the bottom up rather than the top down. In other words, small groups of teachers create a culture they share with others in the organization until the common beliefs and values spread throughout the school. When exclusively discussing school culture, Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe, and Alterman (2008) suggested determining "good" school culture "is a matter of perspective [but for their study] a positive or 'good' school culture is considered as one in which meaningful staff development and enhanced student learning are practiced" (p. 160). In the same study, Engels et al. (2008) developed five dimensions of school culture, as follows:

- Goal orientedness: the extent to which the school vision is clearly formulated and shared by the team members;
- Participative decision-making: the extent to which teachers participate in decision-making at school;
- Innovativeness: the extent to which teachers have an open attitude towards change;
- Leadership: the extent to which teachers perceive the principal as somebody who engages in supportive and/or structuring behavior; and
- Cooperation between teachers: the level of formal and informal relationships. (p. 160)

Schoen and Teddlie (2008) included four dimensions in their definition of school culture: Professional Orientation, Organizational Structure, Quality of the Learning Environment, and Student Centered focus. The table below depicts the dimensions.

Table 2

Four Dimensions of School Culture

I. Professional Orientation	II. Organizational Structure
the activities and attitudes that characterize the degree of professionalism present in the faculty	the style of leadership, communication & processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business
III. Quality of the Learning Environment	IV. Student-Centered Focus
the intellectual merit of the activities in which students are typically engaged	the collective efforts & programs offered to support student achievement

(Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 140)

Schoen and Teddlie posited these four dimensions existed across three different levels of abstraction: artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions. Bosworth (2000) also examined school culture across the same three levels, and suggested "positive changes in the school culture can ripple out to the wider contexts of district, neighborhood, and family culture" (p. 12). The literature review continues to illustrate that culture is a complex concept with multiple layers and dimensions.

Organizational Structure

Schoen and Teddlie (2008) considered organizational structure to be one of the four dimensions of school culture and defined it as "the style of leadership, communication and processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business" (p. 140). Main (2009) explained the organizational structure of a school included "the physical layout, programming, allocation of resources, and administrative support" (p. 466). Green (2000b) measures the organizational structure of a school's culture in relation to ten organizational themes: a) collaborative decision making, b) concern for school/stakeholders, c) continual school improvement focus, d) empowerment, e) human (needs) resources, f) intent/direction, g) leadership, h) management of excellence, i) professionalism, and j) teaming. When Damico, Bell-Nathaniel, and Green (1981) examined the way in which school organizational structure at the middle school level affected interracial friendships among students, they found the organizational structure of schools and classroom often subtly affected the "quantity and quality of student interactions" (p. 391). Although there is a need for further research on the ways in which organizational structure affects the quality and quantity of adult interactions, studies on collaborative environments can also offer evidence. Richardson and Skinner (1990)

proposed examining and describing *forces* that might alter organizational culture (p. 486). They advocated addressing the forces so persons did not perceive diversity as a threat to quality in post-secondary institutions. These same implications exist in K-12 education because diversity, demographics, and socioeconomic status are often variables related to student achievement.

The organization of schools should reveal a clear understanding of their purpose and why they exist. When an organization has shared understanding, a common culture develops and ensures success. However, when understanding, expectations, and beliefs are incongruent among employees, culture disintegrates and leads to eventual failure (Macneil et al., 2009). In other words, lack of organization within a school is a sign of a negative school culture (Flores, 2004). Leech and Fulton (2008) purported, "Organizational structures should be constructed to encourage group action, which requires the sharing of information, resources, and ideas" (p. 633).

Byrk (2010) identified five organizational features as essential supports for school improvement:

- Coherent instructional guidance system;
- The school's professional capacity;
- Strong parent-community-school ties;
- A student-centered learning climate; and
- Leadership that drives change. (pp. 24-25)

In Byrk's study, schools with strong indicators of the listed supports were more likely to improve on student achievement. In *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership*, Fullen (2007) asserted that school culture is a living thing "that needs to be actively

recognized, valued, and nurtured" (p. 157). The following sections elaborate on this concept.

Leadership

"Leading consists of helping people do a better job and of learning by objective methods who is in need of individual help" (Walton, 1986, p. 35). Blanchard (1999) suggested the "main job of a leader is to help his or her people succeed in accomplishing their goals" (p. 13). Jaworski (1998) acknowledged the conventional view of leadership as "positional power and conspicuous accomplishment" (p. 182), but he argued "true leadership is about creating a domain in which we continually learn and become more capable of participating in our unfolding future" (p. 182).

While the current study focused on how the organizational structure of a school could impact school performance, leadership is a critical component of a school's organizational structure. Since the 1980s, the role of the principal has changed drastically. Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) suggested the principal's role has "evolved from manager, to street-level bureaucrat, to change agent, to instructional manager, to instructional leader, to transformational leader" (p. 137). Unfortunately, not all leaders evolved with their roles. While recommending a shared decision making approach, Bosworth (2000) also attributed the smooth functioning of a school to the principal, noting "the principal shapes, enhances, and maintains the tone, culture, and vision of a school, determines priorities, and ensures that school policies conform with state and federal guidelines" (p. 15). An article, Best Principals Espouse Collective Leadership (2011) in *Education Digest* reported that a national study of 8,000 teachers and

administrators "confirmed that school leadership is the second most important influence on student learning, ranking only behind classroom instruction" (p. 63).

In preparing to write their book *The Leadership Challenge,* Kouzes and Posner (2007) studied thousands of organizations to identify the practices of exemplary leaders. They constructed their findings into five practices of exemplary leadership which coincided with ten commitments of leadership. The table below depicts the practices and commitments.

Table 3

Practices and Commitments of Exemplary Leadership

Practice	Commitment
Model the Way	1. Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals. 2. Set the examples by aligning actions with shared values
Inspire a Shared Vision	3. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. 4. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
Challenge the Process	5. Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve. 6. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.
Enable Others to Act	7. Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships. 8. Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.
Encourage the Heart	9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. 10. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

(Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 26)

Leech and Fulton (2008) used the five practices of exemplary leadership as a framework for studying how school faculties perceived leadership behaviors. Often leaders are unaware of the way in which their behaviors impact the culture of school, when, in reality, their behaviors have a direct impact on the culture as well as on student achievement. Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) noted principals directly influenced student achievement by simply raising the expectations of teachers for student learning. However, Bosworth (2000) encouraged school leaders to gain the support of all people affected by change. When leaders had this support, "change occurs more rapidly and causes less emotional upheaval" (Bosworth, p. 6).

Collins (2001) discussed a hierarchy of different levels of leadership and labeled *Level 5 Leadership* as the highest level. Leaders of this level display a combination of "personal humility and professional will" (Collins, p. 20). Level 5 leaders display modesty, have ambition for the organization rather than themselves, and offer credit for achievements to the people in the organization rather than taking credit themselves. Referencing a study by Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, and Switzler, (2008), Dufour and Dufour (2010) suggested those who are:

> extraordinarily effective in bringing about change . . . identify and focus on a few high-leverage vital behaviors, create new structures and revise existing structures to align with the behaviors, coach the behaviors, provide resources and rewards to reinforce the behaviors, and confront those people who fail to act appropriately. (Dufour & Dufour, 2010, p. 80)

With the role of leaders in education evolving a daily basis, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) encouraged sustainable leadership through not depleting material and human resources and continuously renewing the energy of personnel.

Intent and Direction

When speaking of intent and direction, many will recite the line Disney made famous in the adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*: "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there." However, in education, we cannot wander aimlessly hoping for *any road* to take us where we need to be.

> An abundance of evidence indicates that an essential step in helping students learn at high levels is to ensure that each teacher is clear on exactly what students are to learn and committed to providing the curriculum and instruction that ensures each student acquires the intended outcomes. (Dufour & Dufour, 2010, p. 81)

Ainsworth (2010) supported this concept in the opening of *Rigorous Curriculum Design* indicating "the need for a cohesive and comprehensive curriculum that intentionally connects standards, instruction, and assessment has never been greater than it is today" (p. xx). He stressed,

> For educators to meet the challenging learning needs of students—comprehend all other standards, prepare for a variety of formative and summative assessments, and demonstrate proficiency on high-stakes state or provincial tests—they must have a clear road map to follow throughout the school year. (p. xx)

Blanchard (1999) added communicating clear performance objectives ahead of time was "the perfect way to ensure that everyone is working from the same sheet of music and headed in the right direction" (p. 35). To clarify, Ainsworth (2010) combined a number of resources and definitions to provide readers with the following definition for a rigorous curriculum:

> A rigorous curriculum is an inclusive set of intentionally aligned components-clear learning outcomes with matching assessments, engaging learning experiences, and instructional strategies—organized into sequenced units of study that serve as both the detailed road map and the high-quality delivery system for ensuring that all students achieve the desired end; the attainment of their designated grade- or course-specific standards within a particular content area. (p. 8)

As Bosworth (2000) asserted, a vision of the future is "an anchor for change" (p. 5); whereas Senge (1990) noted when there was a "genuine vision (as opposed to the all-too-familiar 'vision statement') people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to" (p. 9). Bennis (2000) supported having a true vision versus simply having a vision statement. The researcher stated the creation of new practices was not merely through articulating the organization's goals, "but rather the imagery that creates the understanding, the compelling moral necessity for the new way" (p. 474). Senge (1990) referred to "building shared vision" (p. 8) as one of the five disciplines of a learning organization. In order to be effective, organizations and individuals must "begin with the end in mind" (p. 98), which Covey (2004) defined as starting with a "clear understanding of your destination" (p. 98). He suggested that, while individuals and

organizations could be very busy and efficient with their work, they would often only be effective when they "begin with the end in mind" (p. 98). Bennis (2000) added, "True leaders . . . communicate their vision lucidly" (p. 474).

Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) found in a review of literature that schools with a clear mission focused on academic improvement "are better able to make decisions in the interests of students and to allocate resources toward the improvement of teaching and learning" (p. 140). McTighe and Seif (2010) offered, "The best mission statements describe educational goals that are outcome-not input-oriented" (p. 151), explaining that a school's mission statement "identifies the overall purpose of schooling and the kinds of graduates a school strives to develop" (p. 151). Bosworth's (2000) guide for creating protective schools defines a school-wide vision as:

> A commonly held belief system that:
>
> • provides a framework within which to evaluate new ideas or programs and determine which to implement, revise, or reject;
>
> • provides a general consensus about ways to respond to the challenges facing youth and the role of the school community in promoting student success and healthy development;
>
> • is often reflected in mission statements;
>
> • is clear, coherent, simply stated, and positive in outlook;
>
> • is widely communicated so that participants throughout the school and community understand the vision and recognize how their actions contribute to bringing it about;
>
> • helps unite people to move in the same general direction; and

• is an anchor for change that buffers the school against conflicting pressures from public opinion and political changes. (p. 5)

As previously mentioned, when an organization has shared understanding, the culture will ensure success. However, when understanding, expectations, and beliefs are incongruent among employees, the culture will eventually fail (Macneil et al., 2009). In Angelle's (2010) portrait study of distributed leadership, which also found high student achievement, she noted, "The shared goals of increasing student achievement were viewed as not only the purpose of the organization but the responsibility of its members" (p. 12). Ghysels (2008) reported that, by teaching educators "how to align teachers' goals to students' goals, the teachers were more apt to pay attention to organizational goals" (p. 53). On the other hand, Green (2000a) warned leaders that teachers' participation in building a vision "must be a voluntary act [and suggested] coercion restricts energy flow and the potential to do work" (p. 249).

Lack of organization and lack of awareness of the schools' goals, especially in relation to curriculum and student achievement, can foster a negative view of school culture (Flores, 2004). Other contributors to negative culture include what Lencioni (2002) referred to as dysfunctions of a team. He identified five dysfunctions with three of the five, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results, directly relating to the direction and intent of an organization. When schools have clear direction and intent, they can avoid pitfalls more easily. In a study of fifteen highly effective schools, Green (2000a) shared that he and his colleagues found each school had "reached an internal agreement (alignment) on the purpose of the school" (p. 249).

Blanchard (1999) asserted, “All good performance starts with clear goals” (p. 70) and indicated motivation occurred when people “know where they are going” (p. 71). Depree (1989) suggested, “leaders are obligated to provide and maintain momentum” (p. 14), and

> momentum comes from a clear vision of what the corporation ought to be, form a well-thought-out strategy to achieve that vision, and form carefully conceived and communicated directions and plans which enable everyone to participate and be publicly accountable in achieving those plans. (p. 15)

Brown (2004) identified three ways in which “well-managed conversations about purpose, vision and mission” (p. 6) could revitalize schools, to wit:

- They create new and deeper relationships among people who care about the school.
- Serious inquiries into matters people have come to take for granted build a sense of community that begins to mold school culture around common values, ideas and hopes. People tend to ‘buy in’ to the school and think of it as theirs.
- Agreement about vision and mission leads to practical criteria for making decisions about what is most important, what must be set aside and what to do when unpredicted situations arise. (p. 6)

Brown (2004) referred to these conversations as “super-conversations” (p. 6) because they actually generated a need for a higher level of organizational structure. He identified the following needs generated from conversations about purpose, vision, and mission, such as: “the need to make choices as a group, the need for decision-making criteria, the need to define limits and constraints and relevant data” (p. 6). The current

literature review addresses these components of organizational structure throughout. Brown (2004) asserted that, together, the components provided a framework for a coherent organizational structure that supports learning. He emphasized the need for the organizational structure to remain coherent, indicating "no matter whom you talk to in the organization, or what documents you read, you hear and read similar themes" (p. 6). On the other hand, McTighe and Seif (2010) warned schools and districts about creating meaningless vision or mission statements about student achievement, without truly believing in them and working towards them.

> In addition to their lack of focus on key learner outcomes, many district and school mission statements were crafted long ago and remain dormant, residing in a binder, on a website, or displayed through wall art. Such statements are empty works that have little or no impact on the daily operations of schooling. (McTighe & Seif, 2010, p. 151)

To improve performance, a school must have a clear vision and all must share that vision. Kouzes and Posner (2007) referred to this leadership practice as inspiring a shared vision. Blanchard (1999) simplified the concept by stating "a clear vision is really just a picture of how things would be if everything were running as planned" (p. 81). As previously mentioned, however, Green (2000a) warned leaders that teachers' participation in building a vision must be voluntary and suggested "coercion restricts energy flow and the potential to do work" (p. 249). When commenting on ways to get educational professionals to buy in, Ainsworth (2010) addressed the necessity of presenting the "big picture" (p. 19); in other words, they must see that "everything is

intentionally connected to everything else, and why each component needs to be part of the whole" (p. 19).

Building trust is an important part of building a shared vision and direction. Schools must work to build trust among teachers and students as well as community stakeholders. It is not enough to have parents involved, schools must also foster trust among those stakeholders. "Parental involvement will not support achievement unless the involvement builds trusts among students, teachers, and parents" (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 443). Many schools may erroneously assume parents visiting the school or becoming Parent Teacher Association members is enough to raise student achievement.

Henderson et al. (2005) found a positive relationship between student academic performance and a school's academic emphasis, indicating when a school had student achievement as its intent and direction, students would meet this expectation.

> Academic emphasis involves the extent to which the school is driven by a quest for academic excellence. High but achievable academic goals are set for students, the learning environment is orderly and serious, and teachers believe in their students' ability to achieve. Students work hard and respect those who do well academically (Henderson et al., 2005, p. 70).

While keeping a clear focus on providing students with a rigorous curriculum, Ainsworth (2010) informed educators that rigor does not equal rigidity. Schools must continuously assess where learners are, and what they need to accomplish, taking into account the needs of advanced learners as well as those who may be struggling (Ainsworth, 2010).

Koch (2008) takes direction and intent to a higher level in his book, *The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Achieving More with Less.* In his discussion of how to achieve

more by doing less, he asserted in most cases 20% of input essentially generated 80% of output. In other words, 20% of what we do produces 80% of what we want. However, 80/20 is not always the proportion—the proportion can vary and may be anywhere from 90/10 to 40/60, but input and output are typically disproportionate. While he credited Pareto for originally noticing this disproportionality over a century ago, Koch provided examples of the use of the theory in the modern business world. He recommended organizations should examine how they could apply the principle in order for 20% (or the lesser proportion) of their efforts to generate 80% (or the greater proportion) of their desired outcomes (Koch, 2008). If schools could employ the same strategy, they could narrow their focus, direction, and intent and move from reactive to proactive measures.

Jaworski (1998) suggested, "If individuals and organizations operate from the generative orientation, from possibility rather than resignation, we can create the future into which we are living, as opposed to merely reacting to it when we get there" (p. 182). Collins (2001) offered a similar approach in his theory that simplicity was the key to success. He indicated great organizations narrowed their focus to what they could do best, what they were truly passionate about, and what drove their economic engine, and then directed all of their energy and attention toward those goals. For schools, continuously increasing student achievement should be the task they want to do best.

Collaboration and Teaming

"Organizational structure can increase or decrease the amounts of connectivity and communication among the people in the building and between the people in the building and the outside world" (Brown, 2004, p. 7). This review of literature supports schools and organizations ensuring their structure increases connectivity, communication,

and reflection across multiple levels. One of Deming's Fourteen Points for Quality Management was to "break down barriers between staff areas" (cited in Walton, 1986, p. 35). According to Walton, Deming suggested when departments or units or even physical areas separated those within an organization, employees might compete with each other, rather than working toward a common goal.

Dufour and Dufour (2010) noted, "Reflection leads to improved practice only when it is based on actual evidence of student learning and when it is done collectively"(p. 88). Kouzes and Posner (2007) asserted, "Leadership is not a solo act, it is a team effort" (p. 223). In their research on exemplary leadership practices, the researchers studied thousands of cases, and noted the absence of an example of "extraordinary achievement that's occurred without the active involvement and support of many people" (p. 223). This observation resulted in the identification of enabling others to act as one of the practices of exemplary leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Dufour and Dufour (2010) pointed out when teachers worked collaboratively within Professional Learning Communities (PLC), "Teachers who are struggling to help their students acquire a skill have timely and direct access to colleagues who are highly effective in teaching that skill" (p. 84). In addition, Senge (1990) classifies team learning as one of his five disciplines in learning organizations. Researchers have also found teaming to be an effective strategy in moving schools forward with reform and school improvement (Ghysels, 2008; Hackmann, Petzko, Valentine, Clark, Nori & Lucas, 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Wallach, 2010). However, a school's culture, as defined previously, closely links to the teams' ability to function effectively within the school (Main, 2009, p. 467), therefore, it should be of consideration when implementing teaming. Many

organizations "fail to achieve teamwork because they unknowingly fall prey to five natural but dangerous pitfalls" (Lencioni, 2002, p. 187), which are referred to as the five dysfunctions of a team. Lencioni (2002) warned of the dysfunctions that often cause teams to fail, such as: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results.

While examining the implementation of a continuous improvement model, Ghysels (2008) found "tapping the power of teams" (p. 51) was one of the essential practices in successful implementation. While educators may implement teaming, "the true litmus test for [effective] teaming should be what occurs in the classroom" (Hackmann et al., 2002, p. 44), meaning effective teaming could improve classroom instruction and, in effect, student achievement. In Wallach's (2010) study on reforming or converting high schools from the larger comprehensive model to a smaller school, three themes emerged when examining the successful schools: personalization, professional community, and shared decision making (p. 264). These three themes are common among schools seeking to develop a team approach to leadership.

Dufour and Dufour (2010), strong advocates for collaboration and teaming in schools in the form of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), reported, "Students are unlikely to acquire the skills and knowledge essential for the 21st Century unless schools function as PLCs" (p. 78). York-Barr et al. (2001) supported PLC implementation by stating, "It is becoming increasingly clear that when educators engage in high-quality learning experiences, the impact on student learning is positive" (p. 1). Dufour and Dufour (2010) added PLCs should go beyond merely collaboration around planning

lessons and interacting solely around academic standards, but should assume responsibilities for hiring as well. They explained,

> as a teacher enters the profession, his or her collaborative team will play a role in the hiring process and will assume responsibility for providing a smooth transition. Instead of the traditional sink-or-swim introduction to teaching . . . when members of the team discover problem areas, they will have multiple sources of support to help improve their instructional practices. (p. 88)

Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Support framework supported teams of professionals coming together to engage in a four-step problem solving process when students were unresponsive to core instruction. The problem solving team discussions should include questions such as: a)What specifically do we want students to know and be able to do when compared to what they do know and are able to do; b)Why is/are the desired goal(s) not occurring; c) What are the barriers to the student(s) doing and knowing what is expected; d)What are we going to do; e) Is it working; and f) If not, how will the instruction/intervention plan be adjusted to better support the student's or group of students' progress (Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Support, 2013). These collaborative teams continue to engage in the process until students achieve and maintain success.

When developing a team approach, simply forming teams is not enough. Schools must "move beyond the simple formation of teams to the creation of an infrastructure that supports high-performing teams, and thereby promotes improved student achievement" (Hackmann et al., 2002, p. 33). In their research among middle schools, Hackmann et al.

(2002) found that, although 79% of schools formed teams, few were "fully implementing effective teaming" (p. 42). In order to move toward effective teaming, Hackmann et al. (2002) made the following recommendations:

- Both team and individual planning time must be provided for team teachers.
- Team sizes should be smaller.
- Teams must be characterized by heterogeneous student placements.
- Team teachers must carefully examine their classroom practices, ensuring that the curriculum and instructional methods promote student learning.
- The school's scheduling model should empower the team. (p. 42)

Researchers noted a true team effort expands beyond teachers and administrators to include various stakeholders, such as community members, parents, and students. Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy (2006) posited, "Principals and teachers, together with parents and students, can create cultures of optimism that support academic learning and student efficacy" (p. 444). Dufour and Dufour (2010) suggested schools and districts should "identify and study *positive deviants*- teachers and schools that are achieving exceptional results- so that others can benefit from their expertise" (p. 84). Hackmann et al. (2002) advised while forming teams within a school was a simple task, "fully incorporating interdisciplinary teaming practices which promote student achievement is an extensive and time-intensive process" (p. 45). Angelle (2010) added effective teaming, wherein there was shared power, decisions, and leadership could occur only in a culture of trust. York-Barr et al. (2001) agreed building trusting relationships was imperative in effective collaboration, where teams of teachers could openly reflect on their practices but "to be in a trusting relationship with oneself or others requires acting in trust-worthy ways" (p.

24). He identified a set of interrelated skills to promote trustworthiness: “be present, be open, listen without judgment and with empathy, seek understanding, view learning as mutual, honor the person, and honor the process” (p. 24). Supporting these warnings, Main (2009) identified six features that influenced middle school teachers’ abilities to function effectively within teams.

> These features concerned: (a) training (i.e., both preservice and inservice); (b) administrative support throughout the teaming process (i.e., from formation to establishment and maintenance); (c) attitudes of team members to teaming (i.e., a willingness to participate in a team and experience and confidence in contributing to the team); (d) relationship building; (e) conflict; and (f) school culture. (Main, 2009, p. 466)

While the current literature review suggests teaming is an extensive process, with many facets to consider, studies have identified multiple positive outcomes from interdisciplinary teaming (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 1999). Flowers et al. identified improvements to work climate, parental contact, job satisfaction, and higher student performance as positive outcomes of interdisciplinary teaming. Jawarski (1998) reminded, “Humans have an innate capacity for collective intelligence, they can learn and think together, and this collaborative thought can lead to coordinated action” (p. 109). To identify the “nature of the cultural shifts necessary for schools and districts to function as PLCs” (p. 79), Dufour and Dufour (2010) summarized the information in the following table:

Table 4

Cultural Shifts Necessary for Functioning

From	To
The job of teachers is to teach; the job of students is to learn.	Teaching without learning isn't teaching at all; it's just presenting. The purpose of school is to ensure all students learn.
Professionals are free to use their own judgment and discretion regarding how they go about their work.	Professionals have an obligation to seek out best practices for those they serve.
Protecting individual teacher autonomy is more important than ensuring students have access to a guaranteed curriculum, are assessed according to the same criteria, or receive similar support and assistance when they struggle.	Professionals must address the crucial issues impacting student learning collectively rather than in isolation. Teachers must build a collaborative culture and systems that promote effectiveness and equity.
Teachers work best when they work alone.	Teachers who work in isolation will never help all students learn at high levels. Teachers must take collective responsibility for their students.
Schools work best when districts provide them with site-based autonomy.	Schools work best when they operate within clearly defined and clearly communicated parameters regarding their purpose and priorities, receive assistance in aligning their practices with the specified purpose and priorities, are held accountable for doing so, and have latitude regarding how to best achieve goals.
Teachers have no control over the factors that cause students to learn.	The individual and collective efforts of educators can have an enormous positive impact. The key factors that impact student learning are within the sphere of influence.

(Dufour & Dufour, 2010, p. 79)

Shared or Distributed Leadership

Shared or distributed leadership may be a new concept in education, but it can promote a "positive culture of empowerment and respect" (Bosworth, 2000, p. 15).

Townsend (2011) identified shared or distributed leadership as one of the major trends evolving in the area of educational leadership. He acknowledged multiple strategies employed worldwide to ensure the distribution of school responsibilities well beyond the building level principal. Hallinger and Heck (2010) supported the view that collaborative forms of leadership had a positive impact on school performance in reading and math. While Park and Datnow (2009) found efforts to make data-based decision making more relevant, some leaders "distributed decision-making authority in a manner that empowered different staff members to utilize their expertise" (p. 477). Ghysels (2008) noted, "Teachers must be considered equally important leaders and at the center of efforts toward continuous improvement" (p. 52). While many leaders hesitated to share power with others, Bosworth (2000) purported when principals employed shared decision making, they actually gained more power because "more people are involved in an effort to move in the same direction" (p. 15). Bennis (2000) explained, "True leaders work to gain the trust of their constituents, communicate their vision lucidly, and thus involve everyone in the process of change" (p. 474). The article *Best principals espouse collective leadership* (2011) reported a condensed version of a study that espoused "student achievement is higher in schools where principals share leadership with teachers and the community [and that] higher-performing schools seek more input from stakeholders on major decisions" (p. 64).

Wallach (2010) also noted shared leadership and "relying on those closest to the classroom to make decisions about curriculum and instruction" (p. 271) were imperative in school reform. In addition, contributions made by teachers in the decision making process should not be limited. When implementing a true team approach, teachers and

other members should contribute to decisions "ranging from the school's budget to the curriculum" (Wallach, 2010, p. 271) and beyond. Harris (2005) suggested distributed leadership offered schools a "new and important theoretical lens through which leadership practice in school can be reconfigured and reconceptualized" (p. 255).

In shared leadership, Leech and Fulton (2008) reminded educational leaders that everyone participating must have authentic experiences wherein they were "productive team members and not just leaders" (p. 640). Schools fully embracing teaming and shared leadership may employ the methods in Maxwell's *The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*. Maxwell (2005) recanted the myths about the inability to effect change unless it was top down. He offered effective strategies for what he called leading up (to supervisors), leading across (to peers), and leading down (to those supervised). He continuously claimed that, regardless of one's position, anyone could lead from anywhere within the organization (Maxwell, 2005). Regardless of the framework used, it is important for leaders and administrators to allow for shared/distributed leadership because, as Bennis (2000) proclaimed, an attempt to change could end in disaster if leaders were not cognizant of the needs of others. He wrapped up his cautionary guidance with the tenth way to "avoid disaster during periods of change [which was] remember that change is most successful when those who are affected are involved in the planning" (p. 476).

Focus on Individual Needs, Human Resources and Empowerment

In education, the focus on meeting individual needs has traditionally been on the individual needs of the students. While student needs should remain a primary focus, administrators should not neglect the individual needs of the teachers. Administrators

must continue to meet the needs of teachers for them to develop as professionals. "The key to developing people is to catch them doing something right" (Blanchard and Johnson, 1982, p. 41). In the book *The World is Flat*, Friedman (2007) shared excerpts from real life experiences and conversations he had with some of the most famous (or infamous) people in the world. He offered an example from the CEO of eBay, who indicated people crave, almost require, positive affirmations, regardless of how small. Friedman quoted her as saying, "I think that every human being . . . the janitor or the waitress or the doctor or the professor, needs and craves validation and positive feedback" (p. 621). Friedman said it was a huge misconception that monetary compensation was all people needed. Blanchard (1999) supported this idea, indicating most leaders had a difficult time understanding motivation, especially the concept that what motivated one may not motivate another. He suggested leaders take the simplest approach to finding out what motivates their employees: ask them!

Depree (1989) proclaimed, "Leaders owe people space, space in the sense of freedom. Freedom in the sense of enabling our gifts to be recognized" (p. 14), and "effectiveness comes about through enabling others to reach their potential—both their personal potential and their . . . institutional potential" (p. 16). Brown (2004) identified a sense of belonging and security as an additional positive outcome of organizations having clear visions/direction. He stated, "Everyone seems to know why they are there, what they are doing as individuals and that their organization is contributing to some greater good. Everyone is proud, everyone feels he or she 'belongs' there" (p. 6). Ellerbrock and Kiefer (2010) conceptualized a caring school community as "a place in which students and teachers care about and support each other, in which individuals' needs are satisfied

within a group setting, and in which members feel a sense of belonging and identification with the group" (p. 403). In a study of non-profit organizations, Watts (2010) found most leaders reported they "believe it is 'important' and 'vital' for employees to identify with their organization" (p. 203). Kouzes and Posner (2007) referred to this exemplary leadership practice as encouraging the heart. As part of this practice, they suggested leaders should commit to showing their appreciation for individuals that displayed excellence and continuously celebrated victories.

Brown (2004) suggested that acknowledging relationships usually involved emotions. "Teachers who have worked in the same building for a long time have arrived at certain emotional compromises with their colleagues and students" (Brown, 2004, p. 9). Further, Brown indicated teachers might consider it risky to re-negotiate existing relationships, and that new teachers might not be honest due to their vulnerability. However, when administrators provide a structure of support to highly motivated teachers, student learning can improve even after controlling for socioeconomic status (Tarter & Hoy, 2004). Bosworth (2000) agreed that persons produced more innovative work when they were in environments with "high intrinsic motivation" (p. 41). In his chapter on survival, Medina (2008) suggested persons might not perform as well if they perceived lack of safety with an employer or teacher, and "certain types of learning wither in the face of traumatic stress" (p. 46). The father of Total Quality Management, Deming listed *Drive out Fear* as one of his fourteen points, asserting "it is necessary for better quality and productivity that people feel secure" (cited in Walton, 1986, p. 35). Harris's 2002 study on *Effective Leadership in Schools Facing Challenging Contexts* found "empirical evidence from teachers, senior managers, pupils and head-teachers

point towards a model of leadership that is fundamentally concerned with building positive relationships and empowering others to lead" (p. 15). Blanchard (1999) offered support, suggesting to leaders, "If you want your people to be responsible, be responsive to their needs" (p. 42). Depree (1989) suggested all persons had the following rights, regardless of their position: the right "to be needed, to be involved, to have a covenantal relationship, to understand the corporation, to affect one's destiny, to be accountable, to appeal, to make a commitment" (p. 24).

Tarter and Hoy (2004) found "efficacy taps the work that teachers do directly affecting student performance" (p. 549). Bosworth noted "when teachers work in isolation and feel a 'sink or swim' mentality, they may feel less secure about their own abilities and fall into teaching as they were taught" (p. 41). This could inevitably produce a negative impact on school performance. Further, Bosworth (2000) suggested schools must first become exciting places for adults to learn before they could become exciting places for students to learn. In March 2011, *Education Digest* reported that principals of high-achieving schools "offered greater support to teachers by fostering a climate of mutual respect and trust, advocating for teacher professional development and making intentional classroom visits that focus on instruction" (Best principals espouse collective leadership, 2011, p. 63). They also had greater confidence in their abilities and in those of their colleagues.

Data-Based Decision Making and Continuous Improvement

"To improve student achievement in the classroom and on high-stakes tests, we need to ask the right questions and gather the right data" (Deker, 2003, p. 22). Lachat and Smith (2005) found that data coaches and data teams played an important role in

fostering effective data use to improve school performance and Park and Datnow (2009) identified leadership as critical in developing these skills. Smith (2005) identified key factors that affected data use in schools, as follows: "the quality and accuracy of available data, staff access to timely data, the capacity for data disaggregation, the collaborative use of data organized around a clear set of questions, and leadership structures that support school-wide use of data" (p. 333). Park and Datnow (2009) reported schools effectively using data to drive reform had leaders who shared leadership, made data relevant to all teachers, and constructed a culture of "continuous improvement rather than one of blame" (p. 477). Deming listed "create constancy of purpose for improvement of product and service" (cited in Walton, 1986, p. 34) as the first of his fourteen points for Total Quality Management, while Tomlinson and Allan (2000) suggested, "Effective leaders for change constantly look for both formal and informal indicators of growth and progress" (p. 47).

"A growing body of research supports the power of assessment to improve, rather than merely report, student achievement" (Dufour & Dufour, 2010, p. 82). According to Brown (2004), "Instead of beginning with what the school offers, you have to begin with what the student requires" (p. 8). In addition, Bosworth (2000) noted stakeholders could master goals and objectives when monitored. Data driven monitoring on an ongoing basis could provide focus. Dufour and Dufour (2010) suggested teachers form PLCs driven by the following questions:

> What do we want each student to learn, how will we know when each student is learning, how will we respond when a student is not learning,

> and how will we enrich and extend the learning for those who are proficient? (p. 84)

Flowers and Carpenter (2009) affirmed while most educators realized the importance of data-based decision making, many were intimidated. To battle this intimidation factor, the researchers developed a process that acknowledged "schools have limited time for data gathering and exploration, little training in data analysis and interpretation, and a desire to make informed decisions by raising key questions among stakeholders" (p. 65). Their simple process consisted of the following five steps for schools making decisions based on data:

> The first step is to review your school improvement plan to identify the most salient issues your school wants to improve. The second step is to determine how the data will be examined (that is, what groups in your school will be involved in reviewing the data). The final steps are in a cyclical three-part process: Identify the relevant data, examine and discuss the data, and set goals and evaluate your progress. (Flowers & Carpenter, 2009, p. 65)

An elementary school in North Carolina attempting to improve student achievement via data-based decision making theorized "to increase student achievement, we need current and accurate data on an ongoing basis" (Deker, 2003, p. 22). A multi-disciplinary team at the school created a framework consisting of four major components:

- Curriculum alignment: What are we going to teach?
- Curriculum mapping: When are we going to teach it?
- Curriculum benchmarking: Did students learn it?

- Differentiation: What teaching methods would be best for each student? (Deker, 2003, p. 22)

By employing the framework for data driven instruction, the school increased student performance on the end of grade tests in all grade levels for 2001 and 2002. The school made gains despite the area's increasing poverty rates (Deker, 2003). Bennis (2000) suggested truly innovative organizations employed the scientific model, "as scientists seek and discover their own truths—carefully, thoroughly, honestly, imaginatively, and courageously (p. 476). The models used by Flowers and Carpenter (2009) and Decker (2003) were similar to the scientific model.

Collins (2001) called data-based decision making *confronting the brutal facts.* He posited, in order to achieve greatness, organizations must have the discipline to "confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be" (p. 13), while at the same time maintaining an "unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end" (p. 13). Bennis (2000) proclaimed, "Means must be found to stimulate the pursuit of the truth—that is, the true nature of the organization's problems—in an open and democratic way" (p. 476). Barth (2004) supported this by affirming the *nondiscussables* in a school can be detrimental to school culture and the ability to improve. Nondiscussables are topics not discussed or confronted in an open forum but obvious to everyone in a school. Instead, members of the organization seek opportunities to discuss these in private places, such as the parking lot or the restroom, for fear that public discussion may cause a meltdown (Barth, 2004). Low performing schools must use their existing data to confront the truth about *why* they are low performing, and identify *what* they are going to do about it. One of the things schools may lack in the reform movement is the faith that they can

and will improve. This can be as detrimental as failing to identify the need to improve and may necessitate a paradigm shift. Brown (2004) posited schools must make every effort to shift from an "I Taught It" culture to a "They Learned It" culture. While he admitted a shift in focus from teaching to learning sounded simple, he added, "It actually requires profound changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, management, organization and leadership" (Brown, 2004, p. 8). Dufour and Dufour (2010) offer the following "Three Big Ideas" for reform efforts:

- A commitment to high levels of learning for all students
- The imperative of a collaborative and collective effort to fulfill that commitment
- The intense focus on results that enables a school to respond to the needs of each student, informs teacher practice, and fuels continuous improvement. (p. 78)

Florida's Bureau of School Improvement website (2013) defined Florida's Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) as "a continuous process in which data analysis determines classroom instruction" (para. 2). The FCIM follows a continuous cycle or process referred to as Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA), wherein teachers depend on data analysis to determine their next instructional steps. The following eight steps fall within the PDCA cycle: a) Data Disaggregation and Calendar Development (Plan), b) Direct Instructional Focus (Do), c) Assessment, Maintenance, and Monitoring (Check), d) Tutorials and Enrichment (Act), and e) Data Disaggregation and Calendar Development, beginning the cycle again (Florida Department of Education Bureau of School Improvement 2013). The major elements of FCIM are:

- Using evidence-based practices that build a schools capacity to establish continuous improvement as a way of work.

- Facilitating focused instruction for all students.
- Collaboration among teachers, students, and instructional support staff.
- Active learning and student involvement in the learning process.
- Ultimate responsibility for learning placed on the learner.
- Data driven so as to remove subjectivity and replace it with a focus on results.
- Aligning planning, instruction, assessment, and support on student performance.
- Using assessment results to improve teaching and learning (Florida School Leaders, 2013).

The FCIM combines Total Quality Management (which enables schools to become more data driven, process oriented, and to identify customers and products), the five principals from the effective schools research (strong instructional leadership, high expectations for student achievement, instructional focus on reading, writing, and mathematics, safe/orderly climate, and frequent assessment), and the following process, known as FOCUS:

F–Formulate a plan. Disaggregate student performance data.

O–Optimize time by preparing and following a timeline. Plan the instructional calendar.

C–Concentrate on teaching standards and collaborate with the instructional team. Teach the instructional focus in the classroom.

U–Utilize assessments at short, frequent intervals. Conduct frequent student assessments, maintain and monitor the teaching and learning process.

> S–Sustain learning with tutorial, enrichment, and maintenance activities. Provide tutorials for re-teaching or enrichment for objectives that have been mastered. (Florida Department of Education Bureau of School Improvement, 2013, para. 2)

Similar to the Florida Continuous Improvement Model is the Planning and Problem Solving Process used to "match instructional resources to educational need" (Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports, 2013, para. 1). The problem solving process is an ongoing cycle, and consists of the following four steps:

> *Step 1. Define the problem or goal* by determining the difference between what is expected and what is occurring. *Step 2. Analyze the problem* using data to determine why the issue is occurring. Step 3. *Develop and implement a plan* driven by the results of the team's problem analysis by establishing a performance goal for the group of students or individual student and developing an intervention plan to achieve the goal. *Step 4. Measure response to instruction/interventions* by using data gathered from progress monitoring at agreed upon intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan based on the student's or group of students' response to the intervention. (Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports, 2013, para. 2)

School based problem solving teams should "continue to engage in instructional planning and problem solving to ensure student success is achieved and maintained" (Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports, 2013). York-Barr et al. (2001) also offered a simple four step process for educators to guide reflection and strive for continuous improvement:

"1. What happened? (Description) 2. Why? (Analysis, interpretation) 3. So what? (Overall meaning and application) 4. Now what? (Implications for action) (p. 47).

School Performance and Organizational Structure

In order to reform schools successfully, Brown (2004) suggested, "We will have to rethink the relationships between culture, organization and time" (p. 8), noting "it has long been observed that an organization's success can be attributed to its culture" (p. 2). In addition, many studies linked student achievement and school performance to the organizational structure (culture) or organizational health of a school (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). When attempting to raise student achievement, Main (2009) reported a school's success or failure with reform "can be measured by whether the reform has become an accepted, effective, and sustainable part of the school's culture" (p. 457). Barth (2004) supported the notion that "all school cultures are resistant to change" (p. 160) and that awareness of the culture should precede change because many school reform efforts failed. Hoy et al. (2006) suggested, "There are few school characteristics that consistently predict student achievement, even after controlling for socioeconomic factors" (p. 439). On the other hand, the researchers posited three organizational properties that appeared to affect student achievement: "academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust are tightly woven together and seem to reinforce each other as they positively constrain student performance" (p. 439). These three properties combined attributes and academic optimism, which impacted student achievement positively.

Brown (2004) noted the following "ingredients" needed for a school to support high achievement:

- An inspiring vision, backed by a clear, limited and challenging mission.
- A curriculum, modes of instruction, assessments and learning opportunities that are clearly linked to the vision and mission and tailored to the needs and interests of the students.
- Sufficient time for teachers and students to do their work well.
- A pervasive focus on student and teacher learning, coupled with a continual, school-wide conversation about the quality of everyone's work.
- Close, supportive teacher-student, teacher-teacher and student-student relationships.
- Many opportunities and venues for creating culture, discussing fundamental values, taking responsibility, coming together as a community and celebrating individual and group success.
- Leadership that encourages and protects trust, on-the-job learning, flexibility, risk-taking, innovation and adaptation to change.
- Data-driven decision-making systems that draw on timely, accurate, qualitative and quantitative information about progress toward the vision and sophisticated knowledge about organizational change.
- Unwavering support from parents.
- District flexibility and support for multiple school designs, visions, missions and innovations. (p. 4)

Byrk (2010) reported the statistical evidence from his study strongly suggested school organization played a major role in student achievement and had major impacts on classroom instruction. Gaziel (1997) agreed school culture was an important aspect in explaining the effectiveness of schools. Macneil et al. (2009) found when students had a healthy learning environment, they scored much higher on standardized tests and Hofman, Hofman, and Guldemond (2002) linked educational culture to individual performance on standardized math scores.

Gaziel (1997) identified certain dimensions of school culture important in explaining secondary school effectiveness, including: norm of teamwork, norm of orderliness, a shared culture across all groups that emphasizes academic achievement, norm of continuous school improvement, norm of encouraging students to take responsibility, norm of adaptation to customers' demands, norm of valuing teacher competency, and the norm of valuing principal competency. Stringfield and Teddlie (1988) also found several factors associated with student achievement; however, their research also controlled for socioeconomic status. The factors independent of socioeconomic status they identified were: "(1) student perception of positive academic climate, (2) principals' sense of school efficacy, (3) family commitment to education, (4) student sense of long-term educational achievement, and (5) absence of a negative school climate" (p. 44). Byrk (2010) identified five features of school organizational structure essential to the improvement of student achievement. The research also found the schools that presented with stronger indicators on these supports were more likely to show improvement than were schools with weaker indicators.

Measuring School Culture and Organizational Structure

Many researchers used some sort of questionnaire to measure or diagnose school/organizational culture effectively (Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe, & Aelterman, 2008; Gaziel, 1997; Hofman, Hofman, & Guldemond, 2002; Lohmeire, 2008; Macneil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Zeinz & Scheunpflug, 2010). However, Shein (1996) suggested "culture needs to be observed, rather than measured, if organization studies is to advance" (p. 229). In 2006, Maslowski reviewed numerous inventories for diagnosing school culture and asserted questionnaires could have value in this process. Based on five criteria, he narrowed down the array of questionnaires to six inventories effective for accurately diagnosing school culture. The five criteria included:

- The inventory has to be aimed at measuring basic assumptions, values, norms, or cultural artifacts shared by the members of a school.
- The questionnaire needs to assess the different aspects or dimensions of school culture.
- The instrument has to be explicitly developed for diagnosing the culture of schools.
- The instrument needs to be directed at organizational processes in schools, and therefore has to be addressed to school staff.
- The instrument has to be validated. (p. 10)

Based on these criteria, Maslowski (2006) eliminated numerous inventories and identified six questionnaires to measure or diagnose school culture. Each inventory contains a set of subscales. The table below adapts Maslowski (2006), and depicts the name of the instruments identified as well as the scales they address:

Table 5

Maslowski's Recommended Instruments and Scales

Questionnaire (Authors)	Scales
School Culture Survey (Saphier and King, 1985: Edwards et al., 1996)	Teacher professionalism and goal setting Professional treatment by administration Teacher collaboration
School Work Culture Profile (Snyder, 1988)	School-wide planning Professional development Program development School assessment
Professional Culture Questionnaire for Primary Schools (Staessens, 1990)	Principal as a builder and carrier of the culture Degree of goal consensus Professional relationships among teachers Lack of an internal network of professional support
Organizational Culture in Primary Schools (Houtveen et al., 1996)	Harmony of school team Responsibility for instructional processes Appreciation of teachers' quality and capacities Emphasis on teachers' professional development Flexibility Emphasis on school growth Emphasis on public relations Ability to innovate Formality of sharing information Communication on educational matters Stability Emphasis on achievement Emphasis on reaching school objectives Efficiency Trust in own effectiveness
School Values Inventory Form-III and Form-IV (Pang, 1998a,b)	Formality Bureaucratic control Rationality Achievement orientation Participation and collaboration Collegiality Goal orientation Communication and staff consensus Professional orientation Teacher autonomy
School Cultural Elements Questionnaire	Teacher efficacy

(Cavanaugh and Dellar, 1996a)	Emphasis on learning Collegiality Collaboration Shared Planning Transformational leadership

(Maslowski, 2006, pp. 10-12)

After analyzing the six instruments, Maslowski (2006) noted they contained similar scales evident in the table above and reflecting "teacher collaboration, collegiality, efficacy, professional development, and an academic orientation towards student learning" (p. 29). He also suggested the similarities could be due to the six inventories basis on models of school improvement or school effectiveness.

Macneil, Prater, and Busch (2009) reported that measuring school culture by using assessments was imperative in focusing on student learning and an important part of the process of improving student achievement. Their study used the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI), which has the following ten dimensions that characterize the culture of a school:

- Goal focus is the ability of persons, groups or organizations to have clarity, acceptance and support of goals and objectives.
- Communication adequacy is when information is relatively distortion free and travels both vertically and horizontally across the boundaries of an organization.
- Optimal power equalization is the ability to involve and coordinate the efforts of members of the work unit effectively and with a minimal sense of strain.

- Cohesiveness is when persons, groups or organizations have a clear sense of identity. Members feel attracted to membership in the organization. They want to stay with it, be influenced by it and exert their own influence within it.
- Morale is when a person, group or organization has feelings of well-being, satisfaction and pleasure.
- Innovativeness is the ability to be and allow others to be inventive, diverse, creative and risk-takers.
- Autonomy is when a person, group or organization can maintain ideals and goals as well as meet needs whilst managing external demands.
- Adaptation is the ability to tolerate stress and maintain stability while being responsive to the demands of the external environment.
- Problem-solving adequacy is an organization's ability to perceive problems and solve them using minimal energy. The problems stay solved and the problem-solving mechanism of the organization is maintained and/or strengthened.

Henderson et al. (2005) also used the Organizational Health Inventory for Middle Level Schools (OHI-ML). Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggested healthy organizations would "renew and recycle their resources" (p. 470), while unhealthy organizations "exhaust and abuse them" (p. 470). In education, resources are not only books and computers, but people and time.

Knutson, Miranda, and Washell (2005) used Hord's School Professional Staff as a Learning Community Culture Survey to examine how closely school culture

approximated that of a learning organization. The instrument offered five subscales/organizational attributes, including:

- The collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership – and thus power and authority- through inviting staff input and decision making.
- A shared vision developed from an unswerving commitment on the part of the staff to student learning, consistently articulated and referenced for the staff's work.
- Collective learning among staff and application of the learning to solutions that address student needs.
- The visitation and review of each teacher's classroom behavior by peers as feedback and assistance to support individual and community improvement.
- Physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation.

Senge (1990) also identified five components, which he referred to as disciplines, of learning organizations: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning. Three of these disciplines, systems thinking, building a shared vision, and team learning, overlapped with the subscales of shared leadership, shared vision, and collective learning in Hord's (1997) instrument. While Senge (1990) discussed systems thinking first, he noted systems thinking was the *fifth discipline* because it was "the discipline that integrates the disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice (p. 11). While all the inventories measured or diagnosed school organizational culture, they did not measure the strength of that culture, which, according to Maslowski (2006), was important to examine. He stated cultural strength referred to "the extent to which the behavior of school staff is actually influenced or

determined by the assumptions, values, norms and artifacts that are shared in the school" (p. 9). Maslowski suggested weak cultures simply offered a guideline for behavior as opposed to stronger cultures, which may place a great deal of pressure on members to behave or interact in a certain manners. Maslowski (2006) further posited.

> School culture inventories are best suited, for reasons of efficiency and standardization, for diagnosing specific cultural elements (e.g. culture of "effective schools"), or for comparing cultures across schools. In other cases, both in research and consulting, questionnaires can be used along with other, more qualitative methods to study school culture. (pp. 29-30)

Measuring School Performance

When determining the effectiveness of schools, it is important to use outcome measures that are "meaningful within a given cultural context" (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998, p. 148). The educational system in America has traditionally used standardized testing. "In the cultural catch phrase, achievement testing represents 'the way we do things around here' in the United States" (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998, p. 144). According to the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001, all schools must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in relation to student achievement and states must utilize statewide standardized tests to measure AYP.

Implications for Further Research

As Gaziel (1997) and Macneil et al. (2009) suggested, future comparisons of student achievement to school culture could help leaders to focus their energy on raising student achievement. Macneil et al. (2009) suggested paying special attention to goal focus and adaptation when studying or developing a healthy school culture. Maslowski

(2006) suggested, “school culture inventories are best suited . . . for diagnosing specific cultural elements (e.g., culture of “effective schools”), or for comparing cultures across schools” (pp. 29-30). He added research should measure the strength of school culture in addition to the characteristics mentioned in most inventories. While Angelle (2010) noted her research could not make a case or state that distributed leadership led to increased student achievement, she did suggest the findings from the study warranted future research to examine the link between the two. Harris (2005) also suggested further research on the relationship between distributed leadership and student achievement.

Little evidence is available on the relationship between specific areas of organizational structure and school performance. However, the review of the literature created a framework for the present study that compared school culture, more specifically organizational structure, of low performing and high performing schools to identify characteristics that seem to have the greatest correlation to high school performance. Future leaders may refer to this study when examining whether their school’s organizational structure (culture) impedes school performance and whether they should develop a plan for improvement.

Conceptual Framework

If we accept that the purpose of any organization, public or private, is to build a quality product or perform quality services, then we must also accept that the workers in the organization must do quality work and that the job of the manager is to see that this occurs (Glasser, 1992, p. 1). A body of research on reform and school improvement emphasizes organizational structure and its importance in professional decision making (quality work) and school performance (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al.,

2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). In addition to the concept of organizational behavior, the work of Bosworth (2000), Byrk (2010), Main (2009), and Shoen and Teddlie (2008) formed the foundation for this study's conceptual framework. All studies examined certain components of organizational structure and their relationship to school performance or student achievement, and organizational behavior assumes "under the right circumstances, people and organizations will grow and prosper together" (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 7). Using a detailed review of the literature as a springboard, this study took a more comprehensive approach to examining the relationship between organizational structure and school performance by using the SCS to examine 50 specific elements of organizational structure. The 50 elements formed the following ten themes: Collaborative Decision Making, Concern for School/Stakeholders, Continual School Improvement Focus, Empowering, Human (Needs) Resources, Intent/Direction, Leadership, Management of Excellence, Professionalism, and Teaming (Green, 2000b).

Overview of Methodology

This study was quantitative in nature and used an independent samples *t* test and Pearson's *r* correlation to examine the significant differences in and the relationship between the organizational structure of selected low performing and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia to determine the relationship between organizational structure at each school and school performance. A t-test of independent samples using the SCS Average Total Quality Point score, and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test formed the analysis of the first research question. Pearson's *r* correlation, comparing Average Total Quality Point scores as measured by

the SCS, and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test formed the analysis for the second research question. A more detailed discussion of the methodology follows in Chapter 3.

Chapter Summary

This review of literature provided a framework for the study. It began with an overview of school/organizational culture and structure, and offered more detail about the relationship of school performance and organizational structure. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between schools' organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The body of research outlined in this review of literature (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) identified some degree of correlation between organizational structure and school performance and supported further examination of this relationship. The next chapter outlines the methodology used in this study, including the study design, rationale, research questions, and data collection and analysis.

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the methodology used in this study. This quantitative study used data from the School Culture Survey (SCS) (Green, 2000b) as well as school performance data from the Florida and Georgia Departments of Education websites. A more detailed description of these data is in the following sections. Chapter 3 contains five sections: study purpose and research questions, selection of study participants, research instrumentation, data collection, and research design. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Does the School Culture Survey evidence a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

RQ2: Does the School Culture Survey reveal correlation between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary school.

Study Permissions

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Valdosta State University must approve all research or put the proposal through an IRB oversight screening process that exempts some research. Prior to collecting data from selected schools, the researcher and the two doctoral candidates with whom she partnered followed the screening process and received confirmation from the Valdosta State University Graduate School that the study was not subject to IRB oversight. Following exemption from IRB oversight, each of the three doctoral candidates identified one high performing and one low performing school via a convenience sample, and secured approval to conduct research in the selected schools from the appropriate district and school level personnel. Details of this process are in the section titled Selection of Participating Schools.

Selection of Study Subjects

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. Therefore, subjects for the study comprised three low performing and three high performing schools from different school districts in the southeastern states of Florida and South Georgia. The basis for district selection was for convenience and access. The percentage of students passing the mathematics portion of the state criterion referenced assessment (FCAT and CRCT) measured school performance. The following sections of this chapter outline the state assessment systems used in Florida and Georgia and the process used to select schools for this study.

Florida State Assessment System

The Florida Department of Education established a system of school grading based on student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Since 1999, schools have received letter grade ratings from "A" to "F" based on the calculation of factors related to student performance on the FCAT. Schools accumulate points for multiple reasons, including students' meeting and exceeding expectations on the FCAT, students falling in the lowest quartile in making learning gains, and testing a high percentage of eligible students. Schools that receive a grade of "A" earn 525 or more points, while the lowest performing students making adequate progress in reading and math must test at least 95% of eligible students. Schools that receive a grade of "B" earn between 494 and 524 points, while the lowest performing students must make adequate progress in reading or math within two years and the school must test at least 90% of eligible students. Schools that receive a grade of "C" earn between 435 to 494 points, while the lowest performing students must make adequate progress within two years and the school must test at least 90% of eligible students. Schools that receive a grade of "D" earn between 395 to 434 points and must test at least 90% of eligible students. Schools that received a grade of "F" earn fewer than 395 total points. In Florida, schools earning a grade of "A" or "B" are considered high performing, and those earning a "D" or "F" are considered low performing.

While Florida's system of school grading to distinguish low and high performing schools differs from Georgia's accountability system, Florida also recognizes pass rates on state assessment exams as a measure of school success. The FCAT scoring process

recognizes five levels of achievement with accompanying scaled scores for each level. The minimum level for passing the FCAT is Level 3.

Table 6 shows each of the levels and the accompanying scale scores for each grade level.

Table 6

Achievement Levels on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT)

FCAT Achievement Levels	
Level 5	This student has success with the most challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*. A student scoring in Level 5 answers most of the test questions correctly, including the most challenging questions.
Level 4	This student has success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*. A student scoring in Level 4 answers most of the test questions correctly, but may have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.
Level 3	This student has partial success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*, but performance is inconsistent. A student scoring in Level 3 answers many of the test questions correctly but is generally less successful with questions that are the most challenging.
Level 2	This student has limited success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*.
Level 1	This student has little success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*.

FCAT Mathematics Scale Scores					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	100 - 252	253 – 293	294 - 345	346 - 397	398 – 500
4	100 - 259	260 – 297	298 - 346	347 - 393	394 – 500
5	100 - 287	288 – 325	326 - 354	355 - 394	395 – 500
6	100 - 282	283 – 314	315 - 353	354 - 390	391 – 500
7	100 - 274	275 – 305	306 - 343	344 - 378	379 – 500
8	100 - 279	280 – 309	310 - 346	347 - 370	371 – 500
9	100 - 260	261 – 295	296 - 331	332 - 366	367 – 500
10	100 - 286	287 – 314	315 - 339	340 - 374	375 – 500

For the purposes of this study, the low performing schools in Florida were those with 70% or fewer students scoring at Level 3 or above in mathematics. High performing

schools were those with 80% or more students scoring at Level 3 or above in mathematics.

Georgia State Assessment System

The Georgia Department of Education requires the administration of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) to students in grades one through eight. Assessment of students in grades one and two is in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Reading. Students in grades three through eight test in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Social Studies and Science. However, due to budget constraints, Georgia did not administer the CRCT to grades one and two in 2011.

Measurement of student performance on the CRCT uses a rating scale ranked as exceeding (above 850), meeting (between 800 and 849), or not meeting state standards (below 800). The measure of school performance is by the percentage of students that meets or exceeds the CRCT standards outlined by the state. This passing percentage is the school's Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) for Mathematics. The current study reviewed the state AMOs on the CRCT in mathematics for 3 school years—2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011—to obtain a 3-year average on which to base the selection of low and high performing schools. The following table shows the AMO in Mathematics.

Table 7

Annual Measureable Objectives in Mathematics for Georgia for 2008-2009 through 2010-2011

AMO Subject	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	3-Year Average
Mathematics	59.5%	67.6%	75.7%	67.6%

As shown in Table 7, mathematics had significant annual increases in pass rates over the 3-year period. The measure of student achievement as a review of the performance of schools showed a similar pattern of performance. Based on the state average AMO for these three years, low performing schools were those with a 3-year average math pass rate of 70% or below and high performing schools were those with a 3-year math pass rate of 80% or higher.

Selection of Participating Schools

The researcher is a member of a doctoral cohort in an Educational Leadership program at Valdosta State University, and partnered with two other doctoral candidates to gain access to elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. Each of the doctoral candidates identified elementary schools that met the selection criteria for low or high performing. Each then selected a convenience sample of one high performing school and one low performing in their relative or neighboring districts totaling six schools. Each candidate contacted the appropriate district personnel to secure permission to conduct the study in the identified school(s). The doctoral candidates then contacted the school principal for permission to conduct the study at the school site, and arranged a time to administer the SCS to selected faculty. The doctoral candidates worked with school personnel to ensure a minimum participation rate of 85%. Specific response rates are provided later in this section.

After collecting the data, the researcher assigned each school a code name in order to mask the school's identity. FLA Low 1 was an elementary school in a small rural school district in northeast Florida with an enrollment of 351 students in grades pre-Kindergarten through five and 22 teachers. The demographics of the student body were

Caucasian (2%), African American (77%), Hispanic (18%), and Free and Reduced Lunch (91%). FLA Low 2 was an elementary school in a small rural school district in northeast Florida with an enrollment of 222 students in grades pre-Kindergarten through five and 17 teachers. The demographics of the student body were Caucasian (5%), African American (86%), Hispanic (7%), and Free and Reduced Lunch (55%). GA Low 1 was an elementary school in a small rural school district in southwest Georgia with an enrollment of 429 students in grades pre-Kindergarten through five and 26 teachers. The demographics of the student body were Caucasian (6%), African American (78%), Hispanic (13%), two or more races (3%), and Free and Reduced Lunch (99%).

FLA High 1 was an elementary school located in a small rural school district in northeast Florida with an enrollment of 569 students in grades Kindergarten through five and 38 teachers. The demographics of the student body were Caucasian (79%), African American (11%), Hispanic (3%), two or more races (7%), and Free and Reduced Lunch (63%). FLA High 2 was an elementary school in a small rural school district in northeast Florida with an enrollment of 603 students in grades Kindergarten through five and 40 teachers. The demographics of the student body were Caucasian (79%), African American (14%), Hispanic (3%), two or more races (3%), and Free and Reduced Lunch (45%). GA High 1 was an elementary school located in a small rural school district in southwest Georgia with an enrollment of 750 students in grades pre-Kindergarten through five and 49 teachers. The demographics of the student body were Caucasian (82%), African American (12%), Hispanic (3%), two or more races (3%), and Free and Reduced Lunch (41%). A detailed table of each school's three year performance on the FCAT or CRCT is in Chapter 4. Each school's principal was instrumental in receiving

the following response rates: FLA Low 1 – 90%, FLA Low 2 – 88%, GA Low 1 – 98%, FLA High 1 – 97%, FLA High 2 – 89%, and GA High 1 – 95%.

Research Instrumentation

Green (2000b) developed the SCS as a tool to assist school leaders in determining whether the organizational structure aided high performance. The 50-item survey uses a continuum framework, wherein participants reflect on the current conditions of their school and identify where they are on the continuum. The first 42 items on the survey use a Likert scale for participants to rank their school's performance, from 1 (Below Expectation) to 5 (Above Expectation) for each survey item. The last eight questions ask participants to give their school a *grade* on one sentence statements related to the school's organizational structure. All 50 items on the SCS cluster to reflect the following ten themes related to effective schools: collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human (needs) resources, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming. Because the 10 themes examine a school's organizational structure, data analysis included all 50 items.

Initially, administration of the instrument was with a paper and pencil format. However, the creators evolved the instrument to an electronic format administered through a secure password protected website (www.instrumentalsurveys.com/rssi). Using this secure format, each survey participant received a unique user name and password or key code generated by the SCS Administrator at Educational Services Consortium, Incorporated in Tallahassee, Florida. Each participant had a randomly assigned individual key code. The school site administrators also had unique identifiers, which allowed them

to compare their scores with those of their faculty and administrative team. The nature of the survey questions required participants to have direct knowledge of the organizational structures within the school; therefore, only administrators and instructional staff could participate. The SCS measures the quality of the culture and organizational structure of a school by awarding total quality points among ten themes. A score of 60 or below on any item or theme or in Total Quality Points awarded indicates a deficiency, while a score of 70 or above indicates quality.

Maintaining Study Subject Confidentiality

Ensuring participants their identity is anonymous plays a major role in eliciting true and honest responses. School employees may feel unsure about answering survey questions honestly if they perceive a chance of linking their responses to their identity. In order to elicit the most honest responses, each school in the study had a list of key codes and passwords. Participants randomly selected their own key code prior to taking the survey. Since a randomly generated series of numbers and letters formed the key codes and passwords, participants had assurance of anonymity. The online database is a secure site, thus, all data remains secure and accessible only to those with granted access. In addition to protecting participant identities, the names of the schools and districts participating in this study also remain anonymous. The study utilized a technique called "masking," which assigned counties and schools a non-specific identifier to hide their identity.

Data Collection

The researcher and cohorts identified a number of schools that met the identified selection criteria. The researcher contacted appropriate district personnel for each site to

secure permission to conduct the study and to contact the building level administrator. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, the research design, and the benefits of administering the SCS to the principals of the identified schools. The researcher also provided information on the different variations of the survey. Principals had the option of administering paper and pencil surveys, from which the researcher would collect and record responses by hand into the secure electronic format of the survey or to have faculty complete the survey via the secure online electronic format. All principals selected the secure electronic format. Once they agreed to participate in the study, the principal and researcher secured a date and time for administration of the instrument. The researcher and colleagues contacted schools within multiple school districts before identifying six schools meeting the criteria, three low performing and three high performing, and agreeing to participate in the study.

Each time an agreement was made with a school, the researcher contacted the SCS Administrator at Educational Services Consortium, Incorporated and communicated the number of administrators and instructional personnel at each school site, along with the dates of survey administration. The SCS administrator generated the appropriate number of key codes and passwords for each selected school site. The researcher emailed the key codes and passwords along with the PowerPoint that explained the procedures for completing the survey to the school site administrator. In addition, the researcher offered various times when she would be available to speak with the principal to answer any questions and confirm the dates for survey completion. Each school site agreed to complete the survey within the given ten day window.

Each school received a statement notifying participants that no punitive measures could or would occur because of their participation. Each school site completed the survey within one 50- minute session, using their computer labs, but were given additional days for the survey window for those teachers who were absent or had prior commitments during the agreed upon administration time. After the agreed on ten day window closed for each school, the researcher checked the percentage of faculty participation to see if the number reached the target of 85% participation or greater. Each school site exceeded the target and the researcher notified the SCS administrator that the ten day window had ended and the target participation was reached. The SCS administrator sent the results of the SCS for each school site to the researcher in the form of an HTML table. The researcher transferred the data, specifically the Quality Average Point Score for each item into Microsoft Excel, to conduct statistical analysis. The specifics regarding the statistical analysis are described in more detail in the following sections as well as in Chapter 4.

Study Design

This study was quantitative in nature and used an independent samples *t* test and Pearson's *r* correlation to examine the significant differences in and the relationship between the organizational structure of selected low performing and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia to determine the relationship between organizational structure and school performance. For the statistical analysis of the first research question, the researcher used a *t* test of independent samples based on the SCS Average Total Quality Point score and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test. A *t* test is a basic statistical test, which analyzes statistically significant

difference between two similar group means (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005; Slavin, 1992). A t-test is traditionally used to compare two means or proportions, and is appropriate when the following assumptions are met: (1) each group is a sample from a distinct population; (2) the responses in each group are independent of those in the other group; and, (3) the distributions of the variable of interest are normal (Kaufhold, 2007). For this study, all assumptions of the *t* test were met.

The researcher used the *t* test to compare Average Total Quality Points on the SCS to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the levels of organizational structure as measured by the SCS for the selected low and high performing schools. A value of *p* can identify random sampling errors between two means. A *p* value of less than or equal to .05 is statistically significant (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). The range of *p*-values is typically:

- 0.2 - extremely insignificant
- 0.1- somewhat insignificant
- 0.05 - significant
- 0.02 - very significant
- 0.001- extremely significant.

In most research, a 0.05 or lower produces statistically significant findings, though some researchers identify 0.02 as the set point (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). As previously stated, 0.05 was the set point for this study.

For the statistical analysis of the second research question, the researcher used Pearson's *r* correlation to compare the Average Total Quality Point scores as measured by the SCS, and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test. A Pearson

correlation coefficient (*r*) is the most common correlation technique used by social science researchers to evaluate the degree of the relationship between two quantitative variables without identifying the distinction between an independent and dependent variable. Pearson's correlation should be used when there is a linear relationship between variables. It can be a positive or negative relationship, as long as it is significant. A possible research hypothesis for this statistical model would be that there is a positive linear relationship between variables. Another possible research hypothesis would be that there is a negative linear relationship. If there is no linear relationship between the variables, then we would retain the null hypothesis. The correlation is affected by the size and sign of r. A small size makes for a small effect. A positive correlation results in a positive linear relationship where as a negative r results in a negative linear relationship (Creswell, 2008). Values to measure correlation range from -1.00 to 1.00, with zero indicating no correlation, -1.00 indicating a perfect negative correlation, and 1.00 indicating a perfect positive correlation exists (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005).

Chapter Summary

Following a quantitative study design, the research methodology for this study focused on determining whether there was a statistically significant difference in the levels of organizational structure at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. It also focused on determining whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. Data derived from three selected low and three selected high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia to answer the research questions. The

following chapter provides a detailed discussion of the data analysis and the findings of the study.

Chapter IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In order to achieve what they referred to as organizational excellence, Ott, Parkes, and Simpson (2008) suggested "our most important collective challenge . . . is to develop an increasingly sophisticated ability to creatively use leadership, learning, and adaptive change" (p. 8). They added, "Under the right circumstances people and organizations will grow and prosper together" (p. 7). Within a school framework, the school is the organization and the people are the students, teachers, and administrators. The evidence of their prospering together is the school's performance, but little research is available on the specific components of organizational structure linked to school performance. The following sections, which reveal the results of the School Culture Survey (SCS) (Green, 2000b) from selected low and high performing schools in Florida and South Georgia, may assist in identifying what some of those "right circumstances" (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 7) may be. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Does the School Culture Survey evidence a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

RQ2: Does the School Culture Survey reveal correlation between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

The researcher administered the SCS to teachers and administrators at six selected elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia and examined school performance. The measurement of school performance was on the percentage of students passing the mathematics portion of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) and CRCT (Criterion Referenced Competency Test) from the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 school years. A three year average served as the school performance indicator for this study. The researcher determined not to use school performance data from the 2011-2012 school year because the 2011-2012 data for Georgia schools was unavailable from the Georgia Department of Education at the time of the study. Although 2011-2012 data from the Florida Department of Education was available, Florida transitioned from administering the FCAT to the FCAT 2.0 during the 2011-2012 school year. The Florida Department of Education considered the FCAT 2.0 a more rigorous assessment than the FCAT because it measured newer, more complex standards known as the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2013). Thus, the researcher determined a 3-year average from the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 school years would provide the most consistent and comparable data for school selection for this study.

Study Subjects

Table 8 lists the percentage of students passing the Mathematics portion of the FCAT or CRCT for the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 school years, as well as the three year average for each school selected for the study.

Table 8

Percentage of Students Passing the Mathematics Portion of the FCAT or CRCT in Selected Low and High Performing Elementary Schools

Selected Elementary Schools	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	3 Yr Average
FLA High 1 (FCAT)	79	81	79	80
FLA High 2 (FCAT)	76	81	82	80
GA High 1 (CRCT)	90	93	97	93
FLA Low 1 (FCAT)	71	67	72	70
FLA Low 2 (FCAT)	59	48	60	56
GA Low 1 (CRCT)	49	57	66	57

Low performing schools are those with a 3-year average pass rate on the mathematics portion of the FCAT or CRCT of 70% or below. High performing schools are those with a three year average pass rate on the mathematics portion of the FCAT or CRCT of 80% or above. Codes for the selected low performing schools are FLA Low 1, FLA Low 2, and GA Low 1. Codes for the selected high performing schools are FLA High 1, FLA High 2, and GA High 1. Selected schools derived from a convenience sample based on mathematics scores.

School Culture Survey Results in the Selected Low Performing Elementary Schools

Table 9 lists the Average Quality Point Scores on each item of the SCS in the order they appear in the survey for each low performing elementary school. The first column is the item number on the SCS, and the second column is the "to" statement for that item on the SCS. The third, fourth, and fifth columns list the Quality Point Scores for

each item by school. The sixth column provides the Average Quality Point Score for all three selected low performing elementary schools. Finally, the last column lists the standard deviation (SD) across selected low performing elementary schools for each item. Holcomb (2004) defined standard deviation as a "yardstick for measuring differences among a group of participants" (p. 44) and also as a "yardstick for measuring variability (i.e., differences among participants, subjects, respondents, or cases)" (p. 46). Essentially, the greater the value of the standard deviation, the greater the variability across the respondents (Holcomb 2004). The last row of Table 9 lists the average for each column.

Table 9

Average Quality Point Scores on the School Culture Survey in Selected Low Performing Elementary Schools

Item	SCS Item "To" Statement	FLA Low 1	FLA Low 2	GA Low 1	SCS Avg.	SD
1	Leadership resides in teams, with everyone taking leadership responsibilities, from the bottom-up.	62	43	63	56	11.27
2	Teachers are viewed as key to organizational health and school success.	68	53	59	60	7.55
3	An organization with few layers where most policies impacting a team are made by the team members and implemented by an elected team leader.	64	53	63	60	6.08
4	Employees and teams are encouraged to describe the skills and strengths they have and how they complement each other.	67	58	69	65	5.86
5	School Leadership characterized as using coaching skills to achieve a "we are all in this together" attitude.	63	55	67	62	6.11
6	Delegates to others. The sharing of responsibility is promoted and employees are empowered to act.	60	53	65	59	6.03
7	Teachers, parents, students, and community members are given timely and consistent responses.	60	50	72	61	11.02
8	Team members give feedback to the Principal and Leadership Team on their performance.	60	53	59	57	3.79

9	Learning activities for teachers and staff are determined by the learner and groups are formed only if common needs are identified.	66	55	64	62	5.86
10	Resources are distributed to each team member based on a fair, equitable formula that is transparent, public, and understood.	66	66	72	68	3.46
11	The school is organized around self- managing improvement teams with emphasis on increasing school performance.	68	60	67	65	4.36
12	Our school projects a unique character as well as an image consistent with the vision of a quality school.	65	60	67	64	3.61
13	Incentives are essential for school success and are integral to each self-managing team.	61	51	61	58	5.77
14	School improvement activities are coordinated and part of the school's structure and strategic plan.	64	57	70	64	6.51
15	School is lead by the principal (with a small support staff, assistants, secretary, etc) and elected team leaders working with self-managing teams.	63	57	63	61	3.46
16	Leadership is visible, accessible, and frequent contacts are initiated.	67	54	65	62	7.00
17	Faculty and staff can perform multiple jobs and cross train regularly.	62	54	59	58	4.04
18	Success is based on everyone having a clearly defined role and cooperation among students, teachers, and staff serving in clearly defined roles.	63	63	67	64	2.31
19	Improvement efforts are measured, tracked, and publicly reported.	67	66	69	67	1.53
20	Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization.	57	46	66	56	10.02
21	Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired.	57	57	58	57	0.58
22	Leadership is modeled at every opportunity— others are encouraged to model leadership.	66	54	70	63	8.33
23	Strong evidence exists that the school's leadership cares about the school family.	66	57	72	65	7.55
24	Much emphasis is placed on recognizing individual and team successes with celebrations.	65	63	74	67	5.86
25	Full support for employee motivated/directed pilot programs with short implementation timelines.	65	57	61	61	4.00

26	School's organizational design encourages employees to take immediate and appropriate action when needed.	64	51	68	61	8.89
27	A clear vision about where the school is going and what is to be achieved is re-created regularly with everyone.	65	60	70	65	5.00
28	A view of the school as an "excellent school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success.	65	60	67	64	3.61
29	Everyone participates in everything.	57	54	63	58	4.58
30	Everyone participates in the creation and implementation of the School's Strategic School Improvement Plan.	63	51	68	61	8.74
31	New ideas are embraced, supported, and encouraged.	66	71	68	68	2.52
32	High standards of integrity are observable in all leadership actions.	63	60	69	64	4.58
33	School has a set of core values that are written, public, and known by all employees.	62	60	67	63	3.61
34	The school is marketed in the best possible light via a word-of-mouth strategy and other significant image-building strategies.	59	54	63	59	4.51
35	An organization that balances job responsibility with authority.	61	51	63	58	6.43
36	The hearts of key school stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, community, etc.) are encouraged by promoting enthusiasm and high ideals.	63	60	64	62	2.08
37	School leadership time is spent freely and productively listening to teachers.	63	57	67	62	5.03
38	Focus on teachers and staff developing and creating custom improvement resources they believe best fits the school.	62	60	66	63	3.06
39	Job security is important, and once you become a member, job security is promoted at all costs.	62	60	63	62	1.53
40	Relationships are positive. Everyone treats others with respect and civility, based on high standards of human relations.	58	63	57	59	3.21
41	Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data.	68	77	73	73	4.51
42	Eliminate policies and practices (usually tiny) that demean and belittle human dignity.	63	63	66	64	1.73

43	How do you grade the quality of work life at your school?	63	66	66	65	1.73
44	Are team members given the necessary information, resources, and decision making authority needed to do quality work at your school?	62	66	69	66	3.51
45	Does the leadership at your school effectively empower teachers and staff with real power?	63	63	69	65	3.46
46	Are teachers and staff organized into empowered, self managing teams with elected team leaders?	61	60	66	62	3.21
47	What is the quality of the relationships at your school?	67	66	61	65	3.21
48	Are all teachers and staff actively involved, with specific responsibilities, in the school's strategic improvement plan?	62	57	64	61	3.61
49	Is your school organized and designed effectively creating a high performance culture?	66	63	63	64	1.73
50	The 'To' statements and indicators in the previous 49 questions are reflective of "effective organization, empowerment of participants and a quality of work life for all." Question: Based on your school's organization design and approach to leadership is it "Likely" to aggressively move forward meeting higher and higher standards as noted in this survey?	68	66	66	67	1.15
	Average	63	58	66	62	4.74

The average Quality Point Scores across the three selected low performing schools revealed 13 D-Flags (a score of 60 or below), which indicated a deficiency in that area of the schools' organizational structure, and one Q-Flag (a score of 70 or above), which indicated an area of quality within the schools' organizational structure. These items are in more detail following Tables 10 and 11. When examining individual schools, FLA Low 1 had 8 D-Flags and 0 Q-Flags; FLA Low 2 had 36 D-Flags and 2 Q-Flags; and GA Low 1 had 5 D-Flags and 8 Q-Flags. All selected low performing elementary schools had multiple D-Flags, as did the average of the selected low performing schools

(13 D-Flags), indicating multiple areas of deficiency in the schools' organizational structure.

The average standard deviation across the three selected low performing elementary schools was 4.74, with a range of 0.58 to 11.27. Item 21, *Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired*, had the least variation across schools, with a standard deviation of 0.58. This is indicative of more centralized hiring decisions made by the top leadership within the schools. All selected low performing schools scored below 60, with an average Quality Point Score of 57, on this item, indicating a deficiency in this area. Further discussion of Item 21 follows in the comparative section of this study. The item with the second lowest standard deviation (1.15) was Item 50, *The 'To' statements and indicators in the previous 49 questions are reflective of "effective organization, empowerment of participants and a quality of work life for all." Question: Based on your school's organization design and approach to leadership is it "Likely" to aggressively move forward meeting higher and higher standards as noted in this survey?* While there was little variation across the selected low performing elementary schools, an average Quality Point Score on this item of 67 did not indicate a deficient area or a quality area. However, all selected low performing schools scored closer to 70 (quality range) than to 60 (deficiency range) on this item, which indicated promise for future improvement.

Item 1, *Leadership resides in teams, with everyone taking leadership responsibilities, from the bottom-up*, had the greatest standard deviation (11.27) across the selected low performing elementary schools. However, on closer analysis, the table revealed FLA Low 2 as an outlier on this item, which caused the large variation across

schools. FLA Low 1 and GA Low 2 scored within one point of each other: 62 and 63, respectively, on this item, while FLA Low 2 scored only 43 points. This difference of 19 and 20 points was the reason for large variation across schools.

On the other hand, Item 7, *Teachers, parents, students, and community members are given timely and consistent responses*, had the second greatest standard deviation (11.02) and closer analysis revealed each school's score varied by 10 to 11 points: FL Low 1 (60), Fl Low 2 (50) and GA Low 1 (72), with a range of 50 to 72. Another interesting variation was that the two Florida schools flagged for deficiency in this area, while the Georgia school flagged for quality in this area. Item 20, *Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization*, had the third largest standard deviation (10.02). Similar to Item 7, the schools varied by 9 points from school to school, FL Low 1 (57), Fl Low 2 (46) and GA Low 1 (66), and had a 20 point difference in the range from 46 to 66. This item also followed a similar ranking pattern as Item 7 with FL Low 1 scoring in the middle of the other two schools. However, all three schools, as well as the average for the three schools, were flagged for deficiency on Item 20. While there is variation across the degree of deficiency in this area, it is clear all three selected low performing schools were deficient in the area of decentralized decisions.

Table 10 lists the five highest scoring items on the SCS on the Average Total Quality Point Scores across the three low performing elementary schools. The items rank from highest to lowest based on the Average Quality Point Scores, which is the sixth column in the table. The first column is the item number on the SCS, and the second column is the "to" statement for that item on the SCS. The third, fourth, and fifth

columns list the Quality Point Scores for each item by each school and the last column lists the standard deviation (SD) across selected low performing elementary schools for each item.

Table 10

Highest Ranking Items on the School Culture Survey (Average across Low Performing Elementary Schools)

Item	Item "To" Statement	FLA Low 1	FLA Low 2	GA Low 1	SCS Avg	SD
41	Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data.	68	77	73	73	4.51
31	New ideas are embraced, supported, and encouraged.	66	71	68	68	2.52
10	Resources are distributed to each team member based on a fair, equitable formula that is transparent, public, and understood.	66	66	72	68	3.46
19	Improvement efforts are measured, tracked, and publicly reported.	67	66	69	67	1.53
24	Much emphasis is placed on recognizing individual and team successes with celebrations.	65	63	74	67	5.86
50	The 'To' statements and indicators in the previous 49 questions are reflective of "effective organization, empowerment of participants and a quality of work life for all." Question: Based on your school's organization design and approach to leadership is it "Likely" to aggressively move forward meeting higher and higher standards as noted in this survey?	68	66	66	67	1.15

With the exception of Item 24, *Much emphasis is placed on recognizing individual and team successes with celebrations* (SD 5.86), the standard deviations of the five highest scoring items across the selected low performing elementary schools fall below the average standard deviation for all 50 items (4.74). This is indicative of little variation in the highest scoring items across the selected low performing schools. The only one of the highest scoring items with an Average Quality Point Score high enough

to be flagged as an area of quality was Item 41, *Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data*, with an average of 73. Likely the reason for a quality flag in this area was that all schools, particularly low performing schools, had a mandate to use student achievement data to drive their instruction and decision making under the *NCLB Act, Race to the Top*, and Senate Bill 736 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2012; Florida Department of Education, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Race to the Top Grant, 2012). These same mandates, which required various layers of intervention to increase student achievement in low performing schools, closely related to the selected low performing schools scoring higher (though not in the quality range) and consistently in the following areas: embracing, supporting, and encouraging new ideas; measuring, tracking and reporting improvement; allocating and distributing resources; and recognizing successes. As stated in the previous section, an Average Total Quality Point Score of 67, with a standard deviation of 1.15, across the selected low performing elementary schools on Item 50 showed promise for the low performing elementary schools selected for this study. Item 50 states: *The 'To' statements and indicators in the previous 49 questions are reflective of "effective organization, empowerment of participants and a quality of work life for all." Question: Based on your school's organization design and approach to leadership is it "Likely" to aggressively move forward meeting higher and higher standards as noted in this survey?*

Table 11 lists the five lowest ranking items on the SCS based on the average across the three low performing elementary schools. The items rank from lowest to highest, based on the Average Quality Point Scores, which is the sixth column in the

table. The first column is the item number on the SCS, and the second column is the "to" statement for that item on the SCS. The third, fourth, and fifth columns list the Total Quality Point Scores for each item by each school and the last column lists the standard deviation (SD) across selected low performing elementary schools. When the researcher identified the five lowest scoring items, four items had the same Average Total Quality Point Score (58) for the fifth lowest scoring item. For these reasons, the researcher determined all four items should be included in the table below, giving the table eight items rather than five.

Table 11

Lowest Ranking Items on the School Culture Survey (Average across Low Performing Elementary Schools)

Item	Item "To" Statement	FLA Low 1	FLA Low 2	GA Low 1	SCS Avg	SD
1	Leadership resides in teams, with everyone taking leadership responsibilities, from the bottom-up.	62	43	63	56	11.27
20	Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization.	57	46	66	56	10.02
8	Team members give feedback to the Principal and Leadership Team on their performance.	60	53	59	57	3.79
21	Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired.	57	57	58	57	0.58
13	Incentives are essential for school success and are integral to each self-managing team.	61	51	61	58	5.77
29	Everyone participates in everything.	57	54	63	58	4.58
17	Faculty and staff can perform multiple jobs and cross train regularly.	62	54	59	58	4.04
35	An organization that balances job responsibility with authority.	61	51	63	58	6.43

The list of lowest ranking items includes the item with the least (Item 21, SD 0.58) standard deviation for all 50 items based on the responses from the selected low performing elementary schools. Discussion of this item is in more detail in the section comparing the low and high performing schools. The list of lowest ranking items across the selected low performing schools also includes the items with the greatest (Item 1, SD 11.27) and third greatest (Item 20, SD 10.02) standard deviation, across the selected low performing schools. As discussed earlier in this section, FLA Low 2 was an outlier on Item 1, *Leadership resides in teams, with everyone taking leadership responsibilities, from the bottom-up*, which caused the large variation across schools. FLA Low 1 and GA Low 2 scored within one point of each other: 62 and 63, respectively, on this item, while FLA Low 2 only scored 43 points. This difference of 19 and 20 points was the reason for large variation across schools.

Item 20, *Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization*, had the third largest standard deviation (10.02). The selected low performing schools varied by 9 points from school to school: FL Low 1 (57), Fl Low 2 (46), and GA Low 1(66). However, all three schools as well as their averages were flagged for deficiency on Item 20. While there was variation in the amount of deficiency in the schools' organizational structure, it was clear the three selected low performing schools' organizational structure had deficiencies in decentralized decisions. The lowest scoring items across the selected low performing schools fell under the themes of teaming and shared or distributed leadership, addressed in Chapter 2 of this study.

School Culture Survey Results in the Selected High Performing Elementary Schools

Table 12 lists the Average Quality Point Scores on each item of the SCS in the order they appear in the survey for each high performing elementary school. The first column is the item number on the SCS, and the second column is the "to" statement for that item on the SCS. The third, fourth, and fifth columns list the Quality Point Scores for each item by each school. The sixth column provides the average Quality Point Score for all three selected high performing elementary schools. Finally, the last column lists the standard deviation (SD) across selected high performing elementary schools. Holcomb (2004) defined standard deviation as a "yardstick for measuring differences among a group of participants" (p. 44) and also as a "yardstick for measuring variability (i.e., differences among participants, subjects, respondents, or cases)" (p. 46). Essentially, the greater the value of the standard deviation, the greater the variability across the respondents. The last row of Table 12 lists the average for each column.

Table 12

Average Quality Point Scores on the School Culture Survey in High Performing Elementary Schools

Item	SCS Item "To" Statement	GA High 1	FLA High 1	FLA High 2	Avg. QP	SD
1	Leadership resides in teams, with everyone taking leadership responsibilities, from the bottom-up.	64	88	73	75	12.1
2	Teachers are viewed as key to organizational health and school success.	73	89	78	80	8.2
3	An organization with few layers where most policies impacting a team are made by the team members and implemented by an elected team leader.	63	80	72	72	8.5
4	Employees and teams are encouraged to describe the skills and strengths they have and how they complement each other.	69	84	74	76	7.6
5	School Leadership characterized as using coaching skills to achieve a "we are all in this together" attitude.	74	91	82	82	8.5

6	Delegates to others. The sharing of responsibility is promoted and employees are empowered to act.	75	77	76	76	1.0
7	Teachers, parents, students, and community members are given timely and consistent responses.	61	82	77	73	11.0
8	Team members give feedback to the Principal and Leadership Team on their performance.	67	83	79	76	8.3
9	Learning activities for teachers and staff are determined by the learner and groups are formed only if common needs are identified.	68	80	70	73	6.4
10	Resources are distributed to each team member based on a fair, equitable formula that is transparent, public, and understood.	72	76	73	74	2.1
11	The school is organized around self- managing improvement teams with emphasis on increasing school performance.	76	87	78	80	5.9
12	Our school projects a unique character as well as an image consistent with the vision of a quality school.	80	92	82	85	6.4
13	Incentives are essential for school success and are integral to each self-managing team.	63	77	74	71	7.4
14	School improvement activities are coordinated and part of the school's structure and strategic plan.	76	85	79	80	4.6
15	School is lead by the principal (with a small support staff, assistants, secretary, etc) and elected team leaders working with self-managing teams.	74	80	74	76	3.5
16	Leadership is visible, accessible, and frequent contacts are initiated.	67	85	73	75	9.2
17	Faculty and staff can perform multiple jobs and cross train regularly.	64	78	74	72	7.2
18	Success is based on everyone having a clearly defined role and cooperation among students, teachers, and staff serving in clearly defined roles.	72	89	75	79	9.1
19	Improvement efforts are measured, tracked, and publicly reported.	77	82	73	77	4.5
20	Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization.	65	73	70	69	4.0
21	Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired.	61	39	76	59	18.6
22	Leadership is modeled at every opportunity— others are encouraged to model leadership.	73	86	73	77	7.5

23	Strong evidence exists that the school's leadership cares about the school family.	77	93	84	85	8.0
24	Much emphasis is placed on recognizing individual and team successes with celebrations.	59	81	84	75	13.7
25	Full support for employee motivated/directed pilot programs with short implementation timelines.	65	76	73	71	5.7
26	School's organizational design encourages employees to take immediate and appropriate action when needed.	73	83	77	78	5.0
27	A clear vision about where the school is going and what is to be achieved is re-created regularly with everyone.	78	88	75	80	6.8
28	A view of the school as an "excellent school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success.	80	93	82	85	7.0
29	Everyone participates in everything.	71	76	71	73	2.9
30	Everyone participates in the creation and implementation of the School's Strategic School Improvement Plan.	74	82	82	79	4.6
31	New ideas are embraced, supported, and encouraged.	75	86	78	80	5.7
32	High standards of integrity are observable in all leadership actions.	80	89	78	82	5.9
33	School has a set of core values that are written, public, and known by all employees.	82	86	70	79	8.3
34	The school is marketed in the best possible light via a word-of-mouth strategy and other significant image-building strategies.	78	87	70	78	8.5
35	An organization that balances job responsibility with authority.	75	84	70	76	7.1
36	The hearts of key school stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, community, etc.) are encouraged by promoting enthusiasm and high ideals.	73	88	78	80	7.6
37	School leadership time is spent freely and productively listening to teachers.	71	81	78	77	5.1
38	Focus on teachers and staff developing and creating custom improvement resources they believe best fits the school.	75	82	75	77	4.0
39	Job security is important, and once you become a member, job security is promoted at all costs.	73	83	76	77	5.1

40	Relationships are positive. Everyone treats others with respect and civility, based on high standards of human relations.	75	91	67	78	12.2
41	Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data.	80	90	80	83	5.8
42	Eliminate policies and practices (usually tiny) that demean and belittle human dignity.	77	86	72	78	7.1
43	How do you grade the quality of work life at your school?	81	89	78	83	5.7
44	Are team members given the necessary information, resources, and decision making authority needed to do quality work at your school?	75	89	78	81	7.4
45	Does the leadership at your school effectively empower teachers and staff with real power?	74	87	74	78	7.5
46	Are teachers and staff organized into empowered, self managing teams with elected team leaders?	76	83	75	78	4.4
47	What is the quality of the relationships at your school?	79	93	73	82	10.3
48	Are all teachers and staff actively involved, with specific responsibilities, in the school's strategic improvement plan?	77	87	78	81	5.5
49	Is your school organized and designed effectively creating a high performance culture?	82	94	78	85	8.3
50	The 'To' statements and indicators in the previous 49 questions are reflective of "effective organization, empowerment of participants and a quality of work life for all." Question: Based on your school's organization design and approach to leadership is it "Likely" to aggressively move forward meeting higher and higher standards as noted in this survey?	82	89	75	82	7.0
	Average	73	84	76	78	7.1

The average Quality Point Scores across the three selected high performing schools revealed 48 Q-Flags (score of 70 or greater), which was indicative of a quality area within the schools' organizational structure and only 1 D-Flag (score of 60 or less), which indicated an area of deficiency in the schools' organizational structure. The only D-Flag was for item 21, *Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired.* Closer analysis revealed that only one high performing

school had a D-Flag on this item (FLA Low 1), but the score was so low (39) that it brought the average of three schools down to a 59 or just below the cut-off for a D-Flag. The other two schools scored 61(GA High 1) and 76 (FLA High 2). The variance across the selected high performing schools caused Item 21 to have the greatest standard deviation (SD 18.6). Further discussion of this item is in the following comparative section.

Item 24, *Much emphasis is placed on recognizing individual and team successes with celebrations*, had the second highest standard deviation (13.7) and was the only other item for which any of the selected high performing schools received a D-Flag. For this item, the Georgia school (GA High 1) was an outlier with a score of 59, while the two Florida schools scored similarly (FLA High 1 – 81, FLA High 2 – 84). Item 6, *Delegates to others, The sharing of responsibility is promoted and employees are empowered to act*, Item 10, *Resources are distributed to each team member based on a fair, equitable formula that is transparent, public, and understood*, and Item 29, *Everyone participates in everything*, had the three lowest standard deviations (1.0, 2.1, and 2.9, respectively). These three items fell under the theme of shared or distributed leadership. The average standard deviation for the high performing group was 6.7. Though there was greater variation in the level of quality across the selected high performing schools, all high performing schools had high numbers of Q-Flags (37, 49, and 49) and only one or less D-Flags for each school.

Table 13 lists the five highest-ranking items on the SCS across the three high performing elementary schools. The items rank from highest to lowest based on the average Quality Point Scores, which is the sixth column in the table. The first column is

the item number on the SCS, and the second column is the "to" statement for that item on the SCS. The third, fourth, and fifth columns list the Total Quality Point Scores for each item by each school and the last column lists the standard deviation (SD) across selected high performing elementary schools. When identifying the five highest scoring items, two items had the same Average Total Quality Point Score (78) for the fifth highest scoring item. For these reasons, the both items are in the table below, giving the table six items rather than five.

Table 13

Highest Scoring Items on the School Culture Survey (Average across High Performing Elementary Schools)

Item	SCS Item "To" Statement	GA High 1	FLA High 1	FLA High 2	Avg. QP	SD
28	A view of the school as an "excellent school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success.	80	93	82	85	7.0
12	Our school projects a unique character as well as an image consistent with the vision of a quality school.	80	92	82	85	6.4
23	Strong evidence exists that the school's leadership cares about the school family.	77	93	84	85	8.0
49	Is your school organized and designed effectively creating a high performance culture?	82	94	78	85	8.3
41	Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data.	80	90	80	83	5.8
43	How do you grade the quality of work life at your school?	81	89	78	83	5.7

Multiple themes appeared in the top scoring items. They included a focus on continuous improvement and data-based decision making, a focus on human needs (resources), and clear intent/direction. Item 28, *A view of the school as an "excellent*

school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success, had the highest Average Total Quality Point Score across the selected high performing schools. All top scoring items had an average of 83 or greater, which exceeded the cut-off for a Q-Flag by 13 points.

Table 14 lists the five lowest ranking items on the SCS across the three high performing elementary schools. The items rank from lowest to highest, based on the Average Quality Point Scores, which is the sixth column in the table. The first column is the item number on the SCS, and the second column is the "to" statement for that item on the SCS. The third, fourth, and fifth columns list the Total Quality Point Scores for each item by each school and the last column lists the standard deviation (SD) across selected high performing elementary schools. When identifying the five lowest scoring items, two items had the same Average Quality Point Score (72) for the fifth lowest scoring item. For these reasons, both items are in the table below, giving the table six items rather than five.

Table 14

Lowest Scoring Items on the School Culture Survey (Average across High Performing Elementary Schools)

Item	SCS Item "To" Statement	GA High 1	FLA High 1	FLA High 2	Avg. QP	SD
21	Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired.	61	39	76	59	18.6
20	Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization.	65	73	70	69	4.0
13	Incentives are essential for school success and are integral to each self-managing team.	63	77	74	71	7.4
25	Full support for employee motivated/directed pilot programs with short implementation	65	76	73	71	5.7

	timelines.					
3	An organization with few layers where most policies impacting a team are made by the team members and implemented by an elected team leader.	63	80	72	72	8.5
17	Faculty and staff can perform multiple jobs and cross train regularly.	64	78	74	72	7.2

As previously stated, the only D-Flag for the high performing group was for item 21, *Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired.* Closer analysis revealed that only one high performing school had a D-Flag on this item (FLA Low 1), but the score was so low (39) that it brought the average of three schools down to 59 or just below the cut-off for a D Flag. The other two schools scored 61(GA High 1) and 76 (FLA High 2). The variance across the selected high performing schools caused Item 21 to have the greatest standard deviation (SD 18.6). Discussion of this item is in the following comparative section.

Item 20, *Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization*, was the second lowest scoring item with an average of 69, which was one point below the cut-off for a Q-Flag. Closer analysis revealed the Georgia school (GA High 1) scored a 65, which brought the mean of the three selected high performing elementary schools down to 69, while the two Florida Schools both received Q-Flags for this item. While Items 20, 13, 25, 3, and 17 were also included in the lowest scoring items, they each earned Q-Flags, indicating the selected high performing elementary schools demonstrated quality in these areas of organizational structure.

Comparison of Average Quality Point Scores on the School Culture Survey in Low and High Performing Elementary Schools

Table 15 compares the selected low performing schools identified as Group 1 and the selected high performing elementary schools identified as Group 2.

Table 15

Comparison of the Average Quality Points of Item of the School Culture Survey between Low and High Performing Elementary Schools

	Group 1 (Low Performing Schools)				Group 2 (High Performing Schools)			
SCS Item	FLA Low 1	FLA Low 2	GA Low 1	SCS Average Total Quality Points for Group 1	GA High 1	FLA High 1	FLA High 2	SCS Average Total Quality Points for Group 2
1	62	43	63	56	64	88	73	75
2	68	53	59	60	73	89	78	80
3	64	53	63	60	63	80	72	72
4	67	58	69	65	69	84	74	76
5	63	55	67	62	74	91	82	82
6	60	53	65	59	75	77	76	76
7	60	50	72	61	61	82	77	73
8	60	53	59	57	67	83	79	76
9	66	55	64	62	68	80	70	73
10	66	66	72	68	72	76	73	74
11	68	60	67	65	76	87	78	80
12	65	60	67	64	80	92	82	85
13	61	51	61	58	63	77	74	71
14	64	57	70	64	76	85	79	80
15	63	57	63	61	74	80	74	76
16	67	54	65	62	67	85	73	75
17	62	54	59	58	64	78	74	72
18	63	63	67	64	72	89	75	79
19	67	66	69	67	77	82	73	77
20	57	46	66	56	65	73	70	69
21	57	57	58	57	61	39	76	59
22	66	54	70	63	73	86	73	77
23	66	57	72	65	77	93	84	85
24	65	63	74	67	59	81	84	75
25	65	57	61	61	65	76	73	71
26	64	51	68	61	73	83	77	78
27	65	60	70	65	78	88	75	80
28	65	60	67	64	80	93	82	85

29	57	54	63	58	71	76	71	73
30	63	51	68	61	74	82	82	79
31	66	71	68	68	75	86	78	80
32	63	60	69	64	80	89	78	82
33	62	60	67	63	82	86	70	79
34	59	54	63	59	78	87	70	78
35	61	51	63	58	75	84	70	76
36	63	60	64	62	73	88	78	80
37	63	57	67	62	71	81	78	77
38	62	60	66	63	75	82	75	77
39	62	60	63	62	73	83	76	77
40	58	63	57	59	75	91	67	78
41	68	77	73	73	80	90	80	83
42	63	63	66	64	77	86	72	78
43	63	66	66	65	81	89	78	83
44	62	66	69	66	75	89	78	81
45	63	63	69	65	74	87	74	78
46	61	60	66	62	76	83	75	78
47	67	66	61	65	79	93	73	82
48	62	57	64	61	77	87	78	81
49	66	63	63	64	82	94	78	85
50	68	66	66	67	82	89	75	82
Average	63	58	66	63	73	84	76	78

A comparison of the Average Total Quality Points for Groups 1 and 2 for each item revealed that, for most items, the difference, or range, between Groups 1 and 2 was greater than 10 while some were closer to a 20 point difference. Only three items had a range less than 10. Item 10, *Resources are distributed to each team member based on a fair, equitable formula that is transparent, public, and understood*, and Item 24, *Much emphasis is placed on recognizing individual and team successes with celebrations*, both had a difference of 7 between the two groups. The item with the least difference (1 point) between groups was Item 21, *Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired*. As previously stated, Item 21 was also the only D-

Flag for Group 2 (High Performing), and was in the list of lowest scoring items for both the selected low and high performing elementary schools. This indicated hiring decisions were centralized. It is likely that many schools have hiring procedures dictated by the school district's Human Resources Department. It is also likely that hiring procedures develop through negotiations with local and state teachers unions, which may limit schools to certain procedures for hiring. However, as schools and districts move forward in the 21st century, Dufour and Dufour (2010) suggested teachers who will work with the new hire should play an important role. They asserted in schools that truly embrace Professional Learning Communities, collaborative teams played roles in the hiring process as new teachers entered the profession. The collaborative teams "will assume responsibility for providing a smooth transition. Instead of the traditional sink-or-swim introduction to teaching . . . when members of the team discover problem areas, they will have multiple sources of support to help improve their instructional practices" (Dufour & Dufour, 2010, p. 88). The greatest difference between the two groups (21 points) was on Item 5, *School Leadership characterized as using coaching skills to achieve a "we are all in this together" attitude*, Item 12, *Our school projects a unique character as well as an image consistent with the vision of a quality school*, Item 28, *A view of the school as an "excellent school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success*, and Item 49, *Is your school organized and designed effectively creating a high performance culture?* While the selected low performing schools might not have higher ratings on Items 12 and 28 until the schools' performance rates increased, the difference in items 5 and 49 was of concern for the selected low performing schools.

Table 16 compares the selected low and high performing schools for the lowest scoring Average Quality Points of items. Group 1 consists of the three selected low performing elementary schools and Group 2 consists of the three selected high performing elementary schools. The items are in order of least to greatest for each group. The first and sixth columns list the SCS item. Columns 2-4 and 7-9 list the Total Quality Points for each item for each school, and columns 5 and 10 list the Average Quality Points for each Group for each item. As mentioned previously, Group 1 includes eight items (as opposed to six in Group 2) because four items received the same score (58). Thus, it was important to include all four items in the table, rather than randomly selecting two to omit.

Table 16

Comparison between Low and High Performing Elementary Schools (Lowest Scoring Average Quality Points of Items)

Group 1 (Low Performing Schools)					Group 2 (High Performing Schools)				
SCS Item	FLA Low 1	FLA Low 2	GA Low 1	SCS Avg. QP	SCS Item	GA High 1	FLA High 1	FLA High 2	SCS Avg. QP
1	62	43	63	56	21	61	39	76	59
20	57	46	66	56	20	65	73	70	69
8	60	53	59	57	13	63	77	74	71
21	57	57	58	57	25	65	76	73	71
13	61	51	61	58	3	63	80	72	72
29	57	54	63	58	17	64	78	74	72
17	62	54	59	58					
35	61	51	63	58					

Item 13, *Incentives are essential for school success and are integral to each self-managing team*, Item 17, *Faculty and staff can perform multiple jobs and cross train*

regularly, Item 20, *Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization*, and Item 21, *Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired* were the lowest scoring items for both the low and high performing schools selected for the study. Item 21 was a common occurrence in previous tables and previously discussed in detail.

Table 17 compares the selected low and high performing schools for the highest scoring Average Quality Points of items. Group 1 consists of the three selected low performing elementary schools and Group 2 consists of the three selected high performing elementary schools. The first and sixth columns list the SCS item. Columns 2-4 and 7-9 list the Total Quality Points for each item for each school, and columns 5 and 10 list the Average Quality Points for each group for each item.

Table 17

Comparison between Low and High Performing Elementary Schools (Highest Scoring Average Quality Points of Items

Group 1 (Low Performing Schools)					Group 2 (High Performing Schools)				
SCS Item	FLA Low 1	FLA Low 2	GA Low 1	SCS Avg. QP	SCS Item	GA High 1	FLA High 1	FLA High 2	SCS Avg. QP
1	68	77	73	73	28	80	93	82	85
31	66	71	68	68	12	80	92	82	85
10	66	66	72	68	49	82	94	78	85
24	65	63	74	67	23	77	93	84	85
19	67	66	69	67	41	80	90	80	83
50	68	66	66	67	43	81	89	78	83

Item 41, *Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data*, was the only item Groups 1 and 2 had in common on the two groups' highest scoring items. As stated previously, schools mandated by No Child Left Behind,

Race to the Top, and Senate Bill 736 (Florida) must use specific student achievement data for driving instruction and data-based decision making. The Q-Flag (indicating an area of quality in the schools' organizational structure) for both groups was more likely due to the mandates rather than to decisions made at the school level. The selected high performing schools scored highest (85 points) on Item 12, *Our school projects a unique character as well as an image consistent with the vision of a quality school*, Item 23, *Strong evidence exists that the school's leadership cares about the school family*, Item 28, *A view of the school as an "excellent school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success*, and Item 49, *Is your school organized and designed effectively creating a high performance culture?*. Items 12, 28, and 49 were three of the four items having the largest difference (21 points) in Average Quality Point Scores between the low and high performing groups.

Findings for Research Question 1

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The following research question guided this study:

RQ1: Does the School Culture Survey evidence a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

To answer the first research question, the researcher conducted a *t* test of independent samples using the SCS Average Total Quality Point score and the Mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test for each selected school. A *t* test

is a basic statistical test, which analyzes the statistically significant difference between two similar group means (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005; Slavin, 1992). The *t* test compared Average Total Quality Points on the SCS to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the levels of organizational structure as measured by the SCS of the selected low and high performing schools. A value of *p* identifies random sampling errors between two means. A *p* value less than or equal to .05 is statistically significant (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). The range of *p*-values is typically:

- 0.2 - extremely insignificant
- 0.1 - somewhat insignificant
- 0.05 - significant
- 0.02 - very significant
- 0.001 - extremely significant.

In most research, a 0.05 or lower results in a statistically significant difference, though some researchers identify 0.02 as the set point (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). For the current study, the researcher used the *t* test statistical analysis function in Microsoft Excel to conduct a t-test of independent samples. The *t* test revealed a *p*-value of 0.0346, which was less than 0.05. Therefore, the results of the *t* test of independent samples indicated there was a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools.

Findings for Research Question 2

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school

performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The following research question guided this study:

RQ2: Does the School Culture Survey reveal correlation between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

To answer this research question, a Pearson's *r* correlation compared the SCS Average Total Quality Point scores, and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test. A Pearson's correlation coefficient (*r*) is the most common correlation technique used by social science researchers needing to evaluate the degree of relationship between two quantitative variables without identifying the distinction between an independent and dependent variable. Values to measure correlation range from -1.00 to 1.00, with zero indicating no correlation, -1.00 indicating a perfect negative correlation, and 1.00 indicating a perfect positive correlation (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). A negative correlation indicates the relationship is "inverse (i.e., those with high scores on one variable tend to have low scores on the other one.)" (Holcomb, 2004, p. 71). A positive correlation indicates the relationship is direct. This means "those with high scores on one variable tend to have high scores on the other variable and those with low scores on one variable tend to have low scores on the other variable" (Holcomb, 2004, p. 71). For both positive and negative correlations, the closer they are to zero, the weaker the correlation. For negative correlations, the closer it is to -1.0, the stronger the correlation. For positive correlations, the closer it is to 1.0, the stronger the correlation (Holcomb, 2004).

The researcher used the correlation statistical analysis function in Microsoft Excel to calculate the correlation for this research question, comparing the three year average of each school's pass rate on the mathematics portion of the FCAT (Florida) or CRCT (Georgia) and the Total Average Quality Point Scores for each low and high performing elementary school. The analysis resulted in a correlation of 0.7382. Therefore, the researcher found the SCS did reveal correlation between organizational structure and school performance in the selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools. The correlation was moderately strong at the 0.7382 level. Figure 1 further illustrates the relationship between organizational structure as measured by the SCS and school performance. GA High 1 had the greatest difference in the mathematics pass rate and SCS Average Quality Point Score. This school had a 93% pass rate. In order for a school to score close to 93 on the SCS, it is likely the personnel would need to work towards the factors/items on the instrument with great intent.

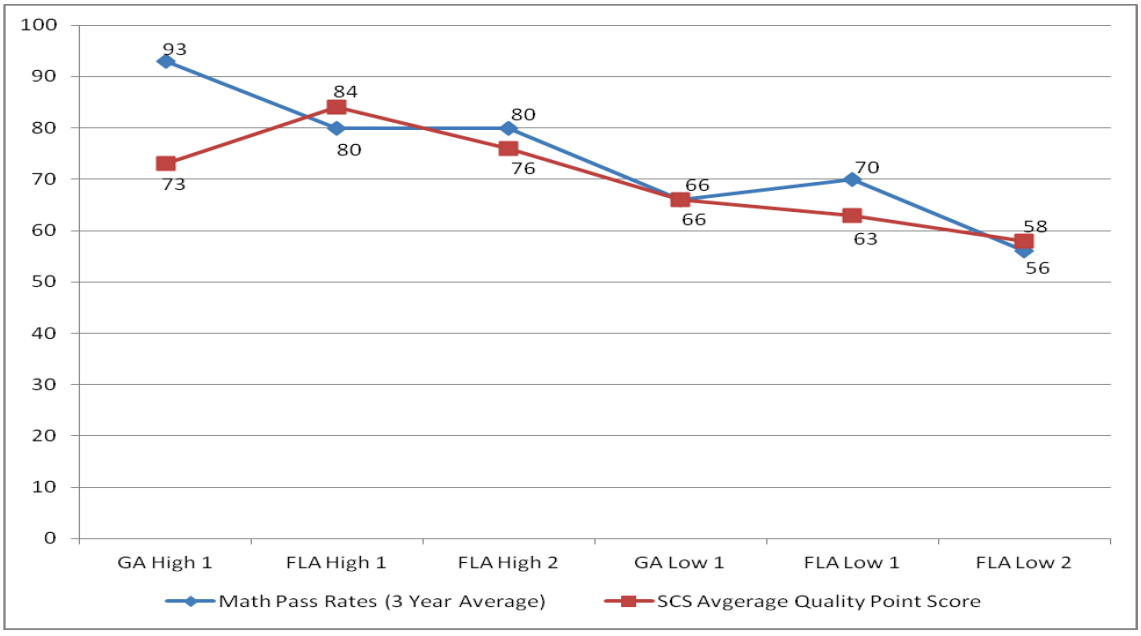

Figure 1. Comparison of Percentage of Students Passing the Mathematics Portion of the FCAT or CRCT and SCS Average Quality Point Scores

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 provided the descriptive analysis of the school performance data as well as the results of the SCS for each of the selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. Two research questions determined whether there was a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools, and whether there was a correlation between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools. The researcher used a *t* test of independent samples and a Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) to answer the two research questions. The results of the statistical analysis revealed the following:

1. There was a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools, with a *p*-value of 0.0346.
2. There was a moderately strong correlation, at the 0.7382 level, between organizational structure as measured by the SCS and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools.

The final chapter of this study contains a summary discussion of the study results as well as implications for future research.

Chapter V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

When Congress reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as *No Child Left Behind* in 2001, teachers and school administrators across the country experienced greater pressure and accountability for increasing school performance than they had in previous years. This unprecedented national mandate dictated the expectation that all students would achieve grade level standards as measured by standardized testing within a 12-year window, regardless of their state of residence. Consequences for not meeting standards included significantly more retentions and schools labeled as Needs Improvement, which would allow students to opt out of attending their neighborhood school and transfer to their school of choice. Schools labeled as Needs Improvement also faced mandatory restructuring. Because states were unaccustomed to so much pressure from the federal level, many thought the federal accountability movement would subside (Hess, 2006). However, more than a decade later, the federal government applied increasing pressure on states and local school districts to perform. Since 2009, three major national school reform initiatives have surfaced, including: development and adoption of the Common Core State Standards, *Race to the Top*, and a proposed Reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Leithwood (2007) explained some educators might perceive those holding them accountable might not care about the methods used to achieve positive results as long as they were ethical. However, he also charged those choosing to act on the "best available evidence" (p. 193) regarding what worked in school reform with what he considered major obligations, such as "figuring out what that evidence is, how best to use it for your school's improvement purposes, and how to make the case for its use with your staff, parents, and other colleagues" (p. 193). The purpose of the current study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the School Culture Survey (SCS) (Green, 2000b), and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. A number of studies linked school performance to the organizational structure or organizational health of a school (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson, Buehler, Stein, Dalton, Robinson, & Anfara, 2005; Hofman, Hofman, & Guldemond, 2002; Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Macneil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

This study examined organizational structure using data from the SCS administered in six elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. Performance on state standardized assessments in mathematics classified the schools as low performing or high performing. The survey contains 50 questions, which, collectively, measure a school's organizational structure. The 50 questions align with the following ten themes for data analysis: collaborative decision making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human (needs) resources, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming (Green, 2000b). The researcher disaggregated and analyzed the results from the SCS to

determine the relationship between elements of organizational structure and high performing schools as well as the relationship between organizational structure and low performing schools.

Conceptual Framework

Research on reform and school improvement emphasizes organizational structure and its importance in professional decision making and school performance (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Barth (2004) proclaimed an individual school's organizational structure/culture often had a greater influence on learning than did administrators, including principals, superintendents, school boards, and departments of education. Bosworth (2000) considered culture to be the "most pervasive influence" (p. 9) within schools. In addition, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) identified four major dimensions of school culture: "organizational structure," "professional orientation," "quality of the learning environment," and "student centered focus" (p. 140). They defined organizational structure as "the style of leadership, communication and processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business" (Shoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 140). Main (2009) delineated the organizational structure of a school as "the physical layout, programming, allocation of resources, and administrative support" (p. 466). Green's (2000b) SCS measures the organizational structure of a school's culture in relation to ten organizational themes: a) collaborative decision making, b) concern for school/stakeholders, c) continual school improvement focus, d) empowerment, e) human (needs) resources, f) intent/direction, g) leadership, h) management of excellence, i) professionalism, and j) teaming. In a recent study, Byrk (2010) identified the following

five organizational features that positively correlated with improved student achievement: coherent instructional guidance system, the school's professional capacity, strong parent-community-school ties, a student-centered learning climate, and leadership that drives change (pp. 24-25). In addition to the research directly related to schools as organizations, the literature on organizations as a whole and the concept of organizational theory and organizational behavior were present in more depth in the review of the literature. It is important to note the concept of organizational behavior within this conceptual framework because "organization behavior has assumed that under the right circumstances people and organizations will grow and prosper together" (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 7).

In addition to the concept of organizational behavior, the work of Bosworth (2000), Byrk (2010), Main (2009), and Shoen and Teddlie (2008) formed the foundation for the study's conceptual framework. The framework examined schools as one type of organization, and organizational structure as one component of a school's culture, as outlined in the work of Schoen and Teddlie (2008). The work of Bosworth (2000), Byrk (2010), Main (2009), and Shoen and Teddlie (2008) reviewed certain components of organizational structure and its relationship to school performance and student achievement.

Related Literature

Many studies linked school performance to the organizational structure or organizational health of a school (Byrk, 2010; Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). When attempting to raise student achievement, Main (2009) asserted a school's success

or failure with the reform "can be measured by whether the reform has become an accepted, effective, and sustainable part of the school's culture" (p. 457). Schoen and Teddlie (2008) considered organizational structure one of the four dimensions of school culture and defined it as "the style of leadership, communication and processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business" (p. 140). Barth (2004) supported the findings of Main (2009) by proclaiming that "all school cultures are resistant to change" (p. 160) and reformers first have to be aware of the school's current practices before attempting to change them. Main (2009) referred to the organizational structure of a school as "the physical layout, programming, allocation of resources, and administrative support" (p. 466).

Hoy et al. (2006) identified three organizational properties that appeared to impact student achievement: "academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust are tightly woven together and seem to reinforce each other as they positively constrain student performance" (p. 439). The three properties contributed to academic optimism, which Hoy et al. (2006) found to impact school performance positively. Byrk (2010) identified five organizational features that were essential supports for school improvement:

- Coherent instructional guidance system;
- The school's professional capacity;
- Strong parent-community-school ties;
- A student-centered learning climate; and
- Leadership that drives change. (Byrk, 2010, pp. 24-25)

In the current study, schools with strong indicators of those supports were more likely to show improvement in relation to student achievement (Byrk, 2010). Byrk noted the statistical evidence from his study strongly suggested that the organization of schools played a major role in student achievement and had major impacts on classroom instruction.

Brown (2004) also identified areas essential for a school to support high achievement, such as:

- An inspiring vision, backed by a clear, limited and challenging mission.
- A curriculum, modes of instruction, assessments and learning opportunities that are clearly linked to the vision and mission and tailored to the needs and interests of the students.
- Sufficient time for teachers and students to do their work well
- A pervasive focus on student and teacher learning, coupled with a continual, school-wide conversation about the quality of everyone's work.
- Close, supportive teacher-student, teacher-teacher and student-student relationships.
- Many opportunities and venues for creating culture, discussing fundamental values, taking responsibility, coming together as a community and celebrating individual and group success.
- Leadership that encourages and protects trust, on-the-job learning, flexibility, risk-taking, innovation and adaptation to change.

- Data-driven decision-making systems that draw on timely, accurate, qualitative and quantitative information about progress toward the vision and sophisticated knowledge about organizational change.
- Unwavering support from parents.
- District flexibility and support for multiple school designs, visions, missions and innovations. (p. 4)

Gaziel (1997) noted certain elements are important in explaining school effectiveness. They included: norm of teamwork, norm of orderliness, a shared culture across all groups that emphasized academic achievement, norm of continuous school improvement, norm of encouraging students to take responsibility, norm of adaptation to customers' demands, norm of valuing teacher competency, and the norm of valuing principal competency. Stringfield and Teddlie (1988) also found several factors associated with student achievement while controlling for socioeconomic status. The factors independent of socioeconomic status they identified incorporated: "(1) student perception of positive academic climate, (2) principals' sense of school efficacy, (3) family commitment to education, (4) student sense of long-term educational achievement, and (5) absence of a negative school climate" (p. 44). In addition to the specific indicators identified in the previously mentioned studies, Macneil et al. (2009) posited that, when students had a healthy learning environment, they scored much higher on standardized tests and Hofman, Hofman, and Guldemond (2002) linked educational culture to individual performance on standardized math scores.

Methodology

This quantitative study used data from the SCS administered to personnel in six elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia selected for convenience and access. School performance data available through the Florida and Georgia Departments of Education websites, particularly the percentage of students passing the mathematics portion of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) and CRCT (Criterion Reference Competency Test) during the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 school years, guided the selection of the elementary schools. The researcher used these data to identify schools with a 3-year average pass rate of 70% or below for the selected low performing elementary schools and 80% or above for the selected high performing elementary schools. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between school organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Florida and South Georgia. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Does the School Culture Survey evidence a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

RQ2: Does the School Culture Survey reveal correlation between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools?

As mentioned previously, the researcher and her cohorts used school performance data to identify a number of elementary schools that would provide convenient access due to their location. The researchers contacted the appropriate district level administrators to gain permission to approach the school level administrators about

participating in the survey, and explained the purpose of the study, the research design, and the benefits of administering the SCS to the principals of the identified schools. Principals had the option of having the SCS administered via a paper and pencil format or through a secure online electronic format; all principals who agreed to participate in the study selected the secure online format. The principals and researcher secured a date and time to administer the SCS. Following that agreement, the researcher arranged for survey availability for each school by providing the SCS administrator with the school site's name and location, number of administrators, and number of instructional personnel.

The SCS administrator generated the appropriate number of key codes and passwords for each selected school site, and the researcher forwarded that information along with the PowerPoint explaining the procedures for completing the survey to the principal of each school. The researcher offered various times of availability to speak on the phone with the principal to answer questions and confirm the dates for the survey completion. Each school site completed the survey within one 50-minute session using their computer labs, but were given additional days for the survey window for teachers who were absent or had prior commitments during the agreed upon administration time. Each school completed the survey within the agreed upon ten day window with 85% or greater participation. At the end of the period, the researcher downloaded the data from the secure online format to Microsoft Excel to conduct data analysis.

Data Analysis

In order to determine the relationship between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in this quantitative study, the researcher used an independent samples *t* test and Pearson's *r* correlation. For

the statistical analysis of the first research question, a *t* test of independent samples compared the SCS Average Total Quality Point score and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test for each of the selected low and high performing elementary schools. A *p* value less than or equal to .05 determined statistical significance (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). For the statistical analysis of the second research question, a Pearson's *r* correlation compared the SCS Average Total Quality Point Scores and the mathematics scores on the state criterion referenced test. The closer a correlation is to 0, the weaker it is, and the closer the correlation is to 1.0 (positive correlation) or -1.0 (negative correlation), the stronger it is (Holcomb, 2004).

Study Limitations

Limitations of the quantitative research design in this study included sample size, scope, geographic region, and time. The six schools in the sample were elementary schools, which did not allow for a secondary perspective, and included only data from schools in Florida and South Georgia due to access and convenience. For the purpose of this study, the measurement of school performance was performance on the state standardized mathematics assessment over a three-year period. School performance did not include other areas of evaluation, such as performance on other content area exams, attendance rates, retention rates, or discipline rates. Finally, the study did not include qualitative data.

Discussion

Based on the results of the SCS, the teachers in the selected high performing schools perceived the quality of work life at their school to be higher than average and that the school leaders cared about the school family. Teachers from the selected high

performing schools also noted their schools projected a unique character, an image consistent with the vision of a quality school, and excellent school. The same teachers perceived their schools as organized and designed effectively to create a high performance culture and mentioned the vision as based on a clear strategy for success. Teachers in both low and high performing schools indicated that teams and individual team members had access to specific student achievement data. In addition, teachers in both low and high performing schools indicated team members who would work with the individual did not make hiring decisions.

Based on the results of the SCS, teachers in the selected low performing schools noted their schools had 13 areas of deficiency in organizational structure. Individual schools had additional deficiencies. Overall, teachers in the low performing schools did not perceive leadership as shared among teams, including lack of delegated responsibilities and inclusion in decision-making. They reported most decisions as made by a few people residing in administrative positions, in other words, from the top down through multiple layers. Teachers in the selected low performing schools did not perceive their faculty and staff as able to perform multiple jobs or that all teachers could participate in "everything." While teachers in the high performing schools rated their quality of work life above average, teachers in the low performing schools indicated they did not perceive relationships as positive, or that everyone was treated with respect and civility, or that teachers were key to organizational health and school success. Study participants at the selected low performing schools indicated team members did not give feedback to the principal and leadership team, and incentives for school success were not an integral part of their school improvement planning. Teachers in the selected low

performing schools also indicated the marketing of their schools was not in the best possible light through word of mouth strategies.

Teachers and administrators in the selected low and high performing elementary schools scored high on Item 41, *Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data,* but this was the only item on which the low and high performing groups agreed in the comparison of the two groups' highest scoring items. This item was also the only Q-Flag (indicating an area of quality in the schools' organizational structure) for the low performing group. The high score on this item was likely due to state and national mandates for using and displaying student achievement data, rather than decisions made at the school level. The selected high performing schools scored highest (85 points) on four items: Item 12, *Our school projects a unique character as well as an image consistent with the vision of a quality school*, Item 23, *Strong evidence exists that the school's leadership cares about the school family*, Item 28, *A view of the school as an "excellent school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success*, and Item 49, *Is your school organized and designed effectively creating a high performance culture?*. Items 12, 28, and 49 were three of the four items with the largest difference or range (21 points) in Average Quality Point Scores between the low and high performing groups. It is interesting that none of these items require additional tangible resources in the form of money, time, or additional personnel, yet are often what schools indicate they "need" in order to increase school performance. Rather, the items directly tie to human relationships and clear direction/intent. Also identified as one of the top scoring items (83 Average Quality Points for the group) was Item 43, *How do you grade*

the quality of work life at your school? These findings have major implications for the way schools and districts plan for school reform.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice in the Field

This study found a statistically significant difference, with a *p*-value of 0.0346, in the organizational structure, as measured by the SCS, in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools. Additionally, this study revealed a moderately strong correlation, at the 0.7382 level, between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing Florida and South Georgia elementary schools. These findings provide a rationale for school and district level administrators to examine the link between organizational structure and school performance. Furthermore, district and school administrators may work toward identifying deficits in their own schools' organizational structures, enhancing specific elements, particularly those identified as high scoring in the high performing schools. In addition to examining the relationship between school performance and organizational structure, the study closely reviewed the Average Quality Point Scores for each item on the SCS for the selected low and high performing elementary schools, as well as the lowest and highest scoring items for the low and high performing groups.

The major theoretical implication of this study is the findings further support the work of Byrk (2010), Gaziel (1997), Henderson et al. (2005), Hofman et al. (2002), Hoy et al. (2006), Macneil et al. (2009), and Schoen and Teddlie (2008), that asserted organizational structure affected school performance. In addition, the findings of this study also support the organizational behavior perspective of Organizational Theory, which suggests "when the fit is good between the individual and the organization, both

benefit" (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008, p. 5). These findings also expand on the current body of research by identifying the specific components of organizational structure on which the selected low and high performing schools scored the lowest and the highest as well as identifying how each school scored on each item of the SCS. This allows readers to see how the selected schools differ in their levels of implementation across each component, to analyze the information, and to reach their own conclusions.

The practical implications are powerful. First, the results of this study suggest the practices wherein high performing schools outperform low performing schools have little to do with financial resources as one might suspect. Instead, the findings suggest high performing schools have a clear strategy for success, a clear and shared vision of being a quality school, an organization that creates a high performance culture, and leaders that truly care about the school family. More simply put, those leaders striving to create high performing schools should worry less about spending money on additional resources and personnel, and focus on efficiently and effectively organizing the resources and personnel they have while caring for the school's family. Secondly, the implications suggest those charged with school reform should examine current practices for effectiveness. The finding that both high and low performing schools share student achievement data suggests the sharing of data is not enough to improve school performance. Sharing data should pair with other practices, such as using the data to develop a clear strategy for success. Finally, educational leaders should closely examine current practices within their schools to determine which changes in practice they could make with the least amount of resources and the greatest impact on school performance.

Summary and Conclusions

As budgets continue to shrink each fiscal year and accountability continues to rise, educational leaders must identify more creative ways to impact school performance with fewer resources. The current study found a statistically significant difference in the measure of organizational structure in selected low and high performing schools, as well as a moderately strong positive correlation between organizational structure and school performance in selected low and high performing schools in Florida and South Georgia. Those responsible for school improvement should closely examine the findings of this study, as well as the findings of other studies which link organizational structure to school performance (Byrk, 2010: Gaziel, 1997; Henderson et al., 2005; Hofman et al., 2002; Hoy et al., 2006; Macneil et al., 2009; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) in order to analyze the capacity and limitations of organizational structure on school performance. The results of this study may aid schools and districts in developing authentic and specific school or district improvement plans, as well as providing leaders with some ideas of vital behaviors on which to focus to improve the performance of their schools. Those interested in the field of organizational structure within schools and the use of that structure as a guiding light for improved school performance should consider duplicating this study in elementary schools across other geographical regions. In addition, researchers may consider duplicating this study in secondary schools. Other researchers may wish to examine certain elements of organizational structure found to be drastically different in the selected low and high performing schools. Last, educators should analyze this study and reflect on their schools' current practices, paying close attention to how

they rate their own school on the elements highlighted in this study, particularly those rated high by selected high performing schools.

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