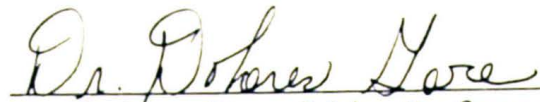


**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY
BASED UPON THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS
REGARDING PRINCIPALS' PRIOR TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

MARK EUGENE RUSSELL

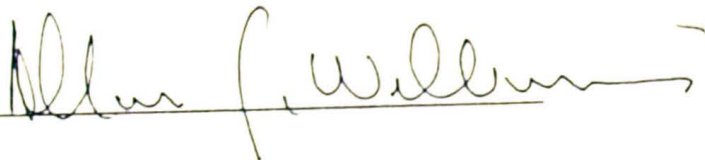
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a field study written by Mark Eugene Russell entitled "A Descriptive Study Based Upon the Perceptions of Teachers Regarding Principals' Prior Teaching Experience". I have examined the final copy of this field study for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Administration and Supervision.




Dr. Dolores Gore, Major Professor

We have read this field study
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:


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BASED UPON THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS
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A Field Study
Presented for the
Education Specialist
Degree
Austin Peay State University

Mark Eugene Russell
May 1999

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study of educational leadership preparation focused on elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' prior teaching experience. A questionnaire was developed and administered to a sample of elementary school teachers within a metropolitan Tennessee school district. Teachers' perceptions were interpreted from their expressed level of agreement with 24 statements using a five-point Likert scale. Collection of the anonymous questionnaires yielded a 70% rate of return.

The results of the study indicated that teachers highly value teaching experience as a prerequisite for the principalship. Teachers in the survey expressed a desire to be officially informed of the principals' prior level of experience in teaching. The data demonstrated teachers in this school system prefer adequate levels of teaching experience rather than specific types of teaching experience. Teachers did not regard principals' higher professional degrees as a substitute for years of classroom teaching experience.

Policies for screening and hiring principals vary from state to state. Principalship certification requirements of two or three years of teaching experience are considered inadequate according to the data collected. Teachers will

more readily trust and cooperate with a principal whose professional foundation includes an adequate amount of teaching experience. Shortages in principal candidates should not weaken policies for certification requirements. Experienced and successful teachers who demonstrate leadership in the schools should be recruited for formal training in educational leadership.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction to the Study

The equipping of principals for effective instructional leadership is an issue of concern at several levels. Departments of education at the state and district level review and revise their policies periodically. State boards of elementary and secondary education appeal to bureaus of higher education, teacher certification, and continuing education for higher standards or more relaxed requirements (Louisiana, December 1996; Texas, October 1997; and Kentucky, September 1998). Studies of the credentials and related issues of heads in accredited international schools worldwide appear frequently in the literature (Hawley, 1994).

At the district and building levels the issues surrounding a principal's suitability and potential effectiveness take on personal dynamics. The following questions should be addressed: Is the candidate well matched for the community to be served? Will the classroom teachers and parents respond positively to the individual's leadership style and background? However, of all the contributing factors in a principal's

effectiveness, ideally instructional leadership effectiveness is supreme. Initially the principal must unite and facilitate a team of teachers to foster a climate for learning. Ultimately the school will be most functional as a learning culture if teachers respect and trust the instructional leadership of the organization.

Schools and districts in crisis, primarily from non-instructional causes, are resorting to leaders whose only experience is in non-educational fields (Ballou, 1995). Teachers in such situations encounter the potential of being evaluated on criteria that are better suited to business or military management. Decisions made at the building level might be devoid of educational insights. Teachers may sense that they are alienated from the values of such a school leader. Such perceptions threaten the climate and effectiveness of the learning environment.

Principals who have been thoroughly socialized in their immediate instructional setting have a greater potential to gain the initial respect and cooperation of their teaching teams. Their familiarity with methods, terms, classroom practices and routines are likely to help teachers identify with them. A practical knowledge of what is realistic and what is idealistic must be

applied in the leadership of instruction. A clear distinction between quality management and fostering learning must be drawn from the principal's earned regard for the value of learning.

Teachers may be unaware or inconsiderate of the principal's prior teaching experience as it affects their efforts and goals. Teachers who were in place upon the hiring of the principal may have been made aware of the credentials of the new administrator. It seems less likely that teachers hired by the principal would be provided that information in an official and accurate manner. Teachers tend to be content with the leadership as long as they and their students are not negatively impacted. Once a teacher receives an unfavorable evaluation or disagrees philosophically with the principal, however, is there an increased likelihood that the teacher will question the principal's prior experience? Any attempt to defend or interpret the validity of a principal's instructional leadership to teachers does not depend on academic preparation or certification. Teachers rate teaching experience highly as a criterion for accepting help from their principals. Different teachers may qualify what constitutes valid teaching experience in different ways.

Once a principal has navigated a career path and is in the first assignment to lead a school, many obstacles remain. Teachers are the medium through which a principal is effective for the students within a particular building. Teachers' perceptions of a principal can account for many aspects of the success or failure of that career. The question of what makes an effective principal seems to be inexhaustible in the literature. It is related to instructional effectiveness through achievement scores, longevity in a position, and through school culture and climate. In the areas of school culture and climate, teachers' perceptions fuel much of the research.

Certification requirements for school administrators have been criticized in recent years for being either unnecessarily narrow or irresponsibly lax (Ballou, 1995). Both extremes have potential influence on state certification policies across the nation. One attempt to remedy the perceived problem is by focusing on university course requirements. Another popular emphasis in current literature is an examination of principal internship programs and assistant principalships (Ortiz, 1982). Other national studies survey current, and particularly new, principals to include data on prior years of

experience in classroom instruction. (Ten Year Studies, NAESP, 1988).

All of these attempts to locate a weak link in the path to principalship should be addressed. They fail, however, to address the delicate relationship between teachers and their immediate instructional leaders. The perpetual stream of studies in the area of teachers' perceptions of principals deposits some valuable data about desired characteristics and effective leadership style. In the most general terms, some studies demonstrated that teachers highly value principals' professional experience; identified under the term competence (Richardson, 1992). More specifically, and related to the present proposed study, are findings which state "the only experience associated with higher performance ratings is teaching experience" (Ballou, 1995). In the present decade a study of K-8 principals' prior teaching experience reported that 22% of them entered the position with no elementary teaching experience (NAESP, 1988). Further probing into the various categories under the general term teaching experience may qualify these findings and reveal that those leaders came from secondary classrooms, guidance offices, or other specialized educational positions.

Statement of the Problem

This descriptive study has as its problem the investigation of teachers' perceptions concerning principals' prior teaching experience. There seems to be a research void in the area of those less traditional career paths to the principalship. Data was collected to obtain answers to the following questions that remain after a review of available research surrounding principals' prior experience:

- 1) Should teachers be aware of their principals' prior teaching experience?
- 2) To what degree do teachers expect principals to have teaching experience similar to their own?
- 3) Should teachers confront their principals about issues related to prior teaching experience?
- 4) Do principals with non-typical teaching experience (physical education, special education, guidance, art, or music) have a disadvantage when seeking to gain teacher trust and cooperation?
- 5) Are teachers more willing to take criticism or direction from a principal if they know the leader's background includes similar teaching experience?
- 6) Do teachers in non-typical classrooms believe a principal with standard classroom experience can effectively supervise their instruction?

7) Do teachers feel their expertise is considered and utilized by their principal regardless of prior teaching experience?

8) Do teachers feel their teaching can be fairly evaluated by a principal with dissimilar teaching experience?

Hypothesis

There will be no measurable difference between teachers' perceptions of principals with extensive prior teaching experience and principals with minimal or no prior teaching experience.

Purpose of the Study

The role a principal's teaching background plays in gaining trust and respect from elementary teachers was the purpose of this study. Principals function as a dichotomy of building administration and instructional leadership. As such, their role is a perpetual balancing act that draws on all of the resources they can amass in preservice and inservice equipping. Typically, teachers' most formal and direct interaction with the principal comes in the form of an individual teacher evaluation. Aside from the initial employment interview, the observation/evaluation process places the teacher in the

most official and potentially intimidating setting. The principal brings not only a specific method and personal style to the atmosphere of an observation session, but also a background of personal experience.

Principals affect the teacher's immediate professional well being through curriculum and policy decisions at various levels. Whether mandating, suggesting, or valuing a particular curriculum choice, the principal's influence on the teacher, at least on an official level, is significant. This has been distributed beyond the scope of the individual principal only to the extent that site-based management is effectively carried out by a functional team. Few systems have attempted to team manage a building without a principal. Therefore, policy difficulties or changes remain within the principal's accountability. This study examines teachers' opinions of the principal's point of reference regarding previous classroom experience.

Significance of the Study

Any teacher or group of teachers could effectively undermine the principal's validity by calling into question the prior classroom experience of that leader. A principal who values a team system will not disregard the perceptions of the teachers in the building. An

educator aspiring to principalship should operate on information derived from a variety of sources, not the least of which being teachers' perceptions.

Whether or not the intended principal follows a standard career path to the position, consideration should be given to what teachers value in their leader. Certification requirements vary from state to state. Years of teaching experience for principals among those state-required credentials, if required at all, are occasionally waived due to low salaries and limited candidates. Eager candidates for principalship may need a clear view of the value teachers place on teaching experience. Policy makers who seek to improve or maintain the quality of this nation's schools dare not dismiss teachers' perceptions of the value of teaching experience.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to all elementary schools of one metropolitan school system in Tennessee.
2. Subjects included only kindergarten through fifth grade standard classroom teachers and art, music, and physical education teachers.
3. The survey was limited to a three-day response time.

Methodology of the Study

Research procedure guidelines and permission were obtained from the sample school system's central office. Public records of each elementary school principal's prior teaching experience were noted with the assistance of officers in the personnel department of the school system's central office. Questionnaires were constructed in such a way as to rate teachers' responses using a five-point Likert Scale of agreement. The questionnaire, which served as the instrument for this survey, was pretested with a group of subjects selected for characteristics similar to the target population. Weak and ambiguous items will be improved or eliminated once they have been identified by the pretest group's comments. This revised instrument was used to determine the subjects' perception of the value of teaching experience prior to assuming the principalship. Elementary school teachers were randomly selected from the school system's complete personnel list. Teachers' names were sorted according to school of employment. Additional permission was obtained from appropriate school principals once investigator's intentions were disclosed. Questionnaires with removable name labels were delivered to previously selected elementary school

teachers at their schools of employment. Upon hand delivery to specific subjects who had been randomly selected, questionnaire name tabs were removed to preserve confidentiality. Subjects were instructed to seal the completed, anonymous questionnaire in its envelope and return it by a predetermined date to a collection envelope held by the school receptionist. Collection envelopes were retrieved from each school by the investigator or a neutral designee. Results of the study obtained by data analysis methods summarized below were presented to Austin Peay State University and the school system's central administration office. The central office makes research results available to individual schools.

Data Analysis

The variety of administrative and teaching staff across a socio-economically diverse county can be expected to provide a broadly representative sample for this region of the country. This supports the rationale of selecting a city-county school system as a target population. Analyzed data will finally be reported and summarized in written descriptions of findings supported and clarified by graphs.

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions will be applied to terms used in this study:

1. Career path -the education, years of practical experience, and order, frequency and type of positions held in an advancing career.
2. Elementary principals -building level instructional leaders or assistants who formally observe and evaluate teachers or curricula for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
3. Elementary teachers -teachers of students in kindergarten through fifth grade, whether maintaining a typical classroom and curriculum or specialized instruction for physical education, the arts, or special education.
4. Experience -accumulated years as a practicing professional in education.
5. Non-standard teaching experience -employed by a school to teach subjects such as art, music, physical education, or special education.
6. Observation -formal or informal viewing of a teacher's work with a class of students, the purpose of which being to evaluate or offer professional development.

7. School System -the unified city, county, or consolidated city-county system of public schools for kindergarten, elementary, and secondary students.
8. Teachers -instructional staff who teach in standard and non-standard classrooms.
9. Teaching experience -employed on a faculty as a classroom instructor in such subject areas as reading, writing, language, mathematics, science, and social studies.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Literature relevant to elementary principals' prior teaching experience, teachers' perceptions of the value of classroom experience of the principals, and policy and career patterns in preparation for elementary principalship will be presented within this chapter. The focal issue, stated as the perceptions of elementary teachers regarding prior teaching experience of principals, will be approached from a broader set of literature topics which form a logically ordered review foundation. The sequence will culminate in literature most directly related to the topic and limitations that reveal the need for further study.

Although past and current data on the topic indicate that only in rare cases are principals appointed having no teaching experience, and greater than 90 percent of elementary principals possess elementary teaching experience (Doud, 1998), policy changes have been proposed for great reduction in or "elimination of teaching experience as a requirement for principal certification" (Scott, 1989). What, after all, is so difficult about running a school that a person with a

degree in business management or public administration couldn't accomplish? Teachers have strong opinions on this issue as revealed in numerous surveys of the various aspects of educational leadership.

National rates of attrition in the principalship were projected near the 50% mark for the 1990s (Anderson, 1989; Klauke, 1990). In hindsight the national data for the decade almost fulfilled the predictions at 42% turnover in the principalship (Doud, 1998). The projection of 40% attrition for principals has already been made for the final decade of this century (Doud).

In the late 1960s outstanding Oregon schools were headed by "principals who most commonly did not intend to become principals. Most indicated that they had intended to teach but were encouraged to become principals by their superiors" (Becker, 1971). This level of recruiting may be needed now, some thirty years later, to place quality educational leaders.

Another option to expedite the replacement of principals has surfaced in some of the areas. Authorities have chosen to lower or eliminate certain requirements of certification. In a university survey interview in the Northwest, one official stated:

We're accustomed to only getting 35- to 45-year-old residue going into our principalship program. Our screening procedures are devised only to rescreen these people. We should throw out the three-year teaching requirement for admissions. Being an outstanding teacher may well not be an appropriate criterion for assurance that this same person will become a successful public school administrator (Becker, 1971, p116).

Other more radical proposals received serious consideration and, in some cases, were adopted into policy. Administrators from noneducational backgrounds may now be certified as school administrators in New York. No teaching experience is required to be fully certified in certain building-level administrative positions. It was found that these noneducators "brought superior finance and budgetary skills to their new jobs, but had some difficulty exchanging a profit orientation for a service and people-oriented bottom line" (Murphy, 1997).

To remove teaching experience as a principalship certification requirement, which has also been proposed in the state legislature of New Jersey, is little worse, in the short term, than many rural schools' common practice of waiving certification requirements in a staffing crisis. Indeed, 34% of principals surveyed across the nation in 1997-98 reported that alternative or

nontraditional certification licensure were either available or being discussed (Doud, 1998).

Diluting or removing the instructional experience requirements of principals may seem less radical in comparison to another untraditional solution that has found its place in opinion and policy. Citing teachers' loss of confidence in the instructional leadership of principals, a rationale for schools with no principals has been advanced.

Teachers, by and large, quickly lose confidence in the ability of most administrators, including principals, to fully comprehend the realities of teaching...To designate as an evaluator of teaching someone who once taught but has now chosen to avoid it is offensive. Teaching is both complex and contextual enough that nonteachers wandering around with evaluative instruments collecting generic effective behaviors can help no one but the absolute neophyte or the classroom failure (Saken, 1998, p. 669).

The solution offered by Saken is for capable teachers to serve a term in leadership and either return to working with children in a classroom or seek a position in the central administration office. If the proposal to replace the tradition of career principals in schools seems remote to most of the nation, it is a foregone conclusion for others. "For example, the Minnesota legislature has established the right of local school

districts to determine whether their schools should have principals" (Bussler, 1998).

Trust and Trustworthiness

The dynamics of trust and trustworthiness among all stakeholders in the nation's school reform efforts seem to be more highly valued than faultfinding and assertions of power. Identifying terms in the literature such as trust, acceptance of authority, confidence, and competence resound in the literature. A basic challenge to trust which is inherent in human socialization is the "them versus us" mentality.

Teachers, by and large, quickly lose confidence in the ability of most administrators, including principals, to fully comprehend the realities of teaching. The principal then becomes a member of a second group within the building: the non-teachers (Saken, 1994).

Principals maintaining close and frequent contact with teachers and demonstrating compatible beliefs and behaviors with regard to instructional supervision contributed significantly to teachers' confidence in their leadership (Keaster, 1990). Teachers place "pedagogical confidence" in principals whom they perceive to have power, responsibility, and instructional validity (Martin, 1990). Power is demonstrated in principals who use their knowledge and skills to positively affect

learning. A principal's responsibility in attending to the needs of the organization in a timely and appropriate manner fosters trust among teachers. The degree to which teachers perceive a principal's decisions to be in the best interest of the instructional program contributes to their level of confidence in the principal.

According to teachers' perception surveys in South Carolina, the characteristics rated most desirable in principals closely parallel those rated highest by business employees toward managers. The top ranking characteristic was honesty and competence followed closely (Richardson, 1992). The reciprocal nature of trust requires that it permeate the whole climate of a school. This is most likely to be initiated by a trusting and trustworthy principal who has merited the respect of teachers (Bulach, 1998). Competency among instructional leaders and classroom instructors will be developed as a major theme of this study.

Educational research efforts to reform or transform this nation's schools have focused on several initiatives from "return-to-basics" to "improve the teacher" to use of higher technology. Disintegration of the traditional American family and the eroding values of society in general have been frequently cited (Doud, 1998). In this ongoing search for key areas of weakness in our

educational system, school leaders have also been closely scrutinized. Traditional programs for educational administrators' preparation have been redefined. Profiles for most common or most desirable leadership characteristics have been drawn from endless studies. Policies for recruiting, certifying, and appointing principals have been adjusted. Practices for instructional leadership have been reviewed and reformed. Performance based funding has forced a more direct connection between principals' effectiveness and student achievement in states such as Pennsylvania and Kentucky (Goldsberry, 1984; Cline, 1988).

The critical lack of mutual trust at all levels has become painfully clear in many of these efforts. From this array of school reform efforts, however, the cloud of confusion has begun to lift. A logical and desirable pattern of promising solutions has begun to emerge.

A pivotal issue, which will be presented in related literature, is the perceived role of elementary principals. Prior to answering the question of trustworthiness of principals, some level of agreement must be reached on the expected role of the principal. No simple answer presents itself in the literature due, in part, to the multifaceted nature of the principalship. A major factor in defining the principal's essential role

is the perspective of the individual being questioned (Davis, 1986).

The origin of a title is a reasonable, albeit limited, avenue of information about a given role or position of responsibility. The "principal" title finds its origin in the history of the principal teacher. This seemingly trivial reference to public school history retains relevance to the central topic, and bears mentioning. During a period of transition from the one-room, public school to the familiar, present organization of classrooms, hallways, and offices with teachers and building administrators, there was a "head teacher" role. European school principals retain the title "head" of school whereas "principal teacher" became the title of choice for instructional leaders in the United States. The head or principal teacher retained classroom-teaching responsibilities during this interim period of development in the evolution of public educational organization. Supervision of fellow teachers, administrative duties and some building maintenance fell to this practicing teacher.

Principalship, it has been said, was conceived in a halo of chalkdust. Indeed, for many years, the principal was 'principal teacher,' first among equals. Prior to 1850, the duties of the principalship consisted largely of teaching, record keeping, and a modest amount of maintaining school

property, and disciplining students. By 1900, however, the relatively unambiguous roles of the principal changed" (Lane, 1984).

As the weight of other responsibilities required principal teachers to relinquish classroom duties, they assumed a new level distinction from teachers.

"Historically, the research literature has reflected the principalship as a position with a great amount of ambiguity, chaos, and diversity. Modernistic programs must prepare future administrators to be more than glorified custodians responsible primarily for building maintenance. The stereotypical view of the principal as administrative manager will not be sufficient to meet the increased demands for instructional leadership. The current literature is now illustrating the key role played by principals in building and maintaining effective schools" (Cline, 1988).

The professional roles of teacher and principal are now clearly differentiated. What must be revisited is the degree of interdependence the two roles retain in the school mission. Neglect in addressing the value of this relationship may lead to hiring policies and career patterns that undermine mutual trust among teachers and their building level leaders.

To what degree do teachers and principals agree on the primary roles of the principalship? This question is fairly well represented in the literature. The level of agreement between teachers and principals on this issue

seems to be time and location dependent (Larsen, 1987). A survey of Georgia principals in the middle 1980s indicated 54% view the ideal role of principals to be primarily instructional leader. Only 31% of the same group reported they practice instructional leadership as their primary function. In reality, 25% of them find they primarily operate as school managers (Davis, 1986).

Of the rural teachers surveyed across Tennessee, 81% indicated they felt that principals should be instructional leaders. The implementation of this role in the late 1980s, however, resulted in a strained working environment.

In many instances, instructional leadership roles with teachers have not created collegial relationships. Rather, instructional leadership roles with teachers have created wide barriers between principals and teachers (Martin, 1990).

As a direct result of teaching reform efforts, teachers became alienated from their principals. An adversarial coexistence ensued producing a counterproductive atmosphere in schools where principals were under a mandate to facilitate teacher effectiveness.

Many teachers have concluded that instructional leadership roles imply more control over their teaching. They mistrust principals and find them unsupportive, while principals find it difficult to lead teachers (Martin, 1990).

The irony of such a situation lies in the agreement among teachers and principals "that the primary goal of evaluation was improvement of the teacher's classroom performance" (Kiley, 1988). Not all studies indicate teacher agreement on this point (Goldsberry, 1984).

A deceptively simple solution to the suspicion principals find in their teachers is for the principals to remember what it was like to be a teacher. Granted that a principal's "role orientation differs radically from that of a teacher...(the) principal role contradicts and overrides that of the earlier experience in teacher role." "Principals inevitably forget what it is like being a teacher" (Erickson, 1979). Yet, if the manner and severity of evaluation were tempered with empathy, the process would not alienate the best of teachers nor eject those within reach of positive intervention. The empathy element requires that principals possess an adequate background in the classroom. Those who do not adequately fulfill this expectation compound the mistrust (Erickson, 1979, p.240).

How can prospective educational leaders best be equipped for the principalship? An obvious relationship exists between this question and the previous one about roles. Studies that cite principals' responses to this question emphasize the need for principalship

internships. Other similar studies indicate years of teaching experience second only to the internship.

Longitudinal studies which deal with the most prevalent career paths of elementary principals indicate a strong tradition of prior teaching experience followed by formal degrees in preparation for administration. (Doud, 1988;1998) A perception that large numbers of coaches and physical education instructors are being appointed directly into the principalship has not been broadly supported in the literature. No more than 10% of principals nationally have been found to have a direct path from the gymnasium to the front office. (Schools and Staffing Surveys, 1983-95) There is evidence of localized trends among male principals having begun their careers as physical education instructors.

Although the perception of teachers is not the most substantial concern of a principal's career, this indicator is directly related to trust and competence (Richardson, 1992). It is likely to play a significant role in the initial effectiveness of a principal with the faculty in a new appointment. The "principals' authority must be accepted by the faculty" (Wilkes, 1989). For a principal who has had years of successful or unchallenged experience, the issue of authority is practically settled. New principals or those facing new processes of

accountability in instructional leadership must find ways to establish trustworthiness.

Using an instrument originally developed by Chester Barnard in 1948, teachers' acceptance of principals' authority has been measured to reveal what fosters a principal's influence of teachers (Wilkes, 1989). Authority from principals to teachers must be earned in somewhat different ways now. Acheson argued that "instructional leadership changes are inevitable during the 1990s." His research at the threshold of the last decade of the twentieth century indicated that the principal must be viewed by teachers as a "trusted confidant/analyst possessing unconditional regard for the teacher potential" (Acheson, 1990). Barnard's "Zones of Indifference" instrument measures teachers' response to directives from their principals. If a directive is ignored or delayed, it constitutes a low acceptance of authority. Directives that cause conflict, but are carried out by teachers are measured as indicators or high acceptance of authority when they are followed without conflict. Principals for whom such directives are followed are translated as having high acceptance of authority. A direct correlation between higher acceptance of authority and higher years of experience in the principalship has been demonstrated (Wilkes, 1989).

Contradictory findings challenge and confuse any topic of study, but they reveal a need for more and different studies. Such is the case for prior teaching experience among principals. Focusing on five instructional leadership behaviors, Smith finds a negative relationship between prior teaching experience and principal leadership behavior (Smith, 1990).

A strongly positive finding in favor of principals' prior teaching experience seems to contradict the Smith study. Teachers' assessment of their principals' performance on instructional leadership revealed a number of types of career experiences that did not raise performance ratings. "The only experience associated with higher performance ratings is teaching experience (Ballou, 1995). The two previous opposing studies indicate a need to clarify teachers' perceptions of which characteristics and behaviors foster trust in school leadership. Perhaps more significantly, they call into question the alleged need to professionalize the principalship through advanced degrees and principal internships. An older study of leadership practices among principals affirms that "principals who had the greatest amount of formal education did not provide the greatest professional leadership to their teachers" (Blumberg, p29, 1965).

Teachers' perceptions regarding the principal have been studied from a variety of angles. School climate, instructional methods, principals' effectiveness have been the focus of many (Goldsberry, 1984; Larson, 1987; Richardson, 1992; Patrick, 1995; Evans, 1996). Principals' use of Transformational Leadership, an alternate strategy for influencing excellence within organizations through goal sharing, has been rated by Michigan teachers in 1996 (Evans, 1996). This study indicated that as principals' years of service increased at a single school, they could be expected to exhibit more transformational leadership style. Teachers' perceptions of the principal's administrative style were measured in correlational studies of school climate. Teachers indicate a positive correlation between their preferred leadership styles and overall school climate (Patrick, 1995). Qualitative data were collected from 1000 Pennsylvania teachers on their perception of the effectiveness of supervision the principals provide. Teachers agreed that the principals were able to effect positive instructional change, but responses were quite reserved (Goldsberry, 1984). Teachers in high achieving schools and low achieving schools in California rated their principals' on six instructional leadership behaviors. The study found that teachers' views on

instructional leadership behaviors correlate positively with high achievement (Larson, 1987). Teacher perceptions translate to more than statistics. "Teachers have the power to implement or foil the best goals, plans, and mandates when the classroom door is closed" (Richardson, 1992).

Teachers Prefer Instructional Leader Role

A rural Tennessee survey found that teachers "felt that principals should be instructional leaders" and regard them as professional mentors who earned teachers' confidence (Martin, 1990). This study cited other literature, which found that teachers mistrusted leaders and viewed them as the adversary during the zealous 1980s reform efforts. According to Davis, teachers, as a rule, view the principal's primary role as something other than instructional leader (Davis, 1986). Studies show they frequently value the administrator as a support in discipline challenges. The role of instructional leader is more frequently named as a principalship identifier by principals or superintendents than by teachers.

Instructional Leader Role Challenged

Teachers do not all highly regard the principal as primarily an instructional leader. Some of the

literature states that teachers tend to view the principal's ideal role as primarily a support for discipline or a manager of the organization's various operations (Davis, 1986). This perception, at least at the elementary and intermediate levels, contrasts with the most recent national ten-year study of kindergarten through eighth grade principals (Doud, 1998).

A leader of a major national professional organization for principals offers the following rationale:

The principal relies significantly upon his or her experiences as a teacher when performing tasks in five major areas of responsibility. These include employing teachers, supervising instruction, leading and managing teachers, understanding and working with students, and conferring with parents (Thompson, 1989).

Principals at all levels are expected to possess a personal understanding of the skills and challenges of teaching. This opinion is held within the school as well as among parents and the extended community (Pellicer, 1988).

Guidance Counselors/Teaching Experience

Principals favor prior teaching experience in their guidance counselors. A survey of administrators in Montana schools revealed that principals believe guidance

counselors need four to seven prior years' of experience in the classroom (Nowlin, 1995). A larger study two years earlier found that administrators consider it a key to effectiveness for counselors to have teaching experience. The same study indicated that those principals whose guidance counselors had no prior teaching experience still rated them as effective (Olson, 1993).

Certification Requirements

The value policy makers and policy influencers place on various facets of principalship preparation may be interpreted from changes in certification requirements. If a state department of education retains their minimum three years of teaching experience for principalship certification while raising the university degree requirements beyond the Masters level, this indicates a confidence in formal preparation. In such a case, aspiring principals in the state of Ohio must only teach three years. Their course work requirement, however, is 68 hours. The M.Ed. is typically completed in 54 hours. The remaining 14 hours may be fulfilled as an Educational Administration Certification Sequence or as part of an Ed.S. program (Cleveland State University Graduate Bulletin, 1996-1998). For more than 30 years the majority of colleges have required no less than two years

of teaching experience as a prerequisite for being accepted into school administration programs (Becker, 1971). These requirements are being called into question at the university department level in Texas. The chair of the School of Education's Department of Educational Foundations and Administration at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas has been very outspoken on the futility of requiring teaching experience (Saken, 1994).

Georgia, as other states in the South, significantly raised certification standards during the middle 1980 reform efforts. Prior to these changes 90% of superintendents reported they had no published policy or guidelines for recruiting or selecting principals. The recruitment and selection of principals nationally was an informal process. At that time 20% of elementary principals in Georgia held only a Bachelor of Elementary Education, and 55% had completed a Masters degree in Administration and Supervision (Davis, 1986). Furthermore, the policy review of the Professional Standards Commission for Georgia certification specified that elementary principals be required to have teaching experience at the elementary level.

Texas teachers, in 1975, strongly supported raising the teaching experience minimums for principals to four-

five years. The 1997 Texas "Advisory Committee on the Principal Certificate" only recommended two years classroom teaching experience at any level for principals "so as to better understand the needs, concerns, and demands placed upon the classroom teacher." California is among the states which reformed administrator requirements in the mid-1980s (Bartell, 1994). These reforms did not raise the minimum requirements of prior teaching experience.

Citing a National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) professional resource entitled Proficiencies for Principals, 1996, Doud offers the following rationale for principals to have prior teaching experience:

We know that teaching experience is essential in helping the principal develop "the levels of skill and the practical understanding that come from working directly with students in the classroom on a day-to-day basis." (Doud, 1998).

The Principal Preparation Program of the Danforth Foundation Program for the Preparation of School Principals was the focus of a self-study in Missouri in which teachers surveyed said their principal's leadership was significantly effective. "Findings indicate that formal school-leadership preparation makes a significant

difference in leadership, and that good theory is of considerable value to school leaders" (Leithwood, 1995).

Advanced degrees were not highly valued by teachers' assessment in a Massachusetts survey the same year (Ballou, 1995). This study echoes the perspectives collected by Arthur Blumberg in 1965: "Principals who had the greatest amount of formal education did not provide the greatest professional leadership to their teachers." Blumberg also observed: "More experienced principals do not demonstrate greater executive professional leadership...(and) Neither type nor length of previous teaching experience discriminated among principals as to their executive professional leadership" (Blumberg, 1965). This low regard for the value of previous teaching experience is not isolated. Twelve years after the publication Blumberg's book, the American Educational Research Association hosted a report that more years teaching experience contributes to 1, principals who are less inclined to attempt innovative techniques, and 2, principals more accepting of the status quo of upper leadership, facilities, and students (Kohr, 1977). Higher years of previous teaching experience has been negatively related to a desirable instructional climate (Smith, 1990).

Teaching experience prior to becoming a principal is not a high reform priority according to some studies of the principalship. Of several administrative concerns surveyed among California educators in 1993, there was no record that respondents mentioned the need of more prior years of teaching experience for principals(Bartell, 1994). Concerning the progression from the classroom to the principalship, one researcher makes the point that there are "vast differences for which teaching does not prepare principals" (Lane, 1984). He cites the following contrasts: Teachers can bring most daily tasks to closure, whereas principals are involved in more continuous tasking without daily closure. Principals may take their vacations only to return and find that work kept piling up in their absence. Teachers are not usually responsible to the school for the entire summer break after which they make a fresh start. Teachers can typically predict their general tasks for the day, but principals are confronted daily and hourly by unforeseen tasks. Success in one area; teaching, is not considered indicative of a good prospect for the other area; the principalship(Lane 1984). Saken finds it offensive to teachers "to designate as an evaluator of teaching one who once taught but has now chosen to avoid it."

Principals rarely depend solely on their prior teaching experience to supervise instruction or administrate the larger organization. The transition takes place in a variety of ways. Opportunities to serve as staff leaders without reducing the teaching responsibilities allows teachers to distinguish and equip themselves as leaders.

Principals are generally chosen from three populations of educators: classroom teachers, teacher-leaders, and administrators...Candidates from each population have different socialization experiences. For example, teachers who seek authority and influence beyond the classroom traditionally look toward the principalship (Peterson & Finn, 1985). These prospective leaders have been socialized and encultured into administration from their experiences as teachers. Consequently, traditional education administration preparation programs rely on a rather standard view of the socialization process of prospective administrators as classroom teachers. These candidates typically come to preservice programs from the classroom with a wealth of expertise in teaching but with little experience and knowledge about the larger organizational context. At best, some of these teachers have limited management experiences in part-time leadership positions as department heads (Goldring, 1993).

Training programs such as "LEAD" prepare teacher-leaders as well as principals and assistant principals (Beasley, 1993). Favoring the suitability of equipping teachers as leaders, Siroinik praises simultaneous experience in teaching and leadership:

A curriculum for teacher leadership is most potent at the inservice or professional development level. Good principal preparation programs can also be good

teacher leadership programs if they capitalize on experience and adult learning principles (Siroinik, 1996).

Goldring adds that "Empowered teachers, or teacher-leaders bring these diverse experiences into educational leadership training programs as they prepare to be principals-in-charge" (Goldring, 1993)

Career Patterns

Critics of the prevailing manner in which the principals of this nation's schools were placed a decade ago cited systemic inadequacies.

Current methods are often ill suited to developing and employing outstanding leaders. Traditional avenues to the principalship including university course work, teaching, and administrative experience, have not proved satisfactory (Anderson, 1989).

The preservice preparation for principalship is a professional opportunity, which, if inadequate, is not likely to be recovered in practice. On-the-job experience and coursework study for a basic knowledge of the art and science of teaching is found to be a poor substitute for adequate immersion in the profession prior to leadership appointment. "Teaching experience, de facto and de jure, is an important ingredient in the career patterns of the principalship" (Pellicer, 1988).

Statistics from 20 years ago in Georgia indicate that nearly 50% of elementary principals entered the position directly from the classroom. Ten percent of their principals came directly from physical education/coaching (Davis, 1986). This phenomenon has been broadly exaggerated in teachers' opinions on surveys (Stoker, 1975). On a national level 52% of all principals served as athletic coaches in their careers, but were either teaching in other areas or held an assistant principalship in the interim (Pellicer, 1988).

Although prior teaching experience continues to be a characteristic of principals, by 1987 a national survey showed only 20% had gone straight from the classroom to become principals (Pellicer). It is likely that the 80% reported in Georgia was both high for the national average on direct classroom to principalship patterns and received much of the attention in policy changes in this educational reform climate.

Principals asked to evaluate their own administrative behaviors report that their continuing years of experience as principal do not seem to produce a significantly positive effect (Mitchell, 1997).

A somewhat dated study of elementary schools in Oregon found that 13% of principals rated teaching experience at the elementary level as the most significant training for

elementary principalship (Becker, 1971). Doud's most recent study found that 89.2% of principals say their experiences as a classroom teacher "were of much importance" (Doud, 1998). These values are very similar to national studies of the past 20 years.

Gender Issues

Patterns related to principals' gender involve age at first appointment, elementary versus secondary level, characteristic leadership behaviors, professional degree attainment, and prior years of classroom teaching experience. A study focused on elementary teachers' perceptions will need to consider some gender factors.

It is common knowledge that the vast majority of elementary level teachers are female, 75% in 1988, and 86% in 1998 (Doud, 1998). What may not be widely known is that a long-standing trend among elementary principals has reversed in the last decade. This gender-focused change brings with it a strong trend toward increased prior classroom teaching experience.

One nation-wide longitudinal study of principals in metropolitan schools tracked a gender element from 1949 through 1973. Demographic data in the five administrations across these 24 years revealed female principalship declined from 55% to 19.6%. This trend

translates to almost 1.5% average annual increase in male principal to female principal nationally (Erickson, 1979). In 1988 a rather rapid increase in the number of women in elementary principalships was documented by another longitudinal study. This ten-year study series spanning from 1928 to 1998 reported a 2.2 percent increase from 1879 to 1988 (Doud 1988).

The most recent study, "The K-8 Principal in 1998", shows an even more dramatic increase in the current decade. In 1988, 20% of principals responding to the survey were female. Female principals in the subsequent 1998 survey made up 41.9% of the respondents. The report corresponds well with the 41.1% female principal statistic of U. S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in their 1997 report on *Public and Private School Principals in the U.S.: A Statistical Profile* (Doud).

The female principal in elementary schools, as statistically compared to males, is older at first appointment, enters with more teaching experience and more school committee leadership. She has less experience in work-related leadership, athletic coaching, and non-education union membership. Typically she moved out of her teaching district and spent fewer years as an administrator (Soranno). Specifically male principals in

1982 in the state of Massachusetts had taught an average of five to seven years whereas females had taught 15 years (Ortiz, 1982). By 1992 the general number of years of prior teaching experience seemed to have been with previous administrations of the study until analyzed by gender. Female principals had taught noticeably more years than their male counterparts. They had increased in teaching experience over the females of an administration of the same survey 11 years earlier (SASS, 1995). Female principals' ranges of years of teaching experience by survey year and gender reveal a significant difference.

The communication process, so vital to so many aspects of the principalship and the relationship between teachers and principals, appears to be gender sensitive. It surfaces in surveys of teachers' perception of principals' effectiveness, closeness to teachers, and degree of attention given to teachers (Hutton, 1993).

Female principals tend to fare better than males in their assessed leadership. Erickson summarizes:

A final explanation for women's generally positive performance as educational leaders, particularly in elementary schools, is related to...the general career pattern of the female teacher-principal... women are more effective as elementary school leaders because of their many years experience in the classroom.

He further clarifies that:

It is not only the length of time spent in the process of teaching, but the whole commitment to the classroom and the world of the school during the teaching years that helps make women superior administrators(Erickson, 1979).

Although surveys of teachers' attitudes toward female principals continue to show that characteristics associated with women are preferred, women are underrepresented in the principalship(Hudson, 1996).

If current trends continue, the principalship will have a new female majority by the next ten-year national study of the K-12 principal in 2008.

Elementary Level Unique

There are statistical tendencies uniquely associated with the elementary level. Their teachers consistently respond more positively on questionnaires when asked about their "attitudes toward students, parents, fellow staff, and school administration"(Kohr). Their principals were often appointed with no teaching experience at the elementary level in the past, but this now occurs in only ten percent of cases(Doud, 1998). "Elementary principals are particularly prone to hold that position for the duration of an administrative career" (Ortiz, 1982; Doud, 1998), as opposed to

secondary principals who frequently seek central office appointments or university faculty positions. The perception that elementary principals hold a hierarchical position below that of secondary principals seems to be evident in their typically "smaller office area than secondary principals, smaller administrative staff, and less complex organization serving smaller local areas"(Ortiz).

Elementary Principal: National Profile

By analyzing the data from the most recent in a series of ten-year national studies by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), a theoretical profile of the typical elementary level principal in America has been constructed.

...the "typical elementary principal" in 1998 is a 50-year-old white male. He earns \$60,285 as a full-time principal of a single suburban school that enrolls 425 students. An educator for 25 years, he has been principal for 11 years(6 in his current position." "Opinions about his performance are most often furnished by the superintendent and by himself." "This principal spends most of his time in three areas: contacting and supervising staff, interacting with students, and discipline/student management. He chooses his teachers and has primary responsibility for their supervision. He has established a formal process for involving teachers in the development and evaluation of the instructional process, and he is likely to share responsibility for instructional improvement with the teachers. He holds a masters degree from an NCATE-approved program." "He values his experience

as a principal and as a teacher highly, and feels his major professional development needs are understanding and applying technology and improving staff performance (Doud, 1998).

Of all elementary level principals 98.7% had taught an average of 10.6 years before taking their administrative position. Principals of higher ages had more years of teaching experience (Hammer, 1993).

Teachers' Value of Principals' Teaching Experience

Georgia teachers rated their principal's effective teaching ability with 53% indicating they were mostly or entirely satisfied (Davis, 1986). Texas elementary teachers' ideal elementary principal, according to their collective opinions on one state-wide survey, would have been a 38-year-old male with 4-5 years of elementary classroom experience (Stoker, 1975). Most of them reported their principals were more likely to have had secondary experience rather than elementary level. In larger Texas school systems the elementary principal was far more likely to have been an elementary teacher rather than secondary (Stoker).

Most states require only two or three years of teaching experience, yet:

Principals with more than 15 years of teaching experience received higher ratings from their

teachers on seven areas of performance including "helps improve teaching in general"(Ballou, 1995).

Teachers express their views of common weaknesses in the principalship. Teachers are critical if their principals "lack educational priorities"(Bulach, 1998).

Teacher respondents commonly complain that some school principals do not have a knowledge base in curriculum and instruction. Such administrators are seen as managers/administrators of the building, with little knowledge of the instructional process or the curriculum being taught(Bulach).

Researchers in various regions and at various periods of time continue to find conflicting teachers' perceptions about what makes a good principal. Teachers are not consistently concerned that their principals are inadequately educated, too young or too old, or even the wrong gender. The only characteristic or experience consistently "associated with higher teacher performance rating of their principal was prior teaching experience"(Ballou, 1995).

Summary

Authorities from all levels express their views of what is needed to improve school leadership. Policy and procedures descend from the U. S. Department of Education reflecting their interpretation of educational research. States must legislate minimum standards for principalship

certification or face renewed criticism. Superintendents and local boards of education work within the set parameters to screen candidates. Few teachers, however, have official input in the final analysis of most desirable candidates.

The voices of teachers are consulted in surveys that loosely contribute to policy. Regardless of such information, there is no evidence that their expressed desires to be supervised by experienced former teachers is being translated into state-level certification policies. The value teachers placed on prior teaching experience of principals must be gleaned and interpreted from surveys that often give vague or only cursory interest to it.

An assumption that principals will always be recruited by way of the classroom is being challenged. The authority or control granted to any administrator once the classroom doors are closed, ultimately depends on how the teacher trusts his/her instructional leadership. If the teachers view that the principal as an impostor rather than trusted colleague, the necessary trust is dangerously compromised.

Teachers' perceptions of the principal carry significant weight in a climate of educational reform. Principals' competence and socialization in the

environment he/she hopes to lead may depend heavily upon adequate time spent as a laborer with the laborers.

Much information can be gained from a study that has as its focus the prior teaching experience of principals. The stakeholders most directly affected by this issue are the teachers. Their opinions and perceptions should be continuously sought on this topic as long as there is a challenge to the necessity of principals to be instructional leaders.

Contradictory study results on the preferred role of principals and the value of teaching experience and professional degrees reveal the need for research focused on these issues. A desire for instructional leadership that is insightful and valid has been established among most stakeholders in the instructional process. The perceptions of teachers as to the source of such virtues have not been fully addressed. If nation-wide certification minimums for principals' prior teaching experience remain at two to three years in a period of high attrition, the quality of instructional leadership is likely to decline, at least in the opinions of teachers.

CHAPTER III

Analysis of Data

Procedure

The research procedure for this descriptive study of teachers' perceptions regarding principals' prior years of teaching experience included development of a questionnaire. This instrument utilized a five-point, Likert-type scale of agreement. Seven demographic items and 24 statements were developed following a review of related literature. The questionnaire was piloted and revisions were made to weak items. The survey instrument was then distributed to a randomly sampled population of elementary level teachers on a metropolitan Tennessee school district. Of the 160 questionnaires delivered to the 16 elementary schools within the district, 112 were collected. This constitutes a 70% return on first attempt, thus the level of response was abundant to conduct the study. No follow-up efforts were made to secure a higher response. Data were transferred to a digital medium, electronically stored, and analyzed.

One respondent bypassed the prescribed collection method and sent her sealed questionnaire directly to the university after the collection deadline. There was, however, no way to identify the group from which the survey was taken without corrupting methods or breaching

promised confidentiality. The individual questionnaire was not included in this data analysis or the general survey.

Demographic Data

Demographic data were collected in seven items of the survey (see Appendix A). Data on principals' actual years of teaching experience prior to becoming principals in the surveyed school system were acquired from local public records. Each school was identified both as a group number, and the number of years the principal taught prior to becoming an administrator.

The accessible population for this study presented only female principals at the elementary level. The range of prior teaching experience among principals was 12 years with a minimum of 11 years and a maximum of 23 years. This produced a mean of 16.536 years of prior teaching experience for principals of teachers in the study.

Issues regarding gender of teachers, which may produce some interesting observations, are weakened by the fact that only five of the subjects were male. This four percent male gender representation negates any significant generalizable results. The recent reversal in the trend of gender in the principalship (Doud, 1998),

suggests more studies are needed to focus on new gender issues for teachers' and principals.

Certified teaching experience for teachers in the study indicated that 14% of respondents were new teachers with two or less years completed. Three to five years experience were represented by 18% of the subjects, 16% of teachers surveyed had taught six to nine years, and another 16% indicated they had taught between 10 and 15 years. The highest category, greater than 15 years, was represented by 36% of teachers surveyed. Exactly 40 of the 112 teachers were in this highest range. The mean of teachers' years of certified teaching experience fell within the range of six to nine years. The teachers' years of experience from zero years to 15 years were quite evenly distributed as described in figure 3.1.

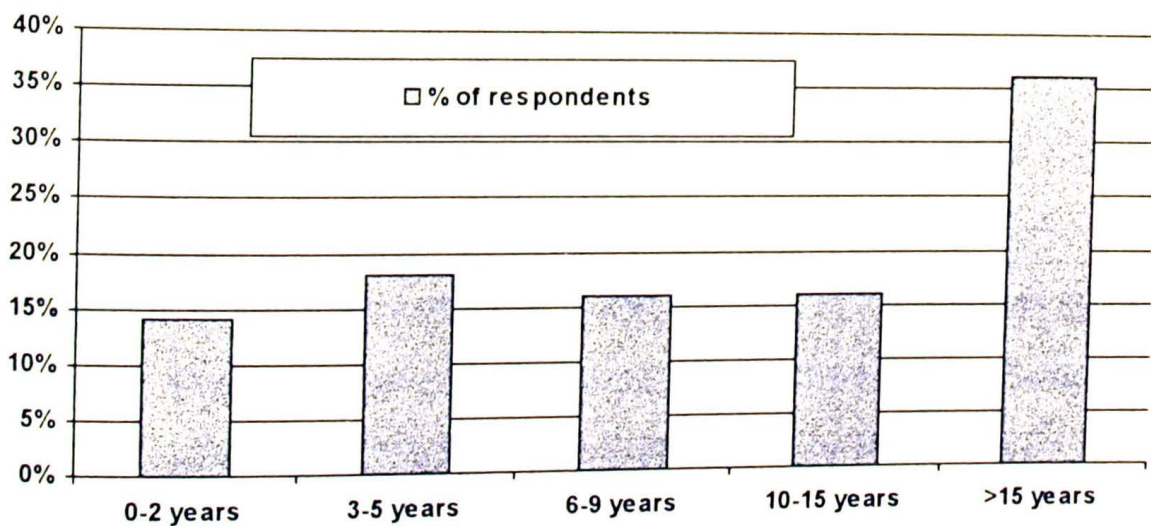


Figure 3.1 Responding teachers' experience levels

Having such a significant representation of teachers with experience beyond 15 years, (40%), skews the mean sufficiently to render any further analysis of this item inaccurate.

Sixty-four percent of teachers in the study were hired by their current principal. Thirty-six percent of teachers indicated that they were placed before the current principal received the position. There would seem to be information opportunities for a teacher who was in place before the installation of a new principal. Among these would likely be teaching experience of the incoming principal. Teachers hired by or transferred to work with an established principal seem less likely to have opportunities to hear of that principal's prior teaching experience. These are issues addressed in the first five items of the present questionnaire, and will be discussed below.

Primary instructional responsibility of subjects was manipulated before randomization to include only classroom teachers of one grade level, school-wide instruction in one subject area, and specialization with students assigned an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This eliminated principals, assistant principals, guidance personnel, teacher assistants, custodians, and others who might be listed in the personnel directory

without primary instructional responsibilities. Only three respondents indicated their instructional responsibilities were other than the three included categories. Upon closer examination of their responses, all three were found to be clearly within the specified group. One of the three "other" respondents is a school-wide music teacher and the other two are assigned to work with students who have an IEP.

Standard, grade-level classroom teachers made up 86.6% of the sample population. Special curriculum area teachers such as art, music, and physical education instructors, serving all grade levels within the school made up 8.9% of the sample. The remaining 4.5% of the sample are assigned specifically to students who have an IEP. This final group is often referred to as special education teachers, but includes inclusion teachers.

Teachers are formally supervised through lesson plan checks and periodical observations. The teaching experience principals, assistant principals, other supervisors, and leader teachers bring to such supervision practices falls within the focus of this study. It should be noted that 10.7% of respondents indicated that the principal was the only person who checked their lesson plans. Only 7% indicated that the principal exclusively evaluated their instructional

skills. Only five of the 16 principals were found to exercise exclusive responsibility over some teachers' lesson plans or evaluation of instructional skills. Two principals in the district have at least one teacher for whom they exclusively supervise both instructional skills and written lesson plans. Principal's preference for delegating supervisory tasks seems to be indicated more than teacher characteristics such as level of experience.

Supervisory responsibilities are shared beyond the principal and assistant principal for lesson plans in 83% of cases and for instructional skills in 93% of cases. This would indicate that either central office supervisors of instruction, university supervisors, or building-level teacher leaders share these supervisory responsibilities with principals.

Information about the experience level of teachers may offer insight into the value they place on principals' prior teaching experience. "Who came first" to the school may effect how information on the principal's background is available to a given teacher. Type of instructional responsibility categorizes teachers in ways that may effect how they identify with their principal's type of prior experience. The significance of principals' participation in the supervisory process may effect the value teachers place on prior teaching

experience of principals. All of these have been addressed in the demographic section of the study.

Questionnaire Itemized Report

The Likert scale of agreement on the 24 items of the questionnaire consisted of SA:Strongly Agree, A:Agree, N:Neutral, D:Disagree, and SD:Strongly Disagree. Each item below will be assigned a (+) if its statement positively values prior teaching experience for principals. An item below assigned a (-) indicates a statement which does not positively value prior teaching experience for principals. Agreement with items which positively (+) value prior teaching experience for principalship effectiveness will be indicated by higher frequencies on "SA" or "A". Higher frequencies or percentages of "D" or "SD" on positive items will indicate disagreement with the general perception that prior experience is to be valued in principals. Conversely, higher frequencies of disagreement with negative (-) items will indicate support for the perception that principals should accumulate significant prior experience as a teacher.

Agreement Level with Statements Positive and Negative

Questionnaire Item 1: (+) *A teacher should be aware of his/her principal's prior teaching experience.*

This item produced strong agreement with 33% (37) of the respondents and agreement with 55% (62), therefore 88% of elementary teachers in this sample positively identify with the statement. Only one respondent disagreed with this statement, but 11% of subjects (12) remained neutral toward the item. The standard error was 0.062 for item one.

Questionnaire Item 2: (+) *I believe teaching experience is of vital importance to a principal's preparation.*

The strongest agreement of the survey was found on this item. 84% of respondents (94) strongly agreed with this statement. An additional 14% (16) agreed, while only one respondent disagreed and one indicated neutral. An overwhelming 98% agree that teaching experience is vitally important to preparation for principalship. The standard error was 0.045 for this item.

Questionnaire Item 3: (+) *A principal should share with teachers about his/her prior teaching experience.*

Among the strongest agreement scores, this statement found agreement with 90% of respondents. Of those in agreement, 39% (44) strongly agreed. Remaining neutral toward the statement were 9% (10). This item yielded a standard error of 0.063.

Questionnaire Item 4: (+) *A teacher should feel free to inquire of the principal about prior teaching experience.*

Yielding a response very similar to the previous statement, this item found positive identity at the 90% level with 37% (41) strongly agreeing and 53% (59) agreeing. As in the previous item, 9% (10) indicated a neutral position on the statement. For this item the standard error of measurement was formulated at 0.065.

Questionnaire Item 5: (+) *A Teacher should feel free to inquire of others about the principal's prior experience.*

Respondents seemed more reluctant to express positively or negatively on this item than on the previous four. This is determined by their 29% (32) neutral response. A majority 59% agreed with the statement, but only 20% (22) of the sample strongly agreed. The first significant disagreement with a positive item was found on this practice of inquiring of others about the principal's experience. 19% (21) disagreed with this method of

acquiring information. A looser standard error of measurement, 0.101, was found on this item.

Questionnaire Item 6: (+) *A principal's evaluation of teaching outside his/her areas of experience is valid.*

Responding teachers tended to perceive this to be a true statement. 63% (71) agreed with the item, but 26% of the remaining sample were neutral. This left slightly over 10% in disagreement with this first statement on the type rather than amount of experience. The standard error for this item was 0.078.

Questionnaire Item 7: (-) *Non-standard teaching experience such as school music or physical education is unsuitable for preparing instructional leaders.*

Addressing the type of teaching experience again, this first negative statement received a minority agreement response. Only 29% (33) agreed that "special area" elementary teaching was unsuitable experience for principalship preparation. Disagreeing with this statement were 47% (53) of responding teachers.

Remaining neutral were 23% (26). The highest standard error of measurement of the 24 items, 0.112 was found in this item.

Questionnaire Item 8: (+) *Teachers are typically more willing to accept criticism or direction if the observing principal's prior teaching experience is similar to their own.* Experience similar to ones own is perceived to be more conducive to supervision according to 78% (87) of responding teachers. Among those agreeing, 35% (39) strongly agree with this statement. Although none strongly disagreed, 12% (13) disagreed and 11% (12) indicated neutral. The standard error of measurement for this item was found to be 0.091.

Questionnaire Item 9: (-) *Principals with only standard classroom experience are unlikely to offer valid supervision to special area teachers such as art or music.* This item is designed as the counterpart to item seven. It is also designated as a negative value for prior experience for principals. Disagreement with this statement constitutes a positive value for prior experience toward the principalship. A majority of respondents, 63% (71), disagreed with the statement. Agreement with this statement registered with 13% (14), while 24% (27) remained neutral after reading the

statement. This item's standard error of measurement was formulated at 0.081.

Questionnaire Item 10: (+)*My principal respects my expertise in areas outside his/her prior experience.*

The first of three statements turning the attention directly to teachers' current principal, this item found 76% (85) agreement and only 4% (5) disagreement in this sample. Choosing neutral were 20% (22). The standard error of measurement for this item was 0.082.

Questionnaire Item 11: (+)*Most instructional skills evaluated by my principal are common to a wide variety of teaching experiences.*

Agreement on this item was 95% (106), among which 34% (38) indicating strong agreement. Only one respondent disagreed with this statement, and 4% (5) were neutral. This item showed a standard error of measurement 0.059, the "tightest" item of the survey.

Questionnaire Item 12: (+)*I would hesitate to trust the instructional leadership of a principal with less than three years of prior classroom experience.*

Two items dealing with factors contributing to teachers, professional trust are inserted. This first, dealing with minimal years of experience, found 83% (93) agreement with more than half of those 43% strongly agreeing. 10% (11) of respondents disagreed on this item. Neutral toward this statement were 7% (8) of the teachers who responded.

Questionnaire Item 13: (-) *I would tend to trust the instructional leadership of a principal with a doctorate degree in instructional supervision regardless of minimal teaching experience.*

This second statement dealing with trust factors places formal, professional degrees over experience.

Disagreement with this item supports a positive value for prior teaching experience for principals. Respondents agreed with this statement 12% (14) while 9% (10) were neutral. A heavy majority disagreed with this statement at 78% (88) with 13% (15) of those strongly disagreeing. This item's standard error of measurement was 0.081.

Questionnaire Item 14: (+) *My principal's support for my class demonstrates a keen awareness of the needs of students and teachers.*

Item 14 is a third item focused on subjects' current principal. This item is the second strongest agreement statement of the survey. Strongly agreeing with this statement were 49% (55). Adding the 39% (44) who simply agreed to those strongly agreeing brought the agreement to 88% (99). This statement found disagreement with 4% (5) while 7% (8) responded neutral. For this item the standard error of measurement was 0.078.

Questionnaire Item 15: (+) *Principals with less than three years of classroom teaching experience usually lack the insight to properly support teachers.*

An item designed to identify the teachers who more strongly value prior teaching experience for principals, this statement received strong agreement at 27% (30) and agreement at 39% (44). Slightly over 10% (12) disagreed with this statement. The zeal of this statement may have contributed to its 23% (26) neutral response. The standard error of measurement was 0.089.

Questionnaire Item 16: (+) *The best principals are those who sorely miss their years in the classroom.*

This item distinguished itself as the statement drawing the most respondents, 37% (42), to indicate neutral. Only slightly higher than that were the disagreeing

teachers at 39% (44). Among items designated as positive value (+) for prior teaching experience for principals, this item was weakest. 23% (26) agreed with the statement. The standard error of measurement is 0.089, although some question remains as to the strength of any item which produces a majority neutral.

Questionnaire Item 17: (+) *Principals should frequently take time to plan lessons and teach in the classroom.*

Responding teachers perceive this as a positive statement in 52% (58) of cases. Disagreement is indicated in 27% (30) of cases. 21% (24) chose neutral on this item.

Although by no means a significant weakness, one of the higher standard errors, 0.107, was calculated on this item.

Questionnaire Item 18: (-) *Once an educator assumes a position of administration, he/she usually ceases to use the knowledge and skills of a teacher.*

This negative item yielded 59% (66) disagreement. 26% (28) of respondents agreed. There were similar levels of strong identity on both extremes. Strongly disagree and strongly agree were 7% and 6% respectively. Neutral

responses were 15% (17). Standard error of measurement for this item was 0.101.

Questionnaire Item 19: (-) *My primary need of a principal is disciplinary support.*

Responding teachers from this sample agreed 37% (41) with this statement, however 54% (61) disagreed. Remaining neutral to the statement were 9%. 0.196 was the standard error of measurement; the second highest in the study.

Questionnaire Item 20: (+) *Principals with extensive classroom experience often make "classroom friendly" decisions regarding budget and schedule.*

28% (31) of respondents strongly agreed with this item, and 50% indicated they agree. This 78% agreement is countered by only 3.6% (4) disagreement. Respondents choosing to indicate neutral were 19% (21). The standard measure of error for this item was 0.074.

Questionnaire Item 21: (-) *It has been my experience that principals tend to be out of touch with the needs of the teachers and students.*

This negative item is an indirect indicator for teachers' current principal without the focus of earlier items on

the topic. It should be noted that this sample of teachers all work with principals with prior teaching experience above the national average. Disagreement with this item was indicated by 69% (77) of respondents. 19% (21) agreed with the statement related to their experience, while more than 12.5% (14) were neutral on this item. The standard error of measurement for this item was 0.092.

Questionnaire Item 22: (-) *A school with competent teachers can run effectively without a principal.*

This controversial statement found agreement with slightly over 20% (23) of teachers responding to the questionnaire. 75% (84) disagreed with the statement. Only 4% (5) remained neutral after reading the statement. The standard error of measurement for was 0.105.

Questionnaire Item 23: (+) *"Principal teacher" is a fitting title for my current principal's style of practice.*

Teachers responded with majority 54% (60) agreement. Although no one strongly disagreed, 26% (29) disagreed. Remaining neutral were 20% (23). For this item the standard error of measurement was found to be 0.100.

Questionnaire Item 24: (+) *I believe principals should be required to teach a minimum of 5 years before being certified in educational leadership.*

Drawing on an arbitrary preference of five years experience teachers have indicated in literature on the topic, this item found strong agreement at 82% (52). Exactly half of those agreeing, 41% (46) strongly agreed. Nearly 2% (2) strongly disagreed, while 3.6% (4) disagreed. 12% (14) were neutral toward the statement. The standard error of measurement on this item was 0.086.

In isolation each of the 24 items contributes a specific element toward answering the problem of this study. The following chapter will further develop the interpretation of the data derived from the above items. An effort has been made to combine items in a meaningful way by topics rather than the mixed format in which the questionnaire was designed for the survey.

CHAPTER IV

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose adopted for this study was determining elementary teachers' perception of principals' prior teaching experience. Guided by a review of literature spanning thirty years, the research questions were developed into a questionnaire for a teacher survey. Data were collected and analyzed to measure teachers' agreement with statements both negatively and positively valuing prior teaching experience for principals. Interpretation and clarification of the findings from the data are the purposes of this chapter. Conclusions will be drawn from this information which may contribute to individual careers, local recruitment, and broader policies affecting the certification and selection of principals.

The format of this chapter will group the 24 items by sub-topics and reveal trends in the perceptions of the subjects. Analysis of this type will be supported by figures and summary. Groups of items relating to a topic, whether negative or positive in value, will be summarized together.

Disclosure of principals' prior teaching experience was the focus of items 1, 3, 4, and 5. The statements were all positive in their value of such experience.

Teachers in the sample overwhelmingly agree that they should be given information on their principal's prior teaching experience. Item five drew the highest neutral response. Teachers were not as willing to agree with seeking a secondary source to acquire information about the principal's prior experience.

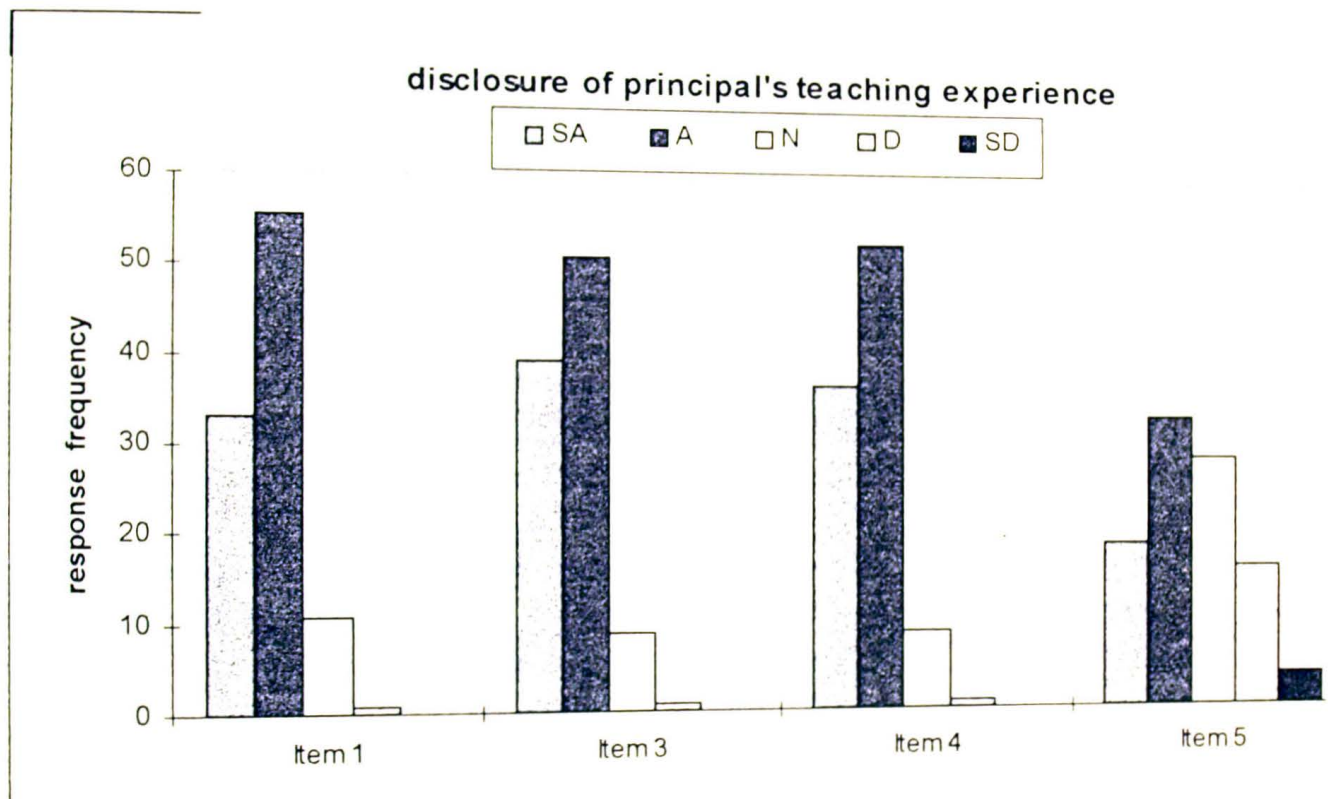


Figure 4.1 disclosure of principal's prior experience

Items 2, 12, 15, and 24 directly assess the value teachers place on years of prior teaching experience among principals. Of these statements, item 2 produced the highest frequency of strong agreement and the lowest frequency of neutral or disagreement of the study. By

specifying a number of years identified in the related literature as minimal, these items require teachers to support typical experience requirements or reject them. Less than three years in item 12 and 15 received teachers' rejection, while five or more years met with their support. The requirement of five years prior teaching experience for principals is not typical, although teachers would require it. Figure 4.2 illustrates how strongly teachers feel about the positive value of prior teaching experience for principals.

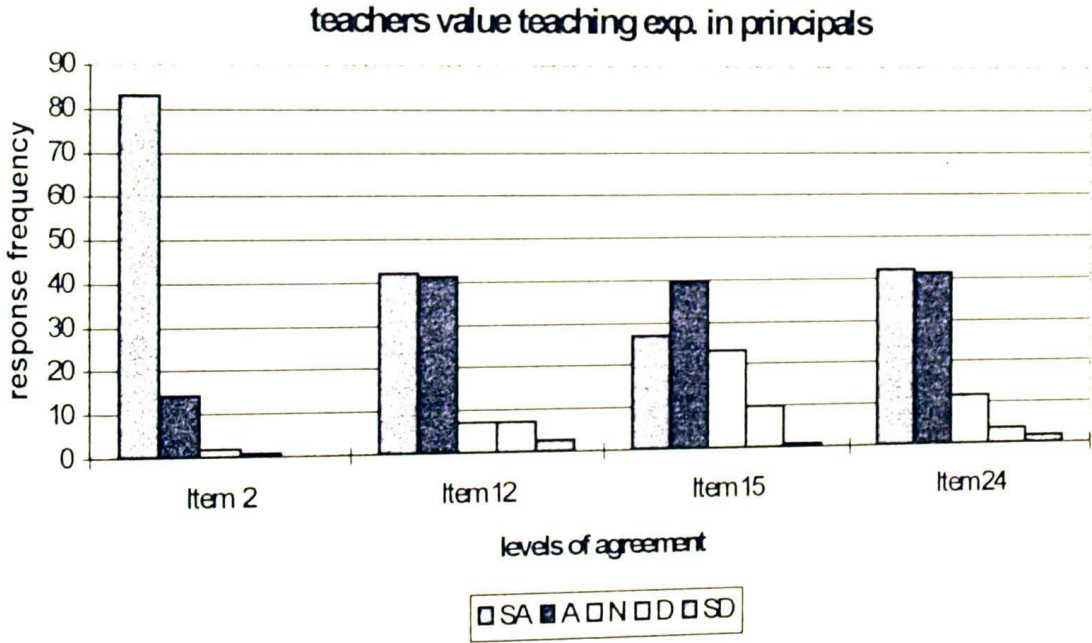


Figure 4.2 teachers value teaching exp. in principals

The type of experience, whether standard classroom teaching or elementary special area teaching, is the

emphasis for items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. Although responses on these items had broader distributions, there was overall much more frequent agreement with the positive items 6, 8, and 10, as well as overall much more frequent disagreement with negative items, 7 and 9.

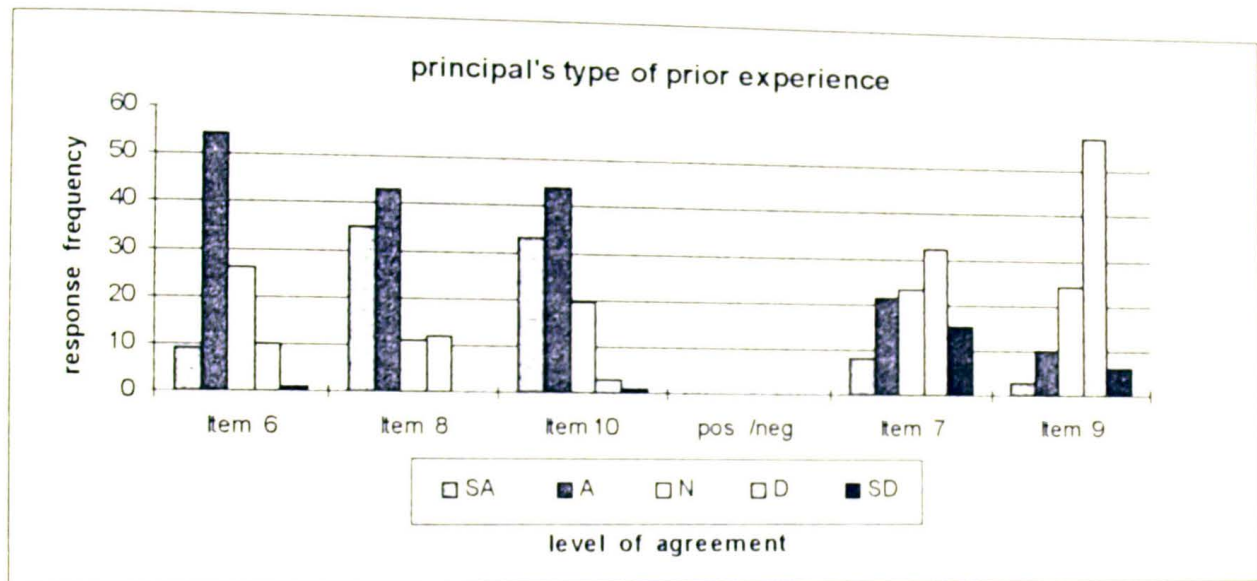


Figure 4.3 principal's type of prior experience

Item 11, relates evaluation of instructional skills to type of experience. The vast majority of teachers strongly agreed that specific areas of teaching share mostly common skills and methods.

The statement in item 13 bears the weight of all the literature that contrasts professional degrees with adequate prior teaching experience. By design it is a negative value for prior experience. Teachers in the survey indicated this item as the one with which they

agreed least of all. By rejecting this statement they send a message of preference for experience over advanced degrees. A comparison between items 12, a positive item, and 13, a negative item, reveals a consistent value among responding teachers. Teachers consistently perceive they would withhold trust from a principal with minimal prior teaching experience. Agreement with positive item 12 and disagreement with negative item 13 are illustrated in figure 4.4 which follows.

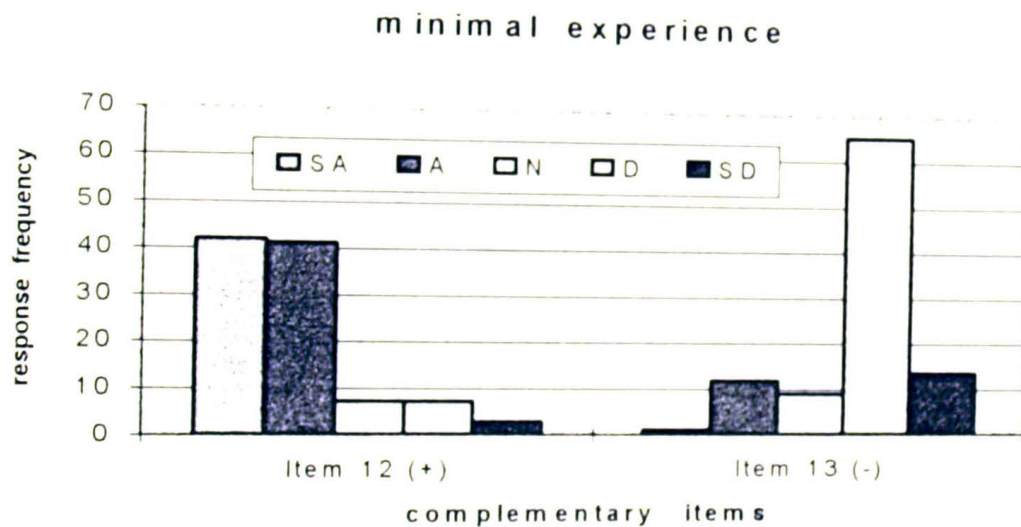


Figure 4.4 Minimal experience

Awareness of and support for classroom needs are common themes for items 14, 19, 20, and 21. The positive statements in items 14 and 20 produced significant agreement. It is an honorable endorsement from the teachers in this study to their principals that item 14

brought the second highest agreement rating of the study. It should be noted, as before, that these principals rate highly in prior teaching experience according to nationwide studies(Doud, 1998). Items 19 and 21 are negatively related to prior teaching experience for principals. Both statements drew high frequencies of disagreement responses. The four items can be graphically compared in figure 4.5.

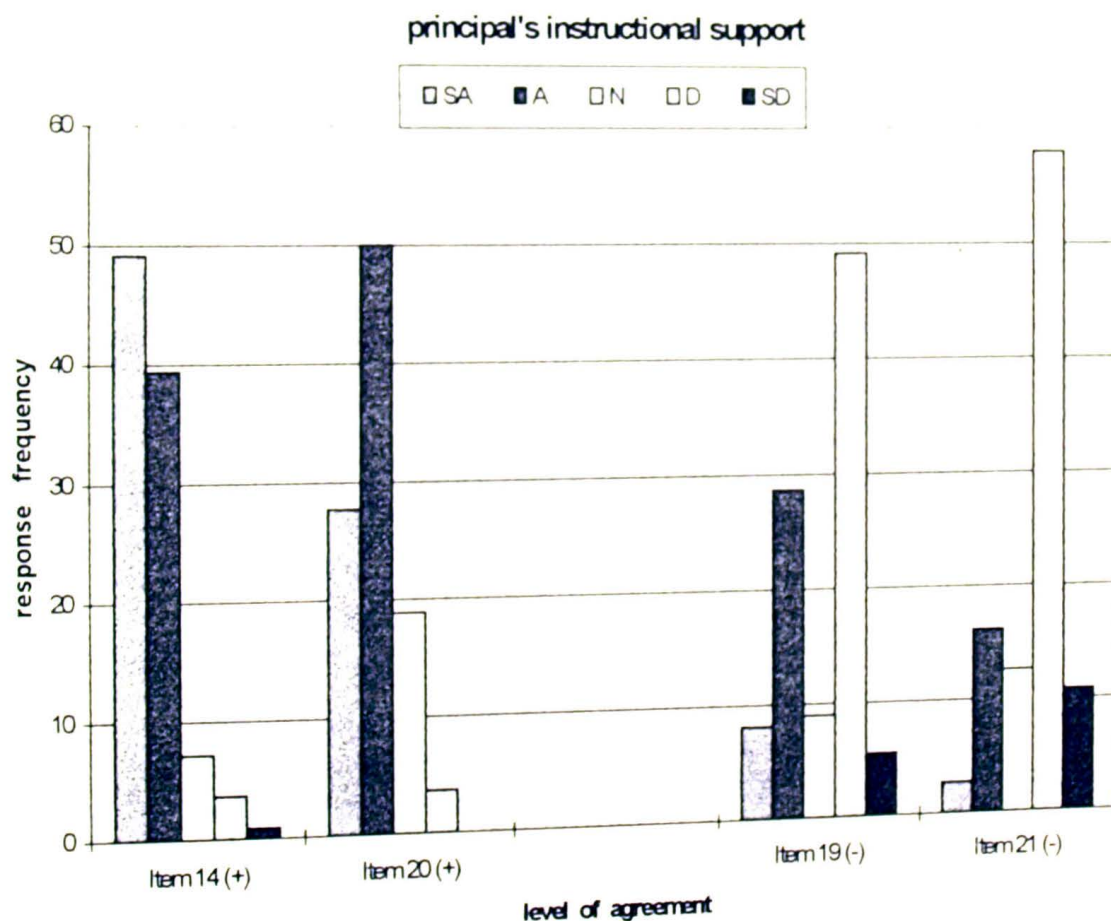


Figure 4.5 Principals' support for classroom needs

The need for primarily discipline support in item 19 was a divided issue among the teachers of this sample. This is consistent with literature on the topic. Teachers value their principals as primarily an instructional leader and administrator in 55% of cases according to this item in the present study. In the present surge of apathy or defiance displayed by some students at every level and their parents toward teachers, the principal may be sought primarily as a support for discipline. This dynamic may explain the nearly 30% agreement with the primary need for discipline support on item 19.

Item 16 has been reported in the previous chapter as the most neutral item. The neutral option may have been selected for numerous reasons including lack of clarity and lack of significance. This statement has been designated positive (+) in support of prior experience for its implication that the principal had been a successful teacher. It was intended to portray an administrator who remembers her teaching years with great fondness. This item was the only positive item to produce a majority disagreement. The statement may be interpreted to indicate teachers do not prefer administrators who long to return to the classroom. This interpretation is supported by the results of item 17, another positive (+) statement. Number 17 was second

only to item 16 as a split indicator. A slim majority of respondents agreed with statement 17. Principals would certainly be frustrated by this sentimental notion, given the demands already placed upon them. Principals might make a token appearance as a teacher to make a point, but, as a frequent practice, few could justify it.

A common theme unites items 16, 17, and 23. These three statements call into question the distinction between principals and teachers. Item 23 joins the other two as an item about which teachers were least enthusiastic. According to this study, teachers reject an effort to blur the line between classroom instructors and educational leaders. The responses on item 18 show teachers perceive that principals continue to use knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom. This would seem to support a parallel theme with item 20. Teaching experience enhances the insight needed to effectively make many budget and scheduling decisions, as well as lead the instructional program. As cited earlier in related literature, item 22 contains a controversial proposal. If this sample is representative of a broader mind set, the principalship will not soon be eliminated. Experiments to operated schools without a distinct leader have not met with broad appeal. Teachers desire instructional leaders who draw on adequate experience.

Questions and Hypothesis Answered

According to the data, teachers have answered the problem questions of this study. The following section will apply the findings of this study to those questions.

1. Should teachers be aware of the principals' prior teaching experience? Teachers indicated a strong desire to know this information they consider so vital to effective instructional leadership.

2. To what degree do teachers expect principals to have teaching experience similar to their own? Teachers do not reserve their approval of principals who taught in areas dissimilar to their own. They perceive that various teaching areas share in common the skills and methods of good instructional practice.

3. Should teachers confront the principal about issues related to prior teaching experience? Teachers believe they should feel free to approach the principal about his/her prior teaching if this information is not forthcoming. They were not as willing to acquire this information through more informal or indirect sources.

4. Do principals with non-typical teaching experience (physical education, special education, guidance, art, or music) have a disadvantage when seeking

to gain teachers' trust and cooperation? The data indicated that teachers are willing to trust and cooperate with a principal with non-standard classroom experience if the experience was of adequate duration.

5. Are teachers more willing to take criticism or direction from a principal if they know the leader's background includes similar teaching experience? Teachers prefer that the supervision of their teaching comes from a former teacher who shares similar teaching experiences.

6. Do teachers in non-typical classrooms believe a principal with standard classroom experience can effectively supervise their teaching? Teachers, both standard and non-standard reject the idea that principals from standard teaching settings are ill equipped to supervise the instruction of special area teachers. There is strong agreement that special area teachers can be effectively supervised by principals from standard teaching backgrounds.

7. Do teachers feel their expertise is considered and utilized by the principal regardless of prior teaching experience? Teachers in this sample strongly agree the principal demonstrates professional respect,

and properly regards the individual strengths they contribute to the organization.

8. Do teachers feel their teaching can be fairly evaluated by a principal with dissimilar teaching experience? A very high percentage of teachers agreed that most instructional skills evaluated by the principal are non-specialized. These skills are common to a wide variety of teaching areas.

Teachers strongly believe teaching experience to be vitally important for a principal's preparation. They expect the information about the principal's prior experience to be forthcoming, preferably from an official, primary source. Teachers see the organizational need of a leader apart from the team. They prefer that their leaders come from among teachers, but remain distinct. The content area of prior teaching experience is not nearly as important to teachers as the longevity of the experience. Teachers are not willing to substitute formal preparation at high levels in the place of time spent functioning at the lower levels. They perceive the two or three years minimum experience requirement inadequately low for principal certification.

Hypothesis Rejected

Hypothesis: There will be no measurable difference between teachers' perceptions of principals with extensive prior teaching experience and principals with minimal or no prior teaching experience. The case against this hypothesis has been abundantly demonstrated in the current study. Powerful and consistent responses collected in this descriptive study of teachers' perceptions regarding principals' prior teaching experience lead to the rejection of the hypothesis.

By combining the findings of this survey with purely scientific methods of research on related topics, the concepts suggested may influence hiring policies and practices for the principalship. Those districts considering the recruitment of administrators from unconventional career paths may be ill advised to ignore the perceptions of this sample of teachers. Those aspiring educational leaders in training may be well advised to take the recommendation of the teachers in this study and become a seasoned teacher before seeking to lead an organization of seasoned teachers.

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APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA: FREQUENCIES

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. My total, certified teaching experience as of May 1999 falls within:

☐ 0-2 years (n = 16 14%) ☐ 3-5 years (n = 20 18%) ☐ 6-9 years (n = 18 16%) ☐ 1-15 years (n = 18 16%) ☐ >15 years (n = 40 36%)

2. My current building principal:

☐ was in place when I was hired at my current school. (n = 72 64%)

☐ became our school's principal after I was employed. (n = 40 36%)

3. My principal's gender is: ☐ female (n = 112 100%) ☐ male (n = 0)

4. My gender is: ☐ female (n = 107 96%) ☐ male (n = 5 4%)

5. My **primary** instructional responsibility is:

☐ with one grade level - teaching several subject areas.

(n = 97 86.6%)

☐ with one subject area - school wide, over several grade levels.

(n = 10 8.9%)

☐ with students who have an Individual Education Plan, (IEP).

(n = 5 4.5%)

6. My lesson plans are checked by:

☐ my principal only. (n = 12 10.7%)

☐ the assistant principal only. (n = 7 6.3%)

☐ the principal and/or others. (n = 93 83%)

7. My instructional skills are evaluated by:

☐ my principal only. (n = 8 7%)

☐ the assistant principal only. (n = 0)

☐ the principal and/or others. (n = 104 93%)

APPENDIX B

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Survey of Elementary Educators' Perceptions of the Prior Teaching Experience of Principals

Please place a ✓ in the most appropriate ☐ to complete the statements below.

1. My total, certified teaching experience as of May 1999 falls within:
☐ 0-2 years ☐ 3-5 years ☐ 6-9 years ☐ 10-15 years ☐ >15 years
2. My current building principal:
☐ was in place when I was hired at my current school.
☐ became our school's principal after I was employed.
3. My principal's gender is: ☐ female ☐ male
4. My gender is: ☐ female ☐ male
5. My **primary** instructional responsibility is:
☐ with one grade level - teaching several subject areas.
☐ with one subject area - school-wide, over several grade levels.
☐ with students who have an Individual Educational Plan, (IEP).
☐ other _____
6. My lesson plans are: ☐ checked by my principal only.
 ☐ checked by the assistant principal only.
 ☐ checked by the principal and/or others.
 ☐ only checked by someone other than a principal.
 ☐ never checked.
7. My instructional skills are: ☐ evaluated by my principal only.
 ☐ evaluated by the assistant principal only.
 ☐ evaluated by the principal and/or others.
 ☐ evaluated by someone other than a principal.
 ☐ never formally evaluated.

Please respond to all items below with a ✓ on one level of agreement:
SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, or SD-Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. A teacher should be aware of his/her principal's prior teaching experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I believe teaching experience is of vital importance to a principal's preparation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. A principal should share with teachers about his/her prior teaching experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A teacher should feel free to inquire of the principal about prior teaching experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. A teacher should feel free to inquire of others about the principal's prior experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. A principal's evaluation of teaching outside his/her areas of experience is valid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Non-standard teaching experience such as school music or physical education is unsuitable for preparing instructional leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Teachers are typically more willing to accept criticism or direction if the observing principal's prior teaching experience is similar to their own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Please continue with item # 9)

SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, or SD-Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. Principals with only standard classroom experience are unlikely to offer valid supervision to special area teachers such as art or music.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. My principal respects my expertise in areas outside his/her prior experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Most instructional skills evaluated by my principal are common to a wide variety of teaching experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I would hesitate to trust the instructional leadership of a principal with less than three years of prior classroom experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I would tend to trust the instructional leadership of a principal with a doctorate degree in instructional supervision regardless of minimal teaching experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. My principal's support for my class demonstrates a keen awareness of the needs of students and teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Principals with less than three years of classroom teaching experience usually lack the insight to properly support teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. The best principals are those who sorely miss their years in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Please continue with Item # 17)

SA-Strongly Agree, **A**-Agree, **N**-Neutral, **D**-Disagree, or **SD**-Strongly Disagree


	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. Principals should frequently take time to plan lessons and teach in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Once an educator assumes a position of administration, he/she usually ceases to use the knowledge and skills of a teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. My primary need of a principal is disciplinary support.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Principals with extensive classroom experience often make “classroom friendly” decisions regarding budget and schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. It has been my experience that principals tend to be out of touch with the needs of the teachers and students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. A school with competent teachers can run effectively without a principal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. “Principal teacher” is a fitting title for my current principal’s style of practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I believe principals should be required to teach a minimum of 5 years before being certified in educational leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses.

APPENDIX C
APPROVAL DOCUMENTS

MEMORANDUM

To: Mark Russell
c/o Dr. Dolores Gore, Education

From: Gaines Hunt, Chair
Human Research Review Committee 

Date: March 9, 1999

Re: Human Research Proposal #99056

I have received your human research proposal "Perceptions of Elementary Teachers Regarding Principals' Prior Teaching Experience," which has been assigned protocol #99056. My initial review of your proposal determines that this project is exempt from the requirement of committee review. You are free to proceed with this research project without any further action on the part of the Committee.

If you modify your project significantly, changes may trigger the need for reconsideration of this exemption by the Committee. We advise, therefore, that you consult with me in planning any changes. You are obligated to notify the Human Research Review Committee immediately if you significantly modify your protocol, or if adverse events occur during the conduct of this research project.

This approval is valid only for a period of one calendar year. Should your project extend beyond that time period, you will need to obtain an approval for continuation.

If your proposed research will be used to fulfill requirements for a graduate degree, you will need to provide the Graduate School with a copy of this memo.

Thank you for your cooperation in the Human Research Review Process. Please accept our best wishes for successful completion of this research project. If the Committee can be of further assistance, please let us know.

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**AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
CHECKLIST FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

DATE: 3-1-1999

Project Title: Perceptions of Elementary Teachers Regarding Principals' Prior Teaching Experience			
Funding Source: Independent			
Principal Investigator:	Mark Russell	Department:	Education
Sponsor: Dr. Dolores Gore			

1. Give a brief description or outline of your research procedures as they relate to the use of human subjects. This should include:

- a) a description of who the subjects will be; Elementary school teachers employed in a public school system
 - b) instructions given to the subjects; Subjects will be asked to complete a voluntary, confidential questionnaire of four personal/ professional identifiers and twenty (20) Likert agreement items. They will then be instructed to seal and deposit completed questionnaires into an envelope held by their school receptionist.
 - c) activities in which the subjects will engage; Only pencil and paper responses requested.
 - d) special incentives; None
 - e) tests and questionnaires to be administered. Complete questionnaire with instructions attached.
- If new or non-standard tests or questionnaires are used, copies must be attached to this form. Note if the subjects are minors or otherwise "vulnerable" (e.g. children, prisoners, mentally or physically infirm, etc.)
- The attached questionnaire is original to the investigator. Subjects are adult professionals who are currently employed as educators.

2. Does this research entail possible risk of psychic, legal, physical or social harm to the subjects? Please explain. What steps have been taken to minimize these risks? What provisions have been made to ensure that appropriate facilities and professional attention necessary for the health and safety of the subjects are available and will be utilized? It is conceivable that social and professional risks to teachers, principals, schools and school systems exist in this study. Were names of subjects, principals, schools and school systems disclosed, certain interpretations of items and perceptions of subjects may place affected parties at odds. Social and professional risks associated with breach of confidentiality have been minimized by anonymous, sealable questionnaires. Reported references to the sampled population and their school system will be generic, rendering data virtually untracable.

3. The potential benefits of this activity to the subjects and to mankind in general outweigh any possible risks. This opinion is justified by the following: Suggestions, interpretations, and recommendations resulting from this study may better inform authorities who hire elementary principals. Individuals seeking a career as an elementary principal may benefit from the perceptions of teachers regarding prior teaching experience of principals. Subjects in this study may analyze, clarify, and establish their values concerning

their leaders. Policy-makers may use these findings to shape minimum levels of experience for prospective school principals.

4. Will legally effective, informed consent be obtained from all subjects or their legally authorized representative? Describe consent procedures and attach a copy of consent documents. Method of informed consent will be stated in the conclusion of the instruction sheet, (attached), which will be included on the cover of each copy questionnaire. "Rather than collecting signatures and compromising subjects' confidentiality, the simple acts of completing and returning the questionnaire will constitute informed consent."

5. Will the confidentiality or anonymity of all subjects be maintained? How is this accomplished? (If not, has a formal release been obtained? Attach.) Confidentiality and/or anonymity of all subjects will be maintained.

a) If the data will be stored by electronic media, what steps will be taken to assure confidentiality/anonymity? Data will be collected by a non-electronic medium and transferred to electronic media for analysis and storage. Non-networked machines will be used to store data, and all analysis will either be stored to removable media or destroyed before time of publishing. Standard software security passwords will be used where appropriate and will remain exclusive to the investigator and his supervising professor.

b) If the data will be stored by non-electronic media, what steps will be taken to assure confidentiality/anonymity? Confidentiality/anonymity will be assured by the method of distribution and collection to the satisfaction of the subjects and the investigator. Questionnaires on a standard paper medium will be hand delivered to schools by the investigator or a neutral designee for general distribution to all teachers. Where allowed, teachers' memo boxes will be used by carrier. Instructions for confidentiality using standard, permanent-seal envelopes will accompany the questionnaires, (attached). Instructions for sealed envelopes to be deposited into a large envelope at a reception area will be included. Collected envelopes will be hand retrieved by the investigator or a neutral designee.

6. Do the data collected relate to illegal activities? If yes, explain. No.

7. Are all subjects protected from any future potentially harmful use of the data collected in this investigation? How will this be accomplished? Every effort will be made to avoid any direct or indirect harm to subjects as a result of their participation or non-participation in this survey and the future use of the collected data. Names of subjects, principals, schools, and the sampled school system will not be reported at any time. References to each entity will be identified in generic terms.

INVESTIGATOR'S CERTIFICATION:

I have read the Austin Peay State University Policies and Procedures on Human Research and agree to abide by them. I also agree to report to the Human Research Review Committee any significant and relevant changes in procedures and instruments as they relate to subjects.

Investigator's Signature



Date



3-7-99

2112 Richview Place
Clarksville, Tennessee 37043
January 16, 1999


Dr.
Board of Education Offices

Dear Dr. Hodgson:

I am preparing a field study in partial fulfillment of an Education Specialist Degree in Administration and Supervision. It is my intention to seek proper permission from your office after providing pertinent information and a copy of the questionnaire which will be the instrument for my survey. Prior to submitting a proposal to my graduate committee in the School of Education at Austin Peay State University, I would like to obtain informal, preliminary permission to proceed.

The enclosed abstract has not yet been submitted to my graduate committee for approval. I am providing it to you in advance partly as a courtesy, and partly as an effort to avoid delays and reversals later in the approval process. I will fully inform your office at appropriate steps in the approval process. Please let me know of any initial concerns which might be obstacles to having the study approved by your office. I will need to be provided with any instructions on special procedures which may be unique to this School System for a survey of this type and the use of data.

Please be assured that this study is neither motivated by nor seeks to engage in any ill will toward the , County School System or persons associated with it. My intentions will be expressed to you in greater detail after I have heard from your office, and once my proposal has been approved. At that time I will submit a formal request for your permission to proceed. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration in this endeavor.

Respectfully yours,

Mark E. Russell

FILE: IFA - RESEARCH

Procedures for conducting research projects:

1. A written proposal shall be presented to the Director of Instructional, Research and Development.
2. All initial contacts with schools and/or persons to be involved shall be made from the office of Instructional Support, Research and Development, and the school or schools in question must be willing to participate in the project.
3. There shall be a minimum of class time interruption.
4. A specific group of students shall not be involved in more than one project during a school year.
5. Notification of approval shall be made from the office of Instructional Support, Research and Development.
6. The office of Instructional Support Research and Development shall receive two copies of all project results and/or data, after which he shall provide one copy to the school or schools involved and one copy to the appropriate services or area supervisor.

Last Policy Revision/Adoption: July 28, 1992

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I give my consent to the inclusion of _____ elementary school
(school name)
in Mr. Russell's spring 1999 survey provided all school board adopted guidelines are
followed, confidentiality is maintained at every level, and teachers retain the right of
individual, informed consent.

(principal's signature)

____/____/_____
(date)