

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

Dissertations

Theses & Dissertations

Summer 7-24-2020

Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Team Members and Non-Lighthouse Team Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools

Nina J. Henson
Lindenwood University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Henson, Nina J., "Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Team Members and Non-Lighthouse Team Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools" (2020). *Dissertations*. 63.

<https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/dissertations/63>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses & Dissertations at Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. For more information, please contact phuffman@lindenwood.edu.

Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Team Members and Non-Lighthouse
Team Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline,
and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools

by

Nina J. Henson

July 24, 2020

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
School of Education

Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Team Members and Non-Lighthouse
Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline,
and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools

by

Nina J. Henson

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
Lindenwood University, School of Education

Shelly Fransen
Dr. Shelly Fransen, Dissertation Chair

7-24-20
Date

Sherry DeVore
Dr. Sherry DeVore, Committee Member

7-24-2020
Date

Brian K Wilson
Dr. Brian Wilson, Committee Member

7-24-20
Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Nina J. Henson

Signature: Nina J. Henson Date: 7/24/20

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Shelly Fransen, my dissertation chair and advisor, for all of her support and guidance throughout this process. She was my biggest cheerleader and trusted advisor to keep me motivated and confident to persevere. Thank you to Dr. Sherry DeVore and Dr. Brian Wilson for their continued support in helping complete this project. Thank you to Leader in Me for allowing me to research the schools participating in their program through surveys and to the principals of those schools who took time to support a fellow administrator. I would also like to extend a special thank you to my assistant principal and teachers for encouraging and supporting me to keep our school the best place around for kids while I worked through this process.

I especially want to thank my supportive husband, Jeramie, for pushing me to go for it and reassuring me throughout the process. To my four children, thank you for understanding and supporting me as I juggled multiple tasks to complete this project. Thank you for keeping me focused on what is most important in life! A special thank you to my grandma, Barbara, encouraging me to pursue my education journey later in life and believing I could succeed no matter what the trial in front of me. My mom and dad have always told me I am braver than I believe, and my Lord and Savior has kept me grounded to my ultimate purpose in the midst of frustrating days.

Abstract

The Leader in Me is a school approach with a focus on socioemotional education adopted by over 3,000 schools across the globe (Soutter, 2018, p.8). As culture continues to change with technology and new social aspects, character education programs must continue to adapt as well to support student needs within schools (Rocco, 2018). This quantitative study was designed to identify differences in perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members about how the Leader in Me impacts student attendance, classroom discipline, and school culture. Surveys were sent to educators in 22 schools in southern Missouri who had implemented the Leader in Me for at least two years. Elicited feedback from elementary principals, counselors, and teachers regarding their perceptions of the Leader in Me model was gathered through this survey. The data were disaggregated to determine if differences existed between Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members. Significant statistical differences between the two groups were not evident when examining how the paradigms affected the three areas of attendance, behavior, and culture. Most participants agreed the Leader in Me had a positive impact on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school culture; however, the Lighthouse team members had a greater understanding specific to the breakdown of the five paradigms of the Leader in Me creating change outcome, whereas the Non-Lighthouse team members saw the impact coming from more of a holistic view of Leader in Me program. The results of this study can provide support for principals when implementing the Leader in Me program to ensure all stakeholders have a deep level of understanding to sustain the system with the expected outcomes.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------|
| Acknowledgments..... | ii |
| Abstract | iii |
| List of Tables | viii |
| List of Figures | ix |
| Chapter One: Introduction | 1 |
| Background of the Study | 1 |
| Conceptual Framework | 3 |
| Statement of the Problem | 5 |
| Purpose of the Study | 7 |
| Research Questions and Hypotheses | 7 |
| Significance of the Study | 9 |
| Definition of Key Terms | 10 |
| Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions | 11 |
| Summary | 12 |
| Chapter Two: Review of Literature | 14 |
| Conceptual Framework | 14 |
| The Five Paradigms of Leader in Me | 16 |
| Paradigm One: Leadership..... | 17 |
| Paradigm Two: Change..... | 19 |
| Paradigm Three: Potential | 21 |
| Paradigm Four: Motivation..... | 22 |
| Paradigm Five: Education | 24 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Character Education in Schools | 25 |
| Prominent Character Education Programs..... | 28 |
| Positive Behavior Support System | 28 |
| CHARACTERplus..... | 30 |
| Teaching the Whole Child | 31 |
| The Leader in Me..... | 33 |
| Leader in Me and Attendance | 36 |
| Leader in Me and School Discipline..... | 38 |
| Leader in Me and School Climate | 41 |
| Lighthouse Teams | 42 |
| Summary | 43 |
| Chapter Three: Methodology | 45 |
| Problem and Purpose Overview..... | 45 |
| Research Questions and Hypotheses | 46 |
| Research Design | 47 |
| Population and Sample | 50 |
| Instrumentation | 51 |
| Reliability..... | 51 |
| Validity | 52 |
| Data Collection | 53 |
| Data Analysis | 54 |
| Ethical Considerations | 55 |
| Summary | 56 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter Four: Analysis of Data | 58 |
| Demographics | 58 |
| Data Analysis | 59 |
| School Attendance | 60 |
| Classroom Discipline | 67 |
| Building Culture | 73 |
| Mann-Whitney <i>U</i> Analysis | 80 |
| Summary | 86 |
| Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions | 87 |
| Findings | 88 |
| Research Question One | 88 |
| Research Question Two | 89 |
| Research Question Three | 91 |
| Research Question Four | 92 |
| Conclusions | 94 |
| Implications for Practice | 101 |
| Recommendations for Future Research | 106 |
| Summary | 108 |
| References | 112 |
| Appendix A | 125 |
| Appendix B | 126 |
| Appendix C | 129 |
| Appendix D | 130 |

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Appendix E | 131 |
| Appendix F..... | 132 |
| Appendix G..... | 133 |
| Vita | 134 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1. <i>Survey Participant Breakdown.</i> | 59 |
| Table 2. <i>Likert-Type Scale Responses for Perceived Value of Effects of the Leader in Me on School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate.</i> | 60 |
| Table 3. <i>Mann-Whitney U Test Results of Lighthouse Team Members' and Non-Lighthouse Team Members' Perceived Value of the Leader in Me Paradigms on Increasing Attendance.</i> | 82 |
| Table 4. <i>Mann-Whitney U Test Results of Lighthouse Team Members' and Non-Lighthouse Team Members' Perceived Value of the Leader in Me Paradigms on Decreasing Discipline.</i> | 84 |
| Table 5. <i>Mann-Whitney U Test Results of Lighthouse Team Members' and Non-Lighthouse Team Members' Perceived Value of the Leader in Me Paradigms on Improving School Climate.</i> | 85 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Figure 1.</i> Leader in Me framework..... | 4 |
| <i>Figure 2.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership and the effects on school attendance | 61 |
| <i>Figure 3.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of change and the effects on school attendance | 62 |
| <i>Figure 4.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the effects on school attendance when students set wildly important goals for attendance | 63 |
| <i>Figure 5.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of motivation and the effects on school attendance | 64 |
| <i>Figure 6.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of education and the effects on school attendance..... | 65 |
| <i>Figure 7.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of change and the effects on classroom discipline..... | 68 |
| <i>Figure 8.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership and the effects on classroom discipline..... | 69 |
| <i>Figure 9.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of potential and the effects on classroom discipline | 70 |
| <i>Figure 10.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of motivation and the effects on classroom discipline..... | 71 |
| <i>Figure 11.</i> Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of education and the effects on classroom discipline..... | 72 |

Figure 12. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership on improving school climate74

Figure 13. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of potential on improving school climate75

Figure 14. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of change on improving school climate76

Figure 15. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership on improving school climate77

Figure 16. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of education on improving school climate78

Chapter One: Introduction

The most important component of growth for students in a Leader in Me school is an agreed-upon vision for all teachers that all students have the potential to become leaders (Cummins, 2015). According to Mannell (2018), “The objective of TLIM [The Leader in Me] is not to develop each child into a business leader but instead to develop children into the leaders of their own lives” (Mannell, 2018, p. 1). The Leader in Me program builds a sense of connectedness, which leads to increased student motivation and, in turn, has a lasting effect on their future (Tidd, 2016).

Chapter One includes background information regarding the importance of implementing a character education program to support learning and student behavior; specifically, the Leader in Me program. The conceptual framework, statement of the problem, and purpose of study are also included. The research questions are stated, and the significance of the study is provided. Finally, the definitions of key terms are shared and the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study are defined.

Background of the Study

Recognition of the importance of positive school culture has led to an increased focus on school wide character development programs (Kite, 2018). According to Frizzley (2017), “The practical application for encouraging a passion for learning clearly pertains to student leadership opportunities; through leadership in the school students will develop the ability and skills necessary to lead intrinsically, without being told or being directed to lead” (p. 7). Many principals have recognized the need to implement character education programs to teach the whole child in preparation for the future (Bryant, 2016). The focus on shared leadership needs to be shifted to teaching leadership

skills to elementary students to prepare them for the expectations of the 21st-century (Xiong, 2017).

According to Tidd (2016), “This focused attention on improving the learning environment will better equip students to leave school systems college, career, and life ready thereby preparing them to be productive members of a global society” (p. 4). Many schools are implementing leadership character education programs to prepare students for the future (El-Attrache, 2018). Students focus on building trusting relationships with teachers and peers in the classroom through transparent conversations about their educational journeys (Berlin, 2019).

The need for character initiatives to affect the greater whole of communities both in and out of schools has led principals to implement more than just academic initiatives (Bryant, 2016). According to *Leader in Me* (2018b):

Instead of focusing on academic measures alone, *Leader in Me* embodies a holistic approach to education, redefining how schools measure success. This approach empowers educators with effective practices and tools to teach leadership to every student, create a culture of student empowerment, and align systems to drive results in academics. (para. 7)

El-Attrache (2018) stated, “There has also been anecdotal evidence suggesting that leadership programs, such as *Leader in Me*, have led to improvements in academic performance, as well as a decrease in discipline referrals” (p. 7). Tidd (2016) believed that *Leader in Me* teaches life skills and could be a change agent for the future and for society through the development of habits that affect more than just school (Tidd, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

The Leader in Me conceptual framework was developed around the principle that a positive school climate has a constructive effect on academics, behavior, and culture in the building as shown in Figure 1 (Freeman et al., 2016). The conceptual framework that guided this study was developed from the five paradigms of the Leader in Me program. These five paradigms include leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education (Sampson, 2017).

Bryant (2016) stated, “No longer are schools just places to teach academics; principals and administrators today have to embed initiatives such as the Leader in Me into their schools and into the lives of their students” (p. 2). Educators believe a positive culture is necessary, but most recognized a school-wide character education program resulted in academic success and positive behaviors (Collins, Thomas, & Parson, 2010; Kite, 2018). Tidd (2016) discussed a philosopher who focused on the general idea that the work of schools is to educate students to be productive members of society by teaching good morals, how to behave respectfully, and the importance of good character.

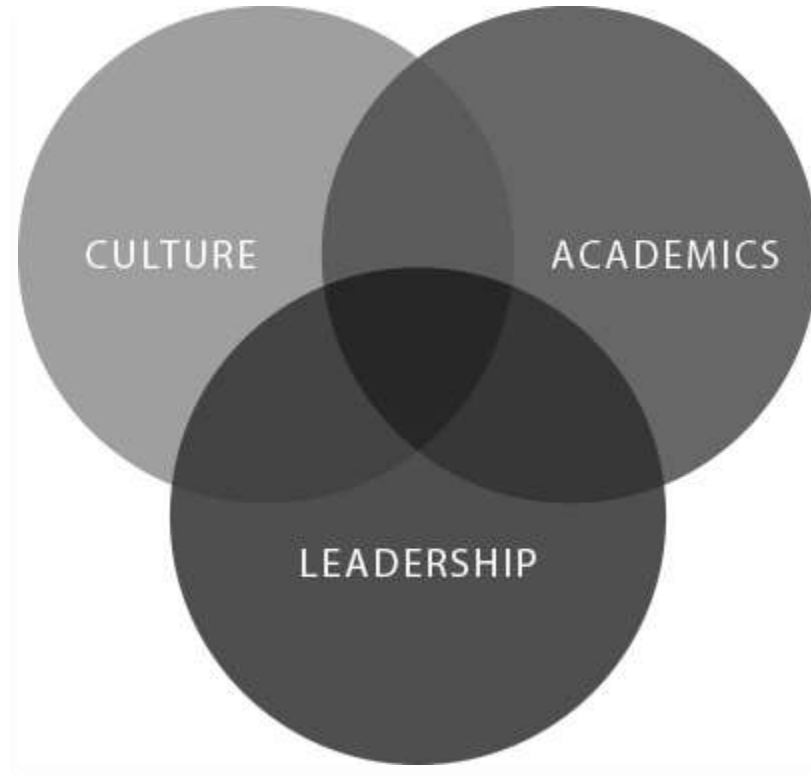


Figure 1. Leader in Me framework. Adapted from “What is Leader in Me?” by Leader in Me, 2018b, para. 7.

Cummins (2015) stated, “With regard to the 7 Habits, like the school leadership vision, the teachers expressed that this process component has not only helped students to improve their behavior, but it has assisted teachers in addressing or offsetting problem behaviors” (p. 119). Furthermore, through the process, Cummins (2015) noted:

The interviewer asked a follow-up question regarding implementation of the student leadership without establishing the vision first. According to one participant, “I think it wouldn’t be student-focused. It would just be to have the data up. I don’t think there would be a connection with the students and what’s on the wall or what’s in their notebook.” Another agreed and added, “The bottom

line is it's focused on the kids and them being leaders, and being successful, and making them better little people. And then the data just kind of comes in to make them accountable for what they need to do and how they need to do it." (p. 132)

Tidd (2016) also acknowledged other benefits, including increased academic achievement for students when schools implemented formal character programs.

Statement of the Problem

When examining character programs, a question arises: What influence does the Leader in Me have on attendance, behavior, and culture? Truby (2018) suggested, "Building a positive environment in individual classrooms and throughout your whole school is a matter of cultivating and maintaining relationships" (p. 1). According to Covey (2013), in reference to children, "Their environment begins to shape them and they start taking on a cultural DNA, or sameness" (p. 12). Furthermore, when considering the effects of school culture on students and staff, Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) discovered some people will change just by being asked, but only if they truly believe and wish to change.

Most principals place a great deal of significance on moral education as a component of daily instruction for their buildings as a whole (Bryant, 2016). The debate of whether or not schools need a character education program shifted following the shooting at Columbine, which caused an increase in schools focusing on positive culture and character development (Great Schools, 2016). Covey (2013) supported a positive change in school culture with the Leader in Me program when he stated, "It starts with the belief that there is greatness in every student and every staff member" (p. 13).

Great Schools (2016) added, “Effective programs engage children in hands-on activities where good character is emphasized throughout the school environment as well as through the curriculum” (para. 13). Tidd (2016) expanded on the Leader in Me initiative as a life-changing sentiment for students due to the increased motivation for learning and promoting a state of connectedness with other peers and staff, which brings a sense of well-being to students. Bryant (2016) further explained principals are making decisions early to incorporate priority initiatives such as Leader in Me to ensure children learn skills essential to support their futures as contributing members of the community

Conflicting research was available regarding the Leader in Me program and school discipline (El-Attrache, 2018; Leader in Me, 2018a; Mannell, 2018). The Leader in Me (2018a) research guide stated, “Leader in Me is associated with a significant decrease in the total number of discipline reports” (p. 7). However, Mannell (2018) indicated, “Findings of this study did not provide conclusive evidence that demonstrated TLIM had a positive effect on students’ and teachers’ perceptions of school climate, students’ academic achievement, and students’ behavior” (p. 1). El-Attrache (2018) asserted:

The main perceptions of leadership programs, like Leader in Me, include the following: they teach students how to become contributing members of society, they help build a sense of community on campus, and teach students how to take ownership of their learning. (p. 5)

Furthermore, the Leader in Me (2018a) research guide declared if students learn the Seven Habits, they will develop self-discipline to ensure ownership of their behavior and learning, which can only lead to significant progress.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members and the incorporation of the Leader in Me program in elementary schools. Within this study, the perceptions of teachers, principals, and counselors were analyzed to determine the effects of the Leader in Me on these three attributes (Covey, 2008). Furthermore, this study was designed to determine if the perceptions of teachers, principals, and counselors aligned with the need for a schoolwide character program to impact the overall concept of the Leader in Me: to “develop leaders, one child at a time” (Covey, 2008, p. 32). The implementation of any program involves change, but the perceptions of teachers and principals may or may not align when considering the change (Kite, 2018; Wasilewski, Gifford, & Bonneau, 2013). The research questions were designed to determine if any difference existed between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members about the outcomes of Leader in Me program implementation in reference to student attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate.

Research questions and hypotheses. The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance?

H1₀: There is no difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and non-Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance.

H1_a: There is a difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance.

2. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline?

H2₀: There is no difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline.

H2_a: There is a difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline.

3. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate?

H3₀: There is no difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate.

H3_a: There is a difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate.

4. What are the opinions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the benefits and challenges of the Leader in Me program on school climate?

Significance of the Study

Bryant (2016) explained a change in the school administrator's role to encompass initiatives other than merely academic; these initiatives affect the child, family, and community. According to Pedersen, Yager, and Yager (2012), culture in the school becomes unified when classmates build trust. Teachers feel relationships with faculty and staff are affected positively as well (Pedersen et al., 2012). Swantner (2016) determined, "Covey realized developing leadership skills in children is not a short-term endeavor, but a long process which requires repetition of a common language and nurtured in a culture of leadership modeled by the adults" (p. 2). This study is important because it provides educators with current and relevant data in regard to the implementation process of the Leader in Me program and the influence on school culture.

Researchers have shown principals felt having a character education program such as the Leader in Me decreased negative student behaviors, especially for children living in poverty (El-Attrache, 2018; Whittle, 2017). Students from low socioeconomic environments were compared to others, and Tidd (2016) noted school members noticed two main points from the Leader in Me book they wanted to implement: to teach social skills with a proactive approach and the importance of teaching students about life

beyond the now, so they have a can-do mindset to see past today and plan for the future. According to Swantner (2016), Covey's 2008 research demonstrated parents felt the most important element of education today was "to have the school teach their child to be independent in thinking, to show tolerance for others, and to take initiative for their own lives" (p. 2). As a result of this study, school stakeholders, principals, parents, and school members may find practical applications, which will allow them to better understand the impact the Leader in Me program can have on student behaviors.

Tuccinardi (2018) determined past research focused on interviews with school staff, parents, and children about their perceptions of the changes in their own lives caused by the Leader in Me program. Tuccinardi (2018) noted limited research, especially research focused on school wide student behavior, was available. Kite (2018) suggested the involvement of both Lighthouse Team Members and Non-Lighthouse Team Members in a study to determine if both groups had the same perceptions of the Leader in Me Program. This study is significant because the perceptions of both Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team Members gave a more holistic view of outcomes the Leader in Me had on attendance, discipline, and school climate.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Leader in Me. The Leader in Me (2018b) is Covey's whole-school transformation process. The program embeds 21st-century leadership and life skills for students and creates a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader (Leader in Me, 2018b).

Lighthouse Team member. With regard to this research, “the purpose of the Lighthouse Team is to promote the Leader in Me model inside the school so that it stays strong and vibrant year after year. They [Lighthouse Team members] are the champions of the process” (SchoolPointe, Inc., 2020, para. 1). For this study, Lighthouse Team members included teachers, principals, and counselors serving on the Lighthouse Team.

Non-Lighthouse Team member. For the purpose of this study, Non-Lighthouse Team members included teachers and counselors not serving on a school’s Lighthouse Team.

School culture. School culture refers to interactions and decisions affecting the school day; a positive school culture includes a feeling of safety for individuals within the school (Kite, 2018).

Whole child. When educators teach students more than just academics, including ethical lessons of life, they are addressing the whole child (Roffey, 2016).

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The scope of the study was bounded by the following delimitations:

Time frame. The study was conducted during the fall semester of 2019.

Location of the study. The location of this study included 22 schools within southern Missouri.

Sample. The participants of this study included principals, counselors, and teachers at Leader in Me elementary schools in Missouri.

Criteria. The participants in this study were from schools using the Leader in Me model of character curriculum.

The following limitations were identified in this study:

Sample demographics. The sample was a limitation because it only included elementary schools that participated in the Leader in Me program.

Instrument. The survey was a limitation because it was created by the researcher based on the literature review and conceptual framework of the study.

The following assumptions were accepted:

1. The responses of the participants were offered honestly and willingly.
2. The sample was representative of the general population of educators who held teaching certificates from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE).

Summary

According to Bryant (2016), in the past, principals concentrated on academics; today, the focus not only includes academics but also the preparation of students to become productive members of society. Trust is a requirement for staff and students to build strong relationships to change a culture positively (Pedersen et al., 2012). Covey asserted parents want schools to engage students in social skills lessons to allow children to learn how to be problem solvers and find success; the process takes time, but Covey felt the process was worth it (Swantner, 2016). To decrease negative student behaviors, a strong character education program such as the Leader in Me is helpful for school principals (El-Attrache, 2018; Whittle, 2017).

Within Chapter One, the background of the study, the conceptual framework, and a statement of the problem were provided. The purpose of the study and the research

questions, along with the significance of the study, were described. Concluding Chapter One were the definition of key terms and the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions.

A review of current literature is provided in Chapter Two. The five paradigms of the Leader in Me program are introduced. The main topics include character education in schools, teaching the whole child, and the Leader in Me program. Specific areas of the Leader in Me Program are explained in connection to how the program affects student attendance, student discipline, and school climate.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The review of literature is organized to focus on the background of character education and its effects on attendance, discipline, and school culture. These areas of focus were used to create the survey for this research, as suggested by Kite (2018). This chapter includes research regarding Covey's (2008) five paradigms of the Leader in Me program. A description of the paradigms of leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education is provided. In addition, research regarding character education programs in schools and teaching the whole child is addressed. Finally, the Leader in Me program is more thoroughly examined.

Conceptual Framework

The five paradigms of the Leader in Me was the conceptual framework through which this study was viewed. Covey's (2014) leadership model included five paradigms: leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education. Impact Factory (2020) explained that in each person's mind, ideas are held of the way things are from one's reality or personal perception, which comes from experiences and the past. Tuccinardi (2018) defined the process of the Leader in Me as a transformation of an institution by modeling and training the seven habits to engrain an internal, personal change in each individual. The Leader in Me model is defined as a change in view of paradigms—the way one sees things and aligns with what is done and results in what one gets, which is the basis for the Leader in Me character program (Covey, 2014). Furthermore, Covey (2020) explained the importance of looking internally at one's paradigms is much more powerful than focusing on beliefs and attitudes. Humphries, Cobia, and Ennis (2015) shared the habits of the Leader in Me are in connection with the values and behaviors of successful people.

McDonald, a support coach for Leader in Me, (personal communication, January 16, 2020) stated:

The Leader in Me is a process. It is not a program. It's the mortar that holds the bricks together for a schoolhouse. The LIM is meant to be 'everywhere' not just 'somewhere.' The framework provides the structure for implementing the process that is based on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, core paradigms, highly effective practices and measurable results.

The Leader in Me framework includes three components to drive Covey's leadership model; See, Do, Get (Covey, 2014). The See component includes the five paradigms of the Leader in Me model. The Do component explains the highly effective practices Covey suggests are needed for the implementation to be effective. Finally, the Get component is the measurable outcome that participants should acquire when they combine the actions of See and Do (see Appendix A).

According to El-Attrache (2018), "It seemed that the students perceived Leader in Me to help them learn how to be responsible and do their part in the classroom" (p. 12). Furthermore, Raleigh (2017) stated, "Additionally, to be prepared for a changing world, successful students are asked to master 21st-century skill sets, such as interpersonal skills and the ability to work as a team as required by business, industry, and post-secondary learning entities" (p. 2). Bryant (2016) explained the process of the Leader in Me, as developed by Covey, allows students to use information learned for success in multiple environments encountered throughout life, which contributes to a lifelong change. Moreover, C. McDonald (personal communication, January 16, 2020) stated, "Dr. Covey's definition of leadership, 'Leadership is communicating people's worth and

potential so clearly that they are inspired to see it in themselves' is a driving force behind the implementation.”

The five paradigms of Leader in Me. Buenger (2019) defined a paradigm as “a word which means a pattern or model; the generally accepted perspective” (para. 1). The paradigms of the Leader in Me program focused around the See component of the Leader in Me framework discussed by Covey (2014). Tuccinardi (2018) suggested the Leader in Me program takes time because improvements require a process to ensure all key components are implemented correctly. Buenger (2019) also stated paradigms can be very far from reality and can cause dysfunction, so a paradigm shift is when life is seen with a new perspective. The greater the difference between the paradigms of individuals, the longer it takes to see change (thwink.org, 2014). According to Tidd (2016), having respect for others and being responsible for one’s own actions are both a part of character.

The Leader in Me framework is comprised of core paradigms, highly effective practices, and measurable results (Covey, 2014). Paradigms of leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education are presented (Covey, 2014). The Leader in Me organization believes the philosophy of “when you change the way you **see** things, it influences what you **do** and the results you **get**” (2018b, para. 3). McDonald (personal communication, January 16, 2020) stated:

The paradigms staff members have regarding leadership, potential, change, motivation and education most definitely impact buy-in and results. If a school is not getting the results they have targeted, it is critical to revisit core paradigms. The paradigms impact the actions taken and, ultimately, the

results. This is referred to as the See-Do-Get model, which is part of both the 7 Habits and the implementation of the LIM.

Mark (2007) explained Covey understood if persons can feel confident deep down, then they are vulnerable to looking at the world in a different way and changing paradigms of belief. Further explained, when a person's paradigms shift, outcomes are created, which are seen in the highly effective practices of the framework, and according to Covey (2014), this shift changes the culture within schools.

Paradigm one: Leadership. Wright (2019) suggested, "It could be reasonable to suggest that leadership programs consider students' own perceptions of leadership and incorporate those characteristics and concepts into future models for leadership education" (p. 34). McDonald (personal communication, January 16, 2020) explained:

Leadership opportunities may vary each year across the building and within each classroom as each student has unique gifts. When students have the opportunity to share those gifts through leadership opportunities, they typically feel a sense of contribution which in turn helps to create a sense of belonging for students.

Furthermore, Cagle (2017) explained the importance of students finding the internal happiness that comes from academic success and of discovering a way to measure success so students see outcomes and work with adults through the process, building positive relationships as well. Wright (2019) continued:

When teachers had adequate leadership development, ample opportunities for leadership practice, and a supportive school environment that fostered leadership growth and implementation on a systemic level, these teachers became central to

school wide efforts of policy reform aimed at improving student outcomes and achievement through an emphasis on leadership development. (p. 29)

Moreover, Berlin (2019) suggested when teachers take part in promoting leadership in students, it allows for the school environment to support resiliency in students from varied backgrounds.

Covey (2008) explained, “One area where the absence of leadership is most apparent is in the dealing with student discipline in the classroom” (p. 91). Covey (2008) described further how classroom management might go better if handled as classroom leadership. As expanded upon in the Leader in Me framework, the first paradigm shift is focused on leadership and explained the idea everyone can be a leader, rather than only a few (Covey, 2014).

According to Covey (2008), when looking at the paradigm of leadership, most people are over-managed and under-led. Tuccinardi (2018) described:

When schools have a consistent systematic process or program in place, students begin to develop and internalize beneficial habits and behaviors, and teachers and principals are provided with a common language, tools, and strategies to better support the students and possible challenging behaviors. (p. 37)

Raleigh (2017) defined character education as teaching students the moral compass and hard work ethic, which is what 21st-century businesses are looking for in future employees. Roffey (2016) explained when focusing on positive relationships, the paradigms not only improve students’ behavior but also bridge a protective nature between adults and the students who tend to be more challenging and vulnerable.

Mannell (2018) reiterated the biggest component of the Leader in Me process is

focused on the habits of principals, comparable to an extension of concepts learned through other character education initiatives. Lanzillotti (2018) described the four imperatives of leadership, which include steps to become an effective leader: inspiring trust, clarifying purpose, aligning systems, and unleashing talent. Furthermore, Wright (2019) shared the leadership component of the program does not focus on a hierarchical model of positions, but rather leadership roles in which everyone participates.

Paradigm two: Change. Covey's (2014) second paradigm involves shifting from waiting on others to take ownership to beginning with change within self. Mannell (2018) explained when students see themselves as leaders, they understand change as reflective of themselves rather than others and will not depend on what the school system is doing, but rather what students are allowed to do. Martindale (2018) suggested, "Leaders often emphasize that culture plays a tremendous role in any effective organization within and outside of the education system" (p. 1). Furthermore, Wright (2019) shared the Leader in Me focuses on the ideal that change starts at the individual level when students recognize their genius. Rocco (2018) expounded on this further, and after reviewing schools that had implemented the Leader in Me program, revealed an increase in academic achievement, improved positive school culture, and decreased student discipline. Furthermore, Wright (2019) detailed a principal in Kansas City, sharing the change in her students when they found intrinsic motivation through positive outcomes as a result of goal setting.

Raleigh (2017) stated, "Developing a culture change in schools, based upon students' development of life skills such as leadership, goal setting, teamwork, peer mediation, time management, and life balance, may be the crucial element to students'

success in today's educational systems" (p. 16). The paradigm is a shift to recognizing change is empowered internally (Sampson, 2017). As Sampson (2017) described further, "By creating an environment that nurtures a mindset that, 'all change starts with me,' one is creating opportunities at home for students to learn responsibility" (para. 7).

Furthermore, Rocco (2018) identified over 90 descriptions of leadership that are always evolving; consequently, the definition of leadership will never grow stagnant. Walker (2019) suggested a change agent for leaders must be built based on principles; for example, teaching the concept that control must come from oneself and not others can help students explain how they must control their reactions, decisions, and behaviors.

To implement a permanent change, the shift must be in a paradigm, or a way of understanding beliefs, rather than just in a behavior or attitude, or the change will be a short-lived and temporary (Journeytoleadershipblog, 2017). Wright (2019) further explained, "TLIM promotes a whole, school-wide transformation process towards positive change in students and in school culture" (p. 25). The process is a whole-school approach to change which alters staff, students, and instruction in such a way that the whole child is affected (Wright, 2019). A Leader in Me support coach stated:

One of the key factors impacting teacher buy-in and, ultimately, measurable results is a clear understanding of the 'why' behind the implementation of the Leader in Me at the building level. If a clear 'why' is not articulated frequently staff members perceive LIM as 'another thing on our plate' but with a clear 'why' staff members are also more inclined to buy-in and to implement with fidelity. (C. McDonald, personal communication, January 16, 2020)

Likewise, Miller (2016) suggested when schools implement the Leader in Me, students set goals to check-in with teachers for accountability, which in turn causes a change in students as they take ownership of themselves and strive to be leaders.

Paradigm three: Potential. Covey's (2014) third paradigm focuses on potential, which allows each student to find his or her unique giftedness. Miller (2016) stated if students are expected to reach their full potential, the climate and culture of the school should be exceptional. Tidd (2016) explained differentiation in a school environment is what students prefer to allow a sense of ownership for their learning. Another researcher shared, "In order to unleash potential in students, they must be given authentic opportunities to 1) experience various leadership roles, 2) explore their passion/areas of interest, and 3) find their voice" (McDonald, personal communication, January 16, 2020). Furthermore, to motivate students, the teacher needs to nurture a classroom environment where assignments are challenging, a relational connection is added to the curriculum, and projects allow for influence among stakeholders to return a feeling of giving back to the community (Tidd, 2016). In the *Journeytoleadershipblog* (2017), change was explained:

It brings us from a state of dependence where we need others to accomplish something for us, to a state of independence where we are self-reliant, self-motivated, derive our self-worth from within and are freed from external dependence, to a state of interdependence where we are self-reliant and competent in our own right but able to work with others, and believe that together we accomplish more. (p. 2)

According to Rocco (2018), leaders must look within themselves to cause an effective change.

Covey believed to see a permanent change of mindset, people must create and write a personal mission statement on paper to ensure the change is not merely an outward performance for others but instead drives a potential outcome due to the internal soul (Journeytoleadershipblog, 2017). According to Mannell (2018), when people hone in on their natural talents and share them to help others, leaders are found and inspired to greatness through Habit 8—Find Your Voice. Buenger (2019) dissected the habit of Begin with the End in Mind to align with the paradigm of potential, where the focus of a person's life drives the outcomes, but should a person work toward the wrong outcome, a waste of potential results. Wright (2019) reiterated when students feel empowered through their potential, learning goals are met successfully.

Paradigm four: Motivation. Sampson (2017) described the paradigm of motivation as allowing students to own their learning by working through problem-solving components and learning to fail forward. Seaton (2018) further explained students' perceptions of themselves and their abilities are often linked directly with what they believe teachers think they can do, which affects their motivation to work. In a recent study conducted by *Education Weekly*, teachers were questioned about students' motivation; eight out of 10 teachers stated to attain high levels of achievement, students must have motivation and engagement in their learning (Yettick, Lloyd, Harwin, Riemer, & Swanson, 2016, p. 15). Tidd (2016) stated when teachers and students do not have an emotional connection that promotes trust, levels of student motivation are often very low concerning academics.

According to Newell (2017), for schools to see change in their culture, Leader in Me studies are focused on the paradigm of motivation when students can control their tempers and emotions and are more kind to each other. Wright (2019) explained, “Social and emotional learning focuses on improved behavior traits that positively influence success both inside and outside of the school environment” (p. 25). As stated by Cagle (2017):

With the history of research indicating that the emotional well-being of a person in a work environment affects their productivity and the studies born from that showing the same in an educational setting, there is little question that there is value in examining methods in which schools can positively impact the level of happiness in the young people they serve. (p. 22)

Berlin (2019) clarified by suggesting a focus of trust and positive relationships between students and staff will bring about motivation for change.

Soutter (2018) explained, “In the paradigm of motivation schools are urged to shift their thinking away from the idea that ‘educators control and direct student learning’ toward the idea that ‘educators empower students to lead their own learning’” (p. 49). Furthermore, Mannell (2018) reiterated the importance within the paradigm of motivation of focusing on students and empowering their voices, rather than teachers making all decisions about teaching and learning. Davis (2017) determined, “The genius of leadership is in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and the values and motivations of their followers” (p. 8). Moreover, Raleigh (2017) stated:

Forming a culture where staff are more effective, share a common focus, and feel that they are making a difference in their students’ lives creates motivation for

educators and reminds them of the reason they chose education as a career path.

(p. 22)

Similarly, the motivation of students was expanded upon by Tidd (2016) as trust between students and adults wherein students are allowed to own certain aspects of the school day through leadership opportunities, which in turn stimulate a deeper desire to learn and grow.

Paradigm five: Education. The last paradigm from the Leader in Me framework focuses on education and goal setting (Covey, 2014). Tidd (2016) explained, “If students are setting goals for themselves both academically and behaviorally, this encourages students to take responsibility for their actions and attitude” (p. 17). Covey (2008) clarified, “But for as much potential as the goal-setting process holds, it could easily fall flat or even have opposite effects if not implemented with proper levels of thinking—the right paradigms” (p. 125). Miller (2016) explained when students learn to set solid, realistic goals and consequently see outcomes, they are also being prepared for goal setting post-high school with a large impact on their future. To keep students on-track with both behavior and academics, students not only need to set goals but receive feedback and be held accountable (Tidd, 2016).

Covey (2008) discussed the uniqueness of all people; however, as young people enter the world, they can be robbed of their identities as the world begins to shape them, unless they are taught the basis of their worth. Furthermore, Tidd (2016) determined, “From an educational perspective, understanding which dominant motivator each student prefers, can help the teacher to differentiate the learning environment and the feedback provided to each student in order to enhance classroom performance” (p. 16). According

to one principal, scores increased on the state assessment following the implementation of the Leader in Me (Wright, 2019). Tuccinardi (2018) defined the detriments to teacher morale when student misbehaviors steal from academic learning within classrooms; many schools are hopeful implementing the Leader in Me will help to deter problem behaviors.

As described by Soutter (2018), “There is no universal approach to fostering nonacademic skills, with scholars advocating a variety of school- and classroom-based approaches to cultivate them” (p. 3). Rocco (2018) explained, “Authentic learning can only take place when students are equipped with the skills to feel emotionally confident and aware of their own feelings, as well as the feelings of those around them” (p. 3). According to Mannell (2018), the paradigm of education as explained by the Leader in Me should not only focus on the academic achievement of a student, but rather on the whole person.

Character Education in Schools

Hamsher (2018) defined “character education as efforts to help young people develop good character, which includes knowing about, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others” (para. 1). Lickona, as cited in Yolcu and Sari (2018), explained:

Some responsibilities for an effective character education are elements such as teachers being a model, a guide for students, treating with love, forming a moral basis in class providing students knowing each other well, providing the moral discipline having support from the neighborhood and family, creating a democratic class environment, giving importance to cooperation and gaining moral values via curriculum. (p. 36)

Furthermore, Raleigh (2017) stated, “Beyond politicians’ recognizing the need for character education, business and industry leaders concerned about workforce development have repeatedly stressed the need to educate students in 21st-century skills” (p. 13). Widyahening and Wardhani (2016) defined good character as the inner drive to meet an internal expectation of goodness after learning traits from a young age.

McCellan (as cited in Lewis & Ponzio, 2016) determined, “From the beginning of American public education in the 1600s until the first third of the 20th century, our nation’s educators, working closely with parents and the community, performed this moral-educational role with commitment” (p. 138). Tuccinardi (2018) stated:

When schools have a consistent systematic process or program in place students begin to develop and internalize beneficial habits and behaviors and teachers and principals are provided with a common language, tools, and strategies to better support the students and possible challenging behaviors. (p. 37)

Raleigh (2017) determined, “Developing a culture change in schools, based upon students’ development of life skills such as leadership, goal setting, teamwork, peer mediation, time management, and life balance, may be the crucial element to students’ success in today’s educational systems” (p. 16). Furthermore, Lewis and Ponzio (2016) explained the discrepancy in expectations for character education caused confusion; the idea of teaching character was put aside for a short time until educators saw the innate need to focus on and teach core qualities during the school day.

Tuccinardi (2018) suggested character education should include an intention to teach students about relationships, virtues, and values by educating the whole child to

affect the school's climate with positive outcomes. Furthermore, Martindale (2018) specified:

The Leader in Me provides a venue through teaching the habits to intentionally create a culture of leadership from a proactive paradigm and in turn creates a culture where staff and students want to come to school and where parents are eager to be an active part of the school community. (p. 5)

Additionally, Weiss (2018) stated for implementation of the Leader in Me to reach full effectiveness, the change required by the program must be seen and felt not only by students but also by the adults in the building, as overall buy-in is necessary for success.

To implement character education adequately, the process must include complete immersion; this is a great challenge considering ongoing pressure to increase academic achievement as measured by required high-stakes testing (Raleigh, 2017). Wardhani, Zulela, Rachmadtullah, and Siregar (2018) discussed teachers as the change agents in schools wherein students learn morals away from home to apply to life. Frizzley (2017) further clarified educators need increased professional development to change a school's climate with character education.

Berlin (2019) specifically elaborated on the necessity of ensuring a protective environment in the school setting, including factors that allow students to feel safe at school to support individual resilience for all students. Miller (2016) discussed how "cultivating a positive learning environment will empower students to reach their potential academically, socially, and behaviorally" (p. 18). Soutter (2018) asserted:

[Character building comes from] discussions of moral dilemmas, fostering trust and trustworthiness, modeling and providing mentors of ethical behavior,

empowering students, maintaining rigorous and high expectations, and explicitly teaching about morality and character in order to foster strong ethical and prosocial values in students. (p. 18)

Berlin (2019) further explained the opportunities provided through leadership activities have a positive influence on students and their success in future life endeavors.

Prominent character education programs. Lewis and Ponzio (2016) described, “A substantial change in moral education in the 20th century was marking the approaches and attitudes related to moral education” (p. 139). Furthermore, Mannell (2018) elaborated on past researchers of character education supporting programs with specific characteristics with greater influence on the success of the program. Kite (2018) explained, “As leaders begin addressing school culture, it is essential to understand culture is dependent on the strength of the organization behind the change and power of the previous culture” (p. 13). Mannell (2018) shared the increase of character education in the 1990s was due to the increase of divorce in families, which was thought to have limited the training of moral ethics at home and in turn was causing students to feel angry and unloved and ultimately affecting their ability to learn academics.

Positive behavior support system. Miller (2016) noted many schools have adopted positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) due to an increase in negative student behaviors. Furthermore, Jones (2020) explained the purpose of PBIS is to focus on creating an environment that will help students exhibit appropriate behavior. According to Kite (2018), “Schools implementing PBIS and other character development models have improved student attendance, reduced problem behaviors through analysis of discipline referral data, and increased student engagement” (p. 13).

Moreover, Tuccinardi (2018) explained, “With all the proper support systems in place and when implemented with consistency, many schools recognized the positive impact PBIS had on their students and school climate” (p. 25). Horner and Monzalve-Macaya (2018) further explained:

The key assumptions guiding PBIS are that (a) students learn how to behave (both how to behave well and how to behave poorly), and this means we need to teach positive behaviors and minimize the learning of problem behaviors, (b) effective schools not only teach positive behaviors, but regularly monitor and acknowledge those behaviors, (c) investing in prevention of problems will be more effective and efficient than waiting for problems to arise, and trying to then focus on remediation, (d) effective behavior support needs to occur at differing levels of support intensity (all students receive general support, some students receive more structured, and intensive teaching and feedback, and a few students will need highly individualized and focused assistance to succeed), (e) the organization of behavior support needs to occur across the whole school, and (f) effective behavior support “practices” will be used with fidelity and sustainability when linked to supportive organizational systems. Individual students and individual classrooms will always be important, but a central key to behavior support is to consider the whole school as a learning community. (p. 665)

Miller (2016) shared positive behavior interventions and supports include a tiered support system for teachers to handle behaviors with a research-based, systematic approach with outcomes for all students. Horner, Sugai, and Lewis (2015) defined PBIS as an evidence-

based three-tier program that includes levels of primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions.

McIntosh and Goodman (2016) explained, “PBIS emphasizes an instructional approach to behavior support, prevention through environmental change, adaptation to the local context, and using the science of applied behavior analysis to achieve outcomes that are valued by staff, students, and families” (p. 6). Horner and Monzalve-Macaya (2018) expanded on the concept of building a positive climate within the building with a vision that would ensure students feel safe through a consistent, positive, and predictable environment. Miller (2016) described, “In order for a school wide positive behavior intervention system (SW-PBIS) to have a positive impact on individual students, a student needs to have a feeling of safety and security by addressing the emotional needs of the student” (p. 19). Kite (2018) concurred PBIS is a tiered intervention system wherein each student gets specifically what is needed to overcome problematic behaviors.

CHARACTERplus. According to Character.org (2020), the CHARACTERplus program allows educators to create a framework to guide a positive school environment through collaboration with an evaluation system to ensure a change in climate for students to thrive. Sivo, Karl, Fox, Taub, and Robinson (2017) stated, “The CHARACTERplus character education measure consists of four scales, together comprising 29 items total: Kindness and Caring, Respect and Responsibility, Fairness and Honesty, and School Expectations (of a student’s behavior)” (p. 37). Shaw (2016) explained CHARACTERplus is a character program that creates an environment where character traits are embedded in the learning and students feel valued due to the environment created by the staff.

Sivo et al. (2017) explained the dimensions of CHARACTERplus are determined based on the need for students to know the basic four constructs and how well they align to teaching through literature. Moreover, Shaw shared (2016):

CHARACTERplus reports in their research studies that 64 schools in a randomized study showed a 41% average decrease in discipline referrals and a 93% increase in the percentage of students scoring proficiency in communication arts within one year of implementation. (p. 46)

CharacterPlus.org (2018) elaborated on the desire for the program to enhance education in the eleven principles of character education that enhance academic achievement, student behavior, and school climate.

Teaching the Whole Child

Rodriguez and Hardin (2017) discussed teaching to the whole child stops when teachers place the importance of the curriculum over putting students at the core of instruction. Furthermore, Lewallen, Hunt, Potts-Datema, Zaza, and Giles (2015) stated, “The social and emotional climate of a school can impact student engagement in school activities; relationships with other students, staff, family, and community; and academic performance” (p. 733). Williams (2015) expanded on the importance of a culture where children learning is not nearly as important as the systems taught and engrained within for long-term change.

Walsh (2016) described teaching to the whole child as a catalyst for change in public education, especially when focusing on a spiritual realm for students. Wright (2019) determined, “The program approaches education from the stance that educators need to develop the whole learner as it relates to the mind, body, heart, and spirit” (p. 22).

Furthermore, Raleigh (2017) explained the Leader in Me is a process where students are seen as individuals with specific learning abilities, so the program is designed to develop the whole child.

Lewallen et al. (2015) shared, “The child is a reminder of the powerful outcomes that can be achieved by giving voice to children and youth about their education, their health and their communities” (p. 6). Walsh (2016) described a sense of spiritual pedagogy being needed for children to develop an inner drive to avoid dangerous behavior. Mannell (2018) shared a study conducted by Education Direction wherein the data revealed, “Survey responses indicated that 99% of principals believed social emotional skills were equally or more important than academic skills as they pertained to their students’ continued success” (p. 25).

Furthermore, Cagle (2017) defined happiness aligning with students’ academic success and having an innate impact on learning when cognitive abilities support social aspects, which starts with the adult interactions within the school building. Roffey (2016) discussed the importance of relationships:

Resilience in schools is fostered by supportive relationships, including bonding with pro-social individuals, high expectations with clear and consistent boundaries, opportunities to participate and contribute, teaching social and emotional skills such as co-operation, communication skills and problem-solving, giving pupils agency, and working collaboratively with families. (p. 4)

Soutter (2018) stated, “More specifically, social and emotional learning is comprised of five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making” (p. 8). Newell (2017) declared the Leader in Me

curriculum supports a bigger picture of learning as the program does not merely focus on academics, but rather the whole child, and all students feel they are necessary leaders within their school community. Williams (2015) explained character education as teaching students how to take care of themselves in life and to understand their identities; the need to give back to the community should be embedded as an ambitious but necessary requirement to develop success in students.

The Leader in Me

Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* includes concepts associated with leadership used to develop the Leader in Me for schools (Leader in Me, 2018b). According to Newell (2017), "The seven habits are universal and timeless principles that enable both young students and professionals to work effectively and efficiently" (p. 2). Miller (2016) stated the Leader in Me program is based on creating a culture of leaders due to a change in participants' thinking about themselves and their roles.

Covey (2008) further explained, "It began in 1999 at A. B. Combs Elementary in Raleigh, North Carolina, where some very creative teachers started teaching the 7 Habits to elementary school children—even to four-year-olds" (p. xxvi). The Franklin Covey Co. (2015) shared, "Additionally, author Bob Sullo added that educators need to move away from traditional fear, coercion, and reward and reinforcement to motivate students and instead move to a mindset where students are internally motivated" (p. 2). The ideas embedded into the framework of Leader in Me work because they are timeless principles people of all ages can understand (Collins, 2013).

Soutter (2018) clarified, "The Leader in Me is one such approach that aims to transform schools' cultures by targeting a range of nonacademic factors from compassion

to leadership skills to self-efficacy” (p. 20). Wright (2019) further stated, “TLIM program utilizes administrators, school staff, and teachers’ innovation and creativity to infuse these seven habits into the curriculum, traditions, and culture of the whole school” (p. 23). Covey (2013) supported the Leader in Me program as a positive change agent dependent upon the internal feelings students and staff members have about themselves and how those feelings, if nurtured, can allow each individual to develop greatness from within.

Newell (2017) expanded, “As students experience leadership opportunities and a common language is developed, a school’s physical and emotional state becomes sharpened into a positive environment where students and teachers work together to meet common goals” (p. 13). Wright (2019) explained Covey’s belief in being proactive aligned with taking responsibility; if students and staff understand that habit, all other habits easily fall into place. Newell (2017) elaborated the Leader in Me is based on the principle that children need to be trained in core values of how to be respectful, responsible, problem-solving, and cooperative.

Soutter (2018) reported, “The program itself has currently been adopted in over 3,000 elementary schools both nationally and internationally” (p. 21). Covey (2013) stated Muriel Summers, principal of A. B. Combs Elementary, found what the community “wanted foremost for their children was the ability to think for themselves, to take responsibility for their lives, to show initiative, and to be tolerant of diversity” (p. 24). Another researcher shared, “Many of the schools in the U.S. and around the world are meeting their targeted, measurable results in leadership, culture, and academics when implementing with fidelity” (C. McDonald, personal communication, January 16, 2020).

Furthermore, Covey (2013) asserted requests for student culture matched what parents were seeking for their children.

The Leader in Me program starts with learning the seven habits of highly effective people (Covey, 2008). Mannell (2018) discussed the principles of the Leader in Me are explained around the picture of a tree, in which the roots are the core habits; when developed, the core habits lend to the next three habits along the trunk as students grow in their leadership (p. 23). Covey (2008) expounded, “The first three habits—Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, and Put First Things First—help individuals to become more independent” (p. 43). Newell (2017) described further, “These three habits allow students to develop specific 21st-century skills of initiative, responsibility, self-confidence, time management, goal setting, integrity, organization, and planning” (p. 2). According to the Franklin Covey Co. (2015), “For a proactive person, Covey explains that our behavior is a product of personal choice, independent of environment, while a reactive person allows personal environment to dictate behavior” (p. 2). The first three core habits focus on planning and organization for an individual; if implemented correctly, the habits will result in what Covey (2008) described as a private victory.

Covey (2008) further claimed parents and community members want students to do more than just control themselves; they should be able to work with others. Tuccinardi (2018) explained, “The following habits, think win-win (habit four), seek first to understand then to be understood (habit five), and synergize (habit six), concentrate on developing the students’ ability to establish and maintain strong relationships with others” (p. 33). Newell (2017) suggested, “When these three habits are practiced, students develop specific 21st-century skills of teamwork, conflict management, problem

solving, creativity, speaking, listening, and analyzing” (p. 2). Specific 21st-century skills include listening and communication, how to resolve conflicts, problem solving, and working with a team; Covey (2008) defined these traits as a public victory.

Further explained by Newell (2017), “The seventh habit, Sharpen the Saw, enables participants to build habits for physical fitness, hygiene, emotional stability, and meaningful work” (p. 12). Collins (2013) shared, “I think the most important aspect of *The 7 Habits*—what makes it not just practical, but profound—is its emphasis on building character rather than attaining success” (para. 10). Tidd (2016) believed the implications of positive social change in student academics and beyond are a result of the Leader in Me. According to Soutter (2018):

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines social emotional learning (SEL) as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” (p. 32)

Mannell (2018) stated there are many similarities between the Leader in Me and other character education programs. Furthermore, Soutter (2018) explained the purpose of CASEL was to ensure there was consistency in outcomes of schools trying to implement character education programs.

Leader in Me and attendance. According to the Leader in Me (2019), a focus on the importance of attendance is crucial not only to academic success but in life past the world of education as students enter the workforce. Wright (2019) stated predictors

for success can be determined when looking at the attendance rates of third graders in reference to high school dropout rates, which is also a correlation to standardized testing outcomes. Furthermore, Leader in Me (2018a) reported, “Research has found that when students and staff feel valued and recognized for their unique gifts and talents, they experience an increased desire to engage with the people and activities in the school” (para. 1). Tidd (2016) shared having students monitor goals through leadership binders and goal setting allows accountability for each student’s growth, which is a key motivator for an increase in outcomes.

Soutter (2018) explained, “They claim that by implementing these highly effective practices—teach leadership principles, create a leadership culture, and align academic systems—the outcome will be leadership, culture, and academics” (p. 50). Tuccinardi (2018) suggested when schools implemented the Leader in Me and stay with the program over a long span of time, there was a consistent increase in school attendance. Wright (2019) elaborated on the connection between attendance and academics for students from low socio-economic backgrounds due to not being afforded the same opportunities from parents; being in a school with Leader in Me leadership paradigms promotes an increase of attendance, and in turn, academics.

Wright (2019) suggested attendance is a vital component of student success due to the impact seen when students experience consistent instructional time involving engaging activities with trained teachers to support maximum academic gains. According to Tidd (2016), “A big part of the goal setting process is the actual tracking of progress toward meeting these goals” (p. 49). Charts are used to track goals for academics, behavior, and attendance to show growth, based on student and building

needs (Tidd, 2016). Wright (2019) discussed the need for school leaders to focus targeted interventions like Leader in Me to support an increase in school attendance.

According to Lehr, Sinclair, and Christenson:

When researchers studied the use of a targeted program aimed at helping students attend school regularly by promoting student engagement in school through relationship building, monitoring key indicators of withdrawal, and active support of students and families, they found a 28% reduction in absences among disengaged students, or students who missed 10 or more days of school annually. (as cited in Wright, 2019, p. 49)

Tidd (2016) stated with the Leader in Me program, positive outcomes were evident for attendance as a side effect of students having ownership and a sense of necessity through leadership roles. Moreover, Rocco (2018) explained schools with a whole-school model of positive culture change promote positive student outcomes for achievement. Students come to feel their roles at school must be filled by them, and they do not want to let anyone down; attendance and roles at school are taken very seriously (Tidd, 2016).

Leader in Me and school discipline. Rocco (2018) discussed many schools experienced a drastic decrease in discipline referrals and suspensions after the implementation of the Leader in Me with fidelity in their buildings. Tuccinardi (2018) shared:

While many of these issues are handled and maintained in the classroom, it is up to the leadership of the administrator to find effective practices, interventions, and programs to put into place in order to address these issues and prevent them before they even occur. (p. 16)

Wright (2019) explained that due to federal mandates for academic outcomes on state assessments, a focus to decrease the number of discipline issues within classrooms is necessary to protect quality instructional time for learners. Rocco (2018) further explained:

In LIM schools, students will have less opportunity for conflict when they are willing to work together and respect each other's opinions both during classroom instruction and activities and outside of the classroom on the playground and or in the lunchroom . . . (p. 39)

Wright (2019) explained the outcomes of A. B. Combs' School, included shy students were more confident and parents stated they saw a dramatic decrease in discipline due to students feeling they were in charge of their actions and learning.

Moreover, Raleigh (2017) elaborated on one schools' outcomes two years after full implementation of the Leader in Me. The data revealed great gains in reading and math outcomes and also a large decrease in student discipline, which in turn, had a positive outcome of satisfaction from students, teachers, and parents (Raleigh, 2017).

According to Roffey (2016):

There will always be a need for additional and specialist responses to challenging behaviors in school but a primarily reactive approach to both mental health and behavior means that even more children will need support along the track and the school environment may not offer protective factors for the those struggling with adversity whose needs do not come to the teacher's attention. (p. 37)

Rocco (2018) suggested discipline issues decreased as students learned the habits, and the practices continued to be ingrained in their daily living. Tuccinardi (2018) explained:

By having a program that is focused on a child's character development, they become aware of proper habits, morals, values, and behavior choices hopefully aiding them in thinking about their actions before they occur both in and out of the classroom. (p. 18)

Wright (2019) expanded on the concept of students learning leadership skills and taking on ownership to manage emotions and build positive relationships, which in turn causes them to make good decisions and fewer negative choices. Davis (2017) found an increase in engagement for students and teachers caused a decrease in discipline issues within classrooms.

Berlin (2019) stated the Leader in Me resulted in outcomes of “overall improvement in the culture of the school, a significant decrease in disciplinary cases, more effective teachers and numerous improvements in student conduct and performance” (p. 5). McDonald (personal communication, January 16, 2020) expanded, “Some of the key areas schools are seeing improved results are: attendance (both staff and students), decreased behavioral challenges, increased academic achievement, improved job satisfaction and stronger relationships with families and communities.” Davis (2017) explained when schools noticed poor behaviors decreasing, they also saw an increase in engagement between students and teachers during instructional time throughout the day. Wright (2019) discussed a Leader in Me principal in St. Louis, Missouri, who noted a decrease in discipline due to students connecting their actions with the habits and how they could have made different choices, all while taking ownership over their actions.

Leader in Me and school climate. According to Kite (2018), principals must understand the importance of making the school environment an exciting place for learning where students and staff alike want to attend and have a shared purpose. Raleigh (2017) shared:

Forming a culture where staff are more effective, share a common focus, and feel that they are making a difference in their students' lives creates motivation for educators and reminds them of the reason they chose education as a career path.

(p. 22)

Rodwell (2020) shared school culture and climate are interchangeable terms used to define the feelings of parents, students, and staff about the values, goals, and structures of a school. Furthermore, Rocco (2018) stated:

Taking into consideration the social and emotional needs of students through implementing character education through TLIM program, the researchers concluded that principals who used the TLIM program viewed it as a success with respect to overall academic achievement and improving school culture. (p. 42)

Soutter (2018) explained, "The Leader in Me is one such approach that aims to transform schools' cultures by targeting a range of nonacademic factors from compassion to leadership skills to self-efficacy" (p. 5). Raleigh (2017) elaborated on the outcome of the Leader in Me program cultivating a positive school culture through professional development for staff, which brings an increase to community and parent involvement in the school system. Mannell (2018) suggested many principals decide to implement the Leader in Me due to claims it will improve school culture, academic achievement, and positive social-emotional skills.

Wright (2019) elaborated, “The program fosters the belief that leadership is not a hierarchical model of leader positions but rather a culture where every person has the opportunity to assume leadership roles” (p. 22). Furthermore, Raleigh (2017) shared the Leader in Me requires a relational approach from educators, as students are placed in high-level leadership roles requiring a strong sense of trust. Rocco (2018) explained discipline decreases due to the habits being integrated into everyday conversations of students throughout the day at school. Berlin (2019) expanded the idea of school culture and a more positive environment promoted by trust developed through relationships between peers and teachers and reflective conversations about self-growth.

Wright (2019) explained, “TLIM promotes a whole, school-wide transformation process towards positive change in students and in school culture” (p. 24). El-Attrache (2018) shared the Leader in Me program increases kindness in schools because through the lessons and application, students and teachers agree they can find ways kindness can be helpful and implemented throughout the day. Weiss (2018) stated, “Effective implementation of school change requires participation by and buy-in from all those involved, students no less than teachers” (p. 1). Furthermore, Berlin (2019) discussed relationships are built when teachers and students capitalize on positive communications to build inner self-esteem for students and to encourage meaningful learning.

Lighthouse teams. Richardsville Elementary (2017) determined, “The purpose of the Lighthouse Team is to promote the Leader in Me model inside the school so that it stays strong and vibrant year after year” (para. 1). Covey (2008) shared, “A Lighthouse Team consists of seven to ten staff members and perhaps a parent” (p. 211). At Leola Elementary (2020), Lighthouse Team members were paired with an action team

depending on personal strengths to carry out and meet other needs of the building in moving forward with the Leader in Me process. Covey (2008) broadened that understanding and explained how the most successful schools utilized synergy among the principal, Lighthouse Team members, collaborative staff and parents, and students with high levels of excitement and leadership.

Furthermore, Covey (2008) described the Lighthouse Team (leadership team) as a group that takes ownership of determining the path the staff will take and the pace at which they can move to shift the views of their school in reference to student leadership. Richardsville Elementary (2017) explained the responsibilities of their Lighthouse Team included training new staff members in the 7 Habits and orienting them to Leader in Me processes, owning the implementation plan for the school, and creating and implementing ongoing staff development. Covey (2008) clarified, “The freshness of the team is kept alive by rotating in a few new members on an annual basis” so the team can keep the system going even if the principal changes (p. 211). Davis (2017) stated, “The transformation begins with the Lighthouse Team, which serves as a leadership team to guide the school through the use of the model” (p. 12). Covey (2008) determined shared leadership is spread to staff and students on the Lighthouse Team as they share the workload to sustain the Leader in Me process.

Summary

The Franklin Covey Co. (2015) explained educators must begin to focus on teaching students how to be driven by their internal desires for good rather than for rewards. The Leader in Me teaches principles adults and children can understand and use to create change within themselves (Collins, 2013). Covey (2013) suggested there is

greatness in everyone, and if schools begin to teach their people how to see it within, schools will see positive change for students and staff.

Chapter Two included a review of literature focused on how a school's climate and academics can be affected by the implementation of a character education program. The conceptual framework was explained based upon the Leader in Me framework of five shifts in paradigms (Covey, 2014). Further described was the impact of Covey's (2014) Leader in Me program on attendance, discipline, and climate through the seven habits. Finally, a detailed explanation of the Leader in Me paradigm framework was presented (Covey, 2014).

Chapter Three includes a description of the problem and purpose of this study. The research questions are reintroduced. The research design and the population and sample are explained. A description of the instrument and the processes of data collection and data analysis are provided. Finally, ethical considerations for the study are addressed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Schools that have implemented a formal character education program have improved school culture, reduced discipline referrals, and increased academic achievement for all learners, and improved job satisfaction and retention among teachers (Character.org, 2017). The Leader in Me program is implemented by schools looking to transform their climate by providing enrichment in noncurricular areas as opposed to focusing solely on academics (Soutter, 2018). Schools began implementing Covey's 7 *Habits of Highly Effective People* in 1999 when educators were searching for a way to improve student leadership and school climate (El-Attrache, 2018).

This chapter includes a description of the problem and purpose, along with the research questions that guided the study. The research design is explained, and the population and sample of the study are provided, along with demographic details about the research participants. An outline of data collection procedures is followed by a description of how the data were analyzed. Finally, a thorough examination of the ethical considerations used during this study is elucidated.

Problem and Purpose Overview

According to El-Attrache (2018), "Schools are now starting to make the act of teaching leadership development just as important as teaching content, because of the necessity of the skills these programs teach" (p. 3). Frizzley (2017) determined, "The aim of this plan is to look specifically at the advantages of creating a culture of student leadership" (p. 9). El-Attrache (2018) noted following observations of a Leader in Me school that teacher perceptions were positive toward students taking more ownership of learning. Furthermore, Swantner (2016) described the Leader in Me as a

transformational leadership style wherein the participants do not follow a person, but rather a method.

The number of studies conducted based upon perceptions of the impact of the Leader in Me on student outcomes is minimal. According to Kite (2018), “Despite increased research and programming aimed at improving school culture, there has been limited research on the perceptions of teachers after implementation of character development programs” (p. 6). The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers, principals, and counselors regarding the incorporation of the Leader in Me program into elementary schools to determine if the program has positive or negative effects on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate.

Research questions and hypotheses. The following questions guided the study:

1. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance?

H_{1o}: There is no difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance.

H_{1a}: There is a difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance.

2. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline?

H2₀: There is no difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline.

H2_a: There is a difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline.

3. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate?

H3₀: There is no difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate.

H3_a: There is a difference between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate.

4. What are the opinions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the benefits and challenges of the Leader in Me program on school climate?

Research Design

Quantitative research methodology was used to analyze the data collected for this study. Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained how survey research is a “quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 12). Johnson and Christensen (2020) acknowledged, “Quantitative

research generally reduces measurement to numbers. In survey research, for example, attitudes are usually measured by using rating scales” (p. 36). This quantitative study was designed to identify differences between perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members. The instrument used to obtain perceptions was a survey utilizing a Likert-type scale distributed to teachers, counselors, and principals in elementary schools that had implemented the Leader in Me program during the specified time period. The responses from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages. Figures were created to display the percentages for each Likert-type scale response. The survey response choices were; strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. The Mann-Whitney U was applied to analyze the data to respond to the research questions.

Survey statements four through eight and question nine were designed to answer research question one regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on student attendance. Wright (2019) detailed the importance of principals making attendance a focus due to the increasing data that prove student success in life has a direct correlation with a high grade-point average, which has been proven to connect to attendance rates. Furthermore, Tidd (2016) examined the impact of the Leader in Me on supporting a decrease in absenteeism due to students feeling needed and taking a direct responsibility for their roles at school.

Survey statements 10 through 14, and question 15, were designed to answer research question two regarding the impact of the Leader in Me on classroom discipline. Berlin (2019) explained teachers in schools using the Leader in Me felt there was a drop in discipline, and parents felt it was due to students feeling more self-confident due to the

mindset of being leaders. Furthermore, Soutter (2018) described a recent study in which teachers reported they felt there was a decrease in bullying within the school after implementing the Leader in Me.

Survey statements 16 through 19 and question 20 were designed to answer research question three regarding the impact of the Leader in Me on school climate. Rocco (2018) stated, “The TLIM program is designed to instill character education values by following and implementing the 7 Habits in all aspects of school culture and life, including parents and guardians, classroom instruction, and student leadership” (p. 37). According to Berlin (2019), student leadership notebooks, one component of the Leader in Me program, led to positive effects on school climate due to students being able to record and share their successes with peers and adults.

The last two survey items were written as open-ended questions to gain a broader understanding of the participants’ feelings. According to Colorado State University (2020), open-ended questions can be combined in a survey with Likert-type scale closed-ended statements to elicit a broader understanding of the participants’ perceptions by allowing them to expand their thinking in sentence form. The last two questions of the survey were designed to gather participant perceptions of Leader in Me in reference to the benefits and challenges of the program. According to Rocco (2018):

The general problem is that students need certain social and emotional skills to be successful in an educational setting, but the current focus on academic achievement and accountability leaves leaders little room for holistic attention to students so that they can develop these skills. (p. 3)

On the contrary, Tidd (2016) explained research shows when teaching students how to regulate behaviors by focusing on social skills, an increase in motivation for school work results and leads to an increase in academic outcomes.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included 22 southern Missouri elementary schools that implemented the Leader in Me program during the 2009-2018 school years (Batchgeo, 2018). Purposive sampling was utilized to allow for “the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses” (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016, p. 2). Dudovskiy (2020) shared, based on the purpose and dynamics of the study, purposive sampling can be an appropriate sampling choice because of the limited numbers selected for research. Studying all 22 southern Missouri schools ensured there was ample data to analyze. Homer (2016) stated if the sample size is large enough, everything within the data set will be significant.

Within the schools selected for this study, Leader in Me implementation ranged from year one to year nine (Batchgeo, 2018). The sample included all principals, counselors, and teachers from the 22 southern Missouri Leader in Me elementary schools. The information was disaggregated between Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members within those buildings for the purpose of analyzing similarities and differences in perceptions. Only those who worked in a school using Leader in Me for at least two years were included in the data analysis to ensure comparable perceptions of any differences.

Instrumentation

The statements on the survey (see Appendix B) were developed by the researcher based on the literature review and conceptual framework. The survey was field-tested by 29 teachers in a Leader in Me school not included in this study to ensure reliability and validity of the assessment tool (Bluman, 2017). The survey statements were designed to elicit information regarding each participant's school position, years the school participated in the Leader in Me program, and to designate whether the participant was a Lighthouse Team member or a Non-Lighthouse Team member. This allowed for the disaggregation of perceptual data collected between Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members.

The next section of the survey included statements posed about perceptions of Leader in Me implementation using a Likert-type scale regarding the impact on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate. Each of these impact areas was followed by an open-ended question for participants to elaborate and further explain their perceptions. The conclusion of this section included two open-ended opinion questions regarding the benefits and challenges of the Leader in Me program.

Reliability. Homer (2016) alluded to the idea of research being easier to gather with shorter surveys due to the use of online questioning; however, the biggest consideration is the reliability of the results and the process used to develop high-quality questions. According to Heale and Twycross (2015):

The second measure of quality in a quantitative study is *reliability*, or the accuracy of an instrument. In other words, the extent to which a research

instrument consistently has the same results if it is used in the same situation on repeated occasions. (p. 1)

Creswell and Creswell (2017) determined data reliability means an instrument is repeatable. Furthermore, Glen (2019) defined reliability as giving the survey a state of consistency with data outcomes. Moreover, Zaiontz (2020) described a reliable instrument as one with outcomes of statements being internally consistent, but still allowing some unique outcomes as well.

Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained field testing "...is important to establish the content validity of scores on an instrument; to provide an initial evaluation of the internal consistency of the items; and to improve the questions, format, and instructions" (p. 154). The measurement of the stability of the instrument by retesting can demonstrate consistency in responses, according to Heale and Twycross (2015). Furthermore, when field testing, it helps to determine the time it will take participants to complete the survey and if edits should be made prior to sending out the actual survey (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

As suggested by Homer (2016), the statements and questions in the survey for this study were created to allow the reader to clearly understand and interpret their meaning. The process ensured instrument reliability when taken by multiple participants (Homer, 2016). The survey was sent to 29 teachers from a Leader in Me school not participating in the study. Participants were asked to complete the survey twice, two weeks apart, in order to evaluate responses to ensure the instrument was repeatable and consistent.

Validity. According to Heale and Twycross (2015), "*Validity* is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study" (p. 1). Creswell

and Creswell (2017) discussed, “Establishing the validity of the scores in a survey helps researchers to identify whether an instrument might be a good one to use in survey research” (p. 153). Bonazza, Smuin, Onks, Silvis, and Dhawan (2017) described the approaches of quantitative researchers as looking at larger theories and dissecting information to smaller data points to describe concepts in detail.

Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2015) considered the importance of the format of a survey. Fraenkel et al. (2015) stated, “Such things as the clarity of printing, size of type, adequacy of work space [if needed], appropriateness of language, clarity of directions, and so on” are elements included as evidence of content-related validity (p. 151). As suggested by Heale and Twycross (2015), validity of this study was ensured by focusing on the specific design of the study within the Leader in Me framework. The statements and questions were aligned with the five paradigms of the Leader in Me program to focus on the perceptions of school teachers, principals, and counselors on the effect of change within their schools. Content-related validity was checked by requesting feedback from the 29 teachers who completed the practice surveys.

Data Collection

Participants were administered a Likert-type survey to rank their perceptions of the Leader in Me in relation to increased student attendance, decreased classroom discipline, and improved school climate. The survey included statements to allow dissemination between the two groups being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). After each section of statements involving a Likert-type scale, an open-ended question was posed to allow for additional explanation. To end the survey, two open-ended questions

were presented allowing participants to provide perceptions regarding the pros and cons of Leader in Me program implementation.

Permission to use the email addresses of participating Leader in Me schools was requested and granted from Covey's Leader in Me school program (see Appendix C). Upon approval of the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (see Appendix D), the principals of 22 southern Missouri elementary Leader in Me schools were identified from the Missouri/Iowa Leader in Me school list (Batchgeo, 2018). The principals were emailed (see Appendix E) and requested to provide a copy of the Survey Information Sheet (see appendix F), a letter of participation (see Appendix G), and the survey link to the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members in their respective schools (teachers, counselors, and principals).

Data Analysis

The survey included 15 Likert-type statements focusing on how participants perceived the Leader in Me paradigms shifted school attendance, classroom discipline, and school culture. The Likert-type statements elicited ordinal-level data (Bluman, 2017). According to Ho (2017), Likert-type scales allow for easy analysis but can cause difficulty when interpreting meaningful results. Therefore, open-ended questions were included following each set of Likert-type statements allowing participants to expand their perceptions. Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained survey questions should be broad and general to allow the participants to draw their meaning from life to answer questions. The results of the survey were organized in a table (Bluman, 2017).

The survey statements were created to compare responses from two separate groups regarding perceptions. Descriptive statistics including percentages were presented

in figures showing survey responses to each Likert-type statement. Then, the data from the 15 Likert-type statements on the survey were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney *U*. Wilson (2009) and Coolidge (2021) explained the Mann-Whitney *U* test is a non-parametric test, not assuming the samples are distributed normally. According to Schenkelberg (2017), the comparison of two samples from one population is recognized when using The *U* test. MacFarland and Yates (2016) explained the Mann-Whitney *U* test uses ranked data to show the notable differences between two comparable groups. Furthermore, Fong and Huang (2018) stated the Mann-Whitney *U* is a rank-based test for a study comparing two samples coming from the same distribution. Therefore, within this study, the two comparable groups were the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members and the distribution of similarity was that both groups were from schools implementing the Leader in Me program in southern Missouri.

Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality and anonymity were safeguards for the protection of participants in the study and to ensure survey responses were ethical and anonymous (Boudah, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Participants were not asked to reveal their name or the name of their school. The electronic communication sent to building principals included an introductory letter, a copy of the survey information sheet, and the survey link. The principals were asked to forward the information to teachers, counselors, and other principals in their buildings so personal, identifiable information was not compromised. This allowed responses to be kept confidential and anonymous.

The introductory letter included information pertaining to the purpose of the study, protections, confidentiality, and anonymity for the participants (Creswell &

Creswell, 2017). The letter also contained an explanation that no anticipated risks or direct benefits were associated with participating in the study. Participation was voluntary, and participants could choose not to respond to any of the statements or questions (Bluman, 2017).

Further clarification of participation included how consent to participate was given through the completion of the survey. Furthermore, the introductory letter described digital survey information would be kept confidential using a protected password on the researcher's personal computer. Responses from the survey would be kept confidential and destroyed after three years from the completion of the study.

Summary

Provided in Chapter Three were descriptions of the problem and purpose of the study involving perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members when considering the effects of the Leader in Me program on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate. The research questions and hypotheses were restated. The population and sample were defined for the participation of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members from 22 southern Missouri elementary Leader in Me schools. Moreover, the description of the purposive sampling used in the study was explained.

For this quantitative study, a survey was the most effective instrument to elicit responses of participants from 22 southern Missouri elementary Leader in Me schools. Furthermore, the data collection process and analysis procedures were described in this chapter. Ethical considerations were explained in detail, along with how participant information would be kept anonymous. The process for analysis of the data collected

through the surveys were described. The description of using the Mann-Whitney *U* test to analyze differences between Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members' perceptions of the Leader in Me impact on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate were explained.

Chapter Four includes the presentation of the data. The demographics and data analysis are described. The specific data collected in the areas of student attendance, school discipline, and school culture will also be provided in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

According to El-Attrache (2018), teaching academic content to students is not the only important component of schools; leadership training to develop students as whole children and prepare them for the future is also essential. Teaching values to children spans far beyond just their childhood and into their world as an adult (Bryant, 2016). The purpose of this study was to determine if a difference existed between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the outcomes of the Leader in Me program in schools when focusing on attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate. The instrumentation tool in this research resulted in a variety of outcomes, but elicited feedback from both groups and revealed similar outcomes. This information can help schools implementing the Leader in Me program when determining their focus and the professional development necessary to promote the program's purposes.

Provided in Chapter Four are the demographics and data analysis. Descriptive statistics are included to show responses to each Likert-type statement. A synthesis of the responses to open-ended questions from the survey are detailed and the Mann-Whitney *U* analysis for research questions one through four are presented.

Demographics

Survey statements one, two, and three were related to each participant's role in the school. Participants were selected if they were Lighthouse Team members or Non-Lighthouse Team members. Of those participants, 55 were identified as Lighthouse Team members, and 75 were identified as Non-Lighthouse Team members. Then, participants responded if they worked in the school for more than two years. Of the

participants, 14 were eliminated due to not having worked in the school for two years or longer. Each participant then responded if he or she was a principal, counselor, or teacher. A total of 15 principals, three counselors, and 112 teachers participated. Twenty-nine participants failed to complete the survey, and none of their data was included in the study. A breakdown of survey participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Survey Participant Breakdown

| Position | Lighthouse Team Members | Non-Lighthouse Team Members |
|-----------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Principal | 12 | 3 |
| Counselor | 2 | 1 |
| Teacher | 41 | 71 |

The remaining 15 statements were designed on a Likert-type scale to determine perceptions of participants regarding Leader in Me. One open-ended question followed each section to allow participants to describe further, if necessary. The last two items were open-ended questions regarding the benefits and challenges of implementing the Leader in Me program.

Data Analysis

In the second section of the survey, principals, counselors, and teachers ranked their perceptions in the three areas of inquiry (school attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate). Each section of the survey was based on the five paradigms of Covey's (2014) Leader in Me: leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education.

A Likert-type scale ranged from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree* with five responses possible. Raw data from Qualtrics were downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet where values were assigned as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Likert-Type Scale Responses for Perceived Value of Effects of the Leader in Me on School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate

| Response | Assigned Score |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 1 |
| Somewhat Agree | 2 |
| Agree | 3 |
| Somewhat Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 |

School Attendance

The next section of the survey focused on perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members in reference to student attendance. Team members responded to whether attendance had increased based on the leadership paradigm that all students are leaders. The results indicated 41% of Non-Lighthouse Team members *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the paradigm of leadership had a positive effect on attendance. Another 18% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with positive effects. Only 1% of participating Lighthouse Team members *strongly disagreed* with leadership affecting attendance, while 73% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the paradigm of leadership affected student attendance (see Figure 2).

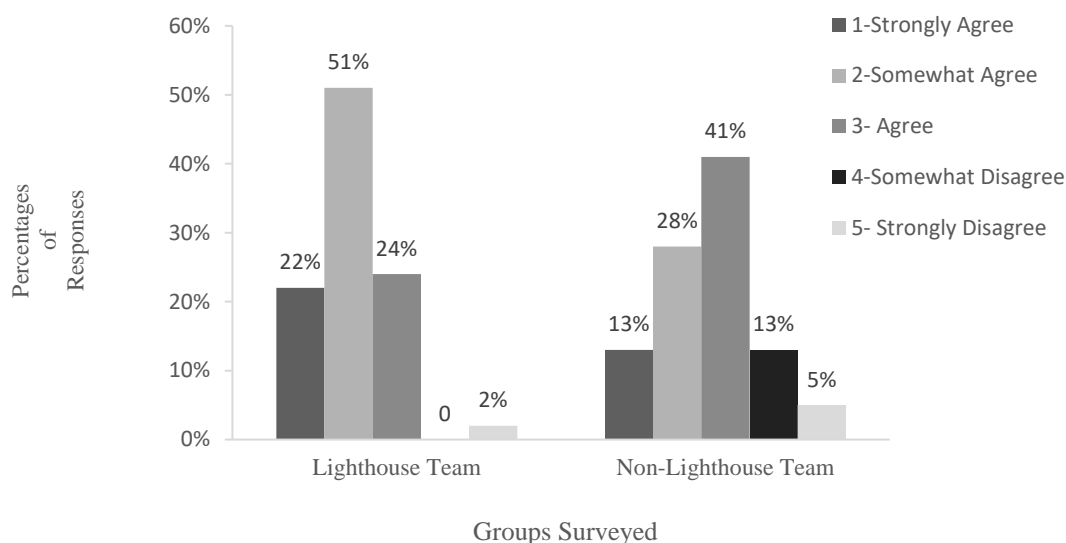


Figure 2. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership and the effects on school attendance.

Participants responded to if they perceived an increase in attendance based on the Leader in Me paradigm of change: Change Starts with Me. Results indicated 15% of Non-Lighthouse Team members *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* attendance was affected by students having buy-in to change starting within; however, 38% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* it did have an effect. In turn, only 6% of Lighthouse Team member participants *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 66% of Lighthouse Team members responded they believed the change paradigm had an effect on school attendance by stating they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* (see Figure 3).

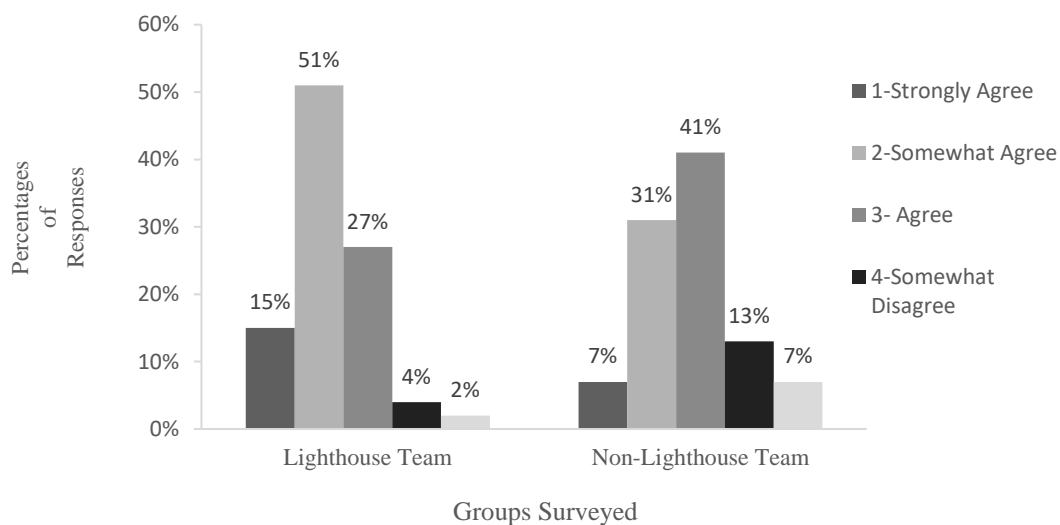


Figure 3. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of change and the effects on school attendance.

The focus of statement six of the survey continued with attendance in schools based upon the effects of setting personal attendance goals called Wildly Important Goals. The outcomes of perceptions from Non-Lighthouse Team member participants indicated 14% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with setting goals having an effect, while 48% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* setting goals did have an effect on school attendance. The Lighthouse Team members' perceptions revealed 10% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, and 71% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with Wildly Important Goals making a difference on school attendance (see Figure 4).

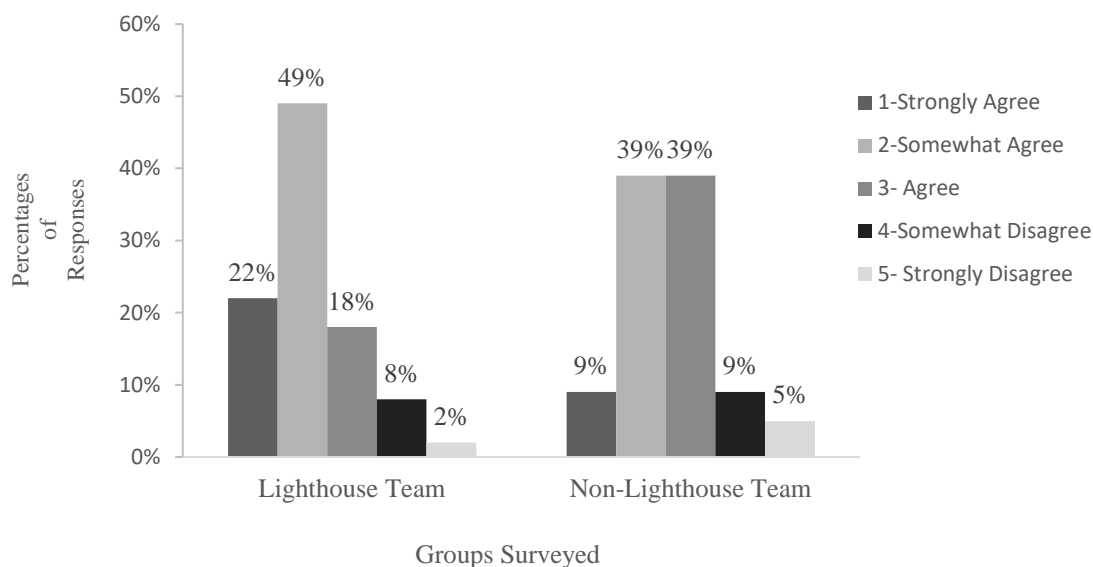


Figure 4. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the effects on school attendance when students set wildly important goals for attendance.

Participants responded about the perceived effects of the paradigm of motivation on school attendance. Of the Non-Lighthouse Team members, 17% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 57% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the components of student clubs or leadership roles increased student attendance. The responses from the Lighthouse Team member participants reflected only 2% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* and, in turn, 82% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the paradigm of motivation having effects on increased school attendance (see Figure 5).

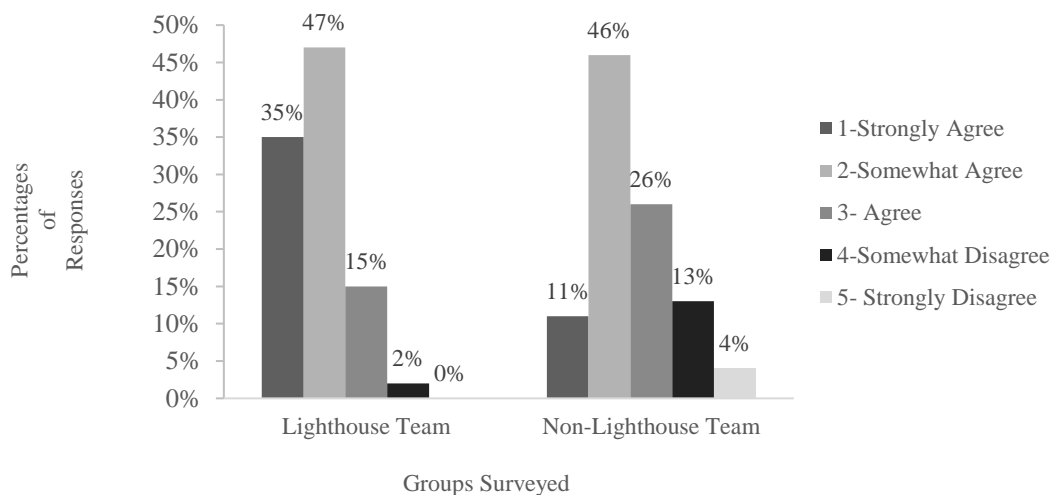


Figure 5. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of motivation and the effects on school attendance.

In statement eight of the survey, participants shared perceptions about school attendance focusing on the fifth Leader in Me paradigm: education. The statement regarded the effects of student voice in their learning to show increased school attendance. The Non-Lighthouse Team member participants' data indicated 19% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 51% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* having educational voice increased school attendance. The Lighthouse Team member participants' data reflected 6% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 73% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the paradigm of education increased school attendance (see Figure 6).

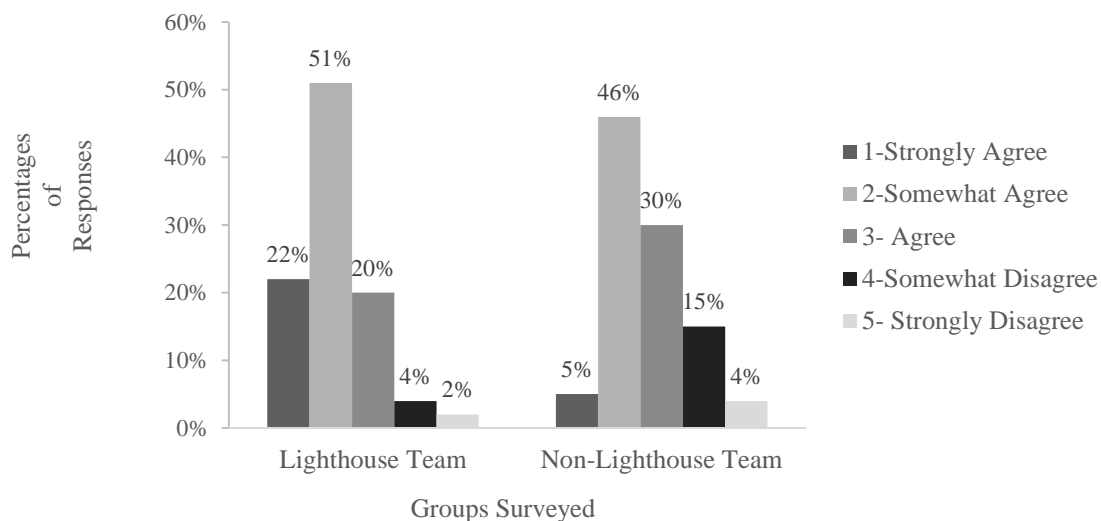


Figure 6. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of education and the effects on school attendance.

Survey question nine was an open-ended question to allow participants to expand on their perceptions regarding the Leader in Me program and the effects it had on student attendance. Participants mentioned components from each of the paradigms they felt played a positive role, with increasing school attendance. Goals and leadership jobs were both mentioned as components that had a high impact on increasing attendance. Non-Lighthouse Team members and Lighthouse Team members consistently mentioned goal setting, helping students take ownership of their attendance efforts.

One Lighthouse Team member stated, “The leadership notebooks/binders has brought awareness to all involved. We also post monthly and YTD [year-to-date] info publicly as a scorecard. It serves as a talking point and lever for success.” Another Lighthouse Team member reflected, “I feel that students enjoy the opportunities for

leadership within their leadership team. Students also enjoy working towards personalized academic goals. These may contribute to an increase in student attendance.” Several Lighthouse Team members explained leadership notebooks were generally known to be a place for students to store their goals in most Leader in Me schools.

One Non-Lighthouse Team member similarly stated, “I believe charting each classroom’s attendance and posting it in the hallway has made a big difference in our school. The students are always checking the chart in the hallway and keeping track of each class and their attendance.” Another Non-Lighthouse Team member revealed, “Making visible school wide goals with included challenges has made a difference.” Once again, a Non-Lighthouse Team member showed support for goal setting having a positive impact by sharing:

I feel the Leader in Me program has impacted school attendance due to students taking responsibility for their own personal learning. I think allowing student choice and voice promotes a positive school environment where kids want to come to school!

However, both groups also mentioned parents were a factor they felt worked against increasing school attendance. One Lighthouse Team member shared:

I think it has definitely helped students work toward the goal of attending school on a regular basis. The problem we seem to have is getting parents on board as well. I am the principal of a Primary school, PK-2nd grade, and we find the need to reach out to the parents as well. Students are definitely on board, but we still have to convince parents. We celebrate monthly students who reach their goals!

Another Lighthouse Team member added:

With the age level of our children, they have very little control of making a choice to come to school, come late to school, or leave early. Their attendance relates back to the parents getting them here on time or getting them to the bus on time.

Similarly, a Non-Lighthouse Team member revealed:

Working in a 5th-6th grade building, I don't feel like there has been an impact, either positive or negative on our building attendance. Parents are ultimately responsible for whether or not their students get to school on time or at all. I don't feel as though our implementation of Leader in Me has changed their [parental] paradigm.

Overall, feedback from question nine revealed both groups viewed goal setting as a positive attribute to increase attendance while still battling against parents having much of the control over attendance without a paradigm shift.

Classroom Discipline

In the next section of the survey, participants' perceptions focused on whether using the Leader in Me allowed for a decrease in classroom discipline. Survey statements were aligned with the five paradigms of the Leader in Me (leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education) to determine if learning the paradigms secured a change in controlling behavior in the classroom. Survey statement 10 was based upon the paradigm of change having an effect on decreasing student discipline within the classroom. Participants shared their perceptions of the statements regarding each paradigm around the habits affecting behaviors to eliminate discipline. The focus was not on overall school discipline but rather if it had an effect within the classroom to deter teachers from sending office referrals due to the actions of students.

The data from survey statement 10 revealed results from the Non-Lighthouse Team member participants as follows: 17% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 61% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* knowing change starts with them (students) had an impact on decreased classroom discipline. The Lighthouse Team member participants' data reflected 7% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 82% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the effects of the paradigm of change having an effect on classroom discipline (see Figure 7).

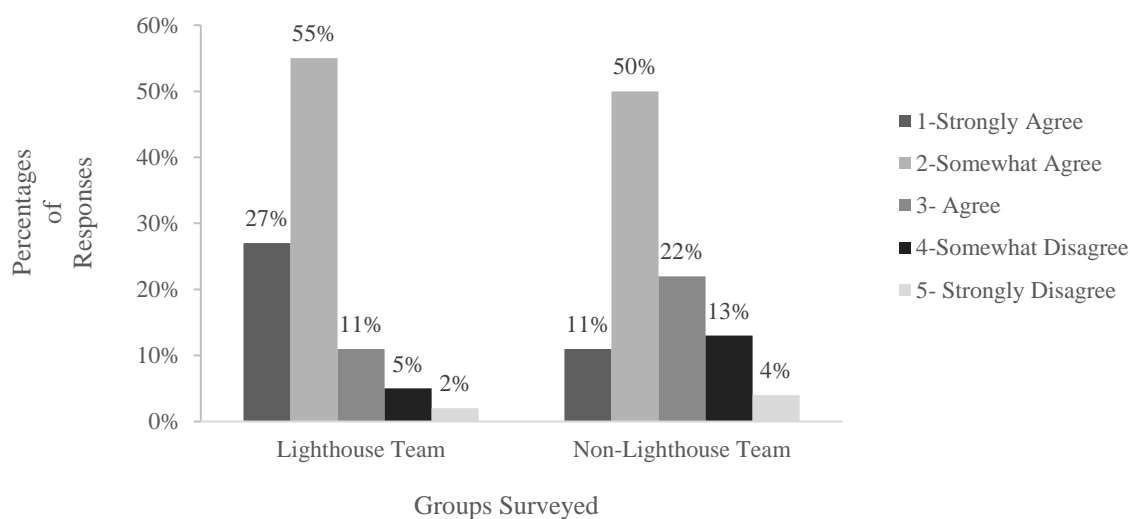


Figure 7. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of change and the effects on classroom discipline.

Survey statement 11 was based on the paradigm of leadership affecting classroom discipline because students believe they are leaders and this change in paradigm thinking causes change to their actions. The data from the Non-Lighthouse Team member participants indicated 13% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 68% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that student leadership has an impact on classroom discipline. The

Lighthouse Team member participants' data reflected 2% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 89% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the paradigm of leadership has an effect on classroom discipline (see Figure 8).

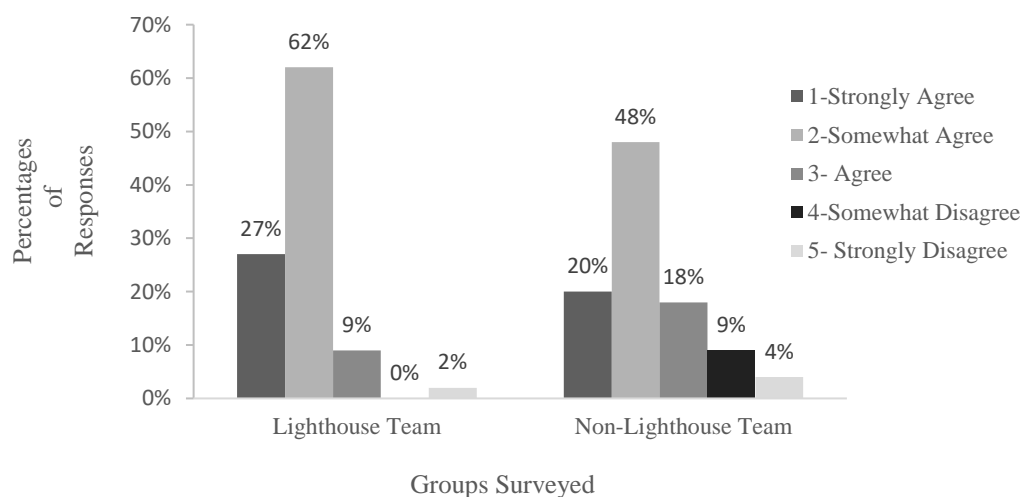


Figure 8. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership and the effects on classroom discipline.

Survey statement 12, regarding the paradigm of leadership affecting classroom discipline because teachers believe that all students can be leaders. The Leader in Me focus was on shifting the paradigm of teachers, believing the way they interact with students has an impact on classroom behavior through the paradigm of potential. The data from the Non-Lighthouse Team member participants indicated 13% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 63% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* when a teacher's paradigm is that all students can lead, classroom discipline decreases. The Lighthouse Team member participants' data reflected 2% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 86% *agreed* or

strongly agreed in the effects of a paradigm change for teachers regarding student leadership having an effect on classroom discipline (see Figure 9).

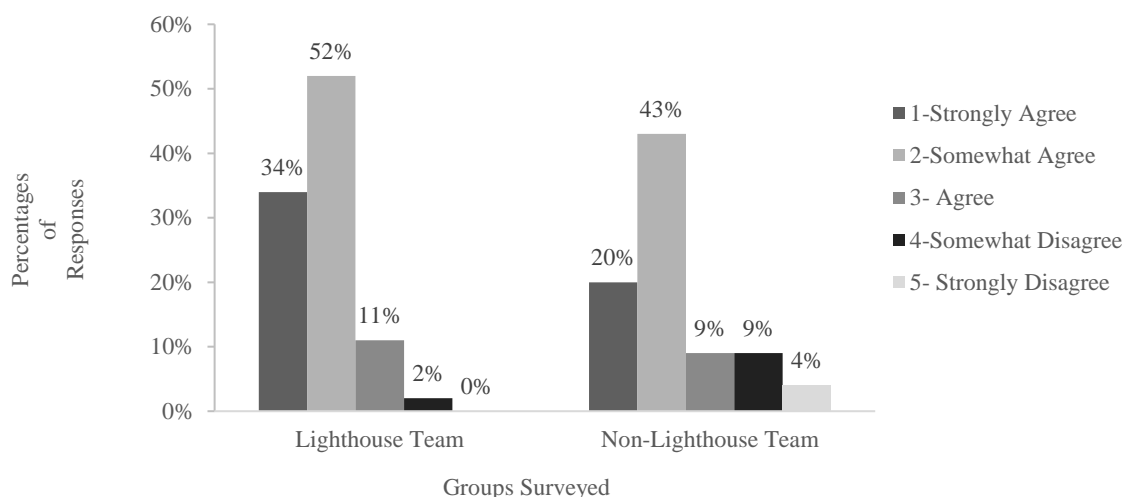


Figure 9. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of potential and the effects on classroom discipline.

Survey statement 13 allowed participants to reflect on the paradigm of motivation affecting classroom discipline because teachers believe they should empower students to take ownership of their own learning. The data from the Non-Lighthouse Team member participants indicated 11% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 68% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* when a teacher's paradigm is focused on students empowering their own learning, classroom discipline decreases. The Lighthouse Team member participants' data reflected 2% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 80% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the effects of a paradigm change for teachers regarding student leadership having an effect on classroom discipline (see Figure 10).

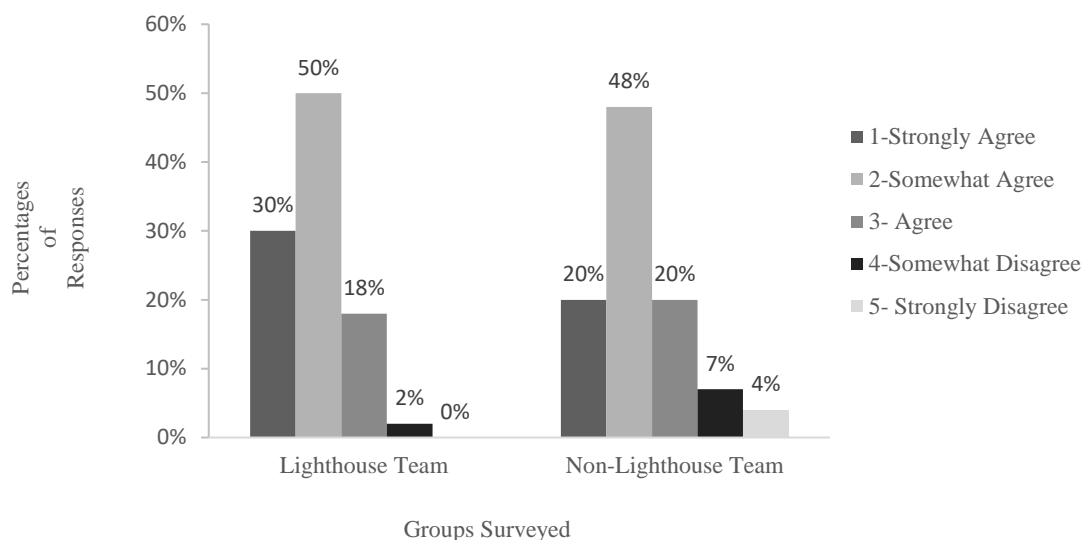


Figure 10. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of motivation and the effects on classroom discipline.

The focus of survey statement 14 was the paradigm of education affecting classroom discipline because teachers believe they should teach the whole child. The data from the Non-Lighthouse Team member participants revealed 10% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 71% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* when a teacher's paradigm is focused on teaching the whole child, classroom discipline decreases. The Lighthouse Team member data reflected 0% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 88% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the effects of a paradigm change for teachers regarding student leadership having an effect on classroom discipline (see Figure 11).

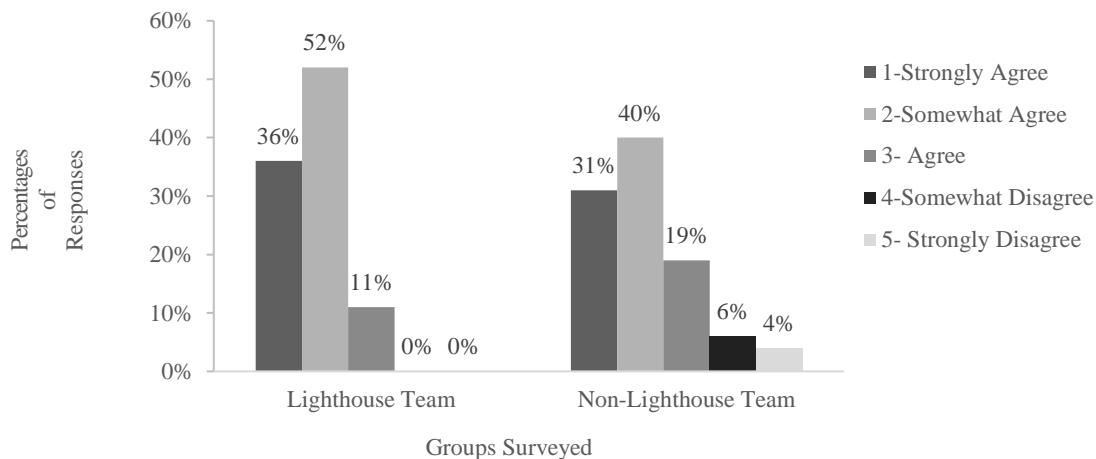


Figure 11. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of education and the effects on classroom discipline.

Survey question 15 was another open-ended question with responses from both Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members reflecting overall themes focused on student accountability, common language, and similar expectations. One Lighthouse Team member reflected, “The Leader in Me program uses real-life skills and behaviors vs. a clip chart. Students are held more accountable for their behavior.” As shared by Pioneer Elementary (2020) a clip chart is a chart used for classroom management that allows students to help with moderation of their own behavior by clipping a clothespin up and down between colors based on their behavior. Another Lighthouse Team member stated similarly:

The language and tone of how teachers approach students is different than non-Leader in Me schools and educators. It’s a mindset thing that impacts vision and

action (be-see-do: what I am affects how I see which affects what I do). That trickles to the kids. I am a leader. I have control over what I do. I can choose how to respond to people/situations.

With regard to goal setting, another Lighthouse Team member shared, “It holds students accountable for their behaviors and working toward a personal monthly goal. The students’ goals are shared with parents as well.” When asked about outcomes in connection with developing the whole child, another member stated, “By far, developing the whole child. Once students feel safe and have trust, we can work through discipline issues.”

Non-Lighthouse Team member participants had similar thoughts with regard to classroom discipline. One Non-Lighthouse participant revealed, “The Leader in Me is a proactive approach with positive re-directs that provides each child with a choice. Give the child a few seconds, and they will usually choose the right decision when trying to solve conflicts.”

Building Culture

The focus of survey statement 16 was on the paradigm of leadership affecting the culture of the building. The data from the Non-Lighthouse Team member participants indicated 4% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 85% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the paradigm of leadership is a positive attribute to improving the culture of the school. The Lighthouse Team member participants’ data reflected 0% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 97% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the effects of leadership have a positive impact on school culture (see Figure 12).

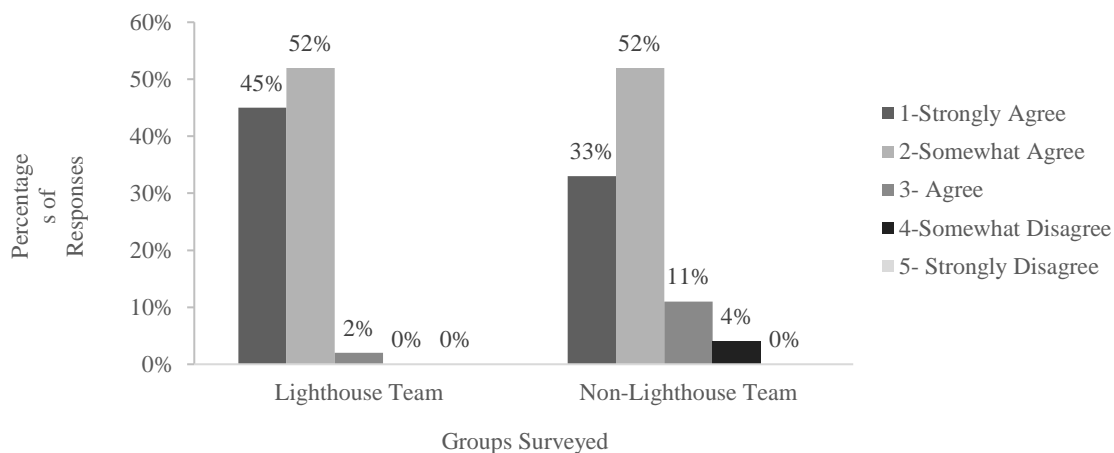


Figure 12. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership on improving school climate.

Survey statement 17 revealed participants' perceptions regarding the paradigm of potential when teachers believe each child has his or her genius. The data from the Non-Lighthouse Team member participants revealed 4% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 80% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the paradigm of potential is a positive attribute to improving the climate within the school. The Lighthouse Team member data reflected 0% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 98% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the student genius with regard to the paradigm of potential having a positive impact on school climate (see Figure 13).

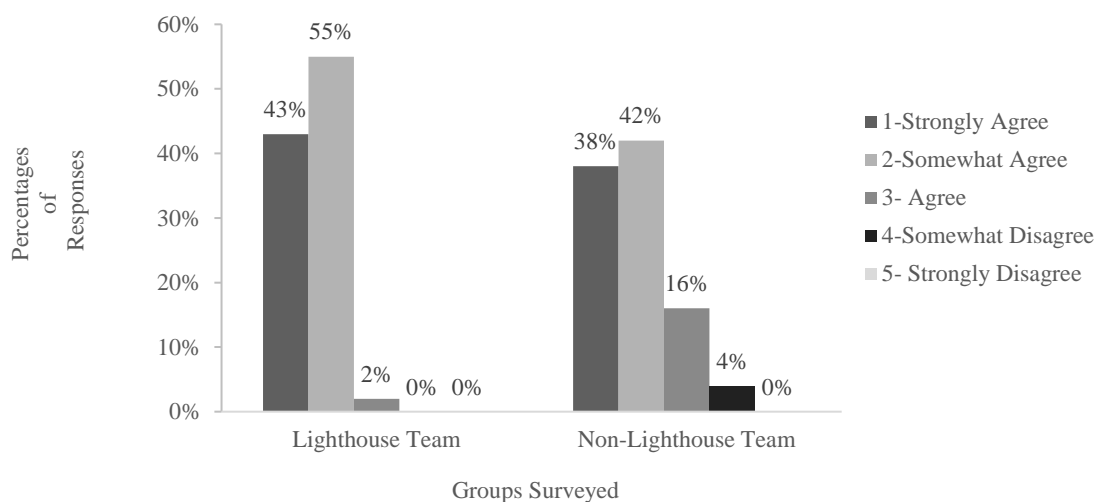


Figure 13. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of potential on improving school climate.

Participants were asked to share their perceptions about school climate, specifically focusing on the change paradigm in survey statement 18. The inquiry of the statement was about the effects of teachers believing change starts with them having a positive impact on school climate. The Non-Lighthouse Team member participants' data indicated 6% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 79% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that when teachers believe in the paradigm that change starts internally, a positive school culture will develop. The Lighthouse Team member data reflected 0% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 93% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the effects of the paradigm of change improving school climate (see Figure 14).

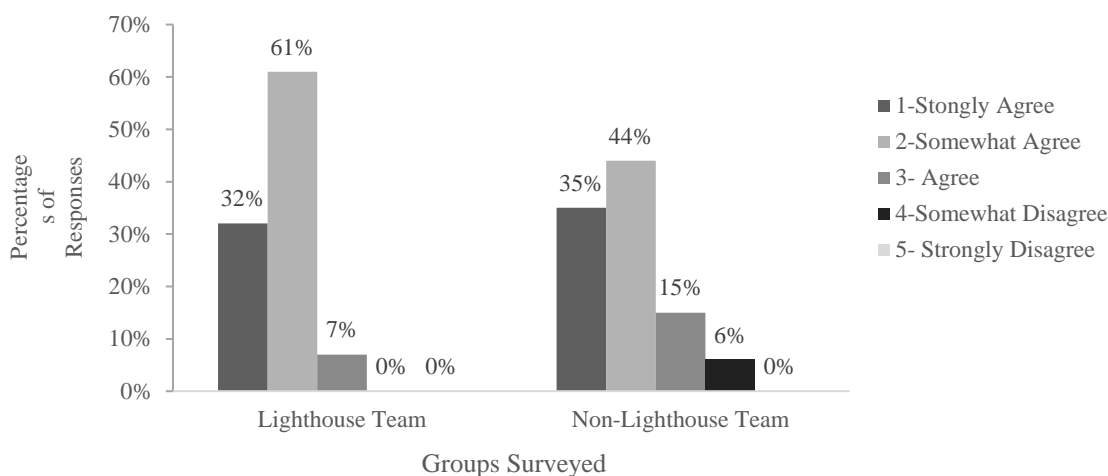


Figure 14. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of change on improving school climate.

In survey statement 19, teachers were asked to share their perceptions of whether or not the culture improves because students all feel they are leaders. The Non-Lighthouse Team member participants' data indicated 7% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 77% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* when students believe they are all leaders due to the paradigm of leadership, positive change in the school culture will follow. The Lighthouse Team members' data reflected 0% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 93% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the effects of the paradigm of leadership on improving school climate (see Figure 15).

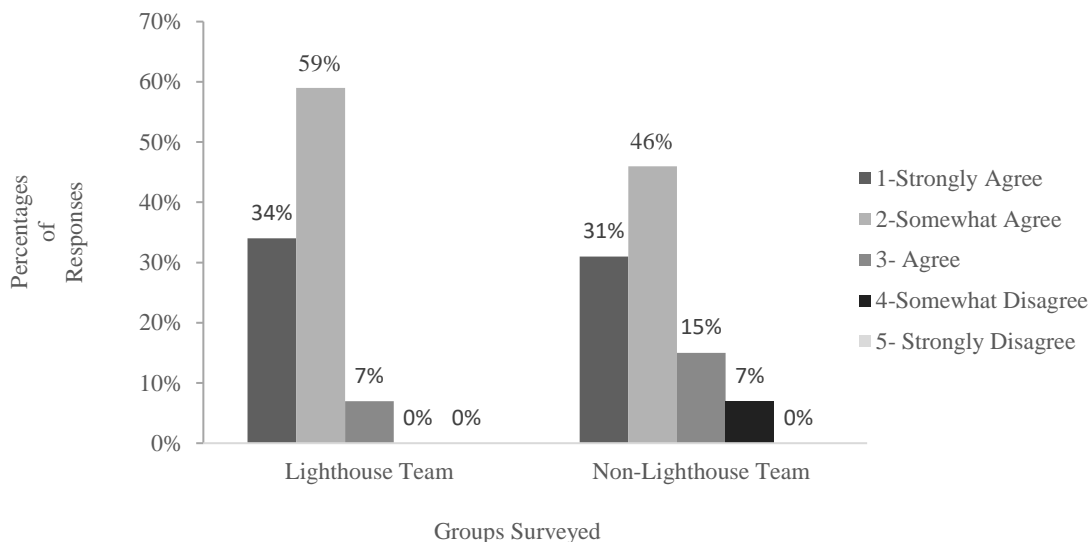


Figure 15. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of leadership on improving school climate.

The final Likert-type statement required survey participants to share their perceptions on the paradigm of education and the effects of teaching the whole child on improving school climate. The Non-Lighthouse Team member participant data revealed 2% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, while 81% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* when students believe they are all leaders due to the paradigm of leadership, school climate will improve. The Lighthouse Team member data reflected 0% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*; however, 98% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the effects of the paradigm of leadership improving school climate (see Figure 16).

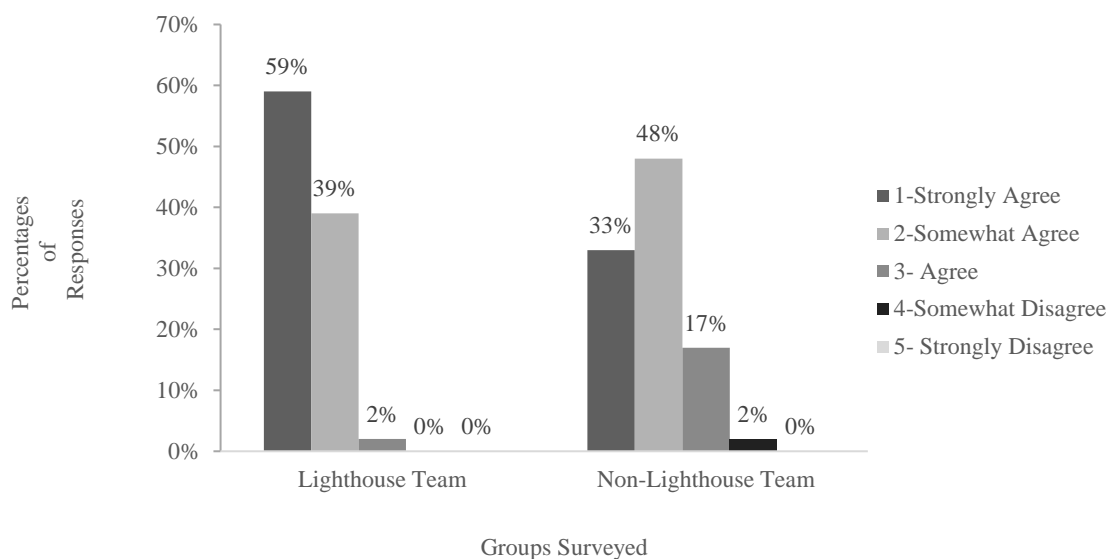


Figure 16. Perceptions from Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members of the paradigm of education on improving school climate.

Question 21 was an open-ended question to allow participants to further express their perceptions of the benefits of the Leader in Me program. Both the Lighthouse Team and Non-Lighthouse Team members were asked the same question and responded similarly. Data were sorted into common themes noted by both groups.

For both the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members, similarities in responses focused on similar themes, including the following: teaching to the whole child, goal setting, and climate of the building. The Non-Lighthouse Team members' outcomes of climate were most specifically focused around students having buy-in to the leadership model. Seventeen Non-Lighthouse Team member participants mentioned students having buy-in as a benefit of the program. One member stated specifically, "The main benefit is that students this young see a value in themselves that they may not see outside of school. The students feel they can be leaders and be in

charge of things.” Similarly, a Lighthouse Team Member responded, “All students believe they have something special about them. It gives a voice to all students, not just a few.”

With these similar themes between both groups, the Lighthouse Team members also noted having a common language was helpful. This was a unique concept when compared with the Non-Lighthouse Team participant data. Three Lighthouse Team participants mentioned feeling common language was important, while only one Non-Lighthouse Team participant mentioned anything about common language. One Lighthouse Team member specifically stated:

Giving all a common language is huge. A common paradigm to work from is very helpful. The message is very empowering and inspirational. A lot of the concepts are basic concepts that seem to be not as common practice but basic effective concepts.

The last item, number 22, was another open-ended question about perceptions of the challenges of the Leader in Me program. Participants in both groups shared similar challenges, which included the following themes: the time it takes to implement, having buy-in from all teachers, and getting parent involvement. One Lighthouse Team member shared, “Teachers dragging their heels, lack of communication between lighthouse, admin and teachers. Lack of student and parent leadership teams. Admin pointing fingers at teachers who simply do not understand data pyramids.”

Non-Lighthouse Team members referred to different struggles from the Lighthouse Team with reference to smaller children not being able to comprehend the depth of leadership and the vocabulary. Specifically, one Non-Lighthouse Team

participant shared, “At an elementary level getting them to understand what all the habits mean and how they apply to each student. I think it is great for grade 3 and up but the littler students just don’t seem to grasp the connection.”

Mann-Whitney *U*

Research question one. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance?

A comparison was conducted of the responses of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members from survey statements four through eight with a focus on the paradigms and increasing attendance. An alternative to a *t*-test was required due to the Likert-type statements resulting in ordinal data (Bluman, 2017). A Mann-Whitney *U* was used as an alternative to compare the responses between Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members on all five sections of the survey (VassarStats, 2017). This test is used to compare two groups of different sizes (VassarStats, 2017). The Mann-Whitney *U* assumes $\alpha = .05$ and a significant difference when $p < .05$ (VassarStats, 2017). The results of the test including the *z* score and probability determinations are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* regarding the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members’ and Non-Lighthouse Team members’ perceived value of the five Leader in Me paradigms on increasing attendance. The leadership paradigm analysis indicated, $z = 3.02525$ with $p < .05$ stating there was a significant difference between the two groups. The Lighthouse Team members felt more strongly than the Non-Lighthouse

Team members that there was an increase in student attendance because students viewed themselves as leaders.

Students believing change starts with them; paradigm of change data results indicated $z=2.69848$ with $p < .05$. These scores showed a significant difference between the groups' perceptions regarding the change paradigm and its effect on attendance. The Lighthouse Team members felt more strongly than the Non-Lighthouse Team members that there was an increase in student attendance because students believed change starts with them.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U for the third paradigm, potential, indicated, $z=2.31198$, with $p < .05$. There was a significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and the Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the effect the paradigm of potential had on student attendance. The Lighthouse Team members felt more strongly than the Non-Lighthouse Team members that there was an increase in student attendance because students set Wildly Important Goals for attendance.

The test results for the motivational paradigm of the survey analysis indicated, $z=3.25715$, with $p < .05$. These scores showed a significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and the Non-Lighthouse Team members for the paradigm of motivation. The Lighthouse Team members felt more strongly that student attendance was better because students had become more involved in school clubs and leadership roles than the Non-Lighthouse Team members did.

Finally, the educational paradigm analysis indicated, $z=2.60009$, with $p < .05$. These scores indicated a significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members for the paradigm of education. Lighthouse Team

members felt more strongly than Non-Lighthouse Team members that student attendance had improved because students felt they had a voice in their learning.

Table 3

Mann-Whitney U Test Results of Lighthouse Team Members' and Non-Lighthouse Team Members' Perceived Value of the Leader in Me Paradigms on Increasing Attendance

| Category | Z | p |
|---|---------|---------|
| Leadership Paradigm: Students believe they are leaders | 3.02525 | 0.00244 |
| Change Paradigm: Students believe change starts with them | 2.69848 | 0.00694 |
| Potential Paradigm: Students set W.I.G.s | 2.31198 | 0.02088 |
| Motivation Paradigm: Student clubs & leadership jobs | 3.25715 | 0.00112 |
| Education Paradigm: Students have voice in learning | 2.60009 | 0.00932 |

Research question two. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline?

A comparison was made of the responses of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members for survey statements 10 through 14 with the focus on the five paradigms and decreasing classroom discipline. The statements were compared using the Whitney-Mann *U* to determine the *z* score and probability determinations of the two groups.

Table 4 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* regarding the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members' and Non-Lighthouse Team members' perceived value of the five Leader in Me paradigms on decreasing classroom discipline. The leadership paradigm analysis indicated, $z = 1.93204$ with $p > .05$ stating there was not a significant

difference between the two groups. Students believing change starts with them; paradigm of change data results indicated $z=2.41773$ with $p < .05$ stating there was a significant difference between the perceptions of the Lighthouse Team members and the Non-Lighthouse Team members. These scores showed a significant difference between the groups' perceptions regarding the change paradigm and its effect on discipline. The Lighthouse Team members felt more strongly than the Non-Lighthouse Team members that there was a decrease in student classroom discipline because students believed change starts with them.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U for the third paradigm, potential, indicated, $z=1.72491$, with $p > .05$. There was not a significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and the Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the effect the paradigm of potential had on classroom discipline. The test results for the motivational paradigm of the survey analysis indicated, $z=1.44635$, with $p > .05$. These scores did not show a significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and the Non-Lighthouse Team members for the paradigm of motivation. Finally, the educational paradigm analysis indicated, $z=1.44123$, with $p > .05$. These scores indicated no significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members for the paradigm of education.

Table 4

Mann-Whitney U Test Results of Lighthouse Team Members' and Non-Lighthouse Team Members' Perceived Value of the Leader in Me Paradigms on Decreasing Discipline

| Category | <i>z</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---|----------|----------|
| Leadership Paradigm: Students believe they are leaders | 1.93204 | 0.0536 |
| Change Paradigm: Students believe change starts with them | 2.41773 | 0.01552 |
| Potential Paradigm: Teachers believe all students are leaders | 1.72491 | 0.08544 |
| Motivation Paradigm: Teachers teach to the whole child | 1.44635 | 0.14706 |
| Education Paradigm: Students are empowered to lead their learning | 1.44123 | 0.14986 |

Research question three. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate?

A comparison was made of the responses of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members for survey statements 16 through 20 with the focus on the five paradigms and increasing positive building climate. The statements were compared using the Whitney-Mann *U* to determine the *z* score and probability determinations of the two groups.

Table 5 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* regarding the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members' and Non-Lighthouse Team members' perceived value of the five Leader in Me paradigms on increasing school climate. The leadership paradigm analysis indicated, $z = 1.5892$ with $p > .05$ stating there was not a significant difference between the two groups. Teachers believing change starts with them; paradigm of change data results indicated $z = 1.38564$, with $p > .05$. These scores do not show a significant difference between the groups' perceptions regarding the change paradigm

and its effect on school climate. The results of the Mann-Whitney U for the third paradigm, potential, indicated, $z=0.5464$ with $p> .05$. There was not a significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and the Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the effect the paradigm of potential had on school climate. The Mann-Whitney U results for the motivational paradigm of the survey analysis indicated, $z=1.10709$, with $p> .05$. These scores showed no significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and the Non-Lighthouse Team members for the paradigm of motivation.

Finally, the educational paradigm analysis indicated, $z=2.69986$, with $p< .05$. These scores indicated a significant difference between the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members for the paradigm of education. Lighthouse Team members felt more strongly than Non-Lighthouse Team members that school climate had improved because teachers were developing the whole child.

Table 5

Mann-Whitney U Test Results of Lighthouse Team Members' and Non-Lighthouse Team Members' Perceived Value of the Leader in Me Paradigms on Improving School Climate

| Category | Z | P |
|--|---------|---------|
| Leadership Paradigm: Teachers believe all students are leaders | 1.5892 | 0.11184 |
| Change Paradigm: Teachers believe change starts with them | 0.5464 | 0.58232 |
| Potential Paradigm: Teachers believe every child has genius | 1.38564 | 0.16452 |
| Motivation Paradigm: Students believe they are all leaders | 1.10709 | 0.267 |
| Education Paradigm: Teachers are developing the whole child | 2.69986 | 0.00694 |

Summary

In Chapter Four, the results of the survey data were collected and analyzed. The data were first analyzed based upon the responses of both groups, Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members. The analysis of the findings involved descriptive statistics based upon data in response to each question used to compare the two groups. Perceptions were categorized corresponding to the five paradigms of the Leader in Me in accordance with an increase in attendance, decrease in classroom discipline, and improvement of school climate. Finally, responses to each section of statements, with reference to the paradigms, were analyzed using inferential statistics through the Mann-Whitney U to compare the difference between the two groups.

Chapter Five includes a summary of the findings according to the descriptive and inferential data analysis in Chapter Four. The conclusions drawn from the analysis of data are shared with a deeper interpretation. The implications for practice section includes suggestions on how the outcomes of this study can aid Leader in Me schools with support for both Lighthouse and Non-Lighthouse Teams. Recommendations for future research are also included.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

When a positive school culture is built, it ensures student success behaviorally, academically, and socially (Miller, 2016). According to Tuccinardi (2018):

Since its initiation in 2009, thousands of schools all over the world have embarked on The Leader in Me journey and have embraced the seven habits as a potential solution to improve school culture and improve the well-being and behaviors of all students. (p. 35)

Wright (2019) determined, “The central premise of this framework is that every child is a leader and capable of achieving greatness” (p. 23).

Mannell (2018) stated, “According to Education Direction (2015), the most common reasons for TLIM implementations were to improve school culture, improve academic achievement, and to teach 21st century or social emotional skills” (p. 26). Tidd (2016) explained, “If students recognize the importance of a positive attitude and how this enhances productivity, this would most likely lead to positive relationships with others” (p. 17). Wright (2019) expanded on the concept that the Leader in Me allows leadership opportunities for students to deepen their self-worth, which affects academic outcomes and social interactions.

Chapter Five includes the findings and conclusions drawn from the statistical data analysis and the review of literature. Implications for practice are provided. Finally, recommendations for future research are presented.

Findings

Research questions one through three were analyzed by using descriptive statistics of the survey taken by Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members which focused on their perceptions of the Leader in Me increasing attendance, decreasing classroom discipline, and increasing positive climate within the building. Each survey statement was based on the five paradigms: leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education of the Leader in Me program. The descriptive statistics were determined by the raw data of the survey results and broken down to look at the outcomes of each paradigm in reference to the focus of the perceptions being researched. Inferential statistics were then determined using the Mann-Whitney U to compare the outcomes of the perceptions of the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members.

Research question four was answered by collecting responses from two open-ended questions. The participants' responses to these two open-ended questions provided information about their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the Leader in Me Program on school climate. Common themes were identified and will be presented in this section.

Research question one. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on attendance?

The descriptive data of both groups' perceptions showed positive results from percentages with each paradigm increasing attendance. The Lighthouse Team members showed a higher percentage of agreement with outcomes in each paradigm category over the Non-Lighthouse team. Furthermore, within each paradigm the difference between the

Lighthouse Team members' agreement to the paradigms had an outcome, usually varying between a 20-30% discrepancy over the Non-Lighthouse Team members; with the Lighthouse Team members more in favor of positive outcomes than the Non-Lighthouse Team members based on the Leader in Me paradigm statements of the survey. However, neither group showed a high level of disagreement of any paradigm having an impact on increasing attendance based on the descriptive breakdown of data outcomes from the survey.

The inferential statistics gathered from the Mann-Whitney *U* test determined significant differences found between the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members in regard to their perceptions of each Leader in Me paradigm having an effect on increasing attendance. The null hypothesis was rejected since there was a significant difference found between the perceptions of both groups. Furthermore, since the descriptive data showed the Lighthouse Team members' percentages of agreement were higher than the Non-Lighthouse Team members, and the Mann-Whitney *U* confirmed those differences as being significant in comparison, it was evident the Lighthouse Team members' perceptions were in support of the Leader in Me having a positive impact on increasing school attendance more than the Non-Lighthouse team members.

Research question two. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on classroom discipline?

The descriptive data of both groups' perceptions showed positive results from percentages with each paradigm decreasing classroom behavior. The Lighthouse Team

members showed a higher percentage of agreement with outcomes in each paradigm category over the Non-Lighthouse team. Moreover, within each paradigm the difference between the Lighthouse Team members' agreement to the paradigms had an outcome, usually varying between a 15-35% discrepancy over the Non-Lighthouse Team members; with the Lighthouse Team members more in favor of positive outcomes than the Non-Lighthouse Team members based on the Leader in Me paradigm statements of the survey. Neither group showed a high level of disagreement of any paradigm having an impact on increasing attendance based on the descriptive breakdown of data outcomes from the survey. However, the paradigm of Education was the only survey statement that the Lighthouse Team members had no one disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the paradigm not having effects on classroom discipline.

The inferential statistics gathered from the Mann-Whitney *U* test determined a significant difference was found between the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members in regard to their perceptions of the Leader in Me paradigm of change having an effect on lowering classroom discipline. However, the other four paradigms of leadership, potential, motivation, and education did not show significant differences. The null hypothesis was rejected for the paradigm of change. When looking at the outcomes of the descriptive data to understand the breakdowns in reflection of the significant differences, it seemed the Lighthouse Team members' percentages of strongly agreeing versus agreeing were exact opposite of the Non-Lighthouse Team members, and the Mann-Whitney *U* confirmed those differences as being significant in comparison. It was evident the Lighthouse Team members' perceptions were in support of the Leader in

Me having a positive impact on increasing school attendance more than the Non-Lighthouse team members only in the area of one paradigm, change.

Research question three. What difference, if any, exists between the perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me program on school climate?

The descriptive data of both groups' perceptions showed positive results from percentages with each paradigm improving school climate. The Lighthouse Team members showed a higher percentage of agreement with outcomes in each paradigm category over the Non-Lighthouse team. Moreover, within each paradigm the difference between the Lighthouse Team members' agreement to the paradigms had an outcome, usually varying between a 15-25% discrepancy over the Non-Lighthouse Team members; with the Lighthouse Team members more in favor of positive outcomes than the Non-Lighthouse Team members based on the Leader in Me paradigm statements of the survey. The results of the Lighthouse Team members seemed to have higher percentages in the survey statements focused on climate than the statements on attendance and discipline. Most statements showed outcomes from the Lighthouse Team members in the 90th percentile of agreement; so much that the paradigms of leadership, potential, and education were at 97% or higher in agreement of outcomes of improving school climate.

The inferential statistics gathered from the Mann-Whitney *U* test determined significant difference was found between the Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members in regard to their perceptions of the Leader in Me paradigm of education having an effect on improving school climate. However, the other four paradigms of leadership, potential, motivation, and education did not show significant

differences. The null hypothesis was only rejected for the paradigm of education. When looking at the outcomes of the descriptive data to understand the breakdown in reflection of the significant difference for the education paradigm, it was noted the Lighthouse Team members' percentages of strongly agreeing was the highest of all survey statements with 59% agreeing, and the Mann-Whitney *U* confirmed those differences as being significant in comparison. This data was further confirmed with responses from the open-ended question analysis in research question four.

Research question four. What are the opinions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the benefits and challenges of the Leader in Me program on school climate?

The data were analyzed to determine what common themes were noted between the two groups. The Lighthouse Team members' top-three most-mentioned benefits were in reference to teaching the whole child, the climate of the building, and goal setting resulting in student growth. The Non-Lighthouse Team participants shared similar responses with the top-three most-mentioned benefits including students showing ownership in the building, teaching the whole child, and goal setting resulting in positive changes for students.

One Lighthouse member stated, "I believe that empowering students, helping them find their voices and focusing on the whole child represents a shift in mindset that is positive for both students and teachers." Another extended, "It helps make the staff more aware of the abilities of the children and their need for responsibilities that are meaningful. It puts focus on citizenship and leadership which will make more responsible adults instead of solely on academics." Similarly, a Non-Lighthouse

participant referenced, “Seeing the whole school community put ownership back on the kids as well as hearing others speak about students as capable leaders with greatness within.”

Participants also shared a benefit was improved school climate and student ownership. A participant on the Lighthouse Team stated, “All students are included and feel like they are a part of the school.” One Non-Lighthouse participant shared, “Teaching students life skills they may not be getting anywhere else is beneficial. Students take ownership in our school. It has become OUR school and OUR classroom.” Another Non-Lighthouse participant quoted Dr. Covey in his statement about why he felt student ownership was a powerful force as a benefit of the program:

The Leader in Me process communicates to ALL stakeholders that they have worth, unique calling, and potential for growth. It develops leadership within ALL stakeholders, not just the select few that hold a “position” of leadership. Students, staff, parents begin to experience living life as a leadership opportunity. Leadership is a choice, NOT a position. Dr. Stephen Covey.

The last item on the survey was an open-ended question asking participants to share what they perceived were challenges of the Leader in Me program. Once again there were similarities in the top-two challenges stated by both groups; numerous participants responded about the time it takes and getting buy-in from all teachers. One Lighthouse Team member shared, “Adults actually embracing the challenge of living the habits and being willing to put themselves out there by publicly sharing personal Wildly Important Goals.” A Non-Lighthouse member stated similarly, “Getting teachers on board. It seems like ‘another thing’ added to their plate. Just take it nice and slow. Some schools

are able to do a microwave approach, others need the crock pot approach. No two schools are the same.” One Lighthouse member explained by stating, “The challenge of implementing The Leader in Me is definitely the time it takes to make the paradigm shift in the lives of all involved. It’s worth it, but it just takes time.” According to a Non-Lighthouse Team member, “Incorporating it into an already demanding schedule at school and the push for teacher to teach to a curriculum” was a challenge.

Conclusions

Conclusions for this study were based on the review of literature and the responses of participants involved in taking the survey for principals, counselors, and teachers in Leader in Me schools. Included were whether the participants were Lighthouse Team members or Non-Lighthouse Team members. This section also includes common perceptions gathered from the survey regarding the impact of the Leader in Me on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school culture.

Research question one. With regard to the effects of the Leader in Me on attendance, Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members surveyed for this study responded with significantly different perceptions. The comments shared offered deeper explanation on what they believed the Leader in Me did to make an impact on attendance. The survey included statements focused on each of the five paradigms: leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education, which allowed a deeper look into the breakdown of staff perceptions. Covey (2014) explained changing the way one views outcomes is to change their way of thinking, or paradigm.

The Lighthouse Team members’ perceptions of Leader in Me paradigms supporting an increase in attendance were strongest in the paradigms of motivation and

education. The same two paradigms garnered the greatest support from Non-Lighthouse Team members; however, the percentage of agreement was significantly different from that of Lighthouse Team members. As stated by the Leader in Me (2018b), when using the see, do, get model, outcomes of change are possible. However, McDonald (personal communication, January 16, 2020) shared core paradigms of areas of no change must be looked at again if significant outcomes are not gained.

Based upon the outcomes of this study, building time into the schedule for students to have jobs and club time where they feel needed and can explore how to be a leader is an asset to increasing attendance for elementary-aged students in Leader in Me schools. Tidd (2016) shared character is found when students have respect for others and feel responsible to be a part of something bigger. Berlin (2019) suggested the same; when teachers promote students as leaders and give them opportunities, students from a variety of backgrounds can develop strengths. Based on the data collected, staff in Leader in Me schools believe when students feel as though they are a necessary part of the school day, attendance increases. This idea was supported by Seaton (2018), who reflected that when students feel their teachers believe in them, they tend to believe the same.

Having a voice in one's own learning was the second-highest characteristic staff from both groups supported for increasing attendance. According to Tidd (2016), when students set goals and are given feedback in these specific areas from teachers, students stay accountable to their outcomes. As believed by Covey (2008), the paradigm shift cannot only come from students, but staff must believe in the change as well in order to hold students accountable and make an impact; the outcomes of this survey support that

belief. This shift in thinking by staff also supports Mannell (2018), who stated staff must look at the whole child rather than just academics in order to ensure growth in students.

Research question two. Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members surveyed were significantly different in perceptions in only one key area of this section. The research question was divided into statements based around the five core paradigms of the Leader in Me. This research question was focused around changes resulting in decreased classroom discipline. Only the paradigm of change resulted in a significant difference in perceptions between the two groups surveyed.

The paradigm of change comes from an inner drive and may not be driven by the school system, but by a changed belief inside a student (Mannell, 2018). After analyzing the data and the discrepancy between the perceptions of staff, one wonders if the additional training for Lighthouse Team members resulted in a deeper belief in and understanding of how to motivate students through activities and ownership of learning to drive a feeling of change. Sampson (2017) stated the environment created by teachers is reflective of students believing that change starts with them, which in turn drives the outcomes of taking responsibility for oneself.

Furthermore, Berlin (2019) explained how staff members with a deeper understanding of the Leader in Me likely have a deeper personal understanding of paradigm changes within themselves, which could be shared transparently with students. Wright (2019) expressed the process as a whole school change, where not only students change, but the adults as well. The Lighthouse Team is often driving the ‘why’ behind the changes within the school through the implementation and understanding of the Leader in Me and its paradigms (Swantner, 2016). As shared by C. McDonald (personal

communication, January 16, 2020), when a clear ‘why’ is set in a way the whole school understands it, deep change begins to take place in everyone.

Tuccinardi (2018) also explained in order to realize change, the initial component is to teach the seven habits, so students not only know them but begin to live them. Changing classroom discipline has to come from a drive for a change in behavior inside the classroom (Covey, 2008). The relationships between teachers and students are deepened as they work together toward change and see outcomes in classroom behavior due to their belief in each other (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Buenger (2019) shared paradigm shifts occur when life is seen adversely as with a whole new understanding.

A significant difference between the two groups of Lighthouse Team and Non-Lighthouse Team members in the paradigm of change was revealed in the outcomes of this section, which could indicate a difference in the paradigms of staff as well. Covey stated leadership comes from the communication of someone’s worth and potential so they can then see it in themselves (C. McDonald, personal communication, January 16, 2020). Since Lighthouse Team members noted positive change in classroom discipline but Non-Lighthouse Team members did not, it would be interesting to determine if the paradigm of change is recognized interpersonally within the members of the separate groups.

Within this question, the paradigm of leadership was close to showing a significant difference as well. The outcome needed for a significant difference was $p \leq .05$, and the data revealed $p = .0536$. Regardless of not rejecting the null hypothesis, with the outcome so close, it is fair to look at this component while noting the other outcomes were further from showing any significance. The whole compass of Leader in Me is to

build leaders, so with a difference in perspectives of this particular paradigm, a gap needs to be filled between the understandings of the two groups in order to ensure success with the program holistically. Buenger (2019) described a paradigm as an overall accepted perspective, and when looking at the results it appears the two groups do not view the paradigm of leadership similarly.

Research question three. Similar to question two, question three resulted in only one key area with a significant difference in perceptions between Lighthouse Team and Non-Lighthouse Team members based on the Leader in Me paradigms. This research question was based around the five core paradigms of the Leader in Me in order to dissect outcomes of any change perceived in terms of school climate. One key area, the paradigm of education, resulted in a significant difference in perceptions between the two groups surveyed.

When asked about the education paradigm, a 17% difference was revealed between those who agreed this paradigm had an effect on climate in the two groups. Interestingly, this question correlated directly with Covey's (2008) statement that the Leader in Me process cannot work if those supporting the process do not implement the paradigms to the proper levels of understanding at its deepest value. Therefore, this leads one to believe the Non-Lighthouse Team members might not have the same core understandings of this paradigm or as much buy-in as the Lighthouse Team members. The first year of implementation for Leader in Me is focused on establishing a culture change focused on leadership (Lund, 2020). Tidd (2016) further expanded the idea of teachers knowing students and their preferred learning styles so well they can differentiate learning to give students voice in what motivates them toward success. This

would allow for both teachers and students to have a transparent learning environment to increase the success of culture, as supported further by Rocco (2018) findings.

The focus of many of the statements in this section of research on climate were based on what teachers believe about students when implementing the paradigms of the Leader in Me. The variation of perceptions supports the idea of Weiss (2018), who stated in order to effect change in climate, both staff and students must participate in the change and implementation of the program. Frizzley (2017) focused on increased professional development of staff to ensure buy-in.

The paradigm of potential did not result in significant difference between the two groups; however, both groups supported this paradigm having positive effects on school culture. This outcome supported the idea staff have buy-in to students having the potential to lead. This concept was supported by the ideology behind teaching the whole child as discussed by Rodriguez and Hardin (2017) in making sure students are the center focus of instruction rather than placing the importance on instructional strategies. Newell (2017) discussed how the Leader in Me promoted leadership of students in their communities and schools.

Research question four. The last question was posed to allow both groups to share concepts that may not have been addressed in the Likert-type statements. When looking at the breakdown of opinions from the open-ended question, common themes emerged in the responses of both groups.

The Lighthouse Team participants' top-three most-mentioned benefits included teaching the whole child, the climate of the building, and goal setting resulting in student growth. All of these statements were similar to the previous ranked statements revealing

buy-in from staff is pivotal to the success of implementing the program. Teaching to the whole child is reflective of Covey's (2014) focus on the change within mind, heart, and spirit. Walsh (2016) also compared focusing on the realm of spirituality as being similar to teaching the whole child.

Furthermore, Martindale (2018) articulated the focus on building climate by implementing a proactive approach to make students and staff want to come to school. These outcomes aligned to the thoughts of Horner and Monzalve-Macaya (2018), who asserted teachers and students want a climate that is safe and positive. Aligning with the outcomes of the Likert statements and the opinions around change in climate, Wright (2019) stated the Leader in Me promotes leadership positions that change the school culture so everyone is needed.

Research also supported participants' feedback about goal setting being a change agent in the climate of the school. Tidd (2016) supported this thinking in his analysis of charts used to track behavior, attendance, and academics. Miller (2016) agreed setting realistic goals to help students in school, but also after leaving school in the real world.

The Non-Lighthouse participants shared similar responses with the top-three most-mentioned benefits including students taking ownership of the building, teaching the whole child, and goal setting resulting in positive changes for students. The differing response was about taking ownership, which was aligned with Sampson (2017), who described students being allowed to own their learning so they can see failure is a part of the process of learning. Walker (2019) suggested leaders must control their own actions, thoughts, and choices.

The perceptions of challenges of the Leader in Me program were similar between groups, but not congruent to research. Both groups stated the time it takes and getting buy-in from all teachers were struggles of implementation; however, Wright (2019) addressed this idea by requiring teachers to develop leadership in themselves and ensuring implementation on a systematic level as a school wide effort and not an add-on. McDonald (personal communication, January 16, 2020) further supported the idea that teachers must also learn the habits to experience their own paradigm shifts in order for the model to be successful for the whole school and not just a program.

Implications for Practice

Teachers, counselors, and principals surveyed on both the Lighthouse Team and Non-Lighthouse Team shared commonalities that the Leader in Me program supports positive change for attendance, classroom discipline, and school culture. Bryant (2016) shared the role of the principal has changed from past practices, in that not only are they responsible for academic instruction, but also for developing moral and character skillsets for students. Many principals are looking for character programs to decrease discipline within their schools (El-Attrache, 2018; Whittle, 2017). The data from this study lend support to principals looking to implement a character education program such as the Leader in Me. The research gathered in this study shows the positive outcomes of the program in support of character and leadership development.

Implication one: Principals need to determine if the Leader in Me program is a good fit for their school. Data on the Leader in Me program are limited, which makes this research a valuable asset to principals in their search. Tuccinardi (2018) shared there was limited research on school wide behavior; however, the data in this study addressed

this concept, which provides additional feedback to guide principals looking for an effective initiative. These data allow principals currently analyzing character programs to hear the voices of a variety of adults and how they perceive the Leader in Me supports attendance, discipline, and culture.

Studies revealed the necessity for school principals to add a character education component to the school day to ensure success for students as a lifelong endeavor (Bryant, 2016). However, with several choices for character education programs available, it is a challenge to determine which would be the most beneficial (Tuccinardi, 2018). The Seven Habits of Highly Effective people has been a tool used by adults for several years, but only incorporated as the Leader in Me in school systems since 1999 (El-Attrache, 2018). This research provides additional data regarding the Leader in Me and the impact it has on developing the whole child with a focus on three key topics of concern to principals. As Tidd (2016) explained, the culture in the building needs to shift to students taking ownership of certain aspects of the day, which also means the administration needs to release some control.

Implication two: Districts must utilize best practices in order to ensure key components of the Leader in Me program are successful and fluid during the implementation process. The focus of implication two was on whether the Leader in Me would result in deeper outcomes than other character programs. The open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate on perceptions regarding the common language of Leader in Me as an effective component to support change for students. Swantner (2016) discussed the development of leadership skills as a long-term endeavor requiring a common language. From this survey, one participant shared the common

language of Leader in Me implementation was very beneficial for her school because it helped connect the concepts of the paradigms through the language for students of all ages.

In turn, this aligns with the ideology of the Leader in Me process in school systems as a “crock pot of action” in order to ensure the skillsets taught are effective (C. McDonald, personal communication, January 16, 2020). These data give additional support to Leader in Me schools in the process of implementation and their understanding of how this system of character development varies from others. Several topics of interest for principals were mentioned as outcomes of the Leader in Me such as teaching the whole child, teacher buy-in, and students taking ownership through the leadership model. As shared by Newell (2017), the Leader in Me infuses 21st-century skills into the school model through instruction and everyday practices. The incorporation of 21st-century skills is of importance when principals are searching for the program that best fits their school’s needs.

Implication three: Provide professional development for all staff on the process to implement the Leader in Me; rather than a focus on smaller groups of staff. The focus of implication three was on a practical application provided from this study. Valuable insight was provided by the data collected during this study regarding the implementation process and suggests the need for professional development for all staff members to support the Leader in Me program. As supported by Raleigh (2017), “The implementation of any learning approach requires teachers to have a complete understanding of what is expected and to recognize that professional development is a required component to establish the kind of environment conducive to success” (p. 23).

Additional data is provided to principals by this study in regards to aligning their professional development for staff. Teachers, counselors, and principals on the Lighthouse Team tend to obtain more training than those on the Non-Lighthouse Team, although principals have options about who can receive training.

The data give Lighthouse Team members insight on the importance of gaining additional time for all staff to guarantee understanding and buy-in of the habits in order to see the outcomes desired. Swantner (2016) determined parents were hopeful the program would teach independence, tolerance, and student initiative. These elements can be gained, if paradigms of thinking are first changed for staff members guiding the students on their journey. The data from this study show how effective professional development of Covey's habits is for all staff to gain the deepest understanding. A concern shared in response to the open-ended question elaborated on the necessity of teacher buy-in to the program to ensure success for everyone.

Furthermore, ensuring staff are living the habits of the Leader in Me by establishing time to implement their efforts would make for an easier transition. The concept of the Leader in Me as a program which adds work was mentioned in responses to the open-ended question by some Non-Lighthouse Team members. This thinking was not shared between Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members, which could be in correlation to the levels of understanding of the staff in the various groups. To ensure all key stakeholders have the same concepts of implementation, principals will want to ensure time for teams to collaborate about their implementation efforts so all teachers have the same love for building leaders using the resources provided through the Leader in Me program. Additionally, principals need to

consistently and frequently monitor those members not leading on the Lighthouse Team to ensure their understanding and to answer any questions before bad practices become habits.

When a school chooses to implement the Leader in Me program, the company provides trainings necessary to begin the process with the team. However, as time passes, principals need to stay focused on providing the yearly training not only to the Lighthouse Team when given the option to ensure all staff are continuing to grow. Ensuring principals train new teachers to understand the Leader in Me Program is important so the program will continue (Raleigh, 2017).

Implication four: Schools need to use best practices when implementing the Leader in Me program to support lowering classroom discipline. The final implication of this study provides educators with a better understanding of the impact the Leader in Me program has on student behavior. The data collected determined the Leader in Me program caused a decrease in negative student behaviors in the classroom. The review of literature revealed conflicting research regarding the effectiveness of the Leader in Me program on student discipline (El-Attrache, 2018; Leader in Me, 2018a; Mannell, 2018). Eliciting perceptions of the Lighthouse Team, members typically having more professional development, and Non-Lighthouse Team, those with most professional development provided by the Lighthouse team, allows for a broader interpretation of data to indicate whether the program is having the effect on discipline that the Leader in Me organization anticipates.

Research conducted by Mannell (2018) did not reveal a positive impact on student discipline; however, this study did show both groups perceived the program decreased

discipline. One participant shared a change in how adults approached students and talked to them to resolve conflict before it began to escalate. Many participants, on both the Lighthouse Teams and the Non-Lighthouse Teams, referenced the focus on developing the whole child and the impact on changing mindsets for staff and students regarding discipline due to the proactive approach to positive behaviors rather than reacting to negative behaviors. Goal setting for student behaviors using the habit “begin with the end in mind” was another outcome of the survey shared by staff from both teams.

Kite (2018) suggested a study with both Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members to get a broader understanding of the impacts of the Leader in Me. In questioning both teams, the data suggested both parties did find favor in the mindset of students believing change starts with self when the program was implemented with fidelity. In turn, they also found focusing on the whole child and setting students up for success with goal setting were necessities for discipline as well, to ensure students see their own growth rather than feeling punished by negative choices.

Recommendations for Future Research

This quantitative study was conducted to determine the difference, if any, in perceptions between Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members from Leader in Me schools on the effects of the program on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate. These data were collected from Leader in Me schools in the southern portion of Missouri. For future research, data could be collected and compared from other Leader in Me schools outside of Missouri or in different regions of Missouri. Collecting data from a variety of locations would open the potential to determine socio-economic differences and would allow for deeper understanding of

student populations and if those factors change staff perceptions on the program's implementation.

The data in this study were broken into groups of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members to determine a difference between perceptions in these two groups. However, it might give additional insight if the data were disaggregated among subgroups of principals, counselors, and teachers to see if perceptions were different among the groups rather than just between Lighthouse and Non-Lighthouse members. This would, in turn, provide a broader understanding of the professional development needed based on the viewpoint of the participants from their interaction with students during the school day.

Another recommendation would be of the participant variety. The data compiled were gathered from principals, counselors, and teachers; however, the smallest participant group was made up of counselors. To ensure solid data, a mixed-method study including surveys for staff and interviews with counselors would provide deeper data collection to ensure each group had similar numbers of participants.

In addition, the perceptions of students might be helpful to determine if what the staff believe to be true for Leader in Me outcomes align with what students perceive to be true. A mixed-methods study with qualitative data from both students and staff members would provide more perceptions, as students often see attributes adults might not. The quantitative portion of the study would involve a survey of both students and staff and utilize the Mann-Whitney U to compare student and staff results.

Summary

When the habits from the Leader in Me are incorporated into the school day, the habits become a part of students and staff, so much that it changes the outcomes of the bigger picture of their lives beyond school (Tidd, 2016). Wright (2019) explained the habits of the Leader in Me are guidelines at the core of personal, professional, and spiritual outcomes and apply to everyone to reach their full potential. This quantitative study was designed to gather perceptions of Lighthouse Team members and Non-Lighthouse Team members regarding the impact of the Leader in Me on student attendance, classroom discipline, and school culture.

A survey was sent to 22 Leader in Me schools in southern Missouri who had implemented the program for at least two years. The survey was administered to principals, counselors, and teachers within those buildings. The data from the two groups, Lighthouse Team and Non-Lighthouse Team members, were compared to determine if any significant difference existed between the two groups using the Mann-Whitney *U*.

Chapter One contained a background of the study, the conceptual framework, and a statement of the problem. The purpose of the study and the research questions were also included in Chapter One. The significance of the study and definitions of key terms were provided. Chapter One concluded with the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study.

Chapter Two began with a review of the conceptual framework, Covey (2014) leadership model, which includes the five paradigms of leadership, change, potential, motivation, and education. Chapter Two continued with the review of literature and

additional research information regarding student attendance, classroom discipline, and school culture. The five paradigms of the Leader in Me, character education programs implemented in schools, teaching the whole child, and how the Leader in Me programs current research has an impact on attendance, discipline, and culture were examined. Also included was a brief analysis of a Lighthouse Team member's purpose to further the understanding of the study.

Chapter Three provided the methodology for the study and explained how data were gathered. The problem and purpose overview was provided, and the research questions were re-stated. The research design for quantitative research methodology was also described. The population and sample used for the data collection were provided. Purposive sampling was used, resulting in 22 elementary Leader in Me schools within southern Missouri to be surveyed. The principals, counselors, and teachers of Leader in Me schools practicing for at least two years were a part of the sample. This sample agreed to take a survey, and data were separated into two groups: those on the Lighthouse Team and those on the Non-Lighthouse Team for perceptions to be compared using the Mann-Whitney U to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups. Data collected from each group were then compared to the literature review in Chapter Two. A description of the instrumentation including the reliability and validity of the instrument used were also found in Chapter Three. The data collection and data analysis processes were detailed. Finally, the ethical considerations were provided.

Chapter Four included an overview of the data collection process. A breakdown of how the survey was designed was included. The data gained from the survey were

analyzed by question to share the outcomes of each group in a comparative nature. A short description of themes of the open-ended questions was also elaborated upon.

Chapter Five included the findings from the data collected. An analysis and review of the data outcomes by research question were provided. The conclusions drawn from the literature review and the data collected from the survey were detailed. Professional development provided to both groups in the same quantity could be supportive in effecting change more quickly using the Leader in Me. Furthermore, groups noted certain paradigms they felt more effective than others in terms of impacting attendance, discipline, and culture within the building. Each of the conclusions aligned to the research questions posed in the survey.

A description of the implications for practice for districts to consider were also provided in Chapter Five. These implications included the impact the Leader in Me program can have on school culture. The importance of providing professional development for staff during the implementation process. The final implication suggested the Leader in Me program, once implemented, could have a positive effect on student behaviors.

Finally, the following recommendations for future research were described. The population of the study could be expanded upon outside of Missouri or in other regions of Missouri. Also, equal participation should be ensured among the subgroups within the study: principals, counselors, and teachers. The outcomes of this study resulted in limited data from counselors, but they play a pivotal role in the character education process of schools. A mixed-method study could be conducted to ensure counselors provided enough feedback on the program. The final recommendation was to gather data from

students to gain a broader interpretation of perceptions outside of the adults implementing the program.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Batchgeo. (2018). MO/IA Leader in Me school list. Retrieved from <https://www.batchgeo.com/map/9be6cf1af7eceaceeb7a4a07304abfb>
- Berlin, S. (2019). *Improving student attitudes towards school via the implementation of leadership binders* (Master's thesis, Goucher College). Retrieved from https://mdsoar.org/bitstream/handle/11603/14395/BerlinSamantha_paper.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Bluman, A. G. (2017). *Elementary statistics* (10th ed.). London, UK: McGraw-Hill International Book Company.
- Bonazza, N. A., Smuin, D., Onks, C. A., Silvis, M. L., & Dhawan, A. (2017). Reliability, validity, and injury predictive value of the functional movement screen: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 45(3), 725-732. Retrieved from <http://www.jgme.org/doi/pdf/10.4300/JGME-D-15-00566.1>
- Boudah, D. J. (2019). *Conducting educational research: " Guide to completing a thesis, dissertation, or action research project."* Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Incorporated.
- Bryant, N. (2016). *Administrators and principals and the implementation process of the Leader in Me initiative* (Doctoral dissertation, Capella University). Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED575425>

- Buenger, V. (2019). Steven Covey: Paradigms and the 7 habits. Retrieved from http://people.tamu.edu/~v-buenger/658/Steven_Covey.html
- Cagle, J. B. (2017). *A study of the life satisfaction of students and its effect on their academic achievement* (Doctoral dissertation, Carson-Newman University). Retrieved from https://www.cn.edu/libraries/tiny_mce/tiny_mce/plugins/filemanager/files/Dissertations/Dissertations2017/John_B_Cagle.pdf
- Character.org. (2017). What is character education? Retrieved from <http://character.org/key-topics/what-is-character-education/>
- Character.org. (2020). The 11 principles of character a validation framework: For inspiration, validation, certification. Retrieved from <https://www.character.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/11-Principles-Introductory-Guide.pdf>
- Collins, J. (2013). Foreword to the 25th anniversary edition of Stephen Covey's *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. Retrieved from https://www.jimcollins.com/article_topics/articles/The-7-Habits-of-Highly-Effective-People.html#articletop
- Collins, K., Thomas, N., & Parson, K. (2010). School climate and student outcomes. *Journal of Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in Education*, 3(1), 4-39.
- Colorado State University. (2020). Writing guides. Retrieved from <https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/index.cfm>
- Coolidge, F. L. (2021). *Statistics: A gentle introduction* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

- Covey, F. (2014). *The Leader in Me framework* [PDF file]. Salt Lake City, UT: Franklin Covey. Retrieved from https://www.leaderinme.org/uploads/Documents/TLIM_Framework_11-17-14.pdf
- Covey, S. R. (2008). *The Leader in Me: How schools and parents around the world are inspiring greatness, one child at a time*. New York, NY: Franklin Covey.
- Covey, S. R. (2013). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.
- Covey, S. R. (2020, February 16). Paradigms [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://resources.franklincovey.com/blog/paradigms>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cummins, K. (2015). *A mixed methods study on the Leader in Me process: How does fostering student leadership capacity influence behavior, efficacy, and achievement?* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Louisiana at Lafayette). Retrieved from <https://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/1761867489.html?FMT=ABS>
- Davis, W. (2017). *A qualitative study of leadership practices exhibited by elementary principals that develop leadership in others* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama at Birmingham).
- Dudovskiy, J. (2020). Purposive sampling. Retrieved from <http://research-methodology.net/sampling-in-primary-data-collection/purposive-sampling/>
- El-Attrache, S. (2018). *The Leader in Me? Understanding student and teacher perspectives of Leader in Me* (Master's thesis, Abilene Christian University). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/metl/9>

- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4.
- Fong, Y., & Huang, Y. (2018). Modified Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test and power against strong null. *The American Statistician*.
doi:10.1080/00031305.2017.1328375
- Fraenkel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2015). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Franklin Covey Co. (2015). Using Stephen R. Covey's *The 7 habits of highly effective people* in education. Retrieved from https://www.theleaderinme.org/uploads/Documents/results/7_Habits_Lit_Review_for_Education.pdf
- Freeman, J., Simonsen, B., McCoach, D. B., Sugai, G., Lombardi, A., & Horner, R. (2016). Relationship between school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports and academic, attendance, and behavior outcomes in high schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 18(1), 41-51.
- Frizzley, S. M. (2017). *The benefit of creating a culture of student leadership on school aged students* (Doctoral dissertation, City University of Seattle). Retrieved from <https://repository.cityu.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.11803/673/SelenaFrizzleyThesis2017.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>
- Glen, S. (2019). Reliability and validity in research: Definitions, examples. Retrieved from <https://www.statisticshowto.datasciencecentral.com/reliability-validity-definitions-examples/>

- Great Schools. (2016). Character education: As important as academics. Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/the-value-of-character-education/>
- Gruenert, S., & Whitaker, T. (2015). *School culture rewired: How to define, assess, and transform it*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Hamsher, S. (2018). A new perspective: Spontaneous character education using positive causal attribution training. *Journal of Character Education, 14*(1), 45-58.
- Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2015). Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. *Evidence-Based Nursing*. Retrieved from <https://ebn.bmj.com/content/18/3/66>
- Ho, G. W. (2017). Examining perceptions and attitudes: A review of Likert-type scales versus Q-methodology. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 39*(5), 674-689.
- Homer, M. (2016). The future of quantitative educational research methods – Bigger, better and, perhaps, Bayesian? In *Hilary place papers* (3rd ed.). Leeds, UK: University of Leeds. Retrieved from <http://hpp.education.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/131/2016/02/HPP2016-3-Homer.pdf>
- Horner, R., & Monzalve-Macaya, M. (2018). A framework for building safe and effective school environments: Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). *Pedagogická Orientace, 28*(4), 663-685. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5e63/c974a7cfebb2217ab23234cd404d6ac00e8b.pdf?_ga=2.93387549.1099038403.1584376066-1770874524.1553128184
- Horner, R., Sugai, G., & Lewis, T. (2015). Is school-wide positive behavior support an evidence-based practice? Retrieved from <https://www.pbis.org/resource/is-school-wide-positive-behavior-support-an-evidence-based-practice>

- Humphries, A., Cobia, F., & Ennis, L., (2015). Perceptions of The Leader in Me process in regard to student discipline. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 4(3), 93-104.
- Impact Factory. (2020). Steven Covey on leadership. Retrieved from <https://www.impactfactory.com/library/stephen-covey-leadership>
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2020). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (7th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Incorporated.
- Jones, S. (2020). Implementation school-wide PBIS framework: School-wide positive behavioral interventions & supports. Retrieved from <https://www.knoxschools.org/cms/lib/TN01917079/Centricity/domain/4325/reading%20materials/PBIS%20Article.pdf>
- Journeytoleadershipblog. (2017, July 19). The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey. Retrieved from <https://journeytoleadershipblog.com/2017/07/19/seven-habits-highly-effective-people-by-stephen-r-covey/>
- Kite, T. (2018). *The perceptions of implementation teams on the impact of character development programs on school culture, student behaviors, and student leadership skills* (Doctoral dissertation, Lindenwood University). Retrieved from <https://pqdtopen.proquest.com/pubnum/10937644.html>
- Lanzillotti, P. (2018, April 10). Stephen Covey's 4 pillars of leadership: The definition of leadership you want in B-school: Amerasia consulting [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://www.amerasiaconsulting.com/blog/2007/12/11/stephen-covey-discusses-leadership-the-type-of-leadership-you-want-in-business-school>

- Leader in Me. (2018a). *Leader in Me: Find your voice research guide*. Salt Lake City, UT: Franklin Covey. Retrieved from <https://www.leaderinme.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Research-Research-Guide-2.0.pdf>
- Leader in Me. (2018b). What is Leader in Me? Retrieved from <https://www.leaderinme.org/what-is-leader-in-me/>
- Leader in Me. (2019, February 8). Attendance matters: One school's journey to change their school culture [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://www.leaderinme.org/blog/attendance-matters/>
- Lehr, C. A., Sinclair, M. F., & Christenson, S. L. (2004). Addressing student engagement and truancy prevention during the elementary school years: A replication study of the Check & Connect model. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 9(3), 279-301.
- Leola Elementary. (2020). The lighthouse team. Retrieved from <https://leolaleaderinme.weebly.com/5-the-lighthouse-team.html>
- Lewallen, T. C., Hunt, H., Potts-Datema, W., Zaza, S., & Giles, W. (2015). The whole school, whole community, whole child model: A new approach for improving educational attainment and healthy development for students. *Journal of School Health*, 85(11), 729-739.
- Lewis, M., & Ponzio, V. (2016). Character education as the primary purpose of schooling for the future. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 4(2), 137-146. Retrieved from <https://journal.scadindependent.org/index.php/jipeuradeun/article/view/92/159>
- Lund, D. (2020). Become an authorized Leader in Me school. Retrieved from <http://www.theleaderinme.org/how-do-schools-implement/>

- MacFarland, T. W., & Yates, J. M. (2016). Mann-Whitney *U* test. In *Introduction to nonparametric statistics for the biological sciences using r* (pp. 103-132). New York, NY: Springer. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-30634-6_4
- Mannell, C. (2018). *The impact of the Leader in Me on school climate, academic achievement, and behavior at a suburban elementary school* (Doctoral dissertation, Baker University). Retrieved from http://www.bakeru.edu/images/pdf/SOE/EdD_Theses/MannellCasey.pdf
- Mark. (2007, January 14). Paradigm shifts [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://sevenhabitsreflection.blogspot.com/2007/01/paradigm-shifts.html>
- Martindale, T. M. (2018). *School leadership: Positive school culture* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (Order No. 10813029)
- McIntosh, K., & Goodman, S. (2016). *Integrated multi-tiered systems of support: Blending RTI and PBIS*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.
- Miller, C. A. (2016). *The effect of the Leader in Me, a school-wide positive behavior intervention system (SW-PBIS), based on student achievement and office discipline referrals for fifth grade students in a rural elementary school in north central Washington state* (Master's thesis, Heritage University). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED565636.pdf>
- Newell, L. G. (2017). *The influence of the Leader in Me program within a middle school in Virginia* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech). Retrieved from <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/85568>

- Pedersen, J., Yager, S., & Yager, R. (2012). Student leadership distribution: Effects of a student led leadership program on school climate and community. *International Journal of Education Leadership Preparation*, 7(2), 1-9.
- Pioneer Elementary School. (2020). PBIS / Classroom Clip Chart. Retrieved from <https://www.puesd.net/Page/316>
- Raleigh, D. R. (2017). *The adoption of the "Leader in Me" and school culture: A grid and group case study* (Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University). Retrieved from <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/299542>
- Richardsville Elementary. (2017). Purpose of a lighthouse team. Retrieved from <https://www.warrencountyschools.org/richardsville/News/34281#sthash.M2Sc23y8.dpbs>
- Rocco, A. L. (2018). *Experiences of elementary school principals who have implemented the Leader in Me program in a large urban district*. Troy, NY: Sage Graduate Schools.
- Rodriguez, J., & Hardin, S. E. (2017). Culturally responsive teaching to support all learners. In W. W. Murawski & K. L. Scott (Eds.), *What really works with exceptional learners* (pp. 100-116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=-Qr1DQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA100&dq=Culturally+responsive+teaching+to+support+all++learners&ots=OIIMAvzY3M&sig=ayK80LMOmGhVxv6ySauRoafGP-k#v=onepage&q=Culturally%20responsive%20teaching%20to%20support%20all%20%20learners&f=false>

- Rodwell, P. (2020, March 14). 8 aspects of a positive school climate & culture [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://www.kickboardforschools.com/blog/post/8-aspects-of-a-positive-school-climate-culture>
- Roffey, S. (2016). Building a case for whole-child, whole-school wellbeing in challenging contexts. *Educational & Child Psychology, 33*(2), 30-42.
- Sampson, K. (2017, June 14). Empowering paradigm changes in the family [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://www.leaderinme.org/blog/empowering-paradigm-changes-in-the-family/>
- Schenkelberg, F. (2017). Mann-Whitney *U* test. Retrieved from <https://accendoreliability.com/mann-whitney-u-test/>
- SchoolPointe, Inc. (2020). Leader in Me & lighthouse teams. Retrieved from <http://www.warrencountyschools.org/richardsville/News/34281#sthash.4KLoeAfY.dpbs>
- Seaton, F. S. (2018). Empowering teachers to implement a growth mindset. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 34*(1), 41-57.
- Shaw, K. A. (2016). *The implementation of CHARACTERplus in the elementary schools of a midwestern urban school district* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas). Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED577175>
- Sivo, S., Karl, S., Fox, J., Taub, G., & Robinson, E. (2017). Structural analysis of character education: A cross-cultural investigation. *School Psychology Forum, 11*(2), 34-44.

- Soutter, M. (2018). *The role of The Leader in Me in the social and emotional learning and youth voice development of elementary students* (Doctoral dissertation, Boston University). Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED587056>
- Swantner, E. (2016). *The influence of implementing the Leader in Me at a Title One elementary school* (Doctoral dissertation, Lamar University). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/openview/f2d58f0208ac52e714a9e674286fa150/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Thwink.org. (2014). Paradigm change. Retrieved from <http://www.thwink.org/sustain/glossary/ParadigmChange.htm>
- Tidd, C. (2016). *Staff perceptions of the effect of the Leader in Me on student motivation and peer relationships in elementary school* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University). Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=4648&context=dissertations>
- Truby, D. (2018, January 16). 8 ways principals can build positive school culture now; school climate should be the foundation for education. *School Leaders Now*. Retrieved from <https://schoolleadersnow.weareteachers.com/8-ways-build-positive-school-culture-now/>
- Tuccinardi, J. (2018). *Administrators and character education: The Leader in Me*. (Master's thesis, California State University San Marcos). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10211.3/202886>
- VassarStats. (2017). Mann-Whitney test. Retrieved from <http://vassarstats.net/utest.html>

- Walker, K. (2019). Principle-centered leadership by Steven R. Covey [Book summary]. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5df3bc9a62ff3e45ae9d2b06/t/5e385456f7bd6b4910e3f2cb/1580749911705/Principal-Centred+Leadership.Covey.EBS.pdf>
- Walsh, S. (2016). Teaching the whole child: Fostering spiritual development in public education. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1807/72300>
- Wardhani, P., Zulela, M., Rachmadtullah, R., & Siregar, Y. E. Y. (2018, August). *Moral literacy and social climate with perception teacher's character education in elementary school*. Paper presented at the Annual Civic Education Conference (ACEC 2018), Indonesia.
- Wasilewski, Y., Gifford, B., & Bonneau, K. (2013). *Evaluation of the school-wide positive behavior support program in eight North Carolina elementary schools*. Durham, NC: Center for Child and Family Policy.
- Weiss, J. (2018). Involving the stakeholders that matter most: Student voice in school reform. *ASCD Express*, 13(13). Retrieved from www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol13/1313-weiss.aspx
- Whittle, D. (2017, May 25). Leadership skills boost kids' behavior, success. *Wrangler News*. Retrieved from <http://www.wranglernews.com/2017/05/25/leadership-skills-boost-kidsbehavior-success/>
- Widyahening, S., & Wardhani, M. (2016). Literary works and character education. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 4(1), 176-180.
- Williams, E. R. (2015). A critical conversation: Remembering culture in the teaching of the whole child. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 82(1), 10.

- Wilson, L. T. (2009). Mann-Whitney U test. Retrieved from <https://explorable.com/mann-whitney-u-test>
- Wright, J. L. (2019). Examining the influence of the Leader in Me on school grades. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1945&context=etd>
- Xiong, P. V. (2017). *Perceptions from school principals about the role of schools in developing student leadership* (Doctoral dissertation, Hamline University). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_all/4332/
- Yettick, H., Lloyd, S., Harwin, A., Riemer, A., & Swanson, C. B. (2016). *Mindset in the classroom: A national study of K-12 teachers*. Bethesda, MD: Education Week Research Center.
- Yolcu, E., & Sari, M. (2018). Teachers' qualities and self-efficacy perceptions in character education. *Acta Didactica Napocensia*, *11*(3-4), 35-48.
- Zaiontz, C. (2020). Cronbach's alpha basic concepts. Retrieved from <http://www.real-statistics.com/reliability/internal-consistency-reliability/cronbachs-alpha/cronbachs-alpha-basic-concepts/>

Appendix A

| SEE Core Paradigms | Paradigm of Leadership | | Paradigm of Potential | | Paradigm of Change | | Paradigm of Motivation | | Paradigm of Education | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------|--|------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Not This | But This | Not This | But This | Not This | But This | Not This | But This | Not This | But This |
| | Leadership is for the few. | Everyone can be a leader. | A few people are gifted. | Everyone has genius. | To improve schools, the system needs to change first | Change starts with me. | Educators control and direct student learning | Educators empower students to lead their own learning | Focus solely on academic achievement | Develop the whole person |
| DO Highly Effective Practices | Leadership | | Culture | | Align Academic Systems | | | | | |
| | Professional Learning * Adult Lead Team * Full Staff * Family & Community Student Readiness * Leadership Courses * Integrated Approaches * Peer Facilitation | | Leadership Environment * Physical Environment (See) * Language of Leadership (Hear) * Trust Environment (Feel) Student Voice * Student LEAD Team * Student Leadership Roles | | Goal Achievement * Student Goals * Team (Department) Goals * School Goals Empowered Learning * Student-Led Learning * Collaborative Learning * Service Learning | | | | | |
| GET Measurable Results | Leadership | | Culture | | Academics | | | | | |

Reprinted with permission from *The Leader in Me framework* [PDF file] by F. Covey, 2014. Retrieved from https://www.leaderinme.org/uploads/Documents/TLIM_Framework_11-17-14.pdf

Appendix B

Survey

1. Lighthouse Team Member ____ Non-Lighthouse Team member ____
2. I have worked in a Leader in Me school for at least two years.
YES ____ NO ____
3. The role I play in the school setting is
Principal ____ Counselor ____ Teacher ____

Please rate the following statements from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

4. I feel the Leader in Me program has increased student attendance because students believe the paradigm of Leadership – they are all leaders.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
5. I feel the Leader in Me program has increased student attendance because students believe the paradigm of “Change starts with me.”

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
6. I feel the Leader in Me program has increased student attendance because students set Wildly Important Goals for attendance.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
7. I feel the Leader in Me program has increased student attendance because of the paradigm of Motivation with student clubs/leadership roles.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
8. I feel the Leader in Me program has increased student attendance because students feel they have a voice in their learning.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
9. In what ways, if any, do you feel the Leader in Me program has impacted school attendance?

10. I feel the Leader in Me program has decreased classroom discipline because students have learned Change starts with them.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. I feel the Leader in Me program has decreased classroom discipline because students believe they are leaders.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

12. I feel the Leader in Me program has decreased classroom discipline because teachers believe everyone can be a leader.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. I feel the Leader in Me program has decreased classroom discipline because teachers believe they should empower students to lead their own learning.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. I feel the Leader in Me program has decreased classroom discipline because teachers are developing the whole child.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

15. In what ways, if any, do you feel the Leader in Me program has impacted classroom discipline?

16. I feel the Leader in Me program has improved the school climate because teachers believe each child can be a leader.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

17. I feel the Leader in Me program has improved the school climate because teachers believe each child has potential with his or her own genius.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

18. I feel the Leader in Me program has improved the school climate because teachers believe the change paradigm “Change starts with me.”

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

19. I feel the Leader in Me program has improved the school climate because students believe they are all leaders.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

20. I feel the Leader in Me program has improved the school climate because students are learning more than just academics with the paradigm of developing the whole child.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

21. In what ways, if any, do you feel the Leader in Me program has impacted classroom discipline?

Please answer the following.

22. In your opinion, what are the main benefits of the implementing the Leader in Me program?

23. In your opinion, what have been the main challenges of implementing the Leader in Me program?

Appendix C

Letter of Permission from Leader in Me Organization

Date:

To: Leader in Me Organization

RE: Permission to Conduct Research in Missouri Leader in Me Schools

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to request permission to conduct research in the Missouri Leader in Me elementary schools. I am currently pursuing my doctorate through Lindenwood University and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled *A Quantitative Study of the Differences in Perceptions of Principals, Lighthouse Team Members, and Non-Lighthouse Team Members in Leader in Me Schools Regarding School Climate, Student Attendance, and Student Discipline*.

I am asking permission to use the list of principal email addresses on your MO/IA Leader in Me school page to send surveys to elementary school principals, school Lighthouse teams, and other teachers not on the teams to gather data.

If you agree, please sign below, scan this page and email it back to me, Nina Henson, at [REDACTED].

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Nina Henson, Doctoral Student at Lindenwood University

Approved by:

Print name and title here

Signature

Date

Appendix D

Letter of Approval from the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board

Jun 26, 2019 1:12 PM CDT

RE:

IRB-19-248: Initial - Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Members and Non-Lighthouse Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools.

Dear Nina Henson,

The study, Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Members and Non-Lighthouse Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools., has been Approved as Exempt.

Category: Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

The submission was approved on June 26, 2019.

Here are the findings:

- This study has been determined to be minimal risk because the research is not obtaining data considered sensitive information or performing interventions posing harm greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

Sincerely,

Lindenwood University (lindenwood) Institutional Review Board

Appendix E

Email sent to Principals

Date:

Dear <Title First Name and Last Name>:

My name is Nina Henson, and I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. The title of my dissertation is, *Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Members and Non-Lighthouse Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools*.

I have gained permission from Franklin Covey to use your Leader In Me school for my research project. Your contact information was obtained through their website. **I ask for your school's participation in my study due to your partnership with Leader in Me and your location in southern Missouri.**

Please complete the included survey and also forward this information to your teachers and counselors for their participation. The initial 23-item (18 Likert type & 5 open ended) survey should take a maximum of 5-10 minutes to complete. You will find the survey link included in this email along with the consent form.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation!

Nina Henson

https://lindenwood.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cVeiaC4NSSn2ofP

Appendix F**LINDENWOOD****Survey Research Information Sheet**

You are being asked to participate in a survey conducted by Nina Henson at Lindenwood University. We are conducting this study to determine the difference in perceptions of school staff on the Lighthouse Team versus those not on the Lighthouse Team regarding attendance, classroom discipline, and school climate. It will take about 10 minutes to complete this survey.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or closing the browser window.

There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Nina Henson at [REDACTED]

Shelly Fransen at [REDACTED]

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be required to do, and the risks involved. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time by closing the survey browser. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age.

You can withdraw from this study at any time by simply closing the browser window. Please feel free to print a copy of this information sheet.

Appendix G

Letter of Participation <Survey>

Date:

Dear <Title First Name and Last Name>:

My name is Nina Henson. I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University, and I am conducting a research study titled *Perceptual Differences between Lighthouse Team Members and Non-Lighthouse Team Members Regarding School Attendance, Classroom Discipline, and School Climate in Leader in Me Schools*.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. I have attached the Research Information Sheet and a copy of the survey link. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey online.

Please contact me at [REDACTED] with any questions you might have.

Thank you,

Nina Henson
Lindenwood University
Doctoral Student

Vita

Nina J. Henson completed her undergraduate studies at Missouri State University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. She furthered her education by earning a Master of Arts in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University in 2013.

Nina began her teaching career in public education as a fourth-grade classroom teacher at Branson School District in 2010. Following her six-year tenure at Branson, she accepted her first administrative job in 2015 as an assistant principal serving the middle school and elementary school in the Hollister School District. Nina took her first building lead administrative role at Hollister Elementary as school principal in 2017.

Nina is an active member of the Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals. She continues her studies in education leadership to prepare for future opportunities to serve students, teachers, and the Taney County community.