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An Investigation of the Impact Targeted Motivational Efforts and Leadership Styles Have on School Climate

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By

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Dr. Shelly Fransen, Dissertation Chair	3/30/2023 Date
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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.

Ashley Nichole Galloway

Signature:  Date: 3/30/2023

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Key Terms

Targeted Measures for School Improvement

School Climate

Organizational Climate in Schools

Effects of COVID-19 on School Climate

Abstract

This dissertation explored the challenging nature school climate holds within the realms of organizational and building effectiveness among building leaders, staff, and students. Difficulties associated with organizational climate were identified. There are numerous factors that contributed to shaping school climate and school climate is also highly dependent on perceptions (McGregor, 1960). Through an interdisciplinary focus between targeted motivational efforts and administrative leadership styles, this study aimed to discover a new understanding of central climate and leadership factors which might lend to a more positive environment. Despite the substantial amount of critical work performed within this study, recommendations for future research were also included to close any existing gaps within the research. This study sought to provide a new understanding of the concepts, conflicts, and contributions that targeted motivational efforts and leadership styles have, offering readers a new understanding of school climate, 21st-century educators, and learners alike.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The importance of a successful primary education is paramount, it builds the framework of every child's future (Pearce et al., 2022). Not only can education properly prepare children for new successes, but it also can prepare them to overcome future obstacles (Goenka, 2020). For the learning process to be effective, schools require more than proficient teachers, a rigorous curriculum, and adequate facilities (Hodges et al., 2022).

Early reform measures suggested that successful learning was highly dependent upon an organizational climate or culture that was positive (Coleman, 1985). Further research supported earlier studies suggesting that school climate is still a high priority for educators and communities (Thapa et al., 2013). Because researchers discovered that organizational climate was influenced by various elements, a determination was made that school success was difficult to measure (Rennie Center Education Research and Policy, 2020).

Chapter One includes the background of the study and an introduction of the theoretical framework. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and hypotheses are identified. The significance of the study and the definition of key terms are provided. Finally, the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions are detailed.

Background of the Study

Over the last 100 years, researchers and educators agreed school climate was significantly affected by the effectiveness of organizational leadership. Although Perry (1919) first examined how school climate affects the learning process, it would take

almost 50 years for climate studies to begin at the organizational level. Argyris (1958) first defined the term organizational climate, separating it into three interrelated systems of variables, including "the formal policies, procedures, and positions of the organization; personality factors including individual needs, values and abilities; and the complicated pattern of variables associated with the individual's efforts to accommodate his own ends with those of the organization" (p. 501).

Difficulties associated with concepts of organizational climate were noted by further studies in which the author argued climate is dependent highly upon perceptions, and because of this, climate is difficult to measure (McGregor, 1960). Another difficulty with organizational climate was the ability to properly measure. Halpin and Croft (1963) were responsible for creating one of the first instruments, the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, to evaluate school climate. Litwin and Stringer (1968) introduced the theory that the realities of an organization were only understood and measured as they were perceived by the members of an organization (as cited in Kundu, 2007, p. 100).

To develop a comprehensive framework for organizational climate, extensive research by scholars began to introduce specific factors that shape climate, which included structure, responsibility, reward, risk, warmth, and support (Jyoti, 2013). Researchers even began to include organizational climate studies on socioeconomic and race differences with mixed results (Coleman, 1968; Hauser et al., 1974). By the late 1970s, researchers would begin associating school climate with student achievement in schools. Brookeover et al. (1978) determined school climate was linked to school achievement outcomes, with the largest indicator being the way students perceived

themselves in the social environment within the school. John (1999) introduced the idea leadership styles may be a significant factor regarding school climate.

Bass and Riggio (2006) indicated individuals who identify with strong moral reasoning and identity would be more likely to emphasize these values in decision making with subordinates, which may be associated with facets of transformational leadership styles. Olsen et al. (2006) conducted a military study, which supported Bass's findings that individual differences in moral reasoning and identity significantly affected leadership behavior. Further results of the military study indicated transformational leadership behavior was associated with positive moral reasoning and identity, as opposed to those negatively associated with passive avoidance leadership traits (Olsen et al., 2006).

Researchers continue climate studies to determine if specific leadership styles can impact positive school climate (Berkowitz, 2022; Velarde et al., 2020). More recent researchers have coupled their observations with older researchers, such as Perry (1919) and Anderson (1982) recognizing the culture of a school affects the learning of the students and accounts greatly toward the variation in student achievement. This study will review and detail how school climate is associated with targeted measures for improving school climate and administrative leadership styles.

Theoretical Framework

The social identity approach is comprised of both the social identity theory and self-categorization theory, which emphasizes individual behaviors can be influenced by groups, systems, or organizations when an individual feels psychologically connected (Hogg & Turner, 1985; Tajfel et al., 1979) These higher level systems are defined by

psychological membership, identification, and connectedness, rather than external criteria, such as the social status, or demographic characteristics (Maxwell et al., 2017). Members who are a part of a positive social identification process become more motivated to achieve the group's goals and as a result, place extra effort into maintaining these goals for accomplishment (Maxwell et al., 2017).

The social identity theory is centralized around the belief that not only does the individual have to be defined as part of the group, but they must also perceive they belong to the group (Tajfel et al., 1979). When a group is composed of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, they begin to share emotional involvement and a certain degree of social consensus (Tajfel et al., 1979). This is a critical component, because staff and students know they belong to a certain school organization, but it leads the individual to ask themselves whether they perceive themselves as part of the organization.

Staff and students who shared an emotional consensus with school personnel were more likely to value the educational process and were more committed to the activities within the school (Wentzel, 2004). Cammarota et al. (2012) reported one of the most effective ways to strengthen personal bonds among the school community was supported by high levels of respect among staff and students' families, communities, and cultures. To determine if staff and students felt they were an integral part of the organization, research questions for this study were developed, based on the social identity approach. Both research questions seek to identify the significance targeted measures for improving school climate have on overall organizational climate, as well as the impact administrative leadership style has on building climate.

Statement of the Problem

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2016) was created to address the need for in depth focus on the accountability of students' social and emotional well-being, combined with a broad approach toward academic development, in an effort to improve organizational climate. The ESSA recognized the imperative relationship between positive school climate and student success by requiring states to collect and report data related to school climate (National Association of School Psychologists, 2021). The ESSA concluded, "a school's environment, and the degree to which students feel connected, accepted, and respected heavily influence students' academic achievement, mental health, and overall student success" (National Association of School Psychologists, 2021, p. 1). To guide educational leaders, specific factors were identified that should be addressed in order to ensure a positive school climate (National Association of School Psychologists, 2021). Six components that were supportive to the learning environment included school safety, positive prevention systems and interventions, school connectedness, positive discipline, cultural competence, and home to school connectedness (National Association of School Psychologists, 2021).

In response to school safety, an increasing number of State Department efforts were placed on school climate reform, recognizing school safety as a main component of school reform and bully prevention (Thapa et al., 2013). According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2020), "Learning occurs best in a warm, inviting, and orderly school setting, where students are safe and feel free from theft, threats, intimidation, bullying, weapons, drugs, or violence of any type" (p. 1).

There is an abundance of resources focused on building climate and perceived leadership styles (Confield, 2016; Dietrich et al., 1996; Dixon 2014; Freiburg, 2005). In 2017, at least 78 published research articles could be found supporting the theory "a positive school climate contributed to higher academic achievement and decreased the negative influence of poor SES [socioeconomic status] background characteristics and other risk factors on academic achievement" (Berkowitz, 2022, p. 33). Although these resources are abundant, scholarly studies focused on the significance of a motivational teams' impact on organizational climate are seemingly nonexistent.

This research is important because it will examine if targeted measures for improving school climate play a significant role on climate, which in turn plays a significant role on overall building climate. Therefore, this research will include the variable of targeted measures for improving school climate that has not been included in previous research. This study may also determine if a specific leadership style is more closely associated with buildings that demonstrate a greater positive climate. This study will seek to add to current research by including a survey that may determine if targeted measures for improving school climate effectively contribute toward a more positive school climate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the significance targeted measures for improving school climate had on organizational and building climate. District climate surveys taken before targeted measures for improving school climate were administered during the 2018–2019 school year and served as a baseline. The same survey was administered during the 2021–2022 school year and the results were used to determine

the impact targeted measures for improving school climate had on School District A. This study also investigated the impact administrative leadership styles had on building climate. This study used a modified version of Bass's (1995) Multi-leadership Questionnaire to compare leadership styles at the building level. For the purpose of this study, the term administrator referred to principals and assistant principals within a particular building, who played a vital role in teacher evaluations. The term teacher referred to certified classroom teachers who were evaluated by administrators within their buildings.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What is the difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

$H1_0$: There is no significant difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

$H1_a$: There is a significant difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

2. What is the difference between building climate scores in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

$H2_0$: There is no significant difference between building climate scores in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

$H2_a$: There is a significant difference between building climate scores in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

3. What is the correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

$H3_0$: There is no significant correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers

$H3_a$: There is a significant correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

Significance of the Study

There are numerous resources on building climate and perceived leadership styles (Confield, 2016; Dietrich et al., 1996; Dixon 2014; Freiburg, 2005). Berkowitz (2022) theorized that a positive school climate helped to negate the negative influence associated with poor socioeconomic status and increased academic achievement. Martin et al. (2013), as well as Wang and Degol (2016), pointed out teachers reported results of large-scale student achievement, which indicated a positive relationship between a safe school environment and student academic success. The National School Climate Council (2007)

revealed an influx of reports, studies, and legislation demonstrating how positive school climate contributed heavily to reducing achievement inequalities, while promoting the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that were necessary for the life and success of the 21st century learner.

Although these resources are abundant, scholarly studies regarding whether targeted motivational efforts significantly impact organizational climate are seemingly nonexistent. This research is important, because it will examine if targeted measures for improving school climate play a significant role on climate, which in turn plays a significant role on overall building climate. Therefore, this research included the variable of targeted measures for improving school climate that has not been included in previous research.

This study may also determine if a specific leadership style is more closely associated with buildings that demonstrate a greater positive climate. The key to minimizing the existing gap within school climate is being able to identify specific factors that contribute toward positive school climate. This study sought to narrow that gap by including a survey that will determine if targeted measures for improving school climate effectively contribute toward a more positive school climate.

Definition of Key Terms

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

Positive School Climate

The United States Department of Education (2021) defined Positive School Climate as

> the product of a school's attention to fostering safety; promoting a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community no matter the setting—from Pre-K/Elementary School to higher education. (p. 1)

School Climate

School climate is defined as "a broad, multifaceted concept that involves many aspects of the student's educational experience" (U.S. Department of Education, 2021, p. 1).

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The scope of the study was bounded by the following delimitations: This study potentially has limitations due to the fact that the study involved perceptions rather than actual behaviors. Another possible limitation is that this research excluded all classified workers within School District A; it was limited to certified teachers.

Time Frame

Secondary data collected for this study was gathered by School District A during the 2018–2019 school year and the 2021–2022 school year.

Location of the Study

School District A is located in central Missouri.

Sample

The sample size for the primary data was 211 certified staff employees for the years 2018-2019 and 176 for the years 2021-2022. The sample size for the secondary data was 90 certified teachers within School District A.

Criteria

Qualifications for participants included being a certified building administrator or certified teacher and having served within the school district for a minimum of three years.

Sample Demographics

The sample demographics were not limited to any particular age, race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, or income. Sample demographic limitations included education and employment criteria. These were limited due to the fact that the sample sizes included certified staff employees. As a result, data did not include classified employees in the District Climate Surveys or the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

Instrument

Leadership Styles- Bass and Avolio developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire form (MLQ-5X) as a tool to measure three leadership styles: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The MLQ-5X can be used to determine what leadership qualities a leader most closely reflects (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The original version consisted of 36 statements pertaining to leadership styles and was composed of three scales that determine leadership outcomes transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire (Bass & Avolio, 1993). However, this study utilized an abbreviated version including only nine statements, three per leadership style**,** and was composed of the original three scales in order to determine leadership outcomes. Participants were asked to rate the leadership style of their building administrator using a five-point Likert-type scale 0= *Not at all*, 1= *Once in a while*, 2= *Sometimes*, 3= *Fairly often*, 4= *Frequently if not always*. The larger

the score, the more a person is perceived as being a transformational leader (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

School climate- School climate for District A was measured using the School District Climate Survey. It is a non-experimental method; the main objective was to encourage participants to provide opinions or statements about themselves. It was suitable to examine attitudes, opinions, views, and knowledge regarding their work environment.

Summary

Over the past decade, studies detailed the importance organizational school climate had on teacher and student satisfaction and success (Kraft & Falken, 2020). Overall, positive school climate was a major factor accredited to the effectiveness of student achievement, including improved student self-esteem, decreased absenteeism, reduced behavioral problems and disciplinary actions, and increased school completion (La Salle, 2020) The necessity for staff and students to feel safe, welcome, and supported was a leading factor to foster a more positive atmosphere for student learning (Wang & Degol, 2016).

The necessity for individuals to feel supported can be traced back to the social identity theory that explained school norms were largely based on the individual's psychological connection to the school (Bizumic et al., 2009; Tajfel et al., 1979). In an effort to analyze the psychological connections between staff members and administration, schools across the country developed and distributed climate surveys determining a school's overall organizational climate (La Salle, 2020).

Chapter One included the background of the study and an introduction to the theoretical framework. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and the research questions were provided. The significance of the study and the definitions of key terms were detailed. Finally, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions were described.

Chapter Two will include a review of current literature. The theoretical framework will be further investigated. The main topics presented will be organizational leadership, building climate, targeted measures for improving school climate, administrative leadership styles, and the impact of COVID-19.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

A review of current literature is included in Chapter Two. An in-depth investigation of the social identity approach is provided. Current research will be synthesized and detailed for the topics of organizational leadership and building climate. Other main topics include targeted measures for improving school climate and administrative leadership styles, and the impact of COVID-19 will conclude the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

The social identity approach guided this study by connecting the importance of staff and student connectedness and the social identity theory with organizational school climate. The social identity and self-categorization theories identified that if an individual belonged to a particular group, combined with the perception that the group membership they belonged to had value and importance, this sense of belonging would ultimately lead to an increase in motivation (Tajfel et al, 1972). As staff and students developed an increased state of self-awareness, including connectedness or belonging, motivation to behave within the norms, values, and attitudes of the organization were likely to increase within the school setting, as well (Bizumic et al., 2009; Turner & Reynolds, 2012).

The social identity theory of leadership is centered around the effectiveness of leaders and followers in regard to seeing themselves as a common group (Tajfel et al, 1972). When leaders and followers identified themselves as a common group, or in-group, they began to share a social identity, using common pronouns, such as we and us (Turner et al., 2022). In contrast, leaders and followers, who did not feel a shared identity, were a part of intergroup differentiation, or out-group, and identified with the common pronoun, such as them (Oakes et al., 1999). The social identity theory placed

emphasis on the basic need for self-esteem, which led individuals to favor an in-group comparison rather than an out-group comparison (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Brown & Abrams, 1986; Doise, 1978; Hogg & Turner, 1985). This social theory was utilized in combination with the self-categorization theory, which supported the idea that it was more ideal or favorable to be a part of in-groups rather than out-groups (Brewer 1979; Gaertner et al., 1989).

Although scholars agreed engagement with shared identity can take many different forms, research literature suggested leaders were most effective when they encompassed what it meant to be *one of us,* or part of a team (Haslam et al., 2011; Steffens et al., 2014; Van Dick et al., 2018). Leader group prototypicality, in-groups, were found to be more effective, because the leader was viewed as the representative of a specific group, as opposed to a general group (Van Dick et al., 2018). Researchers emphasized the importance of these specific groups, including leaders and followers, who not only shared values, but perceived to share values, as well (Hogg, 2001; Platow & Van Knippenberg, 2001). Moreover, a higher sense of trust was discovered among group prototypical leaders and individuals who belong to the shared identity, having felt the group's best interest was the overall focal point (Van Knippenberg & Van Knippenberg, 2005).

Group-based emotions contributed toward regulating attitudes and behaviors between both in-group and out-groups (Smith & Mackie, 2020). Positive group-based emotions, or group-based pride, was characterized by group memberships that have perceived high achievements and status within the group (Harth et al., 2013; Mackie et al., 2000). Group-based pride was considered to be a driving force for group effort within

team tasks and produced perseverance toward future obstacles (Williams & De Steno, 2008).

To achieve maximum influence, more recent studies based on the social identity approach demonstrated the need for leaders to not only assume group prototypicality, but focused on the necessity to also create, develop, and embed shared group identities (Steffens et al., 2021). This approach extended beyond traditional leadership theories, which originally focused on characteristics of leaders, such as personalities, styles, and behaviors, by also focusing on the need to determine a leader's capacity to influence followers (Steffens et al., 2021). Unfortunately, leaders' and followers' characteristics, as well as situational factors, were often considered to have significant moderating effects between leadership behavior and team effectiveness (Pratoom, 2018; Schaubroeck et al., 2007). Thus, making social identity approach studies difficult for researchers to agree on one central factor that may contribute the most toward leadership or organizational effectiveness. As a result, global identity leadership was examined in an attempt to provide a possible pathway to translate the social identity approach, so leadership intervention or training could take place (Haslam et al., 2017). A reliable instrument was developed using cross-cultural samples to examine identity leadership as a multidimensional construct to extend beyond leader prototypicality (Steffens et al., 2014; Van Dick et al., 2018)

The study examined the influence identity leadership has on team performance in targeted measures for improving school climate. Initial studies on identity leadership examined the impact of employee attitudes and behaviors, including job satisfaction and innovation (Steffens et al., 2014; Van Dick et al., 2018). However, more recent studies

focused on exploring the influence of identity leadership on team function and effectiveness (Fransen et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2020). By examining district climate surveys, employees' attitudes and behaviors can be examined to determine if targeted measures for improving school climate contributed toward a significant increase in overall organizational climate, or team function and effectiveness.

Secondly, the social identity approach focused on group-based emotions, in which emotions were dependent on one's self-categorization as a member of the group and included the individual's response to situations which occurred among that group (Smith & Mackie, 2020). Epitropaki et al. (2017) determined:

> The majority of studies on the intrapersonal level have focused on followers' self-concepts and self-identities and more specifically how leaders elicit, prime or effect followers' self-concepts, possibly suggesting that follower identities are more likely to be affected and influenced in the leadership processes than leaders' identities. (p. 13)

Finally, this study examined the moderating effect group-based emotions, including self-categorization, had within the social identity framework, to determine if there was a significant difference between leadership styles between building principals and teachers.

Organizational Leadership

Although the concept of organizational strategies was introduced in the 1980s, theoretical and empirical strategies directed toward the field of education were largely overlooked until the early 2000s (Eacott, 2008). The term strategy was utilized to reflect various actions taken by leaders in an effort to implement improvement in the overall organization (Carvalho et al., 2021). Because scholars agreed strategic leadership was

critical for school leaders, it was necessary for leaders to adopt a comprehensive framework, or strategy, including a clear and well-articulated vision for the future of the organization (Davies, 2006; Eacott, 2008; Quong & Walker, 2010). As a result, the term organizational leadership was coined and described as the management of an institution, by directing an entire team toward achieving its goals and mission and to ensure the overall process more efficient and effective (Point Loma Nazarene University, 2022).

Yahchouchi (2009) pointed out, to achieve the necessary goals of effective organizational leadership, leaders were required to possess the initial skills and wisdom to regulate and lead the various aspects and functions within their organization. Raman et al. (2015) suggested to regulate the organization, principals must have a vital role in implementing school management in a planned and gradual manner by coordinating, mobilizing, and adjusting available educational resources. This included the principal's investment of support and commitment within the local government at the provincial, district, and city levels, requiring time, energy, and money (Komalasari et al., 2020). Carvalho et al. (2021) determined the regulation of educational organizations introduced a variety of complex strategic leadership skills that encompassed historical, economical, technological, cultural, social, and political effects and demands.

Over the past two decades, educators witnessed dramatic changes within the roles and responsibilities of then-current school leadership (Gonzales, 2022; Komalasari et al., 2020; Torres, 2022). This was largely because schools across the country have been given more liberty over their organization's budgets, personnel, and curriculum (Gonzales, 2022). Komalasari et al. (2020) suggested current times require principals to play a more complex role requiring multitasking capabilities, due to dynamic role

changes. These dynamic role changes contributed toward a renewed interest in school culture, as well as the necessity to understand the elements of effective leadership, including academic performance (Torres, 2022).

Effective organizations demonstrated the necessity for leaders to not only properly manage the organization, but to possess the social skills necessary for improvement, as well (Gochhayat et al., 2016; Komalasari et al., 2020; Tsai, 2011). Gochhayat et al. (2016) emphasized leaders should demonstrate the ability to have a high level of leadership spirit in order to influence and motivate their members to successfully achieve organizational goals. This was further supported by Komalasari et al. (2020) who determined the maturity of subordinates was directly proportional to the proper leadership that was applied in an effort to obtain adequate obedience or influence. More specifically, Tsai (2011) noted the importance that the leadership spirit is characterized by a positive attitude to achieve cooperation among members of the organization.

Scholars agreed that this type of cooperation, or synergy, led to the effectiveness of an organization by members within the group achieving a mutual objective or target (Antonio et al., 2000; Sabri et al., 2011). Vasyakin et al. (2016) determined four main outcomes were affected by the resulting synergy established by leaders within an organization: productivity, absence, turnover, and job satisfaction. A member's level of commitment played a key role in the effectiveness of an organization, as well (Syakur et al., 2020). Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) suggested high levels of commitment included members who demonstrated a powerful desire to remain a member of the related organization, a willingness to place optimal effort toward organizational interest, and

high levels of confidence including a strong acceptance of the organization's values and mission.

According to new research, transformational efforts were sure to fail if they were not supported at every level of administration and leadership (Bisson et al., 2021). Berkowitz (2022) suggested it was necessary for such efforts to be of sincere commitment where the leadership was considered to be visible across the entire community. Additionally, Bizumic et al. (2009) agreed goals and expectations could be effectively managed by leadership asking guiding questions to ensure the educational process was driven. Lastly, Bisson et al. (2021) emphasized the necessity for leaders to demonstrate a clear knowledge of issues within the educational setting, to be able to verbalize support for the change, and most importantly, to refrain from mandating changes they are unwilling to undertake themselves.

Research from Ejimabo (2015) proposed that bad policies and inconsistency in decision-making were among the major challenges throughout organizational institutions. Ejimabo (2015) argued those major challenges led to additional unresolved problems among leaders and subordinates, not only in their current workplace, but the entire society as well. Additionally, leaders who demonstrated the inability to develop the skills and attributes necessary for optimal design of their organization, had faced reprimands for mismanagement or even worse, law suits (Ejimabo, 2015).

Bisson et al. (2021) concluded achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion within the educational setting demanded a strong and lasting commitment from organizational leaders. Johnson (2015) noted in order for administrators to promote fairness for all, it was necessary to identify who was responsible and what was needed to initiate

intentional diverse, and meaningful steps necessary to promote positive outcomes. Furthermore, McCandless et al. (2022) argued the need has never been more poignant for educational institutions to promote equity and fairness, due to the large amounts of disadvantage and oppression, stemming from bias and discrimination regarding race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and more.

Overall, scholars agree organizational leadership is dependent on many factors, including leadership style and organizational climate and culture (Jamali et al., 2022). Because leadership styles have a very strong influence on the attitudes of its employees, administrators must possess a variety of leadership skills necessary to manage an effective organization (Komalasari et al., 2020). This study focused on examining the role of organizational leadership and its effects on leadership style and climate performance in education.

Building Climate

Building climate, commonly referred to as school climate, is a significant factor which impacts the overall effectiveness of the academic achievement for all students, especially those with behavior risks (La Salle, 2020). Furthermore, researchers agreed educators who took efforts toward promoting a positive building climate demonstrated numerous important outcomes, which included student self-esteem, decreased absenteeism, enhanced risk prevention, and reduced behavioral and disciplinary actions (Berg et al., 2022; Hansen et al., 2021). As a result, researchers and educators agreed establishing and maintaining a positive building climate benefited all students, including students with disabilities, students from economically disadvantaged families, and students who were racially diverse (Berkowitz, 2022; La Salle, 2020).

Wang and Degol (2016) found schools associated with a positive building climate provided not only a structure for student learning, but also an environment where students and teachers felt welcome, safe, and supported. The Colorado Department of Education (2020) stated the two most important factors attributing to a positive building climate included the cultivation of a safe environment, including social, emotional, and academic areas, as well as the encouragement and sustainment of respectful, empathetic, and trusting relationships. Evidence confirmed the importance of fostering a sense of belonging was a critical protective factor toward limiting adverse social and academic outcomes (GSN, 2019). Frazier et al. (2021), Niehaus et al. (2012), and Reynolds et al. (2017) determined students who felt a sense of belonging and connectedness to their school were significantly more likely to experience additional positive outcomes, such as increased academic performance, self-efficacy, and resilience.

The importance of establishing a sense of belonging for staff and students within the educational setting was based on the social identity and self-categorization theories by identifying that if an individual felt as though they belonged to a particular group, combined with the perception that the group they belonged to had value and importance, would ultimately lead to an increase in motivation (Tajfel et al., 1972). Individuals then would begin to feel as though they are part of the in-group and begin to use pronouns to associate themselves with part of the group (Haslam et al., 2011; Steffens et al., 2014; Van Dick et al., 2018). Van Knippenberg and Van Knippenberg (2005) recognized as individuals felt part of a team due to a sense of belonging, it would result in a higher sense of trust established between both the leaders and individuals, leading to more positive outcomes.

Over 40 years of research supports the ingrained relationship between positive building climate and academic achievement (Cohen et al., 2009; Daily et al., 2020; Reynolds et al., 2017; Thapa et al., 2013). Demiröz (2020) argued the different levels of academic achievement can be proportionally related to either positive or negative building climate. Mitchell et al. (2010) determined positive building climate reduces disciplinary problems, enabling students to place more effort within their academics. On the other hand, schools that possessed a negative building climate demonstrated significant reductions in student academic achievement (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

School connectedness was found to be a major protective factor in regard to several health-risk outcomes among adolescents, including violence, emotional distress, suicides, and substance abuse (Steiner et al., 2019). Eugene et al. (2021) associated increased school connectedness with a decrease in adolescent anxiety and depression, including a reduction in suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Steiner et al. (2019) argued feeling connected to a school can have substantial long-term effects in life, leading to an overall greater sense of satisfaction resulting in a longevity of positive health outcomes. On the other hand, a lack of school connectedness can lead to adverse physical and emotional effects including bully victimization (Abraczinskas, 2022).

Coulter et al. (2021) determined positive building connectedness was especially crucial for minority groups citing that sexual, gender, and ethnic minorities, including those from low socioeconomic families, identified with a lack of school connectedness among students and teachers. Several authors attributed this lack of school connectedness, due to the starting point of these students was generally considerably lower than students of higher economic backgrounds (Crosnoe et al, 2004; Lopez, 2012).

Consequently, minority groups were disproportionally influenced by efforts led by schools, despite efforts taken toward encouraging inclusion (Watkins & Aber, 2009).

Researchers discovered that positive building climate contributed less to academic achievement for minority students in low economic schools (Hopson et al., 2014; Johnson & Stevens, 2006). The same researchers attributed this to many factors, including reduced language proficiency, poverty, minimal school funding, and unqualified teachers (Hopson et al., 2014; Johnson & Stevens, 2006). Munniksma (2021) suggested one of the most important ways teachers can help support positive building climate was to encourage and support open climate discussions, where students can learn different perspectives and insights through social interaction.

Researchers also ascribed positive building climate with higher percentages of teacher well-being and retention, directly contributing to an increase in teacher commitment (Hansen et al., 2021). On the other hand, negative building climate was associated with an increase in teacher exhaustion and burnout (Yang et al., 2022). It was essential to note that teachers in schools associated with positive building climate indicated they experienced positive interactions with colleagues and students and also felt a sense of belonging within the school (Cohen et al., 2009).

COVID-19 restrictions caused an even greater demand for school connectedness and mental health resources in schools (McCabe et al., 2022). Researchers signified litigation measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 contributed toward a significant decrease in school connectedness (Mitrokhin et al., 2020; Sintema, 2020). This was due to remote learning severely limiting the ability to have direct social interactions, thereby increasing social isolation (Francom, 2021; Liberman 2020). Hoffman and Miller (2020)

declared it was vital for school nurses to initiate measures to improve school connectedness, by exhibiting a heightened sense of awareness of students' needs in order to be able to identify who may be at risk. Williams et al. (2018) emphasized the importance for school nurses to conduct belongingness, or connectedness screenings, to identify any interventions or follow-up care necessary to combat those negative effects.

Recent studies demonstrated organizational leaders also played a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining a sense of belonging, in order to establish school climate (Bisson et al., 2021). Specifically, researchers indicated leadership styles and building climate were inextricably intertwined and that transformational and transactional leadership styles had a positive effect on building climate (Atasoy, 2020). Organizational climate was most commonly measured by using surveys at the building level within school districts to make data-based decisions in an effort to improve student outcome (Debnam et al., 2022).

Although there are many instruments to measure school climate, Bass and Avolio, (1995) are credited with developing the most common and valid survey tool, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). This allowed supervisors to rate themselves or subordinates to rate their supervisors (Bass & Avolio, 1995). The MLQ broke the survey into three different leadership styles, transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant, allowing individuals to measure how they perceive themselves, or their supervisors, with regard to specific leadership behaviors (Bass & Avolio, 1995). It is important to note researchers agreed it was far more important for subordinates to rate their supervisors than supervisors to rate themselves (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021; Blatt, 2002; Pinkas, 2021). This was due to studies suggesting supervisors could rate

themselves in a way that they were not truly perceived by their subordinates, thereby rendering the data invalid (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021; Blatt, 2002; Pinkas, 2021).

Overall, measuring school climate is essential because of its effect on student outcomes (Cohen, 2009). Many researchers agreed building climate was a significantly challenging aspect to measure and assess, because school climate was such a complex construct (Berg, 2022; Berkowitz, 2022; Debnam et al., 2022). The Louisiana's Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative (2012) affirmed the need for schools to obtain a school climate coach, which could provide the necessary leadership skills to develop an intervention plan tailored to the school's specific needs, in an effort to combat the challenges presented with measuring school climate (2010). Despite the difficulties associated with measuring building climate, researchers continue to conduct further studies in an effort to foster a more positive atmosphere, thereby supporting academic growth and sustainment.

Targeted Measures for Improving School Climate

For over 100 years, mental health professionals have recognized the critical significance of positive psychology in an effort to promote individual well-being, and healthy development on a universal level (Cohen et al., 2009). Until recently, the majority of studies based on education reform focused primarily on linguistic, mathematical, and scientific learning; failing to identify the need for additional targeted measures for improving school climate in the area of social psychology to improve school climate (Cohen et al., 2022). Recent studies have demonstrated the critical impact prosocial efforts had regarding the ability to create an optimal foundation necessary for school climate reform (Cohen & Espelage, 2020; Rincon-Gillardo, 2020). Overall, while

studies attributed several evidence-based interventions toward improving school climate, targeted measures for improving school climate were attributed toward significant improvements toward promoting a positive building climate (Dursun et al., 2022).

Berg et al. (2022) emphasized taking intentional efforts toward establishing a positive school climate was or should be, the school administrator's top priority. La Salle (2020) argued effective school climate was comprised of administrators who targeted efforts toward cultivating a sense of partnership with both staff and students, who felt as though they had a safe place to proudly identify with and belong to. Consequently, La Salle (2020) discovered building administrators and teachers associated with cultivating a stronger sense of belonging, increased the likelihood their students would experience an abundant amount of additional positive outcomes as well.

Collie et al. (2012) reported teachers associated with schools successful at establishing a higher sense of belonging to a school, were more likely to report lower levels of stress, a greater sense of ownership, and a higher sense of job satisfaction. Alan et al. (2021) revealed in order to solidify a sense of belonging, it was imperative for administrators and teachers to continually provide, monitor, and adapt behavior and academic support systems. As a result, building administrators have begun placing top priority on targeted efforts toward developing, cultivating, and sustaining a positive school climate (Solomon et al., 2022).

Cansoy et al. (2021) pointed out one highly significant factor affecting school climate was largely based on administrative leadership styles found within the organization. An expanding body of research demonstrated administrator styles identified with promoting positive interactions were also associated with a healthy school climate

(McCarley et al., 2016). Velarde et al (2020) claimed autocratic leadership behaviors, leaders who failed to initiate targeted measures to improve school climate, led to a closed school climate, while democratic leadership behaviors, leaders who succeeded to initiate targeted measures to improve school climate, led to a more open school climate demonstrating a lend to change.

Goksoy (2021) discovered leadership styles, which promoted a more democratic management, specifically those who were open minded to new ideas and focused motivational improvement efforts by establishing fair discipline policies, cultivated a higher amount of respect among members, and also demonstrated a sustained sense of trust (Goksoy, 2021). Bryk (2010) confirmed administrators demonstrating targeted measures for improving school climate focused on establishing and promoting a sense of relational trust were more likely to make changes necessary toward promoting an effective school climate. Bogart (2021) concluded school climate restorative practices were highly effective when student-teacher relationships focused on repairing a breach of relationship and trust, rather than assigning the traditional punitive measures.

Additional studies indicated a crucial factor toward improving negative student behaviors involved educators who primarily initiated motivational efforts on building and nurturing interpersonal relationships (Watts & Robertson, 2022). Ningsih and Suwandana (2022) reported targeted measures, which supported and encouraged creativity contributed to a positive school climate by resulting in an increase in job satisfaction, as well as job retention. DeAngelis and Presley (2011), as well as Jessiman et al. (2022), suggested schools which focused on targeted measures for improving school climate

toward a positive school climate might also increase teacher performance, leading to higher student academic outcomes.

Dursun et al. (2022) suggested schools which failed to initiate measures toward improving school climate yielded additional negative consequences. Solomon et al. (2022) noted many educational systems lacked the capacity to successfully initiate comprehensive school climate improvements. Solomon et al. (2022) revealed schools that were in most need of improving school climate were least likely to be successful at initiating targeted climate measures at the foundational level, and schools associated with a lower building climate were often associated with being driven by ineffective leadership styles.

Although there is no universally accepted set of key domains or aspects of a positive school climate, research did reveal evidence-based core measures schools could take to foster a more positive school environment (Arhin, 2018). In, earlier studies, Bradshaw et al. (2012) recognized the need for schools to focus targeted measures toward promoting a school-wide program that clearly identified positive behavior expectations in an effort to increase motivation and decrease discipline problems. As a result, a universal muti-tiered system of support was developed to initiate a team-driven continuous sequence of evidence-based practices, in order to promote positive outcomes within all levels of the educational system to ensure improved student outcomes (Daily et al., 2020).

Current research recognized the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) System as the most widely utilized universal program that was specifically targeted toward positive school behavior improvement (Turner et al., 2022). As of 2018,

more than 23,000 educational institutions across the United States have implemented the PBIS system (Horner et al., 2017; p. 1). This system of support included:

> Tier 1: Establishing and defining behavioral expectations, including procedures to support them;
>
> Tier 2: Identifying and creating targeted general interventions to address academic and/or behavioral needs of students;
>
> Tier 3: Identify and creating individualized interventions to provide additional support for students with more challenging emotional and/or behavioral needs (Horner et al., 2017, p. 1).

However, Kittelman et al. (2019) discovered the PBIS system was less-frequently utilized in rural areas, in comparison with urban and suburban areas, therefore representing a need for future implementation of research in that specific area.

Garbacz et al. (2022) believed smaller, more rural schools, specifically faced a greater number of barriers upon initiating targeted measures toward the implementation, sustainment, and fidelity of improving school climate. In an effort to improve targeted measures toward successful PBIS implementation, MacSuga-Gage et al. (2022) claimed rural schools should directly focus on technical support, especially when installing Tiers 2 and 3. Although the majority of PBIS studies based on geographical contexts largely posed inconsistent results, MacSuga-Gage et al. (2022) noted future research should attempt to disaggregate implementation fidelity and student outcomes further by defining rural features beyond the requirements of the National Center for Education Statistics.

Additional research by Ioverno and Russell (2021) identified barriers toward the implementation of positive school climate, especially sexual and gender identities, and

specifically the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ*)* youth. Day et al. (2020) attributed this due to discrimination and prejudice found among school interactions between staff and students. Recent research initiated targeted measures toward improving school climate directed toward LGBTQ youth, including the implementation of nondiscrimination and antibullying polices, as well as professional development for teachers promoting inclusion strategies (Austin, 2022). Because school climate results from LGBTQ studies varied across sexual and gender identity, as well as grade level, Ioverno and Russell (2021) suggested researchers should disaggregate these factors for future studies to develop more effective ways to promote inclusion.

Because school climate is composed of a multitude of mitigating factors, studies revealed, overall, there was no central concept toward promoting positive school climate (Arhin, 2018; Johnson, 2022). However, several scholars agreed establishing a muti-tiered system of support including the utilization of positive psychology, the initiation and sustainment of school-wide behavioral programs, and leadership development focused on implementing targeted measures for improving school climate were significant measures for educators to consider to effectively promote a positive school climate (Cohen & Espelage, 2020; Rincon-Gillardo, 2020; Turner et al., 2022). Hoffmann et al. (2022), as well as Ioverno and Russell (2021), encouraged future studies toward improving school climate to disaggregate specific factors associated with positive school climate to obtain a more concrete understanding of ways to effectively improve educational and socioemotional outcomes**.**

Administrative Leadership Styles

School administrators are the officials directly in charge of managing the overall organization by shaping the implementation of learning and creating conditions that are harmonious and conducive to achieve organizational goals (Harris, 2011; Syafmawati, 2020). For administrators to succeed, Fitrah (2017) explained they must truly understand the complex and unique aspects that shape an organization, while properly executing the functions required to lead the school effectively. Raolina (2021) argued an effective administrator must possess the ability, as well as the desire to lead the school based on the school's individual needs through the implementation of successful change.

Although leadership effectiveness is influenced by various factors, scholars agreed the leadership style of the administrator played a vital role in achieving the school's goals (Chan, 2002; Komalasari, 2020; Syafmawati, 2020). Traditional leadership theories determined a leader's identity, or leadership style was a main contributor toward leadership effectiveness (Steffens et al., 2021, Van Knippenberg, 2011). However, while traditional leadership theories primarily focused on the characteristics of leaders, more recent studies introduced the social identity approach, which focused on measuring the capacity of how well leaders were able to influence their followers (Steffens et al., 2020). The key to understanding how leaders perceive themselves, as well as how followers perceive their leaders, was imperative to obtain insights on the unique behaviors and actions that define leaders (Raolina, 2021).

Bass and Avolio (1993) developed the Full Range Leadership Theory, which suggested every leader could possibly exhibit, to some degree, one of the following leadership behaviors: transactional, transformational, and/or laissez-faire. It is important

to note the majority of other leadership models failed to include the laissez-faire leadership style (Robinson, 2010). Transactional and transformational leadership were first introduced by James Burns (1978) in his study *Leadership,* where political leaders and their behaviors were analyzed. Researchers described those leadership styles as being antithetical, or as being located at opposite ends of the spectrum (Burns, 1978; Yukl, 1989). Transactional leadership was based on the definition of the root word transaction, which means an exchange between two people relating to conducting business (Jamali et al., 2022, p. 3). Pineda (2022) emphasized transactional leaders are characterized by three defining factors:

1. Leaders identify goals and objectives including specifying what achievements will be rewarded in an effort to increase motivation
2. Leaders actively monitor employees to ensure subordinates are meeting the specified goals, leading to either a reward or punishment system
3. Leaders passively participate in the leadership process until goals and objectives have not been met, thereby motivating employees to perform their work as expected (Pineda, 2022).

Researchers discovered transactional leaders worked more efficiently in a secure and predictable environment in which they utilized benefits and rewards to increase worker performance (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Robinson 2010). In essence, if an employee met goals or guidelines, subordinates under transactional leaders would be rewarded, yet if the employee failed to follow the rules and expectations they would be punished (Pineda, 2022). Lee and Raschke (2016) proposed transactional leaders provided these assets and prizes in exchange for inspiration, efficiency, and career advancement. Meyer

and Botha (2000) argued subordinates under transactional leaders solely performed according to the rules to obtain a reward.

Ridwan et al. (2022) discovered transactional leaders focused less on a vision for the future, and more on current practices, primarily focusing on meeting goals and expectations. Researchers noted this leadership style did demonstrate the ability to include values; however, those qualities were still found to be dependent on the exchange process, such as trustworthiness, obligation, and correspondences (Purwanto et al., 2020). Although the root of transactional leadership tended to yield negative results, Zareen et al. (2015) proposed it could also yield positive results by effectively motivating some employees to reach their goals.

Choudhary et al. (2013) concluded there was a positive and significant relationship among transactional leadership and motivation, particularly contingent upon rewards. On the other hand, Tontong and Yusof (2022) discovered relationships among transactional leaders and their followers were weaker than those among transformational leaders, especially in the area of trust. Gillespie and Mann (2004) suggested transactional leaders could improve trust among their followers by rewarding those who follow the expected directives. Bass et al. (2003) researched military platoons and discovered soldiers who were working under transactional leadership exhibited an increase in performance. However, Rasool (2015) specified transactional leadership styles were more dominant in comparison to transformational or laisses-faire leadership styles.

Rather than attempting to increase an employee's motivational efforts through an agreement, as found in transactional leaders, transformational leaders attempt to increase an employee's motivational efforts through commitment (Robinson, 2021). The term

transformational originates from the term transform and is commonly referred to as a breakthrough, because the leader possesses the ability to bring about enormous changes to the organization (Bakti & Hartono, 2022). Bass and Avolio (1993) emphasized transformational leaders are characterized by four defining factors, known as the 4 I's:

1. Intellectual Stimulation: Leaders foster a growth mindset by empowering followers to grow and learn innovative ways of thinking.
2. Individual Consideration: Leaders establish mutual ownership with followers by mentoring them, and cultivating a sense of trust, including utilizing their follower's unique talents in order to achieve organizational goals.
3. Inspirational Motivation: Leaders provide a strong sense of purpose by setting high standards and expectations by instilling a passion to achieve goals through motivation.
4. Idealized Influence: Leaders serve as a role model by exhibiting ethical and socially desired behaviors with an enthusiasm that inspires followers toward improving the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Burns (1978) described transformational leaders as charismatic leaders, because this type of leader demonstrated appreciative and encouraging attributes as a central strategy to achieve its organizational goals. Bass (1985) discovered subordinates under transformational leaders contributed more toward the organization, because they had better relationships with their supervisors. Further studies by Bass and Avolio (1993) determined the most critical outcome of experiencing an increase in motivation for followers under this type of leader, was that it cultivated a sense of ownership, leaving subordinates to feel as though they made or could make a difference in the organization.

Rast (2018) revealed transformational leadership was critical to organizations, because it reflected contextual issues of change, as such can be found in education.

Although the majority of studies proved transformational leadership had many advantages, researchers noted there have been criticisms discussed, as well (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Hall et al., 2002; Raolina, 2021). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) suggested transformational leadership does not have any type of control system to prevent dictatorship. Transformational leaders have the possibility to display charismatic traits, while also demonstrating a potential abuse of power (Hall et al., 2002). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) responded to these criticisms by pointing out that, to "bring about change, authentic transformational leadership fosters the moral values of honesty, loyalty, and fairness, as well as the end values of justice, equality, and human rights" (p. 192). Padilla et al. (2007) suggested the negative aspects of transformational leadership could be prevented by investing more time into proper leadership selection and development.

Finally, the third and final leadership style under the Full Range Leadership Theory model is laissez-faire, which is derived from the French root word laisser, meaning "to let [people] do [as they think best]" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2022, para. 1). This leadership style was associated with a passive style of management, also known as passive avoidant, where the leader offered no clear way of attaining goals (Al-Maki, & Juan, 2018; Burns, 1978; Bass & Avolio, 1993). Overall, the majority of researchers recognized laissez-faire management as ineffective, because leaders were unresponsive to the critical needs of their employees (Al-Maki, & Juan, 2018; Baig et al., 2019; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978).

Jamali et al. (2022) agreed the passive avoidant management style was ineffective, although leaders might assign tasks to subordinates, they still failed to provide guidance on how to accomplish or successfully execute those goals. Schimmoeller (2010) stated passive avoidant leaders quickly lose their authority in the organization due to this inactive type of leadership. Luthans et al. (2017) found subordinates under passive avoidant management were therefore responsible for their own growth within the organization and for discovering alternative support measures, including coworkers, other leaders within the same institution, or even outside resources. As a result, passive avoidant leadership management was clearly associated with several negative aspects, including role conflicts and increased stress conditions, as well as low job satisfaction (Al-Malki, & Juan, 2018; Jamali et al., 2022).

Although there were many negative outcomes of passive avoidant leadership style management, it is important to note it received very little attention in empirical studies in comparison to transactional and transformational leadership styles (Veronique & Vandenberghe, 2020). Yang et al. (2022) suggested passive avoidant management could be beneficial, it gives individuals room to demonstrate ownership and competences in certain situations. Simpson et al. (2002) agreed this type of management could be potentially beneficial in situations that were due to unforeseen circumstances. Researchers agreed when passive avoidant leaders demonstrated this hands-off stance, subordinates could benefit from employee outcomes, because it allowed them to develop new and innovative ideas (Simpson et al., 2002; Yang et al., 2022).

Although there was no clear definitive answer as to what leadership style was the most effective, most of the research linked positive results with transformational

leadership style traits (Atasoy, 2020; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978; Robinson, 2021). Studies based on leadership styles proved to be of most significance, because research concluded one of the most important skills effective administrators needed to possess was the ability to maintain a constructive influence on all stakeholders involved, through cooperative efforts (Caliba, 2022). These interpersonal relationships between students, teachers, staff, and administrators directly shaped the building climate within a school (Jalapang & Raman, 2020). Finally, researchers concluded building climate was a central construct of whether a school was effective or not, and it was crucial in establishing, maintaining, and sustaining a positive organizational climate (Chan, 2002; Komalasari, 2020; Rodriguez, 2022; Syafmawati, 2020.

Impact of COVID-19

In January of 2020, a severe acute respiratory syndrome known as the Corona Virus or COVID-19, was discovered in the Hubei province of Wuhan, China, that led to devastating effects on individuals on an international level (Ciotti et al., 2021). The virus spread all over the world and as of May 2020, had infected over 4,806,299 individuals, and contributed to over 318,599 deaths (Ciotti et al., 2021, p. 66). Public health care strategies including handwashing, wearing face masks, physical distancing, and avoiding mass gatherings, were developed to limit the spread of the virus (Mitrokhin et al., 2020; Sintema, 2020).

To limit exposure to the deadly disease, schools across the globe responded by either shutting schools down temporarily or completely (Garcia Docampo, 2021). On August 1, 2020, a complete nationwide lockdown was implemented and the World Health Organization (WHO) classified the outbreak as a global pandemic (Palden, 2020;

World Health Organization, 2020). As a result, some schools responded by offering educational instruction remotely (Dhawan, 2020; Reimers, 2022). Brenan (2020) surveyed parents in a Gallup poll and discovered that by early April, 83% of parents indicated their child was involved in a school online learning program (para. 3).

Remote learning included a variety of subject areas targeted toward different age groups, educators agreed there was no one-size-fits-all instructional method approach (Doucet et al., 2020; Subedi et al., 2020). However, there were unified communication and collaboration platforms online, including Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, and Canvas, which allowed teachers to create educational courses and training to provide instruction for students (Petrie, 2020). Pokhrel and Chhetri (2020) argued the use of suitable and relevant pedagogy for those online platforms depended heavily on the expertise and exposure to technology for both educators and learners.

Montacute (2020) emphasized the pivotal move to online learning created educational disparities with some students who experienced limited privacy and focus. The shift to virtual learning uncovered a flaw in the American technological infrastructure and educational budget departments were faced with questioning whether providing internet access and technological tools was a public service for all or a service that was limited only to individuals with adequate financial means (Oberg et al., 2022). Francom (2021) discovered that 30.9% of educators reported their students failed to have the appropriate personal devices and/or lacked access to high-speed internet, which significantly interfered with instruction (p. 595).

Online assessments were carried out through trial and error, which caused uncertainty and confusion among teachers, students, and parents (Pokhrel & Chhetri,

2021). Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) also noted online instruction frequently failed to offer appropriate measures to check for plagiarism. Georgia Test Prep (2020) revealed approximately 50% of parents felt the number one difficulty with virtual learning was being able to keep their children focused on schoolwork (para. 5). On the other hand, scholars recognized innately motivated learners were hardly unaffected, because they needed minimal supervision, consequently furthering the gap for learners who required more guidance (Godber & Atkins, 2021; Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021).

Most parents, educators, and clinicians were all familiar with the phrase summer slide, which is the limited amount of instructional learning retained by students, due to the gap in learning upon returning to school after summer vacation (Oberg et al., 2022). Early research provided by Alexander et al. (2001) found, on average, students lost about a month of learning over the summer. Hence, educators were concerned the gap in instructional learning, due to school breaks, closures, and online learning would inevitably result in an additional widening of the achievement gap (Alexander et al., 2007). Kuhfeld et al. (2020) predicted areas which experienced significant school closures, or voluntary learning, were likely to result in the highest achievement gap, projecting a range from 15% to 20% especially in low-income families (p. 550).

Kehfeld et al. (2020) revealed evidence that indicated schools were not taking enough deliberate measures to remain effective during remote learning. The American Enterprise Institute survey found that only one in five school districts met their standard for rigorous online learning (Malcus, 2020, para. 3). Liberman (2020) noted there were concerning signs that many teachers had little or no contact with a significant portion of their students (para. 2). A national survey conducted by American Enterprise Institute

estimated that, as of the first week in April 2020, only 39% of teachers claimed they interacted with their students at least once a day, with most of the interaction occurring over email (Kurtz, 2020, para. 14). The Office of Civil Rights (2021) determined that by May of 2020, many districts focused instruction on reviewing what had previously been taught, rather than teaching new skills and learning (p. 2). On a national level, teachers calculated that students dedicated half as much time toward learning than they did prior to COVID-19 school closures (Gewertz, 2020)

However, studies did show improvement over the 2020-2021 school year; the National Center for Education Statistics determined 31% of districts reported offering more than five hours of live instruction for their students (Francom, 2021; Office for Civil Rights, 2021, p. 2). During this same time frame, approximately 88% of schools on a national level provided full time instruction, whether it was in-school or in hybrid settings (Office for Civil Rights, 2021, p. 2; Reimers, 2022). Despite this improvement, minorities including African American, Latinx, and Asian students were more significantly affected by the negative effects of COVID-19 and were significantly less likely to be enrolled in fulltime in-school instruction (Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Office for Civil Rights, 2021, p. 2). Scholars attributed the economic impact, due to COVID-19, created an uneven distribution, particularly among families of color, such as African Americans and Hispanics, resulting in income loss, which stemmed directly from shutdowns and illnesses (Parolin et al., 2021).

Students requiring special services faced additional challenges with online instruction, because each student had individual needs required for effective instruction to take place (Kauffman, 2020). In 2021, the United States Senate responded by Passing Bill

89, which required all public schools to add a written supplement to a student's IEP in order to address compensatory services necessary for special education instruction (Disability Rights Texas, 2021). On the other hand, Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) stated, in some ways, online learning benefited some physically challenged students by allowing them more freedom to join in learning that required more limited movement.

Although schools do not explicitly implement social and emotional directed curricula, classrooms often include an environment of peer and adult relationships from which they learn the norms of regulating emotions and social awareness (Tom, 2012). Countless educators agreed a sense of belonging within the classroom setting contributed to a range of positive academic and emotional outcomes, such as higher self-esteem and lower risk-taking behavior (Berkowitz, 2020; Bizumic et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Kraft & Falken, 2020). To the contrary, Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) recognized the absence of the aforementioned benefits expressing fears that the lack of social relationships, due to virtual instruction, could induce a substantial amount of emotional and psychological distress, thus limiting many students' abilities to engage productively. As a result, fear among researchers arose that students who largely participated in virtual instruction would experience a reduced sense of belonging, ultimately leading to an increase in anxiety among adolescents throughout the globe (Oberg et al., 2022).

Dorn et al. (2021) estimated that between 232,000 and 1.1 million American students might drop out of high school, due to the disruption in their schooling experience, as a result of the pandemic (p. 6). One of the most alarming trends has been reported by the Center for Disease Control, which stated the emergency room average number of visits for suicide attempts for girls aged 12 to 17 increased by 26.2% in 2019

(Yard et al., 2021, p. 1). Equally alarming to researchers was the discovery that between March and September of 2020, the physical abuse of school-aged children tripled during the beginning months of the pandemic (Windell, 2022, para. 4).

Researchers discovered teachers experienced higher levels of emotional stress as well, resulting in increasing dissatisfaction in their jobs, as a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (The Center for American Progress, 2021). According to research from the National Education Association (2020), 55% of educators contemplated leaving the profession (para.1). Over 86% of those educators contributed exhaustion, strain, and dire staff shortages that have plagued school systems across the country since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 (Walker, 2022, para. 3). Potential ways to address this issue included higher salaries, additional mental support, additional staff, and less paperwork (National Education Association, 2020, para. 19). One of the most important ways administrators were able to provide additional mental support was by focusing on improving organizational school climate (Gonzales, 2022; Komalasari et al., 2020; Torres, 2022). Cruickshack and MacDonald (2018) acknowledged teachers who feel appreciated are less likely to leave the profession.

The critical role American schools have in the facilitation of children's socialization, social mobility, and education cannot be emphasized enough (Oberg et al., 2022). Consequently, educators, researchers, and policy makers continue to demonstrate a renewed interest in the school's role toward supporting positive emotional and social growth improvement in their pupils to improve overall learning (Berkowitz, 2020; Bizumic et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Kraft & Falken, 2020). With a new surge of COVID-19 emerging across the globe just weeks before the beginning of the

2022-2023 school year, there is no clear answer when the world will no longer feel the effects of the deadly virus (Katella, 2022). Until then, researchers, scientists, and educators have continued efforts to mitigate the virus, in an effort to improve the adverse impacts of COVID-19 (Godber & Atkins, 2021; Oberg et al., 2022; Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021).

Summary

Chapter Two included the review of literature including organizational leadership and building climate. Targeted measures for improving school climate were detailed. Finally, administrative leadership styles and the impact of COVID-19 were included.

Chapter Three will include the methodology. The main topics presented will be the problem purpose and overview, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data analysis, and the collection of data. Finally, ethical considerations will be detailed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used to determine the relationship between targeted motivational efforts and school climate at the organizational and building levels, as well as determining the relationship between building school climate and perceived leadership styles. This chapter is divided into eight sections. It begins with the problem and purpose overview which includes the research and hypothesis questions. This is followed by the research design, population sample, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations will conclude the chapter.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Improving student outcomes through effective teaching is a continual focal point throughout the educational setting each year (Tucker & Stronge, 2021). Unfortunately, there are both organizational factors as well as psychological mechanisms that can either aid or hinder this process (Institute of Medicine, 2001). To target improving student outcomes at the organizational level, educators are currently examining the effects of school climate (Maxwell et al., 2017). School climate is centered around the "patterns of students, parents and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (National School Climate Council, 2007, p. 1). Establishing a positive school climate is vital to ensuring academic success (Pace, 2021).

Confeld (2016) declared, "Positive school cultures provide a safe, supportive, encouraging, inviting, and challenging environment for students and staff, which in turn allows students' academic achievement to evolve" (p. 1). According to new research, this

can be accomplished by developing a framework of understanding by identifying key areas to focus resources for a safe and supportive climate within schools (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2021). Multiple organizations acknowledged such a need and collectively developed a framework that supported educators while ensuring the safety of both children and youth. (National Association of School Resource Officers et al., 2013)

Some schools have developed targeted measures for improving school climate to identify key areas that might promote a more positive climate culture (New Jersey State Bar Foundation, 2021). This study will be the first research conducted to determine the significance targeted measures for improving school climate have on overall organizational climate. District climate surveys taken prior to and after an established motivational team, or climate team, was created within School District A will be examined.

The study will also determine the significance perceived leadership styles have on school climate by administering Bass's (1995) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which was developed and validated to building administrators, certified teachers, principals, and staff (Bass & Avolio, 2003). Overall, this quantitative study will include a triangulation design with the convergence of data to determine to what extent targeted motivational efforts and perceived leadership styles contribute toward overall organizational climate.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. What is the difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

$H1_0$: There is no significant difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

$H1_a$: There is a significant difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

2. What is the difference between building climate scores in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

$H2_0$: There is no significant difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

$H2_a$: There is a significant difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

3. What is the correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

$H3_0$: There is no significant correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

$H3_a$: There is a significant correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

Research Design

According to Johnson and Christensen (2020) quantitative research focuses "on hypothesis testing and theory testing. Quantitative researchers consider it to be of primary importance to state one's hypotheses and then test those hypotheses with empirical data to see if they are supported" (p, 32). This study examined school climate at both the building and organizational levels to attempt to better understand the relationships, if any, among purpose led motivational efforts, as well as leadership styles. A quantitative approach was most appropriate because it allowed for multiple years of data to be analyzed and statistical tests to be ran to determine levels of significance for each of the research questions. Current research suggested that the construct of school climate should be supplemented by three features (1) comprehensive and multidimensionality of the construct, such as relations, and institutional environments; (2) its impact on the various outcomes such as psychological wellbeing, level of bullying, or behavioral misconduct; and (3) the flexibility and potential of a measurement tool (Grazia & Molinari, 2021).

The first feature addressed was the utilization of the School District Climate Survey data analysis. This provided insights on the multidimensionality of the relations among School District A. The second feature was addressed through the utilization of the

Multi-Leadership Questionnaire data analysis. It provided the impacts of various outcomes between leadership styles and building climate. Finally, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Correlation (PPMCC) data analysis also provided insights on outcomes through the comparison among leadership style and building climate.

Population and Sample

Burkholder et al. (2020) stated, "Convenience sampling refers to selecting a sample based on availability" (p. 63). Additionally, Creswell and Creswell (2017) added a convenience sample included participants selected out of convenience and or availability. This study utilized a convenience sample of 211 participants out of a population of 1,059 organizational staff members who received the School District A Climate Survey in the 2018–2019 school year and a convenience sample of 176 participants out of a population of 1,039 organizational staff members who received the School District A Climate Survey in the 2021–2022 school year. These convenience samples were used because they included climate data that were readily available for every participant within the organization for those designated years.

This study also utilized a convenience sample of 90 certified teachers out of a population of 351 staff members for the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire as shown in Table 1. This convenience sample was used because this included selected data for the same buildings within School District A, which included both the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire participants, in conjunction with the selected 2021–2022 participants of School District A's Climate Surveys. The total population for the

comparison of the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire for School District A in 2021–2022 was 351 staff members organizational staff members (see Table 1).

Table 1

District A MLQ Certified Staff Members Population Size for 2021–2022

School District A	2021-2022 Certified Staff Size*
Building 1	69
Building 2	69
Building 3	20
Building 4	31
Building 5	65
Building 6	97
Total	351

Instrumentation

School District A's Climate Survey data were secondary data and were obtained through the school district's assistant superintendent of curriculum. The assistant superintendent of curriculum explained:

> The climate survey was in place prior to my arrival here in 2014. District climate surveys are adjusted each year based on our focus areas. There is not one person who develops it. We revise each year collaboratively as a central office administrator team. (Personal communication, September 22, 2022)

The Climate Survey was created by the district and included 15 Likert-type scale statements. Respondents were asked to respond to each statement with a rating of *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *agree* (3), or *strongly agree* (4).

A modified version of Bass's (1995) Multi-leadership Questionnaire was distributed to certified staff members among six selected schools within School District A. A total of nine statements were derived from Bass's (1995) Multi-leadership

Questionnaire. This included three statements per each leadership style transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant. Respondents were also asked to respond to each statement with a rating of *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *agree* (3), or *strongly agree* (4).

Reliability

Reliability scores for the MLQ subscales were reported from moderate to good (Statistic Solutions, 2021). The reliability score for School District A was found to be good, however the reliability score for the Multi-Leadership Questionnaire was found to be low (see Table 2). This may be due to the small sample size and future studies should seek to refrain from excluding so many questions when editing the questionnaire. The reliability of the District Climate Survey was determined satisfactory as the instrument has been used in the district for numerous years.

Table 2

Reliability Results

Data Selection	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
2018-2019/2021-2022 Climate Data	.932	.933	15
Bass MLQ Data	.399	.400	9
Total	5105	5585	5585

Validity

In research from Statistics Solution (2021), Avolio and Bass's Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire demonstrated strong evidence for validity; the MLQ has been utilized in thousands of research programs including doctoral dissertations, master's theses, as well as multiple constructive outcomes for transformational leadership.

Statistics Solutions (2021) also explained that construct validity was clearly evident through factor analyses which resulted in a six-factor model for the MLQ. The District Climate Survey was created by the district and had been established as the district instrument to determine district climate.

Data Collection

The data collection procedure began by receiving permission from School District A's Superintendent (see Appendix A) to conduct research. Next, the head principal participation letter (see Appendix B), Research Information Sheet (see Appendix C), and building administrator and certified teacher participation letters (see Appendix D) were created. Additionally, a license to reproduce and administer Bass's (1995) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to edit and distribute to School District A's building administrators and certified teachers was purchased through Mind Garden (see Appendix E).

Once permission was granted from the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB), the assistant superintendent of curriculum was emailed a copy of the IRB Approval Letter, the head principal participation letter, the research information sheet, and a copy of the Multi Leadership Questionnaire link with a request to distribute the survey to all certified teaching staff members. The Climate Team Survey Data from School District A was obtained through the school district's assistant superintendent of curriculum to determine if there was any correlation between targeted motivational teams and building climate improvement. For the purpose of this study, targeted motivational teams represented intentional endeavors and contributions made by staff in an effort to increase overall work well-being and satisfaction.

The 2018–2019, and 2021–2022 School District A Climate Survey data were cleaned and separated, and a Mann-Whitney *U* test was utilized to determine if there was a significant difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. This same data was also utilized to run a Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine if there was any difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. Next, the head principals' email addresses were collected from School District A's website.

The head principals of each building selected within the study were emailed a copy of the letter of participation for building administrators and certified teachers, research information sheet, and the questionnaire link to all certified teachers in their building. By participating in the questionnaire, respondents consented to participate in the research. The survey link remained open for one week. Based on the Multi Leadership Questionnaire results, leadership styles were compared to School District A's 2021–2022 organizational climate data by utilizing a PPMCC to determine if there was any significance between leadership styles and organizational climate.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for research question one entailed utilizing the Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine the difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. The Mann-Whitney *U* Test, also known as the Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test, was used to compare differences between two independent groups from the

same population, essentially to observe if the two groups have the same shape regarding their data. In research from Technology Networks (2022) the Mann-Whitney *U* Test is commonly useful when the researcher is assessing the difference between two independent groups with low sample sizes, typically less than 30.

The differences were compared using a parametric test comparing two groups; assuming they would have a normal distribution. This quantitative study used a pre-existing climate survey that had been utilized for several consecutive years within the district. Data for school years 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 were gathered and analyzed for this study.

The Mann-Whitney *U* Test was also utilized for research question two, determining the difference, if any, between each buildings' climate scores in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. The calculated scores provided insight to which buildings had a stronger mean score indicating that certain buildings had a significantly higher building climate.

Additional quantitative data were also collected from a modified version of Bass's (1995) Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire that was distributed among certified teachers within selected buildings of School District A. Data analysis for research question two included the utilization of mean comparison in an effort to determine the significance between building climate scores in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. The calculated scores provided insight into which buildings had a stronger mean score indicating that certain buildings had a significantly higher building climate.

Data analysis for research question three utilized the PPMCC to determine what the correlation was between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. The PPMCC measures how strong the linear association is between two independent variables by indicating if there is a positive or negative correlation as denoted by the r-value, which ranges from +1 to -1 (Coolidge, 2021). A value greater than 0 denotes that the association is positive, on the other hand any negative value denotes a negative correlation (Coolidge, 2021). The closer a value is to 1 indicates a stronger correlation. The Climate Survey Data from School District A for years 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 were compared with the literature review within this study to complete a triangulation design.

Ethical Considerations

Anonymity for School District A's Climate Data was preserved through the district's use of the *SurveyMonkey* application. *SurveyMonkey* utilizes an anonymous response collector option where School District A chose not to track and store identifiable respondent information in the District Climate Data survey results (SurveyMonkey: The World's Most Popular Free Online Survey Tool, n.d.). School District A preserved confidentiality through *SurveyMonkey* also by protecting the recorded respondent IP addresses in backend logs and deleting them after 13 months (SurveyMonkey: The World's Most Popular Free Online Survey Tool, n.d.).

Anonymity for the Multi-leadership Questionnaire was preserved through Lindenwood's survey application Qualtrics. Qualtrics utilizes an anonymous link through the URL used to take the survey (Qualtrics XM: the Leading Experience Management

Software, 2022). The survey was distributed by pasting the link into an email to the recipients. Confidentiality for the Multi-Leadership Questionnaire through Qualtrics was preserved through the protection of the anonymous link by collecting the user's IP Address and location data based on that IP Address and deleting them after 13 months. Informed consent was obtained through the Lindenwood Research information sheet. Finally, all data were stored and secured on a password-protected computer.

Summary

Chapter Three included the methodology of this study. The main topics presented were the problem purpose and overview, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data analysis, and the collection of data. Finally, ethical considerations were clearly detailed. Chapter Four will include the presentation of the data. Figures will be utilized to illustrate the data. The results of the statistical analysis will also be provided.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine the significance targeted measures for improving school climate had on organizational and building climate. District climate surveys were taken before targeted measures for improving school climate were established during the 2018–2019 school year and used as a baseline. The same survey was given during the 2021–2022 school year and the results were used to determine the impact targeted measures for improving school climate had on School District A.

A presentation of the data collected is provided in Chapter Four. Figures will be used to illustrate the data collected. Finally, an analysis of each research question will be detailed.

Climate Survey Data

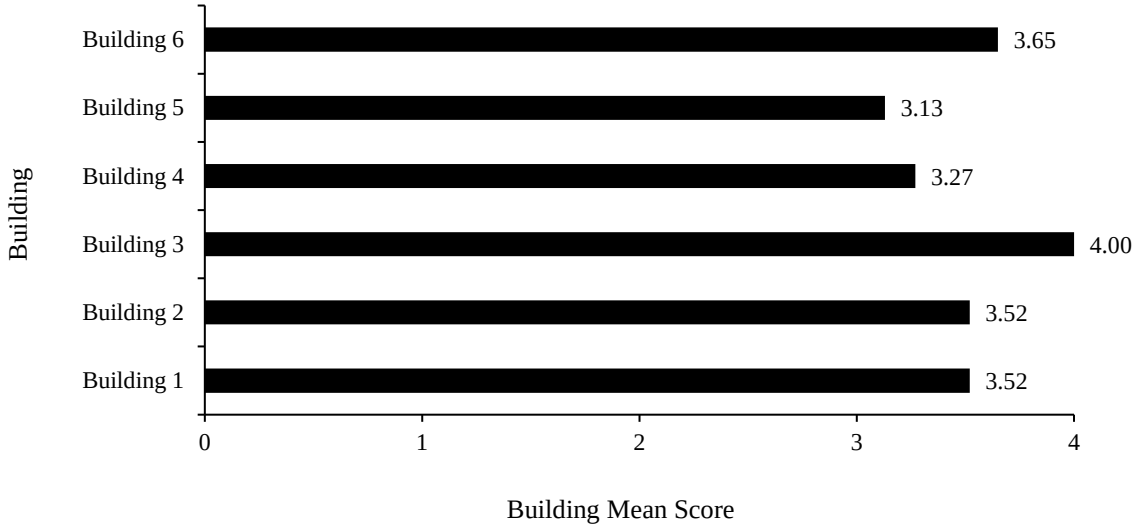
The Climate Survey was created by the school district, which included 15 Likert-type scale statements to determine the organization's overall climate. Respondents were asked to respond to each statement with a rating of *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *agree* (3), or *strongly agree* (4). A higher climate score indicated a more positive school climate, as opposed to a lower school indicating a more negative school climate.

2018–2019 Climate Survey Data

Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, "I feel safe in my school." As shown in Figure 1, building 3 demonstrated the highest building rating, 4. Building 5 demonstrated the lowest building rating, 3.13, when responding to survey statement 1.

Figure 1

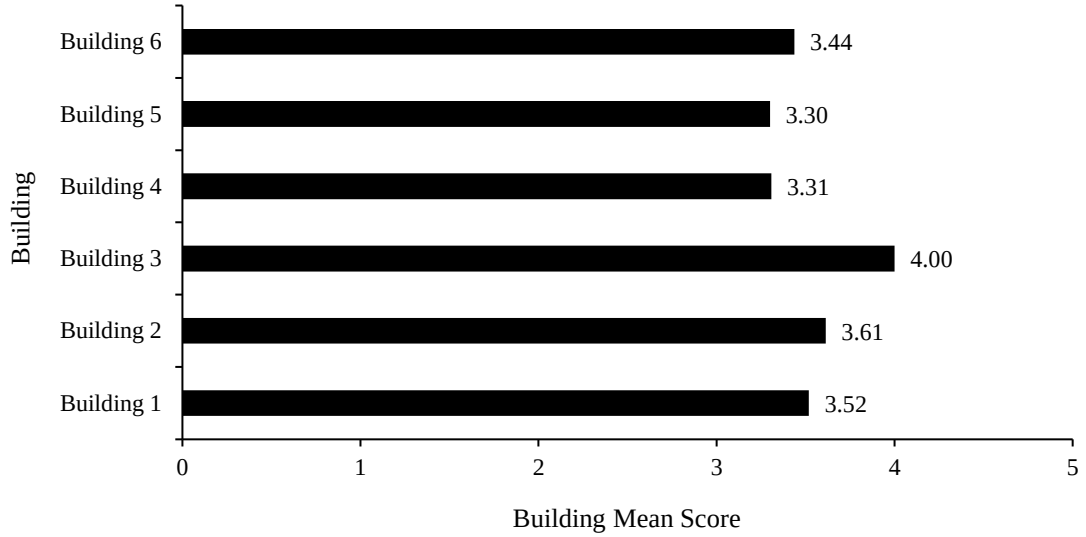
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 1



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “My school makes students feel like they belong.” As shown in Figure 2, building 3 demonstrated the highest rating, 4. Building 5 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.30, when responding to survey statement 2

Figure 2

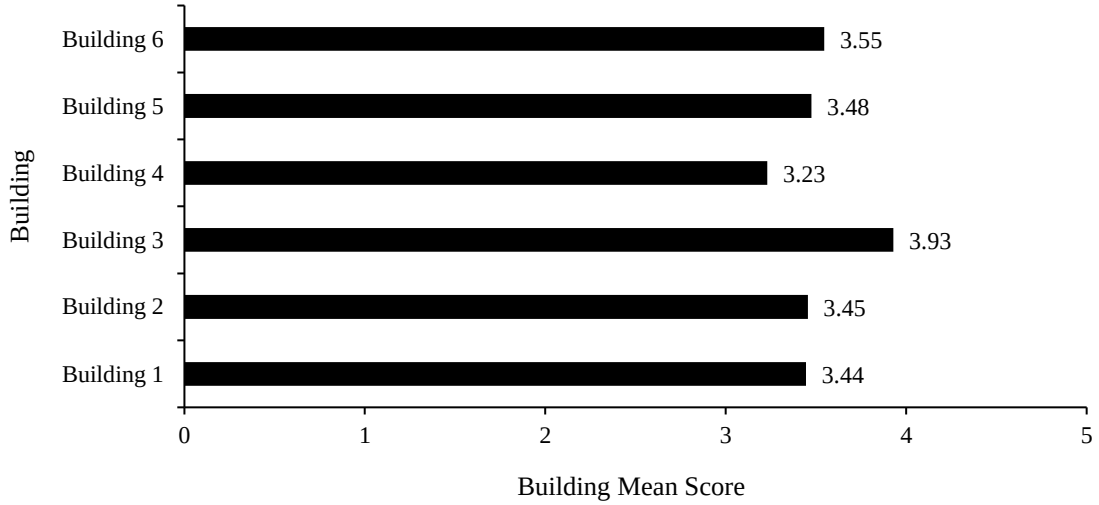
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 2



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Adults in this school share responsibility for student learning.” As shown in Figure 3, building 3 demonstrated the highest rating, 3.93. Building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.23, when responding to survey statement 3.

Figure 3

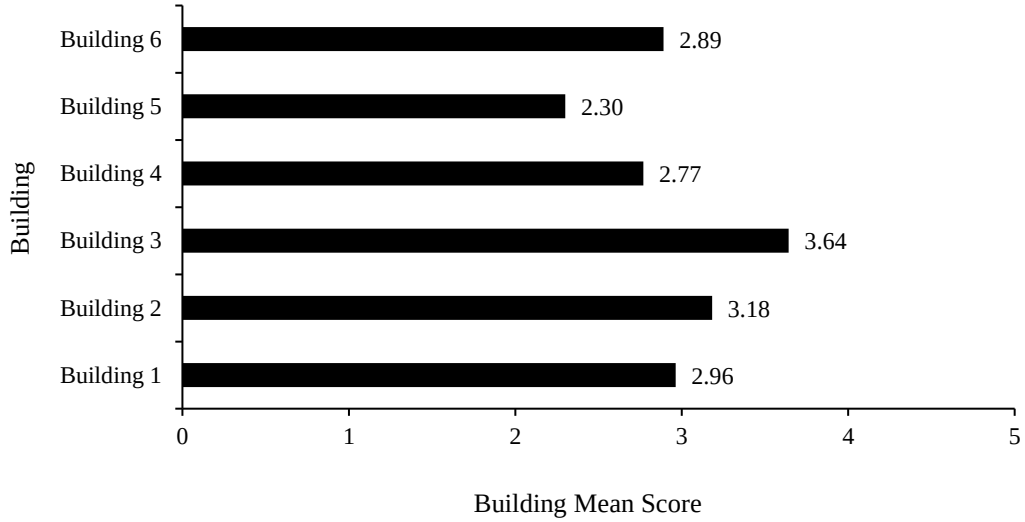
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 3



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Students in this school are motivated to work.” As shown in Figure 4, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.64. Building 5 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.30, when responding to survey statement 4.

Figure 4

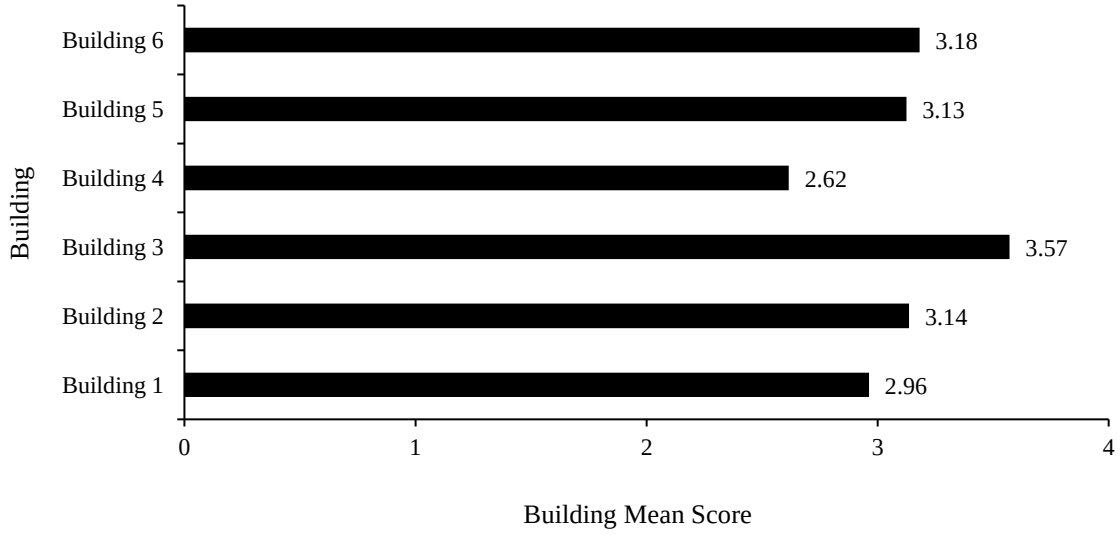
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 4



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “In our school, people tend to trust their teammates.” As shown in Figure 5, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.57. Building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.62, when responding to survey statement 5.

Figure 5

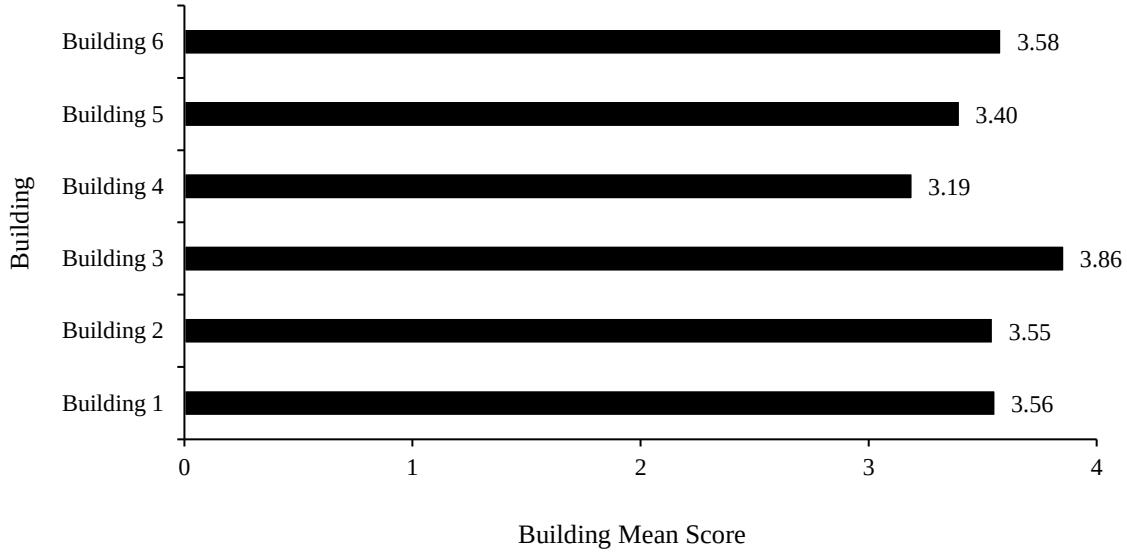
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 5



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Staff respects, understands, and appreciates the value of diversity in our school.” As shown in Figure 6, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.86. Building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.19, when responding to survey statement 6.

Figure 6

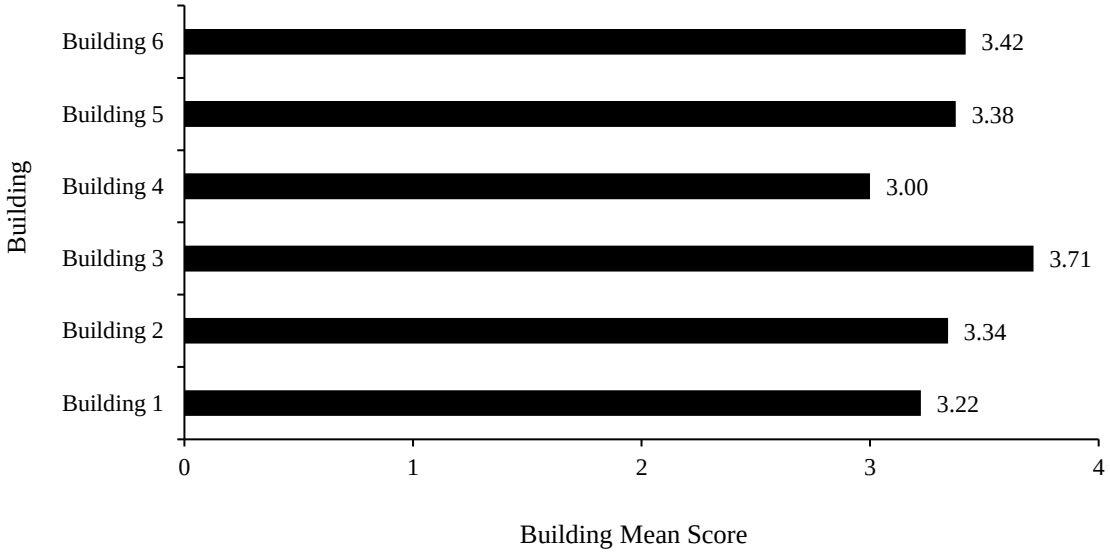
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 6



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Staff members collaborate effectively on PLC teams.” As shown in Figure 7, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.71. Building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.00, when responding to survey statement 7.

Figure 7

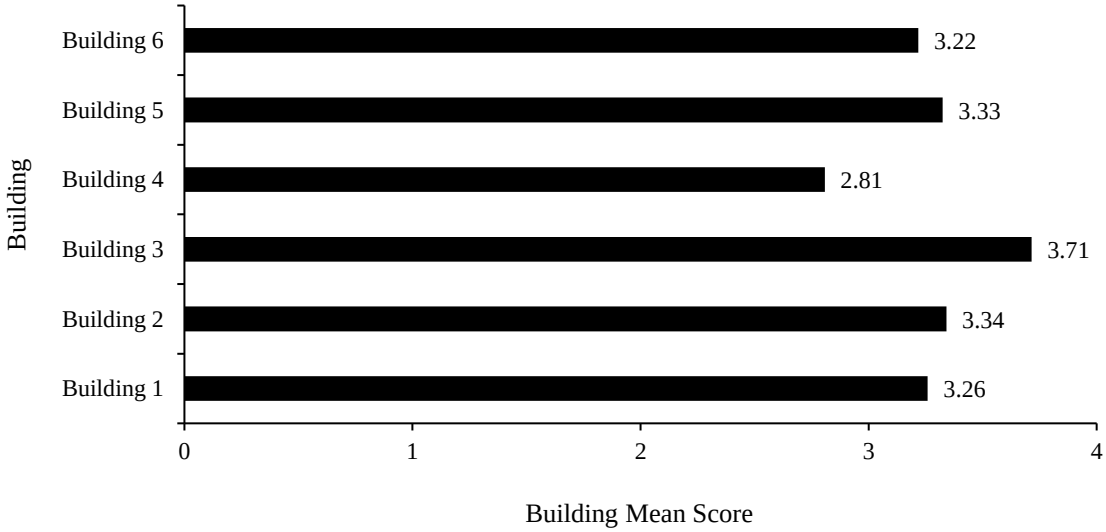
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 7



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, "Adults in our school understand the goals and expectations of the building school improvement plan." As shown in Figure 8, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.71. Building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.81, when responding to survey statement 8**.**

Figure 8

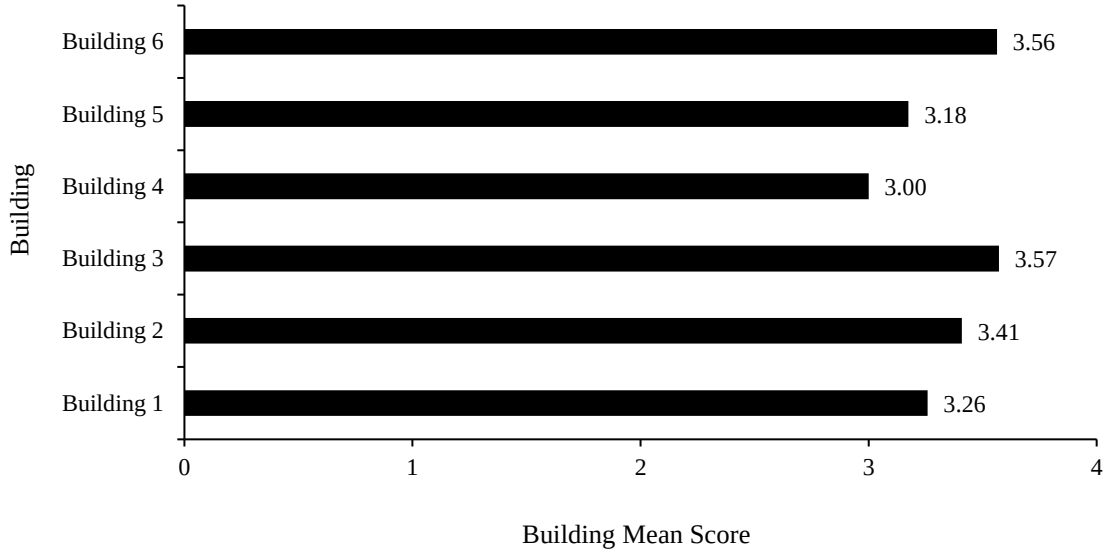
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 8



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, "School administrators give useful feedback on my effectiveness." As shown in Figure 9, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.57. On the other hand, building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.00, when responding to survey statement 9.

Figure 9

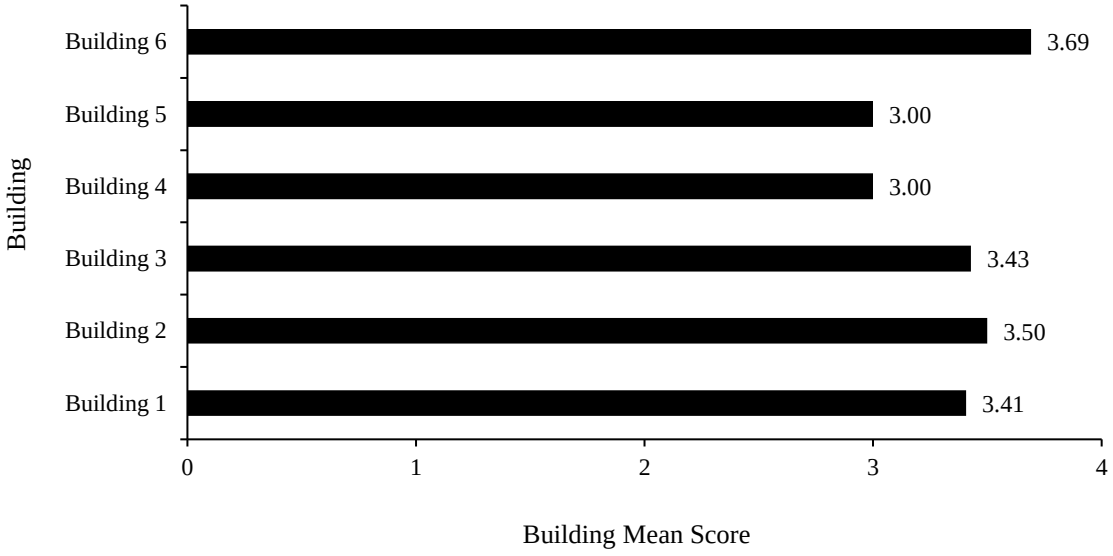
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 9



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I am satisfied with the support I receive from my building administrator.” As shown in Figure 10, building 6 demonstrated the highest score, 3.69. Building 4 and 5, demonstrated the lowest score, 3.00, when responding to survey statement 10.

Figure 10

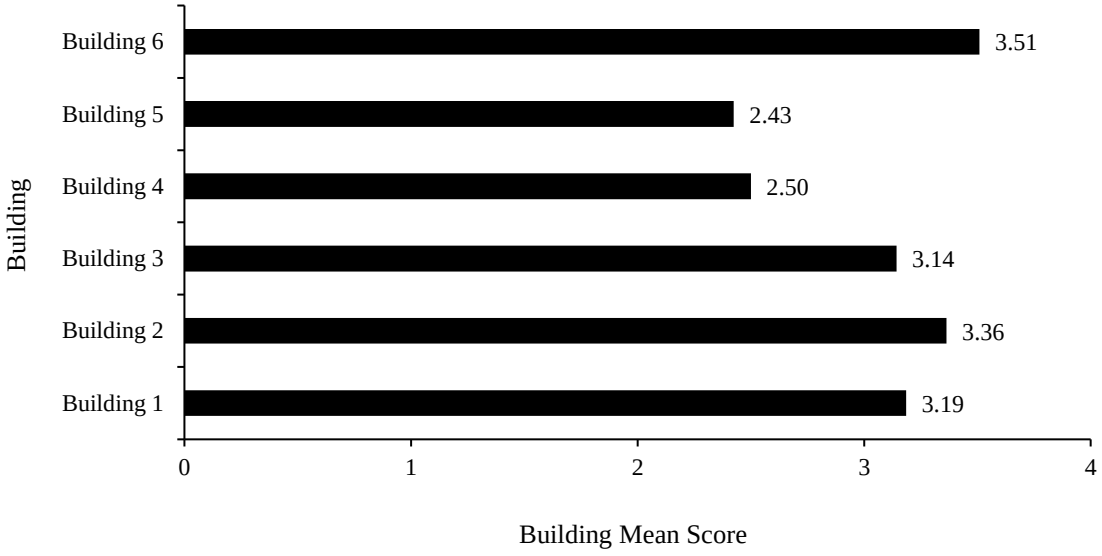
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 10



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Our school administrators involve staff in decision-making.” As shown in Figure 11, building 6 demonstrated the highest score, 3.51. Building 5 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.43, when responding to survey statement 11.

Figure 11

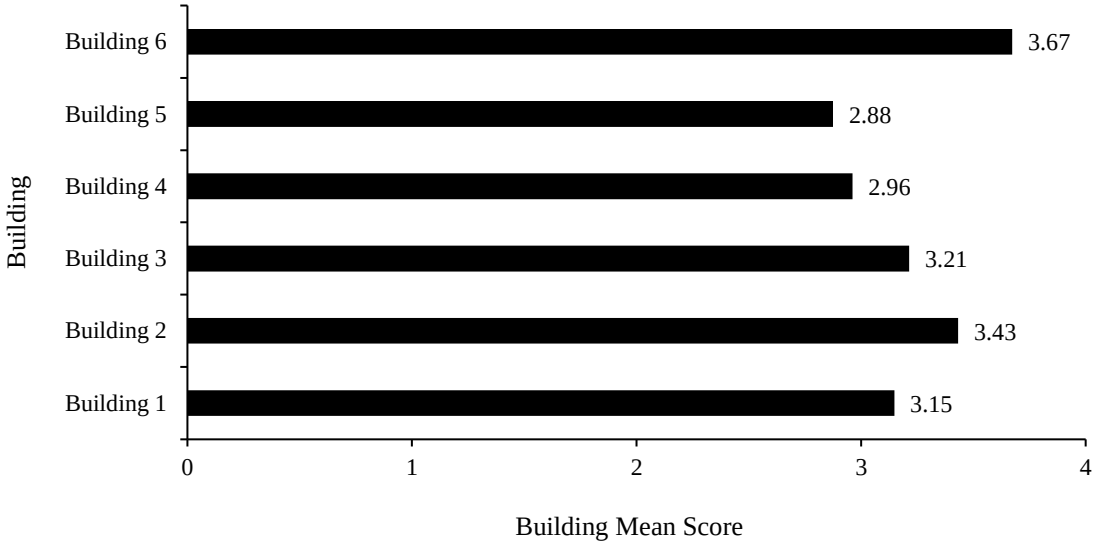
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 11



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “There are open channels of communication between staff and administrators.” As shown in Figure 12, building 6 demonstrated the highest score, 3.67. Building 5 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.88, when responding to survey statement 12.

Figure 12

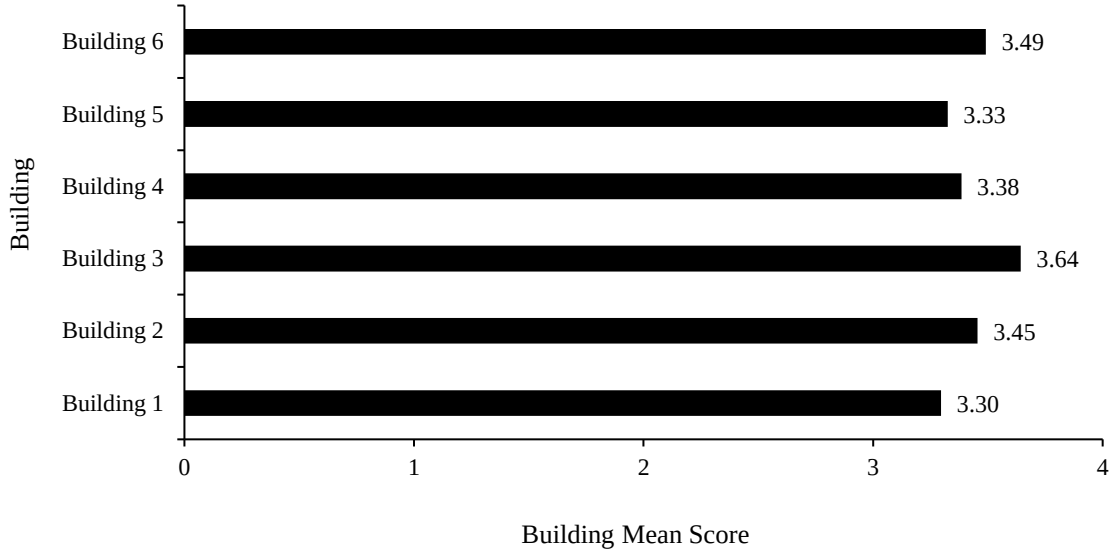
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 12



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “There are open channels of communication between students and staff.” As shown in Figure 13, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.64. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.30, when responding to survey statement 13.

Figure 13

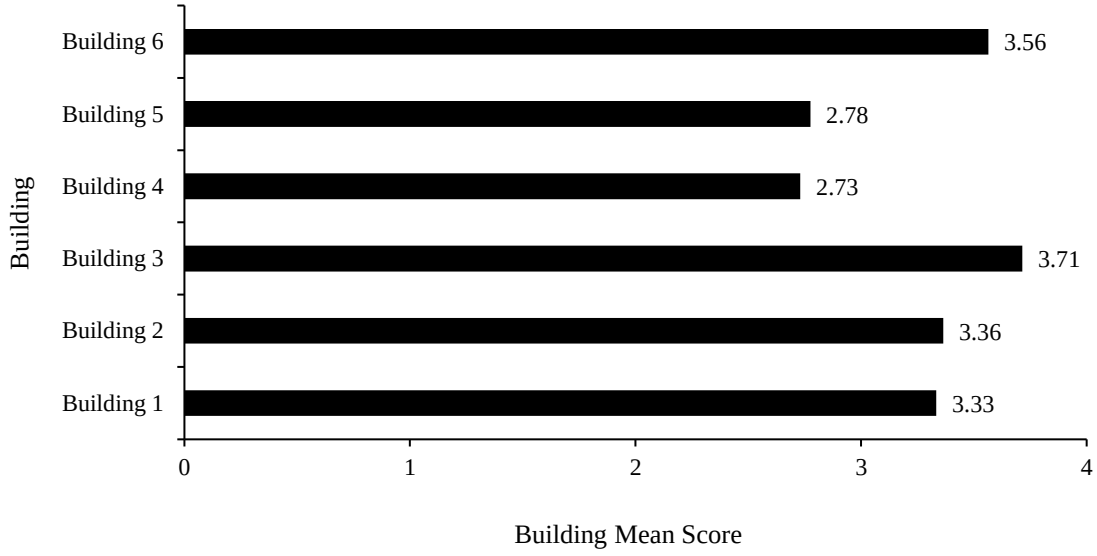
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 13



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I would recommend this school to a friend as a good place to teach.” As shown in Figure 14, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.71. Building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.73, when responding to survey statement 14.

Figure 14

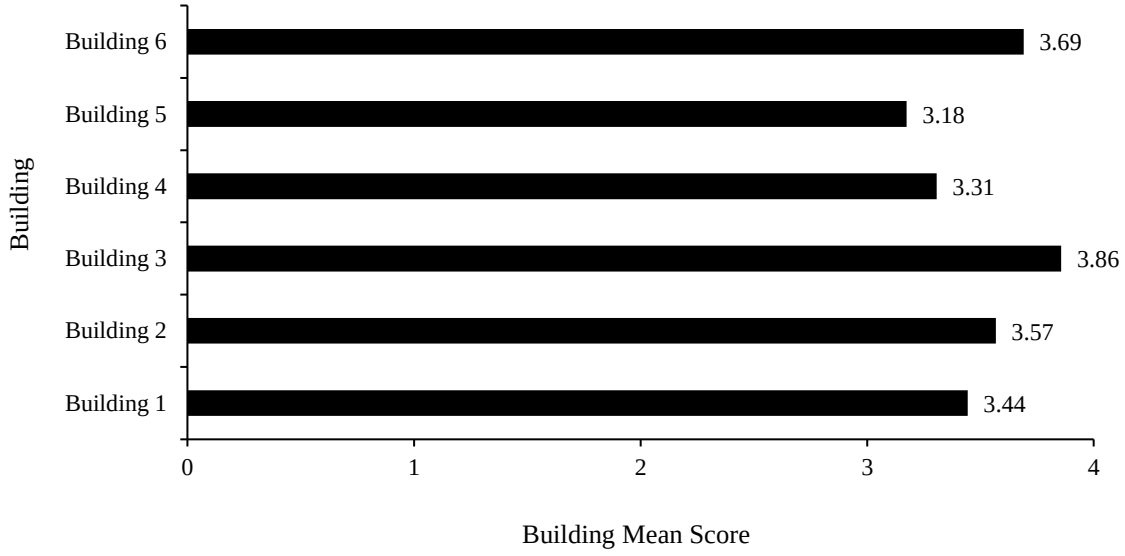
2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 14



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Our school administrator has high expectations for student learning.” As shown in Figure 15, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.86. Building 5 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.18, when responding to survey statement 15.

Figure 15

2018 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 15

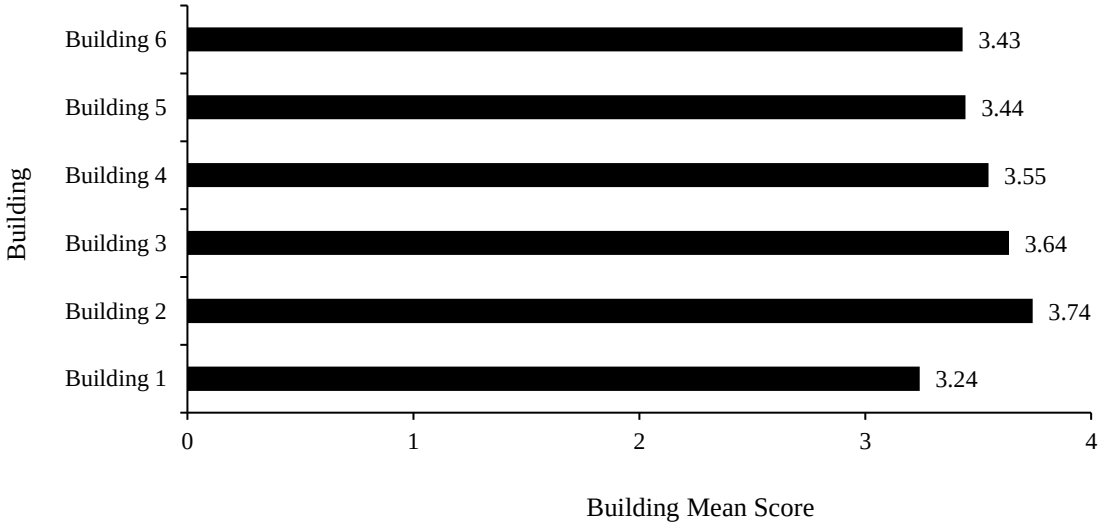


2021–2022 Climate Survey Data

Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I feel safe in my school.” As shown in Figure 16, building 2 demonstrated the highest score, 3.74. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.24, when responding to survey statement 1.

Figure 16

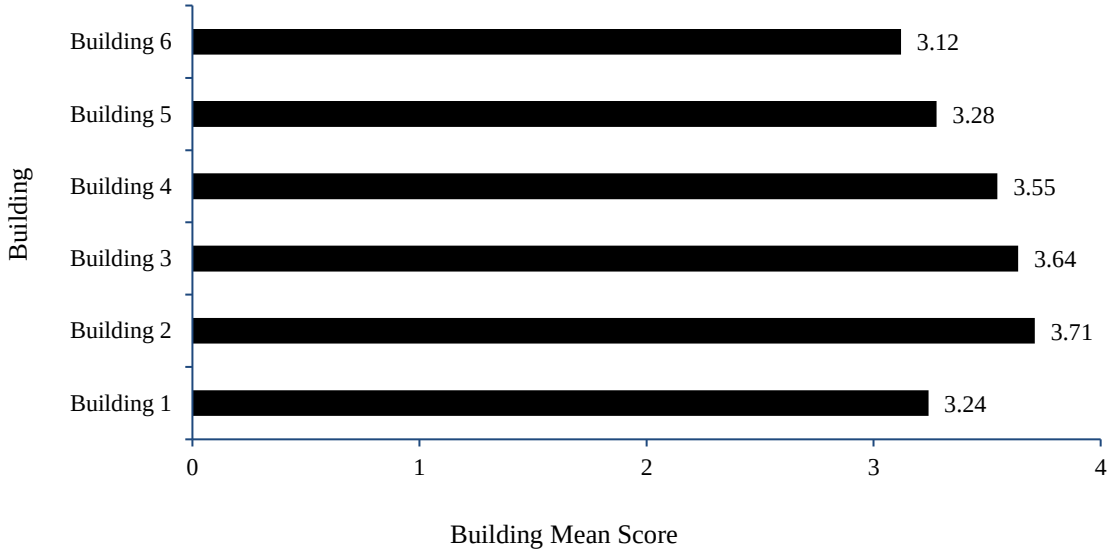
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 1



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “My school makes students feel like they belong.” As shown in Figure 17, building 2 demonstrated the highest score, 3.71. Building 6 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.12, when responding to survey statement 2.

Figure 17

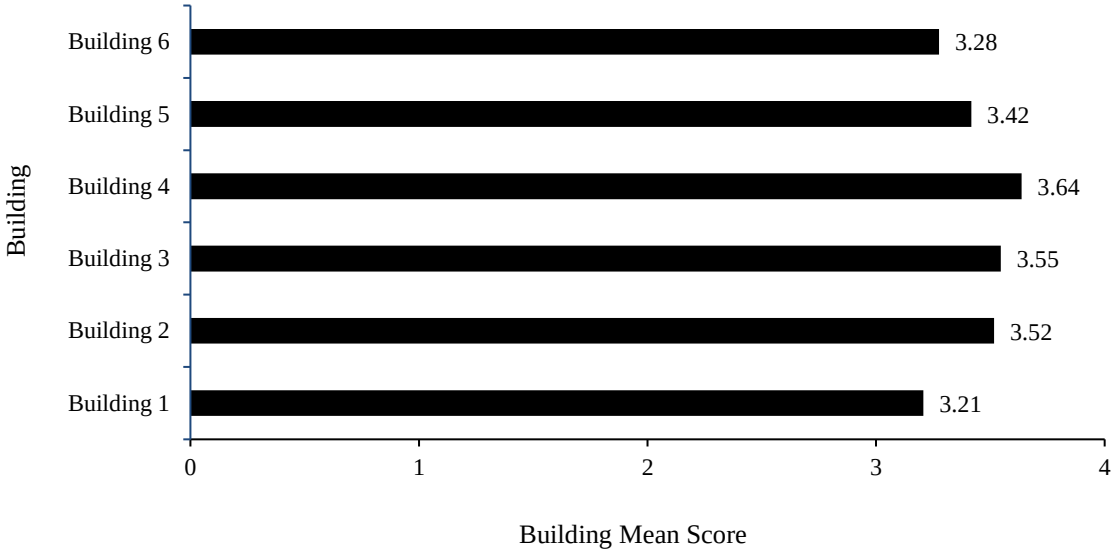
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 2



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Adults in this school share responsibility for student learning.” As shown in Figure 18, building 4 demonstrated the highest score, 3.64. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.21, when responding to survey statement 3.

Figure 18

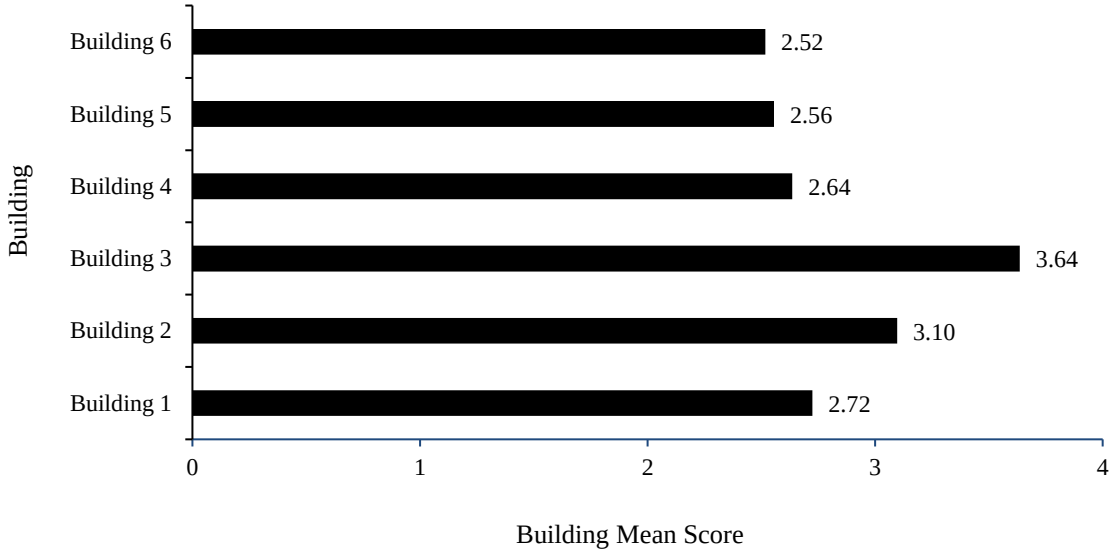
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 3



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Students in this school are motivated to work.” As shown in Figure 19, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.64. Building 6 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.52, when responding to survey statement 4.

Figure 19

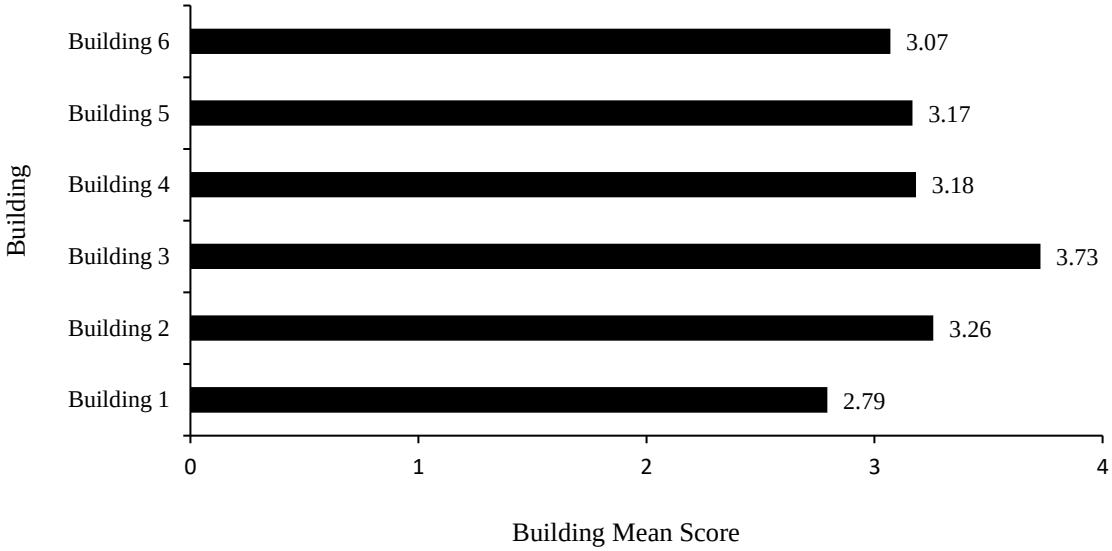
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 4



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “In our school, people tend to trust their teammates.” As shown in Figure 20, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.73. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.79, when responding to survey statement 5.

Figure 20

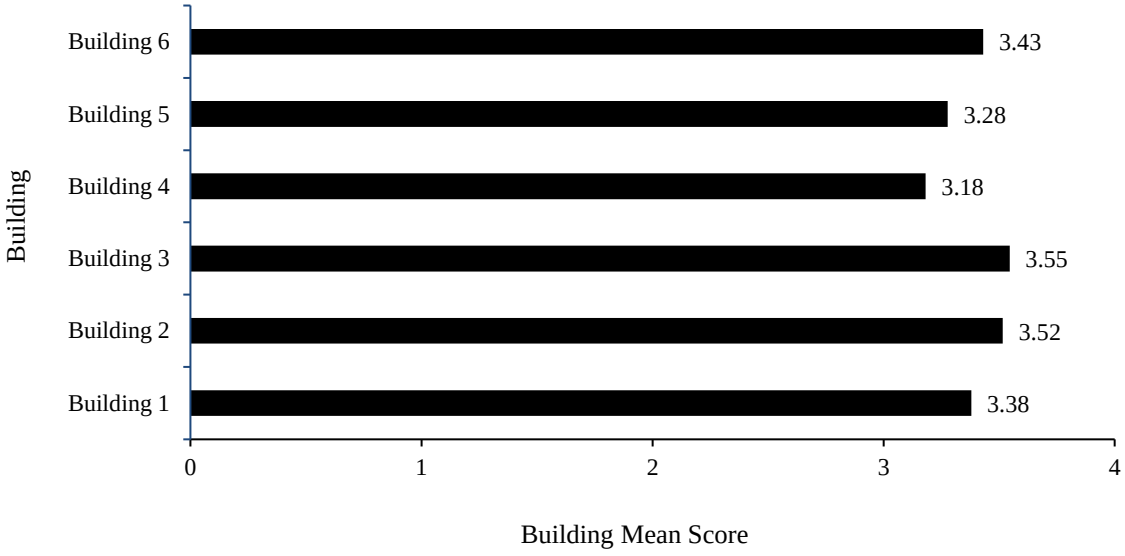
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 5



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Staff respects, understands, and appreciates the value of diversity in our school.” As shown in Figure 21, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.55. On the other hand, building 4 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.18, when responding to survey statement 6.

Figure 21

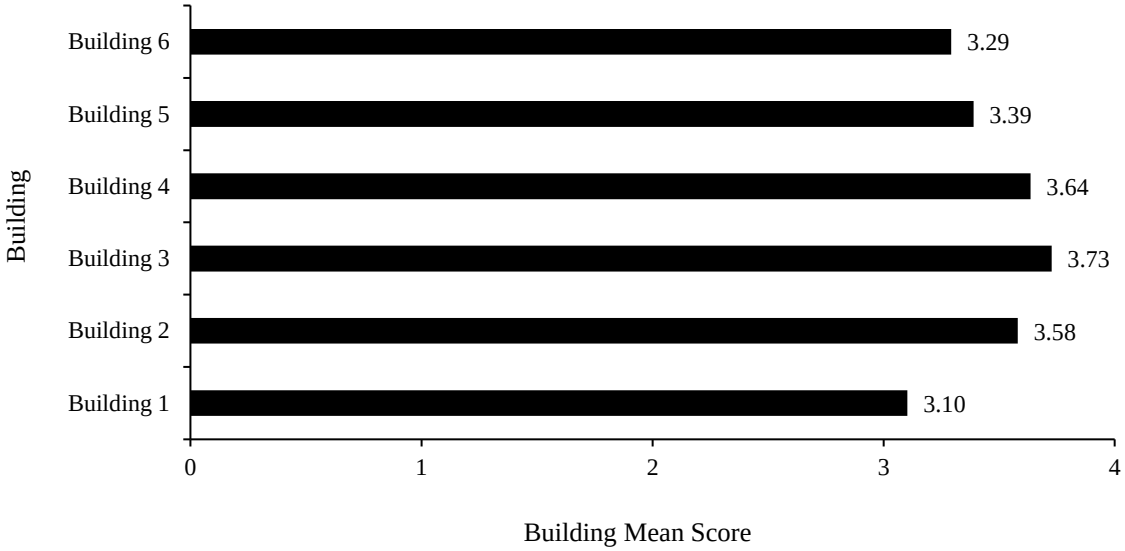
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 6



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Staff members collaborate effectively on PLC teams.” As shown in Figure 22, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.73. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.10, when responding to survey statement 7.

Figure 22

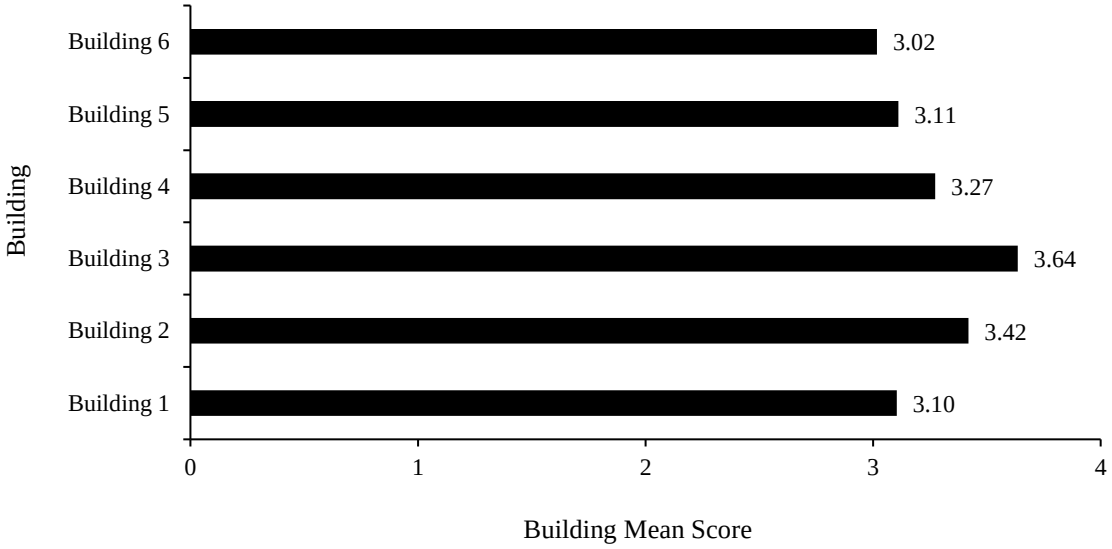
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 7



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Adults in our school understand the goals and expectations of the building school improvement plan.” As shown in Figure 23, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.64. Building 6 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.02, when responding to survey statement 8.

Figure 23

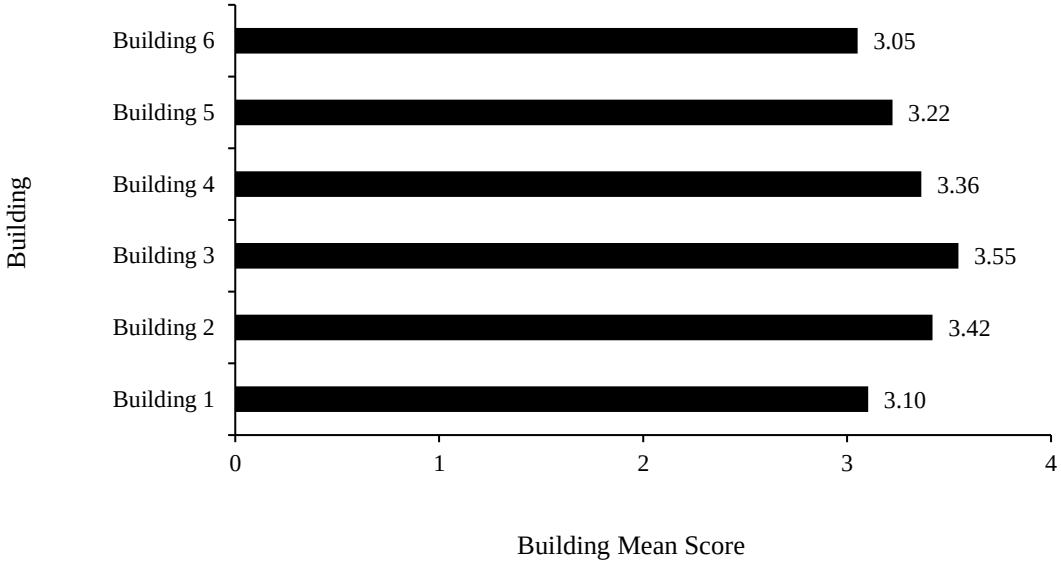
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 8



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “School administrators give useful feedback on my effectiveness.” As shown in Figure 24, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.55. Building 6 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.05, when responding to survey statement 9.

Figure 24

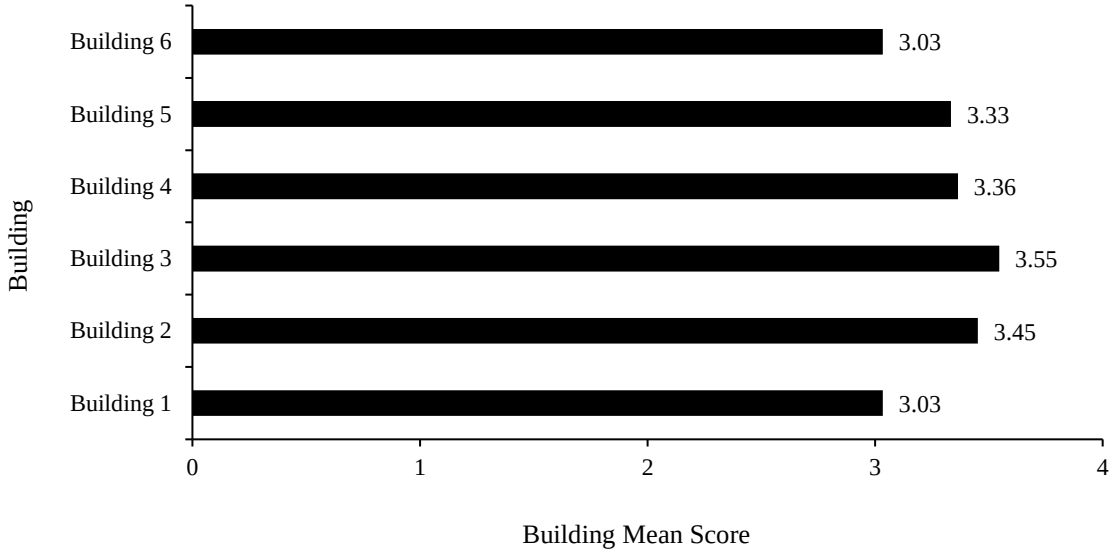
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 9



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I am satisfied with the support I receive from my building administrator.” As shown in Figure 25, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.55. Buildings 1 and 6, demonstrated the lowest score, 3.03, when responding to survey statement 10.

Figure 25

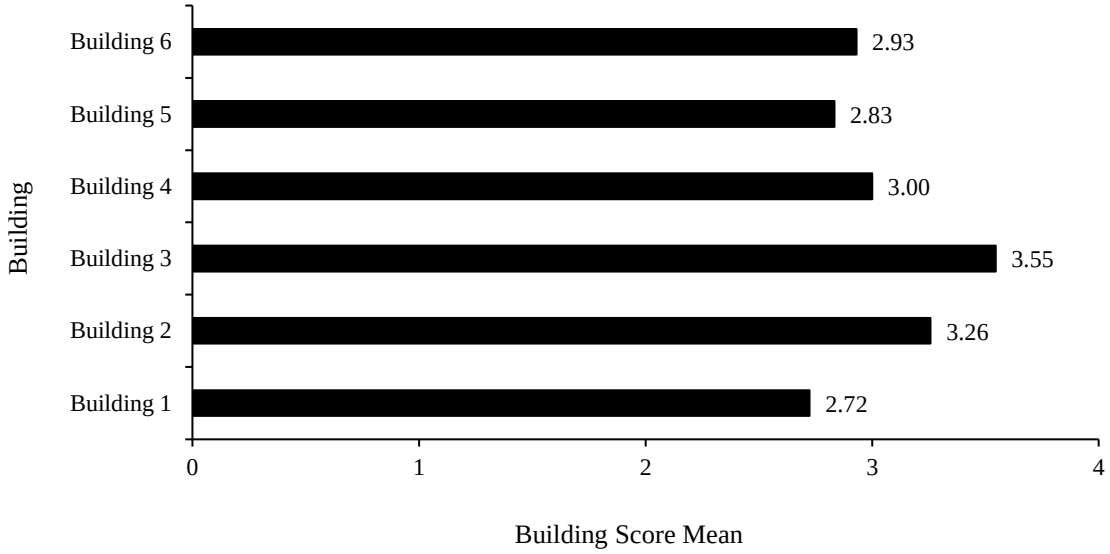
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 10



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Our school administrators involve staff in decision-making.” As shown in Figure 26, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.55. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.72, when responding to survey statement 11.

Figure 26

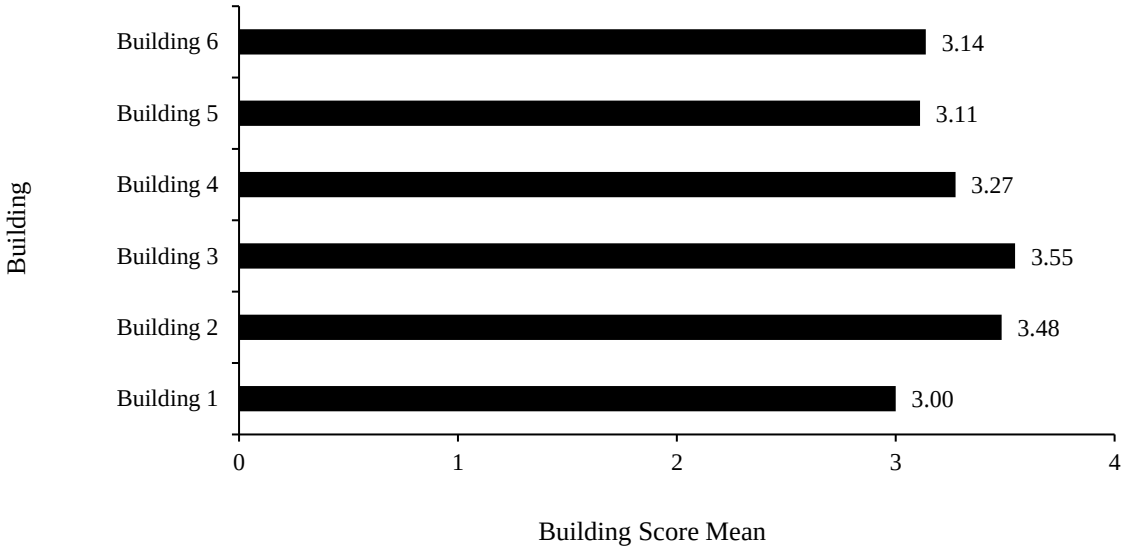
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 11



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “There are open channels of communication between staff and administrators.” As shown in Figure 27, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.55. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.00, when responding to survey statement 12.

Figure 27

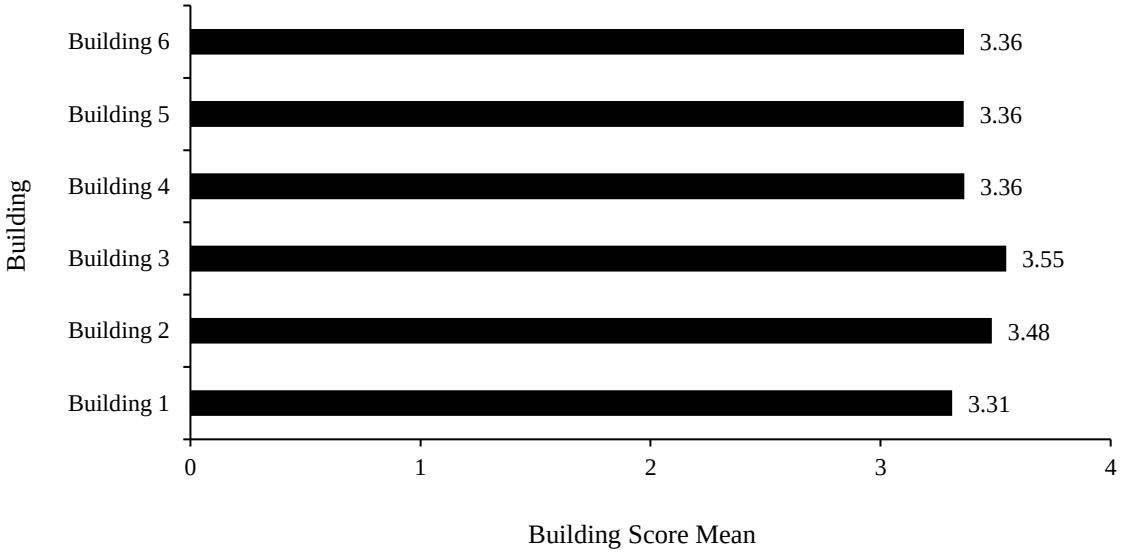
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 12



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “There are open channels of communication between students and staff.” As shown in Figure 28, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.55. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.31, when responding to survey statement 13.

Figure 28

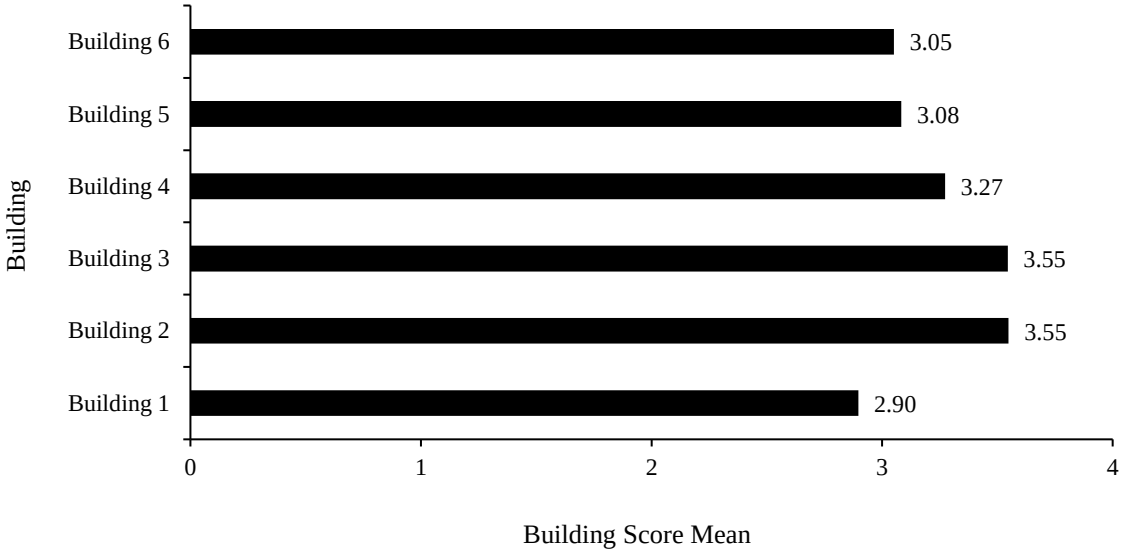
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 13



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I would recommend this school to a friend as a good place to teach.” As shown in Figure 29, buildings 2 and 3, demonstrated the highest score, 3.55. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.90, when responding to survey statement 14.

Figure 29

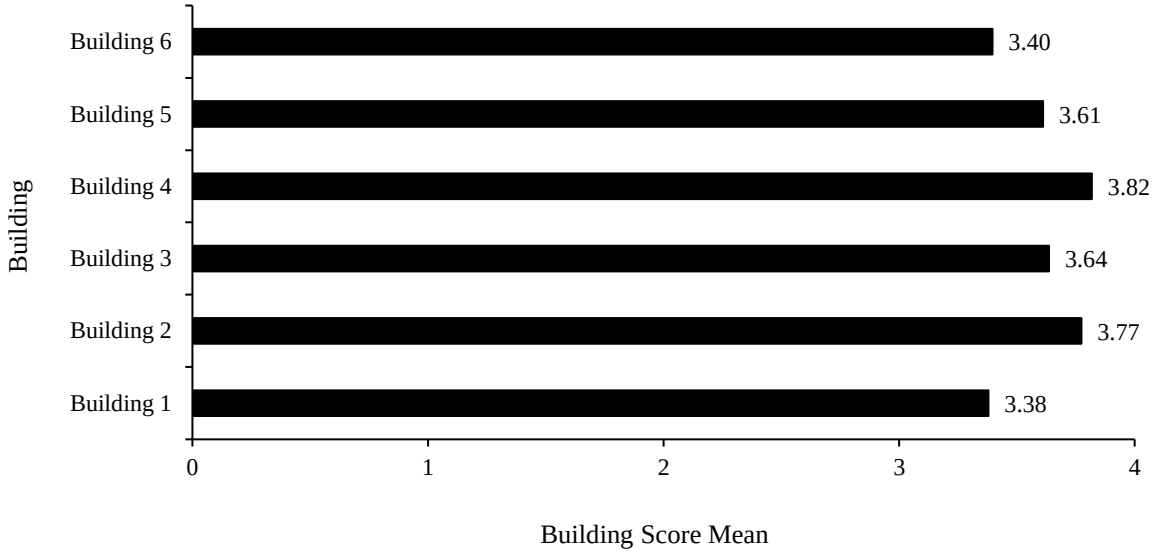
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 14



Climate Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Our school administrator has high expectations for student learning.” As shown in Figure 30, building 4 demonstrated the highest score, 3.82. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.38, when responding to survey statement 15.

Figure 30

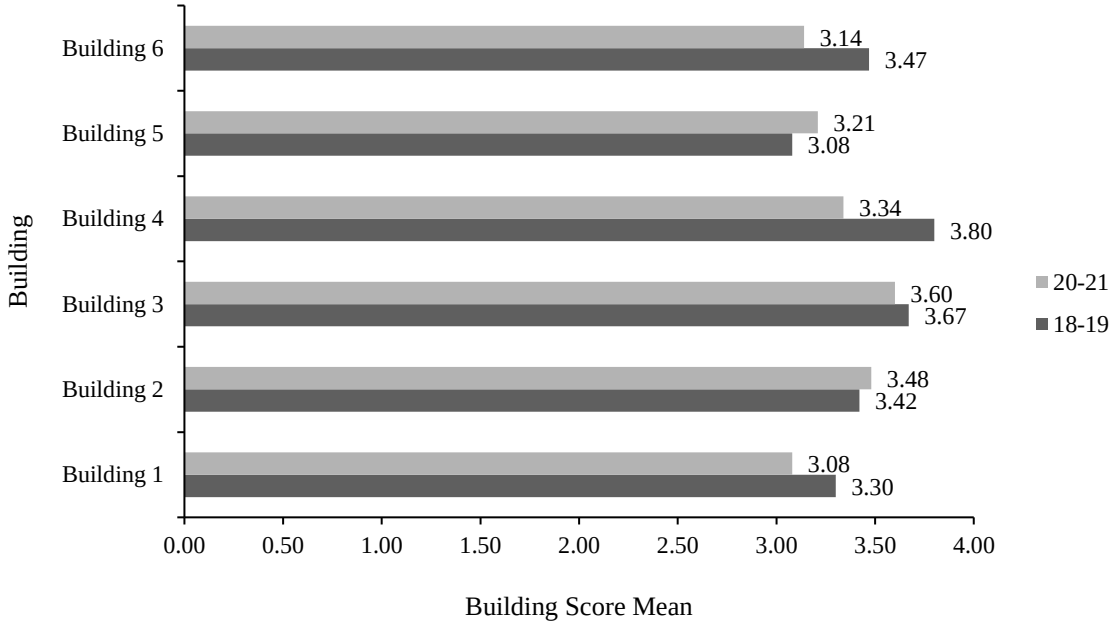
2021 Building Climate Mean Score for Survey Statement 15



The 2018–2019 Climate Survey Mean Scores were compared to the 2020–2021 Climate Mean Scores to determine if a significant increase or decrease was found. A significant increase in mean scores would likely indicate an increase in organizational climate, while a significant decrease in mean scores would likely indicate a decrease in organizational climate. As shown in Figure 31, the mean scores for buildings 1, 3, 4, and 6 decreased, while the mean scores for buildings 2, and 5 increased.

Figure 31

2018–2019/2020–2021 Building Climate Survey Mean Scores



Mann-Whitney *U* Analysis for Research Question One

Research question one was designed to examine the significance targeted measures for improving school climate had at the organizational level, by analyzing the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 building climate means, through the utilization of a Mann-Whitney *U* Test. A mean comparison was configured comparing the climate means for each building at the organizational level by compiling 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 building climate means into one figure. A mean comparison helps to aid in the determination of whether the values in one group are either lower or higher than the values in another group (Coolidge, 2021).

Research question one utilized the Mann-Whitney *U* Test to determine if there was a significant difference between the organizational climate in School District A before, 2018–2019 data, and after, 2021–2022 data, the implementation of targeted

measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. The *p*-value equaled 0.936, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there was no statistical difference before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

Mann-Whitney *U* Analysis for Research Question Two

Research question two was designed to examine the significance targeted measures for improving school climate had at the building level, by analyzing the overall means of the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 climate survey by building. Several Mann-Whitney *U* Tests were performed to analyze data for this research question. A comparison of the means of the 2018–2019 building climate survey to the 2021–2022 building climate survey for each of the six buildings was used. Figures were also included comparing the 2018–2019 building climate survey statements means to the 2021–2022 building climate survey statements for each of the six buildings within School District A.

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Building 1

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 1 revealed a *p*-value of 0.01003. This indicated that $H2_0$ was rejected and $H2_a$ was supported for building 1. There was a significant difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 1.

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Building 2

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 2 revealed a *p*-value of 0.1638. This indicated that $H2_0$ was not rejected for building 2. There was no significant difference between

building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 2.

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Building 3

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 3 revealed a *p*-value of 0.109. This indicated that $H2_0$ was not rejected for building 3. There was no significant difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 3.

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Building 4

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 4 revealed a *p*-value of 0.002571. This indicated that the $H2_0$ was rejected and $H2_a$ was supported for building 4. There was a significant difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 4.

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Building 5

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 5 revealed a *p*-value of 0.4185. This indicated that $H2_0$ was not rejected for building 5. There was no significant difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 5.

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Building 6

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 6 revealed a *p*-value of 0.0004873. This indicated that the $H2_0$ was rejected and $H2_a$ was supported for building 1. There was a significant difference between building climate scores in School District A after the implementation

of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 6.

MLQ Data

Research question three was designed to investigate the impact administrative leadership style had on building climate. This study utilized a modified version of Bass's (1995) Multi-leadership Questionnaire to compare the three different leadership styles to School District A's 2021–2022 Climate Survey means. This included three statements per each leadership style; transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. Respondents were also asked to respond to each statement with a rating of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), or strongly agree (4).

Results from the modified Bass's (1995) Multi-leadership Questionnaire were utilized to initiate a PPMCC for each of the leadership styles transformational, transactional, or passive avoidant. This was done in an effort to determine if there was a correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. Figures included the mean comparison of the Multi-leadership Questionnaire survey statements for each leadership style.

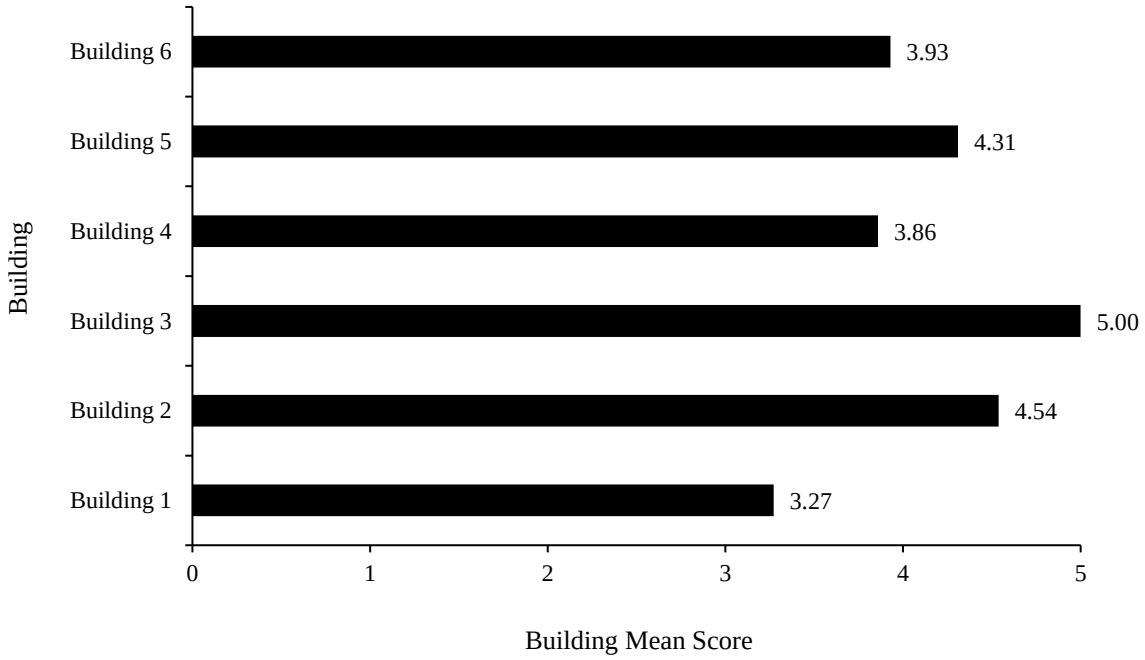
Transformational Leadership Data

MLQ survey statements 1, 4, and 7 were designed to indicate if the respondent perceived that their building principal demonstrated transformational characteristics. A higher mean score indicated that the building principal demonstrated significant transformational characteristics. A lower mean score indicated that the leader demonstrated less significant transformational characteristics.

MLQ survey statement 1 gathered data based on the leader's ability to demonstrate a sense of mission within the building. As shown in Figure 32, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 5.00. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.27, when responding to survey statement 1.

Figure 32

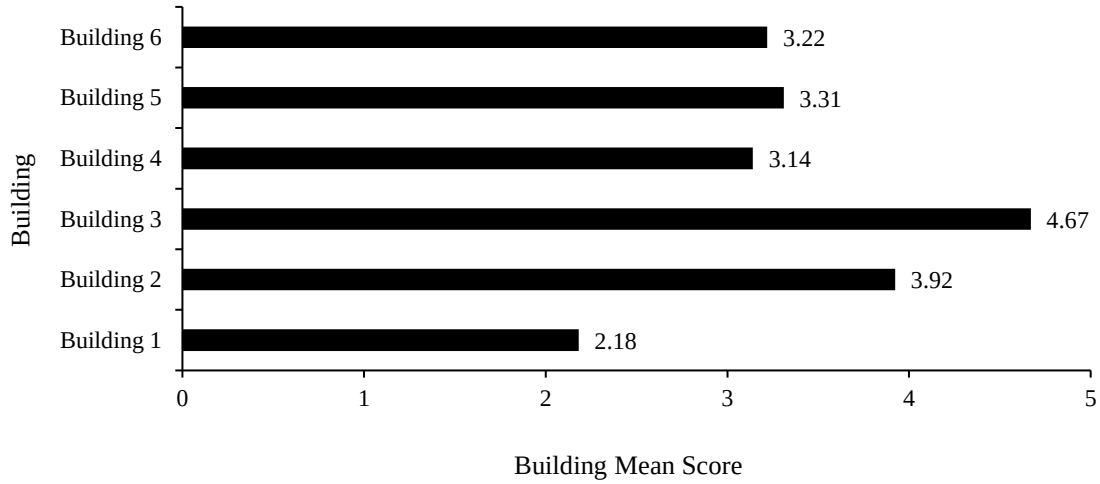
2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 1



MLQ survey statement 4 gathered data based on the leader's ability to encourage staff members to utilize various ways to overcome obstacles. As shown in Figure 33, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 4.67. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.18, when responding to survey statement 4.

Figure 33

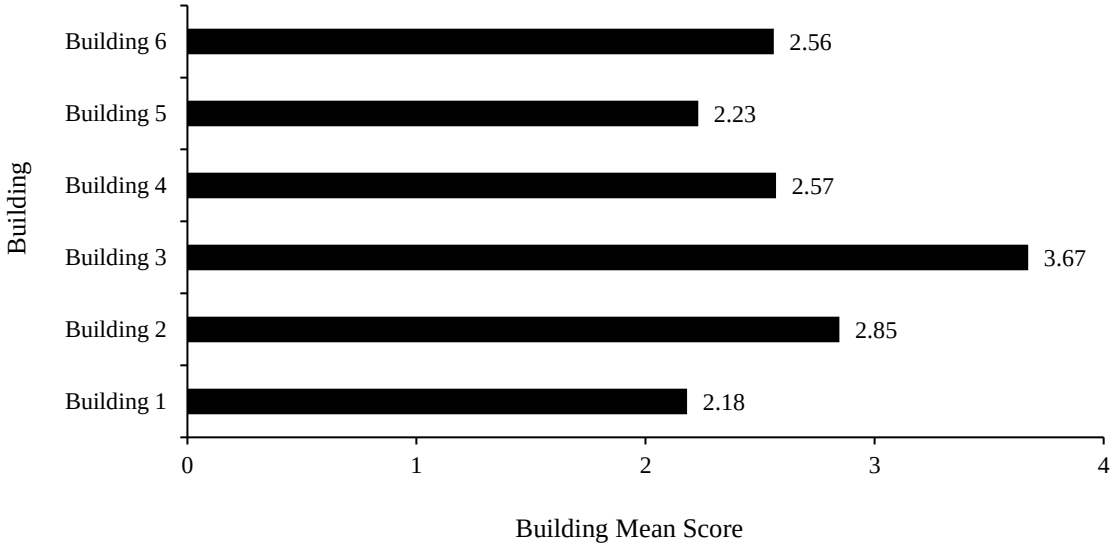
2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 4



MLQ survey statement 7 gathered data based on the leader's efforts directed toward supporting staff members instructional growth. As shown in Figure 34, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 3.67. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 2.18, when responding to survey statement 7.

Figure 34

2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 7



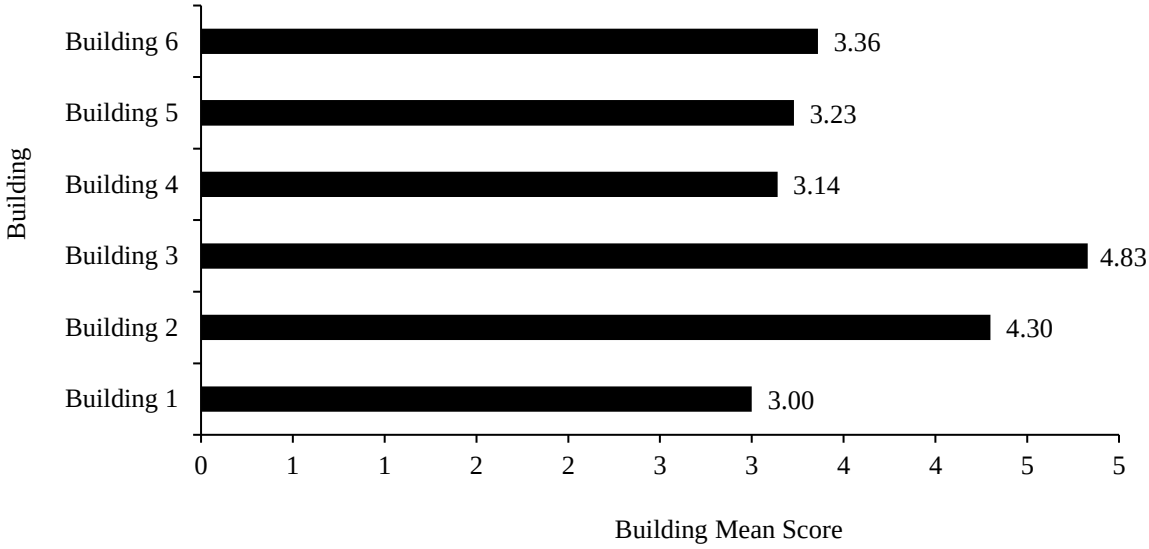
Transactional Leadership Data

MLQ survey statements 2, 5, and 8 were designed to indicate if the respondent perceived that their building principal demonstrated transactional characteristics. A higher mean score indicated that the building principal demonstrated significant transactional characteristics. A lower mean score indicated that the leader demonstrated less significant transactional characteristics.

MLQ survey statement 2 gathered data based on the leader's ability to facilitate guidance based on the member's efforts. As shown in Figure 35, building 3 demonstrated the highest score, 4.83. Building 1 demonstrated the lowest score, 3.00, when responding to survey statement 2.

Figure 35

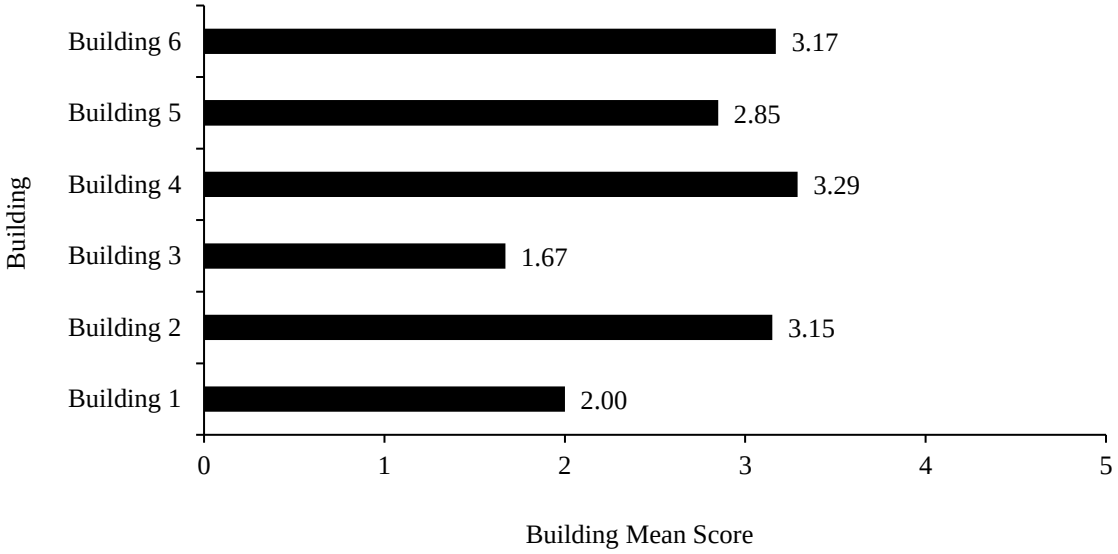
2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 2



MLQ survey statement 5 gathered data based on the extent the staff members perceived that the leader focused on staff members' mistakes. As shown in Figure 36, building 4 demonstrated the highest score, 3.29. Building 3 demonstrated the lowest score, 1.67, when responding to survey statement 5.

Figure 36

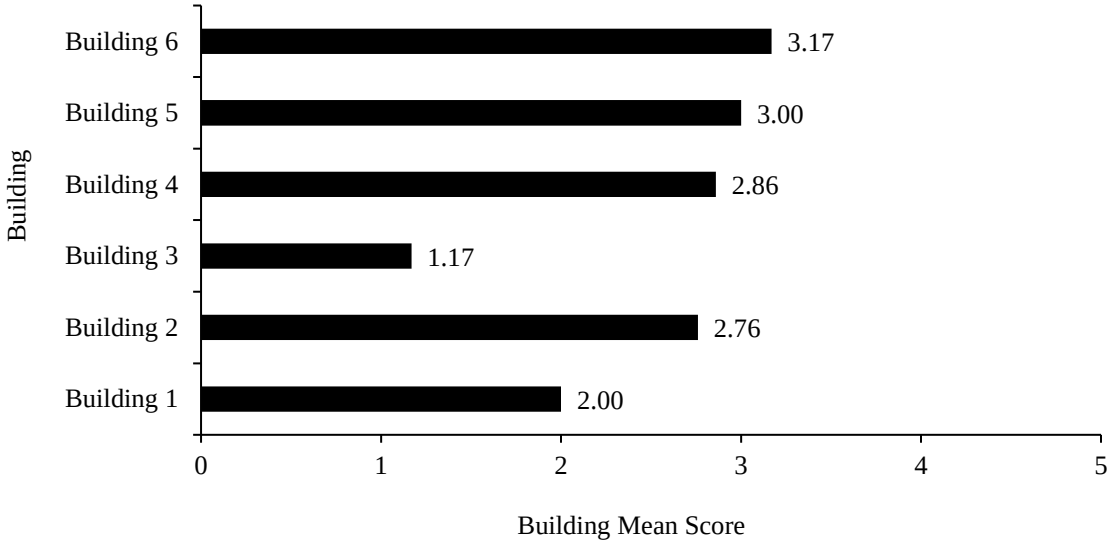
2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 5



MLQ survey statement 8 gathered data based on the amount of focus the leader placed on failing to meet the building's goals and objectives. As shown in Figure 37, building 6 demonstrated the highest score, 3.17. Building 3 demonstrated the lowest score, 1.17, when responding to survey statement 8.

Figure 37

2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 8



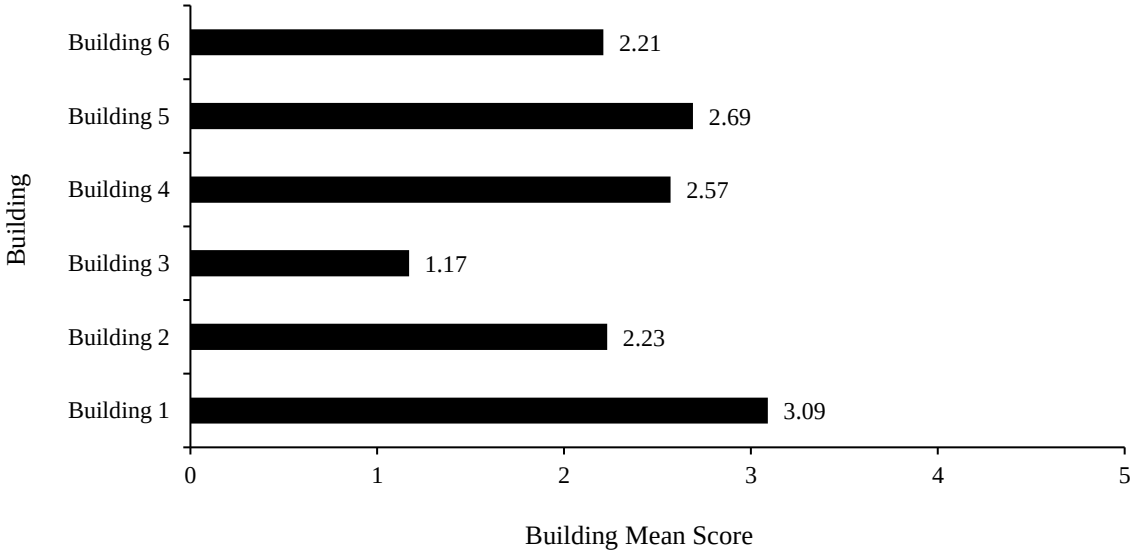
Passive Avoidant Data

MLQ survey statements 3, 6, and 9 were designed to indicate if the respondent perceived that their building principal demonstrated passive avoidant characteristics. A higher mean score indicated that the building principal demonstrated significant passive avoidant characteristics. A lower mean score indicated that the leader demonstrated less significant passive avoidant characteristics.

MLQ survey statement 3 gathered data based on the extent the leader failed to provide support within the early stages of staff members' issues. As shown in Figure 38, building 1 demonstrated the highest score, a 3.09. Building 3 demonstrated the lowest score, a 1.17 when responding to survey statement 3.

Figure 38

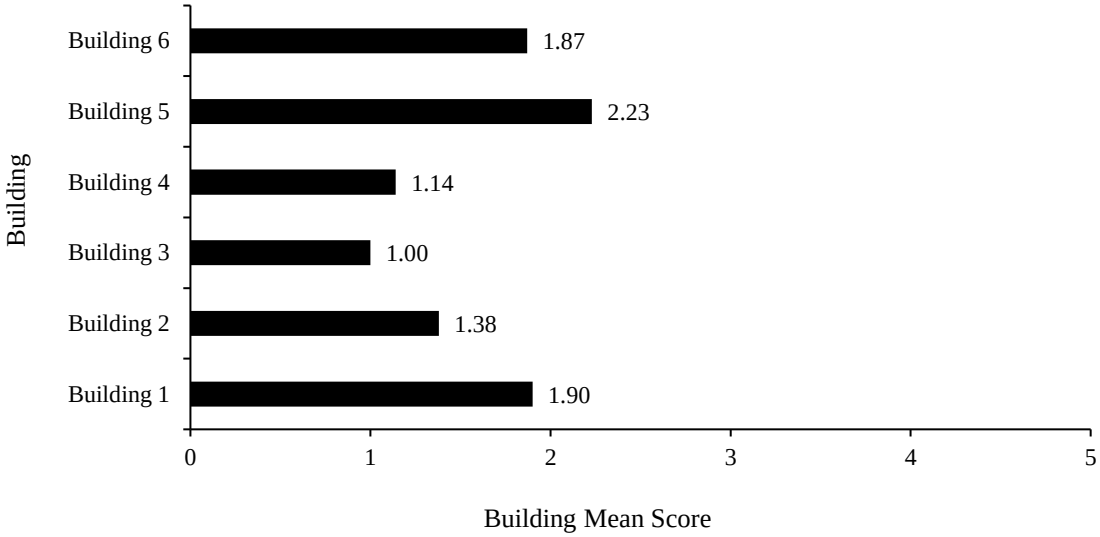
2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 3



MLQ survey statement 6 gathered data based on the extent that the leader failed to initiate decisive actions when needed. As shown in Figure 39, building 5 demonstrated the highest score, a 2.23. Building 3 demonstrated the lowest score, a 1.00, when responding to survey statement 6.

Figure 39

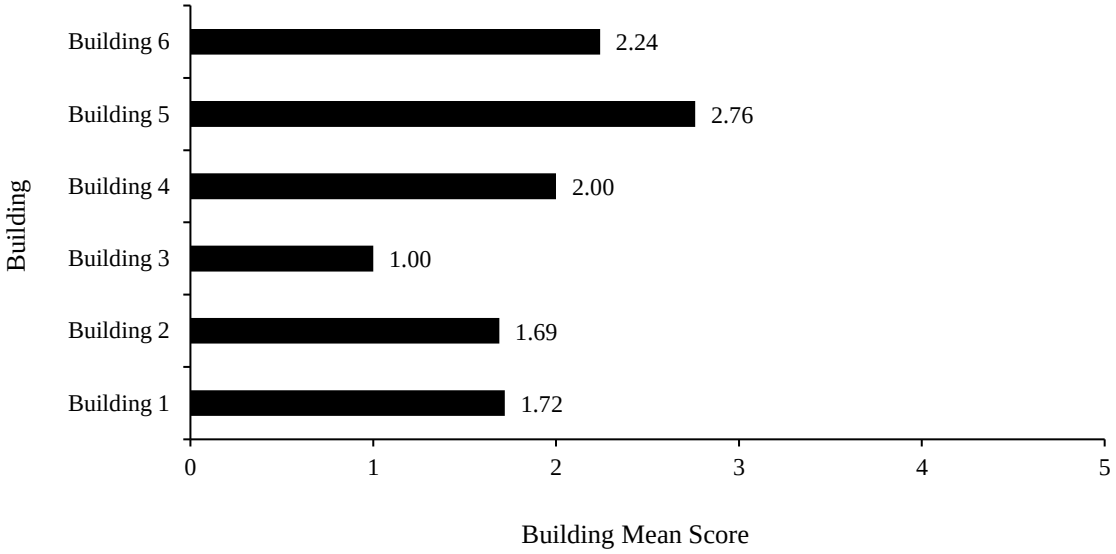
2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 6



MLQ survey statement 9 gathered data based on the extent the leader failed to respond to urgent matters in a timely manner. As shown in Figure 40, building 5 demonstrated the highest score, 2.76. Building 3 demonstrated the lowest score, a 1.00 when responding to survey statement 9.

Figure 40

2021 MLQ Building Mean Score for Survey Statement 9



Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient for Research Question 3

Research question 3 performed a PPMCC for each of the three leadership styles to determine if there was a correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. The transformational leadership style PPMCC results revealed an *r*-value of 0.8505, and a *p*-value of 0.03186. The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a strong positive correlation between organizational climate scores and transformational leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

The transactional leadership style PPMCC results revealed an *r*-value of 0.1303, and a *p*-value of 0.8056. The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a weak positive

relationship between the transactional leadership survey responses in comparison to the 2021–2022 School District A Climate scores.

The passive avoidant PPMCC results revealed a *r*-value of -0.8583, and a *p*-value of 0.02871. The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a strong negative correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

Summary

Chapter Four began with a review of the purpose of the study, as well as the problem that was addressed. A description of the contents of the survey instruments were included. An overview of the data was presented revealing the results of the study.

Chapter Five will include a brief review of the major elements of the study, as well as provide a preview of the major topics of this study including the conclusions and findings. It will also entail the implications for practice including the impact targeted measures have on improving school climate, the importance building leadership styles have on school climate, and the effect COVID-19 have on school climate. Finally, recommendations for future studies will be addressed, followed by the summary.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

Chapter Five introductory paragraphs contain a brief review of the major elements of the study, including the conclusions and findings. This chapter also provides the implications for practice including the impact targeted measures have on improving school climate, the importance building leadership styles have on school climate, and the effect COVID-19 have on school climate. Lastly, recommendations for future studies are addressed, followed by the summary.

Findings

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Research Question One

Research question one was designed to examine the significance targeted measures for improving school climate had at the organizational level, by analyzing the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 building climate means. The Mann-Whitney *U* Test generated a *p*-value of 0.936. The null hypothesis was not rejected, concluding there was no statistical difference before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

Mann-Whitney U Analysis for Research Question Two

Research question two was designed to examine the significance targeted measures for improving school climate had at the building level through the utilization of a Mann-Whitney *U* Test. The Mann-Whitney *U* Test analyzed the overall means of the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 climate survey for each of the six buildings included in the study. The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 1 revealed a *p*-value of 0.01003. The null hypothesis was rejected for building 1. This indicated a significant difference between

building climate scores before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 1.

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 2 revealed a *p*-value of 0.1638 and indicated that the null hypothesis was not rejected for building 2. This indicated no significant difference between building climate scores before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 2. The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 3 revealed a *p*-value of 0.109 and $H2_0$ was not rejected for building 3. This indicated no significant difference between building climate scores before and after the implementation of targeted motivational efforts.

The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 4 revealed a *p*-value of 0.002571. The null hypothesis was rejected for building 4. This indicated a significant difference between building climate scores before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 4. The Mann-Whitney *U* for building 5 revealed a *p*-value of 0.4185 and $H2_0$ was not rejected for building 5. This indicated no significant difference between building climate scores before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 5. Finally, the Mann-Whitney *U* for building 6 revealed a *p*-value of 0.0004873 and $H2_0$ was rejected, supporting $H2_a$ for building 1. This indicated a significant difference between building climate scores before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers for building 6.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient for Research Question Three

A PPMCC was used to analyze the data gathered to answer research question three. A separate PPMCC was used to examine each of the three leadership styles to determine if there was a correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers. The transformational PPMCC revealed an *r*-value of 0.8505, indicating a strong correlation between organizational climate scores and transformational leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

The transactional leadership style PPMCC results revealed an *r*-value of 0.1303 and the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated a small correlation between the transactional leadership survey responses in comparison to the 2021–2022 School District A Climate scores. The passive avoidant leadership style PPMCC results revealed an *r*-value of -0.8583 and the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated a strong negative correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

Conclusions

Research Question 1:

What is the difference between organizational climate in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

This research was based on the social identity approach, which focused on the dynamics of whether individuals perceived or did not perceive themselves as a member within a specified group. (Smith & Mackie, 2020). This study particularly was grounded by questioning the concept if certified staff members perceived or did not perceive to possess a sense of belonging within their school organization. Scholars concurred that individuals who felt as though they belonged as a part of their organization, achieved a stronger sense of synergy and were able to achieve mutual goals (Antonio et al., 2000; Sabri et al., 2011).

To increase a strong sense of synergy among certified staff members, School District A began implementing targeted motivational efforts at the building level in the school years 2018-2019. Although this was done at the building level, the goal of School District A was to improve school climate at the organizational level. Because scholars agreed that an individual's social identity was largely dependent on this sense of positive group-based pride, 2018-2019 district climate survey data was compared to 2020-2021 district climate survey data to determine what significance, if any, motivational efforts contributed toward achieving a greater sense of belonging within the organization (Harth et al., 2013; Mackie et al., 2000).

The findings suggested that despite the school implementing targeted measures to improve school climate, the overall organizational climate failed to significantly improve. Although the district climate team initiated targeted measures, the Mann-Whitney *U* analysis revealed that there was no significant increase in the overall perceived success of the members within School District A. This may be largely due to situational factors, such as the characteristics of leaders and followers considered to have significant

moderating effects between leadership behavior, as well as team effectiveness (Pratoom, 2018; Schaubroeck et al., 2007). As a result, this study determined that moderating factors, such as leadership style and targeted measures at the building level contributed to school climate.

Research Question 2:

What is the difference between building climate scores in School District A before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

Researchers concurred that creating and maintaining a positive building climate benefited all students and teachers by ensuring they felt welcome, safe, and supported (Berkowitz, 2022; La Salle, 2020; Wang & Degol, 2016). While studies have shown building a positive building climate yields a stronger sense of teacher well-being and retention, other studies have associated a negative building climate with an increase in teacher exhaustion and burnout (Hansen et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022). Because Demiröz (2020) discerned that building climate can either have positive or negative effects on individuals such as teachers, this study also studied the effects targeted motivational efforts school climate had, if any, at the building level, as well.

The following Mann-Whitney *U* scores resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis, consequently indicating a significant difference: building 1 revealed a *p*-value of 0.01003, building 4 revealed a *p*-value of 0.002571, and building 6 revealed a *p*-value of 0.0004873. This was clearly supported through further comparison of the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 building climate means. The climate mean scores for buildings 2 and 5 all demonstrated a significant increase before and after the implementation of targeted

measures, as perceived by teachers. Research revealed that the climate among buildings 2 and 5 was likely associated with a greater sense of trust among the leaders and certified teachers (Van Knippenberg & Van Knippenberg, 2005).

The following Mann-Whitney *U* scores failed to reject the null hypothesis, and consequently lacked an indication of a significant difference: building 2 revealed a *p*-value of 0.1638, building 3 revealed a *p*-value of 0.109, and building 5 revealed a *p*-value of 0.4185. This was evident through further comparison the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 building climate means, as well. The climate mean scores for buildings 1, 3, 4, and 6 all demonstrated a significant decrease before and after the implementation of targeted measures, as perceived by teachers. Research suggests that because buildings 1, 3, 4, and 6 were associated with a lack of school connectedness, individuals within these building are likely due to experience adverse physical and emotional effects and may include a higher rate of bully victimization (Abraczinskas, 2022). Because research indicated that leadership styles and building climate were inextricably intertwined, this study further sought to prove the correlation, if any, between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles (Atasoy, 2020; Bisson et al., 2021).

Research Question 3:

What is the correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers?

Scholars substantiated that despite leadership being affected by many factors, leadership style played a major role in achieving organizational goals (Chan, 2002; Komalasari, 2020; Syafmawati, 2020). The Full Range Leadership Theory, developed by

Bass and Avolio (1993) suggested every leader could potentially possess one of the following leadership behaviors: transformational, transactional, or passive avoidant. Because research suggested leadership styles were so crucial to maintain positive interpersonal relationships among students, staff, and administrators, this study sought to determine what correlation, if any, there was between organizational climate and leadership styles (Atasoy, 2020; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978; Jalapang & Raman, 2020).

Bass (1985) suggested that transformational leaders contributed greater toward the organization in relation to transactional or passive avoidant leadership styles, because transformational leaders possessed the capability to form better relationships among members within the organization. Transformational relationships were presumed to be more effective than transactional and passive avoidant leadership relationships, they were built largely on working cooperatively with staff members, contributing toward a significant increase in work performance (Robinson, 2021). The PPMCC score substantiated these claims by yielding an *r*-value of 0.8505, the most significant positive outcome of the leadership scores, concluding a strong correlation between organizational climate and transformational leadership styles. Because the transformational leadership correlation score had the strongest positive correlation of the three leadership styles, it is safe to confirm that this leadership style contributed the greatest toward organizational climate scores and transformational leadership styles before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers.

In contrast to the transformational leader, the transactional leader's capability to maintain an efficient organization was based largely on meeting goals and expectations

through benefits and rewards (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Robinson 2010). The transactional leadership style PPMCC results revealed a weak, yet positive *r*-value of 0.1303 and the null hypothesis indicated a small correlation between the transactional leadership survey responses in comparison to the 2021–2022 School District A Climate scores. This confirmed previous research, which suggested that although transactional leadership styles were more inclined to yield negative results, positive results could be obtained through motivation to achieve the organizations goals (Zareen et al. (2015). The transactional leadership results also confirmed the research of Tontong and Yusof (2022), which stated that relations between transactional leaders and their followers were weaker than transformational leaders.

Finally, passive avoidant leadership management was characterized with a hands-off approach, lending to situations where leaders quickly lost their authority (Schimmoeller, 2010; Simpson et al., 2002; Yang et al., 2022). Research overwhelmingly agreed that the laissez-faire, or passive avoidant leadership style mainly resulted in negative outcomes for members within the organization (Jamali et al., 2022; Luthans et al., 2017; Schimmoeller, 2010). These claims were confirmed within the PPMCC results, which revealed an *r*-value of -0.8583, the lowest leadership score within this study. This dramatically low score indicated a strong negative correlation between organizational climate scores and building leadership styles in School District A after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate, as perceived by teachers, thus confirming that the passive avoidant leadership style did yield the most negative results.

Implications for Practice

The Impact Targeted Measures Had on Improving School Climate

Research regarding whether targeted motivational efforts significantly impact school climate was seemingly nonexistent, so this study aimed to answer that question at both the organizational and building levels. Although results from this study failed to prove that the implementation of targeted measures improved school climate at the organizational level, targeted measures did prove essential toward a significant increase in school climate among two of the six school buildings within School District A. Because school climate was dependent upon several factors, it was very difficult to derive one central concept toward achieving positive school climate at significant levels enough to improve climate at the organizational level (Arhin, 2018; Johnson, 2022).

As a result, further trends in the mean comparisons should be identified, so that the researcher can provide building administrators with the information necessary to improve climate at the building level, and consequently the organizational level, as well. Specifically, this requires further trends to be identified in the mean comparisons of the questions listed on the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 district climate surveys for School District A (See Figures 1-30). By doing so, lower mean score trends can be identified, and the researcher can utilize district climate questions to narrow specific targeted motivational efforts necessary for improvement. This will allow the researcher to provide building administrators with specific areas of improvement necessary within their building so that school climate efforts are maximized and therefore become more effective.

The Importance Building Leadership Styles Had on School Climate

Research showed that leadership styles and building climate were intertwined (Atasoy, 2020; Cansoy et al., 2021; Goksoy, 2021). Goksoy (2021) argued leadership styles which contributed toward a more democratic management cultivated a higher amount of respect among members by sustaining a sense of trust. Research within this study confirmed this suggestion.

This is because the qualities among transformational leadership styles, known as the 4 I's, more closely reflected such democratic traits (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Specifically, the transformational leadership style PPMCC outcomes yielded the most significant positive outcome of the leadership scores. Thus, concluding the strongest positive correlation between organizational climate and transformational leadership styles.

Zareen et al. (2015) argued even though the majority of transactional leadership studies more closely modeled negative school leadership results, it was still possible to obtain positive results. This study also confirmed previous research, when transactional PPMCC results revealed a weak positive correlation between the transactional leadership survey responses in comparison to the climate scores. Finally, the passive avoidant leadership style results concluded a strong negative correlation between organizational climate and passive avoidant leadership. This came as no surprise, the majority of studies found this leadership style to be ineffective (Al-Malki & Juan, 2018; Jamali et al., 2022).

Although findings within this study confirmed previous research, the MLQ was only administered to certified teachers, in which they rated what they perceived their building leaders' leadership style to be. Therefore, future studies should seek to include

additional research inquiring to what extent principals perceive their own leadership styles to be transformational, transactional, or passive avoidant. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) form can also be used to gather information for an examination of building administrators' perceptions of their own leadership style.

Descriptive Statistics can then be initiated for a mean and standard deviation comparison to identify any trends among the data. This will aid in the determination of whether building administrators' perceptions of their leadership styles are consistent with the perceptions of how their staff members view them as leaders. Finally, a correlation analysis can also be included to examine Cronbach's Alpha scores to identify any trends among the transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles.

The Effect COVID-19 Had on School Climate

Although it proved very difficult to isolate a single variable that contributed to negative school climate results, it is imperative to discuss the effects a devastating virus had on the study. It is essential to recall that in January 2020, the Corona virus, or COVID-19, spread across the globe causing educational institutions to shut down temporarily or even completely (Ciotti et al., 2021; Garcia Docampo, 2021). These shutdowns led to increased educational gaps and emotional distress, negatively impacting staff and students alike (Alexander et al., 2007; Oberg et al., 2022). Because the study included climate survey results after the COVID-19 pandemic spread to the United States, negative mitigating factors, such as those previously stated may be the reason that despite educators taking measures to continue educational rigor and support a positive building climate, results from the Mann-Whitney *U* test for research question one

concluded there was no statistical difference before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate.

Recommendations for Future Research

Because positive school climate has been proven to yield numerous amounts of positive outcomes, such as increased self-esteem and risk prevention while decreasing absenteeism and behavioral and disciplinary actions, studies should seek to further research this topic (Berg et al., 2022; Hansen et al., 2021). Specifically, further research should seek to incorporate and target the effects on minority groups, because a connection was discovered among low socioeconomic families and a lack of school connectedness between students and teachers (Coulter et al., 2021). Studies also attributed higher percentages of teacher retention in relation to positive building climate (Hansen et al., 2021).

Consequently, further studies should seek to identify whether those teachers who associated their building with a more positive school climate, were also associated with higher levels of retention. Yang et al. (2022) discovered that negative building climate was ascribed with an increase in teacher burnout and exhaustion. Future studies can also investigate the correlation among participants who may be associated with less positive school climate and determine if this led to a decrease in teacher retention. All the recommendations for future research are vital because studies indicate that school climate data is essential, due to its effects on student outcomes (Cohen, 2009).

Further research should include an investigation measuring COVID-19 stress factors in relation to certified teachers' and building administrators' perceived climate. The Teacher Stress Inventory-Short survey could be used by calculating a total stress

score including a five-factor scale score regarding specific sources of teachers' and administrators' stress (Zurlo et. al, 2013). A statistical test could then be used to determine the correlation, if any, between stress factors and organization and building climate. Hoofman and Secord (2021) affirmed that not only has COVID-19 caused negative adverse effects on individuals within the educational setting but suggested that it would continue to do so for many years to come. Although, while society has been and will continue to be affected by COVID-19, researchers will also continue to study the effects on education by the pandemic (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020).

Summary

This study was guided by the social identity approach by identifying the importance of staff and student connectedness within organizational and building school climate. The social identity theory was based off the importance of individuals feeling valued within their social group (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Brown & Abrams, 1986; Doise, 1978; Hogg & Turner, 1985). Because scholars agreed that this type of synergy led to the overall effectiveness of an organization, this study aimed to determine what role leadership styles played among school climate (Antonio et al., 2000; Sabri et al., 2011). Because the management of how a leader directed the organization toward its goals and missions was vital, this study also sought to determine how targeted measures affected school climate at both the organization and building levels (Point Loma Nazarene University, 2022).

Chapter Five included the findings of this study. These findings included no statistical significance mean score before and after the implementation of targeted measures for improving school climate. Findings also indicated a statistically significant

mean score for buildings 1, 4, and 6 for research question two. Findings indicated a strong positive correlation for the transformational leadership style, a weak positive correlation for the transactional leadership style, and a strong negative correlation for the passive avoidant leadership style.

The most significant conclusions drawn from this study were that COVID-19 could have played a major role in the lack of a significant increase in school climate for research question one. Because research at the organizational level is affected by so many factors, research question two aimed to identify if targeted motivational efforts at the building level yielded significant results. Research question two results did reveal a slight increase in building climate among three out of the six school buildings.

Three implications for practice were identified. The first implication was the impact targeted measures had on improving school climate. The second implication was the importance building leadership styles had on school climate. The third implication was the effect COVID-19 had on school climate.

Finally, recommendations for future research were provided. One recommendation was for further research to focus on the effects targeted interventions have on minority groups. A second recommendation was for further research to explore if there was a correlation between teachers who associated their building with a positive climate and higher levels of teacher retention. The final recommendation was for further research to investigate the impact COVID-19 stress factors had on school climate, as perceived by teachers and administrators.

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Appendix A

Permission Letter

Date: April 07,2021
RE: Permission to Conduct Research in the XXXX School District
To: XXXX, Superintendent of Schools

I am writing to request permission to conduct research in the XXXX School District. I am currently pursuing my doctorate through Lindenwood University and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled *An Investigation of the Impact Targeted Motivational Efforts and Leadership Styles Have on School Climate*. I am asking permission to invite the building principals and certified staff members from XXXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX 6th Grade Center, XXXX Middle, and XXXX High to participate in the Bass's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The purpose of the survey is to determine the perceived leadership styles of each building principal.

If you agree, please sign below, scan this page, and email to me, Ashley Galloway, at ag175@lindenwood.edu.

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

Mrs. Ashley Galloway
Doctoral Student at Lindenwood University

Approved by:

_____
Print name and title here

_____ _____
Signature Date

Appendix B

Head Principal Letter of Participation

Date: June 29, 2021

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is Ashley Galloway, and I am requesting your participation in my doctoral dissertation research project at Lindenwood University. The study is *An Investigation of the Impact Targeted Motivational Efforts and Leadership Styles Have on School Climate*. Participants will be asked to complete a 15-minute online questionnaire. We are conducting this study to identify if there is a significant correlation between administrative leadership style and building climate.

I have received permission to conduct research from the XXXX School District. In order to conduct my research, I will invite building administrators and certified teachers via email to participate in the completion of a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Participants will be sent a link to access the questionnaire online. The questionnaire should take 15 minutes or less to complete.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. All information obtained through this research will be reported anonymously. I will only receive the anonymous data collected from the survey. Survey participants will indicate consent by completing the research instrument but may also review the informed consent form attached to this email.

In addition to participating in the questionnaire, I would also like to request, that you as building principal email a copy of the Participation Letter, Research Information Sheet, and the questionnaire link to all other principals in your building and all certified teachers.

Thank you in advance to those willing to participate and support this study. I hope the results of this study will identify any significant correlations between administrative leadership style and building climate. If you have questions, you can contact me at ag175@lindenwood.edu. Dr. Shelly Fransen, the dissertation chair for this research project, may be contacted at sfransen@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you for your time,

Mrs. Ashley Galloway
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix C

Research Information Sheet

LINDENWOOD

Survey Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire conducted by Mrs. Ashley Galloway and Dr. Shelly Fransen at Lindenwood University. We are doing this study to determine if a specific leadership style contributes to a greater positive climate within a building. This questionnaire measures a broad range of leadership types from passive leaders, to leaders who give contingent rewards to followers, to leaders who transform their followers into becoming leaders themselves. It will take about 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or 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:
Ashley Galloway; Ag175@lindenwood.edu
Dr. Shelly; sfransen@lindenwood.edu

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 D

Participation Letter for Building Principals and Certified Teachers

Date: June 29, 2021

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is Ashley Galloway, and I am requesting your participation in my doctoral dissertation research project at Lindenwood University. The study is entitled *An Investigation of the Impact Targeted Motivational Efforts and Leadership Styles Have on School Climate*. Participants will be asked to complete a 15-minute online questionnaire. We are conducting this study to identify if there is a significant correlation between administrative leadership style and building climate.

I have received permission to conduct research from the XXXX School District. In order to conduct my research, I will invite building administrators and certified teachers via email to participate in the completion of a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Participants will be sent a link to access the questionnaire online. The questionnaire should take 15 minutes or less to complete.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. All information obtained through this research will be reported anonymously. I will only receive the anonymous data collected from the survey. Survey participants will indicate consent by completing the research instrument but may also review the informed consent form attached to this email.

Thank you in advance to those willing to participate and support this study. I hope the results of this study will identify any significant correlations between administrative leadership style and building climate. If you have questions, you can contact me at ag175@lindenwood.edu. Dr. Shelly Fransen, the dissertation chair for this research project, may be contacted at sfransen@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you for your time,

Mrs. Ashley Galloway
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix E

Letter of Permission to use Bass's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below.
Sample Items:

As a leader ….

I talk optimistically about the future.
I spend time teaching and coaching.
I avoid making decisions.

The person I am rating….
Talks optimistically about the future.
Spends time teaching and coaching.
Avoids making decisions

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

Vita

Ashley Nichole Galloway was born on January 27, 1979, in Gulfport, Mississippi. She graduated high school with honors from White Oak High School in 1997. She obtained her Undergraduate Degree in Forensic Science with a minor in Criminal Justice through Chaminade University. She then entered the United States Army to enroll in the student loan repayment program where she successfully resolved herself of $59,000 in student loans. She then became a stay-at-home mom for several years. Upon her children enrolling into school, she decided to continue her education and pursued a Master's Degree in Education Administration through Lindenwood University in December of 2019. She furthered her education and also obtained a Specialist Degree in Educational Administration through Lindenwood University in December of 2020.