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Power strategies used by elementary school principals as perceived by elementary school teachers.

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POWER STRATEGIES USED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS PERCEIVED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

BY
MARGARET CECCACCI

A Thesis
Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research
Through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education at the
University of Windsor

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February, 1998
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ABSTRACT

POWER STRATEGIES USED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS PERCEIVED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

This quantitative research study examined power strategies used by principals as perceived by elementary school teachers. Seven power strategies, proposed by Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980), were examined. Following a correlation analysis of these strategies for this particular study, six out of the seven were collapsed into two main types of power identified by Hersey & Blanchard (1988): positional power (assertiveness, upward appeal, sanctions) and personal power (ingratiation, exchange and coalition). The seventh power strategy, rationality, has been examined separately.

The primary intent of the research was an exploratory investigation of the power strategies used by principals as perceived by elementary school teachers. Power was treated as a dependent variable, while the independent variables included the teachers' perceptions and a variety of demographic variables including gender of principals, years of experience as principal, and gender of teachers.
Data for this study were collected from three local school boards. One hundred and twenty-nine elementary school teachers completed the "Perception of Principal Power Tactic Survey" developed by Lemon and Porter (1988). This survey measured influential power strategies used by principals as perceived by their respective teachers. The teachers were asked to respond to 41 items by indicating the frequency with which their principal engaged in the particular activity.

Data were analyzed using two-way ANOVA tests. Teachers perceived a significant difference in the use of personal and positional power strategies. Teachers perceived their principals to use personal power strategies more frequently than positional powers strategies. Male and female principals were perceived to use the same amount of both personal and positional power, however, male and female teachers did perceive female principals to use significantly more rationality than male principals.

Finally, teachers did not perceive principals with different years of experience as principal to use dissimilar amounts of positional power, however, principals with less than five years and greater than 15 years experience as principal were perceived to use personal power strategies more frequently than principals with five to 15 years of experience.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thanks is also extended to the Directors of Education and to the principals for their cooperation and to all the teachers from the three local school boards in Southwestern Ontario who participated in this study. Your interest in educational research is an indication of your sincere dedication to the teaching profession.

I would also like to thank my family and friends who provided me with ongoing support and encouragement. A special thanks to my mother, Josephine, who has given me unconditional love and guidance in both my personal and professional lives and to my best friend, Sergio who is an endless source of support, motivation and faith. Finally, to my father,
Guido, who is unable to be here to share in the joy of achieving this special goal. Although I lost you at a young age, your spirit, love for life and determination to strive to be the best that you could be will live within me forever. I dedicate this thesis to you.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Research has been put to many uses. A major use has been to help leaders become more effective. In this light, research continues to attempt to define the qualities of good leaders by examining their behaviour (Fairholm & Fairholm, 1984; Jacobs, 1991; Landry, Porter, & Lemon, 1989). While leadership theories have changed over the last fifty years, one factor has consistently been found to be significant. The way a leader uses power and authority is still considered to be one of the most important indicators of effective leadership (Mazzarella & Smith, 1989). According to Bennis and Nannus (1985), “power is the basic energy needed to initiate and sustain action, and leadership is the wise use of power” (p. 17).

Although the use of power is considered to be one of the most familiar and crucial behaviours in any organization, it has become one of the most avoided and discomforting dynamics of educational leadership (Herlihy & Herlihy, 1985). A similar opinion is expressed by other researchers. Bennis and Nannus (1985) argue that power is frequently seen as something to be avoided and ignored because it is generally perceived to
be an insensitive and corruptive trait. In their opinion, "power is at once the most necessary and most distrusted element exigent to human progress" (p. 16). Such confusion and mistrust can be blamed in part on the historical misuse and misunderstanding of power (Gross, 1985).

The term "power" has been misunderstood and misused for many years. According to Bennis and Nannus (1985), "historically, leaders have controlled rather than organised, administered repression rather than expression, and held their followers in arrestment rather than in evolution" (p.16). The term 'power' was most commonly associated with the hierarchical order of an organization and with the giving of orders. Unfortunately, this perception is often employed today. Bennis and Nannus have associated the word power with words such as "ultimate," "veto," and "final." They argue that the positive aspects of power often go unnoticed due to two realities: the promotion of negative connotations of the term power and the neglect of the issue of power within an organization.

As noted by Richardson and Thomson (1982) and Weller (1987), positive aspects of power do exist and need to be recognized. An understanding and the appropriate handling of power are crucial to the operation of any organization, including school systems. Muth (1984)
classifies power as a central element in organizations, and as fundamental to schooling. Robbins (1995) shares an opinion similar to that of Muth. He argues that power is a reality in any organization and stresses the importance of learning how power is acquired and exercised so that organizational behaviour can be better understood. In turn, leaders will be better able to use their knowledge to help them be more effective managers.

One of the most significant challenges facing leaders pertains to their use of power within the organization (Porter & Lemon, 1988). Traditionally, principals have been viewed as utilizing power and influence over their respective staff members. Unfortunately, this authoritarian and hierarchical leadership approach encourages little involvement in decision making from staff members. In time, overall school performance and success may decline. This opinion is shared by many (Gross, 1985; Macy, 1983; Porter & Lemon, 1988).

According to Macy (1983), “power over is dysfunctional to the social system because it inhibits diversity and feedback, it obstructs self-organizing life processes, fosters system disintegration, and restricts our vision and movement (p. 30). Macy goes on to say that power “reduces our flexibility and responsiveness and cuts us off from fuller and freer
participation in life - and also from the capacity to enhance it” (p. 31).

Gross (1985) claims that principals who impose their power and authority do so at the expense of the teachers with whom they work and at the sacrifice of a positive school climate.

The *power with* concept introduced by Macy (1983) encourages an open system whereby power progresses from the bottom-up rather than from the top-down. Lee Iacocca was the president of Chrysler, one of the biggest automobile companies in North America. He has become historically renowned for his ability to rescue a multi-billion dollar company from bankruptcy. His strategy was based on Macy’s philosophy. By empowering his employees, Iacocca improved employee morale and helped employees develop a sense of meaning in their work.

Principals can no longer influence employees in the ways they once did. Fairholm and Fairholm (1984) maintain that “a positive organizational climate is achieved by the interaction of mutually dependent people; and, unless their power is properly balanced and controlled, the organization’s goals will not be met” (p. 68).

The absence of power can be detrimental to both the morale and productivity of an organization. It is the basic energy needed to initiate and
sustain action. Power is the quality without which leaders cannot lead (Bennis & Nannus, 1985). As stated in Robbins (1995), “leaders achieve goals, and power is a means of facilitating their achievement” (p. 463). McClelland (1971) claims that power strategies should be used to assist leaders in finding goals that will motivate the group, and to provide group members with the resources, confidence, and competence to achieve these goals. Principals need to recognize and, more importantly, practise the strategies that have the greatest potential to influence others and to enhance the job satisfaction, commitment, and cooperation of all interested groups.

Understanding and properly exercising power facilitates the development of an effective organization. Fairholm and Fairholm (1984) argue that “the use of power by managers is ethically acceptable and effective when there is an understanding that all individuals in an organized relationship possess and use power” (p. 68).

Macy’s (1983) “power with” approach has been the basis for a significant amount of research regarding the use of power by principals. These researchers conclude that school principalship is a position of power, and how principals use that power can make a difference in the efforts to achieve quality education (Jacobs, 1991; Porter & Lemon, 1988).
According to Landry, Porter and Lemon (1989), the principal is the key agent for change in schools; therefore, effective school change is substantially dependent on the appropriate use of power by the principal.

The frequency of use of power strategies by principals is a key issue addressed in the present study. Regular assessment and feedback about one's performance is considered essential to the effective performance of one's duties (Ivancevish & Matteson, 1996; Robbins, 1995). Hart (1992) contends that practices of principal evaluation have not kept pace in focus, sophistication, or reliability with changes in schools and schooling or with developments in teacher evaluation. Principal evaluation remains an underdeveloped aspect of education research and development (p. 37). Regular feedback to principals from both their leaders and by teachers may assist in improving the relationship between the principal and staff and consequently improve the overall functioning of the school.

A second key issue addressed in the present study pertains to gender issues in leadership. As mentioned, many inconsistencies in literature are noted with regards to differences between male and female principals. Developing a better understanding of whether and how male and female
principals are perceived differently by their teachers may assist principals in recognizing and re-evaluating effective and ineffective power strategies.

Researchers have also examined the effect of years of experience as principal on the use of power strategies (Lyons and Murphy, 1994; Robyak, Goodyear & Prange, 1987; Wilkes and Love-Wilkes, 1989. Years of experience and gender are very important issues that affects one’s effectiveness as principal. The present study is pursued to clarify the inconsistencies in literature with regards to this issue.

A selected examination of literature on power, including a detailed analysis of studies, is included in Chapter Two. A statement of the purpose of the present study, the research questions, and the hypotheses, are also contained therein. Chapter Three describes the research design and methodology of the study as well as the instrument used and the analysis procedures. Chapter Four addresses demographic information, a preliminary analysis as well as detailed analysis of the data collected. Chapter Five highlights the significance and limitations of the study, followed by implications and recommendations for the future.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Gross (1985), the word "power" comes from the French word "potere," meaning "to be able." Northcraft and Neale (1994) identify power as being made up of two specific parts. Firstly, it is part of a relationship among people within a social system. It follows, therefore, that outside of this specific social system, a power relationship may not exist. Secondly, power is the resource for influence and control of the individual behaviour of others. According to the "Theory of Social Exchange" proposed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), power is created when one’s needs are dependent upon another person. In this situation, needs are fulfilled in exchange for changes in the person’s personal thoughts (influence) or actions (control). This theory can be applied to any type of organization where influence is necessary and change is common.

Sources of Power

Power is obtained in a variety of ways in an organization. Although many theorists have formulated different power classification models, the relationship among people within an organization with respect to power is best
explained in the classification system devised by French and Raven (1968).
This theory appears to be the most concise and popular (Ivancevish & Matteson, 1996; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Porter & Lemon, 1988; Robbins, 1995).

French and Raven (1968) distinguish five main sources of power:
reward power, coercive power, expert power, legitimate power, and referent power.

**Reward power.** Reward power is based on the control of resources valued by another. Therefore, reward power gives the leader the opportunity to reward an individual in exchange for a desired behaviour. According to French and Raven, both monetary rewards, such as pay raises and promotions, and non-monetary rewards, such as praise and recognition, are commonly used in organizations. It is important for leaders to become aware of the rewards that are most likely to be intrinsically motivating in order for reward power to be effective.

**Coercive power.** The source of coercive power is defined by French and Raven as fear. One reacts to this power out of fear of the negative results that might occur if one fails to comply. As with reward power, coercive power involves the ability to manipulate. A significant distinction, however, between
these two types of power is that while reward power may result in independent behaviours, the effects of coercive power will continue to be dependent on the situation. Coercive power can be effective if used to eliminate warranted and inappropriate behaviours. If overused, however, the leader's personal power can become jeopardized. For example, if principals make continual threats, yet never carry them out, they may soon lose credibility with their staff and consequently not be taken seriously in the future.

**Legitimate power.** French and Raven consider legitimate power as the most complex source of power. It is based on the authority of the individual to control the behaviour of others for their own personal gain. It stems from internalized values which dictate the right to influence another person. Cultural values, acceptance of the social structure, and designation by a legitimizing agent are three key bases of legitimate power. Leaders who have not effectively established a positive relationship with followers have a tendency to overuse it. This is especially disliked by people who are able to perform independently yet are prevented from doing so due to leaders who dominate excessively.

**Expert power.** Expert power is based on the possession of special information, knowledge or ability. The strength of expert power is dependent
upon the amount of existing knowledge within a given area (French & Raven, 1968). Moreover, in order for expert influence to be successfully employed, trust and truthfulness must exist between the two parties involved. Overall, expert power is widely accepted throughout many organizations.

**Referent power.** French and Raven (1968) associate referent power with the feeling of "oneness" between the two parties. Northcraft and Neale (1994) describe referent power as "individual power based on a high level of identification with, admiration of, or respect for the powerholder" (p. 307). If an order is inconsistent with the personal interests of teachers, it is not likely that the order will be followed. On the other hand, teachers will follow administrative orders most willingly and completely when they subjectively feel the orders are appropriate from the perspective of their personal value system (Bleecher, 1988). This is much more likely to occur if referent power exists, since it develops out of admiration of another and a desire to emulate that person. Like expert power, referent power is almost exclusively based on personal characteristics of the individual.

Cope (1972) identified the benefits and the impediments of each power source. Cope concluded that reward and coercive power are viewed as inappropriate and illegitimate sources of influence that create greater amounts
of stress for teachers than referent, expert, or legitimate power. He also reported that teachers who perceived their own principals to be using coercive or legitimate power felt significantly less social support from their principal. Abbey and Esposito (1985) also suggested that higher job satisfaction and less stress among teachers are related to principals who utilize referent and expert powers.

French and Raven’s (1968) classification of power continues to be highly utilized, however, some limitations of this classification model are addressed in a study by Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980). The first problem is that the power sources recognized in the classification system overlap with one another. This makes it difficult to distinguish the use of one power source from another. For example, effective and highly regarded principals may successfully influence their teachers based on the use of both expert and referent powers, as both of these sources of power are based on the development of respect and admiration. Therefore, it may be difficult to assess the influence ability of individual power sources. Secondly, when further studies were conducted to investigate influence strategies used by leaders, it was found that people do not exercise influence in ways predicted by rational classification schemes. This argument was first made in a study by Goodchild,
Quadrado, and Raven (1975) in which college students were asked to write a brief essay on the topic “How I got my way.” It was found that many of the influence tactics described by the students could not be classified into the preexisting classification model. In many cases, the use of the power sources, such as expert power, were not even mentioned by the students. These two major restrictions to French and Raven’s classification system encouraged others to further investigate power strategies used by leaders to influence others when attempting to change their behaviour.

**Types of Power**

Constant changes in educational policies relating to curriculum and instruction create an environment of mixed emotions. Some accept change openly and willingly, while others are more reluctant. Educational leaders are continually faced with the challenge of ensuring that these changes are successfully implemented. Researchers have stated that the way leaders influence or use their power is crucial to the effective implementation of changes. According to Fennel (1992), teachers in schools with greater collaboration and communication with the principal are less reluctant to change than teachers in schools with greater direct centralization and control by the principal. Bleecher (1988) states that “the authority of the position, the power
of the role, and the strength of the personality are insufficient in themselves to assure compliance with administrative orders” (p. 335). For these reasons, it is important that leaders are informed of strategies that will optimize commitment, cooperation, and one’s potential for influencing others (Landry, Porter & Lemon, 1989).

Hersey and Blanchard (1988) identify two general types of power used by organizational leaders to influence followers: positional power and personal power.

**Positional power.** Positional power is acquired when an individual is given the authority to exert influence over others. The right to issue rewards and punishments and to make legitimate requests are examples of positional power.

**Personal power.** Personal power comes from the willingness of subordinates to follow their leader. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) credit people with having “personal power” when their ability to influence is derived from their personality. The use of rational persuasion and personal regard are two sources of influence related to personal power. Contrary to positional power, personal power comes from the followers. It is dependent on how the
followers view the leader and can be earned on one day and taken away on another.

In the opinion of Adams and Bailey (1989), the principal should properly balance the use of both positional and personal power. Principals who frequently invoke status and authority will generally create an environment with little prestige and influence. Yet, motivation to work decreases among staff when the principal focuses too much time on ensuring that the staff is pleased and little time on the task at hand. Adams and Bailey state “a principal who ignores status and authority is only half-powerful and a principal who ignores prestige and influence is also only half-powerful” (p.86).

**Power Strategies Used To Influence Others**

Specific positional and personal power strategies have been suggested by several theorists. Fairholm and Fairholm (1984) identified sixteen power strategies that describe the power-related behaviour of managers and employees. Muth (1984) redefined the concept of power by relying on Weber’s definition of power, which focused on the use of some force to transact a power interaction. Muth depicted power as a continuum extending from interactions that depend on the use of force (coercion) to those that do not (influence). A highly recognized classification system of power strategies was
developed by Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (Porter & Lemon, 1988; Robbins, 1995). Their classification of power strategies to influence others provided the opportunity to systematically attempt to profile the use of power in a variety of organizational settings and at different levels as well as between various groups (Kipnis, et al., 1980).

Kipnis, et al. (1980) state that there are standardized ways by which powerholders attempt to get what they want. On the basis of two major studies, seven dimensions of influence were identified: assertiveness, ingratiation, rationality, sanctions, exchange, upward appeals, and coalitions. These power strategies are briefly discussed in two groups: positional power strategies and personal power strategies.

**Positional power strategies.** Positional power strategies include assertiveness, upward appeal and sanctions. Making demands and setting deadlines are examples of assertiveness. Upward appeal is an influential strategy used to place additional pressure to conform on the target by invoking the influence of higher levels in the organization. The final positional power strategy involves the use of sanctions such as administrative rewards and punishments to induce compliance.
**Personal power strategies.** Rationality, ingratiation, exchange, and coalition are considered to be personal power strategies. Rationality refers to explaining the reasons for a request. The power strategy referred to as ingratiation alludes to making others feel good. It is considered to be a weak and nonobtrusive influence strategy. Exchange is another type of personal power strategy. The purpose of this power strategy is to ensure that benefits are reciprocated. The final type of personal power strategy is called coalition. A leader who uses coalition to influence is concerned with gaining the support of a peer or subordinate group.

According to a study conducted by Porter and Lemon (1988), the use of the above mentioned power strategies should not be construed as either good or bad. What is important is that they be used appropriately in accomplishing the goals of the school. Their research did, however, recognize that, in the eyes of teachers, the frequency with which the various power strategies were used by principals affected the teaching and learning climates.

Principals are granted positional power for specific purposes. Ensuring that specific board policies are followed and supervision duties are honoured are just a few examples of times where the application of positional power is necessary. According to educational research, however, it appears that
personal power has greater impact on the organization than does positional power (Abbey & Esposito, 1985; Adams & Bailey, 1989). As stated by Keedy and Finch (1994), “judicious use of facilitative power by principals provides the organization stability within which teachers are empowered to influence appropriate workplace conditions” (p. 172). Principals who share their power with staff will consequently develop positive and constructive working relationships and maximize school success. Furthermore, the successful implementation of change is largely dependent upon the establishment of personal, rather than positional power. In fact, most teachers rank “prestigious” principals (principals who lead and influence by showing respect for others) higher than “status” principals (principals who lead and influence by depending on their administrative position). Another study showed that a bond of trust and mutual support between the principal and teacher are fundamental to quality education and school effectiveness (Landry, Porter & Lemon, 1989). This opinion is also shared by Wasserman (1986) who stated, “if you have personal power, it earns respect and may be the key to effective professional leadership” (p. 72).

Although more recent investigations into power strategies used by leaders have been conducted, most researchers continue to base their studies on
French and Raven's classification system. Therefore, power sources are mentioned more frequently in studies than the numerous personal and positional power strategies. Generally speaking, however, the five power sources mentioned earlier can be categorized into the two types of power strategies. Personal power strategies are characteristic of leaders who have obtained their power based on expert or referent influence. Conversely, positional power strategies are generally used by leaders who have obtained their power based on legitimate, reward, or coercive influence. It is important to take these associations into consideration when interpreting the following studies that have been conducted to investigate the effective and preferred power sources and strategies used by principals.

Hannaway and Crawson (1989) argue that teachers are politically sensitive to the powers employed by principals. Although more control-oriented principals may appear to have greater teacher compliance on the surface, there is convincing evidence that in such cases, teachers will reduce their overall involvement in their work, both quantitatively and qualitatively. They also claim that satisfied teachers are those who describe their relationship with the principal as positive, open, trusting, and collaborative. Schools that have been innovative and successful are found to have minimal status
differences between administrators and staff, greater staff involvement in planning, and an overall collegial atmosphere. Based on the findings of Lymas (1993), teacher dissatisfaction with their principal or work is associated with the use of coercive and reward power by the principal. Conversely, the use of expert and referent power by the principal is linked to teacher satisfaction with their principal and work. Lyons (1992) reached the similar conclusion that principal efficacy was positively related to expert and referent power and negatively related to legitimate, coercive and reward power.

Further findings indicate that the implementation of policies and programs in schools is greatly enhanced by the high degree of collaboration among the teachers performing the implementation (Barrett & Fudge, 1981; Common 1983; Deasy, 1984). Consequently, if the leadership behaviours of principals include both status and prestige, and if agreement about goals exceeds conflicts between the role of the principal and the personal needs of the teachers, “the enhanced climate will increase the probability of student learning in the classroom” (Adams & Bailey, 1989, p. 87).

Several researchers (Fennel, 1992; Gronn, 1984; Keedy & Finch, 1994; Northcraft & Neale, 1994) report that high degrees of horizontal communication and lower degrees of centralization have an overall positive
effect on implementation processes in schools. In fact, according to Bleecher (1988), “experienced principals are seen to use positional power only rarely” (p. 334). For example, a principal who seeks a specific change will first speak with key staff to determine the level of support for the change. Bleecher refers to this strategy as the ‘trial balloon technique,’ whereby the main objective is to avoid conflict which would result in a loss of power.

In the view of Keedy and Finch (1994), “as the roles of principals and teachers become realigned, the distinction between the use of personal power strategies and teacher empowerment becomes blurred such that the two processes become inseparable” (p.171). Empowerment is the alternative leadership behaviour to control and is non-bureaucratic functioning (Adams & Bailey, 1989). Adams and Bailey contend that leadership behaviour of empowerment increases personal autonomy in decisions of preference, choice, and judgment and increases innovation everywhere in the school. Essentially, by using empowerment, the principal is trading off control to get more control.

Effective principals should empower their teachers by promoting collaborative decision making, autonomy, innovation, and active behaviours among staff (Adams & Bailey, 1989). Empowerment is viewed as a means of enhancing teacher leadership, which in turn maximizes the overall
effectiveness of the school. These personal power strategies encourage decentralized decision making, reduce the degree to which administrators are perceived as comprising the visible center of schools, and promote solutions as a function of actors and not as a function of a bureaucratic system (Dunlop & Goldman, 1991). Power redistribution provides organizational stability within which teachers are empowered to influence workplace conditions (Keedy & Finch, 1994). Hanson, Morris, and Collins (1991) argue that principals will generally resist power redistribution only if it is believed that a loss of control will jeopardize their ability to meet responsibilities.

Northcraft and Neale (1994) outline two major consequences of inappropriately using power in organizations. Firstly, power holders who gave orders for change without reason were favoured less than power holders who used tactics such as bargaining and persuasion. Secondly, the possession of power can become addictive and can eventually lead to its misuse. In time, powerholders may come to believe that they are more worthy than their followers, and will justify the use of positional power strategies based on this belief. Such a reaction would be common in situations where a principal becomes defensive to events that demand actions that are inconsistent with his/her personal style. Consequently, this type of situation will encourage
leaders to use more direct and irrational power tactics such as coercion. When powerholders lose sight of the followers or are unable to deal with unexpected dilemmas, retaliatory measures are employed by the followers, which inevitably result in a loss of personal power within the organization.

Several studies have investigated the power strategies that are most and least effective and preferred and the consequent effects of both. Muth (1984) designed an empirical model that addresses and explains divergent outcomes of power acts. His model, whose efficacy is supported by three other studies (Devadoss, 1980; Muth, 1973; Thom, 1977), suggests that teachers perceive coercive power strategies, such as rewards and punishments, to be positively related to conflict and negatively related to consensus. Conversely, influential power strategies, such as referent modeling and the use of expert knowledge, are positively related to consensus and negatively related to conflict. Grace et al. (1987) interviewed thirteen principals who were identified by colleagues as outstanding. Their research verified the need for principals with the ability to relate to all kinds of people, to build cohesiveness and a feeling of family among staff and students, and to create a productive and effective learning climate. The use of personal power strategies such as fairness, objectivity,
open communication, conscientiousness, enthusiasm, sensitivity, and knowledge were identified as the most important behaviours of outstanding principals.

Although the descriptions of an effective leader by several researches are similar, relevant literature exposes a significant number of inconsistencies between the perceptions of teachers and principals with respect to the current power strategies employed by principals (Cope, 1972; Lymas, 1993; Franzoia, 1990; Porter & Lemon, 1988).

Lymas (1993) undertook a study to determine the power strategies used by middle school principals and how their use of power affected teacher satisfaction. She concluded that the perceptions of middle school principals of their own use of power strategies were not congruent with the perceptions of their teachers. Principals perceived themselves to use personal power strategies more frequently than positional power strategies whereas teachers perceived the exact opposite.

Franzoia (1990) investigated how elementary and secondary school teachers perceived the power sources most frequently employed by their principals. He found that expert, legitimate, and referent power bases were
perceived to be used the most by principals and coercive power was perceived to be used the least.

Cope (1972) investigated the existing and preferred sources of power between faculty members and chairmen in six social science departments. His findings indicated that the chairmen ranked referent power as the most often used and preferred, coercive power as the least often used, and reward power as the least preferred. Faculty members identified legitimate power as the most often used, followed by referent, expert, reward, and coercive power. Referent and expert powers were most preferred while coercive was the least preferred by the faculty members. Overall, personal power sources were most often preferred by both faculty members and chairmen; however, faculty members perceived their administrators to use positional power more frequently than did the chairmen.

Findings from the Porter and Lemon (1988) study also indicate that teachers prefer a principal who uses personal rather than positional power. Unlike Cope's study (1972), however, they based their study on the seven power strategies identified by Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980). They concluded that rationality and ingratiation were the two power strategies which had the most positive effect on school climate. Positional
power strategies such as assertiveness and sanctions were perceived to produce a school climate with teachers failing to find satisfaction in their work or professional relationships. Consequently, principals have been encouraged to take a more empowering approach to leadership. This leadership philosophy views the principal as having *power with* rather than *power over* their teachers (Herlihy & Herlihy, 1985). Recent studies support this philosophy (Dunlop and Goldman, 1991; Heck & Marcoulides, 1993; Keedy & Finch, 1994). These researchers argue that a shift from the traditional use of power in an organization has occurred and that teacher empowerment more accurately describes how power is exercised by principals in a school setting today.

Most studies of the use of power by the principal survey only the principals themselves. Little research has involved the teachers as participants. The problem with this one-sided approach is that principals may be responding to these questionnaires by indicating which power strategy they *should* be exercising the most rather than which ones they *are* actually exercising. Consequently, teacher empowerment and decision making input may appear to be more prominent in schools when, in reality, this may not be the case.
As demonstrated by the above literature, the perceptions of how frequently principals use particular power strategies differ among studies and between principals and teachers. Thus, the primary purpose of the present study is to investigate the types and frequency of power strategies used by elementary school principals as perceived by elementary school teachers.

Furthermore, studies investigating the effect of gender and years of experience on a leader's use of power have yielded inconsistent results (Bogotch & Riedlinger, 1993; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Guzzetti & Martin, 1984; Ragins, 1989; Wiley & Eskilson, 1982). A study conducted by Grimes (1982) which queried principals failed to produce any substantive evidence that male elementary school principals behave differently as leaders than female elementary school principals. Discrepancies exist among studies that have investigated the perceptions of teachers rather than those of principals.

For many years, female leaders were viewed by their followers as having less power than their male counterparts (Eagly, Karau & Johnson, 1992). Yet, research by Gross and Trask (1976) indicates that female elementary school principals appear to have more power than male
principals with respect to their influence over school affairs. Johnson's congruency theory suggests that females are more likely to use reward power while coercive, expert, and legitimate forms of power may be used more often by men. Kappelman's study (1981), however reported that teachers do not perceive any difference in power strategies employed by male and female principals, although male principals are perceived to use reward and coercive power strategies more frequently than female principals. Eagly et al. reported from their findings that the most substantial difference between female and male principals was the tendency for female principals to lead through a more democratic and less autocratic style than male principals. They suggested that female principals are more likely than male principals to treat teachers and other organizational subordinates as colleagues and equals and to invite their participation in decision making. Men evidently adopt a less collaborative style and are relatively more dominating and directive than are women (p. 91).

Rogers (1980) conducted a study to determine if teacher perceptions of elementary school principals varied based on gender and found that female teachers perceived female principals as being more persuasive, and promoting greater school structure than did the male teachers. Female
teachers in schools with female principals also reported higher morale than did male teachers. East (1981) reported that female teachers perceived their female principals to put greater emphasis on the relationships rather than the task. Conversely, male teachers saw female principals as placing greater emphasis on task behaviours. Cioci (1991) reported that male teachers assessed female principal leadership as relatively ineffective, whereas female teachers rated it above average. The present study also examines these gender issues.

With regard to the variable “years of experience”, Lyons and Murphy (1994) found that as the experience level of the principal increases, so too did the likelihood that the principal used externally based powers, such as legitimate and reward power. Wilkes and Love-Wilkes (1989) reported a significant difference in authority acceptance between teachers with inexperienced and experienced principals. Teachers in schools with experienced principals were less likely to grant the principal authority and were more likely to experience conflict than were teachers in schools with inexperienced principals. Lyons (1992) suggests that principals with more total experience were more likely to use legitimate, reward, or coercive power than were less experienced principals. Yet, results from the Robyak,
Goodyear, and Prange study (1987) indicate that preferences for some power bases were influenced by years of experience while preferences for others were not. Preferences for the referent power source were affected by the amount of supervisory experience, whereas preferences for the expert power and legitimate power source were not affected by experience level. Still other studies (Guzzetti & Martin, 1984; Ragins, 1989) show that neither gender nor years of experience have an influence on any of the types of power bases used.
Research Purpose

The literature presented on the use and effect of power strategies reveals the need for further investigation. The purpose of the present study is to:

1) investigate the types and frequency of power strategies employed by principals as perceived by elementary school teachers;

2) determine whether or not there is any correlation between the gender of the principal and the type and frequency of power strategies used as perceived by the teachers;

3) determine if a relationship exists between the perceptions of power strategies used by principals and the gender of the teachers providing the perceptions; and

4) determine if there is any correlation between the experience of the principal (in years) and the type of power strategies perceived by teachers to be used.
**Research Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

1) elementary school teachers will perceive that their principals use personal power strategies more frequently than positional power strategies;

2) teachers will perceive female principals to use positional power strategies more frequently than male principals;

3) female teachers will perceive female principals to use personal power strategies more frequently than will male teachers;

4) the frequency of use of power strategies by male principals will be perceived similarly by male and female teachers; and,

5) teachers will perceive principals with less than five years of experience to use personal power strategies more frequently than principals with more than five years of experience.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

**Design**

This study is a two (principal gender) X two (teacher gender) factorial with one within-subject variable (personal and positional power).

**Dependent Measures**

**Demographic data.** The first dependent measure was designed by the researcher to obtain demographic data about the subjects and their individual principals (see Appendix A).

**Principal’s Power Tactic Survey (PPTS).** The Principal’s Power Tactics Survey (PPTS) was developed and used by Porter and Lemon in 1988 to measure the overall influence strategies of personal and positional power as well as seven subsidiary strategies (see Appendix B). It consists of 41 items designed to examine how principals try to influence teachers to see things as they do. Teachers are asked to respond to these questions using a five point scale, where 1 indicates that the principal never uses that strategy to influence teachers, and 5 indicates that the principal usually uses that strategy to influence teachers. Each item on the questionnaire
represents one of the seven power strategies identified by Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980): ingratiation, rationality, exchange, coalition, assertiveness, sanctions, and upward appeal. These seven strategies can be classified as either personal or positional, as follows:

**Personal Power Strategies**

**Ingratiation power strategy.** The frequency of use of this power strategy was measured using nine items. These items pertained to how often principals: sympathize with and praise teachers; act humbly while making a request; show their need for help and inflate the importance of the task; make teachers feel important; and act in a friendly manner and make teachers feel good prior to making a request.

**Coalition power strategy.** Three items in the questionnaire pertained to coalition. These items measure how frequently principals: obtain support of other principals to back up their request; obtain support of other teachers to back up their request; and have a teacher come to a formal conference at which they make the request.

**Rationality power strategy.** Five items on the questionnaire pertained to how frequently principals: use logic to convince teachers; write memoranda to explain what they want; explain reasons for and
provide information with their request; and present teachers with information that justifies and supports their point of view.

**Exchange power strategy.** Six of the forty-one questions are related to the frequency with which principals: offer to help teachers; remind teachers of past favours; offer an exchange of favours; offer compromises; offer to make personal sacrifices; and perform personal favours.

**Positional Power Strategies**

**Sanctions power strategy.** This type of power strategy was measured by five questions. These questions relate to how frequently principals: use threats; promise and give incentives; and prevent a teacher from getting an incentive.

**Assertiveness power strategy.** Nine items focused on how frequently principals: set deadlines for teachers and remind them of their task and the deadline; demand/order that teachers do what is required; verbally reprimand and express anger; tell teachers to follow the orders or propose a better way; and check up on teachers.

**Upward appeal power strategy.** The four items that pertained to upward appeal focus on how often principals: obtain informal support of superiors; file a report about teachers with superiors; send teachers to the
superintendent; and make formal appeals to higher levels to back up their request.

After psychometric analysis, it was reported by Landry et al. (1989) that with their sample size of 297 teachers, the PPTS was deemed both reliable and valid for research purposes. Five out of the seven subsidiary strategies had internal consistency reliabilities over 0.59. It was recommended by Landry et al. (1989) that both the upward appeal and coalition subscales be used with caution since they had lower reliabilities of 0.44 and 0.45 respectively. The overall measures of personal power and position power had reliabilities of over 0.84 (see Appendix C).

Procedure

Permission to use the Principal Power Tactics Survey (1989) was obtained from Professor D.K. Lemon (see Appendix D). Upon approval by the Ethics Committee, letters of information requesting access to the elementary school teachers in three local school Boards were forwarded to the respective Directors of Education (see Appendix E). Participants were male and female elementary school teachers from three school boards in Southwestern Ontario. According to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, given the population size of 2000, an appropriate sample size of
this study was 250 with a 95% level of confidence, plus or minus 5%. A
total of 300 surveys were forwarded to teachers. One hundred elementary
school teachers from each respective board were asked to participate. A
systematic sample was obtained by selecting every ‘nth’ name from the
given population. Two steps were taken in this subject selection process.
Firstly, the total number of teachers in a board was divided by 100 which
then determined the ‘nth’ number. Next, from an alphabetized list of
teacher’s names, the researcher sent surveys to every ‘nth’ teacher. This
process was repeated for the other two boards. Following the approval of
all of the School Boards, participants were randomly selected and sent an
information letter (see Appendix F) as well as the two part questionnaire.
The information letter outlined the importance and significance of the study,
and contained explanations regarding confidentiality and consent.
Participants were reassured that anonymity would be guaranteed, and it was
explained that the completion and submission of the questionnaire
represented the participants’ consent to participate in the study. The
participants were asked to return the questionnaires, using the inner Board
mailing system, within two weeks of distribution.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Demographic Information

A total of 129 teachers (97 female and 32 male) completed and returned the survey, a 48% return rate. Sixty-two and 67 surveys were completed for male and female principals respectively.

Preliminary Analysis

Reliability tests were performed on all the subscales for both positional (assertiveness, sanctions, upward appeal) and personal (ingratiation, rationality, coalition, exchange) power strategies. All three positional power strategies and three of the four personal power strategies had alpha scores greater than 0.45 (see Table 4-1). The ingratiation power strategy scored an alpha value of only 0.34. Deletion of item 18 from the questionnaire increased the alpha score for ingratiation to 0.68. Subsequent analyses therefore utilized the modified ingratiation scale.
Table 4-1.

**Reliability Analysis for the Seven Power Strategies Scales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Strategy</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Power Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation (with question 18)</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation (without question 18)</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positional Power Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upward Appeal</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An intercorrelation matrix indicated that all positional power strategies correlated significantly (see Table 4-2).
Table 4-2

**Positional Power Strategies Intercorrelations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assertiveness</th>
<th>Sanctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upward Appeal</td>
<td>0.28**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01.

Three out of the four personal power strategies (exchange, ingratiatiion and coalition) were significantly related with one another. Therefore, these three subscales were combined into one positional power strategy scale in subsequent analyses. Rationality was not significantly correlated with two (exchange and coalition) of the three personal power strategies (see Table 4-3).

Therefore, exchange, ingratiatiion, and coalition were combined into one Personal Power Strategy Scale in subsequent analyses and the rationality subscale was analyzed separately.
### Table 4-3

**Personal Power Strategies Intercorrelations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exchange</th>
<th>Ingatiation</th>
<th>Rationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation (without question 18)</td>
<td>0.53**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01.
* p < .05.

### Primary Data Analysis

The primary analysis of data was performed by using a 2 (male vs. female teachers) X 2 (male vs. female principals) repeated measures (positional, personal) ANOVA (Table 4-4). This analysis tested hypotheses 1 to 4. Hypothesis 5 was tested using a 2 (male vs. female teachers) X 2 (male vs. female principals) X 3 (years of experience) ANOVA.
Table 4-4

**Power Strategies, Teacher Gender and Principal Gender Correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Positional Power Strategy</td>
<td>194.861</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Strategies and Principal Gender</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Strategies and Teacher Gender</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p < .05.

The first hypothesis was that elementary school teachers will perceive that their principals use personal power strategies more frequently than positional power strategies. This hypothesis was confirmed. As indicated in Table 4-5 and 4-6, the significant main effect for strategy reflected the fact that teachers perceived principals to use personal power strategies (ingratiation, exchange, and coalition) more frequently than positional power strategies (assertiveness, sanctions, and upward appeal).
Table 4-5

**Frequency of Use of Positional and Personal Power Strategies by Principals as Perceived by Elementary School Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=129

The second hypotheses was that both male and female teachers will perceive female principals to use positional power strategies more frequently than male principals, while the third hypothesis was that female teachers will perceive female principals to use personal power strategies more frequently than will male teachers. The results of a 2-way ANOVA are represented in Table 4-4.
Table 4-6

**Teacher Perceptions of Power Strategies Used by Male and Female Principals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Strategy</th>
<th>Teacher Gender</th>
<th>Principal Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Tables 4-4 and 4-6, male and female principals were perceived similarly by both male and female teachers with reference to both personal and positional power. A significant difference, however, between
male and female principals was perceived by teachers, following a separate
analysis of the subscale rationality (see Table 4-7). Both male and female
teachers perceived female principals to use significantly more rationality
than male principals (F(128,1)= 8.907, p=.003).

Table 4-7

The Use of the Power Strategy “Rationality” by Male and Female

Principals as Perceived by Male and Female Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Strategy</th>
<th>Principal Gender</th>
<th>Teacher Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 4-4 and 4-6 also confirm hypothesis four which states that the
frequency of use of power strategies used by male principals will be
perceived similarly by male and female teachers.
Hypothesis five was that teachers will perceive principals with less than five years of experience to use personal power strategies more frequently than principals with more than five years of experience. A one-way ANOVA test partially confirms this hypothesis (Table 4-7 and Table 4-8). As predicted, principals with less than five years experience as principal were perceived to use personal power strategies more frequently than principals with five to 15 years of experience as principal. However, principals with more than 15 years of experience were also perceived to use personal power strategies more frequently than principals with 5-15 years of experience as principal.
Table 4-8

Principal's Years of Experience and the Perceived Use of Positional Power Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5 (N=58)</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-15 (N=39)</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;15 (N=32)</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05.
Table 4-9

Principal’s Years of Experience and the Perceived Use of Personal Power Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5 (N=58)</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 15 (N=39)</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;15 (N=32)</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05.

Summary

This quantitative research examines the power strategies used by elementary school principals as perceived by elementary school teachers using a combination of the conceptual frameworks proposed by Hersey and Blanchard (1988) and Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980). It results in an acceptance of two hypotheses, a partial rejection of one hypothesis and a rejection of two hypotheses.
For hypothesis one, the data establish that elementary school teachers do perceive their principals to use personal power strategies significantly more frequently than positional power strategies. This means that principals are perceived to be more empowering and less autocratic.

The second and third hypothesis were both rejected. The second hypothesis states that teachers will perceive female principals to use positional power strategies more frequently than male principals and the third hypothesis states that female teachers will perceive female principals to use personal powers strategies more frequently than will male teachers. The data illustrate that no difference exists between male and female teacher perceptions of personal and positional power strategies used by either male or female principals thereby rejecting the second and third hypothesis. This analysis did confirm hypothesis four which states that the frequency of use of power strategies used by male principals will be perceived in the same way by male and female teachers. A separate analysis of the power strategy rationality, however, did determine that male and female teachers perceived female principals to use rationality more frequently than male principals.

For hypothesis number five, teachers did perceive principals with less than five years as a principal to use personal power strategies significantly
more than principals with greater than five years experience. No significant differences were found among these groups with regards to the use of positional power strategies (Figure 4-1).

![Bar chart showing the frequency of use of power strategies as perceived by teachers by years of experience.]

**Figure 4-1.** The relationship between principals’ years of experience and the perceived use of power strategies.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Significance of Study

As stated in Bennis and Nannus (1985), power is “the basic energy to initiate and sustain action translating intention into reality, the quality without which leaders cannot lead” (p. 15). Principals have a unique opportunity to create an environment of common goals, attitudes, and values for teachers. How they use their positional and personal power strategies will have a strong impact on the development of a healthy working and learning environment for both staff and students.

The principal is the key to an effective school, and the proper use of power within an organization is crucial. This study recognizes the significance in understanding and appropriately utilizing power strategies that will influence the success of the organization. Furthermore, variables such as gender of teacher and principal, and years of experience of the principal as a principal were addressed. If research is to contribute to the effective functioning of a school environment, a thorough investigation of the power strategies and various influential factors must be analyzed not
only by the principals themselves, but by teachers too. Necessary adjustments, if deemed important, can then be considered when training principals so that an effective and efficient working environment can be promoted and ultimately created.

**Limitations of Study**

The distribution of surveys by mail is conducive to having a biased sample. Teachers who chose to participate could have done so for personal reasons rather than merely participating for a research study. For example, teachers who either like or dislike their principals very much have been more likely to respond than teachers with less extreme views.

Furthermore, the scope of the data available for analysis is limited due to the utilization of a questionnaire for data collection. Qualitative data might have provided significant insight into the various extraneous issues that may influence the perception of others such as personality or cultural differences.

A third limitation to this study on power strategies lies in the generality of any conclusions reached. It must be recognized that the data collected may be influenced by the educational environment from which they were obtained. Wages, working conditions, curriculum support and
religious and cultural backgrounds may all be contributing factors that influence the perceptions of the teachers.

Finally, a larger sample return rate may have improved the validity of this research. Low educational morale, feelings of discomfort, or simply lack of interest may have been associated with the lower than expected return rate. Furthermore, generalizing this study to the actual population of teachers and principals within the three school boards may be difficult as the accessible population was anonymous. It is possible that there was greater participation from one particular board compared to the other two.

**Implications**

The development or acquisition of a survey to best meet the needs of any quantitative research study can be a laborious task. As was proven in this particular study, reliability and correlation tests of any measure used to collect data are important whenever a different sample group is used.

This study deals with the power strategies used by principals, as perceived by elementary school teachers. The finding that principals are perceived to use personal power strategies more frequently than positional power strategies is consistent with the findings of Porter and Lemon (1988). Porter and Lemon indicated that the use of any of the seven power
strategies should not be construed as either good or bad. What is important is that the strategies be used appropriately in accomplishing the goals of the school (p. 32). For example, ineffective principals are those who frequently use personal power with little positional power or vice versa.

As time has progressed, so too has the acceptance of females in leadership positions. This study may help rebut a few of the educational stereotypes that persist, such as the belief that females are able to better influence teachers in the elementary school system or that men dislike working for women. In this study, there were no significant differences in the perceptions of male and female teachers of male and female principals with regard to the use of both positional and personal strategies.

Inevitably, one would assume that as principals gain experience, they would also develop greater confidence and comfort in the leadership role. In the present study, the level of experience of the principal appeared to be an influential factor with regards to the perceived use of particular power strategies. It is not surprising to find that personal power strategies were perceived to be used more frequently than positional power strategies by inexperienced principals. Teachers, however, perceived principals with five to fifteen years of experience to have decreased their use of personal power
strategies. Meanwhile, principals with greater than fifteen years of experience were perceived to have used personal power just as frequently as inexperienced principals. Future study may help resolve why these differences occur. Studies that investigate the degree of training principals receive with respect to the power strategies they employ would also be interesting and beneficial.

Principal training courses should be re-evaluated regularly to ensure that the concepts of "power" and "power strategies" are being properly and sufficiently addressed. In the meantime, principals should regularly attend workshops that address effective use of personal and positional power strategies. Also, both regular teacher and self evaluations would be beneficial. Acquisition and effective utilization of these power strategies are crucial so that the most effective working climate for teachers can be established.

Studies have proven that the perceptions of teachers with respect to the strategies their principals use to influence them will determine behaviour in the organization (Abbey & Exposito, 1985; Adams & Bailey, 1989; Porter & Lemon, 1988). Therefore, studies such as this one that gather and analyze teacher perceptions are fundamental.
Principals have a unique opportunity to create an environment of common goals, attitudes, and values for teachers. How they use their positional and personal powers will have a strong impact on the development of a healthy working and learning environment for both staff and students. The preference among teachers for more use of personal power strategies (rationality, ingratiation, exchange, and coalition) is evident throughout many of the studies on power mentioned in this study. This study has determined that teachers in three Southwestern Ontario school boards are experiencing leadership that demonstrates support, promotes empowerment, and strives to create the most effective working climate for teachers.
References


*Dissertation Abstract International, 42*(6), 175A.


Appendix A

Supplementary Questionnaire for Demographic Data
INSTRUCTIONS

There are two parts to this questionnaire. You may record your answers directly on the questionnaires. Please read the instructions and questions carefully and return both the questionnaire and the answer sheet in the envelope provided.

PART A

1. How many years of experience does your current principal have as a principal?
   
   a) <5 years
   b) between 5-15 years
   c) 15 years

2. How many years have you worked with your current principal? ______

3. Is your principal...
   
   c) Male
   d) Female

4. Your gender
   
   a) Male
   b) Female

5. What grade do you teach? _____

*6. Would you like a copy of my research results upon completion of this study?
   
   a) Yes
   b) No

*In order to maintain anonymity, I ask that you send me the request for the survey results in a separate envelope: Margaret Ceccacci, c/o St. Paul's School (school #13), 5881 Malden Road, LaSalle, Ontario, N9A 1S5. Thanks.
Appendix B

Principal’s Power Tactics Survey (PPTS)
Part B

Principal’s Power Tactics Survey

This questionnaire is a way of obtaining information about how your principal goes about changing teachers’ minds so that they agree with him/her. Below are described various ways of doing this. Describe the degree of frequency your principal uses each item to influence a teacher or teachers by circling one of the five numbers to show the answers you have selected.

5 = usually uses this tactic to influence teachers
4 = frequently uses this tactic to influence teachers
3 = occasionally uses this tactic to influence teachers
2 = seldom uses this tactic to influence teachers
1 = never uses this tactic to influence teachers

1. My principal sympathizes with teachers about the added problems that his/her request has caused.  
   5  4  3  2  1

2. My principal threatens to give teachers an unsatisfactory performance evaluation.  
   5  4  3  2  1

3. My principal offers to help if teachers would do what he/she wants.  
   5  4  3  2  1

4. My principal acts humbly to teachers while making a request.  
   5  4  3  2  1

5. My principal shows his/her appreciation of teachers help.  
   5  4  3  2  1

6. My principal sets a time deadline for teachers to do what is asked.  
   5  4  3  2  1

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7. My principal obtains the support of other principals to back up his/her requests.  
   | usually | frequently | occasionally | seldom | never |
   | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

8. My principal uses logic to convince teachers.  
   | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

9. My principal promises (or gives) incentives (e.g., permission to attend a special conference).  
   | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

10. My principal acts in a friendly manner prior to asking for what he/she wants.  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

11. My principal demands that teachers do what is requested.  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

12. My principal tells teachers that the work must be done as ordered or teachers should propose a better way.  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

13. My principal obtains the informal support of higher-ups.  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

15. My principal files a report about teachers with higher-ups (e.g., the superintendent).  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

16. My principal threatens teachers’ job security (e.g., hints of getting a teacher transferred).  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

17. My principal reminds teachers of past favours that he/she did for them and now would like a favor in return.  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

18. My principal makes teachers feel good about him/her before making a request.  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |

19. My principal explains the reasons for his/her request.  
    | 5       | 4          | 3            | 2      | 1     |
20. My principal obtains the support of other teachers to back up his/her request. 5 4 3 2 1

21. My principal sends teachers to the superintendent. 5 4 3 2 1

22. My principal threatens to withdraw an incentive (e.g., to deny a requested re-assignment). 5 4 3 2 1

23. My principal offers an exchange (e.g., if you do this for me, I will do something for you). 5 4 3 2 1

24. My principal praises teachers. 5 4 3 2 1

25. My principal inflates the importance of what he/she wants teachers to do. 5 4 3 2 1

26. My principal presents teachers with information in support of his/her point of view. 5 4 3 2 1

27. My principal scolds teachers. 5 4 3 2 1

28. My principal writes a detailed plan that justifies his/her ideas. 5 4 3 2 1

29. My principal offers to compromise over the issue (he/she gives in a little). 5 4 3 2 1

30. My principal repeatedly reminds teachers about what he/she wants. 5 4 3 2 1

31. My principal waits until teachers appear in a receptive mood before asking. 5 4 3 2 1

32. My principal simply orders teachers to do what is asked. 5 4 3 2 1

33. My principal makes teachers feel important
("only you have the brains, talent to do this").

34. My principal prevents a teacher from getting an incentive.

35. My principal offers to make a personal sacrifice if a teacher will do what he/she wants (e.g., take over a teacher's class, do his/her share of the work, etc.).

36. My principal checks up on teachers to see that his/her requests are completed.

37. My principal becomes a nuisance (e.g., keeps bugging a teacher until he/she does what he/she wants).

38. My principal expresses anger verbally.


40. My principal makes a request of a teacher at a faculty meeting.

41. My principal makes a formal appeal to higher levels to back up his/her request.
Appendix C

Reliability of Tactics Scores for the Principal’s Power Tactics Survey
## The Principal's Power Tactics Survey
### Reliability of Tactic Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Coefficient Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.8039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.7595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.5957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upward appeal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Personal Power</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.8457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Positional Power</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.8407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Permission from Professor D.K. Lemon to use the Principal’s Power Tactics Survey
Appendix E

Letter of Information Requesting Access to the Elementary School Teachers
March 3, 1997

Dear

I am presently enrolled in the Masters of Education Program at the University of Windsor. My teaching experience and active participation within your Board along with this program has enhanced my interests in administrative leadership.

Teacher empowerment is without a doubt significant in creating an optimum working environment. Recent studies have concluded that principals view themselves as empowering agents within the school, however, little research has been done taking into account the teacher’s perspective. Some studies show inconsistency in viewpoints among principals and teachers with regards to the use of power strategies in schools. Teacher empowerment and decision making input may not be as observable within schools as it has been believed and hoped to be. I am interested in further researching the power strategies used by elementary school principals as perceived by elementary school teachers.

My proposal, which has been approved by the University of Windsor Ethics and Research Committee, requires access to 400 randomly selected elementary school teachers. I am interested in surveying elementary school teachers from all four local Boards of Education. I am requesting permission to send surveys to 100 teachers employed with the Essex Roman Catholic School Board. A 41 item questionnaire (see attached) will be distributed to these teachers and the anonymity of all respondents is guaranteed. In no way will this questionnaire create any physical or psychological harm to those involved. The teachers will be informed that completion of the questionnaire will constitute their consent and approval to be part of the research study. Furthermore, their participation is voluntary and I will request to have all questionnaires returned to me at St. Paul’s School within two weeks of distribution.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding my study I would be happy to discuss them with you, either in person or by telephone. Please feel free to contact either myself at 969-7660 or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Noel Hurley, at 253-4232 ext.3815. Any ethical concerns can be addressed to Dr. Larry Morton (253-4232), who is the chairman of the Ethics Committee at the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future and thank you in advance for your time and assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Margaret Ceccacci
Masters Candidate
Appendix F

Information Letter to Elementary School Teachers
FROM ONE COLLEAGUE TO ANOTHER

May 19, 1997

Dear Colleague,

I am a full-time teacher at St. Paul’s School in LaSalle and am presently enrolled in the Masters of Education Program at the University of Windsor. My teaching experience as an elementary school teacher along with my current enrollment in the Leadership Course, with the Essex Separate School Board, has enhanced my interests in administrative leadership.

Generally speaking, the use of power is viewed as a negative leadership trait. Contrary to this, however, a principal who uses a proper balance of positional and personal power strategies can create a very successful and rewarding working environment whereby job satisfaction, commitment, and cooperation of all interested groups are enhanced. Through my own personal experiences and studies I have developed a keen interest in this area.

The purpose of my study is to investigate the types and frequency of power strategies used by principals as perceived by elementary school teachers. (That’s You!) The principal’s gender and years of experience will also be analyzed to see if there is any correlational significance between these two variables and how frequently particular power strategies are perceived to be used. Gender of subjects will also be considered to determine if a relationship exists between teacher perception and gender. In total, 400 surveys have been randomly distributed to elementary school teachers in three local Boards.

Educating principals regarding the effective use of power strategies is crucial. Consequently, I am planning to forward my study to the Directors of all local School Boards, and the Chairperson of the Principal Training Course. In doing so, I will stress the significance of sufficiently and efficiently addressing effective use of power strategies with our present and future principals. Your participation is very important and is needed in order for me to complete my study!!

Enclosed please find a two part questionnaire. Part A pertains to demographic data and Part B consists of 41 items all of which I ask you to respond to on a five-point scale. The survey has been approved by the University of Windsor Ethics and Research Committee and your School Board. This questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes. Should you choose to complete these items, anonymity of all respondents is guaranteed. Your participation is purely voluntary and you may refrain from answering any questions, however, cooperation in completing this questionnaire would be greatly appreciated. The survey can be returned to me in the stamped self-addressed envelope.
provided, as I would like to begin tabulating my data by Monday, June 2, 1997. May I also add that responding to and returning the questionnaire will constitute your consent and approval to be a part of this research study.

If you wish a summary of the questionnaire you may reach me at St. Paul School in LaSalle at 969-7660. Furthermore, should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact either myself or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Noel Hurley, at 253-4232 ext.3815. Any ethical concerns can be addressed to Dr. Larry Morton (253-4232), who is the chairman of the Ethics Committee at the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario. I thank you in advance for your time and assistance with this project and I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

Margaret Ceccacci
Masters Candidate
Vita Auctoris

Margaret Ceccacci was born in 1969 in Chatham, Ontario. She graduated from Blenheim District High School in 1984. From there she went on to the University of Western Ontario where she obtained a B.Sc. in Nursing in 1992 followed by a B.Ed. in 1993. She has been employed by the Essex Roman Catholic Separate School Board since September, 1993. Currently, she is a candidate for the Master's degree in Administrative Education at the University of Windsor and looks forward to graduating in the Spring 1998.