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ENHANCING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF PRINCIPALS: THE ROLE OF CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my son, Harper Parsons. I wanted to better myself by pursuing this advanced degree to show you that, quite literally, anything is possible. You may or may not choose what I did, but I know you, too, will be the best you can be. We did it, Big Bud!

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Abstract

Transformational leadership is a model school principals can use guide their schools and their staff through times of uncertainty and reform. Current research presents many positive effects of transformational leadership to employees in business, industry, and education.

Self-determination theory is centered on the premise of need satisfaction to develop one's sense of self and autonomy. Research has shown self-determination theory to be associated with greater intrinsic motivation, satisfaction, strengthened relationships and a sense of belonging (Deci & Ryan, 2000, Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004, & Graves & Luciano, 2013).

This dissertation examined the perception of met psychological needs from central office administration to principals, teacher perception of principal transformational leadership behavior, and the relationship between met psychological needs and principal transformational leadership behavior.

Results indicated that most principals do not perceive psychological needs are met by central office administration. Most teachers did perceive principals to act in transformational ways. There was no correlation between principal perception of met psychological needs and their transformational leadership behaviors. A post hoc analysis revealed a statistically significant correlation between principal trust in faculty and their transformational leadership behavior.

Limitations

There are limitations of note to this study. First, this study was conducted in one Midwestern, urban school district and may benefit from replication in multiple school districts. Second, there is no causal relationship, and, as such, the results are not useful for testing causal relationships. Third, this study utilized questions from an existing survey that was not specifically designed to measure the relationship between central office and transformational leadership behavior of principals. Last, there is not much variation represented in the results.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the last several years, there has been a trend to build capacity of urban school principals who face adverse, diverse, and unpredictable challenges (Barnes, Camburn, Sanders, Sebastian, 2010). Building instructional leadership capacity of principals has been a dominant focus of research and practice (Blasé & Blasé, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2002). A perception among central office administrators is that the majority of principal time is devoted to instructional and curricular matters (Camburn, Spillane, & Sebastian, 2010). However, research on daily principal function asserts that principals do not spend the majority of their time on instructional matters, but rather, on addressing managerial issues that affect daily operations (Camburn et al., 2010; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Honig, 2012). Camburn, Spillane, and Sebastian (2010) claim that principals spend more time running the building and on student discipline than on instructional issues. They argue that over the last 25 years principals have become withdrawn from instructional tasks and regular evaluation of teaching and learning.

Instructional leadership alone, even if principals devoted more time to the practice, would be insufficient for improving how teaching and learning are delivered in schools (Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). The reality and demands of the principalship mean that school leaders must lead and manage the organization in ways that direct the decisions and actions of many school members and role groups (e.g. teachers, students, parents, staff, district leaders, etc.) toward a shared vision of learning (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003). In order to truly reform urban schools, building leaders need to act in ways that change beliefs, values, and

practices of teachers, students, parents, and community members (Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Transformational leaders make organizations more effective and efficient by inspiring and empowering employees, enhancing vision and mission, focusing on shared commitment, changing attitudes, and creating conditions for employees to work beyond expectations (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996). New ways of thinking and problem solving among employees emerge when employees' interests are brought to attention, vision and mission are articulated, and group interest outweighs self-interest (Bass, 1990; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994). Extensive evidence exists on transformational behaviors of principals, but research has not fully addressed the extent to which district administrators model, enhance, or support principals in their efforts to transform schools (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996;).

To deal with multiple demands placed on them, urban school principals must transform learning experiences by transforming how teaching is organized and coordinated (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992). Instructional leadership alone is insufficient for turning urban schools into places where deep engagement and learning are common place (Marks & Printy, 2003). District administrators can assist school reform by developing and supporting the transformational leadership behaviors of principals. Transformational leadership is positively related to student engagement, teacher engagement, teacher commitment, positive school culture, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support (Finnigan, 2011; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Marks & Printy,

2003). Not much is known, however, about district support for leadership practices that enable principals to effectively change cultures that are inimical to high quality learning opportunities.

Self-determination theory can explain how the decisions and actions of district administrators can either support or undermine transformational behaviors of school principals. Applied to students, self-determination theory explains the differential effects of instructional practices and classroom climates on student motivation, engagement, and performance (Deci, 2009). For teachers and their effectiveness in the classroom, self-determination theory has been used to explain how school structures and processes support or thwart instructional capacity (Deci, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2000). For students and teachers alike, evidence on self-determination theory explains that effective performance partly depends on a context that satisfies psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Extending this explanation to school principals seems to suggest that support for psychological needs has implications for principal behaviors and actions. The purpose of this study is to examine how central office support for principal psychological needs is related to transformational leadership behaviors.

In arriving at the starting place for the empirical part of the study, literature on transformational leadership and self-determination theory was examined. The evidence for both transformational leadership and self-determination theory has much in common, but, surprisingly, few empirical studies have connected aspects of self-determination theory to transformational principal behaviors, leading to the research problem.

Statement of Problem

This study addressed two interrelated problems. The first is a problem of practice relating to evidence of high principal turnover. The second is a research problem that addresses the relationship between central office support for principal psychological needs and transformation leadership behaviors of principals.

Principal turnover in urban districts is alarmingly high. Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, and Wheeler (2007) and Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, and Ikemoto (2012) found in urban districts they studied that 70 – 78% of first year principals left schools at the end of one year. Beteille, Kalogirdes, and Loeb (2012) report that 20% of urban principals leave schools each year. Reasons for high attrition include external pressure from district administrators, working conditions in schools, and school performance (Burkhauser et al., 2012; Clotfelter et al., 2007; DeAngelis & White, 2011). Attrition rates and factors leading principals to leave schools raise questions about support from district executives. Do principals experience district administrators as supporting the psychological needs that undergird healthy personal and professional growth? The research problem extends the question of support for principal psychological needs to leadership practices.

This study used self-determination theory to posit that if central office administration supports principal's inherent psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000), then principals would lead in ways that are more transformational. That is, if psychological needs are supported by central office, principals' transformational leadership behaviors will be more prevalent. The lack of empirical evidence on the antecedents of transformational leadership leaves a

gap in our understanding of how district level administrators can support principal's transformational leadership behaviors. As such, this examination questioned if principals perceived the central office administrators as supporting their psychological needs or as a structure that thwarts psychological needs if teachers perceive their principals as transformational leaders.

Research Purpose

Teachers who act in transformational ways inspire students to achieve (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Marks & Printy, 2003). To truly reform schools, principals primarily behave in a transformational manner rather than a transactional manner (Marks & Printy, 2003). What is not known is the role of central office administration in developing a principal's transformational leadership behaviors.

Current research indicates that principals, especially in urban areas, are leaving the profession at alarming rates. As many as one in five principals leave after the first year, and another study indicated 50% of principals leave within three years (Beteille, Kalagrides, & Loeb, 2012; Fuller, Young, & Orr, 2007). The alarming trend of principal exit from urban schools calls for action from central office administration, and meeting psychological needs of principals is one way central office administrators may be able to support principals in their role.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which central office administration efforts to meet the psychological needs of principals influences their transformational leadership behaviors. The following questions were advanced for the empirical study:

1. To what extent do principals perceive that their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported by central office administration?
2. To what extent do teachers perceive principals exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors?
3. What is the relationship between the central office administration support for principal psychological needs and transformational leadership behaviors of principals?

Definition of Terms

Transformational Leadership: Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on transforming an organization through vision attainment and empowering employees to work beyond their own self-interest (Bass, 1985; Marks & Printy, 2003). Charisma, inspirational stimulation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are fundamental components of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). The following are key dimensions of transformational leadership: "articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation" (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990).

Self-Determination Theory: Self-determination theory explains that optimal human and group behavior is a function of social conditions. Self-determination theory assumes that all individuals have basic psychological needs which determine a sense of oneself (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Psychological Needs: Three innate, essential needs exist that are vital to one's survival and growth; they are autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004).

Need-Support: Need-support refers to the ways in which structures and workplaces support one's psychological needs or, alternatively, thwart one's psychological needs. Structures and workplaces either support or thwart one's autonomy, competence, and/or relatedness (Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009).

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is arranged in six chapters. The first is the introduction to the research that includes the research problem, the research purpose, the definition of terms, and the organization of the dissertation. The second is the review of literature regarding transformational leadership behavior. This chapter includes a definition of transformational leadership, the effects of transformational leadership behaviors on work processes and conditions, the effects on individuals, the effects on outcomes, and the effects in school settings. The third chapter is the theoretical framework that explains the effects of psychological need satisfaction on human and group behavior. This chapter includes a section on psychological needs and need-support, and a section on need-support and transformational leadership behavior. The fourth chapter presents the research methods. This chapter includes the research design, the data source, the measures, and the data gathered. The fifth chapter presents findings of the empirical analysis. This chapter includes a summary of results for each research question and a post hoc analysis that examines the relationship between trust and transformational leadership behavior. The sixth chapter is a discussion of findings in the context of the existing evidence.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The literature review builds the case for studying the relationship between need-support provided by central office administration and transformational leadership behavior of principals. First, transformational leadership is defined and characteristics of this type of leadership are described. Second, an argument about individual and organizational effects of transformational leadership is made from existing empirical evidence. The review concludes with a description of organizational conditions requiring transformational leadership behaviors.

Transformational Leadership

In both educational and managerial literature, two distinctive types of leadership behaviors emerge: *transactional leadership* and *transformational leadership* (Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership, like it sounds, focuses on a transaction between employer and employee that is matter of fact and leaves little room for adaptation (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is quite opposite. Transformational leaders transform organizations by working with and inspiring employees (Marks & Printy, 2003). This distinction does not imply that transformational leaders only use influence and persuasion to inspire change. In fact, there are many circumstances that require direct, one-directional transactions. The difference is that transformational leaders work to create an environment that engages and empowers employees, rather than a transactional approach that relies on positional authority to control the work of employees (Bass, 1985; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Transactional leaders use hierarchical control structures to regulate work processes and expectations (Burns, 1978). In contrast, transformational leaders inspire

followers to work beyond requirements, collaborate, and commit to the vision and mission of the organization by appealing to the needs and motives of individuals (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Marks & Printy, 2003). Transformational leaders have been shown to empower colleagues, enhance vision and mission, focus on shared commitment, change attitudes, and create conditions for employees to work beyond expectations (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994; Podsakoff, 1996). Stated another way, leaders who transform organizations do so by building the social and human capacity within the organization (Bass, 1990; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994).

Elements of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders move organizations toward vision attainment by engaging followers to grow as professionals and by creating opportunities for transformation through empowerment, collaboration, problem solving, and motivation (Hallinger, 1992; Marks & Printy, 2003). Marks and Printy (2003) claim transformational leaders in schools provide direction, encourage innovation in teaching, and support teacher growth and development. Providing a compelling and audacious direction encourages employees to grow in their work and career by building their internal capacity to achieve high standards. Personal and professional growth adds value to the employee and the organization. Similarly, Hallinger's (1992) conceptualization of transformational leadership focuses on finding problems, solving problems, and collaborating with others to improve the performance of the organization. Marks and Printy (2003) state that transformational leaders motivate employees by relating the importance of organizational goals to such a point of awareness that employees put

aside their own self-interest for the betterment, transformation, and growth of the organization as a whole.

In 2012, Leithwood and Sun conducted a meta-analysis of 79 studies about transformational leadership practices in schools. The leadership behaviors considered transformational include: developing a shared vision, building goal consensus, holding high expectations, providing individualized support and intellectual stimulation, modeling valued behaviors, beliefs, and values, strengthening school culture, building structures to enable collaboration, engaging parents and the wider community, and focusing on instructional development processes and actions that can create a collective responsibility within a school. Actions that bring these responsibilities to life in schools include utilizing professional learning communities, working with teachers, parents, and stakeholders to solve school problems, giving responsibility and decision making to teacher leaders, and valuing input and diversity as it relates to school improvement (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). As noted earlier, transformational leadership does not mean that a leader never acts in a transactional way, it means that transformational leaders focus on inspiration and growth as the primary driver of organizational performance (Bass, 1985; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Transformational leadership benefits both the organization as a whole and the individuals who make up the organization. Individuals develop leadership capacity when practicing tenants of transformational leadership, micro effects, and the entire organization benefits through stronger work processes and organizational effectiveness, macro effects. Ruggieri (2009) asserts that transformational leaders increase followers' level of interest, respect for obligations and mission, respect and pride, and prospects

for problem solving and obtaining goals by supporting followers in finding new solutions and generating new ideas. When transformational leaders increase individual commitment, the commitment to the organization as a whole is also strengthened by focusing attention on the entire organization's well-being rather than individual self-interest.

Leithwood's (1994) research suggests vision building and commitment to goals are key transformational leadership behaviors. Leithwood and colleagues (Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003) found that an aligned vision and strong commitment were two conditions that enabled instructional improvement to spread within and across schools. This research suggests that although transformational leaders can utilize various transformational practices to positively influence organizational outcomes, these practices build commitment to a central focus and can be organized by setting an inspiring direction for the future, aligning resources and support to work toward a new future state, and engendering commitment to achieving audacious goals.

In short, transformational leadership is a framework principals can use to move schools closer to their desired future state. For modern school culture, transformational leadership practices and processes are, in part, necessary to meet the host of demands, regulations, and obstacles facing communities, educators, families, and students alike (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003). Arguably, simple changes and quick fixes will not make schools more responsive to the growing needs of children and families. Schools need to transform outdated structures and processes in ways that engage all students in the development of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and mindsets that prepare them for success in school and life (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Smith & Bell,

2011). Principals can respond to reform pressure by organizing and coordinating teaching and learning in ways that enable teachers and students to thrive. Likewise, urban districts are likely to be more effective at system-wide improvement if they figure out how to harness the capacity of principals to lead in ways that transform teaching and learning (Bass, 1990; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Transformational Leadership and Competing Leadership Frameworks

In order to better understand the nature of a transformational style, it helps to contrast such practices against other leadership frameworks. There are many valued approaches to leadership in the context of education. Broadly, leadership may be defined as a set of tasks and responsibilities that leaders are expected to carry out (Firestone, 1989). Other leadership frameworks have utility for school leaders. However, they all have deficiencies given the diverse challenges facing school principals. In the following section, visionary leadership, instructional leadership, managerial leadership, and distributed leadership are defined, their characteristics described, and a comparison to transformational leadership is made.

Visionary leaders focus on what is possible and on the future potential of an organization (Gottlieb, 2007). Visionary leaders promote "a clear sense of common purpose, shared beliefs, and values" (Grady & LeSourd, 1990, p. 102-103). Principals who promote visions focus on innovation, providing a sense of direction, and conceptualizing a vision for the school (Grady & LeSourd, 1990). The leader creates the vision for the perceived best state of the school. The leader also creates an organizational philosophy that adequately states the vision; the leader acts in specific ways to create buy-in at a personal level to further the vision (Sashkin, 1988).

In contrast to transformational leadership, visionary leadership focuses on the principal's "personal convictions" (Grady & Lesourd, 1990) rather than focusing on the shared beliefs and convictions of the school community (Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1994; Valentine and Prater, 2011). Transformational leadership extends beyond visions by shaping processes used to bring visions to life (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Instructional leaders are focused on tasks directly connected to teaching and learning (Murphy, 1998). Instructional leaders focus on being knowledgeable of and evaluating classroom instruction, taking the lead in curriculum procurement and implementation, and overseeing student achievement (Marks & Printy, 2003). Instructional leaders also create the school's mission and goals, lead matters of curriculum, teaching, and evaluation, create conditions for learning, and create a favorable work environment (Murphy, 1988). Instructional leadership occurs through teacher coaching and supervision, developing staff professional development, and modeling instruction for teachers. Instructional leaders focus narrowly on making teaching and learning processes better (Leithwood, 1994).

In contrast to transformational leadership, instructional leadership is insufficient to reform schools (Sergiovanni, 1991). One reason is that school leaders who rely only on instructional leadership will struggle to challenge teachers who are already competent at delivering instruction (Sergiovanni, 1991). Also, in secondary schools class size and the amount of content knowledge required to lead expertly each teacher in each subject inhibits principals from being the most effective instructional leader (Valentine & Prater, 2011). Since transformational leadership in schools includes

elements of instructional leadership, transformational leadership remains the leadership framework most suited to move schools toward their desired states.

Managerial leaders focus on organizing and coordinating classroom management and protecting instruction from unnecessary interruptions (Bossert, Dwyer, Ryan, & Lee, 1982). Managerial leaders are primarily concerned with completing paperwork, communicating local district initiatives with staff, providing order and management of student issues, creating a school schedule, and acquiring resources for the school (Rosenblatt & Somech, 1998). Arguably, aspects of managerial leadership are required by today's school leaders, but approaches are inadequate for principals managing and leading reform in 21st century schools. School management alone does not support the challenges of schools in need of transformation. Managerial leadership does not direct principals to lead in a way that focuses the school community toward a shared vision of learning (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003).

In the distributed leadership framework, responsibilities and activities related to leadership are distributed among a variety of school personnel (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003). This framework of leadership allows for decision making authority to be passed to teachers and other school role groups. One way leadership is distributed in this model is through a leadership council which consists of the principal, teachers, and stakeholders. The leadership council shares responsibility for making decisions (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Some of the functions of the leadership council are shared administration and guidance and collective resource gathering.

Transformational leadership accounts for shared decision making but it does so through engaging the entire school community to rethink teaching and learning

individually so the collective school community may experience transformation (Leithwood, 1994). Distributed leadership fails to meet the challenges schools face today due to an exaggerated focus on shared decision making and an undervalued focus on aligning resources, staff, and stakeholders to focus on an envisioned future state.

Elements of the other frameworks appear in transformational leadership. Visionary, instructional, managerial, and distributed leadership frameworks all have qualities that may be used to improve schools. Often, elements from individual leadership frameworks overlap and are found among each other as there are common elements of leadership that emerge when examining teaching and learning. However, transformational leadership is the framework necessary for principals approaching challenges that schools face in the 21st century (Leithwood, 1994). Leithwood (1994) argues that transformational leaders facilitate change at a personal level that allows teachers to examine and question their beliefs about teaching and learning to facilitate a change in motives and practices and encourage personal growth.

Effects of Transformational Leadership

In both business and educational settings, transformational leadership has been linked to transforming both individual and organizational performance. The case for transformational leadership in schools comes from extensive evidence showing that organizations capable of building and leveraging their human and social capital are not only more productive, but they create environments where people want to work and learn (Fullan, 2008). Positive effects of transformational leadership can be found on work processes and conditions, individual capacity, and organizational outcomes.

Work Processes and Conditions

Organizations, at a very basic level, can be thought of as a collection of people organized by roles, structures, and processes to achieve a common purpose (Bittner, 1965). When viewed this way, it makes sense that a shared direction for organizational performance and a collective commitment to desired goals can transform processes and outcomes. Transformational leaders redesign processes to achieve future goals by engaging and empowering employees to produce organizational effects (Hallinger, 2003; Marks and Printy, 2003). Various complex aspects of entire organizations are affected by transformational leadership. The evidence is quite clear that a transformational approach can lead to changes in work processes and outcomes for organizations (Hallinger, 2003; Marks and Printy, 2003). Some of the effects on work processes and conditions influenced by transformational leadership include managing diversity, contributing to organizational learning, and increasing work engagement. (Abbassi & Zamani-Miandashti, 2013; Garia-Morales, Jiminez-Barrionuevo, & Guiterrez-Guiterrez, 2010; Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013; Kearney & Gerbert, 2009; Ng & Sears, 2012).

Work processes are identified as the functions and responsibilities of members of an organization assigned to do the work and influence outcomes (Bandor, 2007). Transformational leadership has been shown to influence positively work processes and work conditions. Transformational leaders who commit to their organization's vision and mission invest in others to influence work processes in such a way that employees strive not only to meet but to exceed the organization's vision and to reach and achieve beyond goals (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003).

One work process influenced by transformational leadership is diversity. Transformational leaders better manage diversity in the work place as they prioritize collaboration, well-being, and individual consideration of employees (Kearney & Gerbert, 2009; Ng & Sears, 2012). Ng and Sears (2012) claim that transformational leaders will recognize and implement diversity practices because doing so represents what is best for the individuals within the organization while transactional leaders will attempt to implement diversity practices as an act of compliance. They found that transformational leadership from CEOs was positively correlated to implementation of diversity practices where transactional leadership was less strongly associated with the implementation of diversity practices. This indicates that organizations whose leaders act in transformational ways are more likely to effectively implement organizational diversity practices which relate to success of the organization through commitment to the vision and mission, individual consideration, and the overall well-being of employees. Transactional leaders will be less likely to effectively implement diversity practices based on influence contingent on rewards and punishment.

Organizational learning is a work process that is also influenced by transformational leadership. Transformational leadership has been positively correlated to organizational learning (Abbassi & Zamani-Miandashti, 2013; Garcia-Morales et al., 2010). Organizational learning can be thought of as the capacity of the organization to learn, adapt, and progress based on the successes and failures of its individual employees (Cook & Yanow, 1993). Organizational learning can be influenced by transformational leadership behaviors as the overall capacity of the organization to grow and progress toward its ideal state. Transformational leaders create space for

learning to occur without negative consequence which has been shown to directly affect an organization's overall learning and growing capacity (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Abbassi's and Zamani-Miandashti's (2013) study of faculty members in the Iranian public agricultural faculties explains how transformational leadership behaviors facilitate organizational learning. They discovered that vision development was crutial in facilitating organizational learning. They found the transformational leadership attributes of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation to influence knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application. They claim transformational leaders influence knowledge creation when they set the vision and motivate followers to achieve it (Abassi & Zamani-Miandashti, 2013).

Research by Garcia-Morales, Jiminez-Barrionuevo, Guiterrez-Guiterrez (2010) supports the findings of Abbassi and Zamani-Miandashti. They found that transformational leadership supports organizational learning and innovation which influence organizational decisions and goals. Supervisors employing transformational leadership behaviors were able to establish a culture supportive of alternative ideas, innovation, and errancy. In other words, transformational leadership behaviors encouraged risk taking and developed a sense of safety for employees. These findings suggest that transformational leaders create conditions that support learning, innovation, and problem solving and directly influence the organization's learning capacity which supports the success of the organization by supporting the individuals in the organization to learn from mistakes with necessary support and guidance.

Work engagement has been found to be positively associated with transformational leadership as well (Ghadi et al., 2013). Work engagement may be

defined as a state of mind conducive with positive association to completing tasks (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). Employees who are fully engaged in work tasks are committed more than those who are not. Ghadi, Fernando, and Caputi (2013) found that there was a direct relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. Employees with transformational leaders were more focused, committed, and enthusiastic about the work in which they are involved (Ghadi et al., 2013). One reason had to do with the meaning and value derived from work.

To summarize the effects on work processes, transformational leadership has consequences for managing diversity, promoting organizational learning, and supporting work engagement. The research indicates that managing diversity in the workplace creates conditions that support employee autonomy (Kearney & Gerbert, 2009; Ng & Sears, 2012). Also, when transformational leaders promote organizational learning, the vision of the organization becomes a current reality, and employees feel the acceptance necessary to make mistakes and still move toward the organization's vision (Abbassi & Zamani-Miandashti, 2013; Garcia-Morales et al., 2010). Another work process affected by transformational leadership is work engagement. Employees whose leaders promote work engagement in a transformational way are more likely to commit to the organization by staying with the company and reducing employee turnover (Ghadi et al., 2013).

Individual Effects

Transformational leadership has implications for individuals who follow transformational leaders. Transformational leaders inspire and give individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). As a result, the following emerge as effects of

transformational leadership among individuals: empowerment, identification, knowledge creation, and creativity (Bono & Judge, 2003; Choi, Goh, Adam, & Tan, 2008; Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Henry, Arrow, & Carini, 1999; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Kolb, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Noruzy, Dalfard, Azhdari, Nazari-Shirkouhi, & Rezazadeh, 2013; Tse & Chiu, 2014; Tse & Mitchell, 2010; Wang & Howell, 2012; Zhu, Sosik, Riggo & Yang, 2012).

Choi, Goh, Adam, and Tan (2016) found transformational leadership to have a positive relationship to employee empowerment. They argue that employees who feel empowered can transform the workplace and the stigma associated with it. When employees feel empowered, "powerlessness and job burnout are mitigated, which results in higher job satisfaction" (p. 10). Choi et al. (2016) also found that followers of transformational leaders gained a stronger sense of self-determination and competence which are needed to overcome powerlessness.

Castro, Perinam, and Bueno (2008) found that transformational leadership positively influenced followers' psychological empowerment. Their study also suggests that followers who conceptualize a greater sense of empowerment also feel greater job satisfaction and commitment, both of which have been associated with transformational leadership. Zhu, Sosik, Riggo, and Yang (2012) found a relationship between psychological empowerment and transformational leadership behavior. Wang and Howell (2012) found that individual performance, empowerment, and follower identification were related to perceived transformational leadership behaviors.

Another individual effect of transformational leadership is identification in the work place. One definition of identification includes the idea that individuals self-

define based on their relationship to an organization (Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). Individuals may experience group identification or social identification both of which shape personal identification. Group identification occurs when a group interacts that have a common purpose (Henry, Arrow, & Carini, 1999). Social identification occurs when individuals define themselves in relation to group constructs that allow the individual to operate within the boundaries of self-assimilation and differentiation (Brewer, 1991). Employees' identification is shaped in the work place through both group and social identification. Transformational leaders who build an expectation of collaboration (Leithwood & Sun, 2012) are better equipped than other leaders to influence the aspects of group and social identification that are critical in the development of one's identification within the workplace.

Tse and Chiu (2014) found that transformational leadership was positively related to employee's group identification. Specifically, they argue from their evidence that transformational leadership behaviors associated with group tasks is needed for employees to have strong group identification. When employees perceive a sense of identification with the group, their efficacy and sense of value increase as does their commitment to the group's vision (Podsakoff, 1996; Tse & Chiu, 2014).

Bono and Judge (2003) found higher social identification within a group when employees perceived their managers as acting in transformational ways. Kark, Shamir, and Chen (2003) found that transformational leaders exert influence on followers by arousing their sense of identification. Their research also found that followers' social identification with the work group increased once they identified positively with the leader. Transformational leaders influence followers' personal and social identification

in ways that lead to greater job performance and increased job satisfaction (Bono & Judge, 2003; Kark et al., 2003; Tse & Chiu, 2014).

Followers of transformational leaders who have an increased sense of identification are more likely to complete complex tasks, identify with leader, and experience job satisfaction (Bono & Judge, 2003; Kark et al., 2003; Tse & Chiu; 2014). Research indicates that followers who experience increased personal and social (group) identification were more satisfied with their work and, as a result, they were more likely to exhibit increased performance which has been shown to be positively related to transformational leadership behaviors.

Knowledge creation is also an individual effect of transformational leadership. Knowledge creation may be defined as a process through which one overcomes perceived boundaries by gaining new insight through experiences between a person and his or her surroundings (Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000). Research has shown transformational leadership to be positively correlated to learning, knowledge management, creativity, knowledge creation, employee engagement, and intellectual stimulation (Kolb, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Noruzy et al., 2013; Tse & Chiu, 2014; Song, Tse & Mitchell, 2010). A transformational leader who creates conditions for employees to collaborate, take risks, and connect to others and their work in meaningful ways presents opportunities for employees to create knowledge in various ways that benefit both the individual and the organization.

Noruzy, Dalfard, Azhdari, Nazari-Shirkouhi, and Rezazadeh, (2013) found that transformational leadership directly influences continuous learning among employees and knowledge management through managerial support for professional learning.

Continuous learning, an individual effect of transformational leadership, influences more than the individual as it has implications for the success of the entire organization.

Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009) found there was a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and followers' creativity. Creativity in the workplace is a valuable resource for increased productivity and job satisfaction. Tse and Chiu (2014) found individual-focused transformational leadership was positively related to creative behavior because individuals linked to transformational leaders stand out from the group. Creativity and creative behavior contribute to knowledge creation as followers of transformational leaders are encouraged to think creatively and pursue beyond what may be perceived as possible.

Song, Kolb, Lee and Kim (2012) found transformational leadership to be statistically significant to organizational knowledge creation. They also found employee work engagement to show significant influence on knowledge creation. Transformational leaders create conditions under which employees can safely take risks, collaborate, and excel. When a transformational leader creates such conditions knowledge is created, employees are supported, and the organization moves closer to its desired future state.

Tse and Mitchell (2010) argue that transformational leaders provide intellectual stimulation which encourages knowledge creation. They also contend that transformational leaders provide feedback and modeling that enables followers to process information regarding performance in ways that were previously unavailable to them, and followers are able to create knowledge and form ideas that are relevant and meaningful to their team. When transformational leaders provide relevant feedback and

model thinking patterns, followers contribute in ways that create new thinking for themselves and provides support for group initiatives.

Transformational leadership behaviors have varied, positive effects for individuals. Followers of transformational leaders have a greater sense of empowerment (Castro, Perinam, & Bueno, 2008; Choi et al., 2016), have an increased sense of identification (Bono & Judge, 2003; Kark et al., 2003; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Tse & Chiu, 2014; Podsakoff, 1996), and experience knowledge creation to overcome boundaries (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Noruzy et al., 2013; Song, Kolb, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Tse & Mitchell, 2010). These individual effects of transformational leadership combine to contribute to the overall health of the organization and move the organization toward its envisioned potential.

Organizational Outcomes

Transformational leaders can positively influence performance of individuals and organizations through the work of employees. The previously identified literature expressed the effects on individual performance. Transformational leadership has implications for entire organizations. Organizational outcomes include the following: decreased absenteeism, increased safety, increased performance, and increased job satisfaction (McFadden, Henagan, & Gowen, 2009; Panagopoulous & Dimitriadis, 2009; Zacher & Jimmieson, 2013; Zhu, Chew & Spangler, 2005).

The research of Zhu, Chew, and Spangler (2005) found that transformational leadership led to a decreased rate of absenteeism, giving organizations a competitive advantage. The researchers summarize this finding by stating that transformational

leaders motivate and inspire employees to make increased organizational and individual achievement a current reality.

In hospital settings, McFadden, Henagan, and Gowen (2009) found that transformational leadership was positively associated patient safety. The researchers surveyed 212 hospitals with at least one hospital from every state in the 50 United States. They found that improving patient safety begins with transformational, charismatic, and inspirational leaders. Their findings suggest a transformational leader may infuse attributes through an entire organizational system that directly affect culture, outcomes, and values.

In a unique study involving casino wait staff in Australia, Zacher and Jimmieson (2013) found transformational leadership was positively related to sales productivity. Suggesting that supervisors and managers who learn to act in transformational ways can inspire followers to behave in ways that increase achievement, measured output, and goal recognition.

Panagopoulous and Dimitriadis (2009) found that salespeople's job performance was positively correlated to transformational leadership and satisfaction with his or her supervisor. This study reinforces the importance of transformational leaders to followers' success. Transformational leadership was found to improve performance of salespeople and to increase job satisfaction both of which influence their commitment to the organization.

In summary, the empirical research has shown transformational leadership to positively affect absenteeism, patient safety, sales performance, and job satisfaction

(McFadden et al., 2009; Panagopoulous & Dimitriadis, 2009; Tse & Chiu, 2014; Zhu et al., 2005; Spangler, 2005; Zacher & Jimmeson, 2009). As demonstrated from these studies, transformational leaders create conditions for employees to excel and positively affect the outcomes of their organizations.

Effects of Transformational Leadership in School Settings

As demonstrated from the empirical studies above, there are many positive effects related to transformational leadership and work processes, conditions, and individual and organizational performance. Unaddressed to this point are the ways in which transformational leadership behavior may influence schools.

The evidence in schools implies that transformational principals create conditions for schools to be considered more effective. Research suggests that transformational school leaders enhance the performance of schools by providing charisma and inspiration, motivating teachers, using performance data, lowering frustration, recognizing cultural shifts, restructuring processes, and increasing self-efficacy (Dussault, Payette, & Leroux, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Nir & Hameiri, 2014; McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2014; Marks & Printy, 2003; Minckler, 2014; Smith & Bell, 2011; Sun & Henderson, 2016).

Nir and Hameiri (2014) conducted a nationwide study of public elementary schools in Israel that utilized 954 teachers in 191 schools. They found that transformational leadership was a predictor of school effectiveness as measured by schools' math test scores and socio-economic status. Their research suggests that charisma and inspiration, when linked to pedagogical strength, form an experience

through which principals and teachers bond and strengthen their commitment to the school's vision.

Using data from a four year study of numeracy and literacy programs in England, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2006) found transformational leadership to have a strong, direct effect on teachers' motivation and work environment. They also found transformational leadership to have a "moderate and significant effect on teachers' classroom practices" (p. 223). It is interesting to note that in this particular research study, the model did not explain variance in student achievement. However, transformational leadership emerges a leadership model most likely to influence change in teachers' classroom practices as school leaders have more potential to influence outcomes than any program or any other person to garner change classroom practices.

Sun and Henderson (2016) utilized data from 300 high schools in the New York City Public Schools' Quality Review process from 2007-2008. The researchers set out to determine how a principal's transformational leadership style makes meaningful contributions to the public school's performance. Their findings suggest that learning from performance metrics and gaining support from stakeholders are two managerial practices that are congruent with transformational leadership. They also found that transformational leadership can have a "positive influence on the performance of a public organization" (p. 561). They found the greatest influence comes from using performance data in a way that encourages teachers to examine their practice in relation to student results and engaging stakeholders in ways that make it possible for them to support the school's vision and mission.

McCarley, Peters, and Decman (2014) surveyed 399 high school teachers to examine the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and school climate. Of particular interest is that the researchers found a significant negative relationship between transformational leadership and frustrated teacher behavior. This finding suggests that a principal's transformational leadership behavior can reduce the frustration level of teachers. The researchers also claim that when teachers are less frustrated they can experience a clearer focus, higher levels of engagement, and greater commitment. With the multitude of demands placed on teachers daily with high stakes testing, district initiatives, and changing standards, frustration levels are bound to increase. This study pinpoints an instrumental effect of transformational leadership, decreasing frustration, which is related to teacher engagement and commitment.

Minckler (2014) studied data from New York City's Department of Education and found many positive effects of transformational leadership related to schools and teachers, and a statistically significant, positive relationship between transformational leadership behavior and preconditions of teacher social capital. Teachers' social capital is strengthened when transformational leaders provide the structures and supports for teachers to collaborate and work toward the school's common goals. The research also revealed a statistically significant, positive relationship between transformational leadership behavior and teacher bonding social capital. Transformational school leaders create conditions for teacher bonding to occur which increases social capital of teachers and positively influences student performance. There was also a statistically significant, positive relationship between transformational leadership behavior and teacher

collective efficacy. Additionally, Minckler (2014) found a relationship between transformational practices and student performance.

Marks and Printy (2003) examined 24 schools chosen to participate in a school restructuring study. Teachers were surveyed regarding instructional practices, professional activities, and school perception. Transformational leadership emerged as the leadership framework necessary for principals to lead schools through reform. Similarly, Smith and Bell (2011) studied four schools in an urban area of Northern England characterized by high crime, high unemployment, low parental involvement, and high student absenteeism. They found through interviews with school teachers that the teachers wanted to create sustainable shifts in culture and transformational leadership emerged as the leadership framework necessary for implementation of a reform approach.

Dussault, Payette, and Leroux (2008) surveyed 487 French-Canadian high school teachers from 40 schools. They found that principals' transformational leadership is positively related to teachers' collective efficacy. Their research demonstrates that transformational principals model how groups may succeed collectively and provide space and time for collaboration which fosters collaboration and increases the school's overall performance.

To conclude, positive effects of transformational leadership found in general organizations also appear in school organizations. In schools, transformational leadership is positively related to many aspects of school performance. In the studies examined above, transformational leadership emerges as a model necessary to support teachers, influence student performance, and navigate difficult reform efforts. When

applied to school settings, transformational leadership influences teachers' charisma and performance, motivation, change in classroom procedures, commitment to school performance, decreased frustration, increase in teacher efficacy, and navigation through reform processes (Dussault et al., 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Nir & Hameiri, 2014; McCarley, et al., 2014; Marks & Printy, 2003; Minckler, 2014; Smith & Bell, 2011).

Conditions Requiring Transformational Leadership

Although the previous sections argue for the performance effects of transformational leadership behavior, it is the case that effective leaders do not rely on only one type of leadership style or behavior. Leadership decisions and actions are contingent on context and circumstances (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Hallinger, 1992). There are times when a leader needs to manage and provide directives, and there are times when a leader needs to inspire and persuade (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1987; Marks & Printy, 2003). Three organizational and environmental conditions in particular standout as requiring transformational leadership behavior: environmental uncertainty, cultural variation, and task complexity. These conditions also happen to be common in urban schools, making some degree of transformational processes essential for improvement efforts.

The first condition requiring a transformational approach is environmental uncertainty. New and unstable conditions create an uncertain environment and present a greater need for followers to engage in processes that require them to band together, to make meaning from changing circumstances, and to create solutions that promote organizational change and growth. Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) argue that

exceptional conditions or exceptional opportunities present the optimal conditions for transformational practices to result in positive outcomes. A changing external environment does not always have to be viewed as negative. In fact, transformational leadership behavior can be most effective when environmental uncertainty is high and adaptation to a changing landscape is critical to future success (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). In many instances, uncertainty can be used to unite a group around a shared direction for the future performance of an organization (Bass, 1985; Herold, Fefor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008).

Environmental uncertainly and external pressure typify the common urban school district. Districts are expected to raise achievement and close achievement gaps even as resources diminish and the needs of the student population grow. Additionally, many reform mechanisms, strategies, programs, and ideas continue to flow into schools without much effort to remove or displace past practices, adding to the incoherence in the institution (Marsh, Strunk, & Bush, 2013; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). School leaders are expected to implement policies and develop initiatives in ways that transform teaching and learning. These policies and initiatives do not transform schools by themselves. Their effectiveness depends on the actions of school leaders. Given the environmental challenges, it is hard to envision meaningful and sustainable change in urban schools without a commitment to a shared direction and a willingness to make teaching and learning better. Transformational leadership behavior is needed as principals use resources and respond to external pressure so that schools adapt to a changing educational and social landscape in ways that increase the possibility of vision attainment (Marks & Printy, 2003; Smith & Bell, 2011).

The second condition requiring a transformational approach involves one's cultural values and workplace culture. A work culture promotes transformational leadership when leader and follower value information exchange and engage in meaningful decision making processes (Bass, 1985; Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2007; Frahm & Brown, 2007). Transforming the culture of a work place is not done immediately or by following a set of prescribed tasks. A culture is transformed when transformational leadership behaviors are accepted by leader and follower and trust is formed (Bass, 1985; Bommer, et al., 2007; Frahm & Brown, 2007).

In order for transformational leadership to be successful and meaningfully engage followers, there needs to be congruity between the organizational mission and followers' cultural norms and values (Bass 1985; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993; Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, & Lowe, 2012). Followers must be morally involved in the commitment to the organization's vision and mission (Shamir et al., 1993). The task or goal implemented by the leader must connect or relate to the cultural norms and values of the follower. If goals or tasks are incongruent with employee values, then employees will not be authentically committed to the mission/vision of the organization and their level of engagement will suffer making transformational practice less effective.

The same is true for cultural variation. The research of Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, and Lowe (2012) indicates that managers should understand the cultural values of their workers in order to conduct business in a way that is congruent with those values. In so doing, members of a work community with cultural variation may feel valued both as members of the work group and as members of a diverse cultural community.

Task complexity is the third condition where transformational leadership behaviors can thrive. Task complexity includes the structure of a task, resource requirements of a task, and the elements involved in human-task interaction (Liu & Zhizhong, 2012). Complex tasks require transformational leadership to mediate organizational change as transformational leadership inspires employees, enhances commitment to organizational goals, and increases follower motivation (Bono & Judge, 2003; Shamir et al., 1993; Kark et al., 2003).

Teaching and learning are complex tasks that are not easily reduced to a set of practices that work in every case and for every child (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011). Transformational leadership behaviors motivate followers and commit employees to complex tasks. If followers are not committed to the task and the change element taking place within an organization, transformational leadership behaviors will not dominate the movement of leadership or change efforts (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008). Other leadership frameworks such as visionary leadership, instructional leadership, managerial leadership, and distributed leadership have value for school improvement and school leaders but fail to motivate employees and move schools through complex tasks such as school reform.

Environmental uncertainty, cultural variation, and task complexity are three conditions that require effective transformational leadership practices. Environmental uncertainty requires leaders and followers to make meaning out of uncertainty in order transform organizations to reach their desired state of vision implementation. Cultural variation creates an opportunity to define a shared culture. Beliefs and values of followers must align with the operational task in order to create transformational

conditions. Also, the culture of a workplace is improved when leaders and followers engage in meaningful tasks. Task complexity refers to challenging tasks within an organization that require transformational leadership behaviors to solve. Leaders and followers can make sense of change and navigate through it when conditions for transformation are present and when the leader empowers employees to commit to organizational change.

Conditions suitable for transformational leadership abound in urban school districts. Curricular reform, Every Student Succeeds Act implementation, new student assessments, changing teacher and leaders evaluation models, and growing market-based solutions are just a few factors leading to considerable uncertainty in public education. Uncertainty has an effect on school culture. And uncertainty and cultural change are occurring at a time of increased complexity for teaching, learning, and leading. The expectations and obligations for effective teaching and leading are only growing suggesting that the context in which urban school administrators operate seems to call out for increased transformational leadership.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

As demonstrated in the literature review, transformational leadership presents the best case for performance effects associated with principals who create a climate and culture where students and teachers may thrive. Noticeably absent in the literature is evidence on the antecedents of transformational leadership behavior. Specifically, what effects do central office administrators have on principals' transformational leadership practices? The lack of empirical evidence leaves a gap in our understanding of how district level administrators support principals' transformational leadership behaviors. It is unclear why some leaders engage in transformational leadership behavior and others do not. Bommer, Rubin, and Baldwin (2004) claim that there is relatively no empirical evidence to guide organizations hoping to increase transformational leadership behaviors. Thus, self-determination theory is used as the theoretical explanation for the growth and development of transformational leadership behaviors of urban principals.

Self-determination theory explains optimal human and group behavior as being a function of social conditions that build the inner capacity of individuals. Social conditions supportive of psychological needs increase autonomous motivation and improve quality performance (Lynch, Plant, & Ryan; 2005; Stone, Deci, & Ryan; 2009). Conversely, conditions that hinder psychological needs lead to uninspired performance and poor outcomes (Stone et al., 2009). Extending these assumptions to transformational leadership behaviors in schools suggests that support for psychological needs from district administrators can be a powerful energizing force for effective

principal leadership. To understand why this is the case requires a deeper dive into the psychological needs dimension of self-determination theory.

Psychological Needs and Need-Support

Deci and Ryan (2002) claim that the foundation of self-determination theory lies in the assumption that all individuals have basic psychological needs that when supported build inner capacity and drive autonomous action. Motivation is affected both positively and negatively by social conditions. Deci (2009) and Ryan and Niemiec (2009) argue that social environments, situations, and tasks either enable or inhibit the natural, innate tendency of individuals to develop an evolving sense of self. Tendency toward growth and goal fulfillment depend on experience and conditions that support the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2009). The social and relational environment either support or inhibit the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs.

When an individual conceptualizes structures as supportive or restrictive, his or her motivation is affected. The satisfaction of basic psychological needs affects one's motivation to complete work oriented tasks. Successful completion of tasks or continued participation in a group, however, may be contingent on the ways in which structures and/or groups are enabling or controlling (Deci, 2009; Stone, Ryan, & Neimiec, 2009). A need is an energizing state for human behavior. Psychological needs supply the energy to persist in specific tasks and challenges. The research on self-determination theory maintains that the satisfaction of inherent psychological needs liberates and enhances humankind along with connecting inherent tendencies toward personal and professional growth (Ryan & Neimiec, 2009). As such, an individual's

motivation is affected by the way in which structures, including groups, are enabling or inhibiting in relation to satisfying his or her basic psychological needs.

Autonomy is the belief that desired outcomes result from one's decisions and actions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). One experiences autonomy when he or she believes that control over actions and outcomes is largely internal (Baard, Deci, & Ryan; 2004). One way employees experience autonomy is by approaching work situations with a sense of self-motivation and taking ownership of actions (Deci & Vansteenkiste; 2004; Graves & Luciano; 2013). Employers may support autonomy by presenting opportunities for employees to voice opinions, to take control of initiatives, and to bring input to company decisions (Lynch et al., 2005; Graves & Luciano, 2013).

Autonomy support resides in the work environment (Baard et al., 2004; Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). Supervisors, central office administrators in the case of this study, meet the basic need of autonomy by supporting voice and choice, acknowledging differing points of view, promoting self-regulation, and delivering information in non-threating ways (Baard et al., 2004). Leaders also support autonomy by setting goals with followers, planning with followers, and including followers in decision making (Baard et al., 2004; Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). When supervisors give employees a voice in work matters, a choice in work matters, and a sense of drive and leadership related to work tasks, employees feel more autonomy related to tasks (Lynch et al., 2005).

Effects of autonomy support include greater intrinsic motivation, greater job satisfaction, and a greater sense of well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Studies indicate that when the need for autonomy is met, or supported, increases in motivation,

satisfaction, the sense of well-being, commitment, positive attitude and motivation, skill utilization, and satisfaction occur (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Lynch et al., 2005; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens, & Lens, 2010).

Competence reflects confidence in one's ability to achieve desired end states. Competence is similar to efficacy in that the individual has confidence in his or her capabilities for a specific task (Stone et al., 2009). Employees experience competence when they succeed at difficult tasks resulting in desired outcomes (Baard et al., 2004). Employees want to influence their environment and be effective in relation to accomplishment of desired outcomes (Graves & Luciano, 2013). Competence relates to the feeling of being capable, effectual, and influential in work environments (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

One sign of competence is when employees successfully take on challenges, manage change, and excel through challenging circumstances (Graves & Luciano, 2013). Also, increased effort and inner determination are signals of strong competence (Baard et al., 2004). Research reveals that meeting the need of competence enhances intrinsic motivation, a sense of effectiveness, a sense of meaningfulness, well-being, skill utilization, and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci and Vansteenkiste, 2004; Graves & Luciano, 2013; Lynch, Plant, & Ryan, 2005; Van den Broeck et al., 2010).

Competence support is found in a set of behaviors by supervisors/leaders that give employees opportunities to build their confidence in performing meaningful tasks (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). Supervisors may support competence by providing both formal and informal feedback, showing interest in daily interactions of employees, and by providing employees opportunities to work with others on meaningful tasks.

Supervisors may also meet the need of competence by engaging employees in discussions regarding their greatest work challenges (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004; Lynch et al., 2005).

Relatedness is the sense that one is connected to a group, as well as the mission or purpose of the group or organization (Stone et al., 2009). Employees experience relatedness when they gain mutual respect from peers and maintain responsibility for a task or tasks (Baard et al., 2004). Relatedness is experienced when connections with others are safe, solidified, and gratifying (Graves & Luciano; 2013). Ryan and Deci (2000) claim that relatedness consists of one's desire to be accepted and part of a functioning peer group. When supervisors value and support employees in their daily tasks, they create opportunities for employees to author their own behavior and experience feelings of belonging thus supporting the psychological need of relatedness (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004; Graves & Luciano; 2013; Lynch et al., 2005).

Supervisors support the basic psychological need of relatedness by valuing employee perspective and engaging employees in dialogue regarding task challenges. This is similar to the support of the basic psychological need of competence; the two are interrelated and rely on the relationship between employee and supervisor (Lynch et al., 2005). Relatedness is also supported by providing employees opportunities to work with others on meaningful tasks (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004).

In sum, autonomy, competence, and relatedness make up the basic psychological needs in self-determination theory. Each is interconnected through employee and supervisor relationships. The meeting of basic psychological needs fosters a sense of intrinsic motivation, satisfaction with work tasks, strengthens

employee and supervisor relationships, and creates a sense of belonging and job satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004; Graves & Luciano, 2013; Lynch et al., 2005). Next the case is made that need-support provided by supervisors, central office administrators in relation to school principals, is the conduit for transformational leadership practices.

Need-Support and Transformational Leadership Behavior

Unaddressed up to this point is the connection between self-determination theory and transformational leadership behavior. The argument that follows comes from evidence on the relationship between support for employee psychological needs and how employees perform their tasks and responsibilities. When psychological needs are undermined by the organizational environment, employers tend to be more controlling and transactional in their actions and interactions (Stone et al., 2009). Conversely, need-supporting cultures spread transformational behaviors across individuals within organizations (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Graves & Luciano, 2013). Empirical evidence does not directly link need-support to transformational leadership behavior, but it does suggest that behaviors consistent with elements of transformational leadership are more common when needs are supported (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pelletier & Sharp, 2009). Three specific types of transformational leadership behaviors stand out as significant to the satisfaction of psychological needs: greater collaboration, increased commitment, and motivation to persist in the pursuit of a desired vision.

Kovjanic, Schuh, and Jonas (2013) examined 190 participants in an on-line experiment and found environments supportive of employees' inherent psychological needs led to greater willingness of participants to engage in similarly empowering

behaviors such as increased collaboration, openness, and cooperation. Further, they argued that need satisfaction is a way to transform behaviors of followers. Supporting participants' psychological needs led to behaviors associated with transformational leadership. When participants perceived their psychological needs of competence and relatedness were met, their responses were associated to transformational leadership behaviors (Kovjanic, Schuh, & Jones, 2013).

In a study designed to test leader-member exchange and employee performance, Graves and Luciano (2013) found that employees who perceived their work environments to be supportive of psychological needs were more willing to openly communicate with leaders, exchange ideas, and provide important feedback. Perceived need-support facilitated exchanges that connected employees and leaders to a common vision and purpose and enabled important performance conversations to occur. Transformational leadership behaviors such as commitment to a common vision and collaboration (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994; & Podsakoff, 1996) are passed on from leader to follower when followers perceive their psychological needs are met. It is not out of line to reason, based on this evidence, that when the central office meets the psychological needs of principals that transformational leadership behaviors will manifest themselves in principal action.

Similar to Graves and Luciano, Hallinger's (1992) early study of transformational leadership supports the supposition that need-support from a hierarchical level has positive ripple effects across the entire organization. In school settings, he found that leaders who were perceived as inspiring, present, encouraging, and open created a culture where teachers, who often operate in isolation, were more

likely to exchange ideas with colleagues, collaborate with parents, interact with leaders, and listen to students. Leaders who are perceived as inspiring, present, encouraging, and open, were able to support the psychological needs of employees. When principals support teacher's psychological needs of competence and relatedness (as demonstrated by being inspiring, present, encouraging, and open) then teachers may better act in transformational ways with students. This demonstrates that meeting psychological needs can lead to actions consistent with transformational leadership.

In addition to the positive relational effects of need-support from positions of authority, such environments cultivate the durable commitment and motivation behind transformative action (Hetland, Hetland, Andreassen, Pallesen, & Notelaers, 2011). In a study involving 528 investment banking associates, Baard, Deci, and Ryan (2004) found greater commitment to change and increased motivation among associates who experienced the actions of higher management as autonomy-supportive. These associates expressed stronger commitment to the stated vision and a willingness to move their respective departments in a direction consistent with new strategies and expectations when their psychological need of autonomy was met.

Lynch, Plant, and Ryan (2005) in a study of 186 administrative hospital staff found a positive correlation between basic psychological needs and workers' commitment and perceived well-being at work. They also found workers' positive attitude and intrinsic motivation were higher when the needs of autonomy and relatedness were met on the job. These studies reinforce the proposed idea that when psychological needs are supported that followers' transformational leadership behaviors will increase.

Pelletier and Sharp (2009) show that when teachers work in controlling environments they exhibit controlling behaviors toward students. They also have demonstrated that when teachers work in environments that are supportive of autonomy, competence, and relatedness that the teachers exhibit behavior toward students that supports psychological needs. Pelletier, Sequin-Levesque, and Legault (2002) demonstrated that teachers who felt pressure by administrators, other teachers, and the curriculum did not show autonomy support to students. It stands to reason that when principals perceive central office as restrictive and controlling, they will be predisposed to leading and managing in a similar way.

In short, transformational leadership and self-determination theory each address supervisor and employee collaboration, increased employee commitment, and employee well-being in ways that benefit not only supervisor and employee, but organizational performance as well. Using the theoretical link between self-determination theory and transformational leadership behavior, this study examined the ways in which central office administrators may meet the psychological needs of principals. The following questions were advanced for the empirical investigation.

1. To what extent do principals perceive that their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported by central office administration?
2. To what extent do teachers perceive principals exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors?
3. What is the relationship between the central office administration support for principal psychological needs and transformational leadership behaviors of principals?

Chapter 4: Research Methods

Design

The empirical part of the study used a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design. The purpose was to measure perceived need-support of principals in a school district in a metropolitan area, then to examine the relationship between principal perceived need-support and transformational leadership behavior. As a non-experimental study, there were confounding variables to control for in the analysis in order to isolate the relationship of interest. Even with statistical controls, strong causal claims are not warranted from the proposed design. That stated, theory and the empirical evidence can provide provisional support for the relationships.

Data Source

Data came from the capacity project by the Oklahoma Center on Education Policy (OCEP). Data were collected during the 2014-2015 school year from 73 out of 74 principals in an urban school district. The district had a population of approximately 40,152 students; 78.89% of those students met the criteria for free and reduced lunch. The ethnic make-up of the district was Caucasian 28.1%, African American 27.8%, Hispanic 27.9%, American Indian 6.94%, and Asian 1.33%. For principals in the sample, 72% identified as female and 22% identified as male. The average years in current school was 3.5 with an average administrative experience of 7.34 years.

Measures

Items from the teacher trust in district administration scale were used to measure principal perceived need-support. Items from the OCEP surveys were used to measure principal perception of support for psychological needs by district administration. Even

though items were written with trust in mind, they conceptually map onto need-supporting actions of district administration. More on the alignment follows.

1. Autonomy support is defined as "the experience of acting with a sense of choice, volition and self-determination" (Stone et al., 2009, p.77). An employee's need for autonomy is supported when they have voice and choice in work matters, can take control of initiatives, and are given opportunities to share in decision making (Graves and Luciano, 2013; Lynch et al., 2005). Items used to measure autonomy support include:

- District level administrators allow me professional autonomy to do what is best for my school.
- District level administrators value my staff and me as professionals.
- District level administrators value my ideas for school improvement.

Psychometrics for autonomy support items show good structural validity and reliability. The three items load strongly on one factor with loading ranging from .85 - .95. Internal item consistency was excellent as reported with an alpha of .94.

2. Competence support is defined as "the belief that one has the ability to influence important outcomes" (Stone et al., 2009, p. 77). An employee's need for competence is supported when they succeed at difficult tasks that result in the desired outcome there by leading to a sense influence in the work environment which also results in a greater sense of confidence related to performance and success of work tasks (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Graves and Luciano, 2013). Items used to measure competence support include:

- District level administrators inspire me to provide leadership for my school.
- District level administrators are committed to the district's stated goals and strategies.
- District level administrators provide a safe place for difficult conversations.

Psychometrics for competence support items show good structural validity and reliability. The three items load strongly on one factor with loading ranging from .77 - .90. Internal item consistency was good as reported with an alpha of .86.

3. Relatedness support is defined as "the experience of having satisfying and supportive social relationships" (Stone et al., 2009, p. 77). An employee's need for relatedness is supported when they gain respect from peers and maintain responsibility for a task and experience belonging in the work group (Stone et al., 2009). Items used to measure relatedness support include:

- District level administrators facilitate shared decision-making.
- District level administrators show concern for the needs of my school.
- District level administrators maintain a visible presence in my school.

Psychometrics for relatedness support items show good structural validity and reliability. The three items load strongly on one factor with loading ranging from .76 - .84. Internal item consistency was good as reported with an alpha of .84.

Transformational leadership behavior was measured with seven items adopted from Bass's survey (1985). The items capture each element of transformational leadership behavior: 1. Articulating a vision, 2. Modeling, 3. Fostering group cohesion, 4. Setting high performance expectations, 5. Providing individualized support, 6. Challenging assumptions and the status quo, and 7. Recognizing outstanding work (Bass, 1985). The follow items from the OPEC survey were used to measure teachers' perceptions of the transformational leadership behaviors of their principals.

The principal at this school…

- inspires others with his/her plans for the future.
- provides a good model for me to follow.
- develops a team attitude and spirit among employees.

- insists on only the best performance.
- behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.
- asks questions that prompt me to think.
- commends me when I do a better than average job.

Psychometrics for transformational leadership behavior items show good structural validity and reliability. The seven items load strongly on one factor with loading ranging from .78 - .93. Internal item consistency was excellent as reported with an alpha of .95. Items were measured using a Likert scale using 1 as strongly disagree and 6 as strongly agree.

Data Analysis

1. Descriptive statistics were used for the first research question to describe the psychological needs principals perceived were supported by central office administration. An item analysis was used to examine principal response to specific actions of district administration.

2. The second analysis used descriptive statistics to describe the transformational leadership behaviors of principals. For this purpose, an item analysis of the transformational leadership survey was used to report teacher perception of specific transformational leadership behaviors. The item analysis yields evidence on the prevalence of certain transformational leadership behavior practices.

3. Bivariate correlations were used to address the third research question. Bivariate correlations report the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors of principals and principal perceived autonomy support, competence support, and relatedness support.

There are some limitations for valid conclusions in this study. First, there is no causal relationship. Also, this data comes from only one urban school district, and there is not much variation represented in the results. Limitations of this design have consequences for the internal and external validity of the evidence. For internal validity, descriptive and correlational designs do not render causal claims from the evidence because rival explanations cannot be ruled out in the design of the study. For external validity, findings from this sample should not be generalized to all principals in school districts. The sample is representative of city schools and districts across the U.S. but does not reflect suburban or rural schools.

A post hoc analysis was conducted to determine if the concept of "trust" could mediate the relationship between principals' perception of met needs and transformational leadership behaviors as no statistically significant relationship between central office administration support for principal psychological needs and transformational leadership behaviors of principals was found. The post hoc analysis included results for principal trust in students, principal trust in faculty, and principal trust in parents.

Bi-variate correlations were estimated to analyze the relationships between principal trust in students, principal trust in faculty, principal trust in parents and transformational leadership behaviors. Results did not reveal any statistically significant, positive correlation between transformational leadership behavior and principal trust in students ($r=.066$, $p>.05$), principal trust in faculty ($r=.314$, $p>.05$), and principal trust in parents ($r=.219$, $p>.05$). However, principal trust in students was closest to statistically significant at $r=.066$, $p>.05$. Principal trust in students should be

examined in future research in relation to supporting principal's psychological needs. This also suggests that it may be internal school factors that support a principal's psychological needs rather than external factors such as central office administration.

Limitations

Design Limitations

Design limitations center on the validity of claims stemming from the evidence. Validity refers to the accuracy of conclusions drawn about a phenomenon based on the available empirical evidence (Messick, 1989). Threats to the internal validity of this study come from the lack of experimental conditions in the design. Without random sampling, random assignment, and manipulation of the independent variable, the evidence is exposed to possible rival explanation for the estimated relationships.

Measurement Limitations

Measurement limitations should also be considered. The study measured principal need-support with the existing trust in district administrator scale (Adams & Miskel, 2017). Conceptually, the scale items align with need-support, but the probability remains that elements and dimensions of need-support might not be captured in the measure.

External Validity

External validity needs to be considered as well. Evidence in this study is limited to urban principals in one school district. This may have advantages for internal validity, but it does limit the generalizability of the findings. At best, these findings should only be generalized to similar district contexts.

Chapter 5: Results

Descriptive statistics were used to answer research question one, "What psychological needs do principals perceive are supported by central office administration?" and research question two, "What transformational leadership behaviors of school principals do teachers perceive as prevalent?" Descriptive data from item analysis are presented in bar graphs. The graphs show percent of responses in different agreement categories. The criterion of 60% of responses in the agree and strongly agree categories was used to determine overall favorability for the item. Following each bar graph is a summary of findings relating to that particular survey item. At the end of the descriptive statics section is an overall summary for research questions one and two.

Research Question One

To what extent do principals perceive that their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported by central office administration?

As seen in figure 1, 29% of principals felt district administrators allowed them professional autonomy, with 19% responding they agree and 10% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Thirty three percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators allowed them professional autonomy by responding somewhat agree. Thirty eight percent of principals did not feel district administrators allowed them professional autonomy by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (7%), disagree (17%), or strongly disagree (14%). With only 29% of principal responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for their professional autonomy.

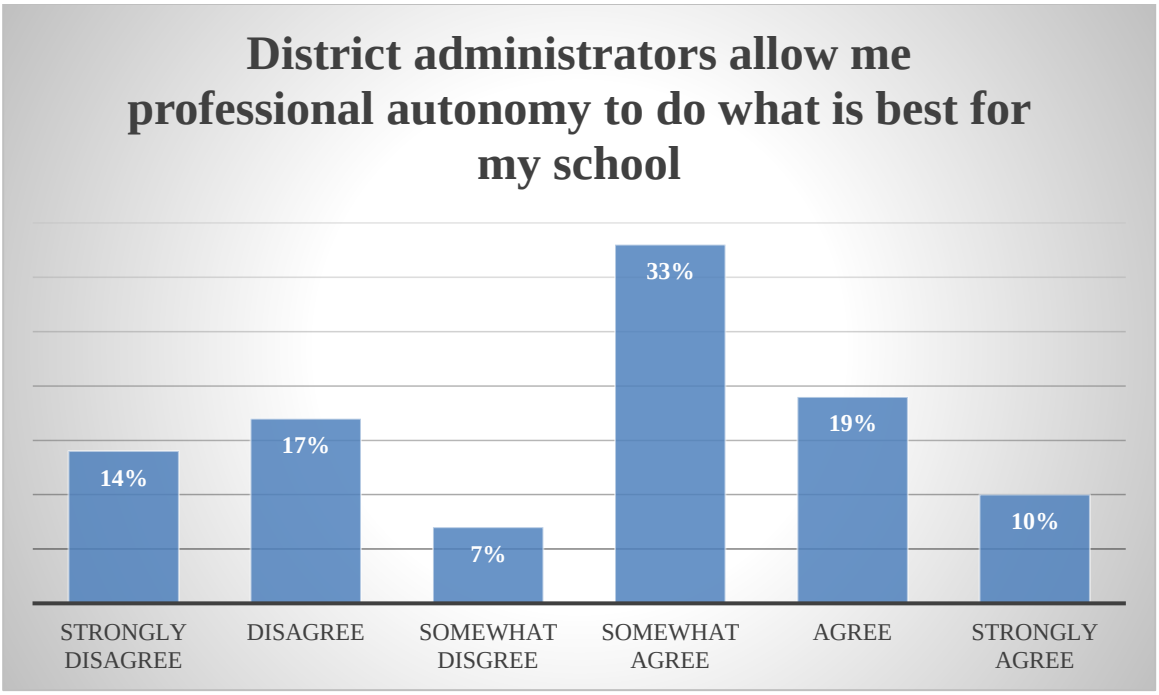

Figure 1: District administrators allow me professional autonomy to do what is best for my school

As seen in figure 2, 45% of principals felt district administrators valued their staff and themselves as professionals, with 35% responding they agree and 10% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Twenty five percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators valued their staff and themselves as professionals by responding somewhat agree. Thirty one percent of principals felt district administrators did not value their staff and themselves as professionals by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (14%), disagree (11%), or strongly disagree (6%). With only 45% of principal responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for being valued as professionals.

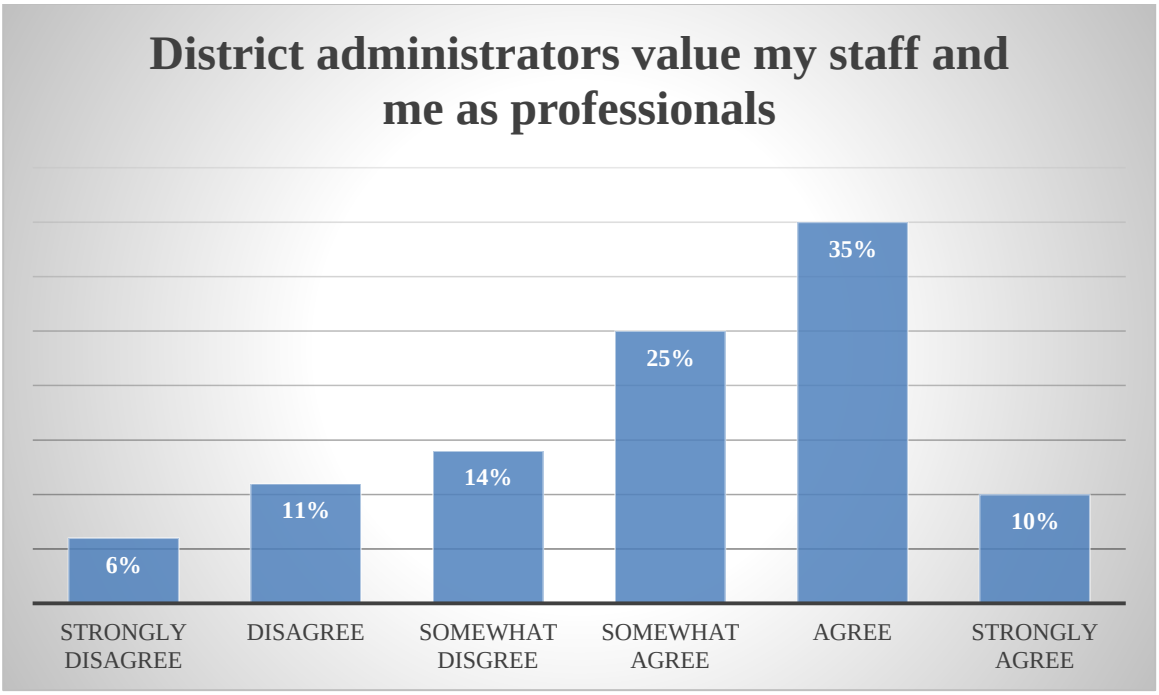

Figure 2: District administrators value my staff and me as professionals

As seen in figure 3, 37% of principals felt district administrators value their ideas for school improvement, with 33% responding they agree and 4% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Thirty one percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators valued their ideas for school improvement by responding somewhat agree. Thirty two percent of principals felt that district administrators did not value their ideas for school improvement by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (8%), disagree (17%), or strongly disagree (7%). With only 37% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study did not experience support for district administrators' valuing their ideas for school improvement.

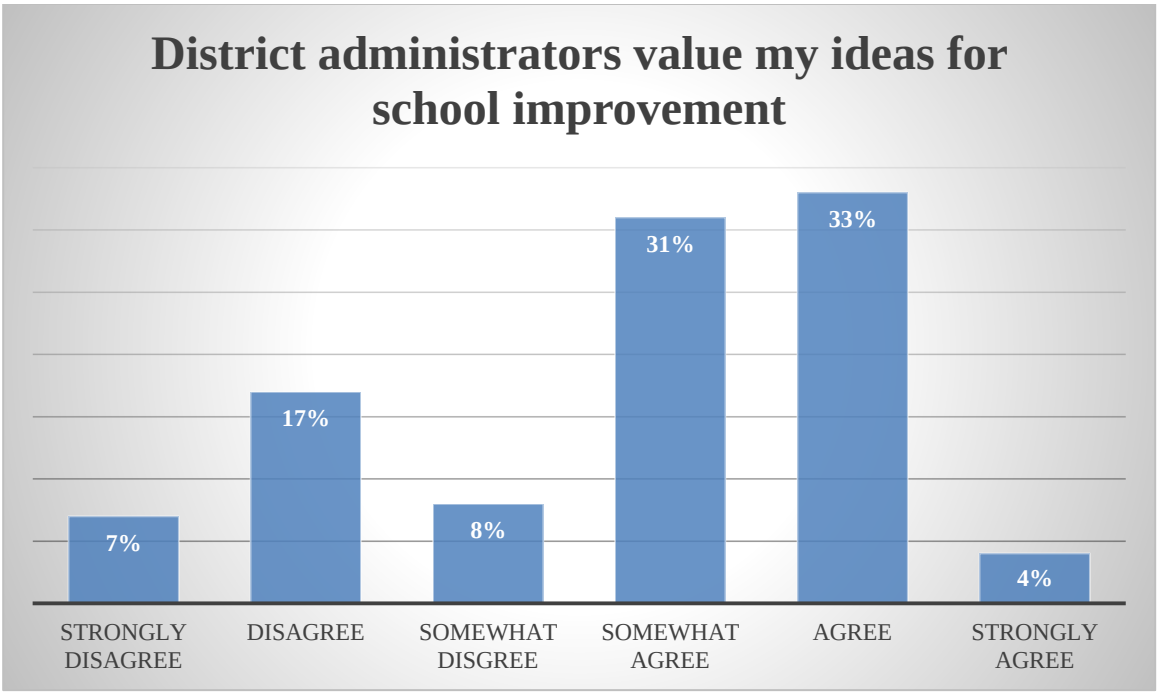

Figure 3: District administrators value my ideas for school improvement

Next, statistics from figures four through six are examined as they related to competence.

As seen in figure 4, 41% of principals felt district administrators inspired them to provide leadership for their school, with 26% responding they agree and 15% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Twenty eight percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators inspired them to provide leadership for their school by responding somewhat agree. Thirty one percent of principals felt that district administrators did not inspire them to provide leadership for their school by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (8%), disagree (17%), or strongly disagree (6%). With only 41% of principal responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for district administrators inspiring them to provide leadership for their school.

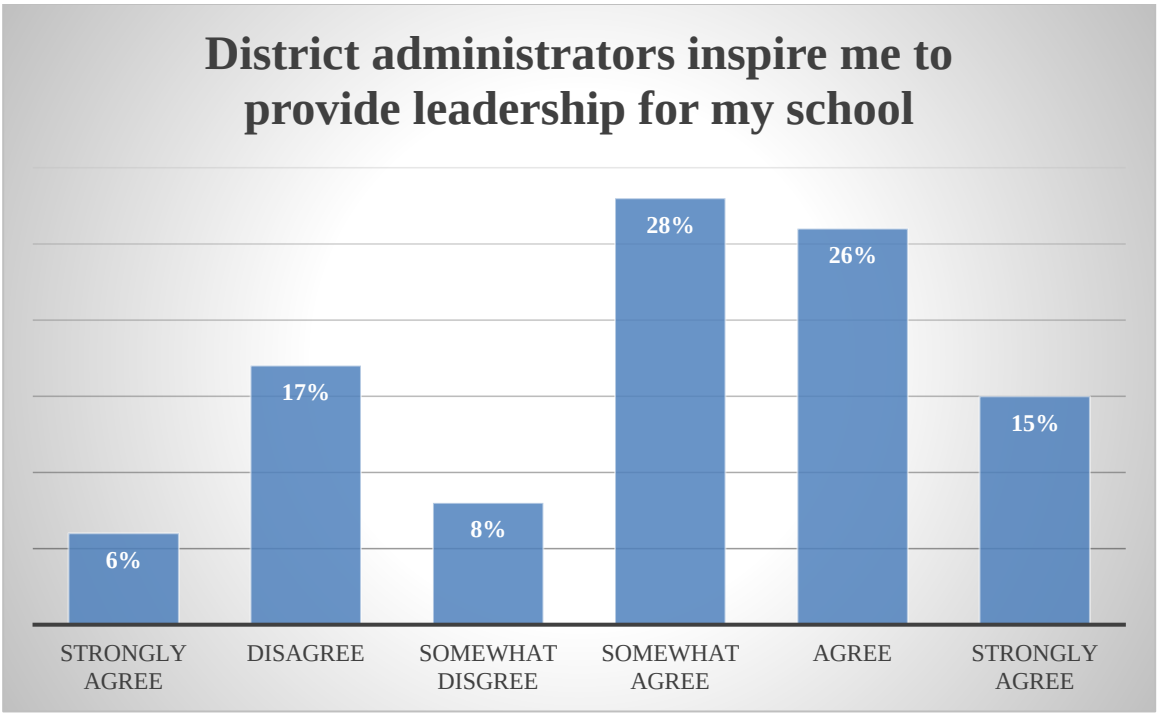

Figure 4: District administrators inspire me to provide leadership for my school

As seen in figure 5, 53% of principals felt district administrators were committed to the district's goals and stated strategies, with 40% responding they agree and 13% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Twenty nine percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators were committed to the district's goals and stated strategies by responding somewhat agree. Nineteen percent of principals felt district administrators were not committed to the district's goals and stated strategies by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (10%), disagree (6%), or strongly disagree (3%). With only 53% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for district administrators committing to the district's goals and stated strategies.

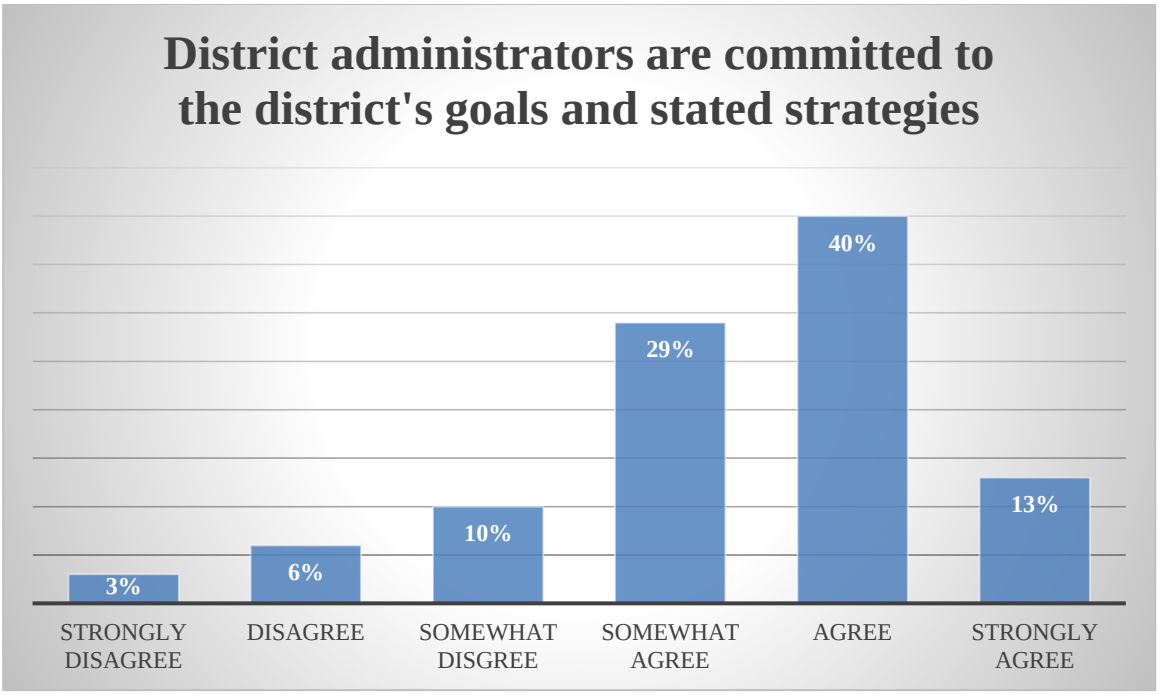

Figure 5: District administrators are committed to the district's goals and stated strategies

As seen in figure 6, 31% of principals felt district administrators provided a safe place for difficult conversations, with 24% stating they agree and 7% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Thirty six percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators provided a safe place for difficult conversations by responding somewhat agree. Thirty four percent of principals did not agree that district administrators provided a safe place for difficult conversations by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (14%), disagree (7%), or strongly disagree (13%). With only 31% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for district administrators providing a safe place for difficult conversations.

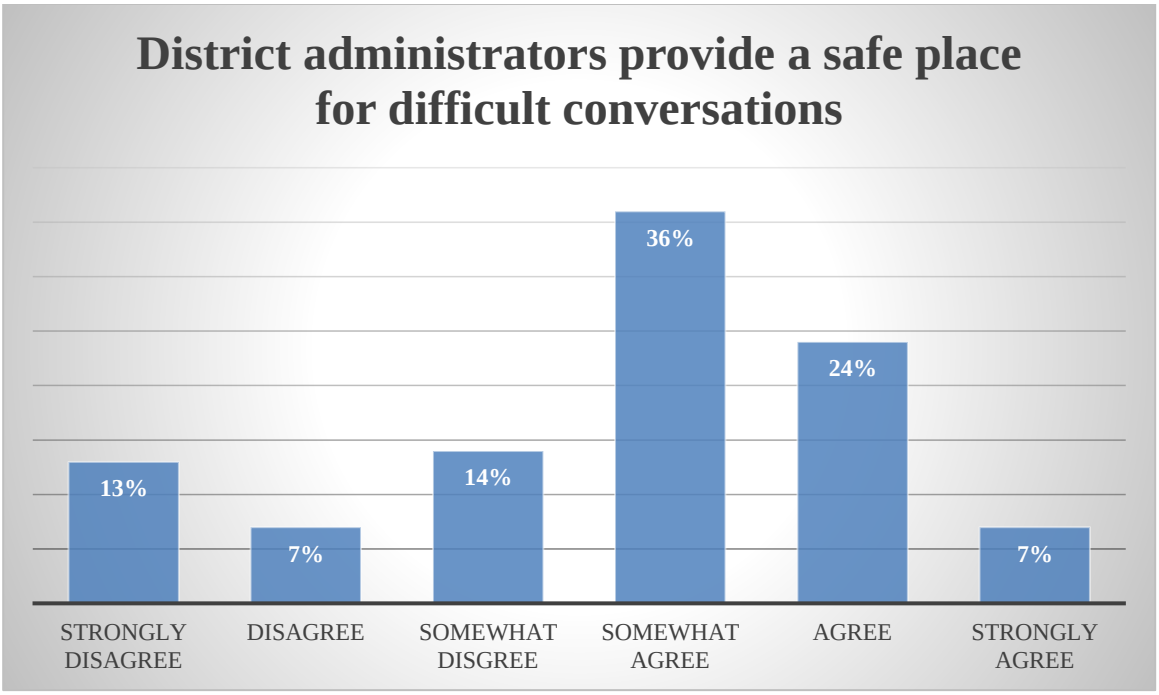

Figure 6: District administrators provide a safe place for difficult conversations

Next, statistics from figures seven through nine are examined as they related to relatedness.

As seen in figure 7, 25% of principals felt district administrators facilitated shared decision making, with 22% responding they agree and 3% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Thirty one percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators facilitate shared decision making by responding somewhat agree. Forty five percent of principals felt district administrators did not facilitate shared decision making by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (13%), disagree (13%), or strongly disagree (19%). With only 25% of principal responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for shared decision making.

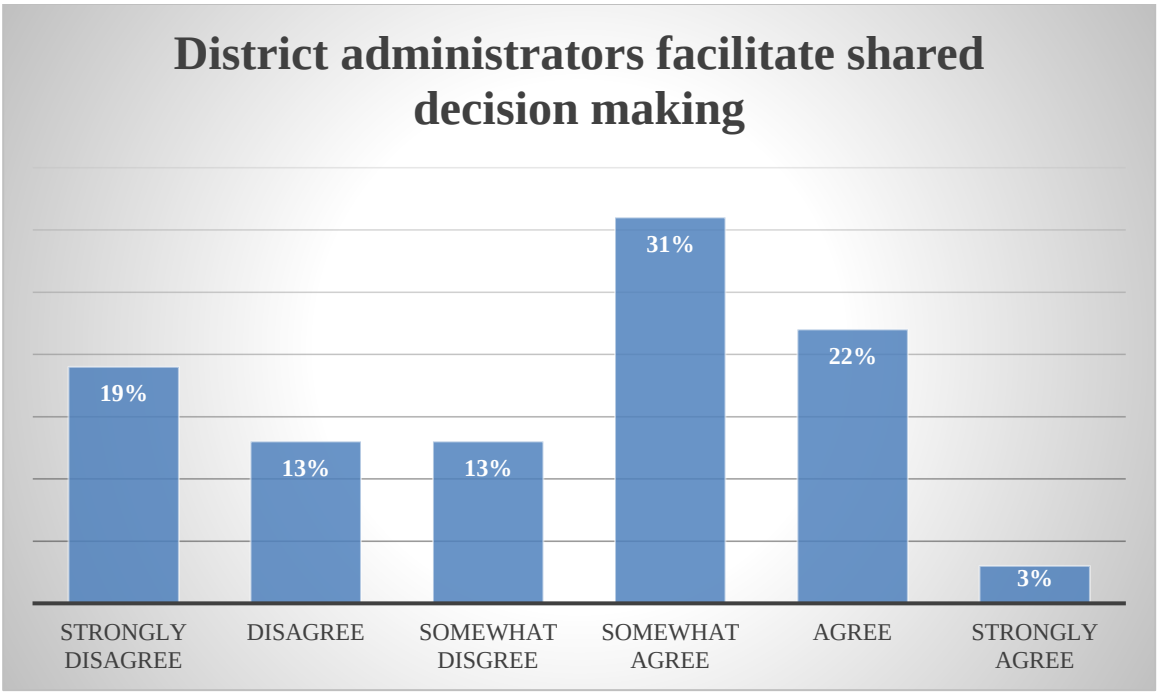

Figure 7: District administrators facilitate shared decision making

As seen in figure 8, 31% of principals felt district administrators show concern for the needs of their school, with 21% responding they agree and 10% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Thirty three percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators show concern for the needs of their school by responding somewhat agree. Thirty six percent of principals felt district administrators did not show concern for the needs of their school by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (14%), disagree (14%), or strongly disagree (8%). With only 31% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for district administrators showing concern for the needs of their school.

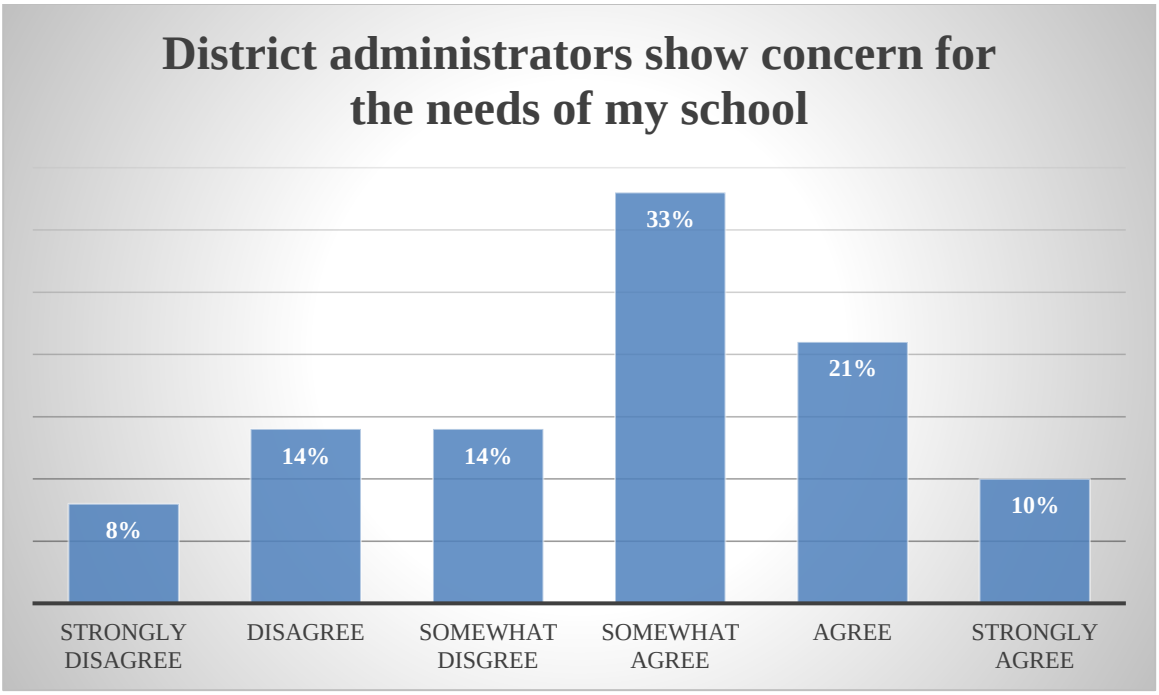

Figure 8: District administrators show concern for the needs of my school

As seen in figure 9, 35% of principals felt that district administrators maintained a visible presence in their school, with 21% responding they agree and 14% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Thirty six percent of principals felt ambivalent that district administrators maintained a visible presence in their school by responding somewhat agree. Thirty percent of principals felt that district administrators did not maintain a visible presence in their school by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (10%), disagree (6%), or strongly disagree (14%). With only 35% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of principals in this study do not experience support for district administrators maintaining a visible presence in their school.

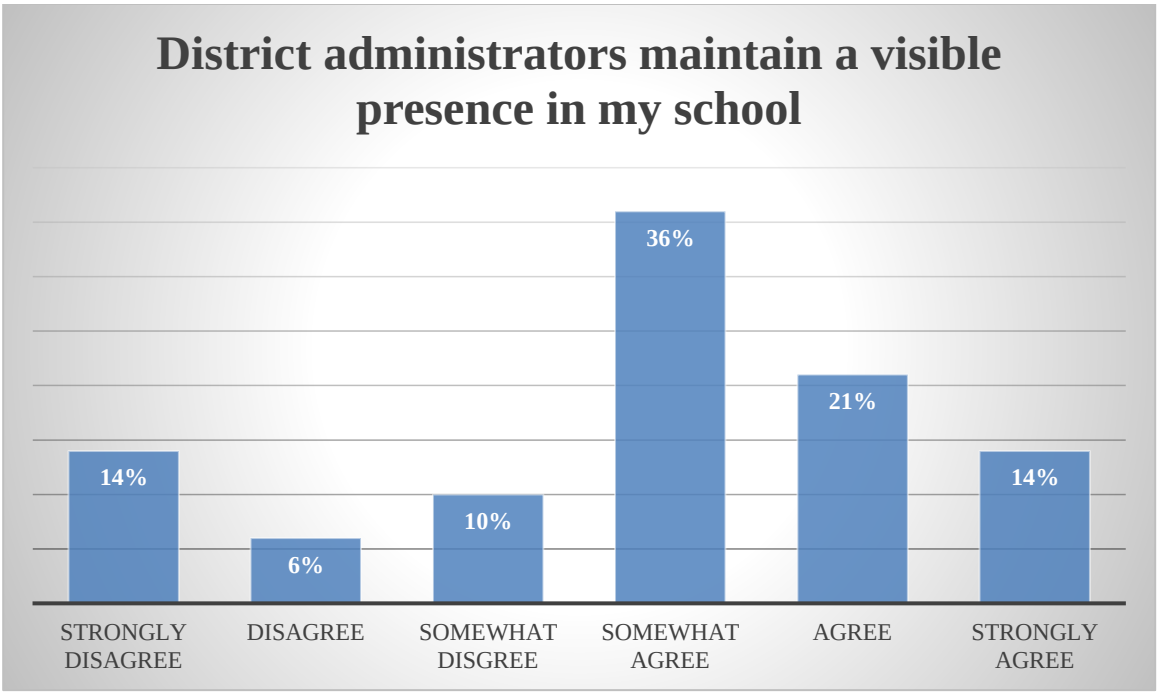

Figure 9: District administrators maintain a visible presence in my school

Summary of Research Question One Results

The inherent psychological need of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000) is specifically measured in survey items one through three. The following questions were used to determine if principals' inherent psychological need of autonomy are met by district administration.

1. District administrators value my ideas for school improvement.
2. District administrators value my staff and me as professionals.
3. District administrators allow me professional autonomy to do what is best for my school.

Responses to items measuring autonomy support did not reach the sixty percent favorability threshold, suggesting that district administration did not provide adequate support to meet this need.

The inherent psychological need of competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000) is specifically measured in survey items four through six. The following questions were used to determine if principals' inherent psychological need of competence are met by district administration. District administrators inspire me to provide leadership for my school.

4. District administrators inspire me to provide leadership for my school.
5. District administrators are committed to the district's stated goals and strategies.
6. District administrators provide a safe place for difficult conversations.

Responses to items measuring competence support did not reach the sixty percent favorability threshold, suggesting that district administration did not provide adequate support to meet this need.

The inherent psychological need of relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000) is specifically measured in survey items seven through nine. The following questions were used to determine if principals' inherent psychological need of relatedness are met by district administration.

7. District administrators show concern for the needs of my school.
8. District administrators facilitate shared decision making.
9. District administrators maintain a visible presence in my school.

Responses to items measuring relatedness support did not reach the sixty percent favorability threshold, suggesting that district administration did not provide adequate support to meet this need.

In summary, it appears that the majority principals do not feel their inherent psychological needs are supported by district administrators. None of the nine survey items garnered a favorable response rate of 60% or higher in the agree and strongly agree categories. Two questions had favorable response rates from 20% of principals; four questions had favorable response rates from 30% of principals; two questions had favorable response rates from 40% of principals, and one question had a favorable response rate from 50% of principals.

Research Question Two

To what extent do teachers perceive principals exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors?

As seen in figure 10, 60% of teachers felt their principal inspired others with his/her plans for the future, with 36% responding they agree and 24% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Twenty two percent of teachers felt ambivalent that their principal inspired others with his/her plans for the future by responding somewhat agree. Eighteen percent of teachers felt that their principal did not inspire others with his/her plans for the future by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (7%), disagree (7%), or strongly disagree (4%). With 60% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of teachers in this study do perceive their principal inspires others with his/her plans for the future.

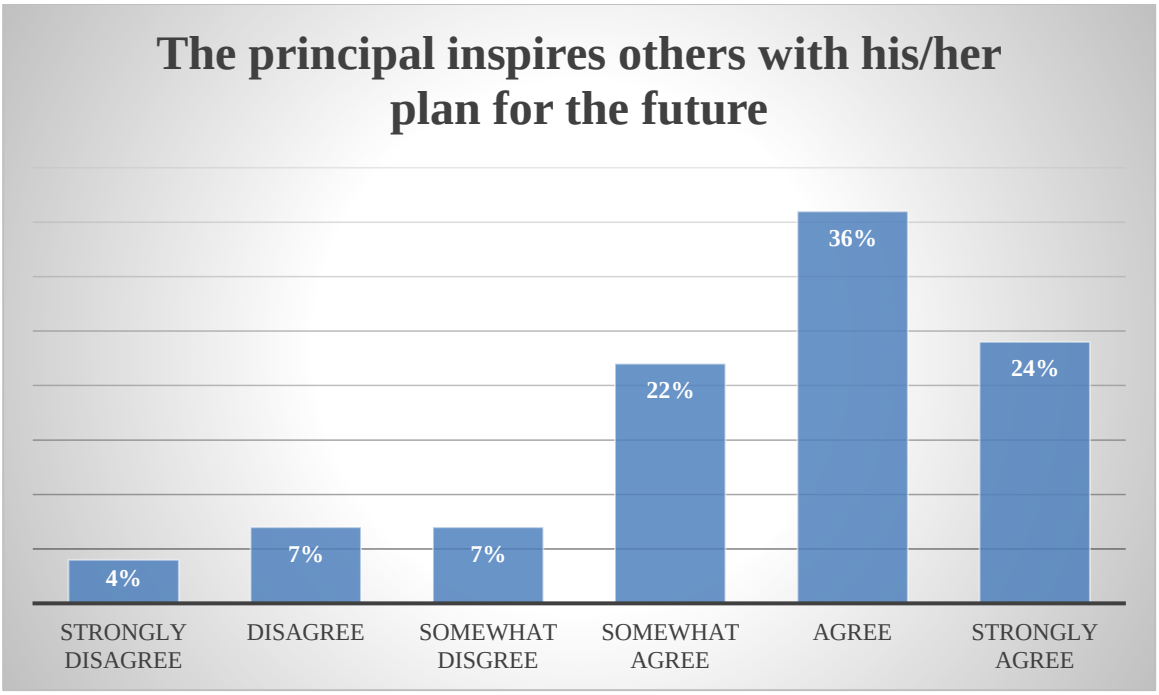

Figure 10: The principal inspires others with his/her plan for the future

As seen in figure 11, 63% of teachers felt their principal provided them a good model to follow, with 35% responding they agree and 28% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Nineteen percent of teachers felt ambivalent that their principal provided a good model for them to follow by responding somewhat agree. Seventeen percent of teachers felt their principal did not provide a good model for them to follow by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (7%), disagree (5%), or strongly disagree (5%). With 63% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of teachers in this study do perceive their principal provides a good model to follow.

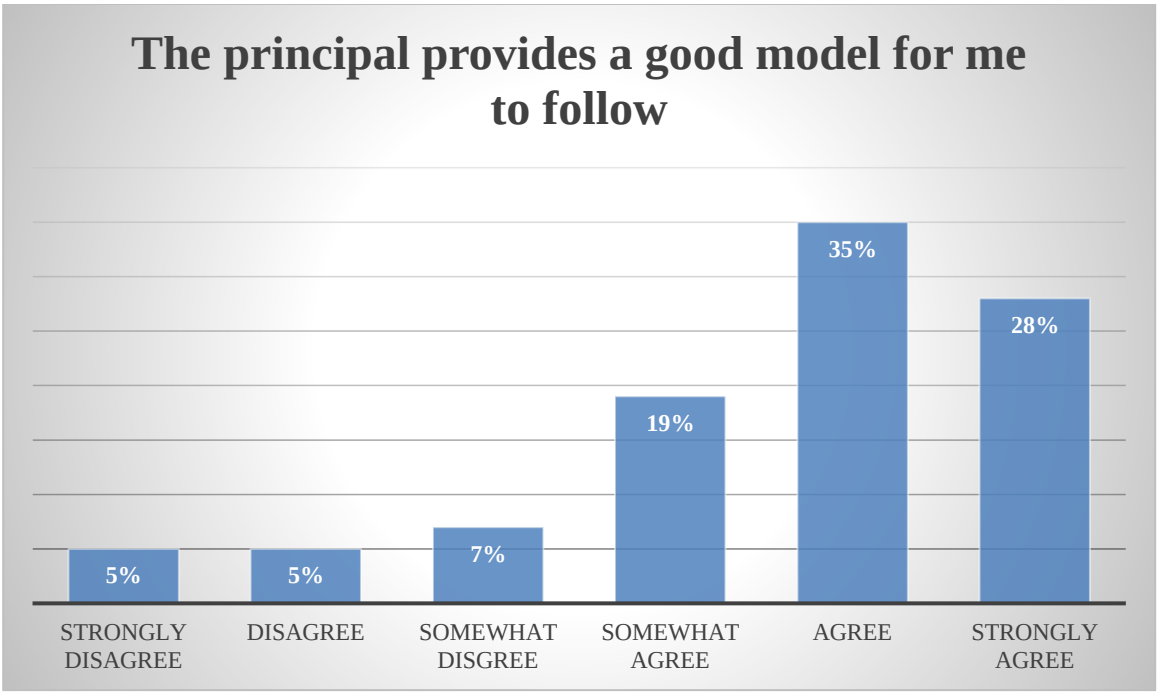

Figure 11: The principal provides a good model for me to follow

As seen in figure 12, 62% of teachers felt their principal developed a team attitude and spirit among employees, with 33% responding they agree and 29% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Sixteen percent of teachers felt ambivalent that their principal developed a team attitude and spirit among employees by responding somewhat agree. Twenty three percent of teachers felt their principal did not develop a team attitude of spirit among employees by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (9%), disagree (7%), or strongly disagree (7%). With 62% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of teachers in this study perceive their principal developed a team attitude and spirit among employees.

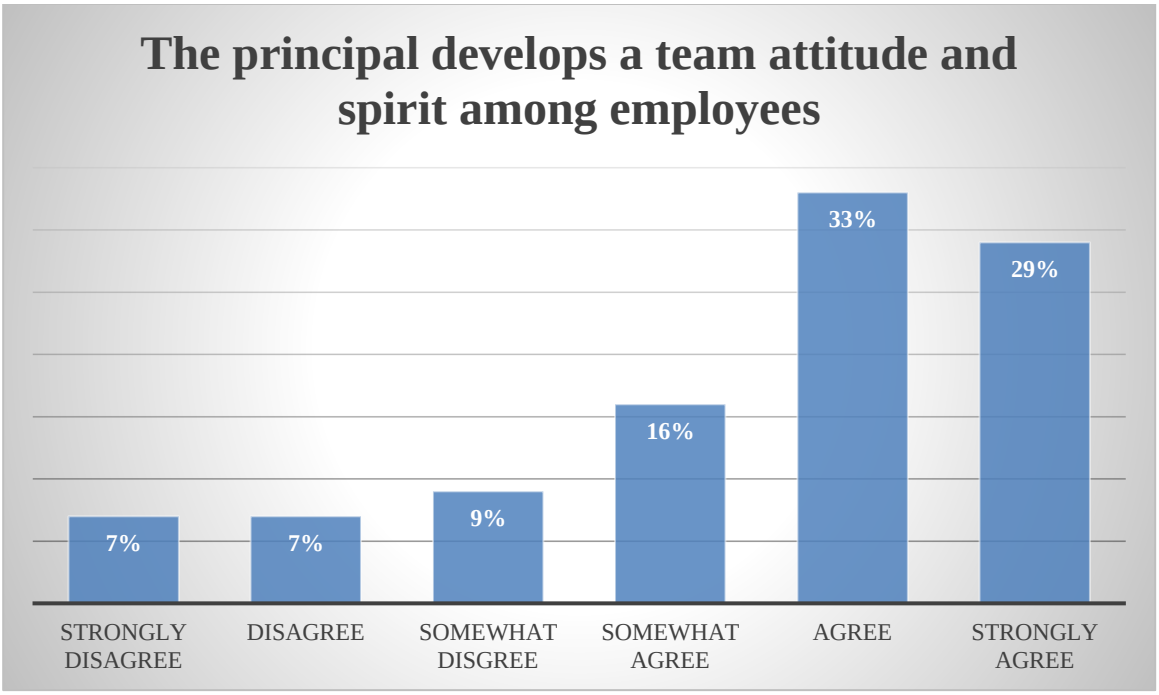

Figure 12: The principal develops a team attitude and spirit among employees

As seen in figure 13, 75% of teachers felt their principal insisted on only the best performance, with 39% responding they agree and 36% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Fifteen percent of teachers felt ambivalent that their principal insisted only the best performance by responding somewhat agree. Eleven percent of teachers felt that their principals did not insist on only the best performance by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (5%), disagree (3%), or strongly disagree (3%). The most frequent response to this question from teachers was agree (39%), with the least frequent responses being strongly disagree (3%) and disagree (3%). With 75% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of teachers in this study do perceive their principal insisted on only the best performance.

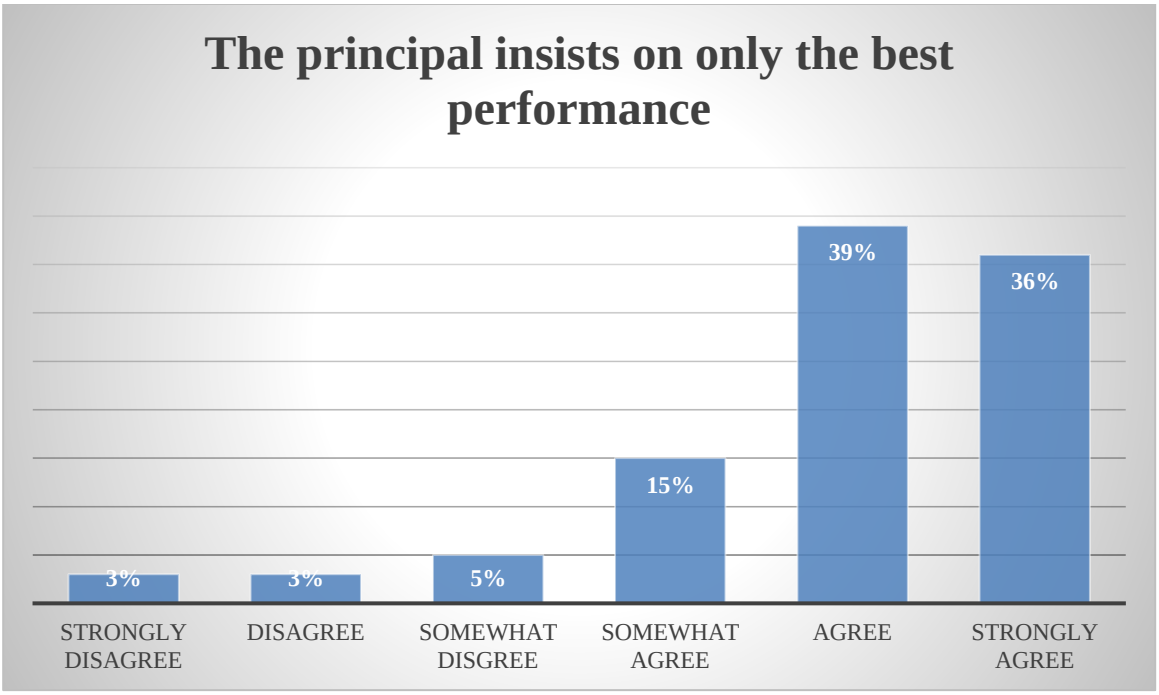

Figure 13: The principal insists on only the best performance

As seen in figure 14, 68% of teachers felt their principal behaved in a manner thoughtful of their personal needs, with 32% responding they agree and 36% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Fifteen percent of teachers felt ambivalent that their principal behaved in a manner thoughtful of their personal needs by responding somewhat agree. Seventeen percent of teachers felt that their principal did not behave in a manner that was thoughtful of their personal needs by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (6%), disagree (5%), or strongly disagree (6%). With 68% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of teachers in this study do perceive their principal behaved in a manner thoughtful of their personal needs.

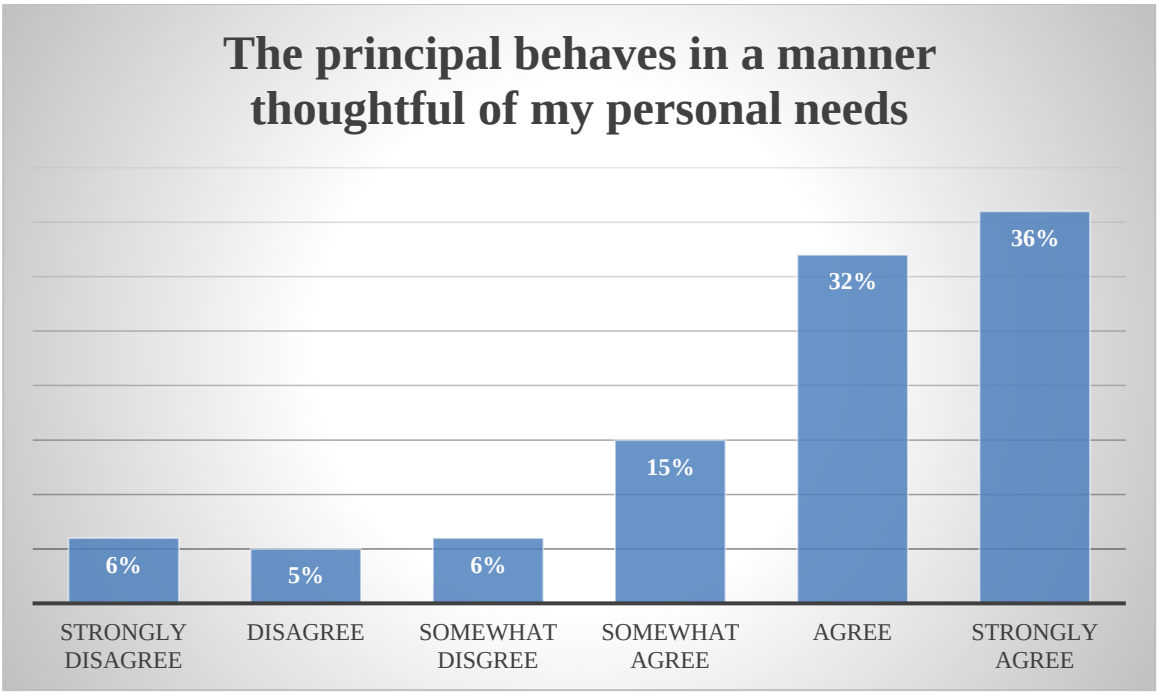

Figure 14: The principal behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs

As seen in figure 15, 66% of teachers felt their principal asked questions that prompted them to think, with 38% responding they agree and 28% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Nineteen percent of teachers felt ambivalent that their principal asked questions that prompted them to think by responding somewhat agree. Seven percent of teachers felt their principal did not ask questions that prompted them to think by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (7%), disagree (4%), or strongly disagree (4%). With 66% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of teachers in this study do perceive their principal asked questions that prompted them to think.

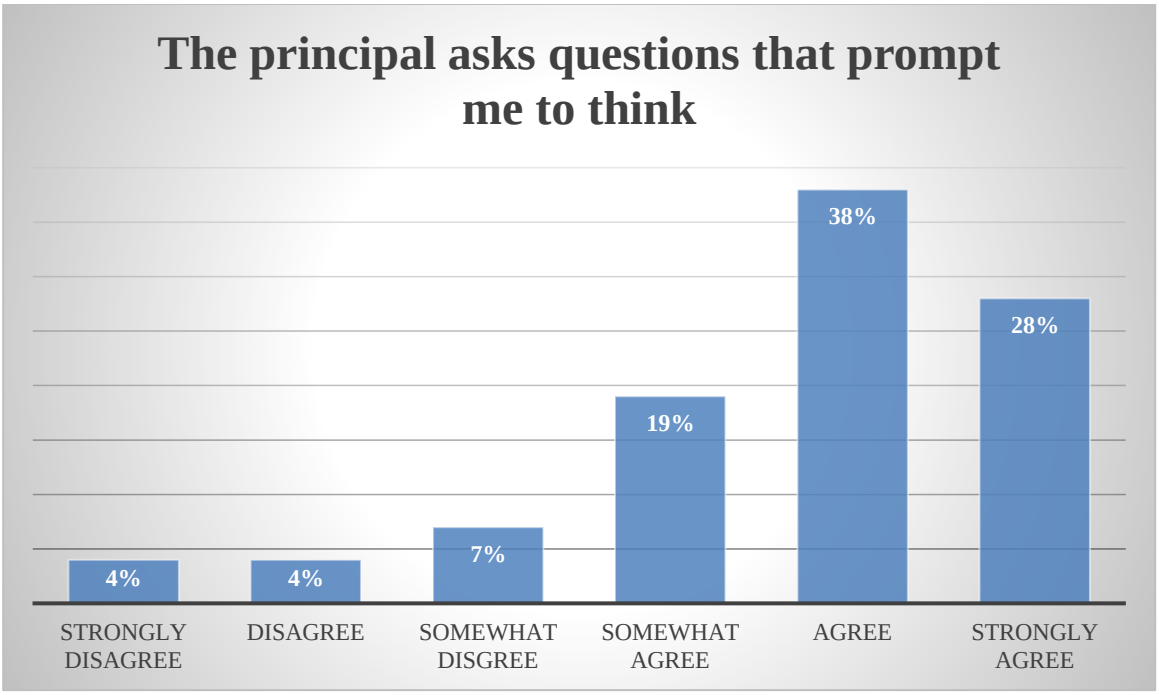

Figure 15: The principal asks questions that prompt me to think

As seen in figure 16, 66% of teachers felt their principal commended them when they did a better than average job, with 33% responding they agree and 33% stating they strongly agree with the statement. Fourteen percent of teachers felt ambivalent that their principal commended them when they did a better than average job by responding of somewhat agree. Nineteen percent of teachers felt their principal did not commend them when they did a better than average job by providing a negative response of somewhat disagree (7%), disagree (6%), or strongly disagree (6%). With 66% of responses in the favorable categories, the majority of teachers in this study do perceive their principal commended them when they did a better than average job.

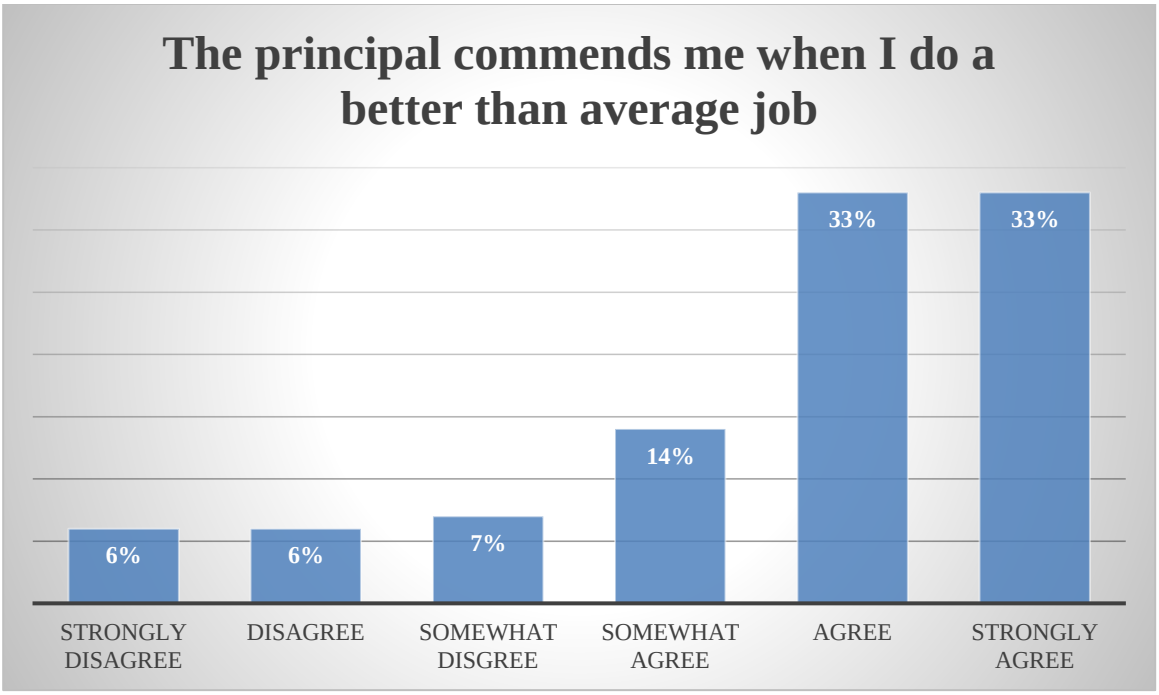

Figure 16: The principal commends me when I do a better than average job

Summary of Research Question Two Results

When examining the descriptive statistics for research question two, "What transformational leadership behaviors of school principals do teachers perceive as prevalent," it appears many teachers perceive many prevalent behaviors of transformational leadership from principals. Responses to items measuring teacher perception of principal's transformational leadership did reach the sixty percent favorability threshold, suggesting that teachers do perceive principals as behaving in transformational ways.

In summary, it appears teachers perceive the following transformational leadership behaviors as prevalent in principals: developing a shared vision, maintaining collective responsibility, providing inspiration, fostering collaboration, strengthening school culture, providing individualized support, and setting high expectations (Bass,

1985; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Marks and Printy, 2003; Podsakoff, 1996).

Research Question Three

What is the relationship between the central office administration support for principal psychological needs and transformational leadership behaviors of principals?

Bi-variate correlations were estimated to analyze the relationship between the central office administration support for principal psychological needs and transformational leadership behaviors of principals. Results revealed no statistically significant or practically significant relationship between need-support of principals and principal transformational leadership behavior. The bivariate correlation between perceived relatedness support and transformational leadership behavior was small and not statistically significant ($r = -.03$, $p.>05$). So were the relationships between autonomy support and transformational leadership behavior ($r = -.036$, $p.>05$) and competence support and transformational leadership behavior ($r = -.042$, $p.>05$).

The only statistically significant relationships were among the three need-supports. Ethnic distribution of the student population was not related to need-supports of transformational leadership behaviors. Likewise, free and reduced lunch rate was not related to these variables.

Additionally, the bivariate correlation between percent white and transformational leadership behavior was not statistically significant ($r = .153$, $p>.01$). The relationship between free and reduced lunch and transformational leadership behavior was not statistically significant ($r = -.204$, $p>.01$).

Table 1: TLB and Psychological Needs and Control Items

Variable	**TLB**	**Relatedness Support**	**Autonomy Support**	**Competence Support**	**Percent White**	**FRL**
TLB	1	-0.35	-.036	-.042	.153	-.204
Relatedness Support		1	.838**	.890**	.079	-.001
Autonomy Support			1	.823**	-.051	.093
Competence Support				1	.035	.086
Percent White					1	-.741
FRL						1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Post Hoc

Given there was no relationship between central office administration support for principal psychological needs and transformational leadership behavior of principals, a post hoc analysis was conducted to see if other principal perceptions may be related to transformational leadership behavior. Bi-variate correlations were estimated between transformational leadership behavior and principal trust in students, principal trust in faculty, and principal trust in parents. In theory, principal trust beliefs would seem to underlie decisions and actions that affect the organization and coordination of school processes. High trust allows for more informal, social control consistent with transformational practices; whereas, low trust likely breeds a more

transactional climate with tighter formal control (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011). Bi-variate correlations moderate tentative support for the relationship between principal trust in faculty (r=.314, p.>.05) and transformational leadership behavior. Results do not reveal any statistically significant, positive correlation between transformational leadership behavior and principal trust in students (r=.066, p.>05).

Table 2: TLB and Principal Trust

Variable	**TLB**	**Principal Trust in Students**	**Principal Trust in Faculty**	**Principal Trust in Parents**
TLB	1	.066	.314**	.219
Principal Trust in Students		1	.545**	.784**
Principal Trust in Faculty			1	.576
Principal Trust in Parents				1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Summary of Research Question Three Results

In summary, principal perceived need-support was not related to transformational leadership behavior of principals. Given that there was no correlation, a post hoc bi-variate correlation was run to determine if principal trust beliefs were related to principal practices. Results indicated that there was a positive correlation

between transformational leadership and behavior and principal trust in faculty but not with principal trust in parents or principal trust in students.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Explanation of Findings

This chapter discusses the descriptive and correlational evidence as it relates to existing literature on principal practice. The chapter begins with evidence on principal need-support. Next, the persistence of transformational leadership is considered. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between need-support and transformational leadership behaviors.

Principal's Perceived Need Support

For many principals, interactions with central office administrators were not perceived as need-supportive. This was the case for each dimension of need-support. All responses from principals regarding their perception of satisfied needs from central office administration fell below the favorable criterion of 60% for responses in the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories. The extent of the problem can be seen in responses to individual items as well. Only 41% of principals believed district administrators inspired them to provide leadership for their schools. Only 31% felt district administrators showed concern for the needs of their school. And only 29% believed that district administrators granted professional autonomy to do what is best for their school.

The descriptive evidence in this school district takes on greater significance when considering evidence on the tenure of urban principals. Urban principals leave the role at alarmingly high rates. In some cases, as many as one in five principals leave schools each year (Beteille et al., 2012). Baker, Punswick, and Belt (2010) found in a study that spanned seven years that from any particular point in the study, half of the principals left the state within five years. They also reported that 75% of principals in

the study moved schools. Fuller, Young, and Orr (2007) reported that 50% of principals in three different Texas cohorts left within the first three years. Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, and Wheeler (2007) found that 70% of first year principals in high poverty schools in North Carolina were first year principals. Burkhauser et al., (2012) found that of 519 first year principals studied, 78% left after the first year. Research dating back almost sixteen years found that two thirds of principals left their original principalship within six years (Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2002). These troubling trends call for more attention to reasons behind high principal turnover.

There are a variety of related reasons given for high principal turnover particularly in urban school settings. While central office administration does not have direct control over all factors for principal turnover, central office administrators could do more to support principals in their role and influence their motivation and commitment (Deci, 2009; Ryan & Niemiec, 2009). Many principals leave the profession due to pressure from the central office regarding their performance (Burkhauser et al., 2012). Principal turnover is also significantly related to students' standardized test scores. Schools that did not meet annual yearly progress goals had more principal turnover than schools who did meet annual yearly progress goals (DeAngelis & White, 2011). Urban districts face more turnover than suburban districts (Burkhauser et al., 2012). Schools with first year principals in high poverty areas experience the highest turnover (Clotfelter et al., 2007).

It is also the case that pressure to increase student performance and decrease student behavior issues at urban schools leads principals to seek employment at suburban schools where principals perceive fewer safety, resource, and student issues

(Baker, Punswick, & Belt, 2010; Fuller, Young, Orr, 2007; Papa, Lankdord, Wyckoff, 2002). As a result of this high turnover, urban schools typically have more inexperienced principals than suburban schools which creates a revolving door of leadership (Baker et al., 2010; Fuller et al., 2007; Papa et al., 2002).

As evident in this study, we should not rule out the possibility that one factor related to principals leaving schools and not being satisfied with their jobs is the failure of central office administrators to meet their psychological needs. Many principals in this study did not experience support for their psychological needs from the central office. Generally speaking, the absence of psychological need fulfillment has profound consequences for the overall wellbeing and performance in one's job (Deci, 2009; Ryan & Niemiec, 2009). When one perceives his or her psychological needs are not met, he or she may show decreased commitment, have less motivation, and be unwilling to engage in complex problem solving (Deci, 2009; Ryan & Niemiec, 2009). As the descriptive evidence in this study shows, 31% of principals felt district administrators showed concern for the needs of their schools and only 29% of principals felt district administrators granted professional autonomy to them to do what is best for their schools, an early indication of troubling times ahead for the district.

Districts need to create a school environment where students, teachers, and principals thrive. Principals contribute to the health and climate of the school (Baker et al., 2010). If central office supports the psychological needs of principals, then principals are more likely to support the psychological needs of teachers who support the psychological needs of students (Pelletier & Sharp, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2002). When principals are granted professional discretion and feel relatedness to the district,

they develop a greater sense of commitment and are less likely to feel the effects of work exhaustion (Fernet, Austin, & Vallerand, 2012). When psychological needs are not met, employee commitment can decrease and employees' dedication to the organization may be weakened (Lynch et al., 2005; Stone et al., 2009). Deci and Ryan (2000) also explain that when inherent psychological needs are not fulfilled, and when people stay in places where need satisfaction is thwarted, that conflict, isolation, anxiety, depression and, even, physical conditions may develop.

It is clear from previous evidence urban principals are leaving the profession at alarming rates. Many principals leave due to pressure regarding their performance from central office and pressure regarding test scores and student achievement (DeAngelis & White, 2011; Burkhauser et al., 2012). As the literature on self-determination theory suggests, conditions that hinder the meeting of inherent psychological needs lead to poor outcomes (Stone et al., 2007). Current literature on need-support has shown that motivation and continued participation in a group are contingent on the ways in which structures are inhibiting or supporting of psychological needs (Deci, 2009; Ryan & Niemiec, 2009). There is also evidende that principals stay in their positions when they perceive strong district support, feel they are part of a team, and are granted professional discretion to make decisions (Farley-Ripple, Raffel, and Welch, 2012).

The thwarting of psychological needs from central office administration to principals could be part of the reason for the revolving door of leadership in urban schools. Certainly, evidence in this study does not address the need-support – turnover relationship, but it does point to an important direction for future inquiry. Need-support matters for a host of psychological, social, behavioral and performance reasons (Deci,

2009; Lynch et al., 2005; Ryan & Neimiec, 2009), and if data in this study are consistent across other urban districts, they would reveal the depth and breadth of the problem.

Persistence of Transformational Leadership

The descriptive data also show teachers appeared to experience a much different quality of interactions with principals than principals did with central office administration. Many teachers perceived principals leading in ways that supported effective teaching through transformational leadership behaviors such as establishing high expectations, building a positive culture, affirming desired practices and outcomes, and inspiring them by focusing on the organization's vision. All responses from teachers regarding their perception of principal's transformational leadership had a favorable response rate of 60% or higher in both the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories. The strongest perception of transformational leadership behavior as perceived by teachers was related to the transformational leadership quality of high expectations (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Seventy five percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their principal insists on only the best performance. The second strongest perception of transformational leadership behavior was related to the transformational leadership quality of individualized consideration (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Sixty eight percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their principal behaves in a manner thoughtful of their personal needs.

The descriptive evidence in this school district demonstrates that teachers perceive principals to behave in transformational ways even though many principals did not perceive their psychological needs to be met by central office administration. The

literature on transformational leadership provides insight on this finding. It is not surprising that teachers perceived principals to behave in transformational ways as urban schools present the ideal environment for transformational leadership behavior to thrive (Marks & Printy, 2003; Smith & Bell, 2011). Given the complex situations faced by urban schools often described as in need of reform, researchers such as Leithwood (1994), Marks and Printy (2003), and Smith and Bell (2011) argue that transformational leadership is the leadership framework most suitable for school reformation.

Many reform efforts in urban schools have failed due to the number of students performing below grade level, the high numbers of students living in poverty, increasingly high numbers of students with limited English proficiency, high leadership turnover, staffing of many inexperienced teachers, and the failure of scripted curriculum (DeAngelis & White, 2011; Milner, 2013). Scripted, mandated reform efforts from outside the school community alone are insufficient without transformation from the inside; that is, the transformation of a school's vision, culture, and performance must come from within the organization (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood, Leonard, Sharratt, 1998). Principals who act in transformational ways by articulating a vision, building capacity to increase performance (in students and teachers), and creating a culture where students may excel are better equipped to face the adversity of reform efforts in urban schools than those principals who do not behave in transformational ways (Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003).

In spite of the challenges faced by urban schools, principals in this study were perceived by teachers to largely behave in transformational ways and were moving schools closer to their desired states. Increased performance and increased student

achievement have been attributed to schools whose principals are perceived to be transformational (Minckler, 2014; Nir & Hameiri, 2014; Sun & Henderson, 2016). Additionally, researchers have demonstrated that teachers are more motivated, experience less frustration, and have more efficacy in schools where principals behave in transformational ways thereby improving the overall culture of the school (Dussault, Payne, & Leroux, 2008; England, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2006; McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2014; Smith & Bell, 2014). Transformational leadership is a movement of transformation, innovation, and organization from within, (Marks & Printy, 2003) and, as such, it's not surprising that transformational principals are influencing school outcomes in positive ways even though principals do not perceive need-support from the central office.

Relationship between Need-Support and Transformational Leadership Behavior

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between perceived need-support from central office administration and transformational practices of school principals. Evidence does not support a relationship in this sample of schools. The bivariate correlation between perceived relatedness support and transformational leadership behavior was small and not statistically significant (r= -.03, p.>05). So were the relationships between autonomy support and transformational leadership behavior (r= -.036, p.>05) and competence support and transformational leadership behavior (r= -.042, p.>05).

The factor related to transformational leadership behavior, revealed in the post hoc analysis, was principal trust in faculty. This finding makes sense from what we know about trust. Trust contributes to a positive school culture (Adams & Forsyth,

2013). For trust to form, meaningful relationships and interactions between groups must be present (Adams & Forsyth, 2013). It makes sense that transformational leadership behaviors from principals, which places an emphasis building significant relationships with teachers, would be related to trust in faculty (Adams & Forsyth, 2013). Trust enables risk taking, and principals who trust teachers have the psychological safety to risk vulnerability by using strategies that place more discretion in the hands of teachers.

Researchers claim that trust can develop when members of a group act in ways that are parallel to expectations of the group or organization (Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2009). If principals do not perceive teachers as open, competent, and benevolent in their work, then principals will regulate teachers' work with control (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy; 2011). However, trust and transformational leadership allow risk taking which is opposite of regulation and control. Research has shown that trust is positively related to teacher buy-in, experimentation, group initiatives, and personal consideration (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). When there is trust between principals and teachers, then principals perceive teachers as open, honest, and reliable (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011). It stands to reason that when principals perceive teachers as trustworthy, that teachers will perceive principals as acting in transformational ways. Future research should continue this inquiry.

Returning to the central object of this study, it is important to consider why there was no relationship between principals' transformational leadership and perceived need-support. Evidence on the contagion of need-support would suggest that principals would be more likely to react in transformational ways when they experience interactions with central office administration as supportive of their autonomy,

competence, and relatedness (Pelletier, Sequin-Levesque, & Legault, 2002; Pelletier & Sharp, 2009). There is evidence that when teachers work in an environment supportive of their psychological needs they exhibit need-supporting behaviors toward students, and, conversely, when teachers work in environments that are not supportive of psychological needs, they tend to use practices thwarting student needs (Pelletier & Sharp, 2009).

Given perceived low levels need-supporting practices, one could assume that principals in this study would likewise exhibit low levels of transformational leadership behavior. This was not found to be the case. The majority of teachers did perceive principals to exhibit transformational structures and processes. Inspiring others develops a team attitude and supports relatedness. Insisting on the best performance and commending teachers for good performance builds competence. Asking questions that prompt teachers to think provided and providing a good model to follow support autonomy.

Why did principals use transformational practices when they did not experience satisfaction of psychological needs from central office administration? In speculating on this question, two possibilities come to mind. First, the proximity of central office to principals may have functioned as a healthy buffer preventing hindering practices from trickling into schools by way of principal leadership. A buffer between organizational levels may have benefitted teachers in this case, but such separation has disadvantages for overall system performance. An ideal school district establishes a healthy balance between top-down and bottom up structures (Honing & Hatch, 2004). An optimal case

would be where central office administration supports principal needs and principals support teachers' professional growth.

Second, district administrators do not know how to support sustainable leadership across school sites. Much of the school leadership literature advances frameworks and practices useful for creating healthy teaching and learning environments (Bossert et al., 1982; Grady & Lesourd, 1990; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003). Less evidence exists on how leadership practices from executive positions develop effective building principals (Honig, 2012). As a response, pressure to get better faster tends to result in overtly controlling approaches to reform, the kind that undermine need-support (Baker et al., 2010; Burkhauser et al., 2012).

What little evidence exists on district support for principal development does not afford much guidance for how central office administration can effectively develop principals' competencies in leading schools. Most literature advances general guidelines that do not easily translate to substantive practices. For example, Bottoms and Fry (2009) call for generic leadership strategies of setting a clear direction for student achievement, organizing professional development, investing in instructional resources, and building useful data systems. These strategies do not explain how the district office builds leadership capacity.

Research into support of principal psychological needs can fill the void in useful knowledge for enhancing principal learning. Inferring from the descriptive evidence in this study, district executives clearly could benefit from studies that explain how

different organizational patterns and leadership practices either impede or activate the inner capacity of school leaders.

Conclusion

Trends of high principal turnover in urban systems (Beteille et al., 2012; Burkhauser et al., 2012; Clotfelter et al., 2007), coupled with evidence on the lack of principal need-support from the urban district in this study, call for greater attention to executive leadership. Questions to include for practice and research include:

How do central office administrators support psychological needs of principals?

How knowledgeable are central office administrators about the function of psychological needs and individual performance?

The initial interest in this study started by thinking about the role of central office administrators in supporting transformational leadership practices of principals. When considering the depth of research on transformational behavior, it was surprising to learn that support for such a leadership approach had been overlooked in the literature. The lack of empirical study, and even theoretical speculation, started a search for evidence that may offer a logical explanation for how central office administration might be capable of influencing principal behavior. Self-determination theory established the explanation.

Even though the theoretical speculation on the relationship between principal need-support and transformational leadership behavior did not play out with this sample, the findings still provided useful information. In particular, it is significant that most principals in this study did not experience autonomy support, competence support, or relatedness support in their interactions with central office administrators. This

finding calls for additional investigation and research to determine the prevalence of this reality and the consequences associated with thwarting principals' psychological needs.

It is also noteworthy that many teachers experience principal leadership as consistent with transformational practices. This begs the question, "Why?" What leads a principal to lead from a transformational approach? Can principals learn to be more transformational? Do central office administrators have a part to play in supporting the transformational leadership behaviors of principals?

In closing, this study may raise more questions than it answers, but the evidence establishes lines of inquiry that have utility for school administrators. This is true both for central office administrators and school principals. It also applies to programs that train and develop school leaders.

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Appendix A: Internal Review Board

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Human Research Determination Review Outcome

Date: January 09, 2017

Principal Investigator: Jody Randel Parsons

Study Title: ENHANCING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: THE ROLE OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Review Date: 01/09/2017

I have reviewed your submission of the Human Research Determination worksheet for the above- referenced study. I have determined this research does not meet the criteria for human subject's research. The proposed activity does not involve intervention or interaction with living individuals, nor does it involve secondary data that consists of individually identifiable, private information. Therefore, IRB approval is not necessary so you may proceed with your project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the HRPP office at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu. Thank you.

Cordially,



Fred Beard, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board