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DISTRICT SUPPORT OF TEACHERS, LEADERS, AND SCHOOLS: AN

EVALUATION OF A SERVICE CULTURE PROGRAM IN AN URBAN,

MIDWESTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DISTRICT SUPPORT OF TEACHERS, LEADERS, AND SCHOOLS: AN
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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Some scholars believe district offices are primarily a compliance-driven, bureaucratic hindrance to transformational change. Other scholars believe that districts can play a key role in school and student success, but exactly what this role looks like remains very much in question. Particularly in large, urban districts, the focus seems to be more on policy and procedure than achieving interconnectivity among and connection with each one of its schools, its staff, and students. The business sector, on the other hand, has long recognized that knowing and satisfying customer/client needs is a key component of success. To improve teacher perceptions, some districts have begun to initiate service culture programs. Although research exploring the business sector finds that service culture enhanced the quality of service to customers, there is limited research on the effects of service culture in the education sector. Many principals and teachers in a focal urban, Midwestern district, report a disconnect between school sites and district office personnel resulting in a perception among school site staff that district personnel do not care. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the design, success measures, and preliminary outcomes related to the implementation of a service culture program in this school district. The primary research question asks, "Did perceptions of service culture among staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?" The service culture evaluation design was quantitative. Surveys and sign-in logs were used to

measure change in service culture, trust, quality of service, and volunteer

participation over time, and were measured prior to the intervention and after the

intervention had been in operation for over a year. The researcher found that

service culture and trust both declined over the study period, with trust declining

more sharply. However, perceptions of service quality and volunteer participation,

two other important intervention outcomes, grew over the study period.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In educational research, there is a long-standing debate about the role of the school district in productivity and improvement. Some scholars believe district offices are primarily compliance-driven, bureaucratic hindrances to transformational change (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Clark, 2018; Honig, 2002; Firestone, 2015; Fuhrman, 1993; Maraffu, 2009). Other scholars believe that districts can play a key role in school and student success, but exactly what this role looks like remains very much in question (Adams & Miskell, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ford et al. 2020; Sykes, O'Day & Ford, 2009). Particularly in large, urban districts, the focus seems to be more on policy and procedure than achieving interconnectivity among and connection with each one of its schools, its staff, and students (Adams & Miskell, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Sykes, O'Day & Ford, 2009).

The business sector, on the other hand, has long recognized that knowing and satisfying customer/client needs is a key component of success (Edvardsson & Enquist, 2002; Liebenberg & Barns, 2004; Ueno, 2012). For example, Amazon has grown into a multi-billion-dollar company by studying the behavior of its customers and providing a user-friendly, one-click shopping experience. School districts could also benefit from knowing and meeting the needs of students, families, principals, and teachers. Due to competition, families have many choices for education: public schools, charter schools, homeschooling, magnet schools,

and virtual schools (Education Week, 2017). Competitiveness and declining enrollment suggest that perhaps a public school district should focus on improving relationships between itself and its constituents. Doing so could go a long way to show appreciation and value for their hard work – ultimately attracting and retaining the best school leaders, teachers, and students.

In the past two decades, increased accountability has shifted district focus to meeting state and federal education requirements under No Child Left Behind (*NCLB)*, *NCLB waivers*, and now the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. These new accountability requirements have encouraged districts to be more tightly coupled, and they often do so by centralizing authority and decision-making (Firestone, 2015; Maraffu, 2009). Researchers suggest moving to tighter coupling could provide the structure to improve equity in learning and to meet state requirements (Firestone, 2015). In response, more tightly coupled districts implement programs or strategies that could improve student learning or achievement, often without regard to unique school contexts (Honig, 2010). Some scholars agree district offices maximize efficiency, but in most cases, district offices require transformation to experience system-wide improvements in teaching and learning (Honig, 2010).

In many cases, there is a disconnect between what district offices provide and what schools need (Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018; Maraffu, 2009). For example, a district may launch a new program or initiative,

when the school would like better strategies on classroom discipline or functioning technology devices. Scholars have suggested that district offices transform their day-to-day work practices and habits to support schools instead of a hierarchical command and control model (Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018; Honig, 2010; Honig, 2012). Direct personal relationships between individual district office administrators and school leadership are critical to transformation of this kind. However, this transformation will require all departments to work differently with schools and each other as they support teaching and learning. This implicates the role of trust in district office transformation.

Trust is the beginning of any meaningful relationship. A vast amount of trust literature exists which substantiates the importance of trust in schools for the day-to-day work as well as school improvement and change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Forsyth, Adams & Hoy, 2011; Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Trust between the teacher and student, teacher and school leader, teacher and families, and the district office is needed. Trust helps schools solve complex problems and complete tasks. Trust between students and teachers promotes learning and building strong skillsets for the competitive global workforce (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Trust between school leaders and teachers promotes teamwork which is instrumental in higher levels of effort and achievement (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Trust is the glue that binds organizations together (Forsyth, Adams & Hoy, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Although the evidence and research suggest establishing trust with these actors or stakeholders is important, minimal progress has been made nationally with respect to building strong trusting relationships between districts and their schools, particularly in large urban school districts.

Statement of the Problem

In the business sector, the term service culture encompasses the entire customer experience from the onset of locating or thinking of using the product or service to the concluding feelings after the usage of the service or product. For example, when one sees McDonalds' golden arches from the highway, service culture begins with the customer knowing that the restaurant is probably easily accessible from the highway. The customer may also wonder if parking is adequate or if the store is clean. Other thoughts could include whether or not the french fries will be hot and does the server make the customer feel welcomed. Lastly, the customer evaluates how long will they stand in line, and if a trash can is accessible when they leave. All of these perceptions of service culture determine if a customer will continue to use the service or product.

School districts, especially large school districts, engage in hundreds (perhaps even thousands) of service interactions with students, staff, and families each day. For example, bus drivers pick up and greet students, cafeteria workers serve students' meals, and school office staff provides services to parents.

Therefore, there are many opportunities in any given day to develop meaningful, trusting, mutually-beneficial relationships between a school district, its schools, and the people who work inside of them. Although there are studies that emphasize district office providing support and establishing relationships with principals and instructional leadership directors (Honig, 2010; Honig, 2012; Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018), there are few examples of scholarship which examines service culture between the district office and school sites. For example, how do teachers perceive the helpfulness of the technology service desk or the friendliness of the cafeteria staff? Do teachers feel connected to district office teams?

Current Study

In the very recent past, a Midwest, large urban district office had a reputation for being siloed—largely disconnected from teachers and principals. The district's past practice was heavily focused on process and compliance rather than the day-to-day needs of teachers and leaders. The opportunity for the district was to develop a culture of trusting relationships, informed honest two-way communication, and a user-centric attitude (Skinner, Glenn, & Reynolds, 2011). The purpose of the new service culture program was to support, recognize, and reward the core values of equity, character, excellence, team, and joy. The everyday work of the district was predicated on consistently providing great customer experiences for everyone, both inside and outside of the organization.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a program specifically designed to work on service culture directly with all school site personnel, including teachers. As a part of this evaluation the researcher hoped to illuminate the knowledge gap between district office personnel positive site perceptions of the services they provided and the actual perception of school personnel. For example, during the service culture needs assessments, district office personnel believed they provided excellent customer service, and the problem lay with site personnel's lack of understanding of their roles and challenges. When in reality, the school site's perception of district office services was one of apathy and a failure to meet the quality of service expectations.

The purpose of this study was to conduct an evaluation of this new service culture program provided in an urban, Midwestern school district—more specifically to evaluate the design, process, and preliminary successes of this program to determine if modifications or pivots were needed. The study is not designed to reach any definitive conclusion about program effects (i.e., impact evaluation) but to suggest potential opportunities for the improvement of current processes and practices. The following research questions will guide the evaluation of the service culture program:

1. Did perceptions of service culture among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

2. Did trust between the district office and school site staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

3. Did perceptions of quality of service among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

4. Did volunteer participation between the district office and school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

As is evidenced in the guiding evaluation research questions, the evaluation assessed both program process, which included reviewing the effectiveness of implementation, program monitoring, and operation, as well as examining the preliminary impact (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). The potential contributions of this study were to: a) add to scholarly literature studying service culture in education; b) explore the role of service culture as a potential alternative tool for districts in supporting their schools, and c) assess and gather preliminary evidence of the relationships of schools to important outcomes for the focal district.

In summary, districts provide hundreds or even thousands of interactions with teachers, students, and families each day. The experience of those interactions determines if the constituents are attracted or retained as customers. At some point, the Midwestern, large urban school district became siloed and disconnected to those they served. Therefore, a service culture program was

launched to improve the trust relationships. This evaluation study reviews the

literature to discover the nuances of service culture.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This review of literature sets out to first define service culture by tracing its evolution as a concept in the organizational literature, shaped by a growing need for a service-oriented approach, and its consequences for the effective functioning and productivity of organizations. Finally, connections were drawn between this broader literature and the opportunity for the school district, as an organizational entity, to focus on service culture through an examination of the evolution of business practices and the role of the superintendent and district office.

Defining Service Culture

Developed by the business industry, service culture is a term that has evolved from similar concepts such as organizational and corporate culture. One of the most straightforward definitions of service is helping or doing work for someone (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). The business industry defines service as support/actions to everyday processes that contribute value to the individual or organization (Gronroos, 2017; Kaufman, n.d.). Service is often associated with customer service. According to the Business Dictionary (2019), customer service is "…all interactions between a customer and product provided at the time of sale, and after that. Customer service adds value to a product and builds an enduring relationship." On the Amazon.com website, there are over 20,000 books referencing customer service. The subject is popular because the

consumer can choose what products or services they will post complaints about, use, or recommend. Understanding and analyzing the customer's Moments of Truth (the smallest image or impression of service) is critical in meeting the customer's needs (Loeffler & Church, 2015; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Toister, 2017). Without this knowledge, it is difficult to know what the customer views as necessary. For example, when a customer is visiting a restaurant, they may evaluate the employee greeting, promptness of service, smells in the restaurant, accuracy of their order, and overall satisfaction. Businesses realize the importance of providing excellent customer service. Through the use of the internet, a good or bad review from a customer can make or break a company's reputation.

In the 1950s and 60s, with the growth of organizational psychology, there was increased interest in understanding and describing the behavior of units which were larger than the traditional "work group" (Bass, 1965; McGregor, 1960). Shortly thereafter, the concept of organizational culture was introduced in the academic literature (Hofstede, 1990; Schein, 2015; Skinner, Glenn, & Reynolds, 2011). In the 1980s, corporate culture emphasized shared values, which were the last principle in Peters and Waterman 'eight basic principles to stay on the top' (Peter & Waterman, 1982; Edvardsson & Enquist, 2002; Sturdy, 2000). These concepts evolved into what is now known as service culture. Culture is an exciting phenomenon. All humans are part of a culture, whether recognized or acknowledged. An anthropological definition of culture provided by Schein

(2015) is, "…a group who have openly shared their experience to learn, grow, and stay connected. Culture has shared components that deal with managing the external environment and other components that deal with the rules and norms of how to get along inside the group" (p. 1). According to Schneider and Bowmen (1995), culture is an employee's belief about what their organization values and regards as imperative. The company culture is embodied, for example, in the behavior of its employees, its mottos, its guiding philosophies, and beliefs.

Service culture is inculcating in employees an emphasis on the organization's need to create memorable customer experiences. In *The Service Culture Handbook*, Jeff Toister (2017), encouraged companies to be a "hero" to their customers. A "hero moment" is making yourself or your team available when the customer needs you and making every interaction positive and as memorable as possible. In an organization emphasizing service culture, the desire is for the employee to go the extra mile. It is thinking of the customer like a friend or family member who needs your help, and you want the experience to leave a positive impression on them.

For example, when visiting a QuikTrip, a Midwestern convenience store, customers value having a wide variety of products or services that can be purchased quickly. QuikTrip employees make customers feel welcomed and noticed with a greeting, no matter what the QuikTrip employee is doing. Another company that also provides a memorable positive interaction is Subway. As you

open the door, you are greeted with "Welcome to Subway!" and a friendly demeanor. The Subway sandwich artist customizes the sandwich to the specification of the customer from the type of bread, cheese, vegetables, hot or cold sandwich temperature, type of dressing, and salt or pepper. The Subway chains have fresh, healthy, alternatives at a reasonable price. Many of the chains offer secret menu sandwiches such as chicken cordon blue and grilled cheese with tomato to make customers feel special and provide them with a memorable experience.

Schneider and Bowen (1995) argue that fulfilling the need of the customer is more critical than meeting the expectations of the customer. The expectations of a customer are usually easier to identify because they are available to the conscious mind, whereas a need could reside at the unconscious level until activated. Customers may not realize why they need a product or service because it is so deep-rooted. Needs are associated with emotion and long-term existence. Service culture seeks to tap into each human being's basic need to feel connected to others, whether it be a customer or colleague. First, employees must meet the customer where they are and fulfill their needs first and then go beyond.

One of the assumptions of service culture is that employee behavior was critical to delivering quality services (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Ueno, 2012). Just providing a service a customer needs does not necessarily mean that it is a quality experience for the customer. A positive perception of service culture exists when

employees of a company or firm provide a service or product that is needed with a high-quality customer experience. When companies make service quality and customer satisfaction a top priority, service culture is said to be a part of the company's deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA (Ueno, 2012).

The Empirical Antecedents and Consequences of Service Culture

Of course, an important assumption is that service culture increases organizational effectiveness and profitability. Human resource management (HRM) practices such as leadership and direction, career opportunities, work demands, and training influence human behavior, which can affect employee performance (Zerbe, 1998). Many service culture organizations implement good HRM practices. Research supports HRM as a unique source for sustaining a competitive edge, which cannot be easily duplicated (Gebauer, Edvardsson, & Bjurko, 2010). According to Parasuraman (1987), customer-oriented organizational culture is a prerequisite for service excellence.

To create and sustain a positive service culture environment, the company's highest-level leaders must first model the desired service culture behaviors with their employees (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Satisfaction with management and with workloads have been the strongest predictors of service behaviors (Beitelspacher, Richey, & Reynolds, 2011; Zerbe, Dobni & Harel, 1998). For example, the Zerbe et al. study (1998) focused on individual employee's perceptions of organizational culture. The researchers hypothesized

that the impact of individual perceptions of service culture affects the individual's behavior. Also, the researchers suggested HRM practices had a direct impact on employee behavior, and service culture is the conduit by which service behavior is shaped. The scholars collected 452 questionnaires from flight attendants and passenger service agents. The study found that employee satisfaction with specific HRM practices (leadership, rewards, career opportunities, performance appraisals, work demands, and training) were significantly associated with self-reported employee behaviors, including creating service quality. Also, this study provided evidence that satisfaction with leadership and workloads had a significant direct effect on service behavior and an indirect effect through service culture.

Another example of satisfaction with leadership as an antecedent to service behaviors is Beitelspacher, Richey, and Reynolds (2011) study in retail organizations. This study explores the service culture antecedents of customer orientation and top management support to create superior service values and performance competencies for both internal and external stakeholders. Customer orientation is defined in this study as the process and activities used to create and satisfy customers through continuous needs assessment. The researchers hypothesized that customer orientation within a retail organization is positively related to retail service culture. The second antecedent was top management support. The scholars argued management should possess both leadership and motivational skills to get employees to buy-in to their plans. Management sets the

tone for the organization by demonstrating and rewarding positive service culture behaviors. If top management can lead by example, there is a higher probability that employees could experience job satisfaction.

The researchers used two surveys. The first survey had 100 completed responses by top retail business owners and senior retail executives. The surveys were also dispersed using direct mail. The second survey targeted only retail store managers and retail buyers at various levels. A total of 300 surveys were completed. Regression analysis was performed in a three-step sequence. The study found that customer orientation and top management support had a positive relationship with service culture, and service culture has a direct impact on quality and marketing outcomes. An assumption could be made that retail companies who prioritize service culture and have top management support would have a higher probability of employee satisfaction and reasonable workloads.

The existing literature acknowledges that appropriate HRM practices such as recruitment, training, teamwork, and empowerment help create and sustain service culture within organizations, which in turn will improve service quality (Hauser & Paul, 2006; Sturdy, 2000). However, there remains little research to substantiate this claim (Ueno, 2012). Service culture is a prerequisite for an organization seeking success (Ueno, 2012). Existing literature argues these HRM practices help to create and develop service culture which in turn improves quality (Grönroos, 2007; Loeffler & Church 2015; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Toister,

2017; Ueno, 2012). The employer should influence the behavior of the employees since they have direct contact with the customer and provide service quality (Pearson, 2012).

For example, Ueno (2012) explored the importance of the six Human Resource Management (HRM) practices: recruitment and selection, training, teamwork, empowerment, performance appraisals and reward, and two-way communication impacts on service culture to improve quality. The study examined medium to large-sized businesses in the United Kingdom. The researchers had 412 questionnaire responses from a wide range of businesses such as cleaning companies, construction, hotel, restaurants, technology companies, real estate, healthcare, and waste management. They found a strong correlation between HRM practices and culture, which facilitates change toward quality or service excellence. Communication had the highest correlation to culture. The study suggests communication is the basis for trust between management and employees.

The recruitment and selection of the ideal employee are critical. Instead of hiring based primarily on competence or technical ability, it is crucial to consider core values, fit, and attitude. Successful companies such as Publix, Zappos, Disney, and QuikTrip hire employees based on their beliefs and values matching the organizational culture. For example, Publix top three hiring selection criteria are: 1. Driven by the need to serve others. 2. Passionate about working together as

a team. 3. Capable of great attention to detail (Toister, 2017). According to the Dale Carnegie foundation, 15% of successful outcomes on jobs and life are due to technical knowledge and skills, while 85% is due to people skills and attitudes. According to O'Reilly & Pfeffer (1995), the People Department (Human Resources) felt skills could be improved through training, but the right attitude could not be taught.

According to Collins (2001), if the right people are hired for a position, it doesn't matter where the company or bus is headed at that time. The right fit is flexible enough to change direction to fulfill the vision. Another critical point is having the person in the right seat on the bus. Sometimes it is necessary to move people to different seats or positions, based on skill set or a change of company direction. Also, due to organizational change, it might be required to take people off of the bus if they no longer fit the culture. One of the problems that can occur as a result of selecting the wrong employee is high turnover. Retail, hospitality, and restaurants can experience 50 – 70% of employees leaving each year. If employees are frequently exiting the company or position, it is challenging to reach excellence with your products and services. The experience and institutional knowledge leave with the employee.

Schneider and Bowen's (1995) study is one example of HRM practices that drive culture towards service quality. The interviews they conducted led them to the conclusion the quality of staff hired was a benefit both in the short and long

term. They argued the quality of staff could energize a company to be more service-oriented in the short term and help the company to maintain the competitive edge in the long term. Providing the appropriate staffing levels or number of employees demonstrated the executive management commitment to provide quality of services.

Training is another HRM practice that is considered a prerequisite to service culture (Grönroos, 2007; Liebenberg & Barns, 2004; Pant, 2013; Sturdy, 2000). Training reinforces the culture and behaviors companies want employees to live each day. The forms of learning can be both informal and formal. According to Schneider and Bowen (1995), informal training concentrates on motivation and learning about the organization by a coworker. For example, Nordstrom pairs a new person with one of the employees who demonstrates excellent customer service behavior and philosophy. Formal training emphasizes skills and attitudes. For instance, Shake Shack's new employees are trained on the company's core values. Southwest Airlines has *University for People* training including New Hire Celebrations, new flight attendant four-week training, manager three and half-day training, and front-line leadership two-day training each year. British Airways provides newly appointed managers two-day customer service training, and all 37,000 employees attend a two-day "Putting People First" training (Schneider & Bowen, 1995; O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 1995; Toister, 2017).

Disneyland, which is known for providing extraordinary customer service experiences, has its cast members (staff) go through extensive training to reinforce company culture and their competencies around it. Disneyland University Orientation indoctrinates every single employee in the brand history and culture. They teach company history and philosophy and provide a tour of Disneyland and all operations (from food preparation to make up to the underground facilities for keeping Disneyland clean). Training is a tool which establishes expectations and models the behaviors desired for all employees (Loeffler & Church, 2015). After Disney's new employee orientation, a trainer spends a day introducing the latest cast member to coworkers and showing them everything about their new area, including duties and processes. Training lasts between one and two weeks before determining if the employee is ready to be put "on the floor." These training days are critical to Disney. Cast members are extensively trained to reflect company expectations to be friendly, smile, make eye contact, greet guests (customers), be courteous, offer assistance, and thank every guest as they leave. It is not enough to provide training for cast members, but they must demonstrate the "Disney Way" before training is complete. Disney also performs on-going training, which in Disney's culture is called "rehearsing the show." Rehearsing is not only fine-tuning the show but preparing the cast member for any situation which may arise. Staff prepares for storms, accidents,

evacuations, or anything which could impact the show or their work (Loeffler & Church 2015; Schneider & Bowen, 1995).

Teamwork is essential for any organization to perform work effectively and with service quality (Teare, 1993). According to Ueno (2012), teamwork strengthens the motivation of the workforce to provide a positive service culture. In a well-functioning team, employees can support one another and work together to provide the best solution for the customer. Organizational structure and processes should support teamwork by encouraging cross-functional communication, collaborative work spaces, and flat reporting hierarchy. According to Lencioni (2002), most organizations are elusive to genuine collaboration and fail to achieve teamwork because of the natural tendencies of the five dysfunctions of a team: the absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. These tendencies produce a negative service culture. However, a well-functioning team creates a friendly and positive climate (Ueno, 2012).

According to research, empowerment is an HRM practice which can transform service culture and quality (Sturdy, 2000; Ueno, 2012). The organization is responsible for providing the authority, tools, and resources for employees to provide great customer experiences. Zappos, an online clothing website known for its customer service, empowers employees. They trust employees want to deliver excellent service. Therefore, escalations to a supervisor

are rare. Zappos culture encourages providing a "Wow" experience for the customer. Zappos' purpose is to live and deliver "Wow." For instance, Zappos showcased an employee who was on the phone bonding with a customer for 10 hours versus most companies who measure and take pride in getting customers off the phone the quickest (Ueno, 2012, Hsieh, 2010; Zappos, 2018).

Empowerment allows employees to take care of the customer without being told what to do (Pearson, 2012). Often upper management is not aware of the actual problems, but the front-line employees who interact with the customer have this knowledge. Employees should be relied upon to solve issues and offer proactive solutions. Many companies recognize the value of the staff that performs the work and provide cash rewards for employees who propose solutions which save the company money or improves efficiencies.

Hiring the right person for the job is paramount for creating a positive service culture. Authors believe it is more important to hire individuals who fit your culture than have specific technical skills (Collins, 2001; Hsieh, 2010; Loeffler & Church, 2015). It is easier to train technical skills than the soft skills of friendliness, caring about the customer, or being kind. According to Lencioni (2002), the ideal team player is smart, hungry, and humble. A smart team player has emotional intelligence and is perceptive of others around them and how to deal with people in the most effective way (Alshaibani & Bakir, 2017). A smart team player will adjust their approach based on the situation. Emotionally

intelligent staff understand and respond to customer reactions (Lencioni, 2002). For example, Disney empowers its employees to do what is necessary to make the customer happy. The employee must be "smart" to identify the need of the customer and take corrective actions to fulfill the need. According to Loeffler and Church (2015), during a crisis, there are 60 seconds of opportunity to defuse a situation and pivot toward a positive experience with your organization. A staff member who can identify and react to hero moments are "smart."

Another trait of an ideal team player is humble. If a person has exceptional technical skills, but the team isolates them because they are arrogant, the organization does not get the full benefit of their professional skills. According to Collins (2001), a level five leader has personal humility and channels their ego needs from themselves to the broader goals of the organization.

Performance appraisals and rewards are practices that can positively influence service culture. A way to perpetuate what is important to the organization is placing service culture behaviors in performance reviews or appraisals, job descriptions, and the employee policy manual. Rewards and recognition are ways to motivate and energize employees (Ueno, 2012; Kokemuller, 2019).

Communication is another critical HRM practice which positively affects service culture and quality. Companies who seek to not only develop a service culture mission and vision statement but allow the employees to participate in the

process creates buy-in with employees and employee engagement. The vision and mission enable the company to have a universal language that can be effectively scaffolded or cascaded throughout the organization.

Businesses implement service culture to improve customer service, increase customer satisfaction, improve quality of services, in order to outperform the competition. Trust between the employee and manager has a strong association with communication and positive company culture. The customer relationship also depends on trust for customer feedback and loyalty (Bouncken, 2000; Evardsson & Enquist, 2002; Grönroos, 2007; Houser, 2006; Pant, 2013; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Toister, 2017; Ueno, 2012). For example, Bouncken (2000) emphasized the importance and complexity of trust in the tourism industry between staff and management, customers and suppliers, and various stakeholders in the value chain. Tourism in the Bouncken (2000) study included travel agencies, tour operators and guides, hotels, incoming agencies (who work for tour operators and guides during the journey), and the tourist-office and destination management. The customer often sees tourism services as an overall system or network while not having direct contact with all of the service providers. Bouncken (2000) research suggests customer needs and desires should constantly be assessed and checked against service criteria. Habitual trust is desired from customers which influences their next travel booking decision.

In Bouncken's Lufthansa AG Case Study, trust was essential to both the customer and the staff. Customers were encouraged to provide feedback through their "Dialogfinder" software. Customer feedback was seen as a way to optimize performance and establish trust. The service provider could then take action to prevent long-lasting customer dissatisfaction. Also, an incentive system was used to inspire staff to voice new ideas. Over 30,000 staff ideas were submitted to improve service quality (Bouncken, 2000). In this study, Bouncken concluded that listening to customers and staff enhances trust and loyalty and provided several strategies to strengthen trust in the tourism industry.

Another example of the customer relationship depending on trust for customer feedback and loyalty was examined in Schneider and Bowen (1995). Quality was the most important factor affecting business performance based on the evidence from the PIMS (Profit Impact of Marketing Strategy) database, which contained strategy and performance data from over 2600 businesses worldwide. The researchers suggest customers can have a much deeper relationship with the company—not just as a consumer. They can be a human resources for the company and can serve in critical leadership roles, if the company trusts them to contribute. Trust between the customer and the company allowed the client to participate in the production of their own services as co-producers. They also suggest that customers can provide feedback on products/services as a source for praise and recognition and can also potentially

have a voice in organizational decisions such as hiring and training employees or conducting marketing research.

The prevailing trend in scholarly research suggests service culture increases product and the service quality, which in turn produces repeat customers (Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Ueno, 2012). The successful implementation of service culture allows the company to focus on other areas of the business, such as watching the market or responding to different business needs (Houser, 2006). The business industry employs service culture strategies due to competition around acquiring and retaining customers. In particular, empirical studies in the tourism and manufacturing industry claims service culture could lead to a competitive advantage by producing better quality of services (Alshaibani & Bakir, 2017, Bouncken, 2000; Evardsson & Enquist, 2002; Gebauer, Edvardsson & Bjurko, 2010; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). For example, Boucken's research discussed the necessity of quality to compete within tourism. The research suggests the tourism service process was divided into three phases: the potential-phase (before consumption), the interaction-phase (during consumption), and the result-phase (after consumption). The combination of these phases is the definition of the service culture experiences from beginning to end, which, if done successfully, may give companies a competitive edge.

The Evarddsson and Enquist (2002) IKEA study is an example of a furniture manufacturing company whose service culture led to a competitive advantage in

producing quality products/services. The researchers examined IKEA's service culture and service strategy. This qualitative study used case studies, official internal documents, internet articles, and books to form a narrative about IKEA in three acts. IKEA had a strong service culture that included the Testament of a Furniture Dealer, which was like a "holy script" that discussed creating a better everyday life for the majority of people. The narrative also explores the company's commitment to social responsibility. Overall, IKEA's organizational culture and commitment to providing quality furniture in a short time frame with an economical cost led to a product which had broad appeal. It did so in part because their company culture was deeply rooted in the needs of the customer.

Without developing and maintaining quality of service, companies will have difficulties delighting the customer. Maintaining a relationship with the customer and considering them as a partner to assist in the design of products or services, allows the organization to understand the customer and what they want (Gebauer, Edvardsson, & Bjurko, 2010; Schneider & Bowman, 1995). For example, some companies think of their customer as part of their staff, and they co-produce products/services together. This type of customer input could create a competitive advantage for one company over another.

The Growing Need for a Service Culture Approach in School Districts

These days, there is a belief that the district has a role to play in school success and improvement, but this role is still very much unclear (Ford et al.,

2020; Sykes, O'Day, & Ford, 2009). In the current educational climate of teacher attrition, principal burnout as well as increased student choice and competition, it could be argued that perhaps the role that school districts could play is in establishing tighter connections with its constituent schools—particularly large, urban districts. One potential way to do this is by developing a service culture-oriented approach to their daily work with schools.

History of school districts and their role. The position of superintendent was created late in the 19th century. This position was precipitated primarily because of the ballooning of school district size, consolidation of rural districts, the passage of attendance laws, increased accountability, and increased efficiency expectations. Before the superintendent role, the district school board of education handled the day-to-day operations of the school district (Kowalski & Brunner, 2011; Sykes, O'Day & Ford, 2009).

The role of the superintendent was initially a political and administrative position (Sykes, O'Day, & Ford, 2009). Growth in the number and diversity of students justified the need for the job. Superintendents were charged to be political without being a politician. They promoted and garnered community and state support for their district. In the 1930s, the Superintendent was competing for scarce economic resources during the great depression. The Superintendent or democratic leader was an advocate for the underserved, whether it was teachers or students. Representing the constituents involved listening and galvanizing the

community, policymakers, and employees. In short, the Superintendent was the political leader for the district (Kowalski & Brunner, 2011; Kowalski & Bjork, 2005; Sykes, O'Day & Ford, 2009).

As cities grew, school districts became larger. In the early 1900s to 1930, the superintendent's ability to manage the operations of the district effectively and efficiently became important, but superintendents often had gaps in knowledge and expertise (Kowalski & Brunner, 2011). For example, a Superintendent may not know how to coordinate meals for thousands of children each day or to design security systems that keep students safe inside and outside of the classroom. The Superintendent may not have experience in the standardization of operations. Therefore, districts began to hire professionals in areas of expertise such as finance, information technology, and operations to be an extension of the Superintendent as the district office, thus allowing the Superintendent to focus on other aspects of their role. The skills of the manager included budgeting/finance, facility development/maintenance, and law (Kowalski & Brunner, 2011; Kowalski & Bjork, 2005).

Thus, the district office grew out of a need to delegate many of the Superintendent's responsibilities, especially in large school districts. Today, many different district office employees are responsible for these various roles, particularly in large school districts, and they arguably have substantial potential to shape the success of schools. According to Honig (2010), district offices can be

transformed to support powerful, equitable, learning experiences for all students. She suggests district offices take a project management approach to solving problems versus just delivering services. Building relationships are also emphasized between the district offices to assist the principal in becoming a stronger instructional leader.

Honig (2010) claims everyone in the district office should reorient their work to support the development of schools to enhance student learning. But in the limited research that exists on district or central office culture transformation in large districts tends to emphasize providing support to district/school intermediaries (Instructional Leadership Directors (ILDs) or Principal Supervisors) to improve teaching and learning (Ford et al., in press; Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018; Honig, 2010; Honig, 2012). Furthermore, although research which focuses on district office transformation emphasizes some aspects of service culture, the difference is between having a district office play the primary role in inculcating a service culture within the district and in targeting the support needed directly to employees (i.e., teachers and principals). The question of whether or not this is a promising role or approach for a large, urban school district to take in improving teaching and learning within schools is still very much an open question.

Developing a Service Culture Program for an Urban, Midwestern District

Starting several years ago, a large Midwestern school district decided that overall district culture needed to be changed to attract and retain the best teachers. The district was (and still is) one of the largest employers in its metropolitan area employing approximately 3000 teachers. Also, the urban district had a diverse and high poverty student population, serving close to ninety schools. Due to its size and geographical location, this district had challenges in realizing district-wide system quality and delivery changes. For this district, even simple service implementation entailed substantial complexity because of the uniqueness of each school and the need to deliver to each one individually. Nevertheless, district administration made service a strategic initiative and collectively decided that changing district service culture was a promising avenue to address the complexities of service delivery.

In January 2017, the executive team launched a collaborative strategy for five bold initiatives within 24 months, based upon a new strategic plan which was developed with broad-based input from teachers, families, students, community members, staff, and administrators in 2015. The district wanted to create the best environment for teachers to work in the state. One of the five bold initiatives the district wanted to achieve was service-oriented district teams who proactively respond and do whatever it takes to serve teachers and principals. In February of the same year, the initiative became known as Service Culture, and the team

members were determined to begin the collaborative work. In the initial stages, the project sponsor and owner were responsible for drafting the Design Brief, People Plan, and Research Plan.

The purpose of the Design Brief (See Appendix A) was to clarify the scope of the priority, the specific problem to be addressed, explore the target group of stakeholders, focus on the business objectives, and identify the strategic opportunities and vulnerabilities. The People Plan lists the stakeholders or human beings who are the target customers impacted by service culture or subject matter experts. In the People Plan, the project team members identified other potential team members such as human resources, purchasing, campus police, teachers, and the teacher's union. The People Plan was used as a guide to determine who would be targeted later for empathy interviews and helped the project team to think broadly about the impacts of service culture with both internal and external stakeholders. The final pre-launch document prepared was the Research Plan. The purpose of the Research Plan was to determine who the Service Culture team could observe to gather additional information about service culture. The team was challenged by the executive team to think about other schools and districts but also industries outside of education. After completing the Research Plan, the team was ready to launch the service culture initiative.

Results of Current State Needs Assessment

Although executive leaders believed district office service culture was less than adequate, based on the 2015–2016 Climate Survey administered by a local university, they suggested the team follow the QuEST process by conducting interviews to provide deeper insight into the data. In the first meeting in early 2017, the service culture cross-functional project team was provided a four-phased QuEST collaborative strategy framework to plan the work. The QuEST framework is comprised of: 1. *Question* – collect information to enable a clear, deep, and rich understanding of the current state of the culture. 2. *Envision* – create options that matter to the district. 3. *Select* – make tough choices until one final approach remained. 4. *Create* accountability by specifying the details of the approach. Each one of the phases produced specific deliverables to design the service culture program (Merchant, 2009).

In phase one of the QuEST process, empathy interviews were conducted to understand the current state of district culture. Anecdotally, district office emphasis was focused on process and compliance rather than teacher's day-to-day needs. The Competing Values Culture Model describes a hierarchy culture with dominant attributes of order, rules, regulation, and uniformity versus a group culture as cohesive, teamwork, and sense of family, which is in the alignment of the district core values (Hauser, 2006).

The individuals selected for interviews were critical stakeholders identified in the People Plan. The 11-member service culture team was split into pairs to perform the interviews: one person asked the questions while the other team member scribed by entering the responses into Qualtrics. A total of 27 interviews were performed with 16 district office staff, seven certified teachers/principals, three school site personnel, and one teachers' union officer in March 2017. The team believed it was important to have a diverse sample of interviewees to ensure the responses were representative of the district. Three of the ten interview questions (Appendix B) used to assess the service culture at the district were:

1. What is the current service culture at the district?

2. How would you rate the current culture on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest)?

3. Describe a great customer experience you have had at the district or would like to have at the district.

The teams were surprised by some of the responses. For example, a teacher said, "In the field as well as the palace, we have to build relationships and we have to understand each other. Visit the sites!" Another teacher said, "It's not about your position; it's about what can I do today to make my teacher's life better." Just as concerning was a comment from a district office staff who said, "I think there is a focus on the Education Service Center (ESC) providing service

and everyone completely ignores the service we get from the sites. I think we (district office) don't understand what goes on at the sites. I also think they (school sites) don't understand what goes on at ESC. The focus is not put on what the school sites are doing for us." After completing all of the interviews, the team analyzed the data.

Qualtrics automatically summarized the data and placed it in a report format. The raw data was then exported to excel to continue the data analysis. Two of the core team members categorized the data based on interview groups (district office, certified teacher/principal, school site, and teachers' union). Empathy personas were then created for each group.

A fishbone diagram, also called the Ishikawa diagram, further assisted the service culture team in identifying the problem statement (see Appendix A). The cause of the problem identified was: "…the district office is viewed as siloed, disconnected from teachers and principals, and privileged. The district is focused on process and compliance rather than a teacher's day-to-day needs." Critical missing aspects of service were identified as communication, empathy, staffing, planning, teamwork, and equity. However, the knowledge gap between the school sites and district office was empathy and trust. Although district office staff believed they were providing good customer service the evidence from the interviews did not coincide. It was my hypothesis that one of the reasons district office personnel was not meeting the service demands of school sites was because

they did not relate to or understand the challenges or joys of the everyday life of teachers and school leaders. The notion that district office exists to support or serve the school sites was not a commonly displayed behavior.

The interviews also revealed there was a violation of trust. Several interviewees believed vital and impactful information was not shared, and the district office did not care about their general needs. The school sites did not perceive a team atmosphere or that all district staff had the same goals.

In the Envision Phase, the team brainstormed options on ways to address the problem using a tool called the "wall of ideas." The wall of ideas is a visual document that can be used to capture a plethora of ideas expeditiously. Based on the data gathered, the team decided to focus on communication, empathy, and planning, believing solving these issues would have the most impact. Based on these goals, the service culture team developed the theory of action, which is displayed in Figure 1.

The theory of action contained the strategies and results of what you intend to do, connecting what you will do to what you hope to get (Knowlton & Phillips, 2012). The theory of action proposed by the service culture team begins with a set of clear actions or activities that are hypothesized to bring about change. For our initiative, these were: ensuring clear and open communication to all staff, creating opportunities for the district office to build genuine trusting relationships with school staff, and empowering and motivating district office

staff to think of the customer experience and equity. For example, schools often

felt they were informed last about critical changes in policy or actions that

directly impacted them. The interview findings revealed many district office

employees (defined in this study as anyone who provides services

Strategy: If we do this	Then we will accomplish…	And we will see this result in:
- Ensure clear and open communication among all district staff - Create opportunities for district office staff and school staff to build genuine trusting relationships - Build a district office staff of empowered, motivated, problem-solvers valuing customer experience and equity	- Maximized positive interactions with teachers and school leaders by communicating early and explaining the "why" - Shared understanding of what it means to serve our schools by walking in their shoes - A shift of the emphasis to the people being served and not the task being performed	- Improved perceived service culture - Increased perceived trust in district office personnel - Increased perceived quality of service - Increased perceived volunteer participation

Figure 1. – *Service Culture Theory of Action*

to schools) had not visited school sites, but believed they already delivered good customer service. If these proposed strategies were to be implemented successfully, the anticipated results were improved perceived service culture, increased perceived trust in district office personnel, increased perceived quality of service, and increased perceived volunteer participation.

In the third phase of the QuEST process, the team selected the best option to address the service culture problem. The deliverable was the logic model. The logic model inventories a program's effort from start to finish (Knowlton & Phillips, 2012). The inputs or activities to improve service culture between the district office and school sites were district office staff resources, school site staff, school site community partners, a project manager, training partner, and funding for the training and development. The district office cross-functional core team staff members were asked to attend regularly scheduled meetings, help design and execute the service culture strategy, and attend events. The school site staff were requested to be involved to ensure the design of activities were user-centered and effective. District office staff members may think they know what principals and teachers want, but the service culture team asked to be sure.

The fourth phase of the QuEST process was the submittal of the action plan, which listed the activities, resources, milestones, cost, and measures of success. The executive team reviewed and funded the service culture initiative in April of 2017. The team began regularly scheduled meetings to implement the

action plan. The Midwest urban district defined service culture (Appendix C) as "…we start by putting ourselves in the shoes of our students, families, teachers, school leaders, teammates, and community. Doing so helps us understand their experience. We build trust. We go the extra mile to provide an awesome experience marked by excellence, leaving those served saying 'Wow!'"

Training is a key component of improving culture (Loeffler & Church, 2015; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Toister, 2017; Ueno, 2012). The Achieving Service Excellence Workshop (ASEW) was the first component the team began to implement. The service culture team did not feel the expertise or capacity for this aspect of the initiative existed in-house. We sought an external partner that performed culture training professionally. It was challenging finding a partner whose beliefs aligned with district strategy, but one was eventually selected as the training partner after multiple conversations and presentations. Their "Achieving Service Excellence" two-day workshop included the service strategy cycle of service expectations, service communication, service-oriented staff, and service recovery with the client (teachers) in the middle. Also, the workshop included role-play to model the correct service culture behaviors. The training was customized to include the district strategic plan, service culture definition, service culture guiding principles, and communication norms. At the end of the workshop, each participant wrote a letter stating the behaviors or tools they would

implement within 30 days. The service culture team mailed the attendees their letters 30 days after the workshop as a follow-up.

The training pilot was held in February of 2017 with 36 district office staff, two principals and four teachers. In June of 2017, eleven district office staff members attended the three-day facilitator training to learn how to deliver the Achieving Service Excellence Workshop. The certification program included practice opportunities, facilitator strategy planning, and delivery best practices. This approach allowed capacity building within the district. As of May 2019, over 1500 cross-functional district staff members have attended the Achieving Service Excellence Workshop. The facilitators collaborated to develop a one-day training for the convenience of district staff members who could not attend two consecutive days of training. The district followed a similar pattern of Disney and Nordstrom by providing formalized training to share the service culture vision.

The District Office Days of Service pilot was in August 2017. Cross-functional teams assisted schools with almost any task, such as setting up their classes, unpacking boxes, and painting. The Days of Service was similar to the United Way Day of Caring. In August of 2017, 180 district personnel volunteered for two days at nine construction sites. District office personnel from campus police, transportation, child nutrition, teaching and learning, and the enrollment center went to the school to be of service. Before district office employees went to the school sites, a short rally was held at the district office, reminding employees

of the core values and what it meant to provide service culture. The rallying cry

event encouraged everyone

Activity	Feb. 2017- June 2018	July 2018- May 2019	Total
Achieving Service Excellence Workshop (ASEW) Facilitators	11		11 district certified facilitators
ASEW - Training	93 staff – 4 classes	1410 staff – 18 classes	22 classes, 1503 staff
Customer Service Week	9 support sites visited		9 support sites visited
Days of Service (Start of School, Spring Cleaning, End of Year)	270 staff signed up 14 schools	539 staff signed up 19 schools	809 staff signed up 33 schools
Test Proctoring	300 staff signed up – over 800 slots filled	300 staff signed up – over 500 slots filled	600 staff signed up 1300 slots filled
Suggestion Box		4 pilot sites – 29 suggestions	4 pilot sites participated – 29 suggestion
Science Project Judges		16 staff signed up	16 staff signed up
Bell Dismissal Assistance		20 staff signed up	20 staff signed up
Service Culture Corner – Newsletter (some in Spanish)	3 articles	3 articles	6 articles
Service Culture Card Distribution		9 support sites visited Over 2000 cards distributed	9 support sites visited Over 2000 cards distributed

Figure 2. *Service Culture Initiative Activities*

to connect with schools and build a rapport with the teachers. Poster boards were designed, and pictures were taken with district office personnel and teachers/principals and placed on the poster board to commemorate the event. By design, the Days of Service helps district office employees to walk in the shoes of teachers, which, it was believed could go a long way to building empathy.

The District Office Days of Service was performed the beginning and end of the school year for the last two years. Each year the number of volunteers grows. In August 2018, the district partnered with the United Way and the local fire department to help the schools. Approximately 400 volunteers assisted 15 schools. Based on principal requests and lessons learned, the Days of Service frequency was quarterly instead of twice a year. The service culture program had a goal of creating a great customer experience with all service interactions.

The service culture team developed activities to celebrate customer service week in October of 2017. Customer service week is an international event devoted to recognizing the importance of customer service and honoring the people who serve and support customers each day. Each of the nine district office locations received candy with the district core values or customer service survival kit. In many instances, this was the first time a group of district office staff visited some of the remote sites such as the transportation bus barns. The goal of customer service week was to bring awareness to providing customer service and

to show appreciation for the staff serving teachers, students, families, and teammates.

Another significant activity service culture launched for the district was providing volunteer test proctors for state testing. In 2018, there was an expedited timeline and a great need to get state testing completed after teachers returned from the state teacher walkout — the project managers for the service culture team coordinated 768 test proctor volunteer slots for schools. In April 2019, over 300 test proctor slots were filled by district staff personnel. The district demonstrated going the extra mile.

While these individual events were occurring, the service culture team tried to improve communications between the district office staff and schools. During the activities, the teams made a special point to communicate and tried to establish a relationship with the teacher and principals. For example, during Days of Service, district office staff only assisted if the teachers were available to guide them with the tasks and have an interaction. For several months, the service culture team published short articles in the support employee newsletters in both English and Spanish. The suggestion box idea was another initiative launched to improve communications, this time using a human-centered design approach. Even though the service culture initiative was implemented in the district for over a year, teachers preferred anonymous feedback due to the lack of trust. The suggestion box was a way for teachers to provide district office suggestions

without the fear of being singled out for negative feedback. The suggestion box pilot was at five schools for five months. Some of the schools provided positive feedback about the suggestion box, while some schools did not use it at all. After the service culture team performed a lessons learned activity and presented the suggestion box results to the executive team, the suggestion box was discontinued based on the project management team level of effort and principal feedback.

In November 2018, the service culture team generated a list of district office staff behaviors. The list was presented to the extended leadership team of approximately 80 directors and executive directors to reduce the list to four choices. The extended leadership team voted on the behaviors and adopted the "hero moment" as the district service behavior. The three behaviors individuals could select were: 1. Be encouraging, supportive, and approachable. 2. Take responsibility for issues and empathize. 3. Volunteer at a school site once a month. The purpose of the service culture behaviors was to create "wow" customer experiences.

The service culture team designed the service culture card, which included the service culture behaviors, the service culture definition, and the guiding principles. The cards were printed and laminated for approximately 3000 district office staff. The service culture team stuffed small candy bags, made popcorn bags, and bought donuts to be distributed with the service culture cards. The service culture team was divided into teams of two and went to nine district office

buildings to pass out a card to each district office employee. A script was created to guide the service culture team on what to say. The service culture team used the cards and the treats as a way to appreciate the staff and communicate why service culture is important. Lastly, there were two impromptu activities the school sites asked the service culture team to provide.

The scholarly research referred to the Human Resource Management practices to influence service culture. Businesses implement service culture to gain a competitive advantage by meeting customer needs. The education industry had little research on service culture. Historically, the board of education and Superintendent supervised the operational functions of the district, and currently, the district office supports the operations of schools. However, enrollment has continued to decline.

It was clear to the large, urban, Midwestern school district's executive cabinet that improvements should be made to attract and retain the best teachers and school leaders in the state. The QuEST framework was used to identify the district's problem and propose possible solutions. After the analysis, the service culture team determined the conceptual framework to use as a guide for the service culture implementation.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

According to the evidence from the needs assessment surveys, the service culture at the focal urban, Midwestern district needed to be improved. The first lens used to guide this study was service culture. It was believed that changing the culture could strengthen school site trust through planned district input activities such as the Achieving Service Excellence Workshops, Days of Service, and test proctoring activities, as displayed in Figure 3. As district office employees began to empathize with school sites and relational trust began to be developed through authentic communication, the desire to provide quality of services and volunteer participation would increase.

One of the goals of the service culture program was to create empathy for the teachers and principals by district office walking in their shoes. Similar to the business industry, the service culture team believed sharing the vision of creating great customer experiences through training and understanding their Moments of Truth could translate to empathy, empowerment, teamwork, and a commitment to meet the needs of school sites (Loeffler & Church, 2015; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Toister, 2017). For example, a district office employee assisting in a classroom may observe that a teacher cannot easily break away from students to respond to a phone call, troubleshoot technology issues, or go to the restroom. Because that district employee gained empathy for that teacher, they could

45

potentially feel empowered to go the extra mile to help a fellow teammate, even though that person might be at a school site.

Regularly visiting the school sites was a possible way for district office personnel to get to know those they served and observe some of their challenges. These activities could become part of the Midwestern, large district's DNA. For example, performing kind and useful acts for school sites could become part of the district office staff's mindset of caring about the needs of schools and having a service attitude. The service culture team created many opportunities for district office "hero moments" while performing the activities. As stated previously, a "hero moment" is making yourself or your team available when the customer needs you and making every interaction positive and as memorable as possible (Toister, 2017). Improved service culture could lead to increased perceptions of trust.
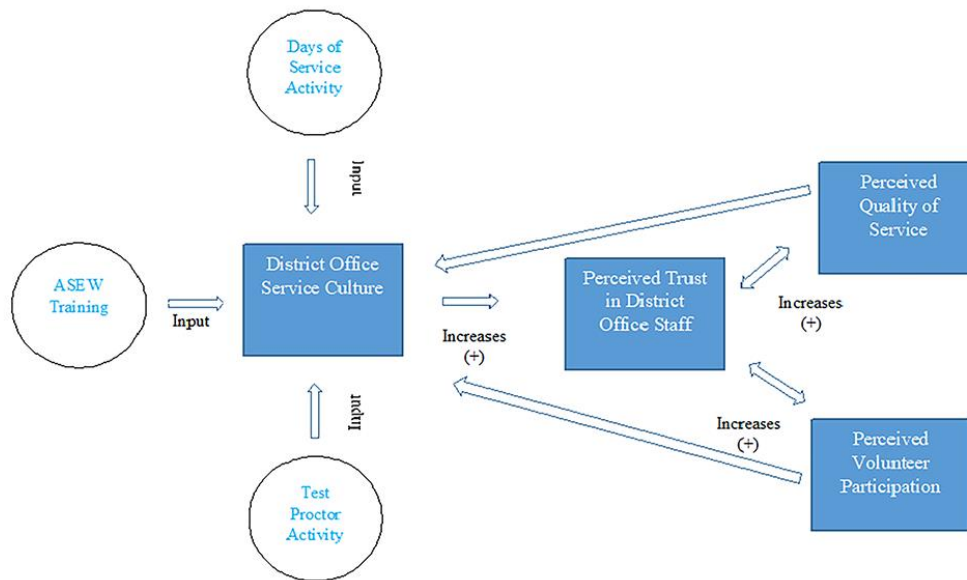
Figure 3. *Relationship between service culture, trust, quality, and volunteer participation*

The second key outcome of the service culture work in the district was improved trust between school sites and the district office. Social trust theory was the second lens that guided service culture intervention. Trust matters because each human has the right to be heard, connected, and respected (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Trust allows teachers, school leaders, and district office staff to be vulnerable and feel safe. Also, trust fosters teamwork, which is necessary to solve complex problems (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). If trust is established, work can be performed with fewer inhibitions caused by distrust. The improved culture could lead to less burnout and a sense of community where the

workload is shared (Conner, 2014). Thus, the Midwestern, urban, large district has the potential to more genuinely serve the schools and become more productive to complete initiatives. Another potential outcome is that teachers would have more time to focus on student needs, including college and career readiness (Conner, 2014).

According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), relational trust emerges from mutual expectations and obligations between different role groups: teachers, parents, students, and administrators. Each group understands their role obligation and have an expectation of what other groups are going to do to fulfill larger organizational goals. Trust is an important aspect of service culture because school sites have expectations of services the district office provides in order to help them fulfill their obligations to students and parents. For instance, teachers at school sites expect their interactive display boards to function while they are teaching a class to fulfill their obligation to teach the students. Trust will not be established if expectations or obligations are not met.

Trust is defined as the willingness of individuals or groups to rely on and become vulnerable to others (Kochanek, 2005; Tschanned-Moran, 2014; Adams & Miskell, 2016). The five components or facets of trust are benevolence, reliability, competency, honesty, and openness (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tshannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Mishra, 1996; Forsyth, Adams & Hoy, 2011; Adams & Miskell, 2016). Benevolence is the sense of care that the collective will

be protected by the trustee (Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Adams & Miskell, 2016). The collective must feel the trustee has the best interest of the group in mind. One of the service culture initiative's guiding principles stated that, "district office is empathetic toward my concerns." This principle seeks to ensure the district office shows concern for school sites. Also, one of the survey items measured benevolence by stating, "it is clear that the district office cares about the welfare of teachers and students." Teachers depend on the district office to care about their welfare and that of students, just as the district office depends on teachers to care about their students.

According to research, trust development is not based on a one-time activity or interaction but an evolution of many experiences over a period of time (Ring & Van de Ven 1994; Lewicki & Bunker 1995; Mater, Davis & Schoorman 1995; Kochanek, 2005). It was the responsibility of the service culture team not only to develop organized low-risk activities between district office personnel and school sites but determine the frequency. Low-risk or low trust activities required less personal vulnerability. For example, during Days of Service, allowing district office employees to pack boxes or clean desks is of minimal risk for a teacher. Because the district trust was initially low, the activities to change the culture were carefully selected. Also, the service culture team hypothesized increased trust could not be established in visiting sites just once a school year. The team believed as the number of input activities increased, such as Days of Service and

test proctoring, the perceived trust in district office staff would increase. Service culture was viewed as the vehicle to begin to establish trust at the schools.

The District Days of Service and test proctoring activity design had the potential to demonstrate benevolence to school sites as well. Schools sites need assistance every year with classroom setup/tear down and test proctoring. These programs were designed to take a proactive and coordinated approach to school site needs. In doing so, the district office could demonstrate their care about the stress levels of school site personnel, meeting state testing requirements, and the quality of the tasks to be performed. Instead of having teachers do it all themselves, all would work together to complete needed tasks. A potential outcome of these activities is teachers and principals feel supported and increased district office employee engagement might lead to improved teacher trust in district office benevolence.

The second component or facet of trust is reliability, which is the sense that a group has consistent, dependable behavior. In education, behaviors are often not consistent, and this inconsistency can grow when systems are large and loosely coupled. Initiatives and programs seem to come and go without follow-through or full explanation of why the program was abandoned. The service culture team has been mindful of the importance of reliability to create or maintain trust. Another one of the service culture guiding principles for district office was, "…we follow through on our service commitments." Throughout

initial implementation of the service culture program, the Days of Service and test proctoring activities had been very consistent each year. Principals and teachers began to expect these services. These services were good examples of how teachers and principals were anticipating and hoping for district office help, which is an early indication of trust.

Competence is the perceived ability to perform a task as expected according to industry standards (Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Adams & Miskell, 2016). Education has certifications and standards for teaching and learning. District offices must believe teachers are competent to teach students, and teachers must feel that the district office has the ability to provide services which can support their needs. The Achieving Service Excellence Workshops were the activities with the highest potential to set the vision, standards, and thus enhance district competency around program goals. The workshop training provided district office staff industry-best practices and service expectations. The district office staff had the opportunity to learn and apply "Moments of Truth" and other tools in their daily work to improve the service culture DNA of the district. The Achieving Service Excellence Workshops were designed to include cross-functional teams, which also promoted the collective learning needed to be able to solve problems together. If the staff competency were improved, perhaps teachers and principals would have great customer experiences leading to positive perceptions of quality of service. The workshops were ideal for reiterating the

importance of being kind to all teammates and the right of everyone to be treated with dignity and respect. Another service culture guiding principle stated, "Simply put: we practice kindness and patience, assuming the best intentions."

The fourth component of trust is openness. Openness is vulnerability, communication, and disclosure of facts and intentions (Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Adams & Miskell, 2016). Transparency of facts and information is needed to improve the trust between the district office and school sites, and this was primarily addressed through the improved communications activities that were a part of the service culture initiative. Moreover, district office, teachers, and principals must listen to each other and communicate freely. The service culture program suggestion box was designed to establish openness between the district office and school sites. By asking school sites for suggestions, the district office demonstrated a willingness to be vulnerable to schools acknowledging the system is not perfect and there is room for improvement. Also, vulnerability and communication were demonstrated when the answers were published or suggestions implemented. The suggestion box had the potential to give the school sites a collective voice.

Lastly, honesty is showing integrity, telling the truth, and providing accurate communication (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Adams & Miskell, 2016). Sometimes district offices are perceived as primarily concerned with hiding facts in an effort to avoid sharing information prematurely or before key stakeholders

52

are informed. The service culture initiative, as a whole, was a response to the lack of trust between school sites and the district. All of the activities can be seen as an effort to regain the trust of the school sites. Also, the activities were tangible ways to set expectations and model trust between the district office and school sites.

In addition to the service culture and trust outcome variables, quality of service, and volunteer participation were key outcomes of the program. As mentioned throughout this evaluation study, service culture is an antecedent to the quality of service. Quality of service is defined as the delivery of customer experiences that are compared to personal expectations and standards (Hauser & Paul, 2006; Liebenberg & Barns, 2004; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Trivellas & Dimitra, 2009). The way you deliver a service is as important as what is delivered (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). High quality of service is proactive and adaptive, adds value, and meets the need of the customer (Hauser & Paul, 2006; Liebenberg & Barns, 2004; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Trivellas & Dimitra, 2009). The literature suggests that each individual defines quality based on their experience and expectations, especially until the services are normalized or encounters competition. QuikTrip, Subway, Disney, and Zappos are examples of companies that emphasize service culture with high outcomes in terms of quality of service. Increased quality of service results from understanding and caring about the needs of the customer and proactively seeking ways to make their experience or product

better.[1] It could be argued that education could benefit from improved quality of services which could affect teacher retention, student enrollment, and student achievement (Honig, 2010; Honig, 2012; Baldrige Framework).

A well-known instrument that measures the gap between service expectations and service perceptions is SERVQUAL or the dimensions of service quality. Originally there were ten service quality dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding, and tangibles. In 1991, the service quality dimensions were refined to five (also known as RATER): responsiveness, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and reliability (Hauser & Paul, 2006, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1985; Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). All five of the service quality dimensions have been found to be associated with relational trust in prior studies.

The first service quality dimension, responsiveness, can be defined as the willingness to assist customers and provide prompt service (Hauser & Paul, 2006, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1985; Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Responsiveness is associated with reliability, a facet of trust. The demonstration of responsiveness is consistent, dependable behavior, which is the definition of reliability. The district office staff are not only

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[1] Quality of service has many guises in the literature. It is alsoreferred to as "continuous process improvement," lean six sigma, Total Quality Management (TQM) or even the Baldrige framework (Ueno, 2010; Hauser & Paul, 2006).

encouraged to be responsive but prompt while keeping the customer informed along the way. Responsiveness applies to two of our service culture guiding principles (Appendix C) "We define the problem and explain the "why" of what we are striving to do. We err on the side of more – not less – communication" and "we anticipate needs and respond proactively with solutions." Following these principles was expected to promote trust between the district office and school sites.

The second service quality dimension is assurance, which is the ability of employees to inspire trust and confidence with customers. Assurance is the knowledge and skills to deliver good service across the organization (Hauser & Paul, 2006, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1985; Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). In the context of this study, there is an assurance that district office staff have the knowledge to resolve problems, which suggests that district office personnel are competent, another facet of trust. For example, if a teacher calls the IT Service Desk, the assurance dimension would measure the quality of service and the perceived competence of the technician to resolve the problem was expected to influence the perception of trust.

Tangibles are the third quality of service dimension or RATER service expectation. Tangibles are the physical or virtual appearance of facilities, equipment, employees, or communication material (Hauser & Paul, 2006,

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1985; Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). This service quality dimension is associated with the trust facet of openness. Specifically, tangibles such as the internet/intranet, marketing, and documentation are ways to be transparent in communicating updated, comprehensive information with full disclosure of the facts. Tangibles are also reinforced by the district service culture guiding principle "We define the problem and explain the "why" of what we are striving to do. We err on the side of more – not less – communication" and "we anticipate needs and respond proactively with solutions." For example, during the budget shortfall, the district used the internet to update the employees and community about the Shaping our Future design work, including the community meetings. Professional, comprehensive, updated tangibles can improve communication and instill a positive perception of trust.

The fourth service quality dimension is empathy which emphasizes caring about the customer and is connected to the trust facet of benevolence. The service culture work was built to enable district office staff to empathize with teachers and school leaders with activities such as the Days of Service, proctoring, and the suggestion box. One of the service culture guiding principles stated, "We practice empathy by putting ourselves in the shoes of groups or persons we serve." Without benevolence or empathy, high quality of services would be difficult, and

the ability to remain competitive challenging (Gebauer, Edvardsson, & Bjurko, 2010; Schneider & Bowman, 1995).

The fifth and last service quality dimension is reliability. Not by coincidence, reliability is both a quality of service dimension measure and a component of trust. Trust and reliability are exemplified in staff members performing promised services dependably and accurately. The test proctoring activity was a good example of a service culture activity which intended to build trust, and then the improved trust influencing service culture, a cyclical process.

The service culture Achieving Service Excellence Workshop was the method used to teach district office personnel about the quality of service expectations. In one of the workshop activities, participants filled out a RATER assessment and rated their teams' current service delivery. The results were totaled, and the participants discovered their quality dimensions strengths and weaknesses. After the workshop, the attendees were asked to have their customers fill out the RATER assessment to determine any gaps between the perception of the quality of service. During one of the workshops, one of the principals identified reliability as the service expectation that scored the highest. Most of the district office staff scored highest on responsiveness. The RATER exercise emphasized the importance of understanding the expectation of your customers.

Lastly, the service culture team anticipated that volunteer participation by district office staff would increase if staff were empowered as problem solvers

and motivated to provide great customer experiences (also noted in Figure 1, the theory of action). According to Santos and Fernandez (2017), corporate volunteering (CV) has been low and can be enhanced if companies understand the barriers of employees volunteering. Corporate volunteering refers to non-profit initiatives that are planned or supported by the employer. Although in the Midwestern school district, volunteering is planned or supported activities for school sites, some trust parallels can be drawn between CV and the district. As stated before, volunteer sign-up logs track volunteer participation in this study.

Trust can be a barrier to volunteer participation if the activity does not accurately depict the tasks performed (Santos & Fernandez, 2017; Santos & Fernandez, 2017). Internal communication describing the volunteer opportunity should accurately describe the tasks and why it is important to the organization. If the communication is not in alignment with the experience, the employee may become skeptical of future volunteer opportunity recruitment, thus engendering distrust. The service culture team paid close attention to all communication related to the describing and planning of volunteer opportunities to ensure accuracy. They were also careful to ensure that the execution of the event was smooth.

A second way volunteer participation can be associated with trust is through benevolence. If a corporate volunteer does not believe the company is honest or genuinely cares about the organization they are assisting, this can

become a barrier for volunteering (Santos & Fernandez, 2017; Santos & Fernandez, 2017). In the case of the district, staff have to believe the district cares about their school sites in order for them to want to take the time to volunteer. Also, the staff members must believe their employer will not penalize them for taking time out of their schedule to volunteer. Trust is important to volunteer participation.

This evaluation study looks through the lens of service culture, trust, quality of service, and volunteer participation. However, the question that remained is whether or not these separate activities, collectively as the service culture initiative, had a measurable, demonstrable effect on the key outcomes it sought to change. This was the focus of this evaluation study, the method of which is described in more detail in Chapter Four.

Chapter 4: Methods

The purpose of this study was to conduct an evaluation of this new service culture program provided in an urban, Midwestern school district—more specifically to evaluate the design, process, and preliminary successes of this program to determine if modifications or pivots were needed. The study was not designed to reach any definitive conclusion about program effects (i.e., impact evaluation) but to suggest potential opportunities for the improvement of program processes and practices. The following research questions guided the evaluation of the service culture program:

1. Did perceptions of service culture among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

2. Did trust between the district office and school site staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

3. Did perceptions of quality of service among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

4. Did volunteer participation between the district office and school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

See table 1 for the overview of the research design.

Focal District Context and Service Culture Initiative Study Background

The large Midwestern school district decided to examine ways to attract and retain the best teachers. The urban district had a diverse and high poverty student population, serving 86 schools. The district was one of the largest employers in its metropolitan area. Due to its size and geographical location, the school had challenges making system quality delivery changes. In response, the district administration made service a strategic initiative. The service culture program began in February 2017. To understand the current state of the district culture, the service culture team performed internal/external district interviews in March of 2017 to provide insight into the development of the program. The core cross-functional service culture team consisted of 11 people. The team performed 27 interviews with the following people: 16 office staff, seven certified teachers/principal, three school site personnel, and one teacher union's officer. A diverse sample of interviewees was selected, and their names and departments were entered into a Google sheet. It was important to get feedback from our target client (teachers and principal) on the current state of service culture. Ten open-ended interview questions were developed, and one question based on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the highest.

The core team was divided into pairs, one who was the interviewer and one the scribe. Each pair selected who they would interview from the interview Google Sheet. The teams contacted the interviewees and scheduled a time for the

interview. The team members updated the Google Sheet with the interview date.

An interview guide sheet was created (see Appendix B) and distributed to the

team with minimal instruction. One of the team members conducted the interview

while the other team member entered the answers into Qualtrics in real time,

serving as the scribe.

Qualtrics summarized the data and placed it in a report format. The raw

data was exported to excel to continue the data analysis. Two of the core team

members categorized the data based on the interview groups and read all of the

answers. From this data, empathy personas were created for each group. The

interview data was divided into four persona canvas categories, representing

different stakeholder groups: 1. District office support staff. 2. School support

staff 3. Teachers and principals. 4) Local teacher's union. A persona canvas is a

profile of a group. Some of the teacher's/principal's negative trends were

communication, planning, and hiring. The areas of opportunity for positive

outcomes identified by teachers and principals were communicating the "why"

and valuing communication, encouragement, and equity. The team reviewed all of

the interviews and feedback.

The service culture team then collected and reviewed previous surveys and

data from 2013 - 2017 to determine if the interviews revealed the same or similar

results. In 2015 – 2016, the Climate Survey administered by a local university,

only 34% of principals and teachers felt district administrators showed concern

for their schools. Also, the Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) discovered in 2015, "Central offices services are not currently designed to anticipate and proactively meet the unique needs of the individual school, and subsequently, fail to provide differentiated and integrated services to schools based on unique needs" (CEL Findings, 2015, p. 27).

Measures and Instrumentation

There four latent dependent variables used in this study are discussed below. Prior to combining them into observed variables, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on them to ensure that, empirically, there was justification for treating them as such. All of the four variables loaded onto one factor, with loadings no lower than .70. Reliability analysis was conducted on the measures and those findings are listed below in the discussion of each.

Service culture (α = .84). The district Teacher Perception (Panorama survey) was the data source for the measure of service culture. The district had used this open-source survey instrument for three years. *Panorama Education* works with schools, districts, and charters to administer surveys. This online survey was distributed via email to all teachers and principals at 86 schools. Some of the benefits of the Teacher Perception Survey for districts were: 1) Strong research-based survey instrument 2) User-friendly website and interactive dashboard allowing teachers, principals, and district staff to see results 3) Good

63

resource for teachers to leverage survey results to improve instruction 4) Ability to administer in English and Spanish.

The survey had approximately 80 questions. Four service culture questions were added using the six-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The questions were translated into Spanish and French, which improved validity. The district distributed this survey every year to all of the teachers and principals three times in a school year, October, March, and May by email. Panorama used primarily quantitative methods for data analysis. The data was benchmarked against national norms and broken down by school and district. The March 2019 response rate was 76.7%. While Panorama did most of the data analysis, the internal Data Analytics team extracted the raw data and performed additional analysis. The service culture questions on the Teacher Perception survey, with anchors from strongly disagree to strongly agree, were:

1. District office teams are focused on serving teachers, school leaders, students, and families.

2. District office (ESC) personnel are empathetic toward my concerns.

3. District office personnel attempt to fully understand my concerns or issues.

4. It is clear that the district office cares about the welfare of teachers and students.

These questions were selected because they helped determine if the service culture program was working with the intended outcomes. For example, the survey question "District office (ESC) personnel are empathetic toward my concerns," could measure benevolence by demonstrating the district office cared. The survey questions measured principal's and teacher's perception of service culture as a short-term outcome (proximal), which is displayed by different district office behaviors (mid distal outcome) resulting in trust between schools and district office (outcome).

Trust in district administration (α = .86). The climate survey administered by a local university for the past three years (2015-2018) was the data source for trust in district administration. Although the district had 86 schools, the survey was administered to site principals, faculty, and parents from 72 schools. All faculty members from all grades were randomly assigned to one or two online surveys that were distributed by email. The data was a capacity indicator. The local university administrators of the survey intended for the teachers and school leaders to interpret and explain their school indicators and not rely strictly on the survey data. The 2015 – 2016 results of the survey served as the baseline for the service culture initiatives.

All survey measures were supported by evidence of strong validity and reliability taken from the extant literature. Psychometric properties were tested with district data. Student surveys were administered by the district during the

school day. Students distributed the parent survey. The parent surveys were returned to the university in a sealed envelope via mail or via the school. The Climate Survey question "District administrators have established a coherent strategic plan for the district," captures district office competence by completing a strategic plan (See Appendix E).

Quality of service (α = .95). The quality of service data source was measured via the Information Technology (IT) Customer Satisfaction Survey using a Likert scale of 1 to 4 (1 poor to 4 excellent) collected from 2016-2019 (See Appendix F). The questions on the IT Customer Satisfaction Survey were:

1. Friendliness of our employees.

2. Helpfulness of our employees.

3. Needs met to your satisfaction.

4. Overall experience.

5. Comments, questions, or concerns.

6. Would you like a member of management to follow-up with you?

The analysis was an aggregation of the responses.

Volunteer participation. One final outcome of interest was volunteer participation. As trust increases, I anticipated that volunteer participation across the district would increase. The data source for volunteer participation was the volunteer sign-up logs. Depending on the event, volunteers signed-up electronically or were assigned a volunteer slot using a software program such as

Google Sheets or Qualtrics. Yearly, the total number of volunteers was calculated and compared to previous years and submitted to district office leadership.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable for research question one was service culture. The Panorama survey instrument was utilized to measure service culture before and after the implementation of the service culture program. The second dependent variable for research question two was trust. The variable *trust* measure was comprised of 10 items that asked principals and teachers to report on (Appendix D). The third dependent variable was quality of service for research question three. The Service Desk customer service survey instrument was used to measure quality before and after the program implementation also found in Appendix F. Lastly, the fourth dependent variable for research question four was volunteer participation sign-up logs which provided a snapshot of the willingness of employees to volunteer before and after the service culture program implementation.

Table 1

Overview of Research Design

	Research Question	Analytical Approach	Data Sources
Research Question 1	Did perceptions of service culture among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?	Quantitative: Descriptive Statistics Paired Sample T-test Linear Curve Estimation Model	Teacher Perception Survey (Panorama)
Research Question 2	Did trust between the district office and school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?	Quantitative: Descriptive Statistics Paired Sample T-test Linear Curve Estimation Model	University Climate Survey
Research Question 3	Did perceptions of quality of service among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?	Quantitative: Frequency Table Non-parametric two independent sample Bar Graph	IT Customer Service Survey
Research Question 4	Did perceptions of volunteer participation between the district office and school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?	Quantitative: Stacked Bar Graph	Service Culture Activity Sign-Up Logs

Data Analysis

Table 1 displays an overview of the various data sources and analyses to be conducted to answer each of the four research questions in this study. For all analyses, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. First, the teacher level Climate (University survey) and Teacher Perception Survey data files (Panorama) were each examined. Then, the Teacher Perception data file and Climate data file were aggregated by school ID. Missing schools in either of these merged files were deleted (only two). The Teacher Perception data representing service culture, and the Climate survey data representing trust, were merged into one SPSS file. A descriptive summary statistics table was run using SPSS for the service culture and trust variables generating the means, standard deviation, minimum values, maximum values, skewness, and kurtosis. The purpose of generating the descriptive table was to provide a statistical visualization of service culture and trust which was used to make inferences about the study.

A paired sample T-test was performed for research questions 1 and 2. This analysis was run on the service culture and trust dependent variables to analyze the perceptions of service culture prior to the service culture initiative in August 2017, and after it concluded in October 2019. This method determined if the variables were statistically significant after the service culture program was implemented. This was the key method that determined if the program had been working since the launch in August of 2017.

In the third step of the data analysis (to answer research questions 1 and 2), a linear curve estimation analysis was run in SPSS to examine potential growth or decline in service culture and trust in district administration. Similar to a repeated measures ANOVA, a linear curve estimation analysis allows us to model change in our outcome over time as a linear (or curvilinear) function.

The fourth step was running a frequency table on the IT Customer Service Survey used to measure the quality of service. This table depicted the frequency of poor to excellent service from 2016 – 2019. Also, a service desk ticket bar graph was created displaying the means score by year. The fifth and final step of the analysis was a stacked bar graph. The graph was a visual representation of the service culture volunteer sign-up for program activities and timeframes. This graph tracked increases and/or decreases in volunteer participation during the program.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter reviewed the research design to answer the four study research questions using the dependent variables service culture, trust, quality of service, and volunteer participation. The data sources used were the Teacher Perception Survey (Panorama), Climate Survey, IT Customer Service Survey, and the service culture sign-up logs. A combination of analytical approaches was used, such as descriptive statistics, paired sample T-test,

frequency tables, linear curve model, and bar graphs. These approaches yielded

interesting before and after results discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Results

Service Culture and Trust in District Administration

As a result of our implementation of a new service culture program in our focal urban, Midwestern school district, I hypothesized that both service culture and trust in district administration would improve. As previously mentioned, the Climate Survey and Panorama Teacher Perception Survey were used to measure trust in district administration and service culture, respectively. Results from both surveys were combined and aggregated by school. Table 2 displays the descriptive results on these two focal outcomes before and after program implementation (which was February of 2017).

Table 2

Service Culture and Trust in District Administrators

Survey	Mean	N	Std. Dev.	Min	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Climate Survey							
Faculty Trust 2016	3.8647	71	.44331	2.77	4.82	-.164	-.181
Faculty Trust 2017	3.5246	71	.41105	2.68	4.64	.312	.259
Faculty Trust 2018	3.1967	72	.64266	1.66	3.88	-.041	.433
Teacher Perc.							
SC Spring 2018	3.2360	72	.30529	2.00	3.88	-.965	3.091
SC Fall 2018	3.3649	72	.28093	2.24	3.94	-1.105	3.098
SC Spring 2019	3.2578	72	.27576	2.45	3.94	-.730	.456
SC Fall 2019	3.1340	69	.28784	2.33	3.93	-.456	1.022

Research question one concerns changes in service culture and research question two concerns changes in trust in district administration after service culture program implementation. As a reminder, service culture was measured twice a year in May and October, and trust was measured in March of each year. As Table 2 shows, service culture in the Midwestern district increased from spring 2018 to fall 2018 ($M = 3.23$ to $M = 3.36$, respectively) but service culture progressively declined in spring 2019 and fall 2019 (from $M = 3.2578$ to $M = 3.1340$). The average faculty trust in district administration consistently decreased each year from a 2016 mean of 3.8647 to a 2017 mean of 3.5246 and finally a 2018 mean of 3.1967. Notable is that 2018 variation in scores increased over the past years, with lower minimum and maximum scores.

Next, as a first step to understanding if service culture and trust in district administration changed before and after program implementation, a series of paired sample T-tests were run on average service culture from spring 2018 to fall 2019 and average trust in district administration from Spring 2016 to Spring 2018, as shown in Table 3. The service culture perception from spring 2018 to fall 2018 showed a moderate positive service culture change of around a half a standard deviation (D = 0.56), which was statistically significant, $t(71) = 4.816$, $p < .001$.

Table 3

Paired Sample T-test Comparing Service Culture and District Admin. Trust

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 SC Fall 2018 - SC in Spring 2018	.12892	.22715	.02677	4.816	71	.000
Pair 2 SC Spring 2018 - SC in Fall 2019	-.09782	.33483	.04031	2.427	68	.018
Pair 3 Trust in 2018 - Trust in 2016	-.65850	.66080	.07842	-8.397	70	.000
Pair 4 Trust in 2018 - Trust in 2017	-.31844	.55208	.06552	-4.860	70	.000

In contrast, from spring 2018 and fall 2019, average service culture decreased by about a third of a standard deviation ($M = .12892$ to $M = .09782$, $t(68) = 4.816$, $p < .05$). Lastly, a paired sample T-test for trust in district administration was run comparing spring 2017 and 2018 average scores (1 year) and spring 2016 and 2018 scores (2 years). From 2017 to 2018, which mark the time before the service culture program began, there was an average decline of about a third of a point, which was about a half of a standard deviation, $t(70) = -4.860$, $p < .001$. For the whole study period, before and after the service culture program began, there was an overall decline in district administrator trust of over

a half a point (D = -.658), which was statistically significant, t(70) = -8.397, *p* < .001.
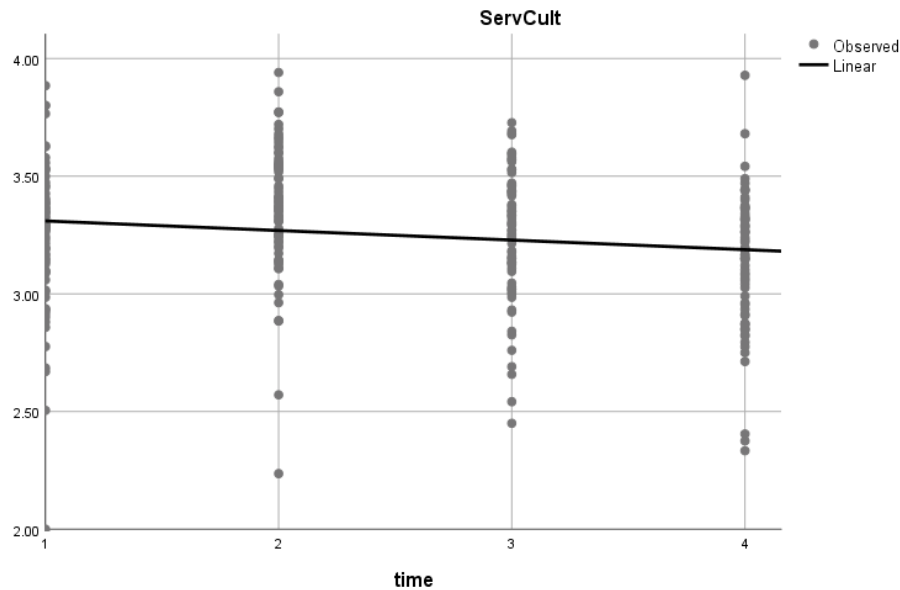

Figure 4. *Linear Curve Estimation Model for Service Culture*

As a final test of the degree to which service culture and trust in district administration changed over our study period, a linear curve estimation analysis was run in SPSS to examine potential growth or decline in service culture and trust in district administration. Similar to a repeated measures ANOVA, a linear curve estimation analysis allows us to model change in our outcome over time as a linear (or curvilinear) function. The independent variable in this case time, four time points for service culture and three for trust in district administration. Figure 4 displays the final linear curve estimation model for service culture. As can be seen, over time, there is a small but significant decline in service culture during

75

the study period, $F(1, 283) = 6.725$, $p < .01$, $r^2 = .023$). Figure 5 displays the final

linear curve estimation model for trust district administration. As can be seen,

over time, there is a significant decline in trust in district administration during the

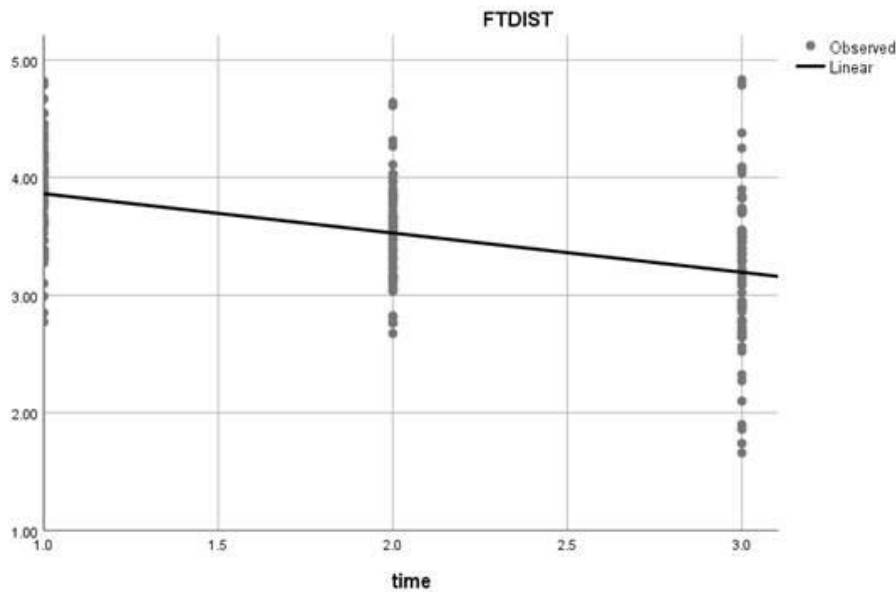study period, $F(1, 212) = 61.58$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .225$).

Figure 5. Linear Curve Estimation Model for District Administrator Trust.

Quality of Service

The Information Technology (IT) Customer Service Survey was used to

measure the quality of service. A reliability and factor analysis was performed to

verify the psychometric properties of the survey. A factor analysis with varimax

rotation of the customer service survey shows that all four items which comprise

the survey load strongly on one factor, accounting for 87% of the variance

(loadings range from .884 to .961). The reliability of the scale was calculated as α

= .95. These four Customer Service survey questions were then combined into one measure for quality of service which was calculated as the sum of the scores for each item.

Table 4

Frequency Table of Scores on the IT Customer Satisfaction Survey 2016 – 2019

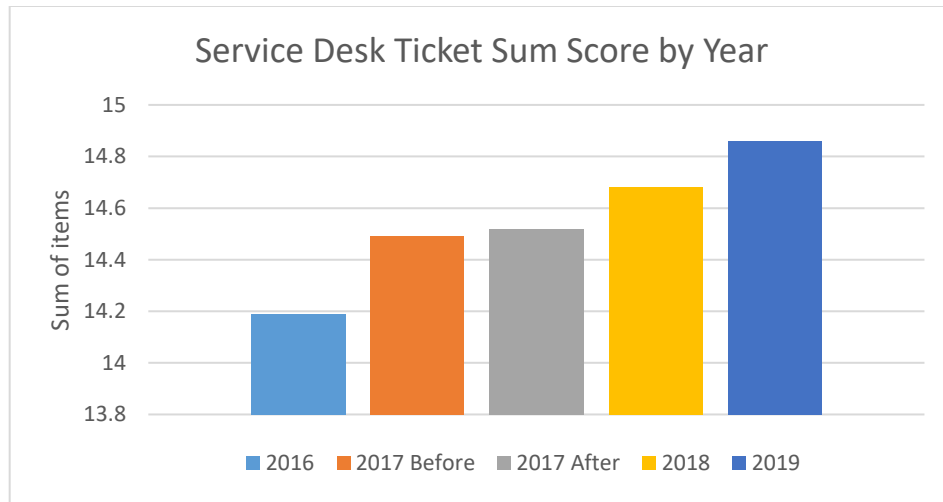|	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
4.00	16	2.2	2.2	2.2
5.00	4	.5	.5	2.7
6.00	8	1.1	1.1	3.8
7.00	10	1.4	1.4	5.2
8.00	15	2.1	2.1	7.3
9.00	9	1.2	1.2	9.5
10.00	9	1.2	1.2	9.7
11.00	22	3.0	3.0	12.7
12.00	74	10.1	10.1	22.8
13.00	21	2.9	2.9	25.7
14.00	14	1.9	1.9	27.6
15.00	37	5.1	5.1	32.7
16.00	492	67.3	67.3	100.0

Figure 6. *Service Desk Ticket Sum Score by Year measuring Quality of Service*

As seen in Table 4, scores ranged from 4 to 16. In total during the study period, there were 731 completed surveys associated with service desk tickets. Four-hundred and ninety-two or 67.3% of these tickets reported the highest score of excellent on all four of the customer satisfaction questions (4 on the Likert scale for a total of 16). A total of 16 tickets or 2.2% had the lowest customer experience score that is shown in Table 4. To answer the question of whether or not quality of service improved after the service culture initiative, we conducted a simple means comparison, comparing average scores before and after the program began. Since the first activities for the service culture program started in August of 2017 (The Days of Service initiative), this became our cutoff date for comparing quality of service ratings. Because the quality of service scores were not normally distributed, I used the non-parametric independent sample T-test (Mann-Whitney U). The service desk ticket sum score shown in Figure 6

increased each year with a marginally statistically significant increase from 2018

M(before) = 14.68 to 2019 *M*(after) = 14.86 (z = 1.735, *p* < .10).

Volunteer Participation

The final question of this investigation concerned whether or not volunteer

participation improved throughout the study period. A stacked bar graph was used

to show the three most significant activities during the service culture program,

which were *Days of Service*, *Test Proctoring*, and *Achieving Service Excellence*

Workshop training. Figure 7 displays the frequency of volunteer participation by

semester (fall and spring). As can be seen, volunteer participation grew 129%

from the 2017–2018 school year to the 2018-2019 school year—in other words,

volunteer participation doubled in one year, and then some. The primary growth

was a substantial increase in Achieving Service Workshop volunteer sign-ups,

n=1406, during the 2018-2019 school year. The goal of the service culture team

was to train the entire district office staff as soon as possible in order to share the

vision of service culture, create buy-in, and begin to hold staff accountable for

service culture behaviors. Also, many of the mid-level managers requested their

staff sign-up for training to improve service culture in their departments. Further,

test proctoring occurred in April of each semester. In the second semester of

2017–2018, there were a large number of volunteers due to a district push to get

students quickly tested after the March 2018 teacher walk out. In contrast, the

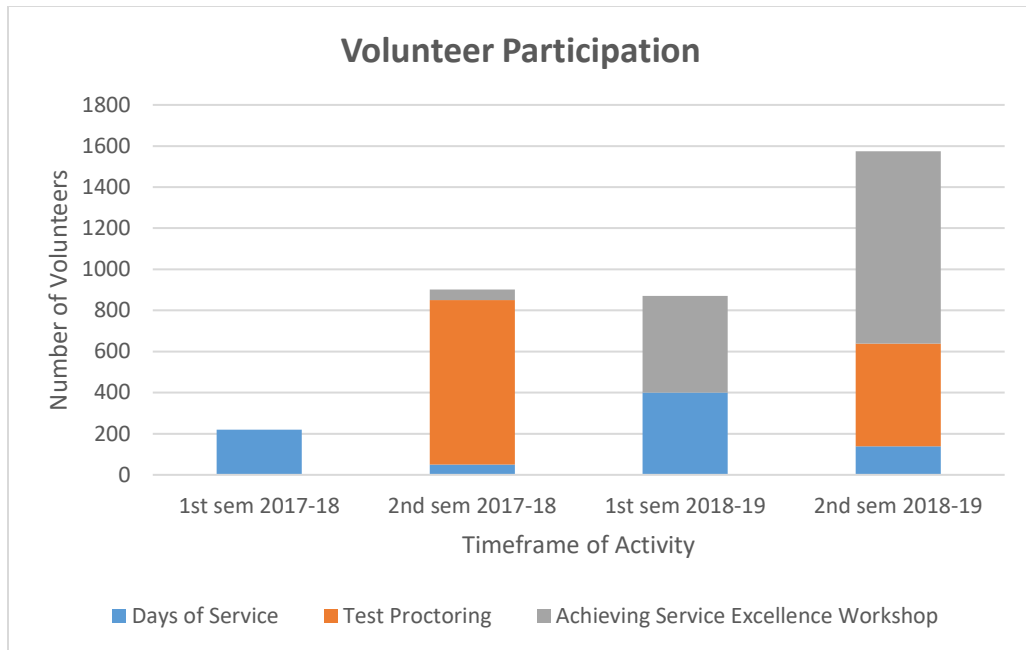spring semester of 2018–2019 was a normal year for test proctor demand.

Figure 7. *Service Culture Program Volunteer Participation by Activity*
Note. Test proctoring only occurred in the spring of each year.

Summary of Findings

The service culture evaluation study had two results, service culture and trust, declined after the service culture program implementation, which did not meet the expectation of the original hypothesis. But, two results increased, the quality of service and volunteer participation, which met the expectations of the hypothesis. The next and final chapter provides the project owner's and researcher's insights and opinions about the study, including the discussion, implications, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

Chapter 6: Discussion, implications, limitations, and Opportunities of Future Studies

The purpose of this study was to conduct an evaluation of this new service culture program provided in an urban, Midwestern school district—more specifically to evaluate the design, process, and preliminary successes of this program to determine if modifications or pivots were needed. Although there were studies that emphasize district offices providing support and establishing relationships with principals and instructional leadership directors (Honig, 2010; Honig, 2012; Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018), there were few examples of scholarship which examined service culture between the district office and school sites. This study was not designed to reach any definitive conclusion about program effects (i.e., impact evaluation) but to suggest potential opportunities for the improvement of program processes and practices. The following research questions guided the evaluation of the service culture program:

1. Did perceptions of service culture among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

2. Did trust between the district office and school site staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

3. Did perceptions of quality of service among school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

4. Did volunteer participation between the district office and school staff change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative?

The first hypothesis of this study predicted that the perception of service culture among school staff would positively change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative. This hypothesis was grounded in empirical research detailed in the literature review (Beitelspacher, Richey, & Reynolds, 2011; Deal & Peterson, 1990; Zerbe, Dobni & Harel, 1998). However, during the service culture initiative, the large Midwestern school district continued to experience a decline in the service culture initiative from the fall of 2017 to the fall of 2019. Still, the service culture school staff perceptions experienced a moderate positive change from spring 2018 to the fall of 2018. During this timeframe, the service culture team strategically coordinated and led activities to bolster service culture such as Achieving Service Excellence Workshop training and test proctoring. But those same activity strategies continued throughout the program without consistent improvement.

Additionally, the results of this evaluation study did not support the second hypothesis that trust perceptions between the district office and school site staff would improve after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative. This outcome is consistent with the theory that service culture is a prerequisite to improving trust perceptions as the district office demonstrates

empathy towards school sites (See Figure 3). However, it is worth noting that, due to the district decision to discontinue the university Climate Survey, trust data was not available after the spring of 2018. The lack of trust data for the final year of the study is an admitted limitation of the study.

However, the findings for quality of service supported the third hypothesis. The school staff had positive quality perceptions after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative. This outcome concurred with the literature (Alshaibani & Bakir, 2017, Bouncken, 2000; Evardsson & Enquist, 2002; Gebauer, Edvardsson & Bjurko, 2010; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). The overall findings for quality of service support a small, significant increase over the study period. This result suggests perhaps that service culture activities can directly influence quality of service irrespective of the growth of trust or service culture. The fourth hypothesis of this study predicted volunteer participation between the district office and school staff would positively change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative. The volunteer participation doubled from 2017 to 2019. Many of the district office staff members looked forward to opportunities to volunteer for Days of Service several times a year and test proctoring each April, a general finding similar to that in the literature (Santos & Fernandez, 2017; Santos & Fernandez, 2017). Also, the school site leaders and teachers expressed their appreciation for district office staff to come "on-site" to assist them with their needs.

Findings

      Service culture. The service culture results build on the research

suggesting that culture is vital for organizations to remain competitive (Alshaibani

& Bakir, 2017, Bouncken, 2000; Evardsson & Enquist, 2002; Gebauer,

Edvardsson & Bjurko, 2010; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Although there were

many planned and organized service culture program activities, there was only a

marginal perceived improvement of the overall district service culture to school

sites. There were thousands of district office interactions with school site

personnel, but were these interactions positively memorable as defined by hero

moments (Toister, 2017)? The data suggests that service culture may not yet have

become the DNA of the district. The scholarly literature suggests district offices

transform their day-to-day work practices and habits to support schools instead of

a hierarchical command and control model (Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers,

Neel & Clark, 2018; Honig, 2010; Honig, 2012). The original charge by the

district's executive team was to develop a service culture program that would

attract and retain the best teachers in the state (see Appendix A). The Midwestern

district's ability to be competitive would be inhibited if the culture could not

appeal to the most valued customers: school leaders, teachers, students, and

families. This was not the expected outcome of the evaluation, though it provides

valuable information for moving the program forward in the future.

One of the suggested HRM practices the business industry claimed contributed to service culture was recruitment and selection (Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Toister, 2017; Ueno, 2012). The service culture team and Human Resources did not collaborate to modify or change the hiring process to fit the culture the large district tried to create using the service strategy cycle of service expectations, service communication, service-oriented staff, and service recovery with the client (teachers) in the middle. Also, the service culture behaviors had not been integrated with the district's interview questions or considerations for staff selection. According to the Dale Carnegie foundation, 15% of successful outcomes on jobs and life are due to technical knowledge and skills, while 85% is due to people skills and attitudes.

Unfortunately, performance appraisal and reward HRM practices were not implemented during the service culture initiative. The program action plan included working with Human Resources to add service culture questions to the performance review as a pilot the first year and add permanent questions the second year, after most of the district office employees had gone through an Achieving Service Excellence Workshop. However, due to limited time, these tasks were not achieved. The reinforcement of the service culture guiding principles and behaviors by rewards and holding staff accountable for their behaviors, could have influenced the service culture positively, thus, allowing the district to be more competitive.

Lastly, to create and sustain a positive service culture environment, the company's highest-level leaders must first model the desired service culture behaviors with their employees (Deal & Peterson, 1990). The modeling of service culture by senior leadership was critical. Some leaders demonstrated service culture with their team(s). For example, one of the executive leaders practiced hero moments by each month holding his staff meetings at school sites and volunteering. His team was also encouraged to go the extra mile when serving schools. However, in other instances, some leaders did not treat their staff or colleagues using the service culture guiding principles or service behaviors. Staff began to notice minimal participation of certain leaders at service culture trainings and activities. Research suggests satisfaction with leadership and with work demands have been the strongest predictors of service behaviors (Skinner, Glenn, & Reynolds, 2011; Zerbe, Dobni, & Harel, 1998). In short, the initiative did not always have the level of consistency in modeling and support of service culture that might be needed to push our desired outcomes to the next level.

Trust. Contrary to the hypothesis that trust perceptions between the district office and school site staff would positively change after the implementation of the district's service culture initiative, there is an argument the Midwestern district service culture program might have actually prevented trust from decreasing more than it already had. For example, without the district focusing on relational trust, the expectations between role groups--teachers,

parents, students, and administrator—could have increasingly gone unmet. According to scholars, all five components of trust; benevolence, reliability, competency, honesty, and openness, require attention if trust among actors were the desired outcome (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tshannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Mishra, 1996; Forsyth, Adams & Hoy, 2011; Adams & Miskell, 2016).

The data illuminated that trust was steadily declining and did so for two time period prior to the initiative beginning. However, these lagged measures were not used by the district quickly enough to address the problem. For example, the service culture team could have performed extensive analysis (See Table 2) to determine which schools had the lowest means and performed interviews to understand better why the perceptions of trust were low. At that point, service culture action steps could have been executed to help improve specific school perceptions.

According to Kochanek (2005), different levels of trust, both low and high, are directly related to the participant's willingness to be vulnerable. The service culture program primarily organized low trust activities such as Days of Service, test proctoring, and training, which had a relatively low risk. Perhaps after engaging in several low risk activities, the team could plan high risk activities to develop a deeper level of trust between the school sites and district office. However, building trusting relationships takes time, depending on the past experiences and backgrounds of individuals. It could also very well be that two

years of activities was not enough time to influence teacher and school leader perceptions. Also, most of the service culture activities were targeted to certain schools based on needs and principal requests. Therefore, not all the district's schools experienced service culture in the same way.

Quality of Service. The results of the quality of services hypothesis met my expectations of increased positive perceptions after the implementation of the service culture initiative. Although the change was marginally significant, it was a bright spot. It also supports the theory that service culture and the quality of services are correlated. One of the assumptions of service culture is that employee behavior was critical to delivering quality services (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Ueno, 2012). When companies make service quality and customer satisfaction a top priority, service culture is said to be a part of the company DNA (Ueno, 2012). The Midwestern, large, urban district began to see an improvement in service culture in 2018, even though this change did not continue the following year.

Another factor that may have increased the quality of service was due to the progress on training via the Achieving Service Excellence Workshops. As stated previously in this paper, these workshops communicated the vision and set the staff expectation of service culture (Loeffler & Church, 2015; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Toister, 2017). The original plan of action for all district office employees, approximately 3,000, to be trained in two years. Approximately 1500 staff were formally trained, about half of what was planned. After reflecting on

the original estimates, these numbers were perhaps unrealistic and made a difference with evangelizing service culture. It was the belief of the service culture team that quality was not going to be improved until the employee mindsets were changed to focus on the customer experience. The change of culture was needed to improve quality as shown in Figure 3.

Volunteer Participation. The results of the district's volunteer participation hypothesis exceeded expectations of increased positive perceptions after the implementation of the service culture initiative. It was amazing watching district participants, who rarely visited school sites, shift to making an effort several times a year to be of service to schools (Santos & Fernandez, 2017; Santos & Fernandez, 2017). Some of the district office staff had never volunteered in the classroom prior to our initiative. Also, these activities engaged a team-of-teams throughout the district working together: directors, first-line support, managers, bus drivers, accountants, information technology specialists, etc. The service culture volunteer-organized activities could be seen as a district-wide, cross-functional team building event in which everyone had the same goals (Lencioni, 2002; Ueno, 2012) For example, when over 400 employees and community volunteers assisted schools during the Days of Service. Everyone's focus was on the opening of schools on time and with excellence. It didn't matter what position you held but what you could do to prepare schools. Through these experiences,

staff began to realize what a teacher goes through to bring instruction to students, thus developing real empathy for their co-workers.

Test proctoring was also an activity that likely influenced the frequency of volunteer participation. The district believed staff could and should provide their assistance to schools to proctor for at least one two hour slot. This was an enormous commitment from the district office. Each staff member who volunteered had to review videos and complete a 10 question quiz, scoring 80% or higher to become a test proctor. The district office staff member sent the certificate to the service culture team for their school proctoring assignment. The schools entrusted district office to serve at their time of need since it was a state requirement that a test proctor was present in each classroom during the test.

Possible Confounding Variables Influencing the Service Culture Study

Most organizations that have sought to change their culture quickly realize changing mindsets and old habits is not easy, especially for large organizations (Honig, 2010; Honig, 2012; Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018). Outside of the areas of improvement, the researcher identified several internal and external forces that might have exerted influence on the results of the service culture evaluation. These were: district issues, state funding, and emergency certifications.

District Issues. In April of 2019, the Superintendent announced the district office would be restructured in July 2019, pending board approval. The

teams proposed to be affected were IT, innovation and design, campus police, finance, bond, human resources, teaching and learning, and exceptional student services. The executive team told the employees these proposed job deletions and creations were not being made as a cost-savings recommendation but were needed to provide strong supports to school teams, students, and families. The restructure impacted dozens of team members. Although employee's jobs which were proposed to be eliminated had an opportunity to apply for other jobs, morale was very low, not only for those directly impacted but those colleagues who remained. There was a sense of both fear and uncertainty. The restructuring occurred close to the administration of the spring Teacher Perception Survey which is usually the first week in May. The trust level for some staff members may have been low because they felt vulnerable and perhaps less apt to be benevolent, reliable, honest, and open. It is possible the results of the restructure influenced the evaluation of service culture and trust.

In September of 2019, the district announced the need to make structural changes to cut 20 million dollars from the general fund budget for the 2020-2021 school year. The budget redesign process consisted of 24 community meetings and engagements with local citizens to obtain feedback about what was important to them as the district considered potential changes. The district also collected over 5,000 surveys about the redesign choices. Also, a Budget Advisory Group consisting of 38 community members including civic leaders, community

partners, business leaders, faith leaders, teachers, and parents were formulated to work with the district throughout the process and provide feedback. The goal for the future of the district was to create strong schools in every neighborhood that included consistent grade configurations, reduce the number of small unsustainable schools, grow specialized programs, and improve the enrollment system. The public meetings and engagements lasted from September 2019 through February 2020. The recommendation, if the board approved, would become effective starting July 1, 2020.

During this period, the district had a large amount of press coverage in the newspaper, television, social media, and local gathering places. Some of the feedback was positive and some negative, from a variety of constituents such as business leaders, teachers, parents, students, district office, and concerned citizens. In short, it is very difficult to change service culture, trust, and service quality for the better when the district is under so much scrutiny, upheaval, and uncertainty. For example, trying to promote service culture activities during the period employees were worried about having a job was difficult. Another example might be from citizens who wondered how the district got into the predicament of being 20 million dollars over budget. These were realities happening during the service culture initiative. Some of the items considered for budget cuts were school closures, district office staff, and changing transportation routes. Unfortunately, during this time frame, our perception surveys were being

administered and there is no question that some of these issues influenced how teachers responded to questions related to trust in district administration and district service culture.

   State Education Funding. In order for public education to survive, the cause of continuous education shortfalls and cuts must be reviewed. States primarily funding education based on revenues must be changed or restructured. Evidence states approximately 46 % of total education spending in the United States comes from state funding. The trend of state per-student spending reduction continues, thus the cuts in jobs, slowing down economic recovery (Leachman & Mail, 2014). Districts, schools, teachers, staff, and students are impacted with little recourse after the school year has started. State funding for the Midwestern, urban district is one of the lowest in the United States.

   In 2018, our state, along with others, marched on the state capitol steps to advocate for increased teacher pay and spending in the classroom. Although some of the funding demands were met, funding remains an issue. Without significant change or legislation, budget cuts will be a problem for years to come. Funding is an external issue that influences the perception of cities not valuing and prioritizing education. Teachers and school leaders could believe they are not appreciated for their talents and efforts undoubtedly influenced perceptions of district trust and service culture.

Emergency Certifications. Another outcome of recent funding issues that led to teacher shortages was the increased amount of emergency certifications being issued to teachers in this Midwestern state. Emergency certifications allow individuals to work up to two years while attaining the education or training for certification. According to the local newspaper in 2018-2019, there was a 54% increase in emergency certification over the previous year. Even though there was a 640 million increased investment of state dollars over the past two years, the teacher shortage remained an issue. The inability to compete with surrounding areas could be a potential negative influence on service culture. For example, staff consistently leaving and entering the district had a direct effect on training, morale, and trust between the district office and school sites.

Moving Forward: Implications for The District Service Culture Program

The service culture program did provide preliminary evidence of improved and declined perceptions within two years in a large, urban, Midwestern school district. There seemed to be some evidence that some of the executive management team's goals to change aspects of service culture had started, but were far from complete. This evaluation study was intended to yield valuable information on program impacts, but also knowledge about how to improve processes and practices to bring about desired outcomes. Below, I reflect on some of our failures, oversights, and opportunities for moving forward.

Service Culture. At the beginning of the service culture program, the leaders of the initiative had expedited timelines to develop the initial plans and launch the program. If the team had additional time, teachers could have assisted with the Design Brief, People Plan, and the Quest interview script questions (See Appendix B). In the initial development of the service culture program, the project owner proposed $10,000 for up to six teacher stipends to participate in workshops, service culture team meetings, and focus groups. The benefit of the teacher stipends would be increasing the likelihood of teacher voice in the plans of serving teachers. This is a human-centered design approach, in which you involve the human perspective in problem solving and building a deep connection with the customer. For example, teachers could receive compensation for assisting in the development of the Design Brief, interview questions, and activities. Also, teachers could pilot the interview question to test the validity. Who would be better to share their thoughts on the design of the program and the perception of trustworthiness or cultural mind shifts? Unfortunately, the stipends were not funded.

In retrospect, teacher and district office focus groups might have produced additional data to improve the service culture program. For example, teacher and district office focus groups could have been conducted on the outset of the program, in the middle, and at the end. This feedback could have been used to determine what increased the perceptions of trust, how schools measured quality,

and what activities demonstrated the district cared. Of course, focus groups take time and resources to develop.

Another suggestion from the service culture team was to hire a full-time project manager for the service culture initiative for one year. The role of the project manager would include organization, planning, execution, and documentation of the service culture program. Unfortunately, the budget was not approved for this position. Existing members of the Project Management Office of the district took on this role, in addition to their current projects. This additional work at times was difficult to manage with their primary job responsibilities.

Trust. In a perfect scenario, the service culture team would have researched the trust literature before the development of the service culture initiative. Thus, grounding in similar empirical studies could have shaped the program. Another option was to organize Network Improvement Communities (NIC), which could consist of district stakeholders, community members, and university researchers (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow & LeMahieu, 2015). This level of expertise could provide deeper knowledge of the trust scales and proven methods for developing trust with individuals and groups. The NIC could possibly employ disciplined methods of improvement research to develop, test, and refine service culture. The service culture team did not have expertise in strengthening trust in a large organization. The levels of trust and different trust relationships between

96

actors were complex. Also, the team was not aware of the severity of distrust at the beginning of the initiative. It is my opinion; this area of the study should have had more focus from the onset.

Also, by the discontinued use of the Climate Survey, a different trust measure should have been selected. Although the service culture team thought some of the questions on the Teacher Perception Survey covered trust, the questions did not address trust directly. Therefore, no trust data was collected after March of 2018. Without this data, the service culture team did not know if specific activities increased or decreased trust perceptions. Perhaps pivots should have been made if the activities were not effective in building trust.

Quality of Service. Moving forward, the service culture initiative can and should build on the momentum of quality of service. Other departments could implement the same or similar IT Customer Satisfaction Survey that could be sent to their customers. For example, the maintenance department has a work order system in which all service requests and resolutions are logged. Perhaps, similar to the IT department, the survey could be dispersed via email. The data from both or multiple departments could be analyzed to determine trends and differences.

Since service culture is hypothesized to improve the district culture, increased focus on completing the Achieving Service Excellence Workshops could have provided an increased outcome of quality of service. Another possible analysis measure could be to determine if there is a correlation between the

number of department employees that have attended the Achieving Service Excellence Workshops and the number of positive Customer Satisfaction Survey responses for that department. This could lead to a hypothesis indicating the training helped change mindset which led to improved quality of service.

Volunteer Participation. The service culture program had the most success with volunteer participation. A continued focus to build on this success might be the district department leaders set expectations for their teams to volunteer. Instead of waiting for the service culture team, their staff could brainstorm and develop volunteer opportunities for each team member. For example, each month their team visits a school site or adopts a school. The school leader could follow up with the employee at least twice a month to discuss the progress of volunteering during their employee check-ins to reinforce the importance of service culture and encourage volunteerism.

As another easy way to build upon volunteer participation, the district could require each employee to adopt a school to volunteer regularly. They might participate in reading partners, the bike clubs, or any school volunteer group. For example, one of the departments did this and they let the employee select the school and the group versus the employee being assigned. This approach worked well for that department. A third way to improve volunteer participation and continue to empathize with school sites, was for each district office employee to

substitute or assist in a classroom. Particularly at the beginning of school when there was a significant need for teachers.

Policy and Barriers

The service culture initiative was a complex program because of the human aspect of changing mindsets. To ensure the initiative was not a temporary trend for two years, policies should be put in place to sustain the program, long after the Superintendent or leadership changes. Although the service culture team intended to get buy-in from district leaders to change policies, the implementation of the policy changes did not occur. One of the policy changes recommended by the service culture team for the sustainability of the program was modifications to the Support Personnel Handbook which contained the personnel policies and regulations for employees. A written policy stating the employee expectation of service culture in their daily work and volunteering at school sites or substitute teaching in classrooms, allows leaders/management to enforce behaviors which did not meet expectations or reward behaviors that did. Evaluation forms could also be changed to include ratings on the service culture behaviors or guiding principles.

With this type of amendment to the student handbook, there could be potential barriers to the change, such as resistance from the employee labor unions. Employees may not agree they should be rewarded or penalized based on the perception of service, quality, or volunteer participation. It has been argued

that frontline staff do not mutely accept policy or changes associated with it, and are not the passive recipients of management actions (Trivellas, 2009). Furthermore, since employees are rarely given raises, how could the district enforce raises or penalties? Another potential barrier would be the school board; this change may not be popular with the school board constituents.

Leadership

The leadership required by mid-level managers, directors, and executives to deliver and maintain service culture at a high level would require grit, patience, and the belief this fundamentally is the right action to take for teachers, school leaders, families, and students. The commitment required from managers to prioritize the need of the schools over their day-to-day operation task could be daunting and sometimes overwhelming. The coaching of employees could be difficult if they are performing their work but not in a way which engenders a feeling of "wow" on the part of employees. Also, leaders would be challenged to model service culture to their team and make sure their service met the high-level definition of service culture that all had agreed upon at the start (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Furthermore, executive leaders would need to continue making service culture a priority and keep service culture on the district scorecard. There would need to be a continued investment of time and money to sustain service culture training, monitoring, measuring, and improvements.

Implications for Practice

It was much easier to develop assumptions and hypotheses about the service culture initiative than to implement the program. As the researcher and the district owner of the service culture initiative, I had a unique perspective, and this perspective, along with the findings from this study led me to the following recommendations for future service culture initiative practices as follows:

1. Continue the Achieving Service Excellence Workshops and modify it as needed. Train additional facilitators since many of the original facilitators are no longer with the district or may not have the capacity to continue to fulfill this role. Transition the coordination of the workshops to human resources or another department for new employee orientation or a refresher for all district personnel, including the school sites. This approach would include service culture for the entire district.

2. Modify the HRM practices to recruit and select candidates based on the service culture behaviors and guiding principles. Add staff exit surveys as a measure for service culture.

3. Modify the Support Personnel Handbook, evaluations, and possibly employee contracts to include the service culture behaviors and guiding principles. Determine if there are ways to reward employees for executing the desired behaviors.

4. Consider re-evaluating the measures for trust and quality and perhaps using a Network Improvement Community (NIC) of teachers, community members, local university researchers, and district office staff to assess the best ways to collect the data differently or use some of the methods referenced throughout this study.

5. Establish a renewed commitment from the executive cabinet to continue the next phase of the service culture work to establishing a deeper trust relationship with the school sites. The commitment would need a marketing campaign to continue the momentum that had already been started from the past two years.

What Did We Learn?

As the service culture team reflected on the lessons we learned, four lessons were most influential to the quality of the program: time for the development of the program, the need to involve experts to shape the program, teacher feedback throughout the program, and factors outside the program that could not be controlled for. Each lesson learned is explained and discussed below.

First, researchers suggest trust emerges over time with multiple social exchanges (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Lewicki & Burkern 1996). The service culture team questioned if it was realistic to develop a program from concept, execution, and measured outcomes in only two years. Perhaps instead of two months to develop the service culture plan from conception to launch, allowing

two to six months to plan would have produced better outcomes. The question phase of the Quest process could have been extended to collect more information from school site personnel about distrust between them and the district office and what they would recommend to improve it. Additional interviews could have been performed or different questions developed. Focus groups might have been a consideration to gather more detailed information about teachers, school leaders, and district office perceptions. Service culture team members may have been able to ask more probing and follow up questions to get a deeper understanding of service culture in the district.

Second, since the members of the service culture teams were not trained in the best methods to gather data and measuring outcomes, engaging subject matter experts such as local university researchers or companies who specialize in creating measurements would have been helpful in the development of the service culture. This approach would have created a better understanding of the climate of the Midwestern district and solutions/activities which might be the most effective. Although there may have been a cost for the assistance, the potential benefit of an even higher quality plan might be worth the expense. The service culture team did take this approach in partnering with a company to train our staff the best practices of service culture known as the Achieving Service Excellence Workshops. The material was already developed and proven to work. The service culture team even went to a university that had used their material and discussed

with them their lessons learned. If a NIC was developed, there may not be a direct cost to have access to experts to help shape the service culture program.

Also, from the onset, the service culture team believed after the initiative was completed, the district office staff would have the empathy and tools to apply the customer-centric attitude in their daily work. At this point, the entire district would be trained in providing positive customer experiences. Thus, not needing a team to promote or organize service culture. There was some question about whether or not the program had been ingrained into the day-to-day activities of employees to continue to build on the momentum from the last two years.

At times during the program, the team was unsure if the activities planned were the most effective, which led to the third lesson learned. Although we did receive antidotal feedback, there was a lag between receiving feedback from school staff and making program adjustments or pivots. Teachers could be considered experts in knowing and understanding the perceptions of their colleagues. The program design should have included more collaboration with teachers to understand how they experience the district, how they might want to interact with the district, and the best mediums of communication between the school sites and district office. There were several check-ins with principals and teachers about specific activities, but it was not enough. Usually, when obtaining feedback, it was lagging versus leading.

Fourth, during the planning of service culture, the team did not consider what action could or should be taken for internal or external factors outside the control of the initiative, such as state funding and district issues. Perhaps a risk analysis should have been performed to brainstorm potential risks and develop risk response plans if they occurred. It is also possible the usage of a NIC could have identified these items early in the program and how to account for them in the measures. For example, the district discontinued the Climate Survey; the NIC could have decided what trust questions should be asked and what tool should be used. Another example would be determining if there was a benefit in measuring employee satisfaction and correlating it to service culture. These were ways experts could have contributed to shaping the service culture program.

One additional area that could have been improved in the service culture initiative was collaborating with the district human resources team earlier to make modifications to the hiring and selection process, evaluations, and the Support Employee Handbook. The service culture team and owner intentionally recruited two management human resource directors to assist with shaping the HRM practices. However, as with many project teams, the service culture team underwent many team disruptions. During the initiative, two sponsors, the two human resources directors, two of eleven facilitators, and multiple team members left the team for various reasons. With the team changes, not all of the team

members with the same expertise were replaced. This was the case with the human resource team members.

Even though the service culture initiative had some areas of improvement, there were many areas in which we excelled, such as providing service quality and continuing to volunteer throughout the district. The lessons learned and program recommendations were provided to the executive team in the service culture phase II transition plan. The intent of the transition plan was to provide recommendations and action steps that could be taken to continue the service culture work in the large, Midwestern, urban district.

Study Limitations

Like most research studies, this evaluation study had several limitations. Since the study only examined one urban school district, the study may not be generalizable to other types of districts such as rural or suburban. For example, the implementation in an urban district may be different than the implementation in a rural district due to issues such as limited resources or general proximity of stakeholders.

Second, the size of the district could also be considered a limitation. Would the study yield the same results if the district had half the number of schools and only 500 teachers? Typically, it is more difficult to implement programs in larger districts, with fewer resources, and increased school challenges such as chronic absenteeism and social emotional learning skills.

A third limitation might be the preexisting climate of the district. Perhaps the results would have been impacted by the current climate of the district office and the relationship with its stakeholders, especially teachers, students, and families. The Midwestern, large district already had a preexisting climate of distrust. Without this climate at the outset, the outcomes could have been different. A good example of this theory is the three school studies conducted by Kochanek (2005) that relied on different approaches to deal with trust based on the school culture before the study began. Because Mills Elementary school started from a lack of trust, the team had to spend more time, in the beginning, engaging in low level trust activities. In contrast to Mills Elementary, Cole Magnet was an ideal high trust school allowing the principal more time to build on already established trust with high level trust activities. The same philosophy could be true with the Midwestern, large, urban district because of the challenges described previously in this study.

A fourth limitation of this study was who was seen as the "district office." Before the service culture program, there was not a clear definition of who was the district office. Some employees might have seen the "district office" as the only the Superintendent, even though the district office was defined in surveys and discussed in the Achieving Service Excellence Workshops. In addition to the employees, the community sometimes viewed the district office as the Superintendent alone as opposed to all of the employees who provided service to

107

schools. Therefore, there was a possibility he or she alone could change the perception of the district office positively or negatively based on their actions.

Another key limitation that might normally be overlooked is the possibility of teacher perceptions being influenced or changed by media coverage, social media, school board representatives, and competing district initiatives. There were unanticipated obstacles that emerged during the study that could not be controlled for, such as an angry parent expressing themselves at a school board meeting or on social media, which might have a direct impact on teacher or community perceptions whether the information was true or false.

Sixth, the lack of trust data was also noted as a limitation throughout this study. The district decided to discontinue the Climate Survey after March of 2018. Without this data, the service culture team did not know where district trust ended up at the very end of the study. In addition, because trust takes time over multiple interactions the timeframe of the initiative could also be considered a limitation— at least from the standpoint of examining impacts. As the primary researcher and the director of the initiative, the evaluation should last between three to five years to get a richer understanding of potential impacts that could be used to improve processes and practices.

Lastly, the timeframe to develop, launch, execute, and measure outcomes from the program was a huge limitation. Because of the desire for the district to remain competitive and improve trust and service to schools, the timeframe

needed to effectively implement and sustain the service culture program, especially while overseeing other projects, was underestimated. Many scholars have argued that trust, because it is predicated on sustained, positive interactions over time, can take a substantial amount of time to grow (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). The service culture team questioned if it was realistic to develop a program from concept to execution and measured outcomes in only two years. School improvement programs in other similar district studies, had undertaken one to two years of data collection before case studies began (Honig, 2010; Kochanek, 2005).

Opportunities for Future Studies

Service culture is an interesting phenomenon that has had limited research in the field of education. The findings from the service culture evaluation in the Midwestern, urban school district, suggests several directions of future studies to add to scholarly literature in education.

First, service culture should be studied in more than one school district with different demographics for generalizability. It is suggested to study three districts, one of which is urban, suburban, and rural. Each district should be a different size, including one large, medium, and small. This research would provide empirical data to test the claims of the service culture conceptual framework (Figure 3). When selecting the districts for the study, the preexisting climate should also be considered. For example, are we intentionally studying

different climates to see the impacts to service culture, or are we comparing districts with similar preexisting culture?

Secondly, the recommended timeframe for the evaluation study should be two to three years after the implementation of the service culture program. This allows the service culture team a couple of years to implement the program before the results are determined. Culture takes time and should be considered when measuring results.

Thirdly, establish consistent data sources throughout the entirety of the study. Unfortunately, in the Midwestern district, the Climate Survey was discontinued in the midst of the study. Thus, the service culture team did not have the trust data needed to determine if program adjustment needed to be made. However, if a cross-functional team of subject matter experts, such as a NIC, had been established, the measurement could have developed and agreed upon before the start of the study.

Even though the implementation of the service culture initiative failed to improve service culture and trust over the study period, the study nevertheless yielded important findings that can hopefully shape this initiative moving forward in attemptive to improve service culture, trust, quality of service, and volunteer participation in the Midwestern, large, urban, school district. It is my hope future studies use and build upon the idea of developing service culture in schools so that teachers, students, and families can benefit from an educational system that is

built around our most valuable partners in improving learning, child development,

and life chances for children.

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Appendix A: Design Brief

Design Brief

Project Description	Problem Statement:
What is the problem or opportunity? *(Difference between what we have and what we want.)* *What is the hypothesis to be tested?* *Describe the project in a few sentences, as you would in an elevator pitch.*	District office is viewed as siloed, disconnected from teachers and principals, and privileged. Emphasis is focused on process and compliance rather than teacher's day-to-day needs. **Service Culture Definition:** Trusting relationships, informed honest genuine two-way communication, and a user centric attitude that puts customer satisfaction ahead of everything else. The district has the opportunity to create/develop a culture of trusting relationships, informed honest two-way communication, and a user centric attitude that puts customer satisfaction ahead of everything else. This culture will support, recognize, and reward the demonstration of the core values of equity, character, excellence, team, and joy. Our everyday work will consistently provide great customer service experiences for everyone, both inside and outside of the organization. Everyone is valued. We will create/develop a culture of trust, communication, caring, and awesome user-centric experiences. The word of mouth communication of these experiences will significantly contribute to attracting and retaining the best teachers and staff in Oklahoma. **Hypothesis**: If a service culture is developed and sustained within the district, we can attract and retain the best teachers in the state.
Scope *What is within scope of the project and*	In scope: Collaborating with District office leaders/staff to develop a service culture which

what is outside of it?	consists of service leadership, service education, and service support. The resulting culture will include a common service language, service vision, service communication, voice of the customer, service measures, and service role-modeling that can be achieved within 24 months (February 2019). As a result of the culture changes, district leaders will identify and improve processes. Out of scope: Design of the school site culture.
Constraints *What constraints do you need to work within?* *What requirements must a successful solution meet?*	**Constraints** ● Limited resources ● Limited funding ● Competing operational priorities **Requirements** ● Shifts in district office mindsets ● Increased commitment to core values ● Improved customer experiences ● User-centric design of processes and services
Target Users *Who are you designing for?* *Try to be as specific as possible. Whom do you need to understand? Why are they important?*	**Primary** ● District office leaders ● District office support staff ● Teachers ● Students ● Principals **Secondary** ● Parents ● Board of Education ● Vendors
Exploration Questions *What do you know (and can prove) about this opportunity/problem?* *What do you believe (but can't prove)?* *What do you doubt?* *What do you suspect are outliers or "red herrings" (conflicting or misleading*	**Know:** ● 34% of teachers and principals feel district office shows concerns for the needs of their school (Climate Survey Spring 2016) ● 57% of principals feel central office staff sometimes respond swiftly and / or proactively to the needs of their school (March 2016

"facts" that are not relevant)? *What do we know about what has been done before?* *Who has been involved?* *What results did they generate?* *What do we need to know about why this worked or didn't?*	principal support survey) ● 64% of principals rated the delivery of central office support is sometimes efficient and sometimes effective (March 2016 principal support survey) ● On average each year, high poverty public schools, especially those in urban areas, lose 20% of their faculty (Ingersoll, 2004) ● Many schools serving the neediest children lose over half of their teaching staff every five years (Allensworth, et al.,2009) **Believe:** ● The district strategic plan avails a ripe opportunity to create a district office service culture that serves all district employees ● Teachers may have a lower rating of district office services and feel even less connected to district office than principals ● A portion of district office staff believe there is room for improvement in quality and efficiency of services **Doubt:** ● None at this time **Suspect:** ● Some district office staff will initially resist change ● Culture will take time to change ● No one thinks they are the issue, this will make change harder **What has been done before?:** ● Customer service focus under previous strategic plan (balanced scorecards) **Who has been involved?:** ● Previous district leadership and some current leadership **What results did they generate?:** ● Annual scorecard reviews were conducted by each department with varying levels of service improvement

	What do we know about why this worked or didn't?: ● No consistent approach in leveraging a continuous service improvement methodology district-wide ● While the balanced scorecard process did build knowledge of key performance indicators, there was never a sense that senior leadership was deeply committed to the process
Expected Outcomes *What outcomes would you like to see?* *(Helps to bound scope.)*	● 80% or more of teachers and principals feel district office shows concerns for the needs of their school
Success Metrics *How will you measure success?* *(Helps to bound scope.)*	● Climate Survey ● Principal Survey ● Other surveys as defined and approved ● Network support feedback channels established with teachers as well as principals and students. Mechanisms to be defined as part of district office redesign work

Appendix B: Quest Interview Script

Quest Interview Script

Research focus

Attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding service culture and customer experiences

Information We Are Seeking

Discuss with all participants

- What does service mean to them
- What does culture mean to them
- What is a customer experience
- What behaviors facilitate a positive service culture or customer experience

Interview Tips

- Have sponsor/owner set up the meeting
- Do interviews in twos - allows one person to focus on listening and one person to take notes
- Don't ask too much. Ask one question at a time.
- When interviewing. Be sure to listen and not lead.
- Focus on learning, not demonstrating intelligence

Before Beginning the Interview

Open with a thank you:

- I/we know you all have very busy schedules and I/we want to thank you for taking time to speak with me/us today.

Introduce yourself and begin with a broad purpose statement:

- I am _____ and this is _____ . We are on the service culture team and would like to ask you a couple of questions about district culture and customer experiences. I will be asking the questions and _____ will be the *note-taker*).
- We are visiting all of the central offices to better understand the current and ideal central office service culture.
- Your candid feedback is incredibly valuable because it will allow us to learn and create a snapshot of our current situation and understand where we would like to be.

Share group norms:

- I will be taking notes today, but my notes will not be attributed to individual speakers.
- This a safe space for you all to speak candidly,

Interview Questions

1. Take a minute or two to tell me about yourself (personally or professionally)
2. What comes to mind when I say the word "service"? Why?
3. What comes to mind when I say the word "culture"? Why
4. What is the current service culture at the district? Why
   a. If you had a magic wand and could snap your fingers, describe the ideal culture
   b. What behaviors or core values in your department could contribute to the ideal culture?
5. When thinking about the relationship between central office and the schools, what would be the ideal culture, how would you rate the current culture on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest)?

        a. What are three things we can do to get closer to the idea culture
6. What comes to mind when I say "customer experience"?
7. Give me an example of a great customer experience you had outside of the district?
8. Describe a great customer service experience you have had at the district or would like to have at the district.
9. Is there anything else you want to tell me about anything we've talked about Today?

Appendix C: District Service Culture Definition and Guiding Principles

Service Culture Definition

We start by putting ourselves in the shoes of our students, families, teachers, school leaders, teammates, and community. Doing so helps us understand their experience. We build trust. We go the extra mile to provide an awesome experience marked by excellence, leaving those served saying "Wow!"

Service Culture Guiding Principles

- District office exists to serve and support our students, families, teachers, school leaders, teammates, and community.

- We practice empathy by putting ourselves in the shoes of the person or groups we serve.

- We define the problem and explain the "why" of what we are striving to do. We err on the side of more - not less - communication.

- Simply put: we practice kindness and patience, assuming best intentions.

- We anticipate needs and respond proactively with solutions.

- We match supports to identified needs. We don't treat everyone the same when they need something different.

- We follow through on our service commitments.

- We go above and beyond to create the "wow!" Wow the small, unexpected stuff that pleasantly surprises folks.

Appendix D: Teacher Perception Survey Scales

Teacher Perception (Panorama) Survey Scales

4 items, 1-5 scale, *strongly disagree* (score 1) to *strongly agree* (score 5), teacher and principal respondents

District…

1. District office teams are focused on serving teachers, school leaders, students, and families.

2. District office (ESC) personnel are empathetic toward my concerns.

3. District office personnel attempt to fully understand my concerns or issues.

4. It is clear that the district office cares about the welfare of teachers and students.

Appendix E: Climate Survey Scales

Climate Survey Scales

Faculty Trust in District Administration

10 items, 1-6 scale, *strongly disagree* (score 1) to *strongly agree* (score 6), faculty respondent

The district administrators…

1. show concern for the needs of my school

2. value my expertise for school improvement

3. value the expertise of teachers

4. follow through on commitments

5. align what they actually do with what they say they will do

6. honor agreements

7. are committed to the stated goals of the district

8. demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning

9. have established a coherent strategic plan for the district

10. take personal responsibility for their actions and decisions

Appendix F: IT Customer Satisfaction Survey Scales

Information Technology Customer Satisfaction Survey Scales

District Customer Satisfaction with IT Quality of Service

10 items, 1-4 scale, *poor* (score 1) to *excellent* (score 4), entire district staff respondents

Information Technology department or service desk…

1. Friendliness of our employees.

2. Helpfulness of our employees.

3. Needs met to your satisfaction.

4. Overall experience.

5. Comments, questions, or concerns.

6. Would you like a member of management to follow-up with you?

Appendix G: IRB Approval and Research Permission

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Approval of Initial Submission – Exempt from IRB Review – AP01

Date: October 10, 2019   **IRB#:** 11249

Principal Investigator: Charlotte Renee Manning   **Approval Date:** 10/10/2019

Exempt Category: 4

Study Title: District Support of Teachers, Leaders, and Schools: An Evaluation of a Service Culture Program in an Urban, Midwestern School District

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the above-referenced research study and determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:
- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications as changes could affect the exempt status determination.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Notify the IRB at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Aimee Franklin, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

July 17, 2019

Dear University of Oklahoma Internal Review Board,

I support the Service Culture research study proposed by Charlotte Manning. Having the authority to do so, I grant approval for the study to be conducted with data obtained from Tulsa Public Schools. Ms. Manning has permission to access such data under the oversight of the University of Oklahoma Internal Review Board.

Sincerely,

Paula R. Shannon
deputy superintendent

Cc: Charlotte Manning