CHARACTER AND COMPETENCE: A MIXED METHODS STUDY ON TEACHER

TRUST IN PRINCIPALS IN A MIDSIZED COUNTY IN FLORIDA

by

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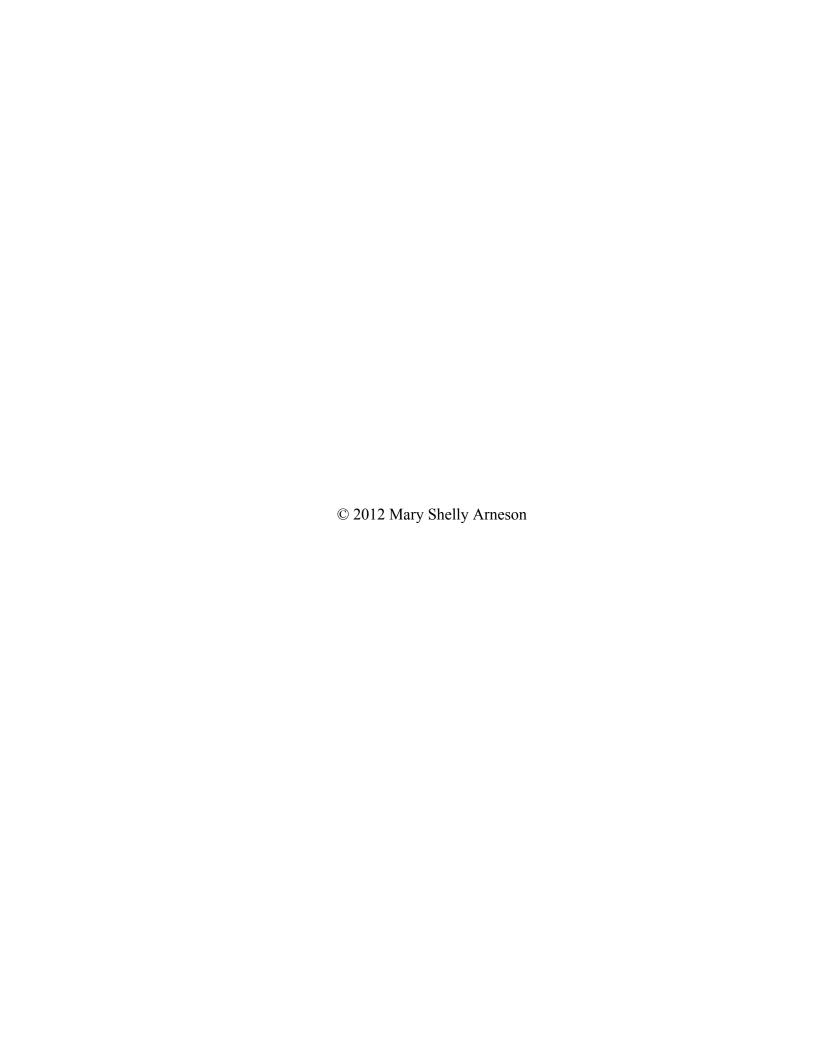
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ABSTRACT

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The relationship between school principals and teachers is a crucial one for school success. While principals have traditionally been expected to be the school's managers, the principal's role is evolving into a role more accurately described as instructional leader and formal evaluator of teacher practices. For the teacher evaluation process to be effective, teachers must trust the principal's capability and integrity. The new look at the role of principal is a change in the public education system. Covey (1989) defines 7 habits that highly effective people use to facilitate change and improved leadership in an organization. Covey stresses the importance of forming relationships, building trust, and creating an emotional bank account between people. The researcher of this study examined the formation of trust between principal and teacher. The researcher defined and explored trust within the context of competence and character using Covey and Merrill's (2006) trust model. In addition, the researcher addresses the question of whether there is a relationship between length of time the teacher and principal work together and the perceived level of trust that teachers feel toward the principal. Principal behaviors leading to greater trust are also examined.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Educational research has the propensity to revolve around the strategies of

teaching, methodology of concepts, and management of classrooms in K-12 settings.

However, since the principal of a school is the educational leader and, therefore, expected

to model effective instructional strategies as well as good communication with parents

and positive student interactions, principals and teachers must form a relationship built on

trust in order for schools to be truly successful. Trust is an understudied issue. If trust is

not present in principal/teacher relationships, it is to the detriment of the schools in which

they work. In the United States, a Harris poll in 2005 indicated that only 22% of

participants trust the media, 8% trust political parties, 27% trust the United States

government, and 12% trust big companies (Covey & Merrill, 2006). Covey and Merrill

(2006) also indicated only 36% of employees believe their leaders act with integrity.

With these statistics, administrators and school policy makers cannot afford to neglect the

aspect of trust. By measuring teacher perceptions of trustworthiness in principals,

researchers (Clark & Payne, 2006) can highlight and address leadership strengths and

weaknesses, thereby improving school success.

In schools across the country, the shift of principal roles is from principal as

manager to principal as instructional leader. For school communities to make good

 use of this new type of authority, the quality of relationships will play a major role (Bryk

& Schneider, 2002). In light of Florida's recent proposal to introduce a new teacher

evaluation system basing a percentage of teacher pay on student performance, the trust in

school administrators is more critical than before. The new evaluation system is based on

Danielson's (2007) model of enhancing professional teaching practices, defined by four

critical domains of the teaching practice including planning, classroom environment,

instructional practices, and professional responsibilities. The new evaluation system in

Florida requires administrators to observe every teacher in the building at least once a

year, a significant paradigm shift from the days of tenured teachers in Florida only

needing to be observed every 5 years when their teaching certificates were due for

renewal (Roberts, 2011). This first chapter addresses the background of the problem,

statement of the problem, statement of the purpose of the study, the research questions

asked in the study, significance of the study, the theoretical framework on which the

study is based, definition of terms, assumptions of the study, and limitations and

delimitations of the study.

Background of the Problem

With the increasing accountability expected from teachers, it is important for

principals to help teachers feel more supported to keep quality teachers in the classroom

(Rowland, 2008). Danielson (2007) suggests that the observation and evaluation process,

typically performed by the principal informing the teacher of strengths and weaknesses of

the lesson, should be more collaborative and that this collaboration is going to require

trust. Zimmerman (2003) notes the importance of trust in any principal/teacher

evaluative process, so now is the time for administrators to refine their relationship-

building skills. Daily interactions in schools need not be dominated by interpersonal

conflict, cynicism, and mistrust (Feltman, 2009); trust impacts schools every day of every year in every relationship and every communication encounter (Covey & Merrill, 2006).

Covey (1989), through his seven habits of highly effective people, has aided many business leaders in transforming themselves to encourage growth in the members of their organizations. Schools are no exception in the need for good leadership and willingness to build trust among stakeholders. Relationships need to be built in schools between teacher and student, teacher and teacher, teacher and parent, and teacher and principal for maximum effectiveness to take place. The relationship between principal and teacher is delicate in nature as the principal typically serves as the primary evaluator for the teacher's performance. For the teacher to hear what the principal has to say regarding performance, progress, goal-setting, and growth, there must be a relationship that allows for effective communication to take place. Teachers must believe the principal is fair and equitable in his or her evaluation of teachers' capabilities. Trust is a major factor in relationship building, just as distrust is a critical factor in the breakdown of relationships (Covey, 1989).

Covey and Merrill (2006) believe, contrary to myths about trust being slow to form, that nothing is as fast as the speed of trust. The good news is trust can be created where it is not currently present, but it can also be destroyed where it currently exists. Vodicka (2006) identifies the four elements of trust as (a) compassion, (b) consistency, (c) communication, and (d) competency. Compassion is the caring for other individuals which is central to a trusting relationship. Vodicka says consistency was prevalent in most of the definitions of trust but feels consistency itself was not enough to generate trust. Vodicka found communication to be important as well since leaders whom

teachers identified as being open found it was a strategy that bred trust. Competence

implies reputation and affiliation, but producing positive results is likely the best

determinant of competence. Feltman (2009) describes trust as taking a risk in exposing

oneself and being vulnerable to another person. The four distinct aspects of trust are

care, competence, reliability, and sincerity. Feltman describes care as a willingness to

show concern for another. Feltman defines competence as the ability level demonstrated

to others. Reliability connotes the trustworthiness of a person to do what he or she said

he or she would do (Feltman, 2009). Sincerity is also known as authenticity (Feltman,

2009).

Covey (1989) believes individuals form emotional bank accounts with every

encounter they have with another person who makes either a deposit or a withdrawal with

each meeting. If a principal and teacher have a good relationship, the principal is able to

share criticism with the teacher (a withdrawal) and still have enough money in the bank

to weather the withdrawal. If the relationship is uncertain or one in which the teacher

does not feel comfortable sharing his or her weaknesses or vulnerabilities, there is no

savings available from which to withdraw. Trust is easy to lose and hard to regain (Reina

& Reina, 2006). Indeed, Covey and Merrill (2006) believe that trust has the potential to

create success but that its power is so often underestimated.

How, then, do principals build up this trust and emotional bank account with

teachers? In this study, the researcher discusses those factors which teachers believe are

trust builders between teachers and principals. In addition, the researcher determines

whether principals' characters or competence matter more to teachers. Additionally, the

researcher explores the influence of the length of time a teacher works for a principal from the perspective of trust building.

Theoretical Framework of Trust

Covey and Merrill (2006) say trust takes time to gain but takes no time to lose. Trust is expensive in terms of cost to a school or other organization when it is lost. Trust is a matter of confidence, and if the constituents in the school do not have confidence in the leader or the school, then distrust and suspicion will reign. Covey and Merrill describe four core components of credibility: high integrity, good intent, excellent credentials, and good track record. They believe the first two, high integrity and good intent, make up the construct of character (Covey & Merrill, 2006). Good credentials and a good track record, on the other hand, make up the construct of competence. Covey and Merrill theorize all four, or rather both competence and character, are necessary to build trust. This study is the researcher's attempt to identify whether competence and character are equal ingredients for trust as Covey and Merrill (2006) suggest and what leads teachers to perceive their principals to be competent and character-filled.

Statement of the Problem

The relationship between principal and teacher is a critical one to study if teachers are expected to collaborate with their administrators on issues of best teaching practices, parent relations, and student success. If teachers are expected to improve in their job performance, particularly if their compensation is going to be based on effective teaching practices and student achievement, educators and administrators must establish a working relationship. Since the principal of a school is the educational leader and, therefore, expected to model effective instructional strategies, good communication with parents,

and positive student interactions, a relationship built on trust between principal and teacher must form. Trust within an organization such as a school aids in the success of the school and the stakeholders. It is, therefore, pertinent to examine the characteristics which foster the relationship of trust between principals and teachers. Specifically, as Covey and Merrill (2006) suggest in their theory of trust, character and competence have an equal impact in determining teachers' trust in principals. However, this researcher argues that one element may be more significant than is the other. Equally important is determining if the length of time the principal and teacher have worked together impacts the level of trust. Tyler and Kramer (1996) suggest trust in the workplace is an emerging social issue since levels of trust are often based on the actions of others.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to examine teachers' level of trust in principals in a mid-sized school district in Northwest Florida and whether the characteristics of competence and character impact the level of trust in an equal fashion as Covey and Merrill (2006) theorize. In addition, the researcher identifies certain principal behaviors that lead to a trusting relationship between teacher and principal. A final question in the study asks whether the factor of time a teacher works for a principal makes a difference in the level of trust felt for the principal. The purpose of the quantitative portion of the study is to determine whether competence or character contributes more to the total perception of trust in the principal. In addition, the researcher addresses whether there is a relationship between the length of time teachers and principals have worked together and the level of trust a teacher perceives in the principal. In the qualitative portion of the study, the researcher identifies those

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characteristics which help build a trusting relationship between principals and teachers. The aim of the mixed methods concurrent design is to explain which factors have an impact on the trust relationship between teachers and principals. Since the level of trust in schools affects the processes and structure of the schools themselves (Tyler & Kramer, 1996), this problem is an important one to study.

The purpose of this study is also to investigate those characteristics which help build the emotional bank account between principals and teachers. Areas to be explored include understanding how relationships between principals and teachers are formed and how teachers perceive trust in their administrators. Organizational trust is not limited to the school as an organization in which to study the importance of relationships, but the leader of an elementary, middle, or high school has the unique challenge of bridging the gap between groups of stakeholders in order to help children reach their maximum potential. Only through effective relationships between leaders and teachers, school and home, and even school and community members can true collaboration take place. The sense of trust between principal and teacher can positively affect change in teachers' growth and professional development.

Since the researcher uses many of Covey's (1989) seven habits as a framework, these seven habits need to be discussed, defined, and examined. Covey outlines seven habits which, when used in the workplace or even in personal relationships, can increase one's effectiveness. A paradigm shift or willingness to adapt to a major change in thinking is required to adopt these habits into one's current schema.

Research Questions

Based on the review of literature and the statement of the problem, the researcher

generated questions. The research questions include the following:

1. Is there a difference between teachers' average perceptions of principals'
   competence levels and their perceptions of principals' character levels when
   examining the overriding construct of trust?

2. Is there a relationship between the number of years the teacher and principal
   have worked together and the perceived level of trust a teacher feels for the
   principal?

3. What actions and behaviors do teachers perceive to be trust builders with the
   principal in their school?

4. What actions and behaviors do teachers perceive to be trust barriers with the
   principal in their school?

Significance of the Study

With state and local legislative changes, the teacher evaluation system in the state

of Florida is being redefined and reconfigured. During the 2011-2012 school year,

principals began observing teachers using the Danielson (2007) model for effective

teaching practices, which defines four critical domains of the teaching practice: planning,

the classroom environment, instructional practices, and professional responsibilities.

Since this evaluation is responsible in part for teachers' performance pay, it is

increasingly crucial to address the trust teachers feel for the principal in the school. The

relationship between teacher and administrator allows the teacher to trust the principal's

analysis of the observation and evaluation of the teacher. This study can lead to

improvements in principal preparation programs in order to better build trusting relationships (Rowland, 2008).

Assumptions

The major assumption of this study is that teachers will be honest in evaluating their level of trust in the principal. Another assumption is that teachers will take the time to complete the surveys, even though they will not be able to be directed to do so through e-mail. A final assumption in this study is the principals' willingness to help facilitate the survey notification distribution.

Limitations

The major limitation of this study is the use of ex post facto research to determine teachers' level of trust in principals. The use of ex post facto research, while very common in educational research, has a lack of generalization as it has occurred after the fact. Another limitation is the constraint not to use e-mail to notify Okaloosa County teachers of the link for Survey Monkey™ (n.d.). When the research study was approved, the board who approves research requests allowed the study to be conducted but recommended teacher e-mail not be the source of solicitation for participation. Instead, the researcher put a note in each teacher's box to identify the log-in and survey information on Survey Monkey™. The lack of convenience to complete the survey may have damaged the number of respondents.

Another limitation in studies on trust is the fear teachers may have of retribution and retaliation. The researcher in this study made every effort to avoid asking teachers to name their specific school for this very reason. However, the reliability of the study

depended on the cooperation of the respondents and the degree of honesty respondents expressed as they participated in the study (Lux, 1981).

Delimitations

While school districts would likely benefit from knowing which specific schools maintain the highest levels of trust between principals and teachers, the researcher of this study did not delve into specific levels for specific schools because of the need for guaranteed confidentiality of participants. Likewise, in-depth interviews with teachers would likely provide deeper substance but the researcher focused primarily on which factors contribute most toward the level of trust teachers feel for the principals in a midsized school district in Northwest Florida.

Definition of Terms

The following are definitions the researcher utilized in the dissertation on trust between principals and teachers.

Character. Character is a person's intention or integrity to do what is right in a given situation.

Competence. Competence is the ability to do what a person is supposed to do or is proposing to do (Feltman, 2009).

Emotional bank account. Covey (1989) created the metaphor of the emotional bank account to describe the inner workings of the relationship between two people. If a relationship of trust is established, a person can make a mistake and afford a withdrawal from the account without jeopardizing the fate of the entire relationship. Every positive encounter in the relationship, likewise, builds up a deposit (Life Training Online, n.d.).

Principal as instructional leader. The principal as instructional leader is a new and evolving role for the administrator of an elementary, middle, or high school. An instructional leader takes the lead in ensuring best practices are being used among the teachers and models the best practices for teachers.

Principal as manager. The traditional or former role of the principal was to be the manager and authority figure for the elementary, middle, and high school.

Relationship. The relationship between teacher and principal is defined as the interaction and trust between the two parties.

Trust. Tschannen-Moran (1998) defined trust as the willingness to be vulnerable to another person who is open, honest, reliable, and competent.

Trustbuilding. Trustbuilding is defined as the set of strategies or techniques which lead to the creation of trust (Kagy, 2010).

Chapter Summary

Since relationships and trust between principals and teachers are fundamental components of the operations of schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), it is incumbent upon school leaders to determine what level of trust exists in schools and to work to improve the current level of trust. The study on trust between principals and teachers allowed the researcher to determine if competence or character plays a larger role in the determination of overall trust teachers perceive in principals within one midsized county in Northwest Florida. In addition, the researcher solicited teacher input about the principal behaviors teachers feel most determine the level of trust they feel for the principal. The resulting behaviors were then categorized into themes. These behaviors were compiled into a list of best practices for administrative leadership classes and for

principals new to the field to learn what builds trust. Schools and universities offering

certification and courses in Educational Leadership may use the findings of this research

to enhance course offerings and administrative training for principals and other school

officials.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Emerson (1875/2001) said, "What you are stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary" (p. 80). Another way of viewing this insightful quotation is the acknowledgment that one's character and reputation matter more than a professed stance or a single set of words. Relationships are built on character, not a one-time communication.

Dewey (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) made an astute observation that a good elementary school is more like a family than a factory. For this reason, relationships are apt to be equally as important as test scores are to school success. Covey's (1989) seven habits have crossed organizational lines to not only create highly effective people but also to create highly effective leaders when habits are practiced with a high degree of fidelity by those leaders. Principals and teachers can benefit and grow from examining their own implementation of the seven habits, which include (a) being proactive, (b) beginning with the end in mind, (c) putting first things first, (d) thinking win-win, (e) seeking first to understand then to be understood, (f) synergizing, and (g) sharpening the saw (Covey, 1989). Also known as heart skills (Jahansoozi, 2006), these habits can be instrumental in aiding principals and teachers to build better relationships. Jahansoozi (2006) conducted a study in schools and found the need for relationships in order to have a high degree of organizational success.

In *Principle-Centered Leadership,* Covey (1990) calls out habits of good leaders that include being life-long learners, remaining service oriented, exuding positive energy, believing in others, and synergizing. No matter the business a leader is running, Covey advocates first leading from within before attempting to influence employees. Leaders need to begin changing from the inside-out (Covey, 1989). The introspection necessary to examine personal and professional belief statements can make the difference between management and leadership (McGregor, 1997). When administrators learn to lead from within, leaders can become more effective at leading others. Up until the 1990s, leaders recognized the importance relationships had in the organization and stakeholder success (Jahansoozi, 2006), but the actual process of relationship building was not taken as seriously until Covey (1989) pointed out many of the habits and skills necessary to form and maintain organizational relationships between leaders and stakeholders. The literature is scant in using Covey's seven habits as a framework for how to build and maintain relationships. The researcher in the study seeks to add to the body of literature in trust and relationships, using Covey's ideas as a framework.

Theoretical Framework

Before the 1980s, trust was considered a mediating factor in the study of the success of schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), but the topic is recently gaining enough importance to be studied on its own. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) concluded from their research on trust in schools five facets of trust exist, including benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. Bryk and Schneider (2002) found relational trust is founded both on beliefs and observable behaviors. What a teacher believes about their principal must be followed by action on the principal's part or the

teacher's belief may not be sustained. Covey and Merrill (2006) would agree since they theorize the concept of trust as being equal parts character and competence. Turner (2010) believes trust is an indicator which has the propensity to improve the success of an organization above all other factors. Karalis (2009) examined the relationships between teachers' trust in the principal and teachers' level of job satisfaction using the Organizational Climate Questionnaire, the Omnibus Trust Scale, and the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale. Karalis found a teacher's trust in the principal was significantly related to principal behaviors and also to teacher's job satisfaction. Two problems arise in the existing trust literature, according to Adams and Forsyth (2010), including the approach to the measurement of trust and the lack of relationship found between trust and school performance. The method by which trust is measured is a significant issue in the research. This research study measured teachers' trust using the Omnibus Trust Scale but left the study of the relationship between trust and school performance to a future research project.

Lack of trust leads to decreased turnover in school districts and is therefore important to study for the sake of preserving and retaining good employees. Bird, Wang, Watson, and Murray (2009) found the principal to be the key individual in establishing relational trust through listening to and acknowledging the concerns of other people as well as respecting the vulnerable nature of other people.

Character. Character is defined by Bryk and Schneider (2002) as listening to what people say and watching what they do. Integrity in character is a consistency between what people say and what they do. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) identified two theoretical perspectives of trust. One is relationship-based and focuses on the perceptions

of the relationship with the leader. Trust then becomes a social exchange process. The

second perspective of trust is character-based and focuses on the leader's character and

how followers allow themselves to become vulnerable based on the integrity and

openness of the leader. Character has an integral part in defining trust between two

people and is therefore closely intertwined with the building of relationships as well.

     Competence. Bryk and Schneider (2002) define competence as the execution of

an individual's formal role responsibilities. Feltman (2009) says competence is the

assessment others have in leaders' abilities to do what they are supposed to be doing or

what they propose to do. Competence is usually defined with regard to skill, knowledge,

resources, and the time to do a particular task. Negative judgments about principal

competence are likely to form when school buildings are not orderly or safe and when

people interact disrespectfully with one another. Since the reputation of a school is often

linked to the perception of outsiders, what is seen and heard within the school walls

contributes to the feeling of competence constituents have for the school leader. Mishra

(1996) found leaders were characterized by how much their followers trusted them to

make competent decisions. Lewicki and Bunker (1996) say knowledge-based trust is

grounded in a person's predictability. The better one person knows the other person, the

more accurately one can predict what the other will do. Competence, Turner (2010) said,

is a person's performance in a given set of skills, including cognitive, affective, and

psychomotor skills.

     Four core components of trust. Other models of trust have similar constructs

within the main tenet of trust. Reina and Reina (2006) have identified a model

encompassing three types of trust: trust of character, trust of disclosure, and trust of

capability. Their model is quite similar to Covey and Merrill's (2006) view that character and competence make up trust, but Reina and Reina have put a further focus on communication trust in an effort to highlight the importance of dialogue between two people in order to establish a mutual understanding and relationship. They also further define trust in character as contractual trust, as it involves following through with good intentions, keeping agreements, and remaining congruent in behavior.

Competence is an important component in building trust between two parties. Reina and Reina (2006) say competence trust involves skill and abilities, decision making, and other actions and behaviors. Mishra (1996) also theorized trust as a combination of four core components: competence, reliability, concern, and openness. The characteristics of competence and reliability fit into Covey and Merrill's (2006) own construct of competence and the characteristics of concern and openness fit well with Covey's construct of character, although Mishra places a bit more emphasis on the caring portion of the construct, which includes having the best interests of employees at heart. Noddings (2005) writes about the importance of caring in a relationship between two people and how dialogue accentuates one's belief in another's genuine caring nature.

The focus of several trust theories is on the idea of trust growing gradually over time, seemingly making the assumption that trust levels start out small and gradually increase (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998). Lewicki and Bunker (1996) posit that knowledge-based trust develops over a period of time as one accumulates trust building knowledge of another person. Others, however have been surprised to see how early trust levels exist (Kramer & Tyler, 1996). An important area explored was whether the length of time a teacher has worked for the principal has an effect on the level of trust

felt by the teacher. In the model by McKnight et al. (1998), the researchers propose reasons why trust may be high when employees have only just begun to work for the leader. They propose three research streams, including personality, type of institution, and cognition, which might explain the paradox of high initial trust. They suggest some people may simply have trusting personalities, while some institutions may inherently have a high level of loyalty and trust. One of the additional concepts of trust the researchers pose is the possibility of a trusting cognitive stance, in which people initially believe their leader is a well-meaning and reliable individual, a belief similar to innocent until proven guilty.

Trust theories often include aspects of risk taking in their construct, as Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) note in their research. Theorists devoted to the concept of risk taking often describe ways in which risky trust ventures can be avoided in relationships. Mayer et al. note that some studies have been done on legalistic ways for employees to minimize risk taking in relationships, but true relationship building needs to avoid legalistic stances in order to build a true trust between employees and their employers. If relationships in schools have digressed to the point of legal involvement, trust is likely not present in any significant form.

Since Rotter (1971) studied trust and the generalized expectations people tend to have of positive outcomes when dealing with other people in the 1970s, schools have come a long way in becoming places of relationships instead of simply places of business. According to Rotter, behavior can be predicted by its potential. In schools, teachers want to feel as though the principal's behavior is going to be predictable and the

administrator will ultimately support the teachers in their work with students and parents. This expectation makes up one aspect of trust.

Need for Trust and Relationships

There exists a desperate need, both business and human, for trust. Businesses need people to work in concert with each other in order to produce better results, lest much time get wasted on repairing conflicts. When trust is present, people are excited about what they do and with whom they are collaborating at work (Reina & Reina, 2006). Kramer and Tyler (1996) say people are motivated to maximize their personal gains and minimize personal losses in social interactions, an important endeavor in a school responsible for the lives and success of children.

Trust according to Covey. Covey (1989) proposes the idea of an emotional bank account as a way to foster the relationship between two people. The premise is that each relationship has a bank account. Every time one of the members of the relationship makes a connection or initiates communication, a deposit or withdrawal is made. The connection is of particular importance in the principal/teacher relationship as principals must observe, evaluate, and give feedback to each teacher who works in the school. With a healthy account in place, the principal can make deposits such as compliments, requests to model for other teachers, opportunities for growth, or even simple notes of thanks placed in the teacher's mailbox. Subsequently, when the need arises to give feedback to the teacher about issues such as parent complaints or worrisome test scores, there are enough funds in the emotional bank to allow the withdrawal not to diminish the entire relationship. If teachers are expected not just to hear what the principal has to say about the evaluation of the teacher's instructional practices but also to be active participants in

the instructional growth of the teaching practices in the school, a give and take of communication and relationship are going to be necessary.

Covey and Merrill (2006) felt so strongly about the aspect of relationship and trust, they wrote an entire book on it, entitled *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*. In this book, Covey and Merrill define four core components of trust: integrity, good intentions, capabilities, and results. The first two cores of trust make up the construct of character and the remaining two make up Covey and Merrill's definition of competence. Only through the combination of all four cores, or rather both constructs of character and competence, do Covey and Merrill theorize true trust can be achieved. Deutsch (2009) also found that trust is crucial to relationship building but pointed out leaders must first synchronize their own beliefs and principles in order to increase their effectiveness with their employees (Birrell, Ostlund, & Egan, 1998). Covey (1990) agrees, noting trustworthiness must be sought at personal as well as interpersonal levels. Dissatisfaction among employees all over the world is increasing. J. Tate (2003) suggests and states many leaders did not want to participate in the study on trust and distrust for fear of hearing what employees might say about them regarding trustworthiness. Not asking how teachers feel about their leaders only denies the existence of potential problems and the unwillingness to deal with issues the teacher faces. The balancing act, therefore, is to find the relationship between leaders and followers which will help the leaders affect positive change in others (Rothenberger, 2008). If trust is not present, the entire relationship is tainted and, therefore, change will not occur.

Educational mandates. Glover (2007) found that as more education mandates are forced upon educators, teachers feel less empowered. More of the teachers' daily work fades out of their control, and teachers become disheartened. Tschannen-Moran (2004) noted the failure to meet increasing expectations of stakeholders has damaged the trust found in schools. One of the main jobs of a principal is to ensure that all voices are heard. Teachers need to feel their concerns are heard, whether action is able to be taken or not. Principals must find characteristics within themselves that encourage teachers to be risk-takers in their teaching and professional growth. Instructional leaders must also be willing to employ certain communication strategies that allow teachers to feel as though their voices are being heard. Yet, teachers fear possible disclosure and, therefore, even refrain from participating in studies designed to determine teacher trust (Blase & Blase, 2006). If teachers cannot feel comfortable enough to participate in a study on trust, the aspect of trust certainly must not be present in those schools. Turner (2010) noted the displacement of trust creates barriers in the relationship between leaders and employees.

Two questions noted by Kramer and Tyler (1996) are important to address in assessing the level of trust in organizations. First, is the level of trust declining in organizations? Next, can trust be rebuilt once it is seemingly lost? Kramer and Tyler believe trust is built on mental accounts, based on the perceived history of trust-related behaviors with another person. These mental accounts are similar to Covey's (1989) emotional bank account.

Trust

A working definition of trust is necessary in order to accurately measure teacher

trust in principals. Defining trust is a cumbersome task but is important if the researcher

will be using the construct of trust in the study. In addition, different types of trust must

be examined, compared, and contrasted.

Definitions. Although humans know intuitively what it means to trust, the act of

articulating an exact definition is not simple (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Gambetta

(2000) noted that scholars mention trust in passing as a major ingredient of social

interaction, but those same scholars tend to move past trust to deal with matters more

easily definable. Indeed, Mayer et al. (1995) say clarity is lacking in most definitions of

trust. While definitions may be difficult, defining trust is imperative. Rotter (1967)

identified trust as a necessary ingredient to human learning.

Trust is complex and multifaceted (J. Jones, 2007). Because of this complexity

and the need to establish common ground, it is important to find a general definition and

an agreement on the constructs of trust. Trust is an emotionally charged topic meaning

different things in different situations (Reina & Reina, 2006). Making the definition

more concrete is one of the necessary challenges of such an elusive concept. In an effort

to define trust, one commonality in trust definitions and constructs was found to be the

willingness to take risks with the trusted individual (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust

relationships are based upon interdependence (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003), which is

a mutual respect and need for another person. This mutual reliance is only possible if

there are no negative outstanding underpinnings existing in the relationship, thus paving

the way for risk taking. Turner (2010) said trust is an individual's assurance in another's

intentions and motives as well as the belief in the authenticity of communication through another's words. Feltman (2009) defines trust as choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions. When one individual trusts another person, what the individual makes vulnerable could be something tangible such as money or a goal, but it could be less tangible such as a belief or even the individual's well-being. Allowing vulnerability is the true key to trust. Trust is rooted in the ongoing and day-to-day social interactions among teachers and principals and is not defined by a one-time event or occurrence. Trust must be built, maintained, and preserved, which takes extensive work and a willingness by both parties.

Relational trust. Kagy (2010) studied relational trust and investigated commonalities and differences between definitions of trust by teachers and administrators. A multiple case study design was used and the most commonly used meaning of trust included the existence of a strong relationship between teacher and principal. It is difficult, therefore, to talk about trust without also addressing distrust and the breakdown of relationships. Defining betrayal, the opposite of trust, is likely a helpful venture as well, as it includes words such as distrust, breakdown, and disappointment in its definitions. Bryk and Schneider (2002) note that individuals withdraw their trust when expectations are not met, thereby weakening the relationship and sometimes actually severing ties completely. Feltman (2009) says the primary disaster of the presence of distrust in an organization is how hard people feel they must work to protect themselves. The act of employees protecting themselves ultimately gets in the way of their ability to be effective at work. In other words, if a teacher is so busy being guarded about their own teaching practices because of distrust in the school

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administrator the very guardedness can hinder the teacher's ability to simply teach the way they inherently know they should within the confines of the classroom. People who are constantly on their guard and wary of their supervisors can hardly be as productive as those who operate in a worry-free environment.

Other definitions of trust include one party's willingness to be open and vulnerable to another party based on the belief the other party is competent, concerned, and reliable (Mishra, 1996). Clark and Payne (2006) stated the difficulty in defining trust has to do with the diversity in trust construct focus and which referents people apply to leadership. How can a definition of trust in school administrators be accurately defined if there is a lack of consistency in what people value as trust building behaviors, actions, and characteristics? The researcher of this study aims to clarify the determining characteristics of trust in administrators.

Adams and Forsyth (2010) felt trust between two people is based on cognitive discernment of one person's intentions to act in a manner consistent with what is expected from the other. A teacher, for example, must believe their administrator is acting ethically in order to place trust in his or her abilities to lead the school. It is, then, the expectations of one and the perceived intentions of another that help make up the true definition of trust.

Constructs of trust. Researchers have included in trust definitions the constructs of confidence and the willingness to risk vulnerability (J. Jones, 2007). Reina and Reina (2006) expressed concern from their own dissertations about the unclear definition of trust. They interviewed leaders in an effort to better determine what the leaders felt trust meant and the behaviors they felt built trust. Turner (2010) said trust is an expectation

that others will not act opportunistically and will be honest, reliable and fair with other people. Bryk and Schneider (2002) posited that trustworthiness is about the degree to which parties meet their respective obligations to others around them. In the case of the school administrator, the stakeholders must feel the principal is meeting the obligations they have to students, parents, staff, and community members.

In choosing to trust someone, each party evaluates the benefits of the relationship based on past encounters, assuming some history has taken place. Creed and Miles (1996) believe trust is the essential factor permitting all forms of risk taking in a social system to take place. Since interactive systems inherently rely on all members of the system to function correctly, one flawed piece of the system could result in breakdown of the entire school or organization. Trust helps make the system seamless. Creed and Miles believe trust arises from the personal experience of recurring exchanges or the expectations based on reputation. Turner (2010) said trust is the social glue uniting organizations rather than dividing them. Ogens (2008) acknowledged the importance of trust in relationships since the decline of trust so devastatingly deteriorates the relationship. Ogens used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the Omnibus Trust Scale for Trust to investigate the relationship between leadership practices and trust. Ogens found a positive relationship between certain leadership practices and a higher level of trust but Ogens recognized the need for continued study in this domain.

Commonalities and differences among definitions. Kagy (2010) explored commonalities and differences that existed in the meanings and within the construct of relational trust. Trust for administrators was found to equate with support, care, and concern for the teachers. Trust was found to be influenced by specific behaviors of the

principal. Some behaviors of the principal impacted the relationship between teacher and

principal more than other behaviors. Vodicka (2006) studied trust and, as a former

principal who adhered to standards-based practices, believed trust is the most important

element in developing learning communities. The effectiveness of professional learning

communities among teachers is inherently if not purposefully reliant upon a strong

trusting relationship among members of the community. Vodicka felt trust was highly

contingent upon the behaviors of the principal in the school and found that teachers

showed greater levels of citizenship behavior in situations in which higher levels of

teacher trust for the principal were found. In other words, when teachers trust their

principal, teacher citizenship improves. Therefore, trust is impacted by certain principal

behaviors and in turn impacts certain teacher behaviors, making trust an increasingly

important aspect of school life to study.

Emotional Bank Account

Covey (1989) proposes the idea of an emotional bank account as a way to foster

the relationship between two people. The premise is that each relationship has a bank

account. Each time we make a connection or communicate with another person, we

either make a deposit or make a withdrawal from the account we have established. This

connection is of particular importance in the principal/teacher relationship as principals

must observe, evaluate, and give feedback to each teacher who works in the school. With

a healthy account in place, the principal can make deposits such as compliments, requests

to model for other teachers, opportunities for growth, and other positively perceived

encounters. Subsequently, when the need arises to give feedback to the teacher about less

positive subjects such as parent complaints or continued discipline concerns, there are

enough funds in the emotional bank account to allow the withdrawal to not diminish the entire relationship.

Arneson (2011) suggests ways in which a principal can enhance the emotional bank account, including making the time to talk privately with teachers instead of catching them in the hallway. In addition, weighing words before giving criticism can enhance the relationship. While certain conversations about student data and parental concerns must absolutely take place and cannot be avoided, making time for courageous conversations and seeking first to understand the teacher perspective will go a long way to maintaining and building relationships.

Deposits. Covey (Life Training Online, n.d.) proposed six major ways to make deposits into someone's emotional bank account, including understanding the person, keeping commitments, clarifying expectations, paying attention to the little things, showing personal integrity, and apologizing when a withdrawal is accidentally made. Based on the work of Covey, Life Training Online (n.d.) believes taking personal responsibility in leadership will have positive effects in building the relationships so desperately needed in schools. Bryk and Schneider (2003) found, with relational trust, each party maintains an understanding of what their own obligations are supposed to be, and each party holds some expectations of what the other person's obligations should be. In other words, while principals hold certain expectations for their faculty members, teachers have expectations of their principal as well. For a school to operate successfully, agreement must be reached among parties (teachers and principals) about the roles each can and should assume. Tasdan and Yalcin (2010) explored the relationship between the level of teachers' support and the trust they felt for the principal. The researchers

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concluded a medium level positive correlation exists between perceived social support and organizational trust.

Covey and Merrill (2006) wrote about the aspect of trust in relationships, feeling it is the most important component to maintaining the relationship. Covey's father, Covey (1990) noted that trustworthiness must be sought at personal as well as interpersonal levels, indicating the need for people to first identify those aspects of trustworthiness and character internally before seeking it out in other people. In relationships in schools, if trust is not present, the entire relationship will be marred.

The relationship between trust and betrayal in the workplace is difficult to understand but crucial to study in order to maintain successful schools (Reina & Reina, 2006). Reina and Reina identified concrete definitions of trust and their book on trust is a result of the research they have conducted on trust in various aspects of society.

Empowering teachers is important when improvement of teacher practices is at stake. As teacher evaluation becomes one of the pivotal points in teacher compensation and pay for performance, teachers must feel they have a voice and feel comfortable expressing concerns about their own practices. One of the main jobs of a principal is to ensure that voices of all stakeholders are heard. Glover (2007) examined three styles of communication commonly employed between principals and teachers, including dialogue, discussion, and debate but found debate to be the method most often used. The inherent problem in the debate method is the unfair power advantage a principal has in debating with teachers. While principals may say teachers are welcome to disagree, the power differential can prohibit such a practice from actually occurring. Many traditional teacher evaluation systems have been built on the practice of principals observing

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teachers then calling the teacher to the principal's office to hear what the teacher did correctly and incorrectly during the observation. This method is decidedly one sided in nature. Danielson's (2007) model proposes to make the evaluation of teaching practices more of a collaborative effort. Danielson suggests a collective responsibility practice, in which teachers share the burden of proof in acknowledging which practices they feel most competent in employing, recognizing which practices need improvement, and making suggestions for how the improvements could and should be made.

Personal and interpersonal trust. Principals must find characteristics within themselves to encourage teachers to be risk-takers in their teaching and professional growth. Instructional leaders must also be willing to employ certain communication strategies which will allow teachers to feel as though their voices are being heard. Teachers often fear retaliation if they participate in research studies aimed at identifying aspects of trust in relationships. Therefore, many teachers abstain from participating (Blase & Blase, 2006). The researcher of this study on trust must acknowledge the possibility of lessened participation because of fear of retaliation by administration.

Yavuz and Bas (2010) interviewed teachers in Turkey to find their perceptions on trust and communication with principals. The most common theme heard from the Turkish teachers, not surprisingly, was the need for principals to listen to teachers. If teachers do not feel their voices are being heard, Yavuz and Bas found teachers may abandon the profession, may complain to the union (or another entity) about their voices not being heard, or may shut themselves in their classroom to operate as an independent. All of those reactions would be counter-productive, but particularly the notion of exclusion from others is counter-productive to the best teaching practice of sharing

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knowledge between professionals. Only sharing ideas and knowledge will allow

educators to grow in the teaching profession. The relationship between teacher and

principal, therefore, is one of necessity rather than simply one of luxury.

Trust and Leadership

A good leader, according to Turner (2010), walks the talk, meaning they show

consistency between their words and their actions. Effective leaders are often

characterized by how willingly their followers trust them to make competent decisions.

Teachers may like a principal and think they have good intentions, but if there is not a

feeling of competence for the leader or a confidence the principal can lead teachers

through difficult times or to the next level of school achievement, simply thinking

someone is nice will not likely matter for long (Mishra, 1996). The literature on

leadership is replete with studies showing the importance of the principal providing

leadership for schools (Walsh, 2005). Marzano (2003) summarized effective leadership

by saying principals should monitor school progress, communicate with staff, create safe

places to learn, maintain a clear vision and direction for the school, and develop an

awareness of what quality instruction looks like. This style of leading is a very different

view of school leadership than the traditional role of principal as manager of the school

grounds and budget. In times of increased accountability and focus on results, managing

school grounds and making sure there is enough money to buy supplies is simply not

enough to run an achieving school.

Leadership and school reform. In response to the growing need for school

reform because of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (National Conference

on State Legislatures, 2006), the role of the principal is changing and must continue to

further evolve. School reform demands a culture of collaboration and relationships

between school leaders and all stakeholders (Sergiovanni, 1995) and this collaboration

will require building and maintaining relationships. Bryk and Schneider (2003) said trust

will be the uniting feature for school reform and, therefore, is an important concept to

study.

R. Jones (2007) found a need for placing greater emphasis on leadership as a

critical role for effectively changing how schools are led. Rothenberger (2008) found

leadership behavior within an organization could be classified in terms of the power of

relationships between leaders and employees. Leaders who remain in control by

wielding their power over employees in the school will likely be viewed quite differently

than leaders who gain the trust and mutual understanding of the stakeholders in the

school. Shared leadership breeds shared relationships. Farmer (2010) said the

importance of leadership behaviors was found to have a significant impact on teachers'

attitudes towards teaching. Teachers were more likely to have better degrees of self-

efficacy and intrinsic motivation when teachers perceived their principals to value core

competencies such as reflection, inquiry, instructional leadership, and learning

communities.

Types of leadership. Various types of administrative leadership have differing

effects on schools. Transformational leadership, shared leadership, and servant

leadership are defined and discussed in the following sections.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is about creating and

building a common interest among all stakeholders in the school (Leithwood, 1992).

Inconsistencies in behaviors among principals will likely diminish trust in leadership

(Bryk & Schneider, 2002) and will create counter-productivity in schools. Covey (1990) indicated the need for good leadership in transforming stakeholders since the act of moving others towards a goal is contingent upon effectual leadership. Another form of leadership is moral leadership (Leithwood, 1992), which has to do with the values and ethics of principals. Marzano (2003) also said effective leaders are willing to listen to divergent opinions from staff and are willing to trust subordinates. Recognizing the value of relationship building is an imperative leadership characteristic (Dabney, 2008). Peak (1995) found the need for principals to identify personal and professional mission statements in an effort to learn to lead oneself before attempting to lead others. Transformational leadership, then, affects change within oneself before changing others in the organization.

If school leaders are motivated by high test scores alone and neglect trust and building relationships, the climate of the school can suffer. The leader must be viewed by the constituents as trustworthy in order to create and maintain a successful school (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Rowland (2008) examined whether the morale of teachers was related to the actions of the school principal. Rowland said principals are not able to manage their schools without first learning how to lead the people in the school. When leaders are ethical and unselfish, the trust felt in schools will not be eroded (Dabney, 2008). Tschannen-Moran (2004) reported that trustworthy leaders are at the heart of successful schools. It is the responsibility of the effective principal to build and foster positive relationships with teachers (Dabney, 2008). Trustworthy leaders keep constituents well-informed and are therefore kept well-informed themselves. Mutual sharing of information benefits both parties. Leaders who are willing to share

information with their stakeholders know the perspectives of their people because people trust them and there is no need for secrets (Reina & Reina, 2006). Clark and Payne (2006) identified specific ways in which organizational leaders can develop trust in their own places of employment and focused their study on the characteristics of the trusted leader. The researcher of this study on trust also seeks to identify specific behaviors and characteristics of the trusted principal in order to add to the body of literature for aspiring administrators.

Shared leadership. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) studied the effect of shared leadership, mutual trust, and the use of professional learning communities on teachers' classroom instructional practices. Trust and shared leadership had been selected as variables likely to have the biggest impact on the instructional practices of classroom teachers. Surprisingly, the results indicated trust and shared leadership had insignificant effect on the classroom practices of the teacher. However, the researchers found that the use of professional learning communities had a positive effect on the classroom practices of the teacher. Perhaps when teachers are allowed to grow professionally in ways that satisfy their individual and collective needs, the classroom practices of the teachers grow as well.

Servant leadership. Black (2010) conducted a research study on servant leadership, attempting to determine whether this type of leadership correlated with school climate. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher gave two instruments to a random sample of 231 teachers and 15 principals in Catholic schools. Following the surveys, focus group interviews were conducted. The researcher found a positive correlation between servant leadership and school climate in the results of the data.

Successful principals (J. Tate, 2003) are successful because they are able to sort out and make sense of the disorder they face. True leaders are able to do this on an ongoing basis and not just as a one-time occurrence. J. Tate (2003) explored the ways effective school principals use their listening skills in conversations with teachers, noting that principals who allow teachers' voices to be heard are more likely to be trusted and respected.

If studies continue to be done on the effective qualities of trust building principals, university professional preparation programs will be better equipped to train aspiring administrators and school districts will be better equipped to hire effective administrators (Bird et al., 2009). The practice of adding trust and communication to educational leadership programs should only have a positive effect on the culture of schools.

Behaviors Related to Trust

Certain principal behaviors, particularly communication and listening skills, have an impact on teacher trust in the leader of the school. These will be explored in the next section.

Communication. Turner (2010) suggests communication is a cooperative process between two individuals with an exchange and sequence of thoughts, feelings, or ideas toward a mutual goal or direction. Communication can considerably improve trust when leaders choose to be open to employees. Conversely, employees can be incredibly resentful when management remains silent as rumors surface.

Trust is inextricably linked to communication and leadership (Mayer et al., 1995), indicating good leadership may be because of good communication, or perhaps

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good communication between leaders and employees comes from effective leadership. Noddings (2005) said that a fundamental component of caring is open-ended communication allowing for both parties to speak, both parties to listen, and neither party knowing from the outset the end result of the conversation. The open-ended nature of communication is particularly important between teachers and principals, as teachers need to feel the direction of the conversation with the principal is not already predetermined.

Communicating expectations and information pertinent to job completion is also important to trust, as Reina and Reina (2006) point out the importance of giving employees the information they need to do their jobs. They also point out several other behaviors related to trust, such as allowing people to make decisions, seeking others' input, and helping other people learn skills. Bies and Tripp (1996) identify actions that violate trust, including violating the rules, changing the rules after the fact, breaking promises, stealing of ideas, criticizing, and accusing of unfair treatment. Many of these trust barriers include inappropriate or ill-fated communication.

In McGregor's (1960) book about the human side of business, he says mutual trust is intricately intertwined with good communication. As a social psychologist, McGregor did extensive research about relationships and interactions in the workplace. Without open communication, McGregor posits, trust will be severely limited; and likewise, without trust, open communication will be next to impossible. Regarding communication, a further question to explore is whether trust impacts communication more or communication impacts trust more.

Hall (2006) researched trust-building behaviors of a middle school principal and certain behaviors were identified prominently in promoting trust and relationships with teachers in the school. One of the main categories of behaviors was found to be in the communicative category, including openness, credibility, visibility and confidentiality. Brimhall (2010) studied the lack of trust between faculty and principal, faculty and client, and faculty and colleague in secondary schools. Brimhall conducted a quantitative study to determine the relationship between administrative communicator styles and level of perceived trust. Respondents completed the Communicator Style Measure and the Omnibus Trust Scale. Brimhall found a relationship between communicator styles and trust levels for principals. Specifically, Brimhall found a significant difference among communicator styles in terms of influence on trust for principals and colleagues.

Communication increases trust. Turner (2010) said good communication instilled trust in leaders because communication and trust allow the employees in organizations to offer input without feeling inferior to the leaders in the school. Although there is an inherent power differential between leaders of the school and the teachers employed therein, the difference need not imply one role is less important than the other.

Turner (2010) said the investigation of the relationship between trust behaviors of leaders and the organizational trust perceived by employees can play a key role for other organizations undergoing change. Information gleaned from trust studies could impact the training and hiring practices in organizations across the country. Kagy (2010) purported to find which behaviors of principals either promoted or hindered trust based on the insights of 21 teachers.

Listening skills. J. Tate (2003) explored the ways in which elementary school principals use their listening skills with teachers. The importance of communication skills and listening were highlighted in this study using quantitative and qualitative data. T. Tate (2003) said that perhaps more important than listening to employees is the communication of understanding which takes place between leader and workers. Glover (2007) said teachers who see their principal as one who does not listen will quit communicating at all or will have an overall negative view of the principal's competence and character. Noddings (2005) expressed the need for effective dialogue to permit safe disclosure in a comfortable setting, making possible a fair exchange of ideas between two parties.

Trust and Student Achievement

In 2001, United States Congress passed NCLB (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2006) in response to an outcry for school reform and more quantifiable standards for academic excellence. Although social trust in schools has emerged in studies as a key feature in improving schools, systematic research in this area is relatively new (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Bryk and Schneider (2002) agree the personal dynamics among teacher and principals affect attendance and achievement. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) said the leadership of the principal is a key factor in supporting student achievement. Teachers in this study were surveyed and the presence of shared leadership was found to be a factor in strong schools.

Walsh (2005) conducted research in North Carolina Title 1 schools. Teachers in participating schools made it clear in open-ended interviews how much the relationship with the principal mattered to their teaching practices and their job satisfaction. Five

themes common among positive principal-teacher relationships included a visible

principal, a supportive environment, resolution of conflicts, strong collegial environment,

and a caring principal. The previous themes emerged from the data analyses of the

teacher interviews. These positive relationships with administrators affected student

achievement. R. Jones (2007) said there is a need for continued improvement demanded

by these high standards of accountability. On the other hand, R. Jones used Hoy and

Tschannen-Moran's (2003) levels of trust to measure whether teacher levels of trust in

the principal had an impact on student achievement, as measured by the Texas

Standardized Achievement Test. Descriptive statistics revealed a lower than average

level of trust in the principal in the school, but there did not seem to be a correlation to

student achievement. The difference in results of studies in achievement and trust

indicate a need for further research in this area.

While this particular research study does not specifically address whether or not

trust impacts achievement, the researcher proposes the notion that improved trust

between teachers and principals could have an indirect effect on student achievement if

trust behaviors indicate an increase in teacher morale and ultimately improved classroom

practices. Student achievement could, therefore, be improved by increased trust between

teachers and principals.

Measuring Trust

Measuring trust is difficult but worthy of the effort to assist organizations in

determining where healthy levels of trust exist and where there are gaps and weakened

areas (Reina & Reina, 2006). Kagy (2010) used an Omnibus Trust Scale to measure

trust. The Omnibus Trust Scale was given to survey teachers about what principals could

do to increase trust between teachers and principals. The Omnibus Trust Scale is a 26-item Likert-scaled instrument containing questions about trust. The scale is split into questions concerning principals, teachers, and students. Kagy determined communication, not surprisingly, to be one of the most critical factors in building trust. Additionally, confidentiality and engagement were high-ranking survey items among the teacher participants. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) identified five important factors of trust, including benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. Reliability and competence seem to align with Covey and Merrill's (2006) construct of general competence, while honesty, benevolence and, possibly, openness align more with the tenet of character.

Abrams (1996) explored the construct of faculty trust in administrators and used Blumberg's 10 dimensions of trust. Abrams found Blumberg's trust scale to be highly reliable but the scale focuses on innovation in the classroom. Abrams found teachers in the sample trusting of principals for the most part, although female teachers were more likely to trust principals than the male teachers in the school. Using the demographics requested in this current research study on trust, the researcher in this dissertation on trust disaggregated the data to determine whether gender of the principal is a factor in trust or even a factor in being trusted.

If teachers are to follow principals' leadership, they must trust the leaders for whom they work. In order for trust to occur, teachers must believe principals to be authentic, according to Bird et al. (2009). Authenticity of the principal is built through confidence, optimism, resilience, and transparency. Authentic leaders are people who know who they are and who know what they believe and most importantly who act on

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those beliefs while interacting with the teachers in their schools. In other words, intention to do good work is not enough to build a relationship of trust. Instead, actions built upon good faith must also follow. A strong correlation in Bird et al.'s study was found between authenticity of the principal and trust between principal and teachers. In addition, authenticity of the principal was found to be highly positively related to teacher engagement levels. Bird et al. attributed the struggle to maintain trust to demands for high performance among student achievement and standardized test scores. Bird et al.'s population included teachers and principals from K-12 public schools in a district in the Southeastern United States. Principals completed surveys in person and teachers responded to online surveys. The number of years the teacher worked with the principal was indicated through the survey. Bird et al. also noted the teachers' answers to questions were much more internally consistent than were the principals' answers.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) developed their own scale to identify the level of trust teachers have for their principal. The questions include areas such as consistency, compassion, communication, and competence. Questions were specifically about the principal's concern for the welfare of teachers, the perception of principal as effective manager in the school, the perception of the principal's confidence in teachers' abilities, and respect for and from the principal.

In discussing skilled facilitation and the group effectiveness model, Schwarz, Davidson, Carlson, and McKinney (2005) acknowledged the question they receive the most is questioning why trust is not listed as a part of their group effectiveness model. The answer they give is that trust is actually not a piece of a model built into a program or technique or strategy. Instead, they suggest trust is the resulting outcome of effective

leadership behavior. Therefore, the importance of asking teachers which principal behaviors most likely to increase their trust in the principal at their school is emphasized. Or perhaps just as important an issue is what principal behaviors decrease the trust teachers feel for their school administrator. More research should likely be done in the area of communication and trust to determine if time working together might alone enhance the trust between principals and teachers.

The Organizational Trust Inventory (OTI; Cummings & Bromiley, 1996) was considered for use in this research project. The OTI was developed on a multidimensional definition of trust. The definition encompasses the following three parts: (a) belief in a person's good-faith efforts to behave in line with commitments, (b) belief in an individual's honesty in negotiations and interactions, and (c) belief that a person will not take unfair advantage of another if the opportunity presents itself. The OTI is a 62-item Likert scale inventory, as opposed to the 26 items on the Omnibus Trust Scale. The multidimensional definition approach is consistent with Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (2003) construction of the Omnibus Trust Scale. Using the OTI, Turner (2010) surveyed 357 employees and found it to be the most appropriate data collection tool to determine trust within the organization. It was set up using SurveyMonkey™. The results of the study indicated low levels of organizational trust throughout the division of a telecommunications company. Leadership had low organizational trust between leadership and employees and low trust between men and women. Turner said the implications were the need for better communication and enhanced leadership skills.

One way to find out about trust is to host focus groups in which teachers are invited to attend. These groups can provide an in-depth understanding of how the

principal manifests relational trust (Dabney, 2008). The strategy of conducting focus groups was considered in garnering participation in such a group from all schools in this researcher's study. All teachers would be invited to attend. This methodology was rejected, however, in respect for the confidentiality and privacy of the teachers in the school district in which the study would be conducted. Hall (2006) noted the challenge in ensuring honest feedback from teachers who might feel their participation in such a forum could cause retaliation and retribution from their building administrator. Dabney (2008) cited the existing power structures in place in focus groups as being a possible deterrent to teachers expressing their ideas to the full extent. Among participants in a focus group, social interactions allow for power relations to surface among participants. The use of focus groups may have its advantages but the limitations outweighed the possible benefits in this case. Principal retaliation notwithstanding, research subjects in focus groups may not be honest in fear of their feelings being taken out of context by other teacher participants.

A case study was also considered as a proposed method of research. Dabney (2008) used the case study method in a dissertation on trust. The typical criticism of a case study is the lack of generalizability, since cases under scrutiny are not always representative of all similar cases. However, the case study could possibly provide much needed information to school administrators in discerning how they are actually perceived by teachers in their schools.

A grounded theory of social trust was constructed by Bryk and Schneider (2002). As they worked through their research on trust, they developed certain beliefs about the

construct of trust itself. A grounded theory was considered for this research study as well but rejected because of the time constraints.

Chapter Summary

Communication and trust are essential in any relationship, particularly relationships in which a leader must evaluate and critique employees. While many teachers in the United States and in other countries, as well, express distrust for the principals for whom they work, solutions are available. Professional development for principals should necessarily include continued training in communication and listening skills, simplistic though these topics sound. In addition, more research should be done in determining which behaviors and characteristics principals display which lead to increased trust between administrators and teachers. Those behaviors should then be explicitly taught to school leaders through educational leadership programs in universities. Finally, educational leaders should role-model effective communication skills for the teachers if they expect good communication between teachers and parents. Role-modeling the type of communication leaders expect their employees to use is an important component to being an active instructional leader in schools (Arneson, 2011).

For schools to reach maximum effectiveness, communication and trust between principals and teachers must improve. An ancient Chinese proverb says, "If you want a year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want ten years of prosperity, grow trees. If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow people" (as cited in Richards, 2009, p. 191). Growing people also means growing ourselves and the relationships leaders foster. If school leaders want to make relationships with teachers successful, they must make the relationships a priority and not leave the consequences to chance. Specific actions and

behaviors will result in increased trust between the two parties. In the time of increased

accountability, trust is a recurring theme in schools. If principals are going to evaluate

teachers and teacher pay is based on that evaluation, it is incumbent upon the principals

to ensure everything they do is met with fidelity and ensures the building, not breaking

down, of relationships.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Trust is a necessary ingredient in the school relationship between teacher and principal. The lack of trust in organizations keeps schools from reaching maximum effectiveness. Particularly in a time in which teacher pay is tied in part to the principal observation and evaluation, a high level of trust between teacher and administrator is desired. The primary goal in this research study was to determine from teachers which factor they consider most crucial in developing trust and an emotional bank account with their building administrator. Three of the difficulties hindering research on the subject of trust have been the lack of differentiation between factors contributing to trust, the lack of clarity in the definition of trust, and the resulting outcomes of trust (Mayer et al., 1995). Discovering what builds trust will assist educational leadership programs in growing new principals and other school leaders. This knowledge can also aid existing principals in learning which qualities teachers value in a trusting relationship with their administrators. Survey data were used to determine the answer to this question. A secondary goal was to determine through demographic data which factors are related to principal trust, including gender or number of years the teacher has worked for the principal. Open-ended questions further enhance answers from teacher participants. Finally, an adjunct goal of the research was to compile a list of effective teaching practices from which school principals can learn and gain insight about their own practices.

Research Design and Methodology

The dissertation about teacher perception of trust in principals including the question of whether number of years working together impacts the amount of trust teachers feel for their principals is a mixed methods study. The study was conducted using a convergent parallel design, in which open-ended questions were asked at the conclusion of a quantitative survey to all teachers. Plano Clark and Creswell (2011) suggest a convergent parallel research design when the overall purpose is to obtain different but complementary data on one topic. The benefit to using the convergent parallel design is the efficiency of time. In this case, a need exists in the current literature on trust to determine which factors teachers perceive as trust enhancers in the principal/teacher relationship. A convergent parallel design allowed the researcher to develop a complete understanding of the issue of trust by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

Intended outcomes included the level of perceived trust by the teacher in the principal. The independent variables were (a) the principal characteristics (namely character and competence) as perceived by the teacher, (b) other behaviors or characteristics the teachers named in the qualitative section of the questionnaire, and (c) the length of time a teacher has worked for a principal. The dependent variable in this study was the level of trust a teacher perceives for the principal.

The survey results were intended to answer questions of trust while the open-ended questions allowed teachers to express specific opinions about the behaviors principals exhibit which lead to a trusting relationship. Plano Clark and Creswell (2011) suggest a convergent parallel design involves gathering quantitative data while

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simultaneously soliciting answers to the qualitative portion. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods maximized the strengths from the two methodologies into one study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that while quantitative data assist the researcher in seeking to limit observer interaction with subjects, the qualitative researcher and respondents have an impact on one another. Turner (2010) suggested a quantitative research design was appropriate for describing trends or explaining relationships among variables and to see if two or more variables were related to each other.

Setting and Participants

The district in which the study was conducted is a medium-sized school district in Northwest Florida. The district is comprised of 24 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 4 high schools in the county, all of which had one principal. It is important to note, unlike most other school districts in the State of Florida, none of the elementary schools had assistant principals, so the principal was the sole evaluator, observer, and human resources manager for the elementary schools. All the school district's middle schools and high schools, however, did have assistant principals. This difference in dynamics may have played a role in the relationships between teachers and administrators in schools.

There were approximately 1,659 teachers in the county. All of these educators were invited to participate in the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study, regardless of school level or length of time they had worked for the district.

Selection of subjects. The author of this study invited all of the approximately 1,659 teachers to participate in the quantitative and qualitative portions of the research.

The further explanation of which principal behaviors lead to teacher trust was conducted through qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions on the questionnaire. While teachers were going to be chosen by inviting random teachers to participate in interviews, the interviews were considered to have the potential to be a bit more invasive in confidentiality than the researcher was willing to risk.

Confidentiality was established as follows: Teacher names were not to be displayed in any portion of this study. Teachers were not to be identified by school name, principal name, or computer from which they completed the survey. All results were designed to be reported in such a way as to maintain anonymity among teachers.

The unique role the researcher had as also being a principal limited the use of interviews as a methodology. The use of the principal as interviewer could have drastically impacted the confidentiality felt by the participants. Therefore, open-ended questions were written to answer the question of which specific principal behaviors and actions lead to increased trust between teachers and principals. As Plano Clark and Creswell (2011) suggest, the qualitative phase should be conducted on the same individuals who first participated in the initial data collection. This method was used in the research study.

Permissions. The researcher of the study requested permission to conduct the study in a mid-sized school district in Northwest Florida in June of 2011 by submitting the research request form required by the county. A copy of the instrument and permission to use the instrument was required by the county's committee. Permission was granted after the research review board met to approve the study (Appendix A).

In October 2011, at the conclusion of the preliminary defense, The University of West Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission was sought. After obtaining IRB approval (Appendix B), principals in the school district were contacted to gain their support in distributing written materials to the teachers in their schools. Written documentation of the Informed Consent (Appendix C) and the survey website were then placed in the teachers' mailboxes in each school in the school district. Permission to use the Omnibus Trust Scale, while not required, was obtained from Wayne Hoy via e-mail (Appendix D).

Sampling and recruiting. The participants were solicited from the entire population of teachers in the district. Participants in this study were identified as being eligible if they were full-time teachers in the district and had taught since the beginning of the school year, which was August of 2011. Of the 1,659 teachers in the mid-sized district in Northwest Florida, the objective was to have at least 300 teachers to participate in the research. Offering the opportunity to participate to all teachers in the county would allow for the sample size to be $n = 1,659$, which would be more than sufficient in order to elicit responses from at least 10% to 15% of the teachers.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to measure teacher trust in the principal at their school was the Omnibus Trust Scale (Appendix E), developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003). The OTI developed by Bromiley and Cummings (Turner, 2010) was considered for use in the study on teachers' trust in principals. The OTI has been used in many research studies to measure the level of trust experienced in different types of organizations. However, the Omnibus Trust Scale was more specifically designed to levels of trust

experienced in schools versus other general workplaces. Since Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) grounded their trust research on Rotter's (1967) finding that trust is an integral piece within human learning, the researcher felt the Omnibus Trust Scale was a logical choice for studying trust in schools. The Omnibus Trust Scale is a 26-item Likert-type scale instrument (from 1-*strongly disagree* to 6-*strongly agree*) purported to measure three aspects of faculty trust: trust in the principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in clients. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (2003) research helped lead them to a multifaceted definition of trust that included reliability, competence, honesty, and openness as major elements. The researcher sought to further determine which elements played a significant role in the development of trust in principals.

In a pilot study (Brimhall, 2010) in which participants rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about their school using the Omnibus Trust Scale, reliability was as follows: Trust in the principal ($\alpha = .95$) and construct validity was high. Reliability and construct validity were, therefore, found to be appropriate.

In this research study, the author focused solely on the teacher trust in the principal, although teachers were asked to complete the survey in its entirety to preserve its integrity. The Omnibus Trust Scale was administered to teacher participants who chose to be a part of the study. The qualitative section of the research was designed in the form of open-ended questions at the end of the survey, eliciting teacher responses of specific principal behaviors which build trust.

For the dissertation on teacher trust in their principals, the Omnibus Trust Scale was available through Survey Monkey[TM] (n.d.) to all of the teachers in the district. Demographic information was also sought, including participant's age, length of time the

teacher had worked for their current principal, number of years teaching in general, gender, and level at which the teacher taught (elementary, middle, or high school). The specific school at which the teacher is employed was not asked to preserve confidentiality and privacy issues. In addition, the study was not designed to compare trust between principals or between schools, so the designation of school was not asked.

Upon receipt of the data, the pieces were transferred to a spreadsheet including headers of the variables, including years with principal (YWP), gender (Gen), and scores on each of the areas of the Omnibus Trust Scale (trust with teachers, trust with students, and trust with principals). Data triangulation was done using (a) a component of the Trust Scale, (b) demographic information provided on the survey by the teachers, and (c) open-ended questions. Patton (2002) suggested the use of data triangulation to corroborate the findings of the study from each data source.

Reliability of the Omnibus Trust Scale. The Omnibus Trust Scale is a short operational measure of these three dimensions of trust, which can be used for either elementary or secondary schools. The reliabilities of the three subscales typically range from .90 to .98.

Validity of the Omnibus Trust Scale. Factor analysis studies of the Omnibus Trust Scale support the construct and discriminant validity of the concept (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The validity of measures of trust continue to be addressed as more research is done on the construct of trust, but the validity will depend on how well defined the construct of trust is defined. For this reason, research from experts such as Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (who have done extensive studies in the area of trust between teachers and principals) was used to validate the trust scale.

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Procedure. The procedures in this mixed methods study included procedures for

data collection. In addition, procedures for the obtaining of informed consent from all

participants were defined.

Data collection. In November 2011, after obtaining IRB permission, the

researcher was contacted by the Research Request Committee in the school district and

was granted permission to e-mail teachers in each of the elementary, middle, and high

schools. Once permission was granted, the researcher no longer had to rely upon courier

mail to send paper notices to be placed in teacher boxes. However, since this step had

already been completed, the researcher decided to continue both hard copy and e-mail

versions of the request to complete the survey. The researcher was advised to send an e-

mail to each principal in the county, asking permission for their teachers to be e-mailed

about the survey. In addition, the researcher notified the principals that notes would be

placed in teachers' mailboxes. As a peer principal in the district, the researcher made

sure the note was informal and friendly, asking for help in completing the researcher's

dissertation (Appendix F). The notes directed the teachers to the Survey Monkey™ (n.d.)

website, on which the researcher placed the Omnibus Trust Scale and the subsequent

open-ended questions soliciting responses from teachers about principal behaviors that

build trust. In addition, the researcher asked to be able to contact the teachers a second

time after a week to remind them to complete the questionnaire. The teachers were asked

to complete the questionnaire within a 2-week time frame.

Informed consent. Gaining consent of participants ensured agreement by all

members of the study. Participants had the right to decide about what they wished to fill

out while participating in the research study and what personal information, including

number of years the teacher has worked with the principal, they wished to share with others. Participants received adequate information about the research study to make a sound decision about their willingness to accept the risk of participation, of which there was very little. The consent form, Omnibus Trust Scale survey data, and answers to open-ended questions were collected electronically.

Methodological limitations. The researcher realized conducting the research study in one county would limit the generalizability of the results of the study since participants were solicited solely from one mid-sized school district in Northwest Florida. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) say the issue of generalizability is left up to the reader of the research findings. Warner (2008) explains the lack of generalizability to other groups of people, settings, and events can be better controlled using an experimental situation but controlling for variables is not part of the design of this particular research study. Warner also indicates external validity is the degree to which this study's results live beyond the specific participants and settings to apply to real world situations.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study on trust included quantitative and qualitative research questions. The data analysis included descriptive statistics and a correlational analysis. The hypotheses and threats to reliability and validity were also included in this section.

Research questions. The first quantitative research question is the following: Is there a difference between teachers' average perceptions of principals' competence levels and their perceptions of principals' character levels when examining the overriding

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construct of trust? The data for this question were the Likert-type scale scores of trust on the Omnibus Trust Scale. Data were transferred from Survey Monkey™ (n.d.) and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 19). Descriptive statistics were conducted on demographic data. The researcher conducted a factor analysis of the particular items relating to character and particular items relating to competence to determine if there was a significant difference between the average perceptions of teachers on the two items.

The second quantitative research question is the following: Is there a relationship between the number of years the teacher and principal have worked together and the perceived level of trust a teacher feels for the principal? The data for this question were Likert-type scale scores of trust on the Omnibus Trust Scale and their relationship to the number of years the teacher indicated working with the current principal. The range of scores was analyzed depicting questions and scores. The scores on the Omnibus Trust Scale were examined in relation to the number of years a teacher indicated working with the current principal through a Pearson r to determine whether or not there is a correlation.

Correlational analysis. Correlational analysis of the data was obtained with SPSS (Version 19). The data were analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) for evaluating the strength of the relationship. In general, studies using the Pearson r should be based on relatively large sample sizes. Sample sizes of less than $N = 30$ would be influenced by other factors rather than the number of years the teacher has worked for the principal (Warner, 2008). Since 1,659 respondents were invited to participate, the researcher anticipated a relatively large

respondent rate. Using the Pearson *r* is appropriate for evaluating interval scaled data (Turner, 2010).

Descriptive statistics were also garnered. The district provided a data set of the approximately 1,659 teachers employed in the county, including gender, level of education, and level at which the teacher is teaching (elementary, middle, or high school).

The first qualitative research question is the following: What actions and behaviors do teachers perceive to be trust builders with the principal in their school? The data for this question were answers to open-ended questions asked of the participants about what actions or behaviors the teachers feel are trust-builders in their principals. The data were represented using themes from the open-ended questions. The data were coded into group themes or categories. The researcher planned to use NVivo software to analyze the data but later reconsidered and analyzed the data by hand using two different methods to help triangulate the data.

The final question, another qualitative question, is "What actions and behaviors do teachers perceive to be trust barriers with the principal in their school?" The data for this question were answers to open-ended questions asked of the participants about what actions or behaviors the teachers feel are trust barriers in their principals. The data were represented using themes from the open-ended questions. The data were coded into group themes or categories. The researcher originally intended to use NVivo software to analyze the data but later reconsidered and analyzed the data by hand using two different methods to help triangulate the data.

Hypothesis. While Covey (1989) has written about the theory of building an emotional bank to enhance the relationship between leaders and employees, little research has actually been conducted on the effects of this phenomenon. While principals and teachers may read Covey's work and nod their heads in vehement agreement, research is needed to validate the assumption that the bank account does two things: builds trust and allows teachers to become confident risk-takers in the classroom and their own professional development. Covey and Merrill (2006) took the trust theory to a new level in theorizing the idea of trust being a perfect balance between competence and character. The purpose of this research study was to determine whether competence or character contributes at equal levels or unequal levels to the total level of trust teachers have towards principals. Covey and Merrill theorize the levels of the two characteristics or behaviors will be equal. The researcher of this study wanted to examine if the two are indeed equal or one is more significant than the other.

Reliability and validity threats. One of the major concerns of the study was the degree to which respondents in the study reply to the questions honestly (Lux, 1981). Every effort was made to ensure respondents were aware their answers would be kept strictly confidential. A cover letter via e-mail accompanied the plea to participate in the research, introducing the researcher as a fellow principal who wanted to learn more about the relationship between teachers and principals and the level of trust teachers tend to feel for the principal of their school.

Summary

The quantitative and qualitative strands of the mixed methods convergent parallel design in this study provided a more accurate picture of the influences on trust between

principals and teachers than have been studied in the past. The data collected using

survey results as well as open-ended questions helped the researcher draw more accurate

conclusions regarding teacher trust in principals.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine whether length of time a teacher

works for the principal has an impact on the level of trust felt for the principal. A further

purpose was to examine whether there is a difference in the rating of principal character

and principal competence when teachers trust the principal in their school. Open-ended

questions about what actions, behaviors, and characteristics of the principal build or

break down trust were also asked to further explain the quantitative data. Data from a

survey on trust and subsequent open-ended questions regarding trust builders and trust

barriers were used to determine the answers to the research questions. The survey was

placed on Survey Monkey™ (n.d.) and participants were invited to fill out the survey.

Open-ended questions were added to get more qualitative information about what

principal actions, behaviors, and characteristics teachers say built and broke down trust.

Characteristics of the Participants

The study was conducted in a medium-sized school district in Northwest Florida.

The school district is comprised of 24 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 4 high

schools in the county, all of which have one principal. There are approximately 1,659

teachers in the county. All of these educators were invited to participate in the

quantitative and qualitative sections of the study, regardless of school level or length of

time they have worked for the district. The only prerequisite was teachers needed to have

worked in the school since August of 2011 and the survey was administered in November of 2011.

Of the 1,659 teachers in the district, 525 teachers responded to the survey, which was placed on Survey Monkey ™ (n.d.), providing an almost 32% response rate. An overwhelming 87.8% of respondents were female. The percentage of female teachers in this school district is 80%. The highest age group responding to the survey was the group of teachers who are 51 to 55 years of age. Of the respondents in this survey 94% were White, while 85% of the entire population of teachers in this district is White. Of the 525 participants, 64.2% (334 teachers) were elementary teachers; 9.4% (49 teachers) taught middle school; and 30% (156 teachers) taught high school.

Originally, participants were going to be invited to participate via a hard copy of a notice placed in their mailboxes. After notices had been printed and copied and put in school envelopes ready to be distributed to schools, the district's research request committee decided to revamp their policy on e-mail use and announced they would allow mass e-mail use for this study and other subsequent studies.

The intent of the study was to keep school names confidential. No school names were asked of participants, and only school level (elementary, middle, high) was asked on the survey. However, middle school principals were incorrectly told during a middle school principal meeting that school names would be used. This misinformation was given to them by school district personnel, not the researcher. In fact, because of the new research policy which would allow researchers who worked for the school district the courtesy of using mass e-mail to solicit participants for such research as simple surveys, school personnel told the researcher there was no need to gain permission from principals

in order to send a mass e-mail to all teachers in the district. Therefore, the researcher did

not attend the principal meetings to tell the principals about the research to be conducted.

However, because of this miscommunication, most middle school principals requested

for their teachers to not be solicited to participate in the trust survey. The researcher was

then contacted and was required to get permission from every principal in the county

before the mass e-mail could be sent out. Every high school principal responded and

every elementary principal except one responded in the affirmative to allow all their

teachers to participate. For this reason, the data are lacking middle school participation,

indicated by only 49 middle school teachers responding.

Another one of the demographic questions asked teachers how long they had

worked for their current principal. Of the 525 participants, 44.4% (230 teachers) who

responded said they had worked for their principal for less than 1 year. Only 3.3% (17

teachers) indicated they had worked for their principal for more than 10 years.

Analysis of Survey Data

The district in which the study was conducted is a medium-sized school district

in Northwest Florida. All levels of educators (elementary, middle, and high school

teachers) were invited to participate in the survey, which was conducted through the use

of Survey Monkey™ (n.d.). Although there are 26 questions on the Omnibus Trust

Scale, only questions 1, 4, 7, 9, 11, 15, 18, and 23 pertain to the level of teacher trust in

the principal and were, therefore, the only questions included in the final analysis of the

data. The entire survey (Appendix E) was included on Survey Monkey™.

When viewing the overall data, the question on the Omnibus Trust Scale that

received the highest average rating was Question 18: The principal in this school is

competent in doing his or her job. Teachers in this district believe their principal to be competent for the job as instructional leader of their school.

Of the 524 people who responded to the question about overall trust in the principal, 100 strongly agreed that teachers trust the principal in their school. The overall rating average for this question was a 4.39 on a scale of 6. Of the total participants, 413 marked either *Somewhat Agree*, *Agree*, or *Strongly Agree* for this question. Question 7 was "The teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal." For the entire group of respondents, Question 7 on the integrity (character) of the principal ranked a 4.66 average while Question 18 on the competence of the principal ranked a 4.98 average. The researcher felt these results were generalized to the entire population and decided to examine only the responses of the people who felt there was a high level of trust for the principal. The researcher wanted to see whether competence or integrity (character) rated higher among those who have a strong degree of trust in the principal.

The researcher filtered the responses for those participants who answered *Strongly Agree* for the overall trust in the principal and analyzed the answers for those 99 people (the original group was 100 but one person failed to answer all the questions and, therefore, had missing data). When the group of 99 was viewed as a whole, integrity of the principal then ranked a 5.73 average score and the competence of the principal ranked a 5.89 average score. While the research was generalized to this particular group, the rest of the population also showed a difference in means. In determining whether those people who had high trust in the principal felt character or competence were higher, the researcher found 84% of the 99 respondents said character and competence were equal.

Of the 16% who responded differently to the questions about character (integrity) and competence, 10 of the 16 ranked competence higher than integrity.

To analyze the data for Research Question 2, the researcher looked at the data through the filter of time having worked with the principal. While the average rating for Question 1 on the trust survey (Teachers in this school trust the principal) was a 4.39 for all 525 respondents, the results varied significantly among the respondents who have worked with their principal for less than a year to the teachers who have worked with their principal for more than 10 years. The average rating for the teachers who have worked for the current principal for less than 1 year was 4.71, with more respondents answering *Agree* than any other answer option. The average rating for the teachers who have worked for the current principal for more than 10 years was a 3.18, with almost an equal number of teachers responding to the negative options (*Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, and *Somewhat Disagree*) and those responding to the positive answer options (*Somewhat Agree*, *Agree*, and *Strongly Agree*). However, the small number of teachers who fell in the category of working for their principal for more than 10 years might have played a part in the skewed results. When the researcher looked at all other categories of time having worked for the current principal, none of the average ratings were nearly as high as the rating of the "less than 1 year" category. In fact, many were significantly lower.

When analyzing the data, the researcher found a significant correlation. A SPSS (Version 19) analysis using a Pearson *r* correlation was run on each of the eight items pertaining to the trust in the principal. The resulting Pearson *r* correlation on each of the factors relating to the principal was a strong, negative correlation. This negative

correlation suggests that as number of years working for current principal increases, trust appears to decrease. Since correlations do not equate with cause and effect, the research is limited in drawing any conclusions such as saying the length of time a teacher works for a principal causes the trust to diminish.

The correlation for number of years and the overall trust in the principal is represented as $r = -.196, p < .01$. A listwise deletion of missing cases was used for all correlations.

Analysis of Open-ended Questions

The author of this study invited all of the approximately 1,659 teachers to participate in the quantitative and qualitative portions of the research. The data were collected through the use of Survey Monkey™ (n.d.) but two open-ended questions were included at the conclusion of the survey. The use of the principal as interviewer could drastically impact the confidentiality felt by the participants. Therefore, while the unique role the researcher had of also being a principal limited the use of interviews as a methodology, the data collected were very specific and overwhelming themes emerged. The open-ended questions were written to answer the question of which specific principal behaviors and actions led to increased trust between teachers and principals. The open-ended survey questions were as follows:

1. What actions, behaviors, and/or characteristics of a principal do you consider to be trust builders?

2. What actions, behaviors, and/or characteristics of a principal do you consider to be trust barriers?

The first thing the author of the research noted when collecting responses was the different ways the respondents interpreted the questions. Some obviously treated the question about trust barriers as though they were talking specifically about their principal and what that particular principal did to build or break trust among teachers, as evidenced by comments like "Not one thing!" or "He believed gossip about teachers from other teachers without consulting the teacher talked about." Others viewed the questions in generalities, even to the point of listing behaviors for trust builders but then saying "the opposite of the above" for trust barriers. The difference in teacher interpretations of the questions did not seem to hinder the overall data collected for this question, however.

Trust builder themes. While the researcher considered and initially planned to use the NVivo™ or other qualitative software to analyze the data, the decision was later made to analyze the data by hand. The reason for the researcher's decision was the nature of the themes that immediately surfaced among the trust builder data. The researcher analyzed the data in two ways. First, posters were created for each major category of most often cited behaviors. Each poster represented a category (Communication, Honesty, etc.). The responses from participants were then cut out and placed on matching posters.

Next, the researcher created a spreadsheet, listing the first several behaviors, actions, and characteristics listed in the open-ended questions as headings. The headings or categories turned out to be different between (not just opposites of) trust builders and trust barriers. The categories emerging the most often among the approximately 525 respondents about actions, behaviors, and/or characteristics which build trust for the

principal were Communication, Shared Leadership, Honesty, Caring, Fairness, Integrity, Competent Leadership, Support for Teachers, Confidentiality and Availability.

   Trust barrier themes. For trust barriers, the list of categories included Lack of Communication, Micromanagement, Dishonesty, Secrecy, Unfairness, Inconsistency, Incompetence, Unfriendliness, Bullying, and Lack of Support for Teachers. Perhaps the connotation of the words builders and barriers invoked particular feelings for individuals which might have led to the differences between emerging themes among trust builders and trust barriers. The data collected were specific for the question asked.

   While several people who responded made specific and obvious notes about the principal for whom they work, most adhered to generalities about the actions and behaviors principals can exhibit to either build or break down trust. Two responses were discarded because of the revealing nature of their comments which would have singled out specific principals in the district. The categories of Honesty and Communication were the most cited in teachers' responses about builders of trust in their principals. It was not surprising that honesty of the principal would be a trust builder, but participants cited communication actions and behaviors more often than honesty or any other action, behavior, or characteristic.

Results of the Study

   The researcher of the study gained permission to conduct the study in a mid-sized school district in Northwest Florida in June of 2011 by submitting the research request form required by the county, along with a copy of the instrument and permission to use the instrument from Wayne Hoy. Permission was granted after the research review board met to approve the study, initially forbidding but later allowing the use of mass e-mail for

data collection purposes. The researcher believes the use of e-mail strongly influenced the number of responses (525) gained from the population of over 1,600 possible teachers.

Quantitative data. The participants were solicited from the entire population of teachers in the district. Their answers provided data for the following research questions.

Research Question 1. The first quantitative research question is the following: Is there a difference between teachers' average perceptions of principals' competence levels and their perceptions of principals' character levels when examining the overriding construct of trust? The data for this question were the Likert-type scale scores of trust on the Omnibus Trust Scale. The researcher conducted a factor analysis of the particular item relating to character and integrity and the particular item relating to competence, then determined there was a difference between the average perceptions of teachers on the two items. The average rating for integrity (character), while high, was not as high as the average rating for competence teachers felt for their principals.

Research Question 2. The second quantitative research question is the following: Is there a relationship between the number of years the teacher and principal have worked together and the perceived level of trust a teacher feels for the principal? The data for this question were Likert-type scale scores of trust on the Omnibus Trust Scale and their relationship to the number of years the teacher indicates working with the current principal.

The answer options allowed participants to respond either less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 2-5 years, 5-10 years, or more than 10 years, referring to the length of time the teacher had worked for the current principal at their school. Among the 518 people who

answered both the length of time question and the trust survey itself, the highest overall level of trust in the principal was felt by the teachers who had worked for their current principal for less than one year, yielding an average rating of 4.71. The average rating on the same question by those teachers who had worked for their principal for more than 10 years was a 3.18. As previously indicated, the number of respondents in this category was quite limited, as only 17 teachers marked that they fell in this category. However, in the other categories, the average ratings came nowhere near that of the less than 1 year category. Might trust be easy to initially gain but harder to maintain and keep over time? Much more research needs to be done in this area in order to fully answer this question.

Qualitative data. Despite several initial concerns of teachers perhaps not wanting to answer this question honestly and openly because of fear of lack of confidentiality, the researcher found just the opposite to be true. The majority of respondents (427) gave answers to the open-ended question about what principal actions, behaviors, and/or characteristics do teachers consider to be trust builders and 411 teachers responded to the question on trust barriers. Within the area of trust builders, some major themes emerged in behaviors and actions that teachers felt built trust between themselves and their principals. The most commonly cited categories were Communication, Honesty, Caring, Integrity, and Support for Teachers. Other categories less cited were Shared Leadership, Fairness, Competence, and Student-Centered Behaviors, Confidentiality, and Availability.

Communication. Of the 427 people who responded to the question about what actions and behaviors build trust between teachers and principals, over 100 of those respondents indicated a behavior related to communication, the most frequented by far.

Some of the descriptors included open communication, although very few defined what they believe this meant. Others indicated words such as open and openness, while several were more specific about the principal maintaining an open door policy. Good listening skills were cited as being important to building trust, and some even indicated how they would listen (listen to ideas, listen with full attention, really listens, listens to all stakeholders, and hearing people out). The willingness of the principal to listen and to hear teachers' concerns was listed as important criteria for building trust by several participants.

Honesty. While it might seem obvious that honesty would be the highest category of actions and behaviors in building trust between teachers and principals, it was actually the second most frequently cited characteristic of a trust builder. While most of the over 75 respondents who cited honesty on their list of trust builders simply said "honest" or "honesty," others indicated specific scenarios in which honesty was important, such as honesty about teacher performance, truthful about decisions, telling the truth no matter what, honest about district happenings, honest professional feedback, and honest even if controversial. Other descriptors under the category of honesty included sharing true feelings, transparency, telling the truth even when it is difficult, candor, frankness, full disclosure, forthright, and having no secret agenda. During a time of a new teacher evaluation system being implemented in this school district, honesty was on the minds of a good deal of teachers.

Support for teachers. Almost 60 teachers indicated a principal can build trust by showing support for teachers. Some openly said trusting teachers about students and parents or always backing the teacher no matter what but some also said things like

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standing up for teachers in the face of adversity or backing teachers until proven

otherwise. Being on our side and sticking up for teachers were other comments made by

teachers, as were standing behind teachers, principals having the teachers' backs, always

siding with the teacher, and even a willingness to always believe teachers. Some

respondents added more general comments such as "supportive," "praising," and "being

loyal to staff."

  Caring. Surprising to the researcher was the fact that only about 50 teachers

wrote something about the principal being caring as a requirement for increased trust.

While many of those 50 respondents used the word care or caring, others used words like

empathy, leaving you feeling appreciated, knowing about teachers, compassionate,

understanding, encouraging, concerned, and genuine kindness. Over 10 of the 50

teachers who responded using this criteria added the words sincerely or genuinely to the

aspect of caring. Several teachers wrote specific actions that would be indicative of a

caring principal, including visiting teachers in the hospital and caring for teachers when

they are sick. Several teachers also indicated they trust principals who are direct but are

kind when they give them constructive feedback. Again, in light of the new teacher

evaluation system in this district which is the impetus for Florida's performance pay

system, this is not a surprising find.

  Integrity. While integrity can be difficult to define, the act of saying something

and following through with it was a large part of the results in this survey. Some teachers

simply used the word integrity to describe a trustworthy principal. Teachers said they

believed trust building would be indicated by a principal's high moral code and holding

oneself to a high moral standard. Other themes included keeping their word, following

through with commitments, consistency with all decisions, being able to count on the principal, and doing what they say they will do. Standing by one's word and keeping one's word were also mentioned several times, as was fulfilling one's obligations.

Trust barriers were not always the exact opposite. In fact, while the highest trust builder was about communication, the highest trust barrier had to do with Unfairness and Inconsistency, followed closely by Dishonesty and Secrecy. Out of the 411 people who responded to this question, almost 100 responded to the categories above. Only about 65 people listed Lack of Communication or Poor Communication as a trust barrier. The researcher believes Good Communication is easier to define as a trust builder than Bad Communication is to define as a trust barrier. The other themes of trust barriers included Unfriendliness/Bullying, and Unsupportive of Teachers, Micromanaging or Lack of Shared Leadership, and Incompetence. The following describe more in detail the results of each of the above themes.

Unfairness and inconsistency. Teachers felt very strongly about trust being hindered when principals single out a few favorites in whom to confide or treat better than others and they were not shy about sharing their frustrations about this happening. The phrases "having favorites," "playing favorites," "showing favoritism," "having an inner circle of friends," "not being fair and equitable," "favoritism," "unequitable treatment of some," "treating different teachers differently," "friendlier with some than with others," "friends of principal getting preferential treatment," "having favorite teachers," "favorites and nonfavorites," "principal pets," and many more were heralded by almost 100 teachers as being trust barriers by principals.

Dishonesty and secrecy. While dishonesty was the most frequently used word in this category, secrecy was a close second for frequency used. The list also included "lying," "telling falsehoods," "not telling the whole truth every time," "being partially honest," "breaking promises," "being sneaky," "trying to catch teachers in mistakes," "lies and manipulation," "gotcha intents," and "unclear motives." Principals and teachers in this school district have received hours and days of training on the new evaluation system with specific emphasis on the evaluation not being a "gotcha," but it remains clear teachers perceive this action as a definite trust barrier.

Lack of communication or poor communication. As previously indicated, while communication ranked top of the list of most frequently cited for trust builder, the opposite did not hold true for lack of communication as a trust barrier. However, the principal action of "not listening" was often cited in this category, as was "not responding to e-mails," "keeping a closed door," "being too busy to talk," and "not communicating effectively."

Unfriendliness/bullying. While not as frequently cited as a concern for lack of trust, being unfriendly was enough of a concern to warrant its own category. Unfriendly behaviors included "being antagonistic," "talking negatively," "angry," "moody," "condescending attitude," "callous words," and "critical." Some teachers used stronger words such as "lack of respect," "open criticism," "yelling at teachers," "threatening teachers," "threats," "vindictive actions," "harsh criticism," "open dislike for teachers," "hurtfulness," and the word, "bullying," was even used by a few teachers.

Unsupportive of teachers. As a trust barrier, being unsupportive of teachers may seem like it would look a lot like uncaring behaviors, but the respondents in this survey

clearly made a distinction between lack of support for the teachers and lack of caring about teachers. Not supporting teachers was indicated by such descriptors as "believing gossip about teachers," "not trusting teacher judgment," "challenging a teacher in front of parents," "not looking out for teachers," "not backing teachers," "not believing teachers," "throwing teachers under the bus," "backstabbing teachers to parents," "thinking parents are always right," and "generally not supporting teachers."

Micromanaging/lack of shared leadership. About 20 teachers listed actions or behaviors of the principal in this area that were, in their opinion, trust barriers. In addition to using the actual word "micromanaging," survey respondents also said such things as "exclusion of stakeholders," "being heavy handed," "controlling," "not allowing anyone to be part of," "top down control of everything," "not being able to delegate," "nitpicks things," "never asking for input," and "not willing to try new ideas."

Incompetence. This characteristic was by far the least likely category in which teachers responded about behaviors, actions, and characteristics that would be barriers to trust in the principal. Some teachers indicated they felt incompetence included the principal not knowing his or her job. Others felt incompetence included the principal not knowing the job of the teacher. The items teachers listed included "not knowing all aspects of the job," "not knowing how to promote vision," "being reactive versus proactive," "knee-jerk reactions," "rash behaviors," "disorganized," "unwillingness to learn," "sky is falling mentality," "incompetence," "not knowledgeable," "not understanding teacher job," "not having taught before," and "having a tainted ethical compass." The researcher believes the new evaluation system in this district, which bases teacher pay, in part, on the principal's evaluation of the teacher, has played a

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substantial role in the listing of such characteristics as "doesn't know the teacher's job" and "not having taught before." Teachers say they feel the principal should know the teacher's content if they are to adequately evaluate the teaching of each subject.

Summary

The researcher learned much from the data from the survey and the subsequent open-ended questions. Several pertinent ideas were made clear.

The length of time a teacher works for a principal does not necessarily equate to heightened trust in the principal. In fact, quite the opposite appeared to be true from this study, as the teachers who had worked for their current principal for over 10 years had the least amount of average trust in the principal. Those teachers who had worked for their current principal for less than 1 year, on the other hand, had the highest average rating of trust in their principal.

When trust is high between teachers and principals, teachers tend to have more trust in the principal's competence versus their character. While both rate high among "high trust teachers," competence rates a bit higher than integrity.

Teachers were more than willing to share specific actions, behaviors, and characteristics through open-ended questions about what builds and breaks down trust in the principal. The most cited trust builders were communication and honesty while the biggest trust barriers were unfairness and dishonesty.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Trust is a necessary ingredient in the school relationship between teacher and principal. Especially in a turbulent time such as teacher evaluations contributing to the determination of teacher pay for performance, the issue is important to address. If the teacher's evaluation is to be conducted by the principal, teachers want to believe the principal is competent and filled with integrity. While Covey and Merrill (2006) suggested that competence and character play an equal role in developing trust, the researcher of this study sought to determine whether or not this is true. Another important aspect of the research was the question of whether or not the amount of time a teacher has worked for the principal plays a role in the overall trust a teacher feels for the principal.

This study was an attempt to find out what research had already been completed on trust and study the construct of trust more in depth. Chapter 2 is a thorough review of the literature on trust, including certain themes continually appearing in the research on trust, including communication and shared leadership. Reina and Reina (2006) found in their research the need for employers to communicate information with their employees and this dissertation sought to find whether communication and other principal behaviors would influence the trust teachers felt for the leader of the school. Chapter 3 discussed the methods by which the study would be conducted, including collecting survey data as

well as asking open-ended questions of the participants. The researcher explained the reason for choosing not to conduct focus groups or one-on-one interviews was due in part to time constraints. In addition, the researcher feared teachers may not want to share openly with a researcher who was also a principal in the same district in which the research was being conducted.

Summary and Interpretation

The dissertation about teacher perception of trust in principals, including the question of whether number of years working together impacts the amount of trust teachers feel for their principals, was a mixed methods study. Two quantitative questions were asked and two qualitative questions were asked. The study was conducted using a convergent parallel design, in which open-ended questions were asked at the conclusion of a quantitative survey to all participating teachers.

Over 1,659 teachers were potential candidates to be invited to participate via notes in mailboxes. At a middle school principal meeting, several middle school principals in the school district requested their teachers not receive notice of the survey. A member of the district staff had incorrectly told the middle school principals the research would indicate the name of the school from which each participating teacher responded. This information was totally inaccurate and the researcher made certain to let everyone know the results would only reported by school level (elementary, middle, and high), but several middle school principals still objected to their teachers participating. After notes about the survey were distributed, the district's research request committee decided to grant permission for a mass e-mail to be allowed in inviting participants to take the survey. The survey was open on Survey Monkey™ (n.d.) for exactly 2 weeks.

The researcher fully believes the number of respondents (525), while initially thwarted by the misinformation provided to middle school principals, was subsequently increased greatly by the use of a mass e-mail. A copy of the note to teachers was put in teacher mailboxes and ultimately sent to the teachers of schools in which principals agreed to let their teachers participate (Appendix F).

Limitations

The district in which the study was conducted is a medium-sized school district in Northwest Florida. The district is comprised of 24 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 4 high schools in the county, all of which have one principal. It is important to note, unlike most other school districts in the State of Florida, only three of the elementary schools have assistant principals, so the principal is, in most cases, the sole evaluator, observer, and human resources manager for the elementary schools.

As the year in which the research was conducted was the first year of implementation for the new evaluation system which will now make the teacher evaluation contribute to the teacher's pay, trust in the principal was a crucial aspect to study. However, since evaluations and postevaluation conferences had recently begun in this school district, several principals expressed concern that the survey results might not be accurate, possibly being skewed by the onset of the new evaluation system. The researcher's response was to ask "What better time to find out the trust level in principals by the teachers in the district if teacher pay, in part, will depend on the evaluation by the principal?" In addition, out of the 525 respondents, 427 of those also responded to the open-ended question about trust builders and 411 responded to the question about trust barriers, indicated there was a desire among teachers to express their feelings about trust.

A limitation noted in the Methods section was not being able to use mass e-mail to invite the approximately 1,659 teachers to participate in the survey. This limitation was going to require notes to be placed in teacher mailboxes. Teachers would then be expected to go to their computer and type in the link to Survey Monkey™ (n.d.) provided on the sheet of paper. However, when the district's research request committee changed the ruling on the previous "no mass e-mail" policy, all the teachers had to do was to click on the link to get to the survey. The researcher feels strongly this opened up more participation by teachers in this district, thus increasing participation from the researcher's desire for 10% to almost 32%.

Another possible limitation was fear of lack of confidentiality. Several teachers mentioned to the researcher that they knew of a few other teachers who had not responded to the survey for fear it would not be strictly confidential, despite the Informed Consent indicating the total confidentiality involved in the study. Survey Monkey™ (n.d.) gives the researcher the option to be informed of the Internet protocol (IP) addresses of computers from which surveys are taken, but the researcher clicked "no" to this option. However, the teachers expressed a concern that the month before, the district had asked teachers to fill out a survey about custodial services in the district and were told the survey was confidential. After completing the survey, however, several teachers were contacted about their answers to the survey. Therefore, a few more teachers might have responded to this dissertation survey had that experience not occurred in the district so recently.

As mentioned previously, the only other limitation the researcher noted was the misinformation given to middle school principals about the level of data asked by

teachers. While the survey very clearly asked for school level (elementary, middle, or high) and never asked for school name, middle school principals were incorrectly told school names would be used in the reporting of the data. Several middle school principals then contacted the researcher and said they did not want their teachers surveyed. Despite the researcher assuring the principals this level of data was never going to be asked for or used, the researcher was unable to get approval from several middle school principals to survey their teachers. The researcher expressed concern to the district office that only asking teachers of schools in which principals "gave permission" for their teachers to participate in a survey could possibly skew results of a trust survey. Overall, however, the high results yielded in the survey (nearly 32% of teachers in the district) warranted accurate results.

Implications

The instrument used to measure teacher trust in the principal at their school was the Omnibus Trust Scale, developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003). Also included in the survey on Survey Monkey™ (n.d.) were two open-ended questions which asked teachers to list actions, behaviors, and characteristics they felt were trust builders and trust barriers.

By determining first that length of time seemed to work against trust, principals have a monumental task ahead of them. Instead of assuming trust will grow over time among teachers and principals, principals must remain vigilant in not only exhibiting trustworthy behaviors when they first hire teachers or first come to a new school but maybe more importantly maintaining that trust throughout the life of the relationships with each teacher. If trust is, as the results of this research indicate, stronger at the

beginning of a working relationship (under 1 year) than after 5 or 10 years of working together, principals need to be aware of the particular trust-building actions, behaviors, and characteristics that teachers believe foster trust. Covey and Merrill (2006) felt trust was a characteristic more easily obtained than kept, and these results seem to hold true to his belief. They also indicated they felt reputation and branding of companies and organizations would need to be worked on an ongoing basis, not just a one-time event.

In the district in which this research was conducted, when high trust was felt for the principal by the teachers (almost 20% of the respondents fell in this category), those teachers felt more strongly that the principal in the school was competent. Fewer of the higher trusting teachers felt the principal demonstrated consistent integrity. The obvious implication to this finding is that the teachers in this district feel the principals are quite competent in their roles as school leaders. Perhaps a less obvious implication from this result is that competence among principals is more easily demonstrated than is character and integrity. More work must be done, then, to find out how principals can better build and demonstrate character and integrity to the teachers in their school.

If communication is the number one rated behavior among the teachers which leads to improved trust in the principal, then principals need to be sure and not be so busy with business within the confines of their office that they lose sight of the relationships with teachers in the classrooms and hallways and teachers' lounges. Indeed, teachers said they value available and interested principals, ones who ask about their families, check on them in the hospital, and remember special events in the lives of the teachers.

Suggestions for Further Research

Several ideas for future research have emerged throughout the completion of this study. Trust has been studied in organizations all over the world, many times noting where it exists and where it does not exist. The Omnibus Trust Scale was specific to school settings and made it possible to study the specific trust between teachers and principals. While the Omnibus Trust Scale focused on multiple areas of trust (trust among teachers, trust for parents, trust among students, and trust with principals), this researcher simply focused on the trust teachers feel for principals and what contributes to that trust.

More research should be conducted in the area of trust, as trust is an important component to any relationship, particularly the relationships of school personnel. With the changing landscape of increased teacher accountability, teachers are more likely to question their evaluator's competence and character, so research in the area of what builds and maintains trust is an important endeavor. In addition, with less limited time constraints, research in the area of trust would benefit from more in-depth interviews by teachers as anecdotal stories of particular people will likely further the knowledge researchers can gain on what increases trust. Furthermore, the researcher of this study feels strongly it would also be highly lucrative to ask the principals to fill out a survey on the trust they feel among the teachers in their own school. Trust is such a two-way street, it is difficult to examine trust from one side without also examining it from the other side as well.

After determining several actions, behaviors, and characteristics of principals which teachers say build and break down trust, more research should be conducted in

principal training. Which leadership preparation programs lead to increased trust in principals from the teachers? If faculty of Educational Leadership programs know the top-rated behavior of teachers in trusting the principal was communication, then perhaps they need to spend as much time teaching principals what to say and how to say it as they do teaching them about the law and finance. While legal aspects of the principal's job are skills clearly needed, just as important might be effective communication skills and the ability to give constructive yet caring feedback. In addition, since the researcher found that trust in the principal seems to diminish over time, perhaps principals should also participate in regular training on how to maintain trust among their teachers.

Conclusion

The researcher of the study on teacher trust in principals attempted to determine whether S. M. R. Covey and Merrill's (2006) theory about whether or not trust is formed equally of character and competence but transformed into a study that became broader with time. While the research showed teachers who trust their principals tend to believe in their competence a bit more than in their character, both characteristics proved to be quite important to building trust. In fact, character and competence proved to be more important in building trust in the principal more than time working for the principal. The researcher feels the aspect of trust is a most understudied but crucial topic to research in order to create more effective teachers and, thus, create more effective schools in general.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

District Research Request Approval

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OKALOOSA COUNTY
120 Lowery Place, SE
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

RESEARCH REQUEST FORM

Please submit in triplicate to the Chief Officer for Quality Assurance & Curriculum for review by the Research Request Committee.

1. Name and address of person requesting research: Shelly Arneson
   1012 Lake Way Dr. Niceville, FL 32578 Date: 4-7-2011
   Telephone: 850-598-5231 or 850-678-7818

   Type of Research:
   ___ Test   ___ Questionnaire   ___ Other
   ✓ Survey   ___ Checklist

   School record to be used:
   ___ Cumulative folders   ___ Statewide test results
   ___ County test results   ___ Other

   State problem or title of study: Teacher trust: a mixed methods study on teacher trust in Okaloosa County principals.

   Purpose of study: The purpose of the study is to examine the level of trust in principals as perceived by teachers in Okaloosa County and whether that trust might be impacted by the amount of time the principal and
   Additional pertinent information: teacher have worked together.

II. Procedure (a 1-2 page narrative should accompany this form with a more thorough description of the proposal):

   Date of administration of test: September, 2011   Kind: Omnibus t-test
   Time required for administering: Survey through Survey Monkey
   Amount of school time involved: can all be completed after hours
   What levels: all
   Number involved: Schools: all   Students: N/A
   How administered: In groups: ___   Individually: online
   Description of population to be used: all teachers in OCSD
   Method of sampling to be used: convenience/voluntary sampling
   Time students will be taken out of regular class work: N/A

   Findings will be made available to the Okaloosa County School District.

   Shelly Arneson   University of West Florida,
   Signature of Applicant   Doctorate in Education
                                       University/Level of Degree Sought

III. Approval: Lap D Bandop 6/9/11

   Sherri Zimmerman, PhD.   *Sherri Zimmerman, Ph.D.*
   Major University Professor   Chairman, Research Committee

   _____   OCSD
   Chief Officer for Quality Assurance & Curriculum

cc: Superintendent of Schools   Pending use of written communication with teachers rather than use of global e-mail system.

Appendix B

The University of West Florida Institutional Review Board Approval

Ms. Shelly Arneson   October 31, 2011
1012 Lake Way Drive
Niceville, FL 32578

Dear Ms. Arneson:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Research Participants Protection has completed its review of your proposal titled "Character and Competence: A Mixed Methods Study on Teacher Trust in Principals in a Mid-Sized County in Florida," as it relates to the protection of human participants used in research, and granted approval for you to proceed with your study on 11-01-2011. As a research investigator, please be aware of the following:

*   You will immediately report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to human participants.

*   You acknowledge and accept your responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human research participants and for complying with all parts of 45 CFR Part 46, the UWF IRB Policy and Procedures, and the decisions of the IRB. You may view these documents on the Research and Sponsored Programs web page at http://www.research.uwf.edu/internal. You acknowledge completion of the IRB ethical training requirements for researchers as attested in the IRB application.

*   You will ensure that legally effective informed consent is obtained and documented. If written consent is required, the consent form must be signed by the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative. A copy is to be given to the person signing the form and a copy kept for your file.

*   You will promptly report any proposed changes in previously approved human participant research activities to Research and Sponsored Programs. The proposed changes will not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the participants.

*   **You are responsible for reporting progress of approved research to Research and Sponsored Programs at the end of the project period 11-30-2011. If the data phase of your project continues beyond the approved end date, you must receive an extension approval from the IRB.**

Good luck in your research endeavors. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Research and Sponsored Programs at 850-857-6378 or irb@uwf.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard S. Podemski, Associate   Dr. Carla Thompson, Chair
Vice President for Research   IRB for the Protection of Human
And Dean of the Graduate School   Research Participants

CC: Sherri Zimmerman, Joyce Nichols

Appendix C

Informed Consent

(Reproduced as used)

Informed Consent

Title of Research: **Character and Competence: A Mixed Methods Study on Teacher Trust in Principals in a Mid-Sized County in Florida**

Federal and university regulations require us to obtain signed consent for participation in research involving human participants. The following information is provided for you to decide if you wish to participate in this study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no penalties or repercussions for withdrawal from this study.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to expand the literature on teacher trust and to determine which factors are related to high levels of trust teachers perceive about the principal in their school.

Procedure: Participants will be asked to complete a 10-15 minute survey with subsequent open-ended questions about teacher trust in the principal through Survey Monkey™.

Potential Risks: There should be **no** risks associated with this study.

By signing this form I acknowledge that:
1. My data will be recorded by the researcher and compared with the data of other
   teachers.

2. Upon request, the investigator will share the study results with me.
3. The time burden for the survey will be less than 30 minutes.
4. My name is **not** on the survey form.
5. My school name is **not** on the survey form.
6. I may withdraw from the study at any time without risk of penalty or repercussion.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions. I consent to take part in the research study titled, *Character and Competence: A Mixed Methods Study on Teacher Trust in Principals in a Mid-Sized County in Florida.* I give my permission voluntarily and without coercion or undue influence. It is understood that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I will be provided a copy of this consent form.

_____
Participant's Name or Electronic Signature (please print)

_____
Signature

_____
Date

If you have questions or want a copy or summary of the study results:

If you have any questions about this research you can contact Dr. Sherri Zimmerman at The University of West Florida by email szimmerman@uwf.edu

If you have any concerns about ethical issues in regards to this research project contact The University of West Florida Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Carla Thompson at (850) 474-2824 or email cthompson1@uwf.edu

Appendix D

Permission to Use Omnibus Trust Scale

Re: Omnibus Trust Survey

Wayne Hoy [whoy@me.com]

Sent: Sunday, June 19, 2011 8:37 PM

To: Arneson, Shelly

Hi Shelly--

You have my permission to use the Omnibus Trust Scale in your research. Be sure to give proper credit when you use the scale.

Best wishes in your research.

Wayne

Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor of
Education Administration

hoy.16@osu.edu
www.waynekhoy.com

On Jun 19, 2011, at 9:06 PM, Arneson, Shelly wrote:

> Dear Dr. Hoy,
>
> My name is Shelly Arneson and I am a doctoral student at University of West Florida. I am writing my dissertation on principal-teacher trust. I want to use your Omnibus Trust Survey in my study. I am respectfully requesting permission to use the survey and to re-type it (verbatim) into Survey Monkey to aide in the use of it.
>
> I would be happy to share the results of my findings with you when complete.
>
> I would also like to add an open-ended question at the bottom of the survey to ask teachers to write what actions they feel principals do to build trust. I hope this is agreeable.
>
> Thank you so much for your consideration.
>
> Sincerely,

Shelly Arneson, Ed.S.
Principal, Edge Elementary School
850-833-4138

Under Florida law, e-mail addresses are public records. If you do not want your e-mail address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.
E-mail records are public records under Florida Law and in general are not exempt from public-records requirements. In the event your response contains information that may be considered sensitive or confidential pursuant to Federal or State law, please do not send that information via e-mail; please contact me to make alternative arrangements.

http://email.okaloosa.k12.fl.us/OWA/?ae=Item&t=IPM.Note&id=RgAAAAj23shnhjTE...   6/19/2011

Appendix E

Omni Trust Scale

Omnibus T-Scale

Directions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about your school from **strongly disagree** to **strongly agree**. Your answers are confidential.

Response options: Strongly Disagree · Disagree · Somewhat Disagree · Somewhat Agree · Agree · Strongly Agree

1. Teachers in this school trust the principal.
2. Teachers in this school trust each other.
3. Teachers in this school trust their students.
4. The teachers in this school are suspicious of most of the principal's actions.
5. Teachers in this school typically look out for each other.
6. Teachers in this school trust the parents.
7. The teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal.
8. Teachers in this school are suspicious of each other.
9. The principal in this school typically acts in the best interests of teachers.
10. Students in this school care about each other.
11. The principal of this school does not show concern for the teachers.
12. Even in difficult situations, teachers in this school can depend on each other.
13. Teachers in this school do their jobs well.
14. Parents in this school are reliable in their commitments.
15. Teachers in this school can rely on the principal.
16. Teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of their colleagues.
17. Students in this school can be counted on to do their work.
18. The principal in this school is competent in doing his or her job.
19. The teachers in this school are open with each other.
20. Teachers can count on parental support.
21. When teachers in this school tell you something, you can believe it.
22. Teachers here believe students are competent learners.
23. The principal doesn't tell teachers what is really going on.
24. Teachers think that most of the parents do a good job.
25. Teachers can believe what parents tell them.
26. Students here are secretive.

---

1. What actions, behaviors, and/or characteristics of a principal do you consider to be **trust builders**?

_____
_____
_____

2. What actions, behaviors, and/or characteristics of a principal do you consider to be **trust barriers**?

_____
_____
_____

Appendix F

Letter to Teachers

(Reproduced as used)

TEACHERS,

I am currently finishing my doctorate in education and have only my dissertation to complete. My research study is on trust in schools, and I need your help. Your participation is **completely voluntary and completely confidential.**

If you can please spare about 5 minutes, go to Survey Monkey and complete the brief survey on trust in your school. Just type the following address into your browser and it will take you directly to the survey.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BXWLG56

The research is valuable and your answers will add to the current body of knowledge on trust in schools. I sincerely appreciate your time in sharing your opinion on such a significant topic.

Shelly Arneson, Ed.S.

Principal, Edge Elementary School

arnesons@mail.okaloosa.k12.fl.us