SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP: IDENTIFYING FACTORS THAT

INFORM PRINCIPAL LONGEVITY

by

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DEDICATION

   This dissertation is dedicated to my family. My brothers and sisters: Monica

Tarango, Armando Ortiz, Diana Castañeda, Fernando Ortiz, Cynthia Salcedo, Jesus

Jaime Ortiz, Elias O'Campo, and Ruben O'Campo; *my boys*, David Rico and Matthew

Rico, and; to my husband, Patrick Casey. Thank you for believing in me.

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ABSTRACT

Seventeen years after researchers sounded the alarm to the phenomenon of principal turnover, principal turnover continues at a national level of 15% to 30% annually with schools serving students in high poverty, majority-minority student populations at the higher range. In Texas, Fuller and Young (2010) found that 50% of principals leave their positions after 5 years. The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to provide qualitative data that identify the motivational factors that inform principal retention. This study captured the voices, perspectives and lived experiences of four middle school principals serving in the second largest school district in Texas. The context of their principalship was drawn from the state and district artifacts, the data from the self-reporting *Basic Need Satisfaction at Work* survey and the semi-structured interviews. This study questioned: Given the high levels of attrition of middle school principals in Texas, what and how have (a) professional and personal experiences, (b) administrative support, (c) professional preparation, and (d) technical abilities contributed to principal retention and why?

Data from this study revealed the personal connections, commitment to the community, and advocacy towards high needs student populations that advanced their reasons to pursue the principalship. The participants reported they did not initiate a career in the principalship and reported their principals recommended them to district sponsored principal preparation programs. These same principals supervised the

participants' internships and continued to serve as mentors and peer supports. This research further solidified current research that purports the need for autonomy at the campus level and how the context of leadership matters.

Further investigation is needed to capture the voices and lived experiences of principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to better understand their work environments and how districts can support principals based on campus needs. Research that informs principal longevity at elementary, middle, and high schools, from rural, suburban, and urban districts with varying years of experience would also be beneficial as well as identifying school districts that have retained principals for more than five years in schools with high needs student populations.

I. PRELUDE

Knowing the rest of the principal selection committee would soon join me I reviewed the stack of applications for the various open principal positions and sighed with disbelief. The positions had been posted for five weeks and not one applicant with principal experience had applied. "What's wrong?" the Superintendent asked as he and the Assistant Superintendent entered the room. "Do we still not have any applicants?" A couple of steps behind them, the Director of Human Resources entered the conference room and announced she had listed the positions on the Texas Association of School Administrators website. She noted 14 applicants for the middle school positions and 24 for the elementary positions with all of them having a principal certification.

Seated around the conference table in absolute silence, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Director of Human Resources reviewed the applications. Then in a triumphant voice, the Assistant Superintendent raised his hand and waved an application in the air announcing, "One with three years of experience!" I responded dryly, "That's the one that was in the news. She was removed from the middle school in the neighboring district due to TAKS [testing] integrity issues."

The Superintendent in a slightly panicked tone asked, "What about our current Assistant Principals? They all have fewer than two years of experience, but are any of them ready?"

My thoughts immediately began to question, "What is going on in this situation? Why is this district not attracting qualified applicants for the principal positions? Is this unique to this school district? Is this something that needs to be explored?"

Introduction

My research interests originated from that experience. I questioned why

experienced principals were not applying for positions in my district and whether our

situation was unique or if other districts were experiencing the same problem. I

considered the implications of not being able to attract experienced principals to the

district and what the district needed to do differently. My initial research on recruiting

and retaining leadership led me to a growing body of research on principal turnover, why

principals leave, the impact of principal turnover, how to mentor principals, how to

develop principal pipelines, and how to overhaul principal preparation programs. Absent

in the literature, however, were studies on how to retain principals and on what motivates

the principals who do stay to continue in their principalships, leading to this research

study.

The influence and impact that the principal exerts on a campus cannot be

minimized. In a 2010 interview, the National Association of Elementary School

Principals (NAESP) asked then Secretary of Education Arne Duncan for his view on a

principal's role in improving student achievement. He responded, "Nothing is more

important. There's no such thing as a high-performing school without a great principal.

It is impossible." The primary responsibility of any school is student learning. In the

current educational environment, principals are expected to spend increasingly more time

in classrooms, focusing on curriculum and instruction and utilizing data to increase

student achievement, while simultaneously attending to organizational demands of their

institution (Lashway, 2002; Murphy, 2005; Shellard, 2003; Tucker & Codding, 2002).

The principalship is dynamic and ever changing, having evolved from a managerial

position to one focused on instructional leadership. However, as district, state, and national expectations continue to change, so must the principal (Drago-Severson, 2012).

The principal informs the culture of the campus and is at the forefront of every success and every challenge the campus experiences (The Wallace Foundation, 2008). Numerous governing bodies in education have recognized the dynamics of the principalship. The Southern Regional Education Board reported that state accountability systems place the "burden of school success and individual achievement squarely on the principal's shoulders" (Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry & Hill, 2003, p. 5). Gene Wilhoit (2008), Executive Director at the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, stated, "Today, educational leaders must not only manage school finances, keep buses running on time, and make hiring decisions, but they must also be instructional leaders, data analysts, community relations officers, and change agents" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 3). Indeed, with its duties, responsibilities and changes in educational policies, what would motivate educators to the principalship?

As the principalship evolves and the demands upon it increase, voluntary principal turnover throughout the nation continues (Battle 2010; Drago-Severson, 2009). Research and the media both report principal shortages nationwide, with high schools experiencing the highest attrition rate, followed by middle schools then elementary schools (Fuller & Young, 2010). The pressures to meet state and federal standards may directly or indirectly influence why some principals leave their positions. However, most leave willingly, with higher rates of turnover reported at schools with high minority, low-income, and low-achieving student populations (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2011; Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

The inability of my previous district to attract qualified and experienced principal candidates was not an anomaly. The shortage of qualified applicants to fill principal vacancies across the United States has been well documented (Battle, 2010; Doud & Keller, 1998; Drago-Severson, 2009; Educational Research Service [ERS], 1998, 2000; ERS, NAESP, & National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 2000; Murphy, 2006). Principal turnover rates across the nation range from 15% to 30% annually, with schools serving high poverty, low-achieving, majority minority populations at the higher end of the range (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2008; DeAngelis & White, 2011; Fuller & Young, 2009; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010b). Principal turnover may create instability in schools and thwart improvement efforts (Dillon, 2011). Frequency in principal turnover results in lower teacher retention, lower student achievement gains, and lower ability to attract experienced successors (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012).

In 2011, the U. S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that opportunities in school administration should be excellent over the next 10 years due to retirement and fewer candidates seeking principal positions. Several research studies have reported that the primary reason for voluntary principal turnover, more so in high-poverty and high-minority schools, is the principals' desire to lead higher achieving and more advantaged schools (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2011; Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009; Loeb et al., 2010b). Gajda and Militello (2008) reported that 63% of principals planned to leave the profession by 2013, with 70% of those leaving due to retirement. The researchers note that this rate of attrition from the profession is

significantly higher than in previous years. Many practicing principals are opting to leave administration in favor of classroom teaching, or are leaving the education profession altogether (Fuller & Young, 2009). Principals serving low-achieving, high poverty schools, tend to use that experience as a stepping-stone to what they view as more desirable assignments (Béteille et al., 2012). Compounding the principal shortage are the teachers and assistant principals with principal credentials who are nonetheless reluctant to apply for principal positions due to inadequate salaries, excessive time demands, and high levels of stress associated with the positions (ERS, 1998; Winter, Rinehart, & Munoz, 2001). In Texas, the Texas Education Agency reported that as of January 2015, 38,630 educators held an active certificate in the Principal certification field (K. Cameron, personal communication, January 22, 2015).

Although the concern over voluntary principal turnover has intensified in recent years, it is not new. In 1998, the NAESP and NASSP conducted a study to examine the availability of qualified candidates for principal openings. The researchers in the study sought to determine whether school districts were finding qualified school leaders to fill principal vacancies and to identify the factors that dissuaded potential candidates from applying for principal positions. The NAESP study found that nationally, nearly 40% of all principals would retire or leave their positions before 2010. A 2001 study on dissuading factors to the principalship found that 92% of the principal participants considered the "time and responsibilities demanded by the principalship discouraging" (p. 42), and 83% reported that the enormous demands of the position had forced them to make compromises in their families and personal lives (Farkas, Johnson, Duett, & Foleno, 2001).

In June 2010, the National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Science, released data from *Principal Attrition and Mobility, Results from the 2008-09 Principal Follow-up Survey, First Look*. The data from this study showed that 80% of the 117,140 principals surveyed in 2007-08 remained in their positions the following year, reporting 20% attrition. The July 2014 data results from the 2012-2013 *Principal Follow-up Survey* reported 78% of the 114,330 principals surveyed from 2010-2011 remained at the same school, a 22% attrition rate. These attrition rates indicate that the rate of principal turnover is twice as high as the 10% recommended for a healthy business model (Gallant, 2013). Sullivan (2012) argued that the attrition goal for top managers or executives should be zero, as companies should want to keep their top employees.

The time or tenure a principal stays at a particular campus is equally concerning. While it takes approximately five years to fully implement policies and practices that will positively impact the school's performance (Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010), the average length of a principal's tenure is three to four years. The National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (2009) conducted an analysis of characteristics of principals in New York schools including whether inexperienced principals hurt school performance. They found that principal experience matters significantly in school performance, particularly during the first few years of a principal's careers. In other words,

> Since this [finding] implies that new, inexperienced principals will, on average, hurt school performance, it has at least two implications. First, it implies that policies that lengthen principals' careers will, on average, improve school performance, since there will be fewer first-year principals. Second, it implies that a positive

correlation between principals' experience and student background may exacerbate

inequality within the NYC education system. (p. 28)

This analysis highlights the correlation of principal experience and student

achievement. The researchers imply that placing inexperienced principals in low-

achieving schools will have a detrimental impact on the school system. More

importantly, it highlights the benefits of retaining experienced principals.

In their 2009 study of newly hired principals in Texas, Fuller and Young reported,

"Principal retention rates are strikingly low for all schools - just over 50% of newly hired

principals stay for three years, and less than 30% stay for five years" (p. 3). Principal

retention for elementary schools after five years was the highest with 45.9%, followed by

middle schools with 36.5% and high schools with the lowest retention rate of 30.5%.

Table 1 shows principal retention at the middle school level at 61% after three years, at

37% after five years, and at 11% after 10 years (Fuller & Young, 2010). Fuller and

Young (2010) concluded:

In fact, about 90% of those leaving a school actually leave the principalship. Thus,

this problem is not simply one of principals moving from one school to another, but

rather a massive number and percentage of principals leaving the profession

altogether. Moreover, most will never return to the principalship. This is important

because it means we have a constant revolving door of new principals who have not

had the opportunity to hone their skills and become experts at school leadership.

This simply makes turnover even more likely, thus creating a vicious cycle of

turnover and inexperience. (p. 17)

Tenure for principals at high poverty, low-achieving campuses is lower than that of

campuses with lower poverty rates. For example, in the McDade County Public Schools,

tenure for principals at the lowest performing schools averaged 2.5 years, while tenure

for principals in the highest performing schools averaged 5.1 years (Loeb, Horng, &

Klasik, 2010a). Similarly, researchers reported turnover rates at the highest needs

schools in Milwaukee at 20%, San Francisco 26%, and New York City at 24%, while

McDade County Public Schools was at 22%, making it similar to large urban districts

(Béteille et al., 2011).

Table 1

*Percentage of Newly Hired Principals Staying at the Same School for Three, Five, and
Ten Years*

	Elementary	Middle	High School
3 Years	70%	61%	50%
5 Years	46%	37%	30%
10 Years	15%	11%	9%

Data retrieved from Fuller and Young (2010) *Principal turnover in Texas: Incidence
rates and impact on schooling.*

In Texas, Fuller and Young (2010) reported that the percentage of principals

leaving a school after one year at campuses with the lowest achievement rates was 19%

for elementary school, 27% for middle school, and 26% for high school. Comparatively,

the researchers also reported principal turnover at the highest achieving campuses was

12% at the elementary level, 19% at the middle school level, and 20% at the high school

level (2010). Table 2 shows principal retention rates after one year by student

achievement and school level (Fuller & Young, 2010) and Table 3 shows principal

retention rates by school level and percentage of economically disadvantaged students

(Fuller & Young, 2010). The results show that students who need the most academic

support face the highest rate of principal turnover.

Table 2

Percentage of Principal Retention Rates After One Year by Student Achievement and School Level

School Achievement	Elementary	Middle	High
Lowest Performing	81.1%	73.5%	74.5%
Low Performing	85.1%	80%	79.2%
Average Performing	85.4%	79.9%	77.5%
High Performing	86.8%	82.2%	79.2%
Highest Performing	88.5%	81.6%	80.1%

Data retrieved from Fuller and Young (2010) *Principal turnover in Texas: Incidence rates and impact on schooling.*

Addressing the direct impact of principal turnover on student learning is also critical, as studies report that the principal is second only to the teacher as the leading factor in determining student success (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Waters et al. (2003) reported a .25 correlation in leadership effectiveness on student achievement. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2004) found that direct and indirect leadership effects account for about one-quarter of total school effects on student learning. Also important to note is that as principal turnover increases, so does teacher turnover and more so in high-poverty, high-minority, and low-performing schools (Fuller & Young, 2009; Fuller, Young, & Baker, 2007).

In a 2011 study on principal turnover in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, researchers found students made lower achievement gains in math under a new principal than they would have under the previous principal. The research found this to be true

regardless of whether the incoming principal had no prior experience or served as an interim principal with experience (Béteille et al., 2011). A 2009 study of principals in North Carolina reported similar results (Miller, 2009). Most concerning is the impact on student learning at high poverty, low-achieving, and majority minority campuses.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

Principal turnover continues nationwide, and studies have identified a myriad of reasons why principals leave. There is also research on the impact of principal turnover on student achievement and teacher retention, and growing research on how to recruit and grow a principal pool from current assistant principals and teachers. Missing from the research however, are the voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of the principals who choose to stay. Identifying the motivational factors that meet the basic psychological needs of principals at work may lead to strategies and support systems necessary to reduce voluntary principal turnover (Deci & Flaste, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Researchers in the field of principal retention and turnover have called for research on the work life and perceptions of principals, specifically in schools with high needs student populations (Fuller & Young, 2009). This study responds to this call by focusing on four middle school principals in the second largest school district in Texas. Each principal served on a Title I campus with a majority minority or ethnically diverse student population. At the time of the research, these principals had completed their fifth consecutive year as principals at their respective campuses, which also happened to be the first principal position for three of the four participants.

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to provide qualitative data

that identify the motivational factors that inform principal retention. This research

utilized the same questions of Fuller and Young's (2009) quantitative study of Texas

principals and reframed them for a qualitative study in order to understand the *essence*

and the *why* of principal retention. The question is: Given the high levels of attrition of

middle school principals in Texas, what and how have (a) professional and personal

experiences, (b) administrative support, (c) professional preparation, and (d) technical

abilities contributed to principal retention and why? The researcher collected data

through in-depth, semi-structured interviews to determine four principals' prevalent

characteristics that informed their continued tenures. Incorporating the *Meeting Basic*

Psychological Needs at Work Scale as developed by Ryan and Deci (2000), the

researcher identified motivational factors that attributed to their reasons for staying in the

principalship. The results of this research could offers insight into improving voluntary

principal turnover, mobility, and retention rates.

Theoretical Framework

Motivation theory, specifically intrinsic motivation, framed this study.

"Motivation theories are built on a set of assumptions about the nature of people and

about the factors that give impetus to action" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 3). Intrinsic

motivation is typified as the highest form of self-determined behavior, with an internal

perceived locus of causality, and is entirely self-regulated (Deci & Ryan, 1990; Ryan &

Deci, 2000). Locus of causality is influenced by social environmental factors, can be

internal or external, and can change over time (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Self-determination theory (SDT) was the specific motivational lens for this

research and was used to examine the motivations that lead to principal retention. Self-

determination theory postulates that all humans have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These three needs are considered to be innate, universal, and cross-cultural for all human beings (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Self-determination theory grew out of the field of psychology and human motivation, particularly in the areas of intrinsic motivation and intrinsic needs (University of Rochester, 2008). Deci and Ryan (2008) developed SDT in the late 1970s and early 1980s in part to answer the question, "Why do we do what we do?" Self-determination theory posits that people innately look for challenges in their environments that will fuel their intrinsic motivation and satisfy their basic psychological needs. Self-determination in employees is vital within an organization, and self-determined employees are more committed to their organizations (Gagné & Deci, 2005) and report a higher likelihood to remain in their positions (Richer, Blanchard & Vallerand, 2002).

The first need of SDT is autonomy, which is defined as the opportunity to be in control of one's behavior, or more specifically, to be the source of one's behavior. Autonomy has been reported as the most important factor for successful internalization (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Important to note is that Deci and Ryan (2008) differentiated between autonomy and independence; autonomy means to act with a sense of choice and independence means to function alone without relying on others. Gagné and Deci (2005) reported that managers' support of autonomy in the work place led to "greater satisfaction of the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy as well as increased job satisfaction, higher performance evaluations, greater persistence, greater acceptance of organization change, and better psychological adjustment" (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 345).

The second need of SDT is competence, defined as a state of *effectance* according to White (1959) (as cited by Deci & Ryan, 1985). White theorized that this state of effectance was an individual's innate desire to master his or her environment: social, physical, or otherwise. Deci & Ryan (1985) further defined competence as, "a personal judgment about how confident one is that his or her skills will bring about a desired action or outcome" (pp. 15-16). The third need of SDT is relatedness. Relatedness is being connected with others, belonging, caring for and being cared for, as well as being part of a community (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Relatedness reflects the need for social interaction or cooperative learning within an activity (Edmunds, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006) and supports the premise that social contexts influence motivation and behavior. Figure 1 shows the interaction of the three basic psychological needs that lead to self-determination.
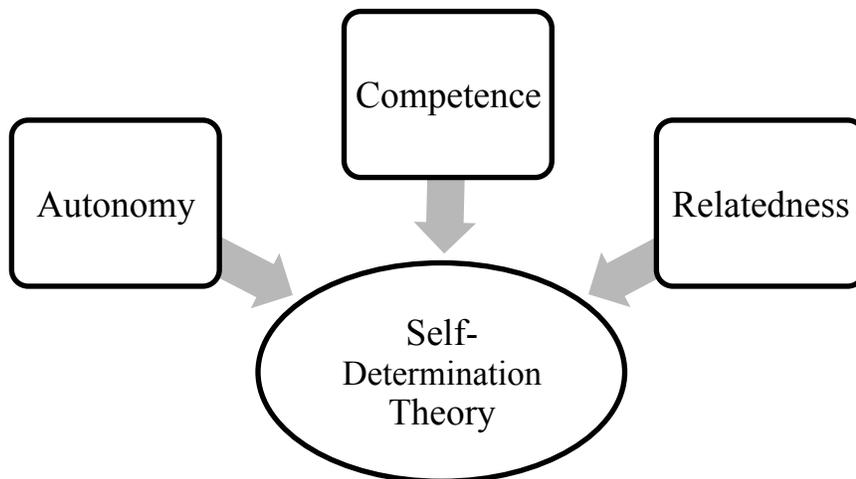
Figure 1. Self-Determination Theory.

Self-determination theory consists of six mini-theories that emerged from research and explain a set of motivationally based phenomena. The six mini-theories are: (1) Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), (2) Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), (3)

Causality Orientations Theory (COT), (4) Goal Contents Theory (GCT), (5) Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BSNT), and (6) Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT). The mini-theories explain individual components of motivation or personality functioning.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

Cognitive evaluation theory, the precursor to SDT, is concerned with intrinsic motivation and proposes that intrinsic motivation stems from individual's inherent psychological need for competence and self-determination (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 2001). Cognitive evaluation theory further proposes that tangible extrinsic rewards undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971).

Organismic Integration Theory

Organismic integration theory focuses on extrinsic motivation and the concept of internalization. Internalization is defined as absorbing the values, behaviors, beliefs and perspectives of others and adopting them as your own (Ryan, 1995).

Causality Orientation Theory

Causality orientation theory proposes that environmental evaluations and personality orientations influence intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1980; Ryan & Deci, 2002). Causality orientation theory encompasses three orientations: (a) autonomy orientation, characterized as intrinsically motivated or self-determined and competent (b) control orientation is characterized as extrinsically motivated and (c) impersonal or amotivated orientation which is characterized as a state of helplessness or incompetence.

Goal Contents Theory

Goal contents theory differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Where extrinsic goals are more ego-related driven (wealth and reputation), intrinsic goals lean towards self-actualization, community, and relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Basic Psychological Needs Theory

Self-determination theory posits that people innately look for challenges in their environments that fuel their intrinsic motivation and satisfy their basic psychological needs. According to SDT, humans have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These three needs are considered to be innate, universal, and cross cultural, for all human beings (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Relationships Motivation Theory

Relationships motivation theory focuses on relatedness as the basic psychological need for human growth (Ryan, 1995). Relatedness is being connected with others, belonging, caring for and being cared for, as well as being part of a community (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Relatedness reflects the need for social interaction or cooperative learning within an activity (Edmunds, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006) and supports the premise that social contexts influence motivation and behavior.

Self-determination theory's basic tenet is that humans have three basic psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and when these needs are met there is a positive correlation to one's overall wellbeing, which also correlates to personal and work motivations. I utilized SDT as a theoretical framework to gain an understanding of the principals' motivations and thus their self-determination the reasons

why they chose to stay in their positions, which provided an insight to curb principal turnover.

Methodology

The methodology used for this research was phenomenological case study. I utilized phenomenology as an iterative approach in which individual perceptions of an experience provided an opportunity to uncover the themes and meanings that principals held when they discussed the experiences that contributed to principal retention (Reid, Flowers & Larken, 2005). A case study approach is appropriate when the goal is to investigate in depth a complex program, event, activity, process, or one or more cases, which are "bounded" by context and time (Creswell, 2003, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Swanson & Holton, 2005). The focus of this qualitative research is to seek answers to what, how, and why questions using data collected from multiple sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Swanson & Holton, 2005). Phenomenological research tries to understand the essence of a phenomenon by examining the views of people who have experienced that phenomenon (Creswell, 2003).

Phenomenology is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, in which case studies incorporate various data points. The decision to use a qualitative phenomenological approach is justified by the complex characteristics of the principalship and the individuals who not only choose to serve in those positions, but who further choose to stay and serve at schools with student population often considered most challenging. Purposeful sampling will be used in selecting the interview participants. Participants who completed five consecutive years of principal experience, in a middle school that serves high poverty, majority minority student populations. Their experiences will

provide details and insights on the case study and address the research questions (Creswell, 2007).

Definition of Terms

The purpose of this section is to provide an explanation of terms specifically utilized in this study. The following definitions derived from the Texas Education Agency Accountability website.

Economically Disadvantaged: The count and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or who are eligible for other public assistance. Economically disadvantaged is referred to in research as "high poverty" or "poor."

English Language Learners (ELLs): The count and percentage of students whose primary language is other than English and who are in the process of acquiring English.

Mobility: The count and percentage of students who are mobile based on prior-year attendance. A student is considered mobile if he or she has been in membership at the school for less than 83% of the school year or has missed six or more weeks.

At-Risk: A student is identified At-Risk of dropping out of school using state defined criteria that states the student must be under the age of 26 and meet one of 13 indicators.

Accountability Rating: The labels assigned to districts and campuses that designate acceptable and unacceptable performance in the state's current academic accountability system are as follows: Met Standard, Met Alternative Standard, Improvement Required, Not Rated, and Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues. Labels assigned during prior to the 2011-12 school year were: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, and Academically Unacceptable.

Distinction Designations: Distinction designations are awarded in recognition of outstanding achievement in academic areas in addition to those evaluated under state accountability. Campus distinctions are based on indicators of student performance in comparison to 40 similar campuses (Texas Education Code [TEC] §§39.201–203). Academic Achievement in English Language Arts/Reading, mathematics, science, social studies, Top 25% Student Progress, Top 25% Closing Performance gaps, and Postsecondary Readiness.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A focused review of the literature was conducted to provide context for this study and was guided by essential issues identified in the previous chapter. Literature and research were reviewed in the following areas: (1) self-determination theory, (2) the role of the principal, (3) integrated leadership, (4) principal turnover, (5) impact of principal turnover, and (6) principal retention.

Theoretical Framework

This research was framed through the lens of intrinsic motivation. The focus of this research was to identify factors that explain why middle school principals choose to stay in the principalship. Why do they do what they do? What motivates them to stay? The approach to this research was through the lens of the self-determination theory (SDT).

Motivation

"Motivation theories are built on a set of assumptions about the nature of people and about the factors that give impetus to action" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 3). Theories on motivation vary considerably. According to Maslow's (1943, 1970) theory of hierarchy of needs, people are motivated for a variety of reasons; some needs are more basic than others. Maslow identified the basic needs as: biological and psychological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization and transcendence (Maslow, 1970). In 1962, David McClelland, building on Maslow's theory, identified three motivators that he believed are intrinsic to all humans: a need for achievement, a need for affiliation, and a need for power. McClelland further reported that everyone has all of the different characteristics depending on our dominant

motivator. These motivators are learned regardless of gender, culture, or age. McGregor

(1966) added to the scholarship of motivation through his theories of X and Y which

report humans as two distinct groups. Theory X posits that human beings are by nature

lazy, uninterested in work or responsibilities and thus must be pushed in order to get

anything done in a disciplined manner with reward assisting the process. Theory Y:

Assumes people want to work, they enjoy achievements, gain satisfaction from

responsibility, and are naturally inclined to seek ways of making work a positive

experience. Carl Rogers (1978) added to the SDT contending that motivation is highly

valued in the real world because of its power to produce (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and

Deci (2000) assert, "perhaps no single phenomenon reflects the positive potential of

human nature as much as intrinsic motivation, the inherent tendency to seek out novelty

and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn " (Ryan

& Deci, 2000).

"Most theories of motivation view motivation as a unitary phenomenon" (Ryan &

Deci, 2000, p. 54). The SDT suggests that there are different types of motivation,

varying levels of motivation, as well as orientation of motivation. Further, "central to

SDT is the distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation"

(Gagné & Deci, 2005, p 334). What does this all mean? Autonomy or being self-

determined involves acting with a sense of volition and having choice (intrinsic) by

responding to one's curiosity or interest. Controlled motivation (extrinsic) refers to

acting to obtain a desirable outcome or avoid an undesired one (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Orientation of motivation concerns the why, as in goals. For example, a principal may

choose to serve in a particular school due to their commitment and belief that they can

make a difference in that specific community, thus intrinsically motivated. Whereas,

principals who are serving in high-poverty, low-achieving schools, to "put in their time"

in order to transfer to a different community are extrinsically motivated because the end

goal is separable (a different community).

Comparisons between intrinsically motivated people and extrinsically motivated

people found that those who were intrinsically motivated to act have more interest,

excitement, and confidence, resulting in higher performance, persistence, and creativity

(Deci & Ryan, 1991; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997) and as heightened

vitality (Nix, Ryan, Manly, & Deci, 1999), self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 1995), and general

well-being (Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995).

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory grew out of the field of psychology and human

motivation, particularly in the areas of intrinsic motivation and intrinsic needs (University

of Rochester, 2008). Deci and Ryan (2008) began their work in self-determination theory

in the late 1970s and early 1980s and formally presented the theory in 1985 in part to

answer the question, "Why do we do what we do?" "Central to SDT is the distinction

between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation" (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p

334), where autonomy involves acting with a sense of volition and having the experience

of choice and competence is the belief that one can influence change resulting in the

confidence to challenge their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Self-determination theory posits that people innately look for challenges in their

environments that fuel their intrinsic motivation and satisfy their basic psychological

needs. According to SDT, humans have three basic psychological needs: autonomy,

competence, and relatedness as previously illustrated in Figure 1 (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

These three needs are considered to be innate, universal, and cross cultural, for all human

beings (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Self-determination theory, a macrotheroy of human motivation, has grown over

the past 40 years, it is multi-faceted, and consists of six mini-theories that emerged from

research to explain a set of motivationally based phenomena. The six mini-theories are:

(1) Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), (2) Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), (3)

Causality Orientations Theory (COT), (4) Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BSNT),

(5) Goal Contents Theory (GCT), and (6) Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT). The

mini-theories explain individual components of motivation or personality functioning. In

addition to the six mini-theories, Gagné and Deci (2005) report that self-determination

theory in the work place has been recognized outside of the realm of psychology and

report, "organizational scholars have recently begun to emphasize its [SDT] importance

for optimal employee functioning and well-being at work" (p. 345).

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

Cognitive evaluation theory, the precursor to SDT and the first mini-theory,

developed from research on the relationship between external events on intrinsic

motivation (Deci, 1975). "Cognitive evaluation theory proposes that underlying intrinsic

motivation are the innate psychological needs for competence and self-determination"

(Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001, p. 3). Where intrinsically motivated behaviors are

authentic to self and volitional, controlling external events pressure people to think, feel,

or behave in particular ways, can undermine intrinsic motivation and influence a person's

perceptions of competence and self-determination (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001).

Examples of external factors beyond rewards are evaluation, deadlines, competition, and performance goals (quotas) (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). The rewards or external events have two aspects, the informational and the controlling. "Informational convey self-determined competence and thus enhances intrinsic motivation" whereas, "the controlling aspect prompts an external PLOC (or low perceived self-determination) and thus undermines intrinsic motivation" (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001, p. 3).

When a person is intrinsically motivated the locus of causality (deCharms, 1968) is within oneself or self-initiated. However, when a person receives extrinsic rewards the PLOC changes from intrinsic to extrinsic as the person begins to perceive that she is doing the activity for the external rewards. Cognitive evaluation theory further asserts that people are intrinsically motivated to perform activities that make them feel competent and self-determined; however, the introduction of a reward can either strengthen or weaken an individuals feeling of competence and self-determination. For example, providing positive feedback will enhance their sense of competence and self-determination where a reprimand will decrease their intrinsic motivation as well as their sense of competence and self-determination (Deci, Cascio, & Krusell, 1973). However, Deci et al (2001) caution that verbal rewards can have significant controlling aspects suggesting that the delivery of the positive feedback guides the interpretation. Interpersonal context refers to the social climate of settings (e.g., the workplace or classroom), as the settings in-themselves, have controlling factors on how they should behave and thus, influence people's experience of self-determination (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 2001).

Deci's (1971) seminal research consisted of laboratory observations of college

students who enjoyed solving puzzles. The students were divided into two groups and observed over three different sessions. At the end of the second sessions, students in one group were paid a dollar for every puzzle they solved correctly, with the control group not receiving any type of reward. Researchers found that during the third sessions, the group that received the monetary reward lost interest in the puzzles while the control group persisted in the activity similar to the previous two sessions. "The findings suggested an undermining of intrinsic motivation by task-contingent rewards" (Vansteenkiste, 2012, p. 107).

Researchers in the 1970s and 1980s replicated the study utilizing varying forms of controlling external events (evaluations, deadlines, punishment, competition, and surveillance) that resulted in the support of the undermining effects of extrinsic motivation on intrinsic motivation. Researchers also found that not only do controlling events undermine task persistence after the removal of the contingency (reward), they also found the removal of the contingency adversely affect experience during task engagement (Vansteenkiste, 2012, p. 109). Pittman, Emery, and Boggiano's (1982) research added to the CET as the research found that that rewarded participants preferred easier tasks and the reward negatively affected the experience during the task. Researchers also found that controlling external events were found to predict less cognitive flexibility (McGraw & McCullers, 1979), more shallow learning (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987), less creativity (Amabile, 1979), and less positive emotional tone (Garbarino, 1975). Weinstein and Ryan's (2010) research found that when people are pressured to help a peer, the pressure or controlling context negatively affects the wellbeing of both the helper and the peer, meaning controlling contexts can spread and

impact others (Vansteenkiste et al, 2012).

Organismic Integration Theory

Organismic integration theory focuses on extrinsic motivation and the concept of internalization. Internalization is defined as absorbing values, behaviors, beliefs and viewpoints of others and adopting them as your own (Ryan, 1995). Unlike the CET that focuses on intrinsic motivation, OIT assumes that it is possible to be autonomously extrinsically motivated. Organismic integration theory suggests that the concepts and process of internal motivation, as presented in the CET, are not relevant for some activities and posits that in the course of life, people experience a multitude of behaviors and responsibilities that are not necessarily interesting or enjoyable (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010). They further report that when presented with such behaviors, varying degrees of extrinsic motivation is necessary to complete said behavior. Organismic integration theory argues that people have a natural tendency to integrate their ongoing experiences, as long as there are support systems to do so. The OIT posits that external motivation "can vary in the degree to which it is experienced as autonomous versus controlled and thus, suggested that different types of [extrinsic motivation] can be distinguished" (Ryan & Connell, 1989).

Seminal research on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation considered them separate and antagonistic (deCharms, 1968). The OIT "views internalization not in terms of a dichotomy but rather in terms of a continuum" (Deci, 2002, p. 15). According to OIT "external motivation will be experienced as autonomous to the extent that people feel a sense of ownership over their behavior and have fully endorsed the personal value and significance of the behavior" (Vansteenkiste, 2010, p. 114).

The OIT posits a continuum or taxonomy of human motivation and types of regulation for extrinsic motivation that differ in the degree to which they represent autonomy. Figure 2 shows the self-determination continuum with types of motivation and types of regulation. The continuum is arranged from left to right in terms of the extent to which the motivation for a behavior originates from the self. At the far left of the continuum is amotivation, followed by the four regulations identified as external regulation, introjection regulation, identification regulation, and integration regulation, ending the continuum with intrinsic motivation. The continuum aligns the regulatory styles or type of motivation with the associated processes and the perceived locus of causality.

Amotivation is defined as the state of lacking the intention to act (Deci & Ryan, 2002) or act passively. Amotivation results from feeling that they are unable to achieve desired outcomes in the absence of an extrinsic reward, or they lack or do not value the activity or outcomes it would yield (Deci &Ryan 2000). *External Regulation* "is the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation and includes the classic instance of being motivated to obtain rewards or avoid punishments" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 14). External regulation has an external perceived locus of causality, for example; a teenager is paid to mow the neighbors yard, when the neighbor stops paying the teenager the teenager stops mowing the yard, meaning the behavior (mowing the yard) will discontinue when the external control (money) is removed. The problem is with maintenance and transfer, as the behavior will only continue as long as the external regulation is present (Deci & Ryan, 2014). *Introjected Regulation* is an external regulation that has been partially internalized with a contingency but not truly accepted as

one's own. Introjected regulation can be quite controlling and behaviors are performed to

avoid guilt and shame or attain ego enhancements and feelings of worth or contingent self

esteem (Deci & Ryan, 1995). In this instance, a student joins the track team, not because

he enjoys the sport, but simply to earn a letterman's jacket to impress his girlfriend. The

behavior is within the person (he is a good runner) but is not considered part of the

integrated self (is not doing it for the love of the sport).

     Identified Regulation is considered more autonomous or self-determined as the

individual "has come to value the behavior and has identified with the regulatory

process" (Deci et al, 1991, p. 329). In this scenario, an overweight adult who attends

exercise classes to lose weight and does so to take responsibility for his health

(Vansteenkiste et al, 2012). *Integrated regulation* is the most autonomous type of

external regulation and functions similarly to intrinsic motivation. In this scenario "a

smoker who understands the health benefits of cessation and wants to quit so that she

might live to see her grandchildren grow up" (Vansteenkiste et al, 2012, p. 116). This

behavior (stop smoking) is extrinsically motivated because she is doing it for her health

or a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 37).

     It is possible for people to take in a regulation at any point along this continuum

providing the individuals background and support constructs (Ryan and Deci, 1991,

Ryan, 1995). Internalization is not instantaneous, Deci and Ryan (2002) assert that

support for autonomy is critical in whether internalization supported by relatedness and

competence will be introjected or integrated. For example, when asking a spouse for a

favor, the spouse will most likely comply out of feelings of relatedness. However, if the

spouse believes he is lacking competence in completing a behavior, he is less likely to

perform the behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Research on OIT has found applicability in various domains to include education (Miserandino, 1996; Grow, Freedman, Ryan & Deci, 1996) intimate relationships (Blais, Sabourin, Boucher, & Vallerand, 1990), and political behavior (Koestner, Losier, Vallerand & Carducci, 1996).
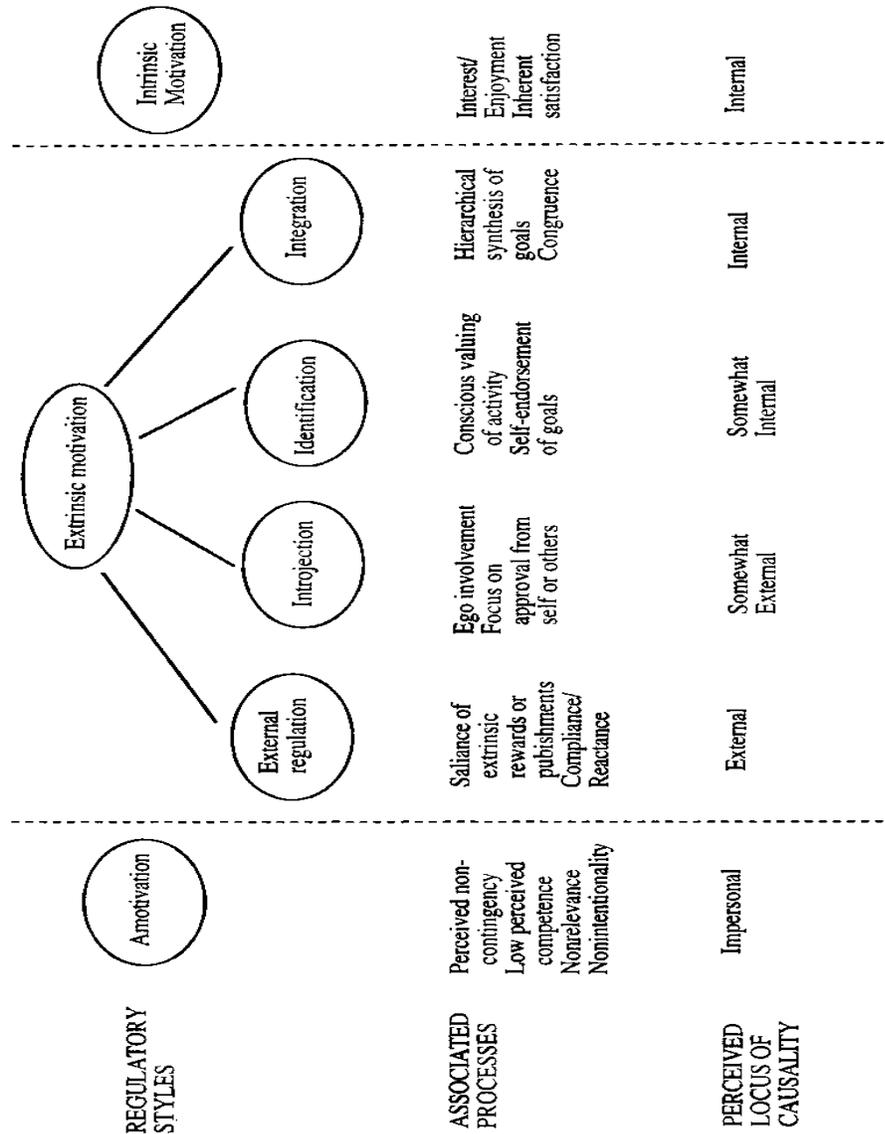
Figure 2. Self-Determination Continuum.

Causality Orientation Theory

Causality orientation theory is the SDT's third mini-theory that focuses on individual differences in global motivational orientations (Vansteenkiste, 2012) and proposes that environmental evaluations and personality orientations influence intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1980; Ryan & Deci 2002). In simpler form, how have our experiences formed or developed our personality orientation? Causality orientation theory encompasses three orientations, autonomy orientation, control orientation, and impersonal or amotivated orientation. Causality orientation theory posits that all three orientations exist to some degree in everyone and depending on the activity or action people will respond accordingly (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010).

Autonomous orientation is characterized as intrinsically motivated or self-determined and competent, which are evident in the actions they demonstrate towards activities or causes they have selected. For example, a principal who is interested in establishing a food bank for her campus community researches how to implement a program and solicits partnerships for this endeavor. Her autonomous orientation initiates her behaviors that align with her values. In contrast, controlled orientation is characterized as extrinsically motivated or controlled. A person with a controlled orientation would view the establishment of a food bank as an expectation and feel pressured to complete the task. The idea was not authentic to him therefore the response would be controlled regulation of their behavior. On the polar opposite of autonomous orientation is impersonal or amotivated orientation and is characterized as a state of helplessness or incompetence. The principal in this scenario has no interest or attachment to a food bank and will not exhaust any efforts to the cause with or without pressure from

external forces. These three orientations are described as surface personality dimensions and reported as relatively stable (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010).

Deci and Ryan (1985) to assess general motivational orientations developed the General Causality Orientations Scale (GCOS). The findings of a study on mothers and children revealed causality orientations may be transmitted inter-generationally. For example, mothers who scored high on *autonomous orientation* also reported greater tendency to support their children. Mothers who scored high in control orientation were found to be highly sensitive to others' evaluations and their children were "anxious about losing their mother's approval, just as their mothers are concerned with others' approval" (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010, p. 127). Mothers who scored high on impersonal orientation reported greater self-derogation, depressive symptoms, social anxiety, impaired ego-development, and low self worth and their children displayed an avoidant attachment pattern (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Hodgins and Knee (2002) examined the relationship of autonomy and control orientations to openness and defensiveness. The researchers rationalized that autonomy oriented individuals would process information and interact with others with a sense of openness, exhibiting greater tolerance and non-biased responding. In contrast, control oriented individuals would feel threatened by intrapersonal and interpersonal pressures and process information in a biased, self-serving manner and relate to others in a more defensive, strategic, and intolerant manner (Vansteenkiste, 2012). Autonomy oriented individuals report higher levels of self-knowledge, whereas control oriented individuals report more biased and inaccurate self-perceptions.

Basic Psychological Needs Theory

Basic needs theory (BPNT) is the fourth mini-theory of SDT and was done "to clarify the meaning of the concept and to detail its dynamic relation to mental health and well being" (Deci and Ryan, 2002, p. 12). The SDT posits that people innately look for challenges in their environments that fuel their intrinsic motivation and satisfy their basic psychological needs. Basic Psychological Needs Theory "specifies innate psychological nutriments that are necessary for psychological and physical health and social wellness" (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 15). According to SDT, humans have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT posits that all humans, regardless of whether their behaviors fit or do not fit the social context, require satisfaction of the three basic needs for psychological growth and wellness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The first basic psychological need is *autonomy*, being the opportunity to be in control of one's behavior or more specifically to be the source of one's behavior. Important to note is that Deci and Ryan (2008) report autonomy and independence as different from each other, whereby "autonomy means to act with a sense of choice and independence means to function alone without relying on others" (pp. 15-16). In 1959, White (as cited by Deci & Ryan, 1985) described *competence* as a state of effectance. He theorized that this state of effectance was an individual's innate desire to master his or her environment: social, physical, or otherwise. Deci & Ryan (1985) further defined competence as; a personal judgment about how confident one is that his or her skills will bring about a desired action or outcome. *Relatedness* is being connected with others, belonging, caring for and being cared for, as well as being part of a community (Ryan &

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Deci, 2002). Relatedness reflects the need for social interaction or cooperative learning

within an activity (Edmunds, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006) and supports the premise that

social contexts influence motivation and behavior. Vansteenkiste et al (2012) report,

> BNT specifies three dimensions of the social environment that support (rather
>
> than thwart) those needs. Specifically, autonomy-supportive (rather than
>
> controlling) contexts support autonomy, well-structured (rather than chaotic and
>
> demeaning) contexts support competence, and warm and responsive (rather than
>
> cold and neglectful) contexts support relatedness. (pp. 131-132)

An important characterization of basic needs, therefore, is that when satisfied they

promote humans' thriving and optimal functioning, and prevent illness. A second

important characterization of basic needs is that they are innate, implying satisfying the

basic psychological need is life long, does not require conscious or cognitive process as

anyone at any age can benefit from being in need supportive environments (Grolnick,

Bridges, & Frodi, 1984) and lastly, that "the need for autonomy, competence and

relatedness are universal nutriments necessary for optimal functioning, regardless of

gender, social class, and cultural context " (Vansteenkiste et all, 2012, p. 134).

Basic psychological needs theory posits that when basic needs are thwarted,

people may cope in a variety of maladaptive ways such as need substitutes (Deci & Ryan,

2000). An example of need substitutes is a strong or obsessive desire for material success

that affects cognition, emotion, and behavior. For example, in pursuit of wealth, an

individual may have a sense of competence meanwhile the marriage is falling apart thus

interfering with his satisfaction of relatedness.

Gagné and Deci (2005) report work climates that promote satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs will enhance employees' intrinsic motivation and promote full internalization of extrinsic motivation and that this will in turn yield the important work outcomes of (1) persistence and maintained behavioral change; (2) effective performance, particularly on tasks requiring creativity, cognitive flexibility, and conceptual understanding; (3) job satisfaction; (4) positive work-related attitudes; (5) organizational citizenship behaviors; and (6) psychological adjustment and well-being (p. 38).

Self-determination theory asserts that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are inherent and universal with autonomy as the most essential. Lastly, the degree to which persons exercise autonomy when answering their needs for competence and relatedness determines the extent to which they are self-motivated (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

As previously discussed, self-determination theory asserts that all human beings have three fundamental psychological needs, which they assert are "necessary in a continuous manner for people to function optimally and to display a high level of psychological health" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 55). Self-determination theory further proposes that deprivation or thwarting of the satisfaction of any of the three psychological needs will result in some form of negative outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2014).

Relatedness is being connected with others, belonging, caring for and being cared for as well as being part of a community (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Relatedness reflects the need for social interaction or cooperative learning within an activity (Edmunds, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006) and supports the premise that social contexts influence motivation and behavior. "Among the most important values and motives of people around the world is to feel connected and meaningfully related to others" (Vansteenkiste

et al, 2012) (e.g., La Guardia & Patrick, 2008; Reis, 2011).

Goal Contents Theory

Goal contents theory (GCT), the fifth mini-theory of SDT, is concerned with the relationship between motivational goals and satisfaction of needs. Self-determination theory added GCT due to growing research on the content of life goals and the need to organize the research in a meaningful manner (Vansteenkiste et al, 2012). Goal contents theory differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic goals where extrinsic goals are defined as ego-related driven (wealth and reputation) while intrinsic goals favor self-actualization, community, and relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Vansteenkiste et al (2012) asserts that research on SDT through the lens of BPNT, examined the relationship of life goals or aspirations that people pursue. Vansteenkiste et al further that researchers found that "intrinsic goals that are authentic to self and associated with community contribution and personal growth, are more likely to sustain or satisfy the basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness" (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006, p 23). In contrast, extrinsic goals or aspirations of worth are not likely to be related to need satisfactions (Sheldon, et al., 2004; Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2000). "The problem, however, is that such pursuits are not likely to provide genuine satisfaction of basic needs, which is integral to healthy personality development and wellness" (Vansteenkiste et al, 2012).

Goal contents theory "posit that that people have a natural tendency to move toward intrinsic goals and away from extrinsic goals, although such shifts do not happen automatically, but require contextual supports for need satisfaction" (Vansteenkiste et al, 2012, p. 146). Sheldon et al (2003) found that need-supportive contexts promote the

redirection of orientation, whereas need-thwarting contexts hinder such changes (Sheldon & Krieger, 2004). Ryan and colleagues (1996) argued that based on the varying motivational factors, "not all goals are crated equal," and therefore, are likely to have differential relations to physical, social, and psychological health.

Based on their orientation, intrinsic goal pursuit has an *inward* orientation and is conducive to need satisfaction, extrinsic goal pursuit is an *outward* orientation, (Williams, Cox, Hedberg, & Deci, 2000) or a "having" orientation (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003) focused on self-worth through achievement and external validation, thus detracting from basic need satisfaction (Vansteenkiste, Soenens, & Duriez, 2008). People motivated by extrinsic goals to achieve fame or wealth encounter conflict at work and home and lack collegiality in the work place that undermines satisfaction of relatedness and autonomy (Vansteenkiste et al, 2007). Extrinsic goal pursuits tend to be associated with poorer wellbeing and less optimal functioning than do intrinsic goal pursuits (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

Vansteenkiste et al., (2006) report several studies have provided evidence that assert that when people report strong aspirations for extrinsic life goals tend to have lower life satisfaction, self-esteem, and self-actualization; higher depression and anxiety; poorer relationship quality; less cooperative behavior; and greater prejudice and social-dominant attitudes (e.g., Duriez, Vansteenkiste, Soenens, & De Witte, 2004; Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996; McHoskey, 1999; Sheldon & McGregor, 2000; Sheldon, Sheldon, & Osbaldiston, 2000). In contrast, goals such as intimate relationships, personal growth, or contributing to one's community facilitate health and wellness. Evidence also suggests

that goals framed toward intrinsic aims are better adhered to than those focused on extrinsic outcomes (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006)

Relationships Motivation Theory

Relationships motivation theory (RMT) is the sixth mini-theory of SDT and focuses on relatedness as the basic psychological need for human growth (Ryan, 1995). The central tenet of RMT is that "the need for relatedness predicts people's experiences of relationship satisfaction or relational well-being, relatedness need satisfaction alone is not enough to ensure high-quality relationships" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 60). Deci and Ryan (2014) further assert that people need to experience autonomy and competence within the relationship in order for the relationship to thrive. La Guardia et al. (2000) found that satisfaction of autonomy and relatedness contributes independently to positive relationship outcomes. Theory as well as data, suggest that in order to for people to experience optimum health, wellness, and high quality relationships, all three basic psychological needs must be satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2014).

Sheldon et al.'s (2000) research on the basic psychological needs found that people who in general felt more satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness between person level, also felt more psychological wellbeing. They also found that on days they experienced each need independently contributed to their wellbeing on that day. Similarly, Ryan and colleagues (2010) researched the three basic need satisfactions of adult workers and found "each of the needs was independently associated with variations in wellness" (p. 56). Their research found that when people felt their work environments thwarted their autonomy and relatedness their wellness was affected. In addition they identified a "weekend effect" where workers had substantially higher

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physical and psychological wellness on weekends and attributed the difference to the needs for autonomy and relatedness being satisfied during the weekend.

In a study on need satisfaction within close relationships, Patrick et al. (2007) found that need satisfaction of each need contributed to personal wellbeing, relationship quality and effectively managing conflict within the relationship. Research on need satisfaction and attachment security between infants and their caregivers found that when caregivers are sensitive and responsive, secure attachments develop (Ainsworth et al, 1978). "These secure attachments are considered to be the basis for what are called working models," which implies that the attachments experienced as infants will be replicated in future relationships especially in romantic relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 57).

Analysis of three studies investigating the consistency of attachment security of young adults across multiple partners found a variance of one-third, suggesting that attachment security in an individual difference. The analysis of the study supports the working-model component of attachment theory. The analysis also shows that the variance is not accounted for at the individual-difference level, but varies within person (Deci & Ryan, 2014). Deci and Ryan (2014) report that that "within each close relationship, the need satisfaction that was unique to that partner also predicted the unique security of attachment with that partner" (p. 57). When La Guardia et al (2000) controlled for relatedness satisfaction, they identified autonomy satisfaction as the greatest predictor of attachment security in every type of relationship including parental and peer.

In summary, research indicates that when people experience satisfaction of autonomy and competence needs within relationships, they experience higher quality relationships, a more secure sense of attachment, and greater psychological wellbeing. These results are generalized across age groups, cultures, and relationship type and over time.

The Role of the Principal

The role of the principal is difficult to define, as the responsibilities and context of learning varies between schools, districts, and states. The ultimate role is to improve learning and provide optimal learning experiences (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). However, in an attempt to describe the principal position, DeVita, Richard, Darling-Hammond, & Haycock (2007) states,

> [Principals] need to be educational visionaries; instructional and curriculum leaders; assessment experts; disciplinarians; community builders; public relations experts; budget analysts; facility managers; special program administrators; and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs. Although that job description sounds overwhelming, at least it signals that the field has begun to give overdue recognition to the indispensable role of and mounting demands on principals. (p. i)

The role of the principal continues to evolve and is influenced by changing educational policies, governmental reform, increased accountability, and historical

events. These historical events are what have formed our current educational system, and thus inform the role of the principalship.

At the start of the 20th century, the notion of school leadership was poorly defined primarily due to the uncertainty of who should lead the schools: community or church leaders, parents, teachers, a district leader, or a building leader. The authority of the principal was also unclear, Rousmaniere (2013) asks, "Was it the mechanical management of children at recess, the examination of student academic work and the disciplining of their behavior, or the authority to purchase equipment and hire teachers?" (p. 28). Most principals at the elementary level continued to teach and attend to the administrative roles delegated by the superintendent as well as perform janitorial work and serve as community liaisons (Rousmaniere, 2013). High school principals' added responsibilities included coaching athletics, directing plays, supervising clubs, participating in local church and community events, and participating in professional associations (Rousmaniere, 2013).

In the1930s, focused attention to the role of the principalship resulted in the emergence of two camps: the administrative progressives, who advocated for the development of school systems driven by values of fiscal economy and organizational accountability, and the pedagogical progressives who promoted a child centered, humanistic approach to education (Rousmaniere, 2013). The administrative progressive reformers believed improved school organization was the key to improved learning. The administrative progressive reformers believed the business concepts of hierarchy was a necessity and that public education should be run as a systemic bureaucracy run by trained managers. They promoted a centralized administrative structure. The

administrative progressives believed, "A strengthened principal's role was the lynchpin to social efficiency-oriented reform because the principal would be the local professional agent who would implement central office policies in the local school" (Rousmaniere, 2013, p. 32). To clarify the enhancing role of the principal, educational administration reformers developed four strategies:

First, they argued for reshaping the regular responsibilities of the principal away from the classroom toward specific administrative work housed in a separate principal's office. Second, they reinforced the authority of the principal as a supervisor over teachers. Third, they promoted a competitive credentialing process for the principalship through universities and state agencies. Finally they developed a campaign to increase the number of men in education administration. (Rousmaniere, 2013, p. 31)

In the 1940s, the role of the principal included educational leader of the community, a model of democratic behaviors, and connecting with social and civic agencies (Hill, 1946). Immediately following the Second World War, the principalship experienced an "unprecedented increase in the complexity of administrative operations" (Rousmaniere, 2013, p.86). Cultural changes and external influences pulled the principal in various directions, as well as opened up the school to scrutiny and governance:

[The principal] juggled the administrative and legal requirements around issues of employment, transportation, facility construction, curriculum development, community engagement, field trips, racial integration, standardized testing, traffic safety, textbooks, janitorial services, sex education, and insurance policies. And his day was also busy with personal interactions with teachers, staff, students, and

parents. (Rousemaniere, 2013, p. 86)

In the 1950s, the emphasis was on efficient administration, Beck and Murphy (1993) noted that, "principals were instructed on minute and even trivial duties, such as how custodians should be introduced to students and how faculty lunchroom conversations should be structured" (p. 59), and they were still expected to serve as instructional leaders.

National events in the 1950s further impacted education. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that separate schools were inherently unequal and ruled racial discrimination in the public schools as unconstitutional. In 1955, the Supreme Court ruled on relief of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case and urged states to dismantle segregation "with all deliberate speed" (SanMiguel, 2005). Desegregation decimated the Black school principal force in the South (U.S. Congress, 1970). Black principals were important role models and respected leaders in their communities. They served as liaisons between the school and family as well as mediators between black and white segments of society. Local school boards mostly neglected black principals resulting in more autonomy than their white peers; ultimate decision making; and authority to shape personnel, implement programs, and raise money for needed resources (Rousemaniere, 2013).

In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the world's first satellite. This act was a wake-up call to Americans, resulting in one of the most historic pieces of education legislation in American history: the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) (deJong-Lambert, 2007). The NDEA provided federal funding for science and technology, foreign language education, and teacher education in these areas, as well as

improved school testing, guidance counseling, and vocational education. Kafka (2009) reported,

> In the 1950s and '60s, for example, at the same time that efficiency, scientific knowledge, and the shoring up of democratic institutions to fight communism were central to American schools, the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown* decision and the larger civil rights movement were affecting American public education as well. In many cities and towns in both the North and South, questions of what school was supposed to accomplish and who it intended to serve raised doubts about local principal's authority. (p. 326)

In the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 402, Congress authorized research on, "the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States, its territories and possessions, and the District of Columbia" (p. iii). The research conducted by Coleman and colleagues (1966) in response to Section 402 resulted in the "Equality of Educational Opportunity" report, most commonly known as the Coleman Report, which found that schools in the United States were highly segregated and noted inequalities in American public schooling and within the public schools themselves. The report asserted that students' background and socioeconomic status were more significant in determining educational outcomes than were measured differences in school resources. While the Coleman Report asserted school resources did not have a significant impact on student learning, the government began funding programs to equalize the education field during the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1960s, the Effective Schools Movement emerged. The principal's role included being a facilitator and monitor of program implementation charged with ensuring compliance with federally funded programs. Principals also became involved with curriculum revision, staff development, and classroom intervention, leading to the perception of principals as change agents. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was a federal program, which instituted federal funding for social enrichment programs for poor children, and the 1968 Bilingual Education Act provided special aid for children with limited English proficiency. As the public education system transformed, principals bore the responsibility of implementing policies and shaping the progress of racial integration in their schools, and some were more successful and accepting than others (Rousmaniere, 2013).

In the 1970s court decisions and new laws continued to change the educational landscape. In the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that language minority students fell under a protective category of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act that required affirmative steps to provide equal educational opportunities for all students. In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act otherwise known as PL94-142 was signed into law in an effort to provide children with disabilities an appropriate education. The principal was now expected to not only understand policies, but to assume responsibility for educating a new population of children into the public schools (Kafka, 2009).

In the mid-1970s came a turning point for principal leadership. Research on effective schools concluded that strong administrative leadership was among a number of factors that had an impact on student learning (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982).

The role of the principal as an instructional leader was a paradigm shift that required principals to move beyond the management component of their work and focus on educational improvement (Hallinger, 1992).

In the 1980s, the principal's attention had been turned from the challenge of achieving equity in schools to alignment with new state and federal demands and student accountability (Rousemaniere, 2013). In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education) reported that America's education system was being eroded by a "rising tide of mediocrity" influencing the effective schools movement that furthered the role of principals as instructional leaders. Principals were also called on to be transformative and that they should be able to mobilize their schools and their communities toward creating a learning culture of shared values around high expectations for student learning (Hallinger, 1992). At the same time, school choice initiatives required principals to act as innovative and entrepreneurial agents (Rousmaniere, 2013).

In the 1990s, the school restructuring movement or Reform Era, shifted the groundwork and assumptions about school leadership so that the status quo was no longer tenable (Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006). Principals as instructional leaders served as the primary source of knowledge for the development of the school's educational program (Hallinger, 1992). The principal was expected to be knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction and be able to intervene directly with teachers. Principals were expected to make instructional improvements and closely monitor student progress (Hallinger, 1992). This era incorporated community involvement and shared leadership.

In the 2000s, "the principal's job was to raise test scores," (Rousmaniere, 2013, p. 132; see also Kessinger, 2011; Pulos, 2012). In 2002, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Act became law and introduced unprecedented accountability measures. These measures aimed to close the achievement gap between student demographic groups and mandated that all students in grades 3 through 8 meet adequate yearly progress in reading and math by 2014. NAESP (2004), sums up the first half of the 20th century principal role by noting, "No longer can a principal be judged solely on how well he or she manages the administrative duties of a school. The quality of the principal must relate to a school's capacity to ensure achievement for all children" (p. 1).

In 2009, Race to the Top legislation was introduced with an additional focus by the federal government to overhaul underperforming schools. This legislation had four components: new standards and assessments; massively improved assessment and data systems; greater quality of teachers and principals; and a focus on turning around the bottom 5% of schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This legislation led most of the states in the nation to adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

The role of the principal continues to evolve. However, the constant throughout history has been the emphasis on student learning. Effective principals are effective instructional leaders and managers. They shape a vision of academic success for all students; they create a climate conducive to learning; they cultivate leadership in others; they improve instruction; and they manage people, data, and processes to foster school improvement (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). The role of the principal continues to be informed by policy, bureaucracy, and the unprecedented demands of high-stakes testing and accountability. School leadership today is very different than what it was ten years ago.

School Leadership

Leadership Matters! The NASSP and NAESP (2013) report, *Leadership Matters: What the Research Says About the Importance of Principal Leadership* assert that, "Great schools do not exist apart from great leaders. NASSP and NAESP have always asserted this reality with confidence, but the past few years have provided volumes of high-quality research that confirm it" (p. 1). How does leadership matter? What does effective leadership look like? Which leadership model is the most effective? What is the desired outcome? Context matters. School leadership theories and models are as bountiful as are the definitions of leadership. As the role of the principal changes, and probably as often, leadership theories and models flow accordingly. However, at the end of the day, or school year, what matters most is the impact of school leadership on student learning.

There is a general agreement that effective leaders lead effective schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). For the purpose of this research, Leithwood et al. (2010) definition will inform this topic: "Leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, it is about establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions" (pp. 9-10).

Effectiveness in the age of accountability and school reform is critical to improved student learning. School leadership informs student achievement indirectly through instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership practices (Marks & Printy, 2003). In *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, Leithwood and colleagues (2004) report that direct and indirect leadership effects account for about one-quarter of total school effects on student learning. They further report effective principals inform

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the culture by setting directions and goals and inform the instructional quality by attracting, retaining, and improving instruction and by actively engaging in the learning process. They further assert that maintaining a campus conducive to learning affects the learning environment (Leithwood, 2013). School leadership is not a one-size-fits-all model and leadership should consider the context of the school, meaning that there is no magic formula on how much time leadership should focus on any component of leadership (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood, 2013).

The *what* of school leadership is informed by district, state, and federal policies. The *what* is also informed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2008), as adopted by the National Policy Board for Education Administration (draft revised standards are currently under review). The ISLLC standards are a broad set of national guidelines that states can use to guide and improve educational leadership preparation, licensure, evaluation, and professional development (CCSSO, 2008). As of 2014, 45 states and the District of Columbia have utilized the ISLLC standards as a framework to inform policy for education leadership. ISLLC provides measure of leadership success based on student learning and guided certification reform related to principal preparation. The ISLLC "were never intended to be all-inclusive. Rather, they were intended as indicators of knowledge, dispositions and performances important to effective school leadership" (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p. 3).

The *what* principals are held accountable for are within the six standards (CCSSO, 2008):

1. Vision, Mission and Goals - by facilitating the development, articulation,

implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

2. Teaching and Learning - by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

3. Managing Organizational Systems and Safety – by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

4. Collaboration with Families and Stakeholders – by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

5. Ethics and Integrity – by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

6. The Education System – by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

The *how* of school leadership is addressed by the actions the principal takes to ensure standards are met, instruction is effective, expectations are high, and the systems or management supports a culture of learning.

The leadership model that is most conducive to student learning and responsive to principal turnover is an integrated leadership model comprised of instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and distributed leadership.

Integrated Leadership

The role of the principal continues to be informed by policy, bureaucracy, and the unprecedented demands of high-stakes testing and accountability. School leadership

today is very different from what it was 10 years ago. School leadership today requires more than courage and a cape, it requires principals to know *how* to ensure learning is achieved while attending to the management of schooling. The principal as an instructional leader is responsible for leading a learning organization. In tandem, principal turnover continues, and the need for sustainable practices to minimize the impact of principal turnover is required.

The leadership models most pronounced in the literature are instructional leadership and/or variations of it, and transformational leadership. Integrated Leadership (IL) incorporates transformational leadership, instructional leadership, and shared or distributed leadership. Integrated leadership is also known as Transformational Shared Instructional Leadership (Marks & Printy; 2003) or simply referred to as a hybrid model. Integrated leadership best supports the context for this research because it maintains focus on the impact of leadership on student learning, as well as on the need to build capacity to mitigate the effects of principal turnover. Some instructional leadership models are purist, with the expectation that the primary focus of school principals, should be on devoting their time as leader of learners and focus on instruction, curriculum, and assessment (Robinson, 2008). Some instructional leadership models include the management component of leadership, but with a minor emphasis (Marks & Louis, 1997). Transformation leadership creates the culture necessary for a learning organization, but lacks enough focus on instruction to meet the demands required in the age of accountability (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998). Utilizing both instructional leadership and transformational leadership simultaneously will meet the demands of the principalship. Incorporating distributed leadership, as the third component of the

integrated leadership approach to school leadership, will mitigate some of the impact of principal turnover.

"The integrated leadership model derived from a study investigating the potential of collaboration around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and student performance" (Marks & Printy, 1997, p. 371). The analysis was grounded in a comparison of two leadership conceptions, transformational and instructional. Principals as transformational leaders can serve to transform school cultures or to maintain them (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Transformational leadership provides intellectual direction and aims at innovating within the organization, while empowering and supporting teachers as partners in decision-making (Conley & Goldman, 1994; Leithwood, 1994). Marks and Printy (1997) posit that instructional leadership replaces a hierarchical and procedural notion with a model of "shared instructional leadership" (p. 371).

Marks and Printy (2003) investigated 24 elementary, middle, and high schools, undergoing restructuring. They measured the conceptions of leadership and their relation to school performance. Their findings established the importance of what they termed *integrated leadership* - transformational leadership coupled with shared instructional leadership; "Where integrated leadership was normative, teachers provided evidence of high-quality pedagogy and students performed at high levels on authentic measures of achievement" (p. 393).

Marks and Printy (2003) reported that transformational leadership is essential for principals in supporting the commitment of the teachers, as well as in inviting teachers to share leadership functions. As teachers perceive principals as instructional leaders, they

become vested in the involvement, innovation, and commitment to the organization (Sheppard, 1996). In schools where shared and transformational leadership are integrated, instruction and achievement tends to be of high quality (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Hallinger and Heck (2010) conducted a similar study, examining the effects of collaborative leadership on school improvement and student reading achievement in 192 elementary schools in the United States over a four-year period. They compared their study to the research of Marks and Printy (2003) and reported that similar research studies are scarce. Hallinger and Heck (2010) concluded:

> Our analysis of longitudinal data supports the view that collaborative leadership positively impacted growth in student learning indirectly through building the academic capacity in schools. The results also provide initial insight into patterns of growth that characterize different schools in their school improvement "journeys." We have suggested that although these findings are consistent with a substantial body of cross-sectional survey research on principal leadership effects, they also extend this knowledge base by focusing on collaborative leadership and employing longitudinal modeling. (p. 67)

Leithwood and Sun (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 79 unpublished studies analyzing the nature of transformational school leadership (TSL) and its impact on the school organization, teachers, and students. One of the models was "school leadership that combined practices associated with both transformational and instructional leadership models" (p. 389).   Leithwood and Sun (2012) compared Hallinger's (2003) study and Marks and Printy's (2003) model, then referenced Louis and Wahlstrom's

(2004) findings. Leithwood and Sun (2012) noted that,

> Leadership practices targeted directly at improving instruction had significant
> direct effects on teachers' working conditions and indirect effects on student
> achievement. However, when leadership was shared between teachers and
> principals, teachers' working relationships were stronger and student achievement
> was higher. Leadership effects on student achievement, according to Louis and
> Wahlstrom, occurred largely because effective leadership strengthened the
> professional community, encouraging teachers to work together to improve their
> practice and to improve student learning. (p. 410)

Leithwood and Sun (2012) concluded with a call for what Marks and Printy
(2003) referred to as "integrated leadership."

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leaders tend to focus on making changes with core curriculum, or
first-order change, referring to the focus on teaching and curriculum in school reform
(Hallinger, 2003), with an underlying assumption that instruction will improve if leaders
provide detailed feedback to teachers and include suggestions for change (Leithwood,
2012; p. 620). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) reported that instructional leadership
consists of three main components: (a) defining the school mission, (b) managing the
instructional program, and (c) creating a positive school climate. Hallinger (2008) further
contends that instructional leadership is held as the model for emulation by school leaders
for its part in monitoring, mentoring, and modeling, and for its promise to improve school
performance.

Instructional leadership, its definition, and its name, have changed over time.

Leadership for learning, instructionally focused leadership, leadership for school improvement, and leadership-centered learning are all derivatives of instructional learning (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). The variance in the models is primarily with the degree of allowance of management. The essence of instructional leadership is the ability of leaders (a) to stay consistently focused on the core technology of school, or learning, teaching, curriculum, and assessment and (b) to make administrative decisions and/or manage and support instruction and learning (Murphy et al, 2007).

Instructional leadership as a function of the principalship is deeply rooted in research. In one of the earliest studies on instructional leadership, Gray (1934) conducted a five-year study that began in 1926

> to determine ways and means of reorganizing and improving the teaching of reading in harmony with the results of scientific studies; to study the character of the administrative, supervisory, and teaching difficulties encountered in a supervisory campaign planned to improve reading; and to determine the effect, if any, on the achievement of pupils that accompanies and follows vigorous efforts to improve teaching. (p. 418)

Gray (1934) conducted the study with one group of four schools and one group of five. He reported that the schools were of varying sizes as well of various ethnic and economic levels. He noted that "in practically every school in which efficient teaching and satisfactory achievement were found, a capable superintendent, supervisor, or principal directed and inspired the staff " (p. 419). Gray described these schools as places where "spirit of confidence and professional zeal prevailed" (p. 419) and stated

"the teachers exhibited keen interest in the achievements and the needs of their pupils" (p. 419), took ownership of their own instructional needs, and sought assistance to improve their instructional practice. Principals or supervisors were instructionally embedded in the culture of the school and actively supported teacher learning with focused professional development.

In contrast, Gray reported, "in the schools which secured unsatisfactory results, there was either little supervision (often none) or inadequate instructional leadership" (p. 419). Gray described those staffs as discouraged. They needed guidance, inspiration, and assistance to improve their instruction; however, their supervisors "were not acquainted with recent professional literature nor with the results of scientific studies" (p. 419). Principals in those schools focused on administrative tasks.

Gray (1934) concluded that capable leadership is essential in effecting desirable changes in teaching, and improving teaching depends to a considerable extent on familiarity with professional literature and the results of scientific studies. He reported,

"The evidence secured showed conclusively that notable progress can be achieved as a result of an intelligent, vigorous supervisory policy. All the schools which attacked the problem seriously made distinct progress in increasing the achievement of pupils in reading" (p. 426).

Two years after the study concluded, Gray (1934) found that the schools with principals who served as instructional leaders not only continued to improve student achievement, but also had reading programs that flourished and developed beyond the expected outcomes. He also noted that program implementation takes time and that it would take at least two years to see the impact of their work.

Almost 40 years later, in response to the Coleman report and refuting the assertion that there was little that schools could do to overcome the deleterious effect of low socioeconomic status (SES), Edmonds (1979) conducted empirical research on effective schools. Edmonds' research compared schools that were "effective" meaning they were successfully educating all students regardless of their socioeconomic status or family background, with those schools that were "ineffective" (Lezotte, 2001). Edmonds's (1979) findings are strikingly similar to Gray's research from 1934. Edmonds found that principals could influence instruction in a manner that resulted in improved student achievement. His finding brought instructional leadership to the forefront. Like Gray, Edmonds (1979) reported that,

> an effective principal focuses on the school's atmosphere, the alignment of all resources to support instruction, frequent monitoring of student progress, a climate of expectation that all students will achieve; and a strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schools can neither be brought together nor kept together. (p. 22)

The Effective Schools research was a turning point in bringing school reformers' attention to the impact of principals' leadership on student learning (Rousmaniere, 2013). "For the first time, empirical research identified the principal as a central player in student achievement, and the momentum of this research continued for subsequent decades" (Rousmaniere, 2013, p. 135). Researchers and policymakers focused their attention on the principal leadership, asserting instructional leadership was crucial to school effectiveness (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Dwyer, 1986; Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Research following Edmonds's

study focused on characteristics of successful leaders, isolating personal traits such as gender and leadership style that correlated with "effective" schools (Elmore, 2000; Heck, Larson, & Marcoulides, 1990), suggesting that personal traits and qualities, rather than knowledge and proven competence, determined whether the principal would be successful (Hallinger, 2005). Instructional leadership was the model selected and identified as effective (Hallinger, 2005). This was a "one size fits all" model and represented a major change in the role of the principal (Hallinger, 2005).

Subsequent studies focused on general behaviors or actions of principals in effective schools. When reporting on the behaviors, principals included systemic processes inclusive of monitoring student progress and being visible (Tyack & Hansot, 1982); they conducted classroom observations and provided teachers timely feedback (Edmonds, 1981); they shared their vision with their staff and they provided leadership in curriculum and instruction (Adams, 1999; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Effective principals were assertive, strong disciplinarians, and evaluated the achievement of basic objectives (Brookover & Lezotte; 1977; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger, 2008).

The instructional leadership model was not without critics and skeptics (Barth, 1986; Cuban, 1988) who questioned whether principals could dedicate the time necessary to be effective instructional leaders. Critics provided reasons why the idea of principals as instructional leaders was unrealistic and cited the principals' management role, level of expertise, and daily routine of managing schools as not conducive to the focus required. The one-size-fits all frameworks did not consider the varying resources, staffing, and student needs (Hallinger, 2005). Research reporting why principals did not assume the instructional leadership role resulted in a shift towards the transformational leadership era

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of the 1990s (Leithwood, 1994) and teacher leadership (Barth, 1990, 2001).

The emergence of the accountability movement and focused interest on learning outcomes of students and schools renewed the focus on instructional leadership, gaining a global audience (Gewertz, 2003; Stricherz, 2001; as cited by Hallinger, 2005). In 2004, Leithwood, Louis, and Walstrom, conducted a "review of evidence" on what "effective" or "successful" leadership looks like and asserted that leadership was the second most important school-based factor in children's academic achievement. They noted that there were few, if any, cases of troubled schools turning around without effective leaders and in 2010, reaffirmed their earlier findings, concluding that:

In developing a starting point for this six-year study, we claimed, based on a preliminary review of research, that leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. After six additional years of research, we are even more confident about this claim. (Leithwood et al., 2010, p. 9)

Leithwood et al. (2010) further asserted, that although school leadership does not make its impact directly, its indirect workings have a statistically significant effect on student achievement with a correlation of .25.

Utilizing the 2004 research, Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon and Yashkina (2007) identified three core leadership practices they suggest are necessary for instructional leaders to be successful in any context: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. In later research they added, "improving the instructional program" to the core leadership practices. Through their research, they included transformational leadership to their instructional leadership model resulting in a

new term "instructional-centered leadership." Similar approaches to the classification of leadership practices have been developed. Hallinger and Heck (1999) classify the practices in their instructional leadership model as; purposes, people, structures, and social systems. Conger and Kanungo (1998) describe instructional leadership as, visioning strategies, efficacy-building strategies, and context changing strategies. Most recently, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) generated a set of categories compatible with those previously described (Leithwood & Seashore, 2012).

With the emergence and focus of research on instructional leadership practices that impact student learning, scholars identified gaps in the literature and contend that our knowledge of *how* these instructional leaders improve teaching remains limited (Elmore, 2000; Leithwood et al., 2004; Lord & Miller, 2000; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004; Stoelinga & Mangin, 2008). Another concern or barrier to more effective instructional leadership is the leaders' content or curriculum knowledge (Nelson & Sassi, 2005; Stein & Nelson, 2003). Leaders who are not confident in their theories of effective teaching, for example, are likely to be reluctant to observe teachers and give them feedback (LeFevre & Robinson, 2014). Even if they do engage in such activities, their chances of being influential are not high (Spillane & Seashore Louis, 2002).

Apart from the work of Stein and Nelson (2003), there is little research on the quality of leaders' instructional knowledge or their capability to apply it for the purpose of improvement (Robinson, 2010; Smylie & Bennett, 2005). Instructional leaders may know that strong collective responsibility for student learning is associated with improved outcomes (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003), but

this knowledge does not tell them *how* to lead the required change in a school culture with a long tradition of privatized practice (LeFevre & Robinson, 2014).

To address the gap in the literature, Leithwood et al. (2010), working with the Wallace Foundation, conducted what they described as an ambitious study of educational leadership and its contributions to student learning and asserted it was the largest study of its kind to date in the United States. Their research on instructional leadership consisted of two separate investigations: Instructional Climate and Instructional Actions. Their findings show these two categories of principal behavior are related, but distinctly different requiring multiple approaches to school leadership.

Transformation leadership. Transformational leadership theory developed in the 1970s and 1980s with separate works by Downton, Burns, and Bass, which found an audience in the educational community of the 1990s, as a reaction to the top-down policies of the 1980s (as cited in Hallinger, 2003, p. 335). Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) introduced transformational leadership for a school setting that Leithwood and his colleagues modified to better address the leadership demands in schools (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

In the late 1970s, Burns (as cited in Owens, 2001) asserted that transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others. He encouraged leaders and followers to raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality, by appealing to higher ideals and values of followers.

Transformational leaders possess charisma and vision, provide intellectual stimulation and inspiration, and unite leaders and followers in search of common goals (Burns, 1978; Sergiovanni, 2008). As such, transformational leaders act as charismatic

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motivators who inspire their followers based on an understanding of their individual

abilities (Slater & Martinez, 2000). As Sergiovanni (2008) further explained,

> Leaders thought to be charismatic have the ability to touch people in meaningful
>
> ways. As a result, these people respond to their leaders and to the ideas and
>
> values that they stand for with unusual commitment and effort. The typical result
>
> is performance that is beyond expectations. (p. 137)

On the group level, transformational leaders encourage groups to work

collaboratively on the issues at hand and develop resolutions together (Nahavandi, 2003).

On the individual level, transformational leaders give individual consideration to each

follower, treating each "differently, but equitably, providing all with individual attention"

(p. 236).   Transformational leaders can match followers' specific strengths and skills to

the needs of the organization, which makes followers feel empowered and special.

Leithwood and Sun (2012) asserted the following,

> Transformational leadership theory does not predict the behaviors of
>
> organizational members resulting from the influence of transformational
>
> leadership practices, much less the consequences of those behaviors for more
>
> distal organizational outcomes. (p. 389)

Scholars suggests the organization, as in schooling whose purpose is to educate

with the intended outcome of learning, could not be measured as a theory. Leithwood

and colleagues have described and assessed the effectiveness of transformational

leadership in schools (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1993;

Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Fernandez, 1994; Leithwood, Jantzi, &

Steinbach, 1999; Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996). Leithwood's (1994) research

suggests that there is some empirical support for the essentially normative

transformational leadership model. He reported on seven quantitative studies and

concluded that, "transformational leadership practices, considered as a composite

construct, had significant direct and indirect effects on progress with school-restructuring

initiatives and teacher-perceived student outcomes" (p. 506).   Kirkbride (2006) added

that there is a correlation between the transformational approach and leadership

effectiveness.

Leithwood and Jantzi's (1999) research on the effects of transformational

leadership showed transformational leadership had strong direct effects on school

conditions that, in turn, had strong direct effects on classroom conditions. Further

reporting that transformational leadership had a weak but statistically significant effect on

student achievement. Hallinger (2003) identified several limitations to that research,

exclaiming the transformational leadership construct did not reside in one individual;

rather it was distributed throughout a variety of people (as cited by Bush, 2012).

Most recently, Leithwood and Sun (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 79

unpublished studies about the nature of transformation school leadership (TSL) and its

impacts on the school organization, teachers, and students. The reason they decided to

review the unpublished theses and dissertations included: (1) the data largely being

ignored, (2) publication bias, stating publications rarely report non-significant findings,

(3) that the studies make up a substantial proportion (95%) of the whole population of

studies inquiring into any given hypothesis and inform researchers' work, and (4) that

some have argued that many unpublished studies are better designed than many published

studies. They quoted Slavin (1995) who said "it may sometimes be easier to get a poorly

designed study into a low quality journal than to get it past a dissertation committee"
(Leithwood & Sun, 2012, p. 14). They concluded that their interpretation of this
research was consistent with recent efforts to conceptualize the indirect influence of
leaders on students.

Leithwood and Sun (2012), in their comparison of unpublished and published
research, noted a growing interest on which approaches or models of leadership make the
greatest contribution to student learning. They cited Hallinger's (2003) report comparing
IL and TSL, which stated that the models were similar with the exception the target of
change, the extent to which the leader adopts a coordination-and-control versus an
empowerment strategy, and the degree to which leadership is located in an individual (IL)
or shared (TSL). Leithwood and Sun (2012) addressed the last distinction by citing
evidence in Marks and Printy's (2003), and Louis and Wahlstrom's (2010) large-scale
empirical studies that suggests the practices associated with either approach to leadership
(TSL or IL) alone were not as powerful as a combination of such practices. Leithwood
and Sun (2012) also affirmed the general claims about significant school leader
contributions to student learning that were reported by Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger
(2003), Chin (2007), Marzano, Walters and McNulty (2005), in other meta-analyses on
TSL approaches to school leadership.

On TSL, Bush (2012) asserts that when transformational leadership works well,
achieving the instructional outcomes and engaging the learning community can happen;
however, when transformation leadership is used as a guise to implement policies or
initiatives, then the process is political. Bush cited Hoyle and Wallace (2005), "the
strongest advocacy of a transformational approach to reform has come from those whose

policies ensure that the opportunity for transformation is in fact denied to people working in schools" (p. 128).

Distributed leadership

Researchers identified burnout due to the workload and the time commitment required of the principal as reasons that contribute to principal turnover (Johnson, 2005). Distributed leadership is a practice that can influence principal retention as well as mitigate the impact of principal turnover. Distributed leadership emerged from organizational theory in the 1960s (if not earlier) and was adopted in the field of education as a component of school improvement efforts in the United States (Harris, 2008). Distributive leadership is regarded as a strong practice framework relevant to the school context and culture (Jones, 2014). The term "distributed leadership" is often used interchangeably with "shared leadership," "team leadership," and "democratic leadership" (Spillane, 2005, p. 2). Researchers caution that a general label of distributed leadership is met with varying viewpoints of what the term means. Smylie, Conley, and Marks (2002) identify three models of distributed leadership in the literature: (a) leadership as the performance of tasks rather than the holding of roles (Heller & Firestone, 1995); (b) leadership as an organization-wide resource of power and influence, the interaction between individuals rather than the actions of individuals (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000); and (c) leadership as a social distribution that is "stretched over" two or more leaders in their interactions with followers in particular situations (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

When explaining what distributed leadership is, Spillane (2005) is purposeful to exact that leadership practice focus should be not only on *what* people do, but the *how*

and *why* they do it. He contends, "Understanding leadership practice is imperative if research is to generate usable knowledge about and for school leadership" (p. 1). Spillane (2005) defines distributed leadership as

> first and foremost about leadership *practice*… leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation…Rather than viewing leadership practice as a product of a leader's knowledge and skill, the distributed perspective defines it as the interactions between people and their situation…leadership practice that results from *interactions* among leaders, followers, and their situation is critical. (p. 3)

A systematic review of literature on distributed leadership identified a number of characteristics, dimensions, and variables (Jones, 2014). The context that frames distributed leadership is

> built on respect rather than regulation: a culture and values based on trust that supports individual autonomy; an acceptance of the need for change and development; a focus on activity undertaken collectively rather than by individual leaders in formal (structured) positions; and agreement by participants on mechanisms designed to resolve conflict given the participation of more people in a distributed leadership approach. (Jones, 2014, p. 131)

Harris (2012) asserted that distributed leadership in schools, beyond the formal leadership or administrative positions "represents one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership in the past decade" (p. 7). Distributed leadership within and between schools (Harris, 2008, p. 16) has achieved global acceptance with researchers, policy makers, practitioners and educational reformers

(Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2008; Leithwood, Bauer, & Riedlinger, 2009). The current direction of educational leadership has shifted towards multiple sources of influence and agency (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008, p. 529). The shift does not imply that the principal is irrelevant; the research evidence highlights that without the support of the principal, distributed leadership will not be sustained (Harris, 2012).

Researchers have reported that the most effective principals do not lead their schools alone; they share or distribute leadership responsibilities with teachers and other campus administrators (instructional specialists, assistant principals, reading specialists) (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Spillane, 2005). Distributed leadership seeks to engage expertise from anywhere within an organization regardless of position or role (Harris, 2004), therefore, the distributed perspective is not a come one, come all mentality to leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2011).

By using a distributive leadership approach, principals do not resign complete authority over a project or assignment. On the contrary, principals actively monitor and support those assigned with the responsibilities to ensure focus and progress towards achieving the intended goal (Harris, 2012; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Distributed leadership is primarily focused on meeting the goals and expectation, not on handing out assignments to alleviate the workload.

Distributed leadership supports a positive relationship between organizational improvement, student achievement, program stability, and individual capacity (Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Harris, 2012, 2009, 2008; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). These impacts do not happen instantaneously. For distributed leadership to achieve the positive outcomes, purposeful planning is necessary (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris,

Leithwood, Qing.., 2009; Leithwood et al., 2009).

Distributed leadership has also been identified as an influence on instructional change (Camburn & Han, 2009) and enhancing teacher participation (Gronn, 2009). Furthermore, researchers have also asserted that distributed leadership is responsive to its context (Mascall, Leithwood, Strauss, & Sacks, 2009) and that the influence on schools and pupils is enhanced when school leadership is widely distributed (Leithwood et al., 2008).

Criticism of this leadership practice is from teachers that have expressed that this type of leadership has had minimal influence on their work within schools (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). For principals, a challenge amidst an increasingly rigid accountability culture is their capacity to "tread a fine line between what they feel they can and cannot safely let go, and nurturing leadership among their colleagues" (Dimmock, 2012, p. 109). Misconceptions of the distributed perspectives are not meant to undermine the role of the school principal (Spillane & Diamond, 2007); however, staff members may view distributed leadership as a sign of weakness. Therefore, when seeking to share leadership, the leader must "face up to and dismantle established assumptions and relations which their staff has of their leader" (James, Mann & Creasy, 2007, p. 83).

Leadership Summary

Leadership in a time of accountability and reform can be a daunting experience as there is no magic formula on how to lead a learning organization. School leadership does not subscribe to a one-size-fits-all model and leadership should consider the context of the school and lead accordingly.

Leadership is all about organizational improvement (Leithwood, 2010) and the focus of leadership practice should be not only on *what* people do, but the *how* and *why* they do it (Spillane, 2005). The *what* of leadership is informed by district, state, and federal policies. The *how* requires principals to know *how* to ensure learning is achieved while attending to the management of schooling. The *why* is student learning. Leithwood et al, report that direct and indirect leadership effects account for about one-quarter of total school effects on student learning (2013).

Marks and Printy's (2003) Integrated Leadership model combines instructional leadership and transformational leadership, researchers assert that the combination of practices are more powerful together than in isolation (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2010; Marks & Printy, 2003). Instructional leadership addresses the *what*, first order change, curriculum, instruction, and assessments, while transformational leadership provides intellectual direction, expectations, support that builds trust and facilitates an environment of shared or distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is built on trust and seeks to engage expertise from anywhere within an organization regardless of position or role (Harris, 2004),

Leadership in education does matter, what matters most, is the impact leadership has on the outcome: student learning. How you get there is dependent on the context.

Principal Turnover

Research on school reform suggests that organizational stability is an important component of a well-run school and that frequent changes to staff undermine efforts to effectively implement a school's instructional program (Fuller & Young, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Weinstein, Jacobowitz, Landon, & Schwartz, 2009).

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Almost 20 years ago, researchers reported on an impending crisis in education due to high rates of principal turnover and the shortage of qualified candidates to replace them (Beaudin, Thompson, & Jacobson, 2002; Roza, Celio, Harvey, & Wishon, 2003). As discussed in the previous chapter, many school districts across the nation face very high rates of principal turnover ranging from 15% to 30% each year, with higher rates in schools serving more low-income, minority and low-achieving students (Branch et al., 2008; DeAngelis & White, 2011; Fuller & Young, 2009; Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Guarino, Ghosh-Dastidar, & Brown, 2006; Loeb et al., 2010b; Ringel, Gates, Chung, Brown, & Ghosh-Dastidar, 2004).

Most research on principal turnover is derived from feedback and data collected at the state and local levels. School and performance data from Florida, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and other states offer descriptive analyses of principal turnover, the characteristics of those who left, and their performance impact upon their schools (Béteille et al., 2011; DeAngelis & White, 2011; Fuller & Young, 2009; Gates et al., 2006; Miller, 2009; Papa, 2007). Outside of some personal and school characteristics, little is known about the causes of principal turnover (Fuller & Young, 2015). Research does suggest four issues related to principal turnover: personal characteristics (Beaudin, 1993; Béteille et al., 2012; Fuller & Young, 2009, 2012; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011), school characteristics (Beaudin, 1993; Béteille et al., 2012; Branch et al., 2012; Fuller & Young, 2009, 2012; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011), emotional aspects of the position (Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011), and working conditions (Fuller & Young, 2012; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011).

Researchers have found that principals leave their schools for a variety of reasons and with varied context. Some leave voluntarily, as in transfers, promotions, or retirement; some are forced, as in termination or forced transfer. In the absence of national figures on the frequency of principal terminations, data from several school districts suggest that the majority of principal turnover comes from intra-district transfers (Gates et al., 2006; Loeb et al., 2010b; Ringel et al., 2004). District leadership may also reassign principals because they believe that bringing new leadership into schools on a regular basis is beneficial for school improvement (Béteille et al., 2012). However, there is evidence that principals' movement across schools is, at least in part, voluntary (Loeb et al., 2010b). Principal turnover in cases of persistently low-performing schools and in response to NCLB and Race to the Top policies, may be positive (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004).

Studies that have examined the career ladders of principals have suggested that principal turnover occurs more frequently at schools that are large, urban, and enroll a larger percentage of minority and disadvantaged student populations (Béteille et al., 2011; Loeb et al., 2010b). Principal turnover is driven, in part, by principals' desires to move to schools that they find more appealing (Loeb et al., 2010b). Principals who transfer tend to move to schools with more advantaged and higher achieving student bodies relative to where they start, suggesting that principals may use their initial school assignments as stepping stones to more desirable future positions in other schools (Béteille et al., 2011).

While principal turnover is inevitable in every school, the frequency or pace of turnover or succession is widely thought to present significant challenges to districts and

schools (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). Stable and effective school leadership maintains a focus on those programs and practices that are supporting positive school outcomes. Principal turnover impacts school characteristics such as trust, morale, teacher efficacy, discretion, conscience, loyalty, and academic achievement (Miller, 2009; Weinstein et al., 2009; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010; Hanselman, Grigg & Gamoran, 2011; Meyer & Macmillan, 2011). Béteille et al. (2011) found that principal turnover does not have to occur every year or two to be problematic. The frequency or pace of principal turnover in-itself is an obstacle that impacts the districts' ability to staff schools experiencing frequent principal turnover (Leithwood, 2013).

Schools experiencing frequent principal turnover are often reported to suffer from a lack of shared purpose, cynicism among staff about principal commitment, and an inability to maintain a school-improvement focus long enough to actually accomplish any meaningful change (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Mascall and Leithwood (2012) posit that the current accountability climate in the United States may also be the reason why principals leave, inferring low student achievement leads to frequent principal turnover. Even in cases where a principal's tenure extends over a period of several years, teachers may remain alienated when principal turnover is due to district leadership rotation policy (Macmillan, 2000). Researchers of school reform contend that principals need to be in their schools for about five years in order to have a positive impact (Leithwood et al., 2012). Turnover that occurs every two or three years makes it unlikely that a principal will get beyond the stages of initiation and early implementation (Leithwood et al., 2012). The turnover rates are, moreover, even greater in both low-performing schools and schools serving high proportions of students in poverty (Branch et al., 2012; Fuller, 2009;

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Fuller & Young, 2009).

Prior research suggests that many non-salary job characteristics affect teacher and principal preferences including student characteristics, school culture, facilities, and safety (Horng, 2009; Loeb et al., 2010b; Loeb & Reininger, 2004). Leithwood et al., (2004) report on the difficulty of schools with high poverty, stating,

> Study after study suggests that socioeconomic status (SES) of families explains more than half of the difference in student achievement across schools; it is also highly related to violence, dropping out of school, entry to postsecondary education and levels of both adult employment and income. (pp. 46–47)

A context of low student achievement, plagued by dropouts and violence, may lead to a low sense of principal efficacy, increasing principal turnover and difficulty in attracting new principals (Leithwood et al, 2012). Further impacting these communities is a reduced supply of qualified candidates to fill the position (Hargreaves et al, 2003). Consequently, new principals in schools with high poverty tend to have less experience leading other schools and are less likely to have advanced degrees than principals in other schools (Loeb et al., 2010b).

Researchers contend that working conditions of principals are the least informed (Fuller & Young, 2012; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). For example, Tekleselassie and Villarreal (2011) state, "Research that directly assesses how workplace conditions impact principal departure and mobility intentions is rather scarce" (p. 255). To address the gap in the literature Fuller et al. (2015) conducted a study which contends that "how principals perceive and experience their working conditions is likely a far more important

factor in explaining principal turnover (and effectiveness) than the other three areas associated with it" (p. 4).

Fuller et al. (2015) suggest that there are four indirect working conditions that affect principal turnover and principal effectiveness: (1) state policy, (2) leadership preparation programs, (3) degree of autonomy, and (4) district policy/supervisor qualities. They further contend that the state principal evaluation systems recently adopted across the nation will also impact the working conditions of principals (Fuller, Hollingsworth, & Liu, in press). Given that these evaluations will be used to make high-stakes decisions about principals in many states (Fuller, Hollingsworth & Liu, in press), these evaluation systems will have a dramatic impact on the working conditions of principals (Fuller et al., 2015).

Fuller et al. (2015) utilized a variety of information to identify urban school districts in Texas and classify them as small, mid-sized, or large city based on the state-reported student enrollment for 2011. Their final selection criteria yielded 96 of the 1,042 non-charter districts identifying 14 large urban districts, 31 mid-sized districts, and 51 small urban districts.

The primary data derived from a survey of a sample consisting of 973 of 1,164 Texas principals. One hundred thirty nine of the participants represented small and mid-sized districts. The participants were asked about their perceptions of their working conditions (support and facilities, salary, resources, autonomy to make decisions, testing and accountability pressures, and relationships with supervisors), their intentions to stay employed as a principal in the same school, and the degree to which the following factors influenced their decisions to stay or leave their current schools: testing system,

accountability system, and relationships with central office personnel.

The study yielded the following findings: principals in small and mid-sized urban districts agreed with principals in other districts that intrinsic rewards, overall workload, and a feeling of effectiveness as a school leader were important factors influencing their intention to remain at their schools. The similarity of these perceptions across district types was more pronounced for principals of secondary schools. Principals in small and mid-sized urban districts reported the state accountability system and statewide testing system as being more influential in their decision to remain in their positions compared to their peers in schools from other districts in the study. Interestingly, principals of elementary and secondary town schools and rural secondary schools identified the relationships with the superintendent and their supervisor as important factors influencing their intentions to remain at their schools. Fuller et al. (2015) concluded that the current study of a selection of Texas principals reports that working conditions in small and mid-sized districts are in fact different from those at urban and suburban schools. The study reported that for rural and small urban schools, principals indicated that salary offered at large urban districts is a factor that influences turnover. They further reported that policymakers should look for incentives to retain principals at rural and small urban schools and should take into account the fact that turnover is very much tied to salary.

Impact of Principal Turnover

Principals, simply by the role they assume, influence the working and learning conditions of the schools they lead. Principals are expected to establish and harness a learning environment conducive to teaching and learning and research has shown that effective principals contribute measurably to the overall achievement and progress of

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students (Dhuey & Smith, 2012; Edgerson & Kritsonis, 2006; Miller, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). The impact principals have on student achievement is indirect; however, the direct impact that influences student achievement comes from teacher performance and school culture (Deal, 1993; Heck, 2007; Senge, 1990; Stoll, 1999). Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms (2011), stated, "A principal can impact the lives of anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand students during a year, but, it is neither teacher alone nor principal alone who improves schools, but teachers and principals working together" (p. 2).

Through their leadership, principals impact teacher and instructional quality by informing instruction, through retention and selection of high-quality teachers (Chiang, Lipscomb & Gill, 2012; Fuller, Young, & Baker, 2011; Grissom, Kalgorides, & Loeb, 2014), improving the working conditions of teachers, (Berry, Smylie, & Fuller, 2008; Ladd, 2011), and developing effective organizational systems (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

Researchers contend that teachers are the single most important school-factor influencing student achievement, and a growing consensus of researchers and policymakers contend principals are critical to increasing teacher quality and student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2008). Simultaneously, emerging research suggests increased principal turnover is associated with greater teacher turnover (Béteille et al., 2012; Fuller et al., 2007) that, in turn, is associated with decreased student achievement (Levy, Fields, & Jablonski, 2007, p. v). The impact on principal turnover is far reaching.

Building a culture, implementing systems, and establishing relationships and agreed-upon expectations takes time. Researchers contend that sustainable reform takes five to seven years (Leithwood et al., 2004). Principal turnover negatively impacts the

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school's culture, morale, programs stability, and reform efforts (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010; Meyer & Macmillan, 2011). Although there are times in which a change in principal is necessary and even positive, regular and constant change in the principal position negatively affects the life of the school organization significantly (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). Frequent principal turnover may lead teachers to become resistant to change because of the revolving door syndrome (Leithwood et al, 2012). In schools with high principal turnover, teachers may simply "wait [principals] out" (Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman, & White, 2003, p. 8) rather than invest in principal-led efforts to improve outcomes.

Mascall and Leithwood (2010) researched principal turnover and sought to determine if it significantly affected conditions across the school and in the classroom. Using a mixed methods approach to their study, they surveyed over 2,500 teachers from 80 different schools and conducted site visits at 40 schools. In addition, they sought to measure the impact of principal turnover on student achievement by examining school achievement data over a three-year period. Mascall and Leithwood concluded:

Principal turnover has significant negative effects on student achievement. The effects are mediated more by school-level than classroom-level conditions. The weaker impact of principal turnover on classroom variables might suggest that teacher classroom practice is in some way buffered from direct effects of changes in principal leadership. They further speculated that teachers may continue to feel secure in their classrooms, regardless of the school culture around them. While buffering of this sort limits the negative effects of principal turnover, it may also limit positive effects of a principal's improvement efforts. (p. 375)

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Principal impact on student achievement is more readily available than the impact of principal turnover on the school organization. "A particularly noteworthy finding is the empirical link between school leadership and improved student achievement" (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 5). Addressing the findings, the foundation stated:

Education research shows that most school variables, considered separately, have at most small effects on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass. Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal. (Wallace Foundation, 2010, p. 9)

Seashore Louis et al. (2010) concurred and stated:

In developing a starting point for this six-year study, we claimed, based on a preliminary review of research, that leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. After six additional years of research, we are even more confident about this claim. To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. Why is leadership crucial? One explanation is that leaders have the potential to unleash latent capacities in organizations. (p. 9)

Similarly, in 2013, Hochbein and Cunningham conducted a study to examine the association between principal change and scholastic achievement of elementary schools. Their research questioned whether principal change was associated with initial and longitudinal improvement of school achievement and if principal change was associated with longitudinal improvement of school achievement. They researched 90 elementary schools in a Midwestern metropolitan school district that served approximately 24,000 elementary students. They examined school performance and principal data from 2001

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through 2009. During this period, 68 of the 90 elementary schools experienced at least one change in principal. In those schools where change occurred, there were109 instances of change. Their research found the following:

> Results of this study indicated principal tenure and principal stability significantly impacted achievement of grade 3 and grade 5 students. CRCT school mean scale scores increased as the length of a principal's tenure at a school increased. Schools with greater principal stability also had higher CRCT school mean scale scores. (Hochbein & Cunningham, 2013, p. 58).

Their findings support the assertion by Hall and Hord (2001) that principal stability is critical to quality school improvement.

Brockmeier et al. conducted a study in 2011 on middle school student achievement in Georgia schools, examining whether levels of principal stability and experience affected middle school student achievement. Their study involved 401 middle schools with 72.3% of the principals having fewer than five years of tenure. The researchers concluded that, "when almost three-fourths of principals have less tenure than what the research has shown to be required to lead significant change, it is no surprise that tenure was not found to significantly impact student achievement" (p. 73). Their study further found that more than 60% of those middle schools had at least three principals over the previous 10 years, and while tenure did not have a *significant impact* on student achievement, findings suggested that schools with greater principal stability have higher levels of student achievement.

Miller (2013) conducted a study in 2011 on how student performance varies with principal turnover analyzing 12 years of administrative and student achievement data

from North Carolina public schools. The analysis of principal tenure of those who started working in North Carolina public schools during the 1995-1996, 1996-1997, and 1997-1998 school years indicates that more than half of those principals left their schools in less than five years. The analysis of the 12 years indicated schools, on average, underwent 1.96 principal transitions, or was led by roughly three different principals in 12 years. The tenure of principals varied, with some schools led by a single principal and other schools led by as many as seven principals. Analysis of student achievement data showed the following:

Relative to schools with zero or one principal transitions, schools with two principal transitions have lower test scores on average. Schools with three or more principal transitions have still lower scores. Schools with more principal turnover also have a higher fraction of students eligible for free lunch and a lower fraction of the teachers return to the same school to teach in the next academic year... Across schools, those which undergo frequent leadership changes are more disadvantaged (in terms of student achievement, student socioeconomic status, and teacher retention) than those with stable leadership. (Miller, 2013, p. 65)

The research also found a decline in student performance prior to the principal departures. Miller further found that the achievement continued to drop two years following the placement of a new principal then rose to the level of achievement prior to the change in principal, meaning, the school was no better off than when the principal change occurred.

As noted previously, Béteille and colleagues (2012) conducted a study on the fourth largest school district in the nation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). They examined the administrative files on all staff, students, and schools in the district from the 2003-2004 through the 2008-2009 school years to examine the relationship between principal changes and school performance. Béteille et al. (2011) asserted that,

> In estimating the effects of principal turnover, we find that mobility in principals'
> career paths has detrimental consequences for schools. The departure of a
> principal is associated with higher teacher turnover rates and lower student
> achievement gains. The negative relationship between principal turnover and
> student achievement is largest in schools with high concentrations of novice
> teachers, high concentrations of poor students and in schools with the lowest
> performance in the state's accountability system. The latter group of schools is
> precisely the type that is the target of the recent federal reforms previously
> discussed. Poorly performing schools and those with high concentrations of poor
> students not only experience much higher principal turnover rates than other
> schools, but they are also unable to attract experienced new principals when
> vacancies arise. (p. 905)

Weinstein et al. (2009) conducted research on New York schools and in part on what principal turnover looks like in new high schools. The study included 80 schools that opened between September 1992 and June 2002 with an average of nine years of graduation data for each school (p. 8). Similar to the previous studies mentioned, data showed considerable principal turnover during the first 10 years of school existence.

Weinstein et al. (2009) identified 13 schools that experienced principal turnover that either enhanced or maintained their performance or lost performance gains over time. From this pool, they recruited four schools to participate in the study. The schools chosen for the study were minority majority schools with at least 60% of the students qualifying for free lunch. Four-year graduation rates for these four schools for the 2006-2007 school year were: 60%, 69%, 65% and 50% respectively. The data suggests that while the transition from founding principal to the immediate successor may lead to a small decrease in the percentage of students graduating, the change from the founding principal to the third principal leads to a larger decrease in graduation rates and is statistically significant (p. 11).

Principal Retention

Seventeen years after researchers sounded the alarm on principal turnover, the crisis continues. Approximately 20 to 25 percent of public school principals will leave their positions this year. Out of 90,000 public school principal positions nationwide, school districts are left to fill 18,000 to 22,500 principal vacancies (SREB, 2009) not including charter schools.

Pijanowski (2009) reported that superintendents view the recruitment and replacement of principals with trepidation. Understandably so, Marketplace (2014) estimates the cost to recruit and train principals at $75,000 per principal. With principal turnover impacting teacher turnover, the cost of staffing should concern districts nationwide. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) estimated the cost of teacher turnover in the Chicago public school system at $17,872 per teacher who leaves the profession (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). The Alliance for

Excellent Education (2014) estimated the cost of teacher turnover in the United States at $2.2 billion annually and at $235 million in Texas. The high cost of principal turnover alone warrants research on principal retention policies.

In 2001, the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB), published, *Preparing a New Breed of School Principals: It's Time for Action.* It called for a change in school leadership and stated, "A looming shortage of school administrators presents us with both a crisis and an opportunity to redefine what it means to be a 'school leader'" (p. 7). It also proclaimed that, "personnel shortages in education never last long. We can be sure that school boards will find someone to fill every principal vacancy" (p. 6). The SREB had an audience and platform to address principal turnover, however; with its belief that "personnel shortages in education never last long," it left school districts to "hire and hope" that whomever they selected for principal would be effective instead of identifying strategies to promote principal retention.

Researchers in the field of school leadership responded to the call to research principal turnover. Their research identified for states, policymakers, and educational communities ways to better prepare and mentor principals, why principals leave their schools, the impact of principal turnover, recruiting new principals, and creating principal pipelines as well as other factors stemming from principal turnover (Danesh, 2001; Fuller & Young, 2009; Hargreaves, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2010). Yet, 17 years later, the United States continues to experience 20% to 25% principal turnover every year, and up to 30 percent in low-achieving, high poverty, minority majority schools (Fuller & Young, 2009).

A database research on the following terms: principal retention, principal

longevity, keeping principals, and retaining leadership produced one article that reported

on research from Australia. Few articles discussed "sustaining leadership" but not in the

context of increasing principal longevity. In essence, there is the gap in the literature. A

2014 report from the School Leaders Network stated, "CHURN…is the first to quantify

and qualify just how important purposeful principal retention efforts are to schools" (p.

2).

School Leaders Network is the *first*! Seventeen years after researchers alerted the

nation to the phenomenon known as principal turnover, this 2014 report is the *first*

asserting the need to focus on *principal retention*. This assertion explains the gap in the

literature and "challenges the myth that developing a strong principal pipeline is where

America should be focused" (School Leaders Network, 2014, p. 2).   The School Leaders

Network identified the multitude of significant impacts principal turnover has on the

school and school system and reported that, "investing in the backend of principal

retention will carry front-end pipeline investments much further" (p. 2). The SLN

proposed four solution to reverse principal turnover: (a) invest in leadership development

beyond pipeline investment, (2) engage principals in authentic peer networks, (c) provide

more than two years of individualized coaching, and (d) revise the roles of principal

supervisors.

The School Leaders Network, reported on the financial impact of principal

turnover, estimating that each principal vacancy at $75, 000, itemizing; preparation,

hiring, signing, internship, mentoring, and continuing education.

On the subject of slowing principal turnover, they reference the National Association of Elementary School Principals survey that reported principals reasoned the issue of turnover is due to their inability to make a difference for children because of four key obstacles. Branch et al, (2013) (as cited by School Leaders Network) reported:

- Workload and extensive managerial tasks prevent more meaningful instructional leadership efforts,

- Expensive personal costs; long hours and a significant toll to their physical and psychological well-being,

- Local and state policies that tie principals hands in making critical decision such as hiring, firing and funding allocation flexibility,

- Profound isolation on the job (p. 12).

To slow principal turnover and increase principal retention, the School Leaders Network recommend four key actions: (1) invest in ongoing professional development, (2) engage principals in meaningful network opportunities, (3) provide one-to-one support, and (4) restructure central office roles and policies. With the exception of ongoing professional development, the other three recommendations have been researched and recommended by several scholars, however; the recommendation to include all four components as a focused set of recommendations has not been identified in the literature. The call for equalized funding aimed at retention of principals has also not been identified in the literature.

Summary

Historical events and continued changes to governmental policy inform the principalship. Over the last century, the roles and responsibilities of the principal have

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evolved from a teacher/principal with minimal administrative tasks to facilitating

integration, state and federal program implementation and compliance, community

liaison and data analyst to an instructional and student learning focus. Throughout this

period, while the policies may have changed, the added responsibilities remained.

Researchers theorize the changes in governmental policy and aggressive approach to

closing the achievement gap impact principal turnover.

Seventeen years after the phenomenon of principal turnover was identified,

principal turnover continues at twice the rate of the business sector goal of 10%, with a

15% to 30% turnover rate. Schools with high minority, low-income, and low-achieving

student populations are at the higher range. "Just over 50% of newly hired principals stay

for three years and less than 30% stay for five years" (Fuller & Young, 2010, p. 3).

Researchers have identified why principal leave as well as the impact principals have on

the school community to include teacher retention, student achievement, program

stability and the district's ability recruit qualified replacements. Researchers have also

identified a gap in the literature promoting principal retention and have called for

research, and dedicated funding from the government to address and promote principal

retention.

III.   METHODOLOGY

The review of the literature revealed a need to address the gap in the literature that identifies factors that inform principal retention in schools that serve high poverty, majority minority student populations. This study explored the voices, perspectives and lived experiences of four urban middle school principals that chose to stay in the principalship for five consecutive school years (Creswell, 2013). This chapter describes the following subsections: (1) research design, (2) participant selection, (3) data collection, (4) data analysis, (4) ethics, (5) trustworthiness, and (6) summary.

Research Design

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to identify the motivational factors that inform principal retention. Phenomenology is an iterative approach in which individual perceptions of an experience provides an opportunity to uncover the themes and meanings that principals hold when discussing experiences that contribute to principal retention (Reid, Flower, & Larken, 2005). A case study approach is appropriate when the goal is an in depth investigation of a complex program, event, activity, process, or one or more cases that are "bounded" by context and time (Creswell, 2003, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Swanson & Holton, 2005). The focus of qualitative research is to seek answers to what, how, and why questions using data collected from multiple sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Swanson & Holton, 2005). Phenomenological research tries to understand the essence of a phenomenon by examining the views of people who have experienced that phenomenon.

Phenomenology is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, in which case studies incorporate various data points. The decision to use a qualitative

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phenomenological approach is justified by the complex characteristics of the

principalship and the individuals who not only choose to serve in those positions, but

who further choose to stay and serve at schools with the most high needs student

populations. This approach is also justified by the incorporation of school data artifacts.

Purposeful sampling will be used in selecting the interview participants, who will have

completed five consecutive years of principal experience in a Title I middle school

serving majority minority student populations. Their experiences will provide details and

insights on the case study and will address the research questions (Creswell, 2007).

Qualitative Research

There are five traditional methods of qualitative research biography, case study,

ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative

research in general and phenomenology in particular is used when the researchers seek to

explore and become immersed in a phenomenon or issue in its natural setting in order to

gain an understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative researchers

seeks answers to how, what, and why questions (Yin, 2014). Creswell (2000) wrote

> …that one of the chief reasons for conducting a qualitative study is that the study
>
> is exploratory. This means that not much has been written about the topic or the
>
> population being studied, and the research seeks to listen to participants and build
>
> an understanding based on their ideas (p 30).

Qualitative research has four primary characteristics. It focuses on process,

understanding, and meaning; its primary instrument of data collection and analysis is the

researcher; its process is inductive; and its product is richly descriptive (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative research also collects data from multiple sources. The most common

data collection methods are, documents, observations, and interviews (Creswell, 2007). The data collected are analyzed to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories (Merriam, 2009). Thus, qualitative research is designed to "listen to participants and build an understanding based on their ideas" (Creswell, 2003, p 30). Throughout the process, a narrative unfolds that produces richly descriptive words and pictures with verbatim accounts and quotes that explain the complexities or theories developed about the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative studies can examine multiple or single events, which are called the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). Exploratory research can help develop new research and pose questions about a particular topic or scenario (Neumann, 2009).

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is rooted in Western and Eastern philosophy (Smith, 2009). Phenomenology is most frequently associated with the philosophy of the German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), whose basic philosophical assumption was that we can only know what we experience. Through these experiences, we produce a description of an essence or essences of a shared experience (Patton, 2002). Husserl contended that

> The life-world is a realm of original self-evidences. That which is self-evidently given is, in perception, experienced as 'the thing itself,' in immediate presence, or, in memory, remembered as the thing itself; and every other manner of intuition is presentification of the thing itself (Husserl, in Welton, 1999, p. 367).
>
> According to Husserl (as reported by Moustakas; 1994), individual experiences

are transformed into essences through the process of ideation. The object that appears in

the consciousness is an "absolute reality while what appears in the world is a product of learning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27). Focusing on the lived experience requires the researcher to go directly to *the things themselves* (Merriam, 2009; Spiegelberg, 1965, p. 658). Patton (2002) contends

> This type of research is based on the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience. These essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essence of the phenomenon. (p. 106)

Examining the phenomenon requires interaction to capture the essence of the principals' lived experiences relative to factors that inform principal retention. Phenomenological methods require the participants to reflect on lived experiences and communicate detailed accounts to form the foundation of the analysis; therefore, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2007). The assumption of essence becomes the defining characteristic of a purely phenomenological study (Patton, 2002).

Prior to conducting interviews, those who have, or have had, direct experience with the phenomenon explore their own experiences to become aware of personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions. This process is called *epoche* (Merriam, 2009). *Epoche* is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the experiences of the phenomenon, but a case study can reveal new insights (Creswell, 2000).

Case Study

Case study research is often used to contribute knowledge to our understanding of individual, group, organizational, political, social, and related phenomena (Yin, 2014, p. 4). Case studies allow researchers to maintain a real-world, holistic perspective while investigating small group behaviors and organizational processes (Yin, 2014).

Qualitative case studies provide a well-organized way of contemplating events, gathering data, examining information, and reporting results (Yin, 2002). Yin's (2014) definition of a case study is twofold. First, "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). A researcher needs to understand a real-world case and assume that important contextual conditions are pertinent to the case (Yin & Davis, 2007). The second part of the definition says,

> The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 18)

The twofold definition shows how case study research comprises an all-encompassing method and is not limited to being a data collection tactic or even a design feature alone (Stoecker, 1991).

A multiple case study involves collecting and analyzing data from several cases

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and can be distinguished from the single case study (Merriam, 2009, p. 49). Multiple case studies enable the researcher to explore differences between cases (Yin, 2009). Stake (2006) describes a multiple case study as follows:

> In multicase study research, the single case is of interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases. The individual cases share a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the collection are somehow categorically bound together. They may be members of a group or examples of a phenomenon. (pp. 5-6)

Participant Selection

When designing a research study, the criteria for the sample selection should be predetermined in order to guide the selection process (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2007) contends, "The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p.178). Selection of participants for this study was based on the criteria for the study itself. The target participants for this study were four middle school principals that recently completed their fifth consecutive year of their first principal positions serving at Title I, minority- majority schools, in a large urban school district. However, through the interview process the participants revealed the following: one of the participants is no longer serving as a principal, one principal has previous principal experience and is in his ninth year as middle school principal, one principal is in the process of completing her fifth year and the final participant meets the criteria as originally proposed. Two male and two female participants were interviewed with the following racial breakdown: "Adam" an Asian male, "Irene" a Pacific-Islander female,

"Jessica" an African-American female, and "Frank" a Hispanic male. Several attempts

were made to identify additional potential participants for the study, including

communication to several urban school districts in Texas that resulted in the

identification of one principal in the Houston Independent School District who had since

transferred to another position and declined the invitation to participate in the study.

While this researcher identified four other middle school principals in the same school

district that met the criteria, two principals did not respond to the invitation and the other

two principals declined the invitation to participate without reason. The four participants

in the study are former colleagues that met the criteria for the study and with whom the

researcher had established trust and rapport.

Data Collection

In this study, interviews, a review of historical documents, and a survey were the

primary sources of data.

Interviews

Prior to implementation of the study, the Texas State University Institutional

Review Board (IRB) granted an exemption for the study (EXP201516656620). Once

approval was received, meetings were scheduled immediately. The primary source of

data collection was through in-depth, semi-structured interviews that utilized open-ended

questions and probes to develop the conversation and lead the participants into telling

their stories and experiences (Creswell, 2002). The researcher utilized Fuller and

Young's (2009) quantitative survey as the foundation for the interview protocol

(Appendix A). The researcher then reworded the questions to align with a qualitative

study, organized the questions into three domains: (1) decision-making process to

become an administrator, (2) attitudes towards preparation, and (3) attitude and

disposition regarding the principalship. The researcher also correlated the three domains

to the self-determination theory's three basic needs of autonomy, competence, and

relatedness (Appendix B).

The researcher conducted one audio-recorded, semi-structured, face-to-face

interview with each participant. The interviews were conducted in the participants'

offices and lasted from 70 minutes to 100 minutes. The interview protocol consisted of

nine questions, with clarifying or follow-up questions to guide the interview.

Clarification was necessary for two interviews, and follow-up conversations were

conducted via phone and e-mails. Field notes were taken prior to and immediately after

each interview and included the researcher's observations of the participants' body

language during the interview, the experience driving in their immediate school

neighborhood, and reflections of the experiences at their respective work sites.

The purpose of each interview was to capture qualitative data on the work life and

perceptions of principals in schools with high needs student populations and to identify

factors that inform principal retention. The researcher inquired about, (a) professional

and personal experiences, (b) administrative support, (c) professional preparation, and (d)

technical abilities that contributed to principal retention and recorded as fully and fairly

as possible that particular informant's perspective (Patton, 2002). Fuller and Young's

Interview Protocol and Hickman's Initial Interview Protocols were used to guide the

interviews. Permission from Hickman to use and modify her initial interview protocol

was granted via e-mail. The modified Interview Protocol is included in Appendix B.

Research questions were evaluated using a standardized observation protocol, which was

designed using the components outlined by Creswell (2009).

One of the most important sources of evidence in a case study is an interview that resembles a guided conversation rather than structured queries. A researcher's actual stream of questions in a case study interview is likely to be fluid rather than rigid (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Gathering verbatim quotations through note taking can interfere with listening attentively to the informant; therefore, recordings are essential in the interview process (Patton, 2002). Asking leading questions will help the researcher and participant focus on the issues surrounding the participant's experience. The questions for these interviews were conceptualized through the literature review, and through the literature review, existing protocols were identified.

Principal Context

Data collection utilizes multiple sources of evidence: archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and historical artifacts (Yin, 2014). Case study evidence can include both qualitative and quantitative data. One of the most distinctive features of a case study is the researcher's direct observation and field notes, which ultimately create a narrative of what, was heard, seen, or otherwise sensed (Yin, 2014). The researcher accessed school demographic and state accountability data of each campus through the Texas Education Agency database to capture the conditions of each campus when the principal assumed the position and throughout their tenure. Campus snapshot data available to the public through the district's website consisting of campus improvement plans and data packets were utilized to further inform the working conditions of each principal. A description of the school neighborhood was also provided. The participants also responded to Deci and Ryan's *Basic Need Satisfaction at*

Work survey.

        Basic Need Satisfaction at Work was developed and validated by Deci and Ryan (2001) and is a 21-item self-report instrument that measures the degree to which the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Appendix C). Within the 21 items of the survey, 7 items assess autonomy, 6 items assess competence, and 8 items assess relatedness. Three questions in each domain utilizes reverse wording, with nine questions total, and phrased in a manner that suggests thwarting of the need. Reverse wording is used to measure validity, keep participants from answering carelessly, and help correct for agreement bias (Hopper, 2013). The participants rated the items on a 7-point Likert-type scale using anchors ranging from 1 as *not true at all* to 7 *very true*. Sample items for each of the basic needs include "I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job" (autonomy), "I really like the people I work with" (relatedness), and "I do not feel very competent when I am at work" (competence; reverse scored - thwarting). Higher values on the BNSW survey indicate participants' basic psychological needs are being satisfied to a greater extent.

Table 3

Data Collection

Data	Purpose	Who
Accountability Reports	To capture campus conditions of principals' tenure	Researcher
Interviews/Transcripts	To capture the interview dialogue	Researcher
Survey	To assess the level of basic need satisfaction met in the workplace.	Researcher
Journaling	To record my biases, perceptions, thought process and experiences throughout the research process.	Researcher
Email	To record member checking/bracketing	Researcher

Data Analysis

Creswell (2009) contended that validating the accuracy of the collected qualitative data involves six major steps: (a) organizing and preparing the data, (b) reading through the data, (c) beginning the detailed analysis with coding process, (d) using the coding process to generate descriptive themes, (e) determining how these themes will be used in the narrative, and (f) interpreting the meaning of the data.

The researcher utilized an online transcription service to transcribe the interviews that provided a turn-around time of less than 24 hours. Prior to reviewing the transcription, the researcher read the field notes then listened to the audio taped interview. The researcher then listened to the audio taped interview while reading the transcript and edited the transcript for accuracy. Next, the researcher listened to the audio again and listened for pauses to reimage the behavior of the participants' responses. When the process was completed, the researcher emailed the transcripts to the

participants to review for accuracy and member checking (Bazeley, 2013). The e-mail asked the participants to add, delete, or clarify in order to ensure accuracy, context, and meaning. Three of the four participants responded within the requested timeframe. Adam clarified his response to the last question, Frank made changes to the names of the schools he mentioned, Irene stated the transcript was accurate as is, and Jessica responded via social media (rather than e-mail) that the context was accurate.

The process of analyzing qualitative data is cyclical (Saldaña, 2009). After receiving feedback from the participants, the researcher read the transcripts again and continued to journal after each transcript, noting the thought process and any biases to clear the mind, refocus on the data, and continue analyzing with minimal bias. The researcher reviewed only one participant at a time and continued the process for each participant. Following Saldaña's (2009) descriptor on analyzing data by "comparing data to data, data to code, code to code, code to category, category to category" (p. 45), I continued with an examination of the survey and analyzed the responses by theme, by question within the theme, by participant, and participant to participant. The researcher then reviewed the school data and developed participant profiles for each participant. The continuous reflection, journaling, and bracketing was important in this process, due to my experience as a middle school principal in the school district of focus and the researcher's shared experiences with the participants.

The researcher utilized the NVivo for Mac (QSR International, 2015) qualitative data analysis software to code the interviews, first by themes that correlate with self-determination theory as noted in Appendix E, then by codes that emerged from the data (Patton, 1990). The main purpose for the database was to preserve the collected data in a

retrievable format that was also helpful with the analysis (Yin, 2014).

Ethics

The data collection stage of this research began after the Texas State University Institutional Review Board granted approval. According to Yin (2014), case study researchers are naturally more prone to bias because they need to understand the issue under study before they even start collecting the data that can lead to a specific orientation. Although a certain amount of bias was unavoidable due to a personal relationship with the participants and prior employment with the school district, the researcher remained transparent and reported my biases via journaling. These initial biases were disclosed in the *epoche,* included in Appendix D.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is to qualitative research as validity and reliability is to quantitative research; each is necessary to establish accuracy, dependability, and credibility. Trustworthiness is established when qualitative researchers describe their research findings in ways that authentically represent the meanings as described by the participants (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The trustworthiness of this research was protected through a variety of measures. The researcher employed the use of triangulation, or the validation of data points and themes from multiple sources of evidence (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Further, the researcher used a chain of evidence and shared the interview transcripts with the participants to ensure the researcher's perceptions did not influence the interview responses (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). To protect the internal validity of this study, I conducted **epoche** self-reflections regarding assumptions, worldview, and bias, as well as

the personal relationship to the study (Yin, 2014).

In an effort to protect the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher established an audit trail through the use of a database. Additionally, the researcher included rich, detailed thick descriptions and employed a type of member checking by sharing the transcripts and draft to participants to ensure credibility of reported findings (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

Limitations

Limitations to this research include the number of participants, as well as the fact that the participants all worked for the same school district. In any case study, participants may not be as forthcoming with their responses, or participants may give the researcher answers they think the researcher wants to hear (Yin, 2014). Other limitations for interviews include restrictions in the setting, where the information could be gathered, indirect information, filtered through the views of the interviewees, and differences in individual articulation and perception (Creswell, 2009).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that inform principal longevity in schools with high needs student populations. The researcher utilized several methods to present the data such as presenting a participant profile that included a brief overview of each participant's background, his or her reason to become a principal, and the context of his or her principalship. The context of the principalship included accountability data including detailed student demographics and a window into the geography of their schools. The researcher presented a discussion organized around the interview protocol and aligned the received responses to the basic needs in the self-determination theory.

Lastly, the researcher presented the voices and lived experiences of principals, which

provide a window into their leadership experiences. The data is presented in the

following chapter.

IV.   FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that inform principal longevity. This research utilized the survey questionnaire of Fuller and Young's (2009) quantitative study of Texas principals and framed the questions for a qualitative study to gain the *essence* and the *why*. The question was: Given the high levels of attrition of middle school principals in Texas, what and how have (a) professional and personal experiences, (b) administrative support, (c) professional preparation, and (d) technical abilities contributed to principal retention and why? The principals were also asked why they chose to serve in schools identified as low socio-economic status, with majority-minority student populations in a large urban district.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section, accountability reports, describes the historical artifacts retrieved from the Texas Education Agency that report on the schools' academic accountability and demographic data. The second section, participant profiles, describes the context of the participants' principalship. The third section, survey results, describes the findings of the *Basic Needs Satisfaction at Work* survey. The final section, interviews, presents the data from the interviews. Analysis of the data is presented in chapter five.

Accountability Reports

Accountability reports available through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website database report on the campus demographics and overall achievement. The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) generate performance ratings for all schools derived from standardized assessments. During the 2003-04 school year and through the 2011-12 school years,

Texas utilized the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to determine

whether a student had mastered specific knowledge of the core subject based on the state

standards known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). When the state

transitioned from TAKS to the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness

(STAAR), the reporting databases also transitioned from AEIS to TAPR; however, due to

the transition in reporting systems and assessment instruments the schools were not rated

during the 2011-12 school year.

The data researched coincided with the participating principals tenure and

specifically sought a breakdown of the campus demographics. The data researched was

the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic

breakdown, English Language Learners, At-Risk, mobility rate, school rating and

performance distinctions, if any. The data is reported in the participant profiles.

Participant Profiles

Research on principal turnover identified principals leading schools with high

poverty, majority-minority student populations with academic challenges experiencing

higher rates of principal turnover, specifically in urban secondary schools. The

participants in the study, two females and two males, are all former colleagues that I have

a good relationship with. Three of the participants have only served as principal of their

professional career in the district, with at least five consecutive years of principal

experience at the same school with one having nine consecutive years of middle school

principal experience at the same school. This principalship is the first principalship for

three of the four principals, with one principal having elementary principal experience.

Accountability reports available through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website database report on the campus demographics and overall achievement. The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) generate performance ratings for all schools derived from standardized assessments. During the 2003-04 school year and through the 2011-12 school years, Texas utilized the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to determine whether a student had mastered specific knowledge of the core subject based on the state standards known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). When the state transitioned from TAKS to the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), the reporting databases also transitioned from AEIS to TAPR; however, due to the transition in reporting systems and assessment instruments the schools did not receive an accountability rating during the 2011-12 school year.

The data researched coincided with the participating principals tenure and specifically sought a breakdown of the campus demographics. The data researched was the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic breakdown, English Language Learners, At-Risk, mobility rate, school rating and performance distinctions, if any. The data is reported in the participant profiles.

In introducing each participant an explanation of why the participant chose to become a principal, a summary of the participant's professional background, and a brief descriptor of the neighborhood in which the participant's school is located is provided. All four participants served in the same urban school district across the same timeframe. The schools all belong to different feeder patterns, are comprehensive middle schools (meaning they do not have specialized or magnet-type programs), and they all have

different supervisors. Although each participant informed me they were not concerned about confidentiality after a couple of the participants asked me to stop the recorder during their interviews, pseudonyms were given to protect their identity. The four participants are, "Adam", "Irene", "Jessica", and "Frank".

Adam

Adam is a product of the school district in which he worked; he attended the local schools, graduated from a district high school, and served as a teacher and assistant principal in the same school district prior to assuming a principal position. Adam was a math teacher for eight years. In that time, he served as the math department chairperson, volunteered for bus duty, and attended extra curricular activities to support the school's administration. He stated he did those things because, "I saw there was a need, so I did it." When asked why he chose to become a principal, he stated,

I had been teaching about eight years and really, I had no plans of doing anything other than teaching. I was doing a good job and I had a lot of responsibilities and so my principal actually came to me and said, 'Hey, you know the ISD is having a program to develop educational leaders and I think you ought to be in it.' I was flattered and thought that maybe I could expand my influence.

Adam's school is located across the street from the high school his students will eventually attend. The school neighborhood is lined with single-family homes. A city bus stop is located in front of his school and approximately a half mile away, there are convenience stores, restaurants, and a shopping center.

Adam assumed his first principalship during the 2010-11 school year. In the prior year, the school received a rating of Academically Acceptable from the Texas Education

Agency (TEA), rebounding from a previous Academically Unacceptable rating. The

campus demographics were as follows: 72.6% of the student population was identified as

economically disadvantaged (EcoDis), 19.4% African-American (AA) and 66.7%

Hispanic (H) and 13.9% White (W) and other ethnic groups (Asian, two or more groups).

The student body was also comprised of 29.9% English Language Learners (ELLs) and

55.6% of the students were identified as At-Risk. The school had a mobility rate of

24.2%. Throughout Adam's tenure, the number of students identified poor, Hispanic,

and at-risk increased significantly (See Table 4). The school maintained an

Academically Acceptable accountability rating, and in Adam's last three years the school

earned academic performance distinctions from the Texas Education Agency. Adam left

the principalship at the end of the 2014-15 school year to assume an assistant

superintendent position in the Houston, TX area.

Table 4

Accountability Data - Adam

Student Population	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Eco Dis	72.6%	79%	84.5%	86.5%	88.7%
AA	19.4%	19.2%	20.6%	15.7%	13.5%
H	66.7%	69%	71.1%	77.1%	80%
W	11.5%	9.1%	6.6%	5.1%	4.5%
Other	2.6%	2.7%	1.7%	2.1%	2%
ELLs	29.9%	37%	36.6%	45.7%	56%
Mobility	24.2%	26.4%	23%	19.2%	21.2%
At-Risk	55.6%	61.8%	59.4%	71.6%	75.6%
Rating	Acceptable	No Rating	Met Standard with one distinction: Reading/ ELA	Met Standard with six distinctions: Reading/ ELA, Math, SS, Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps, Post-secondary Readiness	Met Standard with five distinctions: Reading/ ELA, Science, SS, Top 25% Closing Performance Gaps, Post-secondary Readiness

Data retrieved from the Texas Education Agency and the school district's data portal.

Irene

Irene reported she attended Catholic schools in Louisiana in her formative years and relocated to Texas in 1997 to continue her teaching career. She served as a middle school English as a Second Language (ESL) math teacher for 18 years and five years as an assistant principal prior to becoming a principal. When asked why she decided to become a principal she responded,

> I taught ESL math to sixth, seventh and eighth graders, and my kids, when they would have activities at school, they were always forgotten and so, I wanted to work in administration not to forget the ESL kids. So really truly, that's what led me. I wanted to have a bigger impact; I had a cause. I wanted to be a voice for those students coming into this school system that didn't speak the language.

Irene's school is located in a blue-collar business area with construction of a new elementary school in progress across the street. Ethnic (Hispanic) stores and shops line the street as well as beauty shops, tire repair shops, convenience stores and around the corner, apartment complexes line the streets.

Irene reported that when she was offered the principal position, she was unaware the school was rated Academically Unacceptable by the TEA for the 2009-2010 school year. When she assumed the principalship, the campus demographics were as follows: 94.8% economically disadvantaged, 4.4% African-American (AA) and 94% Hispanic (H), and 1.5% White (W) and other ethnic groups. The student body was also comprised of 57.5% ELLs, and 77.6% of the students were identified as At-Risk. The school had a mobility rate of 24.1%. At the end of her first year as principal, the campus earned an Academically Acceptable rating by TEA and was commended on social studies and

recognition in reading improvement. The next few years the student demographics

remained similar with noted increases in the numbers of ELLs and students identified At-

Risk. Throughout her leadership, the campus has maintained a positive academic rating

and earned distinctions the last two years on Top 25% student progress.

Table 5

Accountability Data - Irene

Student Population	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Eco Dis	94.8%	92.2%	94.7%	95.9%	94.7%
AA	4.4%	4%	4.3%	0.4%	3.6%
H	94%	93.5%	94%	94.7%	95.4%
W	0.7%	1.6%	0.8%	1.1%	0.6%
Other	0.8%	1%	0.9%	0.2%	0.4%
ELLs	57.5%	60.2%	61.6%	65.6%	71.5%
Mobility	24.1%	23.7%	22.3%	22.3%	21.1%
At-Risk	77.6%	75.9%	73.6%	81.9%	86%
Rating	Academically Acceptable, Commended on SS and Comparable Improvement in Reading	No Rating	Met Standard	Met Standard, Distinction Designation: Top 25% Student Progress	Met Standard, Distinction Designation: Top 25% Student Progress

Data retrieved from the Texas Education Agency and the school district's data portal.

Jessica

Jessica relocated from the Texas Panhandle to the North Texas area after

graduating from college. She is currently in her fifth year as principal. Prior to her

principalship, she taught for ten years in middle school and high school where she served as department chair, provided professional development for the district and served as high school assistant principal. When asked why she chose to become a principal she responded,

> I one day was teaching high school and my principal said something very crazy to me and I told him to leave me alone before I had his job and he actually told me, 'Well, you go get your masters and you can have it.' Two weeks later, I received an email from UNT [University of North Texas] saying I had been invited to participate in a cohort for my administrative certification that he [the principal] had tagged my name on. That was in April and I started classes that summer.

Jessica's campus is located in a heavy traffic neighborhood that includes both major big-box stores (Sam's) and retail shops with security bars on the windows and doors. The school is adjacent to a car dealership and within walking distance to fast food restaurants, convenience stores, and apartment buildings where some of Jessica's students reside.

When Jessica assumed the principalship the campus demographics were as follows: 87.3% economically disadvantaged, 43.3% African-American and 52.5% Hispanic and 2.6% White and other ethnic groups. The student body was also comprised of 27.3% ELLs, and 63.3% of the students were identified as At-Risk. The school had a mobility rate of 29.4%. Texas schools were not rated during Irene's first year as principal; however, the following year the school met standard and earned distinction in academic improvement in reading and English language arts. Two years later, the school was rated Improvement Required in Student Achievement and Postsecondary Readiness.

Table 6

Accountability Data – Jessica

Student Population	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Eco Dis	86.3%	87.3%	94.1%	92.4%	89.7%
AA	44.2%	43.3%	43%	41.6%	40.2%
H	52.7%	52.5%	51.7%	53.3%	56.6%
W	1.2%	1.4%	2%	2%	2.1%
Other	1.9%	2.9%	3.3%	3.1%	1.2%
ELLs	27.4%	27.3%	32%	38.7%	43.9%
Mobility	27%	29.4%	31.4%	29.1%	32.8%
At-Risk	64.3%	63.3%	64.4%	79.9%	80.8%
Rating	Academically Acceptable	No Rating	Met Standard, Distinction Designation: Academic Improvement in Reading/ELA	Met Standard	Improvement Required: Student Achievement, Postsecondary Readiness

Data retrieved from the Texas Education Agency and the school district's data portal.

Frank

Frank has nine years of middle school principal experience. He reported that after earning his bachelors degree, he and his then wife were recruited from the Austin, TX area into the district by the local president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) chapter and stated they moved to the area "as a package deal." Frank served as an elementary self-contained special education teacher and technology teacher prior to becoming an administrator. Frank previously served as an elementary principal,

middle school assistant principal, and high school assistant principal in his current district. When asked why he chose to become a principal, similar to Adam and Jessica, Frank was approached by his principal,

> He recommended me for a fast track program to the University of Texas- Austin, that the district was offering, and I didn't really think about it at that time, I applied to the position or to the pool, and the district took 20 of us and paid for our masters program…That's when I said, you know, I can make a bigger impact with kids.

Frank's school is located across the street from one of the elementary schools that feeds into his school. Across the street is a new charter school, small family-type restaurants, an automotive repair shop, and small neighborhood convenience stores. Nearby, blocks are filled with fourplexes interspersed with a few single-family homes. The school is also a block away from the interstate.

Frank opened the middle school he currently leads during the 2007-2008 school year which afforded him the opportunity to select the school colors, mascot and hand pick his staff. The first year open the school received an Academically Acceptable accountability rating and was commended in social studies by the TEA. The campus demographics were as follows: 94.8% economically disadvantaged, 2.9% African-American and 95.3% Hispanic and 1.8% White and other ethnic groups. The student body was also comprised of 27.1% ELLs, and 67.1% of the students were identified as At-Risk. The school mobility rate was not reported due to it being the first year the school was open. The following year, the school earned an accountability rating of Recognized. The state did not rate schools during the 2011-12 school year, however

campus demographics did not show a significant change. During the 2013-14 school

year, the school's academic rating declined to Improvement Required. A year later, with

a noted change in ELLs at 60.4% and At-Risk students at 84% the school rebounded and

once again Met Standard, according to the TEA.

Table 7

Accountability Data - Frank

Student Population	2009-10	2010-11	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Eco Dis	92%	94.6%	92%	97.8%	93.2%
AA	4.4%	3.4%	4.7%	4%	5%
H	94.3%	95.1%	94%	95.4%	94.6%
W	0.8%	1%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%
Other	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0	0.3%
ELLs	36.8	40.5%	47.6%	48.6%	60.4%
Mobility	19%	16.9%	14.2%	16.3%	16.1%
At-Risk	62.8%	64%	70.1%	79.3%	84%
Rating	Recognized	Academically Acceptable, Commended on Social Studies	Met Standard	Improvement Required	Met Standard

Data retrieved from the Texas Education Agency and the school district's data portal.

The participant profiles provide a window into the context of the participants'

leadership. Three of the four principals stated they wanted to impact change as their

reason for becoming a principal. Three of the four principals were selected by their

principals to become administrators and three of the four principals also held leadership

roles in their schools prior to assuming the principalship. All four schools have high

majority-minority student populations, high poverty, high ELLs, and high at-risk student

populations. Three of the four principals have led their schools during academic

challenges as identified by the TEA.

Survey Results

The *Basic Psychological Needs at Work* survey, as developed by Ryan and Deci

(2000) and validated by colleagues (Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Leone, Usunov, & Kornazheva,

2001; Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, & Ryan, 1993; Kasser, Davey, & Ryan, 1992), provided data

on motivational factors that participants attributed to their reasoning to stay in the

principalship. According to SDT, humans have three basic psychological needs:

autonomy, competence, and relatedness as previously illustrated in Figure 1 (Deci &

Ryan, 2000). Autonomy involves acting with a sense of volition and having the

experience of choice and competence is the belief that one can influence change resulting

in the confidence to challenge their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Deci and Ryan (1985) further defined competence as, "a personal judgment about how

confident one is that his or her skills will bring about a desired action or outcome" (pp.

15-16). *Relatedness* is being connected with others, belonging, caring for and being

cared for, as well as being part of a community (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

The data from the BNSW survey is presented as an average by participant,

domain/need, and as the group (Table 8). Data for autonomy ranges from 2.71 to 5.14

with a group average of 4.11. Data for competence ranges from 3.5 to 5.3 with a group

average of 4.63. Data for relatedness ranges from 4.25 to 6 with a group average of 4.97.

The data averages for the complete survey ranges from 3.85 to 5.48 with a group average of 4.57.

Table 8

Basic Need Satisfaction at Work scale data.

SDT	Group	Adam	Irene	Jessica	Frank
Autonomy	4.11	2.71	4.00	4.57	5.14
Competence	4.63	3.50	4.67	5.00	5.30
Relatedness	4.97	4.75	4.25	4.88	6.00
Total	4.57	3.65	4.31	4.82	5.48

In the basic psychological need of autonomy, the group average is 4.11, indicating this basic need is somewhat satisfied. Adam's average of 2.71 indicates this basic need is not satisfied. Referring to the individual questions, when asked if the participants felt pressured at work, both Adam and Frank scored the question a 7, indicating they felt very pressured at work. Irene and Jessica scored the same question a 4, indicating they felt somewhat pressured at work. When asked if they can be themselves at work and if they can decide how to get their job done, the average response was 5.35, indicating they could. In the basic need of competence, the group average was 4.63, indicating that as a group they felt somewhat competent. The response to the specific question that asked if they felt competent at work, Adam scored it a 2 and Frank scored it a 3, indicating they did not feel competent at work. Irene scored the same question a 5 and Jessica scored it a 6, indicating they felt competent at work.

In the basic need of relatedness, the group average was 4.97, indicating that as a group; relatedness was the need most satisfied. The question that received the lowest

113

average asked if they considered the people they work with their friends, the group

average was 3.25, indicating they did not consider their coworkers their friends. Adam

scored the question a 4 and Frank scored it a 5, indicating they did consider the people

they work with their friends. Irene, however, scored the question a 1 and Jessica scored it

a 3, indicating they did not consider the people they work with their friends. When asked

if they liked the people they worked with, the group average was 6, indicating they very

much liked the people they worked with.

These results indicate the participants overall basic psychological needs for

autonomy, competence, and relatedness are somewhat satisfied. Individually, Adam's

responses indicate his basic psychological needs are the least satisfied and Frank's are the

most satisfied. Irene and Jessica's responses indicate they perceive their overall basic

psychological needs as somewhat satisfied. The results of this survey gage the

satisfactions of employees' basic psychological needs and in an environment where

employee-supervisor relationships are supportive, employees are more likely to be

motivated and engaged (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000).

Interviews

The interview data in this phenomenological case study consisted of semi-

structured interviews with four participants. The interviews took place in their offices.

To capture the essence of the lived experiences of the participants, the data from the

semi-structured interviews is presented as a dialogue as if the participants were in the

same room (Sullivan, 2012). The dialogue is then analyzed by theme using self-

determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2006) as the guiding framework. This section

consists of six topics: (1) decision making process to become an administrator, (2)

stepping stones or defined path, (3) attitude towards preparation, (4) attitude and disposition regarding the principalship, (5) central office support, and (6) future plans.

Decision Making Process to Become an Administrator

Participants were asked to describe the experience or event that was most influential in leading them to pursue a career in educational leadership. Sitting at a small round conference table, Adam crossed his legs, leaned back, tilted his head, and smiled. He paused for about five seconds before responding and reported his principal had recommended him for a district sponsored leadership program. He further reported on the impact that principal had on his path to the principalship and stated, "from there, I have been fortunate enough to continue to meet people that are interested in me and my growth as a leader, and it has been very, very fortunate for me."

Adam was very personable; his facial expressions accentuated his feelings and statements as he shared his experiences. When prompted about a personal experience or issue that may have influenced his decision to seek a principal position, he shook his head no and stated, "Not, really," but did report his family was very supportive of his decision.

Sitting in a side chair with clasped hands and a bright smile, Irene responded in a matter of fact manner. Her smile faded slightly as she looked at me and shared her experiences as an ESL teacher. She talked about how her students were not included in school activities and wanting to enter into the principalship to advocate for English language learners.

Sitting at her desk directly across from me, Jessica leaned forward and responded with a serious tone. She began by stating she was destined to be a teacher. She reported that throughout her education she had teachers that cared about her and held her to high

expectations. She attributed her educational experiences as the reason why she went into education and stated she wanted to give back. When probed about her decision to become an administrator she reported she did not initiate the process. Jessica reported her principal recommended her to a district sponsored leadership program. She stated,

> In eighteen months, I was on the road that came with a unique opportunity to be an intern for a year under that principal. So, I left the classroom. I didn't even have time to think about what I was doing. That next school year I was out of the classroom and I was doing an administrative internship under the principal that I told that I was going to have his job.

Frank was very thoughtful in his responses. He paused, as if processing the question and like Jessica, began his response by sharing his teaching experience. He shared his journey towards a career in education and his experience as a special education teacher and the students he served. He discussed the relationships he forged with teachers to provide his students inclusion services, how he trained his students to repair computers and printers and how his students responded to teachers' computer work orders requests that paved the way to include his students in general classrooms. Frank reported his principal recognized his leadership abilities and similar to Adam and Jessica, Frank reported his principal recommended him to a district sponsored leadership program.

Stepping-Stones or Defined Path?

Referring to the literature that reports principals in schools with high poverty, majority minority student populations use the experience as stepping stones to more favorable positions (Béteille, Kalogrides & Loeb, 2011), I asked the participants

specifically about why they chose to lead schools identified as Title I (low-socioeconomic), majority-minority schools in an urban school district. All four participants responded similarly, first with a quizzical look, then with a tone of pride in their decision to lead their respective schools. Adam reported he was well aware of the campus data and he welcomed the opportunity to serve that community. He responded,

> When the principal position came open… I was excited about the possibility of me serving as the Principal…. I reviewed the data and the diversity was appealing to me. At the time of application the ethnic breakdown was 65% Hispanic, 20% African American, 10% White and 5% other. For a comprehensive middle school that was pretty diverse. I was well aware the school was a Title I school and I embraced that fact. As a matter of fact, my entire educational career has been spent serving at Title I schools, so that was not an issue. The data also revealed the school had been rated academically unacceptable the previous year in science and that was a challenge that I wanted.

Irene responded,

You know, I really didn't look at it for Title I, I looked at it for, this is the population. You know, when I moved to Texas in 1997, I worked with ESL kids so I wanted to be at a school with ESL kids because I wanted to be their advocate and I still do. My school, we have some of the best students and their parents really, truly, trust us with them and so, that's part of the reason why it's hard to leave because of the kids. Because I don't want just anybody here who thinks, well, I can do the job. No, you're doing it for these kids, so. There are many schools but you know, this was my first school as a principal, you just get

attached. You get attached to some of your teachers and you get attached to the

kids. Now, this is my sixth year, so now we have siblings of the kids that were

here my first year….. the kids are sweet and kind and ready and willing to learn.

Irene continued and discussed the schools she interviewed for and how they all had

similar populations and that "I was just very excited to get a school." She furthered by

saying, "now that I am here, it is wonderful and I really wouldn't want to go anywhere

else." She stated that when she took the position, she was unaware the school was

"unacceptable" and that it was very difficult as she came from a different school district

and how her boss at the time "was very strict and stern and wanted it done her way." She

continued by stating she learned from that experience and states that now,

I am in my comfort zone, in middle school. I know your master schedule is your

master plan. You have to have a really good schedule. In a middle school you

have to have really good teachers, you have to invest time in teachers. You have

to coach them up and if you don't coach them up you have to put them on growth

plans and lead them out. That is very important, you just can't keep them.

Unfortunately, not everyone is made to be a teacher, so you have to think of the

kids. So, I think, remembering to incorporate the positive, student of the week,

positive thoughts each day, I have learned that. As an assistant principal you are

given one set of tasks and as a principal you are in charge of everything. The full

circle, making sure that each person is doing what they are suppose to be doing

and I think I have a good handle on that. I think I have a handle on recognizing

quality talent, although that is difficult because the district, their PR has made it

very difficult for good teachers to come to our district. I'm more organized, I feel

like I am in my comfort zone in middle school.

Jessica, shaking her head, responded,

No, no. I've always taught at Title I schools. I've always taught, my first teaching

experience actually has been in [this district] and I've pretty much served- have

always served the same type of students as a teacher. So, coming to a Title I

school had no bearing on the work. It was just- it's a school…. I probably went

to a Title I school…. So when I look at the work, I just think about how can I

impact a child's thoughts about their own future? I can't change their parents but I

definitely can have an impact on their lives. So, no, I probably wouldn't even

want to be at a school other than a school that has kids who need something

special that I offer.

When asked why that specific school, Jessica continued,

I don't know. I actually like this school. I do. It's, um, it's a new school. It's a

challenging school. This is actually the first year I've ever felt so overwhelmed.

So I guess being a part of this and having seen the transformation from the

climate and knowing that I had some input on that, … 'I'm those students,' and

keeping that in mind, those students need good people. They need good leaders,

they need good teachers, so I had to just look at the support that I received and I

had great parents. I had a great childhood but I know that some of our kids don't

and I need to be a leader for those people because they need people who care.

Frank at first looked at me with question, then smiled and said,

You know, I was hired into a local title one school and I've been in this area for the last 22 years. I've always stayed in this area. You know, I like it because it's the best-kept secret in [the area]. Our kids are really sweet kids. They're great kids…. and parents are really supportive.…the community's supportive…and they need a good servant leader, so … That's why I stay here. [This school] was an opportunity for me because I was at [an elementary school] …and I was at a stage where I was ready to move, within the district or to another district. I was just … Elementary had burned me out. And it wasn't because it wasn't great, it's just because … When you go from high school to elementary, the pacing is totally different. … It was good opening those doors. I think that helps in building the culture and the climate and just the overall atmosphere of the school. I tell the community all the time that this is their school. I'm just happy to be the one leading it right now, and whoever leads it it's going to continue to be a great school, but I love this area, so that's why I stay in this area. I think a little bit, because inside … My mother's Hispanic and my father is Anglo. So I had lost a lot of my heritage when I grew up, because my dad got custody of us and my mom was kind of out of the picture. Schools are like people, I guess. They'll do what you expect them to do. So, if you have a low socioeconomic [school] I mean that didn't really come into play. All I know is that, when I came in, I wanted to have a good learning environment for the kids.

The purpose of this question was to capture the "why" they chose to pursue a career in the principalship. With the exception of Irene, the participants reported that their principals had identified them and recommended them for a district sponsored

principal preparation program. These same three participants also reported that they had

not considered the principalship until their principal identified them for the program.

Irene reported she chose to go into administration due to the experiences of the students

she taught. Adam and Frank attributed their competence as teachers as a reason for

identification for the leadership programs. Adam attributed the relationship with his

principal and Irene's cause to change the educational environment of her students as

reasons for their pursuit of the principalship. When questioned about the campus

demographics, all of the principals knew of the demographics, knew of the potential

challenges, and reported they chose to serve in their communities. All of the principals

also reported on their personal commitment to their students and taking ownership of

their responsibilities.

Attitudes towards Preparation

The participants were then asked to share the types of experiences that helped

them attain their goal of becoming a principal to include nontraditional training or

personal experiences. Adam responded,

> Part of it for me was first, just being a good classroom teacher. Taking the time,
>
> taking the interest to say, 'You know what? I want to create good lessons, I want
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> to engage my kids, I want to be the best teacher I could be.' The other thing is,
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> it's just being involved. So in the classroom, I felt like I was doing a good job but
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> I was also very involved in the activities at the school, weather it be supporting
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> extra curricular events, having to be the math department chairperson. A lot of
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> the things that leaders do I was already kind of doing as a teacher, both in the

classroom and outside the classroom. I volunteered to do bus duty just because I felt that was a need and I enjoyed it.

Irene's responses were generally more succinct,

You know, I really didn't. I was in a portable in the back of the school and no one ever came to the room. We were just kind of the outsiders. I didn't really... I was self-motivated to become an administrator.

Jessica listed and provided examples of the individual skills she believed were necessary to become a principal then reported,

I think being able to be a department chair, being able to lead committees on campus. Also, the internship gave me an inside view of what administrators do from learning testing, what is the accountability piece, how does that tie in to day to day instruction…. So, having a skill set in each area I think, it was just overwhelming to really think about that. I had never looked at principals as having to be able to do all that and now, I'm like, oh, in any given day, I would have talked or had to change focus five or six times just based on the need at that time.

Frank responded immediately,

Those leadership opportunities within the building, the building principal recognizing that, and then allowing me to participate in the leadership opportunities. Being able to enroll in the fast track program and being accepted. That was a big part of my leadership. Then my first principal who hired me out of the classroom, he is one of my biggest mentors that I still continue to call and he'll tell you that I was a go-getter. When you take leadership classes they don't ... It's

just like teaching. They don't prepare you for the real world. So, that first day when you start is really when you learn who you are and what you're going to be about.

The participants were then asked about their formal preparation and administrative experiences and how they had impacted their leadership practices. Adam reported,

The schooling is very, very important. I still remember the school law class, it was challenging but I think that's one of the areas that helped me as a principal because you know when you're a principal, you're making decisions and knowing what you can do helps you to make decisions and be fearless. Because you know that you are operating properly so the legal class was important. I think, the other thing that was very beneficial was having a relationship as an assistant principal with my principal who realized that yes, I want to eventually become a principal and so they began to start sharing with me and inviting me in to see some of the things that principals really do. I was fortunate to have two principals that said, 'Hey, you know what? I'll share with you.' Maybe you can call it a mentoring situation, but that was very, very helpful as well. So, the course work, you got to have it. It's important, some of the things especially the legal stuff, you do remember but I think for me, I learn more from the relationship with my principals when I was an assistant principal. I think that prepared me the most for being a principal.

Irene smiled and enthusiastically reported,

I had two great experiences. I went to UNT for my administrator certificate and I liked the collaboration with other students from different districts so that you could get ideas, on the educational process from [neighboring districts] so there was a variety of, districts represented so it was a very good learning experience for me. So that part and having face-to-face…I was not a big online fan, so having face-to-face instruction and face-to-face collaboration was very impactful for me. As far as the internships at school, my principal gave me administrative duties. I was literally doing assistant principal duties while another assistant principal was working on testing so I was able to experience everything in a system a principal goes through. So, that was impactful as well. So, both experiences I think helped me.

Jessica slapped the top of her desk and responded immediately,

On the job experience! I think the college component is important but it's not always realistic. I think the actual getting in a position and really doing the work and thinking back on all my previous principals and what they brought to the table and what I admired about what they did and what they didn't do. Or also, having strong mentors, so when you step into this role there's someone or a few people that you trust who are already experienced in the role or are actually currently in it that role and you can go and talk too and ask to give feedback. Or being secure enough to say, 'you know what, I don't quite understand this. Can you help me with this? Can you help me think about what I'm doing?' So, I think just a combination of looking at previous principals, my own or listening to what people

said about others. Looking at different research and what the research tell us about what makes good principals.

Frank, pointing to his office wall, painted in burnt orange, smiled and responded, Of course I got a great education at the University of Texas at Austin, good professors who really pushed us and didn't allow us off the hook. They were supportive. The program was kind of two-fold because the district was paying for our program. During the year as we were working our assistant principal positions we would have class at one of the school so the professors would fly in, we'd have class, and then they'd fly back. A very rigorous curriculum, very rigorous program, so that helped prepare, but, even today it's still about keeping fresh. I belong to ASCD and I try to keep current on what's out there, what principals are doing and what leadership is about. The positive thing about [the former superintendent] was that he focused on the principalship, and how important a principal was on student achievement. The principal is the main leverage in moving schools. Those opportunities; professional development, staying fresh and always being a reflective learner, I'm not perfect and I tell my teachers that also. This is a profession where you have to grow, and have a growth mindset, so ... I make mistakes, and I learn from those mistakes, but I also make sure I'm trying to keep current on what the research is showing. So those are some things. …. I've been fortunate to have good bosses that supported me. So that helps, my current boss is real, real supportive.

The questions in this section explored their experiences preparing for the principalship and while all principals discuss the preparation program component, the internships and relationships yielded the most favorable outcomes for them.

Attitude and Disposition Regarding the Principalship

Three questions asked about their attitude and disposition regarding the principalship. The question that produced the most impassioned responses asked about the barriers in performing their job. Adam, with his smile fading and chin up, looked at me as to say, "you remember" and said,

> Let me just say this, as a principal I had two superintendents. When I first
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> became a principal we had Dr. Ortiz and I really felt supported. I really felt that
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> if there was something I needed to be successful whether it be a program, whether
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> it be help from central office, I really felt that it was okay to say, 'Hey, I need
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> help.' The second superintendent we had, which was Mr. Smith, I really felt as a
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> principal that I really couldn't ask for help. So those are two big differences as a
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> principal and I don't want to say my barrier is the man that's the superintendent.
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> But obviously, the superintendent kind of dictates the culture of the district and
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> having a culture where you think that you can't ask for help or that you can't make
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> mistakes ... That you may loose your job ... That's a big obstacle. Not feeling
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> like you can do some of the things that you know are best practice... Under Mr.
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> Smith of course, things had to be a certain way instructionally. Some of it I
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> agreed with and some of it, it sounded good but it didn't really fit in the classroom
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> and we didn't have the freedom to say, 'I'm not, I don't want to do that.' We
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> really couldn't modify it a lot, things really had to look a certain way and again,

those are obstacles. That means that you can't really use what you know and what you've been trained to do and what you know works for your campus, because it's coming from the top down. So that was a big obstacle, I mean, obviously ... parent support could always improve but I think that wasn't a big hurdle. I think we had funds to do things, it wasn't endless funds but if I needed to buy something, I could do that. I would say the biggest obstacle was the culture of the district.

Irene's response was coupled with coordinating gestures of big, while her voice expressed frustration, she reported,

I think in our district it's just so big. When you have a question or you have a situation you have to go through so many chains of command to get the job done. Let me give you one example from this morning. We have a gaping hole over by our cafeteria, it's about four feet deep and while it may not seem serious to an outsider, if you go look at it and with the rain coming, if a student or child were to fall in it, it could collapse on top of them and we could have a very serious situation. So you turn in a work order. Well, they let work orders sit and sit and sit and sit. So then we call them to tell them the severity, still nothing's been done. This happened yesterday, I go in today [reporting database], well now they want pictures, so you have to call this person who calls another person and then you have to send pictures; so in the end danger. I'm trying to be proactive instead of reactive and I think that's a lot of time that is frustrating about getting your job done, trying to be proactive instead of reactive. Trying to get people to understand you need things done and you can't get it done. You can't do it

yourself. I don't have any mud to fill in the hole and neither does my custodial staff.

Jessica lowered her voice responded with a tone of frustration,

People that are leading the work outside of the principalship are making decisions about what we do in education. How to educate kids but yet, you're not even under the umbrella of education or have even been in a building or in a classroom. Some of the struggles are with educating all kids at the same time under the same umbrella. Well, we know that these kids have different needs and the public school setting may not be the best appropriate education for them but we still allow it because that's what the law says or what, whoever the so-be say that we're going to do. When you have to spend a lot of time dealing with things other than education, that's a barrier. When I have to spend more of my time dealing with parent complaints of irrelevant things, like dress code and not report cards or academics, I think that's a barrier. When kids don't know that it's important to be in school, why it's important, and you're chasing them down, that's a barrier. Or when people want to give you feedback but, not the appropriate feedback. Or when you haven't been a principal or been in a struggling school but you want to give me utopia suggestions......to help me do something that you have never experienced. I think we have to go back and really think about whom we are putting in charge of these campuses and who we are putting in charge over the principals that are leading these campuses and their expectations.

Frank, showing little emotion responded,

Time, of course. Middle school is more unique than any other arena and people tell you that this is the toughest job. Managing little people and big people is a challenge and frustrating. Making sure that your priorities are priorities. For instance, classroom instruction, getting in classrooms, making sure that you keep that your focus, because things can take you away from that very easily. A fight, or a parent, that's a struggle, just managing, and juggling the day-to-day things required of a middle school principal.

The following question asked the participants about barriers in performing the responsibilities and duties of their principalship and further asked how they could solve the issues. Adam, pointing at the interview protocol and leaning forward responded,

I think the way to solve it is to really sit down and talk with principals and find out … your priorities and ask them, ask us about a typical day and how you may have priorities lined up and how those things can change and how many of those things change because of somebody else's needs. I'm not talking about a student or a parent, or a teachers' need. I'm talking about somebody from central office where you've got these things to do today and they call you and say 'hey, you know what? We need to know which teachers are signed up for the teacher training next week.' Those are the kinds of things that derail us from what we're trying to do.…. There would be a lot of days where I could look at that and be like, 'Wow, you know things I had planned didn't really get done.' If I insert all the things that other folks needed me to do, those became the priority. So, I think really, just sitting down and asking principals, 'Hey, what can we do to allow you

to do your job and stay focused and stay on track?' I think that would be very, very helpful.

Irene chuckled, smiled and responded,

Well ... I'll be honest, it's gotten better with my new executive director because, I'm able to get into classrooms more which is really an important aspect of my job, to do the coaching, to really make an impact on student achievement and working with the teachers. What I've noticed is my being able to delegate things to my assistant principals so that I can get into my classrooms, now my assistant principals seem to be very overwhelmed because they're having to do all the tasks that I've given them to do. So, it's a win for me but not a win for my team.

Jessica responded immediately, she reported,

You have to delegate. I think ideally, I wish I could come to school and just be in classrooms and helping teachers and providing feedback but that's not realistic. Being able to delegate those things that you know that other administrators are capable of handling and not having to worry about the follow up on it or if they follow through with it. Being able to have different administrators that handle different things that they're good at. Not all the administrators are good at instruction but it seems like we're forced now that everybody's going be an instructional leader. Well, it takes more than instruction to run a campus and when everybody's supposed to be in the classroom, other things really suffer because you do have the daily discipline issues. You have the daily parent complaints or concerns, you have the community who has something and wants something and it's like we're being pulled to utopia but yet our campus is not

utopia. We're not a perfect campus. But there are days that I say, 'Okay, I'm

going to do classes,' but I can't do classes because I spent four hours on a fight

that could have been solved in fifteen minutes but I have to go through all the

logistical stuff and you know, parents not happy with whatever the consequence

were and you know, and the investigations that come with that. So ideally, I

spend a lot of time on extra stuff and I cannot do what I really need to do when it

comes to instruction or even spending time with teachers. Being able to have

PD's that are effective, that we have been trained to do but now we're having to

create our own what we think is best practices to move, to move instruction but

yet we're not trained.... in curricular admin instruction. We just have one class

that is just a basic, this is what curricular admin instruction looks like. However,

you need to take lead with that.

Frank, like Irene, chuckled and reported,

Calendars are great. Calendars keep you on task. So your to-do lists, daily

outlook calendar, those are you priorities for the day, making sure that you keep

true to those. It's tough but if I'm able to accomplish the majority of that list that

day, then I feel accomplished. Those days that I don't, I'm set back and felt a little

pressure to kind of try to make up for that. It is difficult. In middle school you

got parents, you go to your email, departments asking all things of you, they need

a report that was due yesterday but they never told you it was due yesterday, so

there's a sense of urgency for them, but not for me. So, that's a struggle. Making

sure that I'm supportive to my feeder pattern, because we have, as a feeder

program we have goals and priorities also. Making sure that I'm holding those

accountable, it is difficult, but you have to make sure that the priorities of the school come first. For instance, last year we were an improvement required campus and that was very stressful.

A follow-up question asked the participants if they had the necessary resources to make instructional leadership a realistic priority. Adam reported,

Yes, we did. The resources were there. Again, the thing that I had issues with was more of the philosophy about how. That was the area where our hands were tied. I mean again, we had big Title I budgets, they threw a lot of money at us. I'll give you an example for tutoring. I mean I think they heard us talk about money that's needed for tutoring and they threw thirty thousand dollars at us. But there were other guidelines and restrictions about the tutoring, even just the climate of the district where teachers didn't even want to do the tutoring so it wasn't because of the money, it was other things, the climate of the district. The way that we're suppose to do things, I think that really was more of a barrier than just having resources. The resources are there.

Irene responded with an indignant tone,

No. The district for example, I appraised the reading department and there is no curriculum. So that when you have a new teacher and you're trying to teach them classroom management, how to teach, not only do they have that on their plate but they have to take extra time just to find books for students to read, articles for them to analyze. They're it, it is a very challenging time for teachers in my district right now because there's so much for them to do and learn and the district will say, 'Well it's not an eight to four job,' but they don't realize that it takes a lot

of time to find the right information for middle school kids and so it's very frustrating. So, we don't have the resources necessary.

Jessica's tone mirrored Irene's, she responded,

You know, I think we need more experts that can come into the class, into the schools to help us. If I have a social issue, I shouldn't have to deal with the social piece of that, and I do and we don't have social workers that come into the school to help. So, we are having to do everything with limited time, limited resources and really not having a whole lot of knowledge. You know a lot of this stuff I think we learn is just through the day-to-day operations of being an administrator and it starts to wear on you. You're not the preacher, the momma, the counselor, we're not those things but we have to be in schools if we want the schools to work because those are the things that kids come to school needing. Then, on top of that, what do the teachers need? Making sure we are aware of what they need and that we provide those needs. So really we need more resources with today's kids and I don't mean capital resource, I mean people that are experts to help us do what we need to do because I cannot counsel you and be in the classrooms at the same time but our kids need more of that. Where before, the home did a lot of that, in today's schools, it's not happening.

Frank provided context prior to answering, he shared the following,

I had to go before the superintendent, present a plan, you know, the whole year I was, I was on pins and needles. We're off that list now, so I've relaxed a little bit, but it's still in my forefront, you know, but we could still go IR again. Specifically, because the standards are now being raised. But it's not as stressful

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as it was last year. I mean, when you're an 'improvement required' school or low performing school, I think there's an added stress there. It's just how you handle that stress. You can let it overwhelm you, and eat you alive, or you can work within the confines of that. So, that's what I think I do. I struggled with high-quality instruction… when I went before my superintendent that was one of the things, he goes well, 'How are you going to improve the school?' I said, 'Well I need content teachers that know the pedagogy at a deep level.' He says well, 'Why aren't you hiring them?' And I was like 'Because they're not out there.' You know, we're getting AC's [alternative certification] and we're getting people that are coming from other professions and we're trying to teach them their pedagogy in a quick, three week, four week process in order for them to deliver a higher-quality instruction. So, that is a struggle, that's still a struggle in low performing schools. How do we recruit and retain our high, high-functioning teachers? Well that's what I liked about Mr. Smith is that he really knew that the principal was the leverage point in the system, and that everything supported the principal. So, you know, he has his faults too, but you know, when I pick up the phone and say, 'I'm the principal, I need this,' their job was to support the principal. Now, that's changed, now I'm not here to hustle. It wasn't that long, but it helps that when the system is set up to support principals to do their jobs, it goes a long way, so. Pay's okay I mean, we got incentive pay this year based on performance and we're still tweaking that system, but just like teachers, we're not in it for the pay.

The participants were then asked about defining events during their administration

and the impact to them and the school. Adam quickly responded,

The culture of the district, the morale of the district, I think that really, really

defined my administration. I think teachers were tired, staff were tired, people

were confused, we tried to work very hard on making the initiatives clear but, you

know the teachers are very smart educators and we could tell them what we were

given but they would look at us like, 'well, that really doesn't work.' We tried to

sit down and say, 'Well, how can we make what we've been given with what you

know, how can we make that work in a classroom?' Even with that, sometimes if

things were changed that would be a problem because people who are coming in

to do the evaluating aren't listening to the teachers end. They're getting their

guidance from the superintendent, assistant superintendents and executive

directors. So it has to look a certain way for them… Three of my five years, that

was, I would say the culture of the district was a big, defining piece of my

administration.

Irene, once again appearing frustrated responded,

Well, again, it comes from the district. The district has to change. For example,

the SST [Student Success Team] process was originally given to the counselors

and now it's given to an assistant principal so if there's a disciplinary issue, the

assistant principal now has to have all the meetings with the teachers and the

parent and set it up and put the system in place, in the computer system and

there's no way to- it's required from the district but it's so paperwork heavy so to

speak. There's nothing you can do, it's directed by the district. The way you

discipline, where you have to… you can't just send a student to alternative school,

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there has to be a plan in place and if the plan's not in place the way the district

wants it in place then you can't send the student and so you're just having to have

conferences over and over and over again or suspending a student over and over

and over again but then you get dinged if you have too many suspensions. So, it's

kind of a unique system.

Jessica reported,

My school is unique because we serve over a thousand students, thirty two

percent mobility rate, no neighborhood, mostly apartments and no community.

So, with that, the most defining thing is insuring that kids have a stable place that

they can come to everyday and that parents understand their role as parents. You

know, because I know that their struggles are really hard and really different

because if you're moving every six months and my kids are leaving and coming

and leaving and coming, I have to really focus on attendance. You know,

attendance for my students as well as attendance for my staff. The most defining

thing for me is that my parents support me, those who I have a relationship with,

and I spend a lot of time with ensuring that that's strong. Because I- they need to

see me like them, not someone just here temporary but someone here who really

wants for their child to do well, you know? When I first came to [this school], we

had a lot of issues with gangs and fighting. Everyday the kids would fight after

school, big fights, parents involved in the fights. We have moved away from that.

We no longer have that. I think that we have really made a safe community here

and, and I love that.

Frank, maintaining his calm demeanor, responded,

In middle school you always have major events, emergencies that arise. So I've seen a variety of things. I've had students that passed away. Last year we had a kid that was murdered just down the street by gang members. Dealing with that, going through that grieving process, not only with the kids but the family, that process. Elementary school, I had a kid bring a gun to school. So those things helped define, I guess, my leadership. It's how you handle those situations. Again, it goes back to you, you could let it overwhelm you, or you can control and make some sense of it. I think my best quality is that I'm able to relate with people very well. So, if you have an irate parent, I'm able to talk to them and get them calmed down. If there's a situation occurring, I'm able to make sense of it and bring everybody together and if it's a crisis, because I've dealt with crisis before, you need to call 911, you need to make sure the kids are safe, and you do rounds. So that has helped in making sure that in this job that you relate to people and they can relate back to you. So that helps me with this job is ... You have to manage people. And then how you do that; is it positively or negatively? So, if you're screaming and hollering at parents all the time or you don't give them that sense that you're listening to them, then it can make your job very difficult.

This section asked about the participants' attitudes and disposition of the principalship. Culture of the district, specifically the bureaucracy, and relationships with the supervisors are the themes identified.

Central Office Support Systems

The participants were asked about the most challenging situation they have faced as principals. Adam's demeanor changed, his voice expressed "hurt" and his eyes looked down as he reported,

The, the most challenging situation I dealt with really was the relationship with my supervisor. I'm not saying that students and teachers and community were perfect but the, the feeling of your job being on the line, even though we were a campus that was doing well ... Was there room for growth? Absolutely. But, you know, to be one of the top middle schools in the district and for me to operate and come to work and feel like my job is on the line ... I didn't need my supervisor to give me that pressure. I want to do the best that I can do, regardless. But to, to feel like, if I make a mistake that I'm going to get fired, I think that makes you miserable. The day-to-day challenges with teachers and students, I mean, I embrace those. I know that those are going to happen and I look forward to solving those but it was a really big challenge to not have an effective working relationship with my supervisor.

Irene reported,

The most challenging is when you have an ED [executive director] who doesn't understand working with a campus that is a challenging campus. So, when you have an instructional leader ahead of you who is your boss, trying to have you lead a school when he has not experienced a school like that, that I'm currently in and you cannot get ideas across to him as to why we're doing things the way we do them, it becomes very frustrating.

Irene spoke in a matter-of-fact tone; when asked how she dealt with that situation, she laughed and reported,

Honestly, I prayed and I had other colleagues. We would talk every week. I considered filing a grievance. I considered going to the administration building but I felt like that would jeopardize my career more so, so you just deal with the punches you're given. Whether it be a growth plan that he gave or you just do it the way he tells you to do it, knowing full well that's not going to help your campus. I'll give you one specific example; I am in a school of seventy percent second language learners and in writing class and I told my boss that our kids needed to write more. They need to write weekly because they're second language learners, they need more practice on their skills and he said they should only write once every three weeks. So, he went and asked someone at the district level and he came back and said I was right, and not too much later, that's when I got my growth plan because I challenged him. By saying our school needs to write more, but he didn't want us too. So, that was a challenge that you just learn when to keep your mouth closed and when not too.

Jessica began by describing her campus demographics to include the mobility rate. She also discussed the culture she inherited when she took the principalship and said,

I think it would be the racial thing. About four years ago, there was definitely a racial divide between Hispanics and African American students, more so the boys. Just addressing that head on and making the parents aware of the situation, bringing parents in, having seminars with the boys and getting to know the boys.

A few of the girls and just really saying, 'that's not going be an issue here. We're not going to make this a race thing. We're going to make this about love. You live in the same apartments. You come to the same schools. I think being an African American principal and running a campus that's, over fifty percent Hispanic hasn't really been a challenge until recently. Some of the parents I think they just really don't know what to expect. Some of my new parents coming in, assuring them that I'm not a principal of color; I'm a principal of students. Of all students and what I will do for my own race, I'm going to do for your race; I'm going to do for all kids and ensuring that they understand that. Making sure kids are bonding and gelling with each other and I think that that has been- that was the biggest challenge.

When I asked Frank this question, he paused, his smile disappeared and his body stiffened. Before responding he stood up slowly, walked towards the credenza behind his desk, retrieved a folded colorful card, and handed it to me, it was a memorial card. Pictured in front was a male African-American teenager. He pointed to the card and said,

The most difficult one is the student we had that drowned. This was back in 2010, so it's been, five years ago. So this mom ... was very protective of her children. She was always around. She never let him go anywhere and he wanted to go to a basketball game at [the high school]. And she was very adamant about, 'No, I don't want you to go.' The one time she let her baby go he ended up drowning in Oklahoma in a lake. His best friends tried to save him. He almost drowned too, so that was very difficult, because the mom was very involved here in school. She cared about her kids. She was a single mom. When she didn't

have the financial means, as a feeder pattern we supported her. I had the

reception here in the cafeteria because they didn't have a reception hall so we used

our cafeteria to work through that, but that was a very painful process because he

was a good kid. It made a big impact on the community and on the environment.

Of course, I still have this card so it's made a big impact on me.

The participants were then asked to describe the relationship between them and

the central office staff. Irene responded with a sense of relief, she said,

Uh, I have a new boss now, thankfully, who is very supportive. Well, first of all,

he was a principal under the new regime here so he understands- he's walked in

our shoes. Secondly, he's an advocate for students, for education, he's very smart.

He's very knowledgeable, he reads, he reads research and so as a leader, he brings

that research to the principals and we also do walks together as in a leadership

team. He brings articles. We're currently reading *Lincoln Leadership*, something

like that, sorry. We're revisiting that book which has been great, you know,

looking at our mission and vision knowing that's really important to drive our

school. He just gets it. He gets education, he gets where we are and where we

need to be, and he always tells us he doesn't want us to lead like him. He wants

us to lead like we lead but then to grow us where we are, if that makes sense.

He's really good.

Jessica half smiled and answered,

I think it has changed. It has changed, oh God, drastically over the past three

years. This is my fifth year being principal here. In my first year I had three ED's

that landed for me, I didn't have a lot of leadership guidance. I had to pretty much

swim and figure it out. Then the second year going in with the change of superintendent who actually had his own ideas and it's whatever. You know, this is what it's going to be, you either like it or not or I may like you or not, you know. I think we didn't really have a voice. I think we were given more directives of exactly what was going to happen and how you were going do it and if you didn't do it then you would no longer have a job… This year, we haven't had a whole lot of direction.… So, I can't ever really say that I've had a supervisor that caused a lot of stress on me as a principal. This year been the first year that, I'm actually under IR. I can't even say that the focus has really changed that much. I don't, I don't really even think that central staff has hindered me from doing anything on this campus, you know.

Frank said,

The majority of my bosses have been supportive. There have been a couple where I was on the verge of ... You know, I thought my job was on the line, that I was going to be terminated, that I was going to be non-renewed. Those were difficult, stressful times. [Now] well, my boss kind of filters a lot of that. That's the good thing about her support, she has a good personality, she gets what she needs. So, we have a good support system from central office. Because we were IR there were certain things that we needed on our campus. I presented and [my supervisor] was able to bring all the departments to the school. [We] had a big meeting in the library and I presented a big PowerPoint on what I need from the curriculum, this is what I need from ESL, help MLEP [Multi-Language Enrichment Program] department. This is what I need from ... A lot of these

resources we were able to get because she brokered that meeting so that helped a lot. And then her support saying, 'we're not going to fail. We're going do this together.' Just her supportive nature, you know, kind of elevated everyone.

Since Adam is no longer in the principalship, I did not ask him that question; however, reflecting on the research, specifically Fuller and Young (2009) that reported that 90% of principals that leave the principalship do not return to the position, I asked Adam, the one participant who left the principalship after five years, if he would ever consider returning to a principalship? He looked at me quizzically, looked and tapped his watch and responded,

As time goes by, the chance of me returning to the principalship is getting smaller. I mean if I were going to do that…that needs to be happening probably now. I do still think about the kids and I do still think about the teachers and I do still enjoy all the extracurricular [activities] and all the bells and all of those things but as time goes on, in the position that I'm in now, I can see me not missing those things and becoming further and further removed from the principalship, so probably not. The other thing would just be, and I don't know if people talk about that or not but the other thing is really career minded, it you know, when you look at your career, sometimes people don't want to make backwards moves. They're not even being on lateral moves, much less, going back, so, so yes, I could do it because I like doing the job. But the other thing to consider is that would people that are moving up, would they go back to the principalship? That could be a question about their career, so that would be another reason that I probably would not.

This section explored the lived experiences as well as the perceptions the principals have about the central office support systems. The themes identified are the quality of support and relationships, specifically the relationships with the supervisors, the culture of the district and working under fear of job loss or performance plans.

Future Plans.

An organic topic that came up in the interviews was the future plans of these middle school principals. At varying points in the interview process, Irene, Jessica and Frank each volunteered they were ready for a change. Irene informed me at the start of the interview that she has "tried to leave," and that she "looked" but has not found another position. With a half-hearted smile, she appeared defeated as she mentioned an interest in human resources and clarified she wanted "something without this accountability." Jessica appeared and admitted to being overwhelmed. She reported,

> I've had the luxury of teaching middle school which was my first teaching
>
> experience so I was not unfamiliar with the middle school structure or the middle
>
> school student, thank God for that, but ... I think I've done my time here and I
>
> know it's time for a change. I think [this school] is ready for a, a new leader, you
>
> know…. It is a good school. Our kids happen to come from three of the lowest
>
> elementary schools here in this feeder pattern. I think it makes the challenge so
>
> much [more] difficult because there's such a big gap and I just think it's time for a
>
> new voice over here. I think five years for anybody is enough at a school. I think
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> you have to keep moving and keep growing so I think it's time for me to continue
>
> growing. You know, not that the work is- the work is complete. No, not by any
>
> means, but it's time for a new voice.

Frank reported that he was not challenged as an elementary principal as his reason for moving to middle school. He continued that he is at a similar position in middle school and that he informed his supervisor that he was ready to move to a high school principal position. Frank stated,

I love this job. I am ready for a move, so I am at that point where I was, I'm ready to move, but I still enjoy what I'm doing so ... It is stressful. I won't lie to you. I think middle school is the most stressful job in the world. Sometimes central office doesn't see that, I guess, or other outsiders don't see how difficult this job can be. The amount of things we deal with on a day-to-day basis is sometimes overwhelming.

Summary

Accountability data indicates student demographics changed at every campus during the span of the participants' tenure. Students identified as ELLs and At-Risk grew at every campus, almost doubling at one campus. Students identified as economically disadvantaged was stable in three of the four schools with the fourth school showing growth by 15%. The percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged collectively was over 88%. The major ethnic group in these schools collectively is the Hispanic student population. The data further shows that three of the four principals led schools identified as Academically Unacceptable or Improvement Required during their tenure. All principals served in schools with high needs student populations.

Survey data from the BPNW indicate the basic need of autonomy is the least satisfied for all participants and ranged from "not true" to "true." Competence was the second most satisfied basic need and ranged from "somewhat true" to "true."

Relatedness was the most satisfied basic need and ranged from "true" to "very true." Responses from the male participants indicate extreme differences in their responses to need satisfaction in autonomy and competence while the responses of the female participants were in general similar. Overall, the basic psychological needs of the principals were "somewhat" satisfied.

The interview data revealed principals identified and recommended three of the four participants to district sponsored principal preparation programs. They each reported they chose to enter into the principalship to make a difference and impact similar communities they had experience serving. The participants also reported they actively sought a principalship in schools with high needs student populations.

The principals attributed previous school leadership roles, on-the-job experience, internship, and mentors as contributors to their preparation to assume the principalship. They also identified the bureaucracy and culture of the district, relationships with supervisors, lack of resources, and the absence of informed or campus specific support as barriers to performing their jobs. They further reported the top-down directives and working under duress or fear of job loss as pressures in their jobs. Lastly, all principals reported they were ready to leave that specific principalship.

This chapter provided a window into the context of the participants' leadership, the extent in which their basic psychological needs were being met at work, as well as their voices and lived experiences of their principalship.

V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study captured the voices, perspectives and lived experiences of four middle school principals serving in the second largest school district in Texas. The context of their principalship was drawn from the state and district artifacts, the data from the self-reporting *Basic Need Satisfaction at Work* survey and the semi-structured interviews. The interview data was coded using the methodology framework and aligned with the definitions of the basic needs of the self-determination theory, as well as the thwarting of needs (Appendix E). The themes identified in the data were making a difference, relationships, and organizational culture.

Making a Difference

The first theme identified was making a difference. The participants described their reasons for pursuing the principalship to advocate and positively impact student learning. The data from this research found that principals who taught in schools with high needs student populations prior to entering the principalship were committed to serving that student population. The participants in this study reported they sought out a principal position that matched the demographics of the students they served as teachers. Every participant reported they were well aware of the student demographics of their campus, and they did not consider the demographics as a dissuading factor when applying or assuming their principalship.

Adam reported he had only served in Title I campuses, and that he was well aware the school had been rated academically unacceptable and embraced the challenge. Irene reported that she was unaware her school was rated academically unacceptable, but that it did not matter as she was happy to get the opportunity to be a principal. Jessica reported

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she could not imagine serving communities that did not need her talents, and Frank reported that his entire career had been in the same community and he found it difficult to leave. The participants further reported that students in the communities they served deserved strong leadership. They identified with the students and developed attachments to communities. Irene said that the parents trust them with their students and their education and that, in it self, was reason to continue serving the community.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

In general, principals enter the principalship to make a societal contribution (Cooley & Shen, 1999). In support of that assertion, the participants in this study reported that they were intrinsically motivated to pursue the principalship and to serve their respective communities to make a difference, thus acting in an autonomous manner. By definition, autonomy involves acting with a sense of volition and an experience of choice. Competence is the belief that one can influence change, which results in gaining the confidence to challenge their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self-determination theory posits that people have an innate tendency toward growth and that intrinsic motivation and wellbeing require satisfaction in the three psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1987; Gagne & Deci, 2005; Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan et al., 1997). The participants reported that they actively sought opportunities to lead schools with high needs student populations, which indicates they were intrinsically motivated. Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) posits that intrinsically motivated behavior allows a person to feel competent and self-determined that the locus of causality is within oneself (deCharms, 1968; White, 1959). The participants' assertion that they had a cause or that they

welcomed the challenge associated with their particular campus describe autonomous motivation, as the behaviors were self-initiated (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Cognitive evaluation theory further proposes that people are intrinsically motivated to engage in activities that make them feel competent and self-determined. Thus, the participants' reward is not tangible; rather, it is a feeling of competence and of making a difference with their students. The participants also described the relationships they have developed with the parents and community as one of trust. Cognitive evaluation theory posits that this positive feedback enhances intrinsic motivation and feelings of competence (Deci & Ryan, 1980) and "form the energetic basis for the development and maintenance of intrinsic motivation" (Vansteenkiste, 2010, p. 109). Irene cited the feedback she received from parents as a reason that she stays in her position.

Relationships

The second theme identified from the data collection was relationships, including peer networks and community connections. Relationships with peers and previous supervisors were identified as themes throughout the interview process. The participants reported on the relationships they had with their supervising principals during their internships with respect and admiration. Every participant named at least one of their previous principals as mentors, and they described the opportunities those mentors provided when they were learning to be principals. Every participant reported that they continue to call on their cooperating principals for guidance and or feedback. In stressing the importance of peer networks Frank said,

The principalship, the main thing that keeps you from burning out is making sure

that you have a network of colleagues. Because you don't know everything, so it's

good to have those people that you can pick up the phone and call, and you know

they can give you advice or support. So I think that when principals struggle it is

when they don't have that support system, so making sure that you actually reach

out to people and colleagues.

Similarly, Irene reported that she had a network of colleagues that she called

weekly as a support system, and Jessica said she was in constant contact with peers to ask

for advice and input on her work. Irene reported that collaboration with peers from other

districts was impactful as she prepared for the principalship. Frank reported on the

positive relationship he had with his current supervisor and said that she brokered a

meeting with various departments at the district level to get him the support he needed.

He specifically mentioned her assurance that, "we're not going to fail. We're going to do

this together" elevated his staff. Similarly, Irene reported the relationship with her new

supervisor as supportive,

First of all, he was a principal under the new regime here so he understands; he's

walked in our shoes. Secondly, he's an advocate for students, for education, he's

very smart. He's very knowledgeable, he reads, he reads research and so as a

leader, he brings that research to the principals and we also do walks together as

in a leadership team.

Relationships with the community were also identified in the interviews, with

Irene, Jessica, and Frank reporting they have supportive communities. Frank reported on

the relationships he has made with parents and the personal impact they have had on him.

Irene reported that in her sixth year at her school, she began seeing the younger siblings of students who she served when she first assumed the principalship. Jessica reported that she has worked hard on strengthening the relationships with her community.

Ineffective relationships were also reported, however, with Adam describing his inability to develop an effective working relationship with his supervisor as the most defining and difficult event he has encountered in his career. Similarly, Irene reported difficulties with her previous supervisor's inability to relate or understand the context of her leadership as difficult. Jessica said that relationships with parents require nurturing and identified racism within her student body as the most difficult event in her career.

Relationship Motivation Theory

Every participant identified at least one relationship that impacted his or her principalship. Central to relationship motivation theory (RMT) is the need for relatedness, which "predicts people's experiences of relationship satisfaction or relational well-being, relatedness need satisfaction alone is not enough to ensure high-quality relationships" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 60). Relationships with mentors and principal supervisors were engraved in their memories and easily able to provide examples of how the relationship supported them individually. The relationships between the participants and their mentors were all characterized by reciprocal respect, caring, and reliance (Deci et al. 1991, 2001; Van den Broeck et al. 2008). Graves et al. (2013) reported that both autonomy and relatedness had direct positive relationships with affective organizational commitment. Their research also found that higher levels of autonomy and relatedness appear to be directly linked to higher levels of commitment. This is important for retention considerations as higher levels of commitment results in higher job satisfaction

and lower employee turnover (Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

While researchers have reported that relatedness may not be critical for autonomous motivation, relationships between supervisor and employee and employee and group are necessary to facilitate the internalization of extrinsic motivation and positive work outcomes (Deci & Ryan 2000; Ryan & Deci 2002; James & Greenberg, 1989).

Organizational Climate

The organizational climate also described as the workplace environment, was another theme identified in the study. Throughout the interviews, participants repeatedly described directives from the superintendent and their supervisors that mandated the "how" of instruction and leadership of their campuses. Participants reported they were not allowed to do what they knew was best practice and what worked for their campus. Adam said, "Under Mr. Smith, of course, things had to be a certain way instructionally." Similarly, Jessica said that, "not all administrators are good at instruction but it seems like we're forced now that everybody's going to be an instructional leader. Well, it takes more than instruction to run a campus, and when everybody's supposed to be in the classroom, other things really suffer."

The participants further described the systems and processes at the district level as hindrances and impediments to their leadership. The participants reported spending hours entering data into district required reporting systems and described the inflexibility of the process, even when the safety of the students is a concern. Irene said that, "there's nothing you can do, it's directed by the district." Every participant reported district-level departmental demands that both required immediate response and lacked prior

notification. Frank said that, "they need a report that was due yesterday but they never told you it was due yesterday, so there's a sense of urgency for them, but not for me." Irene reported she believed the district was just too big, and the district needed to change.

The participants also shared concerns on the lack of resources and the low quality of support. Both Irene and Frank reported their need for well-qualified teachers and their inability to recruit or hire due to the district's reputation. Jessica said she needed specialized support due to the campus population, but the support was just not there. Irene explained that the district did not have a reading curriculum, and when she asked for support in creating one, the district asserted that it was the teachers' responsibility to create their curriculum. Irene said it was a difficult time for teachers in her district. Adam claimed he did not believe he could ask for help, and both Irene and Jessica described the level of support from their supervisors as not "helpful" or "utopian" and not relevant to their students' needs. Irene said, "You just do it the way he tells you to do it, knowing full well that's not going to help your campus." Three of the participants reported that their supervisors did not have the background knowledge or experience to provide campus specific support.

The participants also reported a level of insecurity in their positions. To describe the culture of the district, Jessica said, "I think we were given more directives of exactly what was going to happen and how you were going do it and if you didn't do it then you would no longer have a job." Adam reported, "The superintendent kind of dictates the culture of the district and having a culture where you think that you can't ask for help or that you can't make mistakes... That you may loose your job... That's a big obstacle." Adam also said that his campus was one of the highest performing comprehensive middle

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schools in the district, yet even with high student achievement he felt there was no room for error.

Frank reported on the pressures of being a low performing campus. Irene reported that when she advocated for her English Language Learner (ELL) students by informing her supervisor they needed extended writing opportunities, her supervisor, after acknowledging she was correct, placed her on a performance growth plan because she challenged his instructional recommendation. Irene said she did not file a grievance due to fear of retribution, and explained, "you just learn when to keep your mouth shut." Even Frank, the most tenured principal, reported that he too has felt his position was threatened and stated, "there have been a couple where I was on the verge of ... You know, I thought my job was on the line, that I was going to be terminated, that I was going to be non-renewed and would lose this position."

Organismic Integration Theory

The organizational climate described by the participants is reminiscent of the old parental adage "because I said so." The participants reported the climate of the district as devoid of autonomy. Basic psychological needs theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) posits that "people function and develop most effectively as a consequence of social-environmental supports for their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs" (p. 1459). Research on SDT defines needs as universal necessities or nutriments that are essential for optimal human development and wellbeing (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996). The participants' assertion that the district leadership directed the "how" of instruction and leadership of their campuses is descriptive of controlled motivation. Controlled motivation refers to external regulation or extrinsic motivation such as demands, threats,

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rewards, or pressures to avoid punishment, (Deci & Ryan, 2000), not the optimal work environment.

As mentioned in the literature review organismic integration theory (OIT) assumes that people have a natural tendency to integrate their ongoing experiences as long as the necessary nutriments or supports are available (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy is necessary for internalization to occur and is facilitated when people experience a sense of choice and freedom from external requests (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Gagné and Deci (2005) report,

> Studies in organizations have provided support for the propositions that autonomy- supportive (rather than controlling) work environments and managerial methods promote basic need satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and full internalization of extrinsic motivation, and that these in turn lead to persistence, effective performance, job satisfaction, positive work attitudes, organizational commitment, and psychological well-being. (p. 346)

Self-determination theory asserts that individuals have an innate need to feel competent in addition to feeling autonomous. But this need may also be thwarted within the district. The participants expressed frustration with their inability to appropriate campus specific support and resources. The absence of these resources may thwart their need to feel competent. Researchers report that a lack of work related resources has varying effects on employees, depending on the employees' motivation and overall work environment. Researchers also report that in autonomy-supportive environments employees adapt to a lack of work-related resources while in a controlled environment the lack of resources negatively affects employees, which could lead to burnout and high

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turnover (Fernet, Guay, Senecal, & Austin, 2012). Fernet and Austin's (2014) research

on job stress revealed that,

>Control-motivated employees would be more sensitive to environmental factors,
>
>which even when partially internalized are essentially external regulators of
>
>behavior. These employees would therefore be more vulnerable to job stressors
>
>liable to affect their wellbeing, as well as the associated external and internal
>
>contingencies, such as self-esteem and self-worth. (p. 7)

The research further revealed that when employees are faced with job demands in

a controlling environment, the employees would be more dependent on resources in their

environment that could lead to working compulsively and exhaustion (Van den Broeck,

Schreur et al., 2010). If the employees feel powerless, "they would judge resources as

inadequate and insufficient to remedy the situation, which would be perceived as beyond

their control" (Fernet & Austin, 2014, p. 7).

The participants also reported working in an environment rife with fear of job loss

and retaliation. "SDT recognizes that beyond psychological growth and well-being,

people can display cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns that represent the non-

optimal or darker sides of human existence" (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-

Ntoumani, 2011, p. 1460). Individuals in a position of authority can behave in a

coercive, pressuring, and authoritarian manner to impose a specific and preconceived

way of thinking, feeling, and behaving on others (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, &

Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2010). Work environments overseen by such individuals, such as

those described by the participants in this study thwart the basic psychological needs and

can have negative consequences for health and wellbeing (Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009).

Deci and Flaste (1995) assert that when employees feel elevated pressure, the predicted outcomes are either compliance or defiance. Research also suggests that low levels of personal control at work attributed to significant unhappiness (Warr, 2007), lower motivation, and significantly lower job satisfaction (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). In contrast, a culture of collective responsibility, principals have the discretion to implement policies and initiatives to meet the needs of their student population (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, Fenton & Davis, 2014). Principals are entrusted with the advocacy of their students and empowered to report when policies and initiatives do not support the campus initiatives (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, Fenton, & Davis, 2014).

Implications for District and Practice

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that inform principal longevity in large urban middle schools serving high needs student populations. The findings of this study are consistent with the research on principal turnover with one exception; the claim that principals who serve in high needs schools, use the experience as a stepping-stone to a more favorable position. Béteille, Kalogrides and Loeb's (2011) research suggested that principals do not leave their school due to performance, but rather they leave when vacancies arise at easier-to-staff schools that they find more appealing. The research concluded that principals at schools with high needs thus use their experiences as stepping-stones to more favorable positions. This study is more consistent with the research that states "principals and assistant principals working in schools with low-achieving students prefer working in a failing school or in a school with many students of poverty" (Horn, Kalgorides & Loeb, 2009, p. 26). Every participant in the study reported working in schools with similar student demographics prior to their current

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principalship, with Irene reporting she actively sought a principalship in a school with a high percentage of students identified as English language learners. Frank reported working in the same community for 22 years. This study provided a platform for the voices and lived experiences of principals that choose to serve such communities, and allowed them to explain their reasons for seeking to lead their schools.

The study also provided a window into the lived experiences of four middle school principals and described how the changes in the work environment, from autonomous to controlled, impacted their principalship. Similarly, this study is consistent with research that reports principals do not necessarily leave high needs schools due to student populations; rather, they leave for better working conditions, such as greater resources and support (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010b). One of the participants' major contentions was the unresponsive or bureaucratic system at the district level that impeded their job performance. Another major contention was the participants' distrust of their supervisors and central office administrators. The lack of support, inadequate resources, irrelevant feedback, and inability to lead their schools based on the needs of their student populations suggests the thwarting of autonomy. In contrast, work environments that provide a balance of autonomy and support positively influence the perceptions of the working conditions (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, Fenton, & Davis, 2014). Research on self-determination theory in work organization reports that autonomy-supportive environments results in increased satisfaction and engagement, higher trust, and less stress (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Gagné, Koestner, & Zuckerman, 2000) as well as higher levels of affective organizational commitment (Graves & Luciano, 2013).

As principal turnover increases and the challenge of recruiting high quality

principals continues, the information revealed in this study may serve as a resource for

human resources and central office staff to identify practices that thwart autonomy and

potentially hinder principal performance. Utilizing a systematic process to identify

principal candidates with a preference for high needs schools, and exploring *why* they

prefer a specific school with a specific student population, may increase principal

longevity in schools with high need student populations. Providing internships and

mentors that provide support in a risk-free environment, ensuring that supervisors of

principals provide the support and resources specific to the demographics of the school

and providing an autonomy-supportive environment must be included in the framework

of the district strategic plan.

Developing support systems to identify teachers with leadership potential and

providing them with the experiences and opportunities to transition into the principalship

is also recommended as research shows that in-district principal candidates with more

than five years in the district are less likely to leave the principalship (Villarreal, 2011).

Redefining the role of principal supervisors and central staff to limit the bureaucracy and

create an environment of shared accountability is also recommended (Ikemoto,

Taliaferro, Fenton & Davis, 2014).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Federal and state policy makers must make a commitment to improve the

educational environment through investment in principal retention. This study identified

highly qualified principals who are committed to serving in schools with high needs

student populations. The findings suggest that in the absence of autonomy-supportive

work environments, principal turnover will continue. The absence of informed campus support, the culture of accountability, the ever-changing federal and state mandates continue to impact teacher and principal turnover. Federal mandates that require districts to replace principals and teachers should be reconsidered, as these schools are the schools experiencing higher turnover rates. The School Leadership Network (SLN) (December, 2014), published, *Churn; The high cost of principal turnover*, a report that "calls upon decision makers and funders to value and prioritize principal retention efforts as much as principal pipeline development efforts, which research shows are necessary for the sake of students and schools." The report asserts that they are the first to request dedicated funding and the first to report of the necessity of retaining principals. The SLN requested that decision makers and funders;

1. Continue to invest in leadership development beyond pipeline investments,

2. Engage principals in authentic peer networks where principals can learn the art and practice of leading schools from their peers,

3. Provide one-to-one coaching support to principals beyond the first two years, and

4. Revise the structure and purpose of district office principal supervisors' roles.

Federal and state policy makers must heed the voices and experiences of principals and jointly commit to answer the call for equalized funding for principal retention.

Implications for Further Study

In the absence of research focused on principal longevity, I recommend several opportunities for further study. First, expanded research that captures the voices and lived experiences of principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to better

understand their work environments and how districts can support principals based on campus needs. Second, research that informs principal longevity at high schools, elementary schools, and middle schools from rural, suburban, and urban districts with varying years of experience would also contribute to the research. Finally, research identifying school districts that have retained principals for more than five years in schools with high needs student populations would also be advantageous to study.

Conclusion

This research study began with a quest to understand why qualified principals were not applying for principal positions in my previous school district. This quest for answers and understanding revealed 17 years of research reporting on the phenomenon known as principal turnover. Researchers studying this phenomenon have reported on the impact principal turnover has on student achievement, teacher retention, and program stability. Researchers have also reported on why principals leave, how to build a principal pipeline, and how to better prepare principal candidates; however, principal turnover continues, which led to this study.

A professor once asked why anyone would want to pursue the principalship given the multitude of responsibilities and ever changing educational policies. More importantly, why would principals want to stay? Working conditions of principals is the least informed (Fuller & Young, 2015). The purpose of this study was to contribute to the literature by providing the voices and lived experiences of four middle school principals serving in an urban school district with high needs student populations and identifying motivational factors that inform principal retention and answer, "Why do they do what they do?" So what motivational factors enhance principal longevity? This study

revealed the personal connections the participants had with high needs student populations that advanced their reasons to pursue the principalship. This study also provided the voices of principals that committed their careers to serving communities of high needs student populations with the belief that the students "deserved" great leaders and great teachers. The participants in this study shared their advocacy for the students who represent the underserved student populations and actively sought principal opportunities to positively impact student learning.

This study provided the voices of principals who reported they did not initiate a career in the principalship. The participants revealed they had served in leadership capacities at the campus level and their principals approached them and recommended them for district sponsored principal programs. These same principals served as supervising principals during their internships and continue to serve as mentors and peer supports that they report has been the most impactful in their preparation for the principalship.

This research further solidified current research that purports the need for autonomy at the campus level and how the context of leadership matters. The participants, without restraint, reported on their working conditions and how changes in district level leadership can influence the principalship.

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A

Fuller and Young Interview Protocol

1. As you balance your responsibilities do you have the necessary human capital resources necessary to make instructional leadership a realistic priority? If not what would?

2. What are the greatest barriers (challenges) to performing your job?

3. Describe the relationship that exists between the central office staff and you as a building administrator. How is it helpful and supportive?

4. As reform/accountability have increased, what has been the impact on your job expectations?

5. In your opinion, what are the three most important components of a quality principal preparation program?

6. How does your compensation as a building administrator compare with the job expectations?

7. Compare your daily responsibilities with the duties in an ideal principalship. If tasks take you away from meaningful leadership, how might those responsibilities be redistributed?

APPENDIX B

Initial Interview Protocol

Time of interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Participant: _____

Introduction/Description of Project

    (a) Provide an overview of the purpose of the study,

    (b) The sources of data being collected,

    (c) Explanation of what will be done with the data to protect the confidentiality
of the participant

    (d) Provide an approximation of how long the interview will take

    (e) Provide an opportunity for questions

Turn on recorder

Interview Questions

Topic Domain: Decision Making Process to Become Administrator

1. Think of an event or experience in your career or personal life that you think was the most influential in leading you to pursue a career in educational leadership. I'll just wait while you have time to think about this. Describe this experience for me in as much detail as you can remember. Nothing is too small or insignificant.

Follow up:

Were there issues/goals that you experienced as a teacher that influenced your decision to move into administration? Give me examples and details surrounding these issues.

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If you had a hard time narrowing this to just one experience, please share any others that you think also had an impact on your choice to become a principal.

At what point did you decide to pursue administration?

Topic Domain: Attitudes towards Preparation (Competence/Autonomy)

2. What types of experiences helped you attain your goal of becoming a principal? Tell about something nontraditional that assisted you in becoming ready for the principalship. Like an experience from your personal life.

3. Think about your formal preparation for the principalship, including school and your previous administrative positions. Compare how these two assisted you. Which were most valuable? How were these experiences valuable?

Follow up:

Tell about something that you learned from both areas that have really made a difference in your leadership practices.

In your opinion, what are the three most important components of a quality principalship preparation program?

Topic Domain: Attitude and Disposition Regarding the Principalship (Autonomy/Competence)

4. What are the biggest barriers to performing your job?

5. Compare your daily responsibilities with the duties of an ideal principalship. If tasks are taking you away from your priorities, how can you solve this?

Follow up:

How might you redistribute these responsibilities?

Do you have the necessary resources to make instructional leadership a realistic

priority? If not how could this lack of resources best be solved?

6. Have there been any defining events that have taken place during your

administration? What were they? How did they impact you and your school?

Topic Domain: Central Office Support Systems

(Competence/Relatedness/Autonomy)

7. Tell me about the most challenging situation you have dealt with as a principal.

Please give me all the surrounding details of the situation.

Follow up:

How did you decided to handle the issue (decision making process), if you sought

out help - who from? What steps did you take to resolve? How did the problem work

out? What would you do differently if the situation occurred again? Would you seek

additional help from a different source in the future?

8. Describe the relationship that exists between the central office staff and you as

a building principal. How is it helpful and supportive?

APPENDIX C

Basic Need Satisfaction at Work When I Am At Work

The following questions concern your feelings about your job during the last year. Please indicate how true each of the following statement is for you given your experiences on this job. Remember that no one from your work place will ever know how you responded to the questions. Please use the following scale in responding to the items.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all			somewhat			very
true			true			true

1.   I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my job gets done.
2.   I really like the people I work with.
3.   I do not feel very competent when I am at work.
4.   People at work tell me I am good at what I do.
5.   I feel pressured at work.
6.   I get along with people at work.
7.   I pretty much keep to myself when I am at work.
8.   I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job.
9.   I consider the people I work with to be my friends.
10.   I have been able to learn interesting new skills on my job.
11.   When I am at work, I have to do what I am told.
12.   Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working.
13.   My feelings are taken into consideration at work.
14.   On my job I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am.
15.   People at work care about me.
16.   There are not many people at work that I am close to.
17.   I feel like I can pretty much be myself at work.
18.   The people I work with do not seem to like me much.

19. When I am working I often do not feel very capable.

20. There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to go about my work.

21. People at work are pretty friendly towards me.

APPENDIX D

Epoche

Self-examination is to permit the researcher to gain clarity from her own

preconceptions, and it is part of the ongoing process rather than a single fixed event"

(Patton, 1990, p. 408)

The Prelude of this proposal is the one experience that most influenced my

interest in this proposed study. What I did not include in the prelude were the many

different experiences the district experienced due to inexperienced and or unqualified

principals. If I remember correctly, at least one principal left every year, this is not good

given there were only five or six schools in the district. Not one principal left due to a

promotion or to assume a principal position in another district. Most principals left due to

termination or pending termination. I also remember that when new principals were

hired, they lacked the support needed to be successful. I remember the assistant

superintendent would berate them and expect them to "know" what they were expected to

do. I also remember the one principal who the community admired, teachers absolutely

enjoyed working for her and how she presented herself to the superintendent in tears

telling him she could no longer do her job. This, from the most experienced principal in

the district, on a campus that based on the State accountability system was Recognized.

These types of scenarios are what influence me.

Personally, I remember I had served as a middle school assistant principal for

three years and thought I was prepared to assume the principal position. I applied and

interviewed for the district's principal pool, which consisted of an interview, a writing

assignment, and an in-basket group activity. I was one of maybe twenty current assistant

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principals selected to participate in leadership activities to prepare us for the

principalship. At our first meeting, the gentleman selected to lead the program had a mild

heart attack resulting in the end to that year's program.

I applied for several middle school principal positions in the district, however; I

was not selected to interview. Dismayed by the process, I applied, interviewed, and was

selected for an elementary principal position in a neighboring school district. Soon after

being hired, the superintendent that hired me retired. An interim superintendent led the

school district until February when the new superintendent took the helm. Soon after the

new superintendent's arrival I received notification I was accepted to the doctoral

program. While the deputy superintendent announced the news in celebration, the new

superintendent stated he would "not allow" me to enter the program. He furthered by

stating he "forbade" me to enroll in the program. When I tried to meet with him about the

program and my intentions to continue in the program, he refused to meet with me and

stated he had made his decision clear. That was my one and only year in that principal

position. I applied for several principal positions and took an assistant principal position

in a fast-growth school district in the area.

As far as my responsibilities and experience as a leader, there were many things I

was excited about the position. I do remember there was a lot of community politics

involved and with the instability of the Superintendent position the support was not

always evident. I remember having many eager teachers who were always ready to take

on addition responsibilities that allowed me to delegate some duties. I also remember that

the district was not current on *best practice* and the professional development was

reported as absent for several years. I also remember how excited the teachers were when

we implemented embedded professional development. They were equally excited when they received resources to teach science. I also remember the assistant principal was not very effective which required my attendance at every event and most special education and LPAC meetings. The one thing I can honestly say I did not like about that school district was the small town politics.

As a middle school principal in a majority-minority, Title I campus in the second largest school district in Texas. It was in this position that I met and worked with the selected participant informants for this proposed research. While working in this school district, the superintendent who hired me retired at the end of that school year. The Chief Financial Officer for the district assumed the Interim Superintendent position and many changes in the district leadership followed. The last year I was in the district was also the first year for the new superintendent. In the three academic school years I worked in the district, I had four different supervisors. The first supervisor for 8 months, second for four months, third for four months, and the last for one academic school year. Yes, three superintendents and four direct supervisors in three academic school years. I remember attending principal meetings just to find out who was still with the district. Academically, my campus was the highest achieving comprehensive middle school, my students were well disciplined and the community was content. My supervisors pretty much left me alone, they rarely visited my campus and I was seldom given any constructive feedback. When I asked for their support on personnel issues, depending on the supervisor, I may or may not get the support requested.

Data Aligned to Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness

The data tables report the participants' responses aligned to self-determination theory's basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as well as responses that indicates thwarting of the basic needs. Thwarting of the basic needs is indicated by italic font and a hyphen (*Autonomy-*).

Theme	Quotes from Adam
Autonomy	Maybe I can expand my influence
Autonomy-	Under Mr. Smith of course, things had to be a certain way instructionally.
Autonomy-	Again, the thing that I had issues with was more of the philosophy about how.
Autonomy-	But there were other guidelines and restrictions about the tutoring, even just the climate of the district where teachers didn't even want to do the tutoring so it wasn't because of the money, it was other things, the climate of the district.
Autonomy-	I think teachers were tired, staff were tired, people were confused, we tried to work very hard on making the initiatives clear but, you know the teachers are very smart educators and we could tell them what we were given but they would look at us like, 'well, that really doesn't work. We tried to sit down and say, 'Well, how can we make what we've been given with what you know, how can we make that work in a classroom?'
Autonomy-	I'm talking about somebody from central office where you've got these things to do today and they call and say 'hey, you what? We need to know which teachers are signed up for the teacher training next week.'
Autonomy-	a culture where you think that you can't ask for help or that you can't make mistakes ... That you may loose your job ...
Autonomy-	Not feeling like you can do some of the things that you know are best practice.
Autonomy-	That means that you can't really use what you know and what you've been trained to do and what you know works for your campus,
Autonomy-	But, you know, to be one of the top middle schools in the district and for me to operate and come to work and feel like my job is on the line ..
Autonomy-	The second superintendent we had, which was Mr. Smith, I really felt as a principal that I really couldn't ask for help. So
Autonomy-	But to, to feel like, if I make a mistake that I'm going to get fired, I think that makes you miserable.
Competence	I was doing a good job and I had a lot of responsibilities and my principal actually came to me.
Competence	Part of it for me was first, just being a good classroom teacher
Competence	I want to be the best teacher I could be.
Competence	Making decisions and knowing what you can do helps you make decision and be fearless
Competence	I want to do the best that I can do, regardless.
Relatedness	continue to meet people that are interested in me and my growth as a leader
Relatedness	just being involved
Relatedness	When I first became a principal we had Dr. Ortiz and I really felt supported.
Relatedness	I think the way to solve it is to really sit down and talk with principals and find out … your priorities and ask them, ask us about a typical day and how you may have priorities lined up and

Theme	Quotes from Adam - Continued
Relatedness	I was well aware the school was a Title I school and I embraced that fact. As a matter of fact, my entire educational career has been spent serving at Title I schools, so that was not an issue. The data also revealed the school had been rated academically unacceptable the previous year in Science and that was a challenge that I wanted.
Relatedness-	The culture of the district, the morale of the district, I think that really, really defined my administration
Relatedness-	Even with that, sometimes if things were changed that would be a problem because people who are coming in to do the evaluating aren't listening to the teachers end.
Relatedness-	The, the most challenging situation I dealt with really was the relationship with my supervisor

Theme	Quotes from Irene
Autonomy	I had a cause
Autonomy	I was self-motivated to become an administrator.
Autonomy	Being able to delegate things to my assistant principals
Autonomy	He wants us to lead like we lead but then to grow us where we are, if that makes sense
Autonomy-	There's nothing you can do; it's directed by the district
Autonomy-	you just do it the way he tells you to do it, knowing full well that's not going to help your campus
Autonomy-	So, that was a challenge that you just learn when to keep your mouth closed and when not too.
Autonomy-	I think in our district it's just so big. When you have a question or you have a situation you have to go through so many chains of command to get the job done
Autonomy-	Trying to get people to understand you need things done and you can't get it done.
Autonomy-	Well, again, it comes from the district. The district has to change.
Autonomy-	it's required from the district but it's so paperwork heavy
Autonomy-	there has to be a plan in place and if the plan's not in place the way the district wants it in place then you can't send the student and so you're just having to have conferences over and over and over again or suspending a student over and over and over again but then you get dinged if you have too many suspensions
Autonomy-	I considered filing a grievance. I considered going to the administration building but I felt like that would jeopardize my career more so, so you just deal with the punches you're given. Whether it be a growth plan that he gave or you just do it
Autonomy-	but they don't realize that it takes a lot of time to find the right information for middle school kids and so it's very frustrating. So we don't have the resources necessary
Autonomy-	So, he went and asked someone at the district level and he came back and said I was right, and not too much later, that's when I got my growth plan because I challenged him.
Competence	The principal gave me administrative duties, I was literally doing assistant principal duties.
Competence	trying to be proactive instead of reactive
Competence	They need to write weekly because they're second language learners, they need more practice on their skills
Competence	first of all, he was a principal under the new regime here so he understands- he's walked in our shoes. Secondly, he's an advocate for students, for education, he's very smart. He's very knowledgeable, he reads, he reads research and so as a leader, he brings that research to- to the principals and we also do walks together as in a leadership team.
Competence-	So, when you have an instructional leader ahead of you who is your boss, trying to have you lead a school when he has not experienced a school like that, that I'm currently in and you cannot get ideas across to him as to why we're doing things the way we do them, it becomes very frustrating.

Relatedness	I wanted to be a voice for those students coming into this school system that didn't speak the language
Relatedness	I liked the collaboration with other students from different districts
Relatedness	Honestly, I prayed and I had other colleagues. We would talk every week
Relatedness	I have a new boss now, thankfully who is very supportive.
Relatedness	He just gets it.
Relatedness	I really didn't look at it for Title I, I looked at it for, this is the population. You know, when I moved to Texas in 1997, I worked with ESL kids so I wanted to be at a school with ESL kids because I wanted to be their advocate and I still do.
Relatedness-	The most challenging is when you have an ED [executive director] who doesn't understand working with a campus that is a challenging campus.

Theme	Quotes from Jessica
Autonomy	I had been invited to participate in a cohort for my administrative certification
Autonomy	Looking at different research and what the research tell us about what makes good principals.
Autonomy	Delegate
Autonomy	I don't really even think that central staff has hindering me from doing anything on this campus, you know
Autonomy-	Not all the administrators are good at instruction but it seems like we're forced now that everybody's going be an instructional leader. Well, it takes more than instruction to run a campus and when everybody's supposed to be in the class- room, other things really suffer because you do have the daily discipline issues.
Autonomy-	Then the second year going in with the change of superintendent who actually had his own ideas and it's whatever. You know, this is what it's going to be, you either like it or not or I may like you or not, you know. I think we didn't really have a voice.
Autonomy-	I think we were given more directives of exactly what was going to happen and how you were going do it and if you didn't do it then you would no longer have a job…
Autonomy-	When you have to spend a lot of time dealing with things other than education, that's a barrier
Autonomy-	I spent four hours on a fight that could have been solved in fifteen minutes but I have to go through all the logistical stuff and you know, parents not happy with whatever the consequence were and you know, and the investigations that come with that.
Autonomy-	You know, I think we need more experts that can come into the class, into the schools to help us.
Autonomy-	I didn't have a lot of leadership guidance.
Autonomy-	People that are leading the work outside of the principalship are making decisions about what we do in education
Competence	I think being able to be a department chair, being able to lead committees on campus. Also, the internship gave me an inside view of what administrators
Competence	On the job experience
Competence	other administrators are capable of handling and not having to worry about the follow up on it or if they follow through with it.
Competence-	Or when people want to give you feedback but not the appropriate feedback. Or when you haven't been a principal or been in a struggling school but you want to give me utopia suggestions ...... to help me do something that you have never done
Competence-	Being able to have PD's that are effective, that we have been trained to do but now we're having to create our own what we think is best practices to move, to move instruction but yet we're not trained ..... in curricular admin instruction.
Relatedness	Or being secure enough to say, 'you know what, I don't quite understand this. Can you help me with this? Can you help me think about what I'm doing?'

Theme	Quotes from Jessica - Continued
Relatedness	The most defining thing for me is that my parents support me, those who I have a relationship with, and I spend a lot of time with ensuring that that's strong.
Relatedness	I think it would be the racial thing
Relatedness	Making sure kids are bonding and gelling with each other and I think that that has been- that was the biggest challenge.
Relatedness	I've always taught at Title I schools. I've always taught, my first teaching experience actually has been in [this district] and I've pretty much served- have always served the same type of students as a teacher. So, coming to a Title I school had no bearing on the work.
Relatedness	relationship as an assistant principal with my principal who realized that yes, I want to eventually become a principal and so they began to start sharing with me and inviting me in to see some of the things that principals really do.

Theme	Quotes from Frank
Autonomy	You know, I can make a bigger impact with kids.' That's really why
Autonomy	it's still about keeping fresh. I belong to ASCD and I try to keep current on what's out there, what principals are doing and what leadership is about.
Autonomy-	A fight, or a parent, that's a struggle.
Autonomy-	departments asking all things of you, they need a report that was due yesterday but they never told you it was due yesterday, so there's a sense of urgency for them, but not for me
Autonomy-	when I pick up the phone and say "I'm the principal, I need this", their job was to support the principal. Now, that's changed
Autonomy-	There have been a couple where I was on the verge of ... You know, I thought my job was on the line, that I was going to be terminated, that I was going to be non-renewed
Autonomy-	"Because they're not out there". You know, we're getting AC's
Competence	My principal saw that in me…. He recommended me for a fast track program to the University of Texas-Austin that the district was offering
Competence	Those leadership opportunities within the building, the building principal recognizing that
Competence	working our assistant principal positions
Competence	Making sure that your priorities are priorities
Competence	Calendars keep you on task. So your to-do lists, daily outlook calendar, those are you priorities for the day,
Competence	It's how you handle those situations.
Competence	If there's a situation occurring, I'm able to make sense of it and bring everybody together and if it's a crisis, because I've dealt with crisis before
Relatedness	then allowing me to participate in the leadership opportunities
Relatedness	professors who really pushed us and didn't allow us off the hook. They were supportive
Relatedness	if you have an irate parent, I'm able to talk to them and get them calmed down.
Relatedness	She was a single mom. When she didn't have the financial means, as a feeder pattern we supported her.
Relatedness	The majority of my bosses have been supportive
Relatedness	So we have a good support system from central office.
Relatedness	A lot of these resources we were able to get because she brokered that meeting so that helped a lot. And then her support saying, 'We're not going to fail. We're going do this together.' Just her supportive nature, you know, kind of elevated everyone.
Relatedness	I was hired into a local title one school and I've been in this area for the last 22 years. I've always stayed in this area. You know, I like it because it's the best-kept secret in [the area].

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