8-2022

The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership In Secondary School Principals

Christian S. Overstreet

The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership

In Secondary School Principals

by

Christian S. Overstreet

August 31, 2022

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership

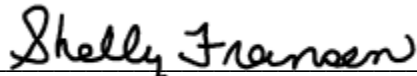In Secondary School Principals

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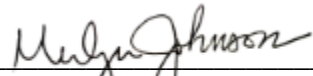
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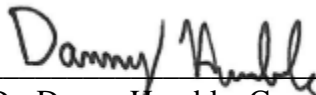_____   _8/31/2022_____
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Dr. Danny Humble, Committee Member   Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Christian S. Overstreet

Signature: _*Christian S. Overstreet*_   Date: 8/31/2022

Acknowledgments

I am very appreciative of Dr. Shelly Fransen, my dissertation chair, for her support, wisdom, and guidance throughout this process. I would also like to share my appreciation for the time and support of my dissertation committee, Dr. Shelly Fransen, Dr. Merlyn Johnson, and Dr. Danny Humble. Lastly, I would like to thank the SWMoASSP and the secondary school principals who participated in this study. The information and insight they provided was extremely valuable as I progressed through my research.

To my wife, Cayse, I share my love and appreciation for allowing me to pursue this goal. Her support and patience made this pursuit achievable. Thank you to my children, Drake, Knox, and Blakely, for being supportive and patient. To my dad, thank you for providing an example of hard work, encouraging me to set goals, and always pushing me to achieve them. To my stepmom, thank you for always being a tremendous example of what a strong educator looks like and your passion for personal and student growth will always inspire me. Finally, to my late mom, Sharon Kaye Jenkins, I know you would be proud of me and I dedicate this entire process to you.

Abstract

Due to the challenges schools and school administrators face in the 21st century,

transformational leadership is considered the most effective approach to school

leadership (Bonsu & Twum-Danso, 2018; Longwell-McKean, 2012; Valentine & Prater,

2011). The purpose of this explanatory, sequential, mixed-methods study was to

investigate the importance of cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits

within secondary school principals through professional development opportunities,

networking experiences, and mentorships. There has been a lack of research on the need

to train in transformational leadership and whether or not it positively influences follower

outcomes (Peters, 2014; Tafvelin, 2013; Udin, 2020). Phase one data were collected from

secondary school principals who were members of the Southwest Missouri Association

of Secondary School Principals via a survey. Phase two focus group discussion questions

were developed after analysis of survey responses. Analysis of focus group discussion

data revealed five emergent themes: feedback, vulnerability, intentional relationships,

professional growth, and COVID-19. Implications of this study include secondary school

principals cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits through one or more

of the four components of transformational leadership; transformational leadership

qualities and traits can be cultivated within secondary school principals through

professional development, networking, and mentorships; and school districts should

provide professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences for

secondary school principals that focus on transformational leadership qualities and traits.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Developing leaders in all fields of the workforce is an integral part of leadership. Leaders influence others by enhancing behaviors, cognitions, and motivations to achieve a common goal (Grunberg et al., 2021). According to Grunberg et al. (2021), "Leaders are aspirational, inspirational, provide resources, and remove barriers to optimize the success of followers, organizations, and the people served by the organizations" (p. 1). Specifically, when developing transformational leaders, school leaders must adopt behaviors and characteristics to facilitate collaboration with their colleagues (Bunaiyan & Williams, 2018). Positive relationships between transformational leaders and their subordinates, even a weak relationship, suggest that increases in transformational leadership might improve employee performance (Crede et al., 2020).

Chapter one includes the background of the study and an introduction to the Framework. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions are provided. The significance of the study is also included. Finally, the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions are described.

Background of the Study

Over the past four decades, the concept of educational leadership has become increasingly more complex, and much debate has emerged over the most suitable model for educational leadership (Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018; Stewart, 2006; Valentine & Prater, 2011). Stewart (2006) stated,

> Starting in the mid-1980s, the public became increasingly more demanding on the school system to raise standards and improve students' academic performance.

Along with this emerged the critical observation of school leadership and the link

between leadership and school effectiveness. (p. 7)

Furthermore, during the 1990s, education reformists vowed for changes in the

organizational structure, professional roles, and goals of public education (Valentine &

Prater, 2011). The reformists recommended the school district control curricular and

instructional decisions, expand roles for teachers and parents in the decision-making

process, and emphasize instructional practice and active learning (Hallinger &

Wimpelberg, 1992).

Valentine and Prater (2011) pointed out, "As a result of the numerous changes

facing schools, the view of the principal as transformational leader emerged" (p. 7).

Valentine and Prater (2011) concluded, "The notion of the transformational leader

resulted mostly from Burns' (1978) work, which provided a conceptual framework on

which to build the distinction between transformational leadership and other types of

leadership" (p. 8). Due to the challenges schools in the 21st century face, the

transformational leadership approach school leaders take is deemed appropriate (Bonsu &

Twum-Danso, 2018; Longwell-McKean, 2012; Valentine & Prater, 2011).

James MacGregor Burns originally developed the term transformational leader

and made the distinction between transactional and transformational leaders (as cited in

Warrick, 2011). Bernard Bass was also a key contributor to developing and researching

the concept of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Bass identified four dimensions

of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual

stimulation, and individualized consideration (as cited in Warrick, 2011). Leithwood (as

cited in Stewart, 2006) bridged the work of Burns and Bass into the field of educational

administration. Leithwood's conceptual model of transformational leadership in the field of educational administration has produced extensive empirical studies and investigations over the past decade (Stewart, 2006). Additionally, Stewart (2006) stated, "The knowledge base for school leadership has risen exponentially and has contributed significantly to our understanding of how leadership affects the school environment" (p. 15).

Theoretical Framework

Butin (2010) stated, "Any particular way of looking at an educational issue is a called a theoretical framework" (p. 58). The theoretical framework aids in focusing your research, putting boundaries into place, and determining the research topic and goals (Butin, 2010). Grant and Osanloo (2014) described the theoretical framework as "The foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and theoretically) for a research study. It serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions" (p. 12).

Furthermore, Grant and Osanloo (2014) identified the theoretical framework as the blueprint of the dissertation, "The framework is used as a guide on which to build and support your study, and also provides the structure to define how you will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole" (p. 13). Butin (2010) stated, "All too often, our theoretical frameworks 'choose us' rather than the other way around, in that we take much about our world and our worldview for granted" (p. 60).

The theoretical framework for this study is transformational leadership. According to the American Psychological Association (2020), transformational

leadership is defined as "a charismatic, inspiring, style of leading others that usually involved heightening followers' motivation, confidence, and satisfaction; uniting them in the pursuit of shared, challenging goals; and changing their beliefs, values, and needs" (para. 1). Duraku and Hoxa (2021) stated, "School principals who integrate creative insight, persistence, and energy with intuition and sensitivity to the needs of others, while inspiring them to surpass their self-interests, are known as transformational leaders" (p. 1). The descriptors used by Duraku and Hoxa (2021) to describe a transformational leader can be found within the components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (p. 2). The research questions created and used to guide this study were developed to better understand how transformational leadership is cultivated in secondary school principals through networking, mentorship, and professional development.

Roth et al. (2007, as cited in Duraku & Hoxa, 2021) determined previous research findings have suggested the school principal leadership style is a major contributing factor in influencing teachers. Kesumawati and Kristiawan (2018) specifically stated, "the increasing of transformational leadership of the headmaster will be followed by the increasing performance of the teachers" (p. 19). This included their motivation to work, motivation to perform specific tasks, autonomy and structure, or experienced pressure at work which can lead to exhaustion or burnout (Duraku & Hoxha, 2021; Tambignon, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Transformational leadership has been at the forefront of leadership research and literature over the past two decades (Avolio et al., 2009; Cho et al., 2019; Ekpoh &

Asuquo, 2018). However, there has been a lack of research on the need to train transformational leadership and whether or not it positively influences follower outcomes (Peters, 2014; Tafvelin, 2013; Udin, 2020). Crede et al. (2019) determined "any positive relationship between transformational leadership and subordinate performance – even a weak relationship – would suggest that increases in transformational leadership might result in improvements in employee performance" (p. 139). According to Pokharel (2014):

> Researchers have indicated that varieties of methods have been developed over the decades to develop transformational principals. The models range from developing syllabus and imparting the training to most well devised real action oriented models like, 360-degree feedback, executive coaching, mentoring, networks, action learning and job assignment. (p. 63)

Due to the ever-changing landscape educational leaders face in the field of education, it is appropriate for educational leaders to display transformational leadership approaches within their leadership style (Leithwood, 1994). Leithwood (1994) argued, "These approaches ought to be advocated more strongly to practicing school administrators and featured much more prominently in the preparation experiences of those aspiring to formal school leadership positions" (p. 499). Furthermore, leaders use the approach of transformational leadership to motivate their followers to recognize the goals and interests of the organization, so followers can identify with them and perform beyond the expectations of the organization (Buil et al., 2019).

For this study, secondary school principals who identify as transformational leaders may recognize the importance of cultivating transformational leadership in

secondary school principals through professional development, mentorship, and networking opportunities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a greater understanding of the importance of the cultivational impact of the components of transformational leadership on secondary school principals in the areas of professional development, mentoring, and networking. The method of analysis was qualitative; thus, the research questions used to guide the study are designed to allow secondary school principals to elaborate on their experiences as a transformational leader. The research participants will also explain the cultivation process they endured while developing into a transformational leader.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways is transformational leadership cultivated in secondary school principals through professional development?

2. In what ways is transformational leadership cultivated in secondary school principals through mentorship?

3. In what ways are transformational leadership traits cultivated in secondary school principals through networking opportunities?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides valuable insight to secondary school principals on the importance of cultivating transformational leadership traits and qualities within their leadership style. Specifically, by investigating how the traits and qualities of transformational leadership can be cultivated within secondary school principals through

professional development, mentorships, and networking opportunities. Through the four components of transformational leadership, transformational leaders strive to achieve superior results using one or more of the components (Mustafa, 2020). School principals committed to building a capacity of school leadership will put the four components of transformational leadership into practice, thus, creating an environment of influencing teachers positively to achieve the vision and mission of the school (Arokiasamy et al., 2016).

This research has practical application because the results may encourage secondary school principals to obtain transformational leadership qualities and traits. Specifically, secondary school principals may acquire and model these traits through professional development, networking opportunities, and mentorships. Managers who use transformational leadership styles affect their organizations positively (Boamah et al., 2018; Oino & Asghar, 2018). According to Ahmad (2018), "Transformational leadership practices present the influential leadership style and main factors for the attainment of results in teaching-learning institutions" (p. 208). Transformational leadership style is a functional and imminent collegiate model for educational institutes' secondary and above levels (Ahmad, 2018).

Additionally, this study may extend the knowledge of secondary school principals' significance as transformational leaders by providing current research on the perspectives of secondary school principals who identify as transformational leaders. Specifically, the perspectives from the principals will be in regard to the importance of professional development, mentorships, and networking with peers and how these experiences cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits in their leadership

styles. Principals who are transformational leaders create conditions to inspire all school members, thus, creating a mindset of continuous school improvement and development (Yang, 2014). Furthermore, Bellibas et al. (2021) stated, "School principals who adopt a more comprehensive leadership approach that combines instructional leadership and transformational leadership practices can maximize their effects on students' achievement through teacher learning and better address the ever-growing demands of educational reforms" (p. 2).

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The scope of the study was bounded by the following delimitations:

Time Frame

The collection of data occurred during the Summer of 2022.

Location of the Study

The location of this study is Southwest Missouri.

Sample

The sample was derived from a population of 239 secondary school principals who are members of the Southwest Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (SWMoASSP).

Criteria

Only secondary school principals who identified as a transformational leader were selected for participation in this study.

The following limitations were identified in this study:

Sample Demographics

The sample selected for participation in this survey was limited to eight secondary school principals from Southwest Missouri who identify as a transformational leader.

Instrument

The principal investigator designed the Likert-type statements and the interview questions for the study. Validity was limited as a result.

The following assumptions were accepted:

1. Participants' responses were offered willingly and without bias.

2. Participants could end their involvement in the study at any time.

Summary

Transformational leadership is perceived as the ideal leadership model for school principals (Leithwood, 1994). According to Bass (1999):

Transformational leadership refers to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration. It elevates the follower's level of maturity and ideas as well as concerns for achievement, self-actualization, and the well-being of others, the organization, and society. (p. 11)

There is a direct relationship between the transformational leadership of a school principal and the climate of a school organization (Rahmi et al., 2019). Thus, a school principal's transformational leadership style enhances teacher performance, professional attitude, and the overall climate of the school organization (Rhami et al., 2019).

Chapter One included the background of the study and the theoretical framework. This study focused on cultivating transformational leadership in secondary school

principals using the transformational leadership theory. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions were provided. Finally, the significance of the study and delimitations, limitations, and assumptions were detailed.

Chapter Two includes a more thorough explanation of the theoretical framework, transformational leadership. A description of the four components of transformational leadership is also included. Chapter Two concludes with the areas in which transformational leadership can be cultivated in secondary school principals and also reviews the effects of COVID-19 on school principals.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Quin et al. (2015) suggested school principals are not adequately trained and prepared to take on a principal's leadership role. According to Anderson (2017), "Training and preparation programs for principals failed to instill them with the skills needed for pivotal leadership which is necessary for producing meaningful school change while being held more accountable for student growth, achievement, and outcomes" (p. 2). Additionally, Anderson (2017) stated, "Education leaders may benefit from training and development in transformational leadership styles proven to enhance performance in business organizations and educational settings" (p. 2).

Kitur et al. (2020) suggested prospective principals should be trained as transformational leaders while they are in college, however, current principals should be supported and trained to be transformational leaders with in-service trainings. Determining the cultivation of transformational leadership within secondary school principals, specifically through professional development, mentorships, and networking opportunities, has the potential to adequately train and develop secondary school principals to meet the growing demands of a 21st Century principal.

Chapter Two includes a summary of the theoretical framework of this study, transformational leadership. The chapter continues with a review of the four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Additionally, an analysis of the literature of professional development, mentorships, networking of secondary school principals, and the impact of COVID-19 on school principals is provided.

Theoretical Framework

The transformational leadership theory is heavily influenced by charisma, leader influence and provides essential insights into the nature of leadership and numerous workplace outcomes (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2013). Yamamoto and Yamaguchi (2019) stated, "Transformational leaders aim to develop the capacity of followers and organization to promote innovations through trust and a shared vision for school change" (p. 48). Balyer (2012) suggested that school principals who are transformational leaders frame their attitudes to move their schools forward. To better understand the leadership factors related to transformational leadership, it is vital to have insight into the four transformational leadership components (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019).

The four components of transformational leadership were identified by Bass and Avolio (1994): idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In a school setting, the four components of transformational leadership directly affect teachers' commitment and inspire innovation, bringing out changes in practice (Duraku & Hoxha, 2021; Hartinah et al., 2020; Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019). Yin et al. (2019) indicated that "By engaging in these transformational leadership behaviors, a leader can transform followers' attitudes and behaviors, foster a value for change, thereby promoting changes and augmenting followers' professional growth (p. 9). When used in a school setting, the model of transformational leadership makes the school less bureaucratic by empowering the school as a collective unit rather than empowering selected individuals (Balyer, 2012). Additionally, Balyer stated, "It is considered that principals who demonstrate these major

characteristics of transformational leadership have effects on satisfaction among teachers and better performance at school" (p. 591).

Idealized Influence

The idealized influence component of transformational leadership describes the leader as someone who is charismatic, admired, respected, and trusted (Bass et al., 2003; Tanase, 2020). Balyer (2012) suggested individualized influence is when the leader considers the needs of others before their own, the leader avoids the use of power for personal gain, the leader demonstrates high moral standards and sets inspiring goals for their followers. Through this component, leaders become role models for their followers, leading to the followers wanting to emulate what the leader does (Fletcher et al., 2019; Sholeh et al., 2021).

Followers are encouraged to take risks and sacrifice their interests to better the organization (Yin et al., 2019). Munir and Aboidullah (2018) determined,

> This quality in principals is essential to foster a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration in schools. When people trust and respect each other, they become a closer community with a shared vision to bring about higher-order changes. In schools where leaders promote such quality, in fact, a true reflection of teamwork is observed. (p. 102)

Additionally, Admad et al. (2019) identified the idealized influence component of transformational leadership as, "The leader is complied, appreciated, regarded, and trusted. The highly persuasive leader has certain personality traits and a well-known relational conduct as the general population has a tendency to listen to his approaches with sharp consideration" (p. 2).

Within this component, Yin et al. (2019) suggested transformational leaders demonstrate their ability to serve as role models for their followers, and in return, the followers trust the leader and emulate the leader's behaviors. More specifically, this component reflects the charismatic trait of the leader (Yin et al., 2019). Furthermore, Ahmad et al. (2019) stated,

> The principal should guide and control his subordinates in a style ever liked by the parents and public. The transformational leaders dependably work for the institutional objectives setting aside their own needs. They do prove themselves [in] an ideal by transforming the system and uphold their influence successfully. (p. 2)

Followers want to emulate these types of leaders and identify with them and their morals. According to Bass et al. (2003), "Among the things the leader does to earn cred with followers is to consider followers' needs over his or her own needs. The leader shares risks with followers and is consistent in conduct with underlying ethics, principles, and values" (p. 208). Furthermore, Yin et al. (2019) determined:

> Therefore, it is expected that the idealized influence component of transformational leadership can lead employees to identify with their leaders and organizations, become more willing to cooperate with their colleagues for a common goal, and feel that their own interests will not be harmed by sharing knowledge with their colleagues, and consequently generate a sense of group belongingness and cohesion. (p. 11)

Raman et al. (2020) emphasized that "An important characteristic of idealized influence is that the leaders do not use their position and abilities to achieve personal interests;

however, leaders will direct their employees to use their potential to achieve the goals of the organization" (p. 71).

Idealized influence also refers to the leaders' ability to increase loyalty, dedication, and identification levels without focusing on their self-interests (Alqatawenh, 2018). Successful leaders do not display leadership for the sake of being idolized by their followers. (Raman et al., 2020). This particular component of transformational leadership hones in on the leader's ability to model appropriate behaviors for followers, thus, motivating followers to internalize the leader's vision, mission, and values (Koveshnikov & Ehrnrooth, 2018). When followers' self-idea and self-esteem identify with the leader, the follower naturally provides additional push to the organization (Linge & Sikalieh, 2019). Furthermore, Raman et al. (2020) stated, "Conduct that [is] connected with idealized influence has motivating pride for others for being associated with the leaders, urging subordinates to go past their personal responsibility to help the group or an organization" (p. 71).

Inspirational Motivation

Shafi et al. (2020) stated that inspirational motivation "refers to a leader that stimulates a motivational degree of the employees outside their presumptions in order to attain organizational as well as personal goals" (p. 167). Gyansah et al. (2020) determined, "Inspirational motivation school leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning to teachers and students' work" (p. 76). Additionally, Gulmez and Negis Isik (2020) stated, "Inspirational motivation refers to methods that leaders use to motivate the followers. In these methods, the leader sees the future with optimism, emphasizes assertive goals, designs an idealized vision and tells the followers that this vision can be reachable" (p. 327). Furthermore, inspirational

motivation is the leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision of a better future for an organization, so the followers shift from their self-interests to a mindset of what is in the organization's best interest (Edirisooriya, 2020).

Inspirational motivation is the process of leaders developing strategies to keep employees' motivational levels high and transform employees' motivation to achieve the organization's future goals (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018). Inspirational motivation involves supportive behaviors of the leaders expected to naturally increase their followers' motivations of being optimistic about the future and articulating the organization's vision among their subordinates (Budur et al., 2020). Yin et al. (2019) suggested, "…a leader inspires followers by articulating visions that are appealing to them and then motivates them to embrace and achieve these visions" (p. 9). Leaders create a favorable view of the future within their followers by establishing goals and identifying new opportunities (Chan et al., 2019). Additionally, leaders motivate their followers to push forward during difficult and challenging times to achieve the goals of the organization (Fletcher et al., 2019). Fletcher et al. (2019) determined, "This may manifest as emotional support or encouragement, or may lean more toward reframing stressors (e.g., limited resources or time) as challenged to be overcome" (p. 7).

Leaders of a positive mindset are more apt to use their positive emotions to convey their vision to their followers (Carleton et al., 2018). These behaviors are consistent with the inspirational motivation component of transformational leadership (Carleton et al., 2018. Leaders who have the ability to create a vision that impacts their followers to make them play a vital role within the organization display the component of inspirational motivation, as well (Alqatawenh, 2018).

Furthermore, when school leaders believe their teachers and students can perform, they exhibit the transformational leadership quality of inspirational motivation that is needed for students' academic achievement to flourish (Gyansah et al., 2020). Administrative leaders who keep pace with change, motivate their employees, and strengthen their employees' abilities showcase behaviors of inspirational motivation (Alqatawenh, 2018; Ekpoh & Asuquo, 2018). Inspirational motivation involves supportive behaviors of the leaders expected to naturally increase their followers' motivations of being optimistic about the future and articulating the organization's vision among their subordinates (Budur et al., 2020).

Intellectual Stimulation

Pokharel (2014) stated, "Transformational leaders not only challenge the status quo; they also encourage creativity among followers. The leader supports followers to investigate new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn" (p. 62). As stated by Yin et al. (2019), "Intellectual stimulation shows that a leader encourages followers to challenge existent norms and take risks by addressing problems in a novel way" (p. 9). In addition, Munir and Aboidullah (2018) determined, "Intellectual stimulation is one of the most prominent behaviors of a transformational leader, expressed by challenging the status quo and encouraging the employees for creativity and innovation" (p. 102). According to Musyoki et al. (2020),

> Intellectual stimulation (IS) assists the school principal in conducting an internal
> analysis of the organization's performance. The principal challenges teachers'
> teaching and students' learning processes to break away from old ways of
> thinking, thus status quo. The school principal stimulates creativity, innovation

and holds high performance expectations for both teachers and students to strive

hard to excel. (p. 1037)

Intellectual stimulation involves leaders stimulating the thinking of their followers by

encouraging innovation, creativity and involving them when coming up with solutions to

various situations (Ekpoh & Asuquo, 2018). Through this component of transformational

leadership, leaders engage their colleagues in decision making and participation towards

team efforts (Fletcher et al., 2019). School principals who apply intellectual stimulation

search outside the formal boundaries of the school and instead look for innovative ways

to enhance what is currently being done by teachers and students (Musyoki et al., 2020).

Principals who modeled intellectual stimulation encouraged teachers to be

innovative and creative with their classroom instruction and always look for ways to

improve (Musyoki et al., 2020). Intellectual stimulation may provide followers with more

role ambiguity and conflict; however, this can be a way for team leaders to express

appreciation and value to team members' contributions (Sanchez-Cardona et al., 2018).

When team members feel valued and appreciated, they will be more apt to engage in

group processes and outcomes (Sanchez-Cardona et al., 2018).

Chebon et al. (2019) suggested, "Leaders challenge the process and confront old

and outdated assumptions, traditions and processes" (p. 13). By questioning assumptions,

reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways, transformational

leaders encourage innovation and creativity within their followers (Chebon et al., 2019;

Orunbon & Ibikunle, 2021). This will ultimately lead to new ideas and creative solutions

to problems from followers (Chebon et al., 2019; Orunbon & Ibikunle, 2021). Yamamoto

and Yamaguchi (2019) suggested that through intellectual stimulation, leaders solicit

creative thinking and reframe problems to approve them with innovation, thus promoting

skills in rationality and problem solving. The practice of intellectual stimulation provides

school leaders and their subordinates the opportunity to propose better ways of having the

district move forward (Musyoki et al., 2020). This is achieved through openly sharing

information and expressing new ideas for the advancement of the district (Musyoki et al.,

2020). Furthermore, when individual members make mistakes, the transformational

leader does not publicly criticize them or their ideas, because they are different from the

leaders' (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Yin et al., 2019).

Individualized Consideration

Mi et al. (2019) described the individualized consideration component of

transformational leadership as, "A leader who cares about each subordinate, attaches

importance to their personal needs, abilities, and wishes, and conducts differentiated

cultivation and guidance according to subordinates' situations" (p. 3). Yin et al. (2019)

emphasized, "Individualized consideration refers to the process by which a leader

motivates followers by paying close attention to followers' needs and listening to their

concerns to help them develop and grow" (p. 9). In addition, Arokiasamy et al. (2016)

determined, "Individualized consideration occurs when new learning opportunities are

created in conjunction with a supportive environment. In their demonstration of

individualized consideration, the transformational leader is an effective listener and

recognizes and is accepting of employees' individual differences (p. 152). Furthermore,

leaders motivate followers by being attentive towards their needs and listening to their

concerns to ensure their development and growth (Yin et al., 2019).

Munir and Aboidullah (2018) stated, "A leader, with transformational behaviors, tries to explore the individual needs of the associates" (p. 102). The leader's role as a mentor is emphasized in this component (Yin et al., 2019) as they initiate an interest in the employee's long-term development (Abazeed, 2018; Chebon et al., 2019). Leaders rely on the component of individualized consideration by recognizing that members of the team are unique individuals with their own set of strengths, challenges, goals, and values (Fletcher et al., 2019). Once leaders recognize these particular traits in their employees, they can capitalize on the identifying factors to tailor motivational styles or role distributions to each team member (Fletcher et al., 2019).

The leader also gives personal attention to their subordinates and reflects the behavior of treating each employee as an individual (Abazeed, 2018). As stated by Balyer (2012), "Individualized consideration represents the leaders' continuing effort to treat each individual as a special person and act as a mentor who attempts to develop their potential" (p. 581). Furthermore, Puni et al. (2018) suggested, "In exhibiting individualized consideration, managers identify individual needs and abilities of followers and then guide them to attain goals that are mutually beneficial to followers and the organization" (para. 13). Furthermore, transformational leaders use the component of individualized consideration when they build relationships with their followers, and value their needs, skills, and potential in such a way that it inspires the followers to be innovative (Al Ahmad et al., 2019).

Employees who receive individualized attention from the organizational leader are more likely to respond by supporting the leader's agenda and performing beyond expectations (Chebon et al., 2019). Through this component of transformational

leadership, the leader extends support to their followers from the organizational level, thus, allowing employees to communicate their new ideas without any reluctance or fear (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018). Yin et al. (2019) determined:

> This dimension focuses on listening to and satisfying employees' individualized needs such as achievement, personal growth, and learning opportunities. Through individualized consideration, transformational leaders promote high interpersonal relationships among employees to avoid any conflict and create a friendly and comfortable work atmosphere. (p. 13)

Moreover, individually considerate leaders delegate tasks and monitor those tasks to determine whether the followers need additional direction or support (Arokiasamy et al., 2016).

This component allows the leader to recognize their followers' abilities and express appreciation for the value of their efforts (Djourva et al., 2020). The follower will be reassured of their importance in meeting the leader's expectations (Djourva et al., 2020). Djourva et al. (2020) determined, "This consideration leads to increased self-efficacy through mentoring and support" (p. 3). Additionally, Tanase (2020) stated, "Individualized consideration will act as a reward for subordinates by recognizing and motivating them" (p. 82).

Professional Development

Preparing influential school leaders has been a topic in education related to student achievement and school effectiveness (Gumus, 2019). Mathibe (2007) suggested poor results in schools are principals who are not adequately skilled and trained for school management and leadership; thus, a call for proper professional development for

school principals is necessary. Specifically, professional development opportunities are essential for principals to improve their leadership abilities and remain current in their profession (Gumus, 2019). Arhipova et al. (2018) stated, "Through performance management and effective continuing professional development practice, the principal supports all staff to achieve high standards" (p. 68).

Professional development is directly related to workers' day-to-day experiences and, thus, should be part of the broader process of continuous learning within professional development (Guskey, 2003). Daniels et al. (2019) suggested effective professional development opportunities for principals are spread out over a period of time, and ongoing support for principals is needed to help principals redefine their proficiencies. Mizell (2010) described professional development as:

> Undertaking formal practices such as training programs, conferences, seminars/workshops, collaborative learning in networks/teams or training courses at a college or university; however, it is important to note that people also learn informally through debates and discussions among colleagues, independent reading, research, or peer learning. (p. 249)

According to Nasreen and Odhiambo (2018), "The principals' commitment to learn from their experiences in formal and informal professional development opportunities helps them to maintain high standards in the school organization that ultimately affect all the stakeholders" (p. 247).

School administrators who desire to achieve success and implement the best educational practices should continuously expand their knowledge and skills (Mizell, 2010). Salazar (2017) stated:

> The technical, conceptual and people skills demanded of educational leaders have
> increased dramatically over the last decade. With the widespread acceptance of
> the needs for schools to improve, it is impossible to ignore the critical needs of
> school leaders to be effective at their work. They must receive professional
> development aimed at helping them be more effective, knowledgeable and
> qualified to facilitate continuous improvement. (p. 21)

Furthermore, the effectiveness of a school principal is determined by their ability to prioritize professional development as one of the major influences on how well they perform their job duties (Nasreen and Odhiambo,2018). Additionally, Nasreen and Odhiambo (2018) determined:

> To equip school principals with the skills and competencies required to perform
> multiple roles, it is necessary to provide high quality initial training at the start of
> their job and then consistent plan for their continuous professional development to
> keep them up to date. (p. 247)

Gumus and Bellibas (2020) believed, "As leaders who facilitate the learning of teachers and students, principals themselves need to be part of an ongoing process of learning and development if they are to meet the exacting demands of modern schools and better serve the various needs of teachers and students" (para. 2). To achieve effective professional development in principals, in-service professional development opportunities can be implemented to help principals acquire knowledge and adopt practices to improve instructional quality and learning outcomes in their schools (Gumus & Bellibas, 2020).

Mentoring

School systems and their leaders often use mentoring and coaching programs to support new administrators and ensure their effectiveness in their new position (Bauer et al., 2018). Yirci and Kocabas (2010) determined, "Training new principals as qualified principals require meticulously prepared pre-service and in-service principalship activities" (p. 2). Furthermore, Yirci and Kocabas suggested, "Mentoring is a remarkable model which aims to combine theory with practice in principal training. It develops beginner principals with the help of a senior principal's support and supervision in a real school environment" (p. 2). Gimbel and Kefor (2018) stated, "Educational mentoring remains an essential component of career development, especially when moving into a new position or when assessing performance management. Mentoring endeavors benefit brand new and inexperienced educational professionals" (p. 26).

According to Sun (2018), "mentors are essential for the success of their mentees…" (p. 108). The mentor is responsible for investing themselves into their mentee's career development and committing to guiding, supporting, and providing opportunities (Sun, 2018). As determined by Tingle et al. (2019), "Principals can benefit from a mentor who asks questions, gives feedback, and provides a trusting relationship. School leadership is collaborative and social, which is why the leaders must trust each other" (p. 5).

Transformational leaders act as mentors to their followers by listening to their concerns and needs (Kao et al., 2021). Transformational leaders serve as mentors to their followers by broadening and elevating followers' goals and providing them with the values, enhanced skills, and confidence to go beyond performance expectations (Bass,

1985). Bass and Riggio (2006) suggested transformational leaders focus more on change and inspire followers to commit to a shared vision for the organization and develop the followers through mentoring. Leaders may need to serve as mentors to stimulate transformational leadership and encourage followers' positive work attitudes and career expectations (Scandura & Williams 2004). Furthermore, transformational leaders empower and develop their followers through intellectual stimulation and serve as mentors or coaches (Kao et al., 2021).

The mentor is a retired or a veteran administrator who serves as a role model and demonstrates behaviors that exemplify effective leadership (Bauer et al., 2018; Donmez et al., 2021; Yirci and Kocabas, 2010). Yirci and Kocabas (2010) suggested:

A mentoring model provides an expert as well as a senior principal for a role model to the novice principal. This enables them to cope with school problems as they occur when they are in the early years of their professional careers as school leaders. (p. 2)

As determined by Yirci and Kocabas (2010), "A mentor helps you to improve your effectiveness in a certain field, shows you how to become an expert in a profession and teaches you how to develop skills" (p. 2). Through a mentor relationship, a novice principal will be provided support and guidance (Hayes, 2019).

Tingle et al. (2019) acknowledged, "Mentors provide feedback to principals regarding their jobs and provide an outlet for principals to share and reflect on their practice" (pp. 5-6). Donmez et al. (2021) acknowledged mentoring has a significant impact on principals in the areas of personal and professional development, organizational commitment, and organizational adaptation. Gimbel and Kefor (2018)

determined, "The relationship between a mentor and a mentee are forged through time and experiences, and although a mentor aims at individual development, that role is supportive, not evaluative" (p. 26).

Mentorship programs are among the most well-known professional development experiences benefitting school principals (Gumus, 2019). Through the principal's mentorship experience, they become more confident in their professional competence, put theory into practice, develop practical communication skills, and acquire a sense of belonging to their new profession (Gumus, 2019; Hayes, 2019). Mentoring relationships that are meaningful can facilitate future professional development opportunities that can potentially improve, expand, and deepen the leadership capacity of the novice principal (Hayes, 2019; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010).

School principals act as a mentor not only to their organization but also to their community (Hashim et al., 2021). Hashim et al. (2021) suggested the principals' role as a mentor involves helping students, teachers, and staff grow and achieve daily goals; thus, ensuring these individuals can perform their daily tasks and are provided with feedback regularly. When principals are supported early in their professional careers by mentors developing their skills and increasing their knowledge, they experience an increase in job satisfaction and self-confidence (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010).

Mentoring programs play a significant role in developing new principals (Kilinc & Gumus, 2021). When best determining the success of a mentorship program, it is crucial to pair mentors and mentees based on their knowledge, experience, ability to collaborate, and the mentee's willingness to learn (Kilinc & Gumus, 2021). According to Gimbel and Kefor (2018), "The daily demands on school principals require clear and

consistent feedback, and without a mentor, a new principal may not have this type of assistance" (p. 22). Mentoring has several benefits for assistant principals and novice principals (Hayes, 2019). Through a strong mentoring relationship between an assistant principal and principal, principals can demonstrate to a less experienced assistant the importance of being an instructional leader (Donmez et al., 2021; Gumus, 2019).

Principals are also provided with insight into their job responsibilities, answers to questions they may have and will receive constructive feedback from their mentor (Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018). According to Arhipova et al. (2018), "Effective leaders seek counsel and advice to learn from the knowledge and experiences of others while they freely offer their expertise to those who seek it" (p. 66). Gumus (2019) suggested principals who serve as mentors become more reflective and critical about their own practices and have a deeper understanding of teaching and learning. Additionally, mentors effectively communicate with their staff and help them grow personally and professionally (Gumus, 2019).

Networking

Formal organizational networks and personal, professional networks are excellent sources of professional learning for principals, because they aid principals in their development as a school leader (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018). Daniels et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of school principals' learning experiences when they spend time with fellow principals and share ideas and current practices. Furthermore, these networking experiences for principals alleviate feelings of loneliness or isolation; therefore, contributing to greater self-confidence (Daniels et al., 2019). A network is capable of stimulating healthy interactions among members, thus, resulting in new and

creative ideas or practices that were not initially part of the skillset of any individual

network member (Leithwood, 2019). Networks connect and help individuals develop

school leaders to solve the challenges they face in their own schools (Pino-Yancovic et

al., 2019). According to Ansmann et al. (2014), "Networking can be a successful tool for

career development in early career academics" (p. 132). Additionally, Ansmann et al.

(2014) stated,

> Networking for professionals in the early phase of their careers can substantially
>
> foster career development and success. In today's academic environment,
>
> networking is becoming more and more important and professional societies are a
>
> useful platform for networking and career support. (p. 133)

Furthermore, experienced leaders should look to professional networking as a support

system as they face challenges of their responsibilities (Chapman, 2005). Acton (2021)

determined future professional learning for principals should provide resources to

encourage networking, because networking is an experience and tool principals can use

to grow professionally. Rather than relying on one-on-one mentor relationships,

principals should focus more on establishing mentor networks (Dalgic & Bakioglu,

2014). Through the mentor networks, principals will meet their personal and professional

needs and develop their ideas for practice (Dalgic & Bakioglu, 2014). Additionally,

principals can speak openly to their colleagues and are provided feedback on issues and

concerns they may be having (Tingle et al., 2019). Tingle et al. (2019) suggested,

"Individuals who participate in a cohort do not have to feel as if they are achieving a goal

alone and are provided with a network of people to share ideas with and to get support

and information from" (p. 6).

According to Arhipova et al. (2018), "The use of networking for professional development of principals is based on the belief that collegial support is needed in order to be an effective school leader" (p. 71). Moolenar and Sleegers (2015) suggested transformational leaders hold a more central position in their school's social network than non-transformational leaders, because they often reach out to others to seek advice and receive feedback. Additionally, principals who are transformational leaders encourage relationships among their staff and principal colleagues to bring those individuals into a connected relationship and in their network (Moolenar & Sleegers, 2015).

Networking is not only for the novice principal but also for the veteran principal (Dalgic & Bakioglu, 2014). Lazenby et al. (2020) suggested networking is sufficient for principals to build collective principal efficacy and networking is becoming a primary professional learning strategy for experienced principals. Additionally, Arhipova et al. (2018) stated:

> Networking involves linking principals for the purpose of sharing concerns and effective practices on an on-going basis. Networks tend to be informal arrangements that emerge when principals seek out colleagues who share similar concerns and potential problems for solutions. (p. 71)

Daniels et al. (2019) suggested professional networks are an integral part of a school leader's professional development and allow school leaders the opportunity to reflect on their practices and behaviors. Rather than meeting periodically in social gatherings, true networking occurs when principals engage in activities that have been purposefully planned, thus, motivating individuals to enhance their professional performance (Arhipova et al., 2018). Pino-Yancovic et al. (2019) stated:

School networks are a privileged place to integrate human, social, and decisional capital with the goal of fostering educational improvement. When participants share experiences, ideas, and practices based on effective collaboration processes (social capital), they will also have the chance to make decisions together (decisional capital); thus, the network can be an opportunity to develop their own professional knowledge (human capital). (p. 6)

Principals benefit from being in a group with other principals to share their experiences, discuss specific issues, and determine other education systems and practices they can apply in their schools (Dalgic & Bakioglu, 2014).

Chijioke et al. (2019) considered, "Poor networking techniques of secondary school managers as perhaps having a link to their own supervisory ineffectiveness" (p. 40). Regardless of the level of experience a principal may have, networks can provide them with knowledge on current issues in education (Dalgic & Bakioglu, 2014). Lazenby et al. (2020) identified a resurgent interest in networking that supports teacher development, but "the implications of networking for experienced principals have still not been considered in any depth" (p. 10). When principals can work together through networking experiences, they are provided with the opportunity to develop skills from other people and use those to ask questions to the group for a more substantial understanding related to differing experiences regarding principalship (Tingle et al., 2019).

Vulnerability

Beer (2020) indicated transformational leaders determined to be most successful are willing to humble themselves by having open and honest conversations and making

themselves accountable to those they are partnering with. According to Beer (2020), "Underlying courageous leadership of an honest conversation is the willingness to be vulnerable" (p. 38). Additionally, Gordon (2022) indicated vulnerability is a leadership trait that can be cultivated over time.

Smith et al. (2020) suggested, "Principal preparation programs that promote how to develop positive organizational climates in schools and facilitate leader influence in authentic and ethical ways further propel the current press for educational excellence forward" (p. 13). Vulnerability is a leadership quality that increases trust by leaders delegating authority, expressing emotion, and communicating their mistakes (Gordon, 2022). Furthermore, Gordon (2022) explained leaders who are vulnerable, openly communicate with their team, thus, increasing their team's productivity.

COVID-19

According to McIntosh et al. (2020), "At the end of 2019, a novel coronavirus was identified as the cause of a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, a city in the Hubei Province of China" (p. 1). The rapid spread of the disease, designated as COVID-19, went throughout the world and caused severe acute respiratory infections (McIntosh et al., 2020). In March of 2020, states within the United States enacted nonpharmaceutical interventions, such as school closure, nonessential business closure, restaurant and bar closure, and prohibition of gatherings with more than 10 people to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (Auger et al., 2020). At this time, all 50 states closed schools despite uncertainty if school closure would be effective (Auger et al., 2020; Slavin & Storey, 2020).

Bagwell (2020) emphasized the coronavirus pandemic rapidly redefines schooling and leadership. School closures due to the pandemic placed new pressures on school leaders and educators to engage in student learning remotely (Richmond et al., 2020; Stone-Johnson & Weiner 2020). School principals were tasked with navigating through unchartered territories and served as frontline workers to their school community (Dawson & Nosworthy, 2021). Principals distributed food to families in need; provided childcare for the students of first responders and other healthcare workers; issued technology to students who did not have access to it; and supported the remote delivery or pick up of learning materials to ensure previous student learning, knowledge, and skills would be retained (Dawson & Nosworthy, 2021).

Slavin and Storey (2020) stated, "The short period between the decision to close schools and the initiation of remote learning caused a scramble across the country to prepare for online instruction, requiring flexibility and adaptation at the state, district, and school levels" (p. 619). However, district and school-level administrators are responsible for supporting teachers and community stakeholders as they navigate the evolving circumstances brought on by COVID-19 (Richmond et al., 2020). Dawson and Nosworthy (2021) acknowledged, "School principals were leading staff remotely, communicating without in-person contact, providing meaningful professional development, and attending frequent virtual meetings" (pp. 17-18). Hubbard et al. (2020) categorized district responses to the pandemic in four ways:

First, many districts responded by centralizing their efforts and thereby constraining schools' autonomy to act independently. Second, another set of districts encouraged schools to act autonomously and viewed their role as one of

supporting schools' responses. A third district approach was to seek a balance between central office guidance and local autonomy. Finally, there were a few cases where schools responded autonomously due to a lack of district leadership. (p. 2)

Dawson and Nosworthy (2021) indicated, "The primary focus for building principals during the COVID-19 school closures was to provide the necessary supports for students, staff, and the school community" (pp. 26-27). The pressures and influences school principals experience when determining policies during the COVID-19 pandemic have made their task of interpreting, translating, and implementing school policies both difficult and stressful (Fotheringham et al., 2021). Schools were forced to engage with students through various communication outlets such as email, phone calls, text messages, print copies of instructional materials, and even social media (Harris & Jones, 2020; Slavin & Storey, 2020). School leaders often take on a high emotional toll while leading a school during a crisis because of the burden to serve others and to place the needs of their school community above their own health and emotional wellness (Hauseman et al., 2020).

Pollack (2020) indicated, "The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered school principals' work across the globe" (p. 38). Harris and Jones (2020) determined that among the most significant problems principals faced during the pandemic were the absence of interpersonal relationships, face-to-face contact between teachers, students, parents, school management, and the school community. Pollock stated:

School leaders are now expected to not only draw on their current skills and knowledge to meet the new challenge of schooling students during the pandemic

but to also do so while developing new knowledge and skills and pivoting some

of their current roles. (p. 39)

Principals were forced to build on their existing responsibilities while developing an

understanding of COVID-19, which includes symptoms, public health protocols, and

preventions (Pollock, 2020). The federal, state, and local guidelines to determine

appropriate COVID-19 responses can change overnight (Harris & Jones, 2020). As stated

by Richmond et al. (2020):

Administrators' decisions are largely informed by norms of schooling and beliefs

about what effective teaching should look like. In such a new context,

administrators are operating with much less guidance, which may lead to varied

decisions across schools, school districts, and state educational agencies. (p. 376)

In addition, Hauseman et al. (2020) identified four aspects of the school principals'

expanded roles during the pandemic, which included:

A heightened sense of accountability and responsibility to support staff and

students; learning new policies and job demands under tight timelines; a need to

engage in transparent and consistent communication with all members of the

school community; and modeling and promoting meaningful collaboration. (p.

72)

New knowledge and skills for principals have arisen from the unknown nature of

COVID-19 and the need for principals to consider ways to successfully educate students

amidst the outbreak (Pollock, 2020). In a pandemic environment, school principals were

forced to think about not only their own wellness but the emotional and social well-being

of their students, faculty, and staff (Pollack, 2020). Since the beginning of the pandemic,

school principals faced the same challenges as everyone else as they tried to find a balance in the new ways of living and working, and managing their fears and uncertainties (Spyropoulou & Koutroukis, 2021). Despite the challenges principals face during the pandemic, Hauseman et al. (2020) stated:

> While the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to increase existing challenges, principals and other school leaders can also view it as an opportunity to embrace new ways of thinking and change the nature of leadership and administrative work in schools. (p. 70)

School principals' leadership styles have become even more critical for optimal school function during the demanding and uncertain times of the pandemic (Buric et al., 2021). Fotheringham et al. (2021) reiterated, "The quality and timely delivery of information is essential for effective policy, especially during a pandemic characterized by widespread uncertainty and rapid change" (p. 5). Hubbard et al. (2020) indicated collaboration and communication between the district and school, the district's support to principals in solving problems, the possibility of autonomy, as well as the availability and access to information, infrastructure, and services, were factors that helped principals to manage the pandemic in a school context.

According to Kaminskiene et al. (2021), "During the time of Covid-19, school principals must provide certainty and redirect focus, nurturing enduring hope, building resilience and ensuring flexible communication, both reflective and reflexive, to and for all school community members" (p. 272). Hubbard (2020) argued principals' experiences in the pandemic taught them the importance of strengthening their relationships with faculty, students, and families within their community. Principals gained a deeper

understanding of the importance of these relationships, which enabled them to make

decisions that directly responded to the needs of their stakeholders (Hubbard et al., 2020).

Richmond et al. (2020) concluded, "Given how teaching and learning are unfolding

during the COVID-19 era, there is much that we need to understand better about these

processes" (p. 375). Bagwell (2020) suggested, "School leaders are now being tested in

ways that they have not been in the past. By adopting an adaptive approach to leadership,

school leaders can build resiliency and capacity for their school communities to weather

future disruptions caused by the pandemic" (p. 30-31).

Summary

Chapter Two included a review of the literature related to the transformational

leadership framework and its use to guide this research. The review of the literature

included topics of the four components of transformational leadership: idealized

influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized

consideration. In addition, the topics of professional development, mentoring,

networking, and the impact of COVID-19 on school principals were reviewed.

The methodology used to guide this study was examined in Chapter Three. This

included a review of the problem and purpose, the research design, and the population

and sample. The instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis are also reviewed.

Lastly, ethical considerations and a summary of the study's methodology conclude

Chapter Three.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Three includes an overview of the methodology used to obtain and analyze data regarding the cultivation of transformational leadership in secondary school principals. The problem and purpose overview provides background on why this study is significant. The research design and population, and sample of the study are discussed. Furthermore, the instrumentation, data collections, and data analysis are provided. Finally, the ethical considerations and a summary of the study's methodology are reviewed.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Farahnak et al. (2020) determined that leaders influence subordinates' attitudes through their leadership style, specifically through transformational leadership behaviors that encourage the acceptance of change and innovation. Transformational leadership behaviors are demonstrated through the four unique behaviors which are the four components that develop transformational leadership (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020; Duraku and Hoxha, 2021). Tanase (2020) identified the four components of transformational leadership as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Hall et al. (2002) determined that the four components are valuable to the transformation process. Furthermore, Hall et al. (2002) stated, "When managers are strong role models, encouragers, innovators, and coaches, they are utilizing the four I's to help transform their associates into better, more productive and successful individuals" (p. 2).

Transformational leadership qualities and traits can be instilled in school principals through high quality mentors and professional development (Quin et al., 2015)

and networking (Arhipova et al., 2018). Windlinger et al. (2020) determined that "Schools led by discernibly transformational principals convey shared goals, productive work environments, instructional improvements, strong organizational cultures and shared decision-making to greater degrees than other schools" (p. 7). Transformational leaders motivate their followers by increasing self-efficacy within them and facilitating social identification within a group by linking the organization's values to the followers' values (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways is transformational leadership cultivated in secondary school principals through professional development?

2. In what ways is transformational leadership cultivated in secondary school principals through mentorship?

3. In what ways are transformational leadership traits cultivated in secondary school principals through networking opportunities?

Research Design

A mixed methods research design was chosen to study the cultivation of transformational leadership in secondary school principals because it combines qualitative and quantitative approaches (Levitt et al., 2018). The integration of combining the two methods of qualitative and quantitative research allows the researcher to generate new insights (Burkholder et al., 2020; Levitt et al., 2018). According to Boudah (2019), "…although it is not uncommon for researchers to use mixed methods, typically, one design will be the primary focus of the research" (p. 232). Burkholder et al. (2020)

indicated, "Planned and conducted in a systemic way, mixed methods research can enhance our understanding of phenomena in ways that extend beyond the use of qualitative or quantitative designs alone" (p. 114). Kaplan and Maxwell (2005) stated, "Multiple sources and methods increase the robustness of results. Using more than one source of data and more than one method of data collection allows findings to be strengthened by cross-validating them" (p. 45).

The primary focus for this study is on qualitative research. Qualitative research focuses on people's experiences and perspectives, neither of which can be described through measurements or numbers, which is the foundation for quantitative research (Kyngas et al., 2019). However, adding the quantitative methodology allows for the analysis of more than one source of data to confirm a concept or idea (Boudah, 2019). The results of the qualitative phase will be triangulated with the data collected from the quantitative phase and the review of the literature to answer the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sample

According to Casteel and Bridier (2021), "The target population is the specific, conceptually bounded group of potential participants to whom the researcher may have access that represents the nature of the population of the data" (p. 344). The targeted population for this study was 249 secondary school principals who were members of the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals' Southwest Region (SWMoASSP) and identified their leadership style as transformational. For the quantitative portion of this study, a census sample from 249 secondary school principals was utilized. A census

sample gathers data from the whole population (Fraenkel et al., 2019). All members of the SWMoASSP was invited to participate in the survey.

Sandelowski (1995) recommended "qualitative sample sizes are large enough to allow the unfolding of new and richly textured understanding of the study, but small enough so that the deep, case-oriented analysis' of qualitative data is not precluded" (p. 183). Furthermore, Burkholder et al. (2020) added, "Important questions in qualitative research include the amount of data you should collect from how many people, and from how many documents or observations. Saturation is the relevant concept here" (p. 90). Eight focus group participants were selected from those survey participants who indicated an interest in participating in the focus group discussion. Mertens (2020) determined six to nine participants in a focus group discussion is sufficient (p. 362).

Instrumentation

For the quantitative phase of this study, an online survey (see Appendix A) was created to collect quantitative data. This instrument was a cross-sectional survey including nine Likert-type scale questions. Cross-sectional surveys describe things as they are and provide a view of things at a single point in time (Fink, 2015). The survey was intended to measure secondary school principals' perspectives on cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits through professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences.

The qualitative phase of the study included focus group questions (see Appendix B) developed based on the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the review of the literature. Creswell and Creswell (2018) determined that focus group discussions are intended to elicit views and opinions from a small group of selected participants. The

focus group questions were created to promote a dialogue amongst the focus group participants.

Quantitative

The creation of the Cultivation of Transformational Leadership survey was informed by reviewed literature. Survey statements 1 through 3 were designed to gather data regarding the mentorship of a transformational leader (Bodilenyane & Mookesane, 2019; Udin, 2020). Networking and the transformation leader were the focus of survey statements 4 through 6 (Grunberg et al., 2021; Palalic et al., 2019). The final three survey statements were created to gather data regarding professional development and the transformational leader (Francisco, 2019; Udin, 2020). The survey response choices were; strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, and strongly agree.

Reliability. To ensure reliability, the methods of field testing and test-retest were used. Field testing was used to determine if the instrument was easy to administer, if more guidance or clarity was needed in certain areas, or if questions were plausible (Boudah, 2019). The test-retest method was used to determine the degree to which a person achieved a similar score on the survey when the survey was administered once and then administered again (Boudah, 2019). Secondary school administrators not participating in the study were asked to field test the survey for this study. This same group participated in a test-retest by taking the survey twice, one week apart, to ensure the reliability of the survey.

Validity. To ensure validity, pilot testing was conducted within a similar environment with participants who had similar characteristics to the sample (Fink, 2017). The survey was reviewed by an expert panel of five secondary school principals who

identify as transformational leaders, thus, they are similar to those targeted in the study. Revisions were made based on the feedback provided by the individuals through completing the Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel (VREP) (Simon & White, 2016). Experts had to score each criterion with a range of 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree.

Qualitative

The focus group questions were created based on the research questions and review of the literature. Questions 1-5 focus on transformational leadership at its core (Bodilenyane & Mookesane 2019). Questions 6-9 focus on the cultivation of transformational leadership through mentorship experiences (Buil et al., 2019; Dappa et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2019). Questions 10-14 are centered on the cultivation of transformational leadership through professional development opportunities (Bass & Avolio; Bunaiyan & McWilliams, 2018; Francisco, 2019; Kouni et al., 2018; Udin, 2020). Questions 15-19 were constructed to determine the importance of cultivating transformational leadership in secondary school principals through networking opportunities (Palalic et al., 2019; Sayyadi & Provitera, 2018).

Reliability. According to Burkholder et al. (2020), reliability refers to the instrument's ability to collect data to produce consistent results across data collection occurrences. To ensure the focus group questions meet standards of reliability, a structured interview was administered to the focus group participants. Burkholder et al. (2020) described the process of a structured interview as, "The researcher composes a script of questions and asks the questions of each participant exactly as stated and in the

exact sequence" (p. 147). In this phase of qualitative research, the structured interview is used to compare participant responses (Burkholder et al., 2020).

Validity. To ensure the focus group discussion questions were valid, a VREP validation rubric was utilized by secondary school principals who were not participants in the study yet considered themselves as transformational leaders to determine if the discussion questions were valid (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). After the focus group discussion was completed participants were asked to member check the transcript. Motulsky (2021) recommended member checking as a validity and trustworthiness check for any rigorous qualitative research. Member checking is a process for participants in a study to review their conclusions, observations, or interviews from their participation in the study (Boudah, 2019).

Data Collection

The data collection process began after receiving permission to conduct research (see Appendix C) from the SWMoASSP and approval from the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix D) to conduct research with the approved association. A list of members of the SWMoASSP and their email addresses were received from the State Secretary of the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals. The secondary school principals who are members of the SWMoASSP were emailed a letter of participation (see Appendix E), a research information sheet (see Appendix F), and a survey link. The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership Survey gathered secondary school principals' responses through the web-based survey tool, Qualtrics. The survey also included a question asking for focus group participants.

To ensure ethical procedures were utilized, the informed consent mailed to each participant included assurance of confidentiality, transparency, anonymity, and security of data (Burkholder et al., 2020; Gupta, 2017; Johnson & Christensen, 2020; Mertens, 2020). An informed consent process that was clearly written at the appropriate reading level and consisted of language that was sensitive to the target research population informed participants their participation in the survey indicated consent (Burkholder et al., 2020). The Lindenwood consent form was utilized as the initial survey page and by completing the survey participants validated their consent. The survey was available for two weeks. Survey data was retrieved and entered on a spreadsheet for analysis. The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages. Figures were designed to display percentages for each Likert-type scale response.

The qualitative phase of the research included the identification of which participants of the survey would be asked to participate in the focus group discussion. The first eight survey participants signifying they were interested in participating in the focus group were selected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An email was sent to the selected focus group participants (see Appendix G) to confirm the time and date of the focus group discussion. An informed consent form (see Appendix H) and a copy of the focus group discussion questions was shared as an attachment to the email confirming the date and time of the focus group discussion. Prior to conducting the focus group, the consent form was reviewed with the participants and any questions answered. Upon review, each participant verbally acknowledged their consent to participate in the study. The focus group discussion was conducted via Google Meet and transcribed using the Google Meet Transcripts application.

The recording of the focus group discussion was transcribed and then shared with participants to verify the accuracy of their statements through the process of member checking (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Motulsky, 2021). After the focus group was conducted, the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data was completed. Each data set will then be interpreted. The results of the qualitative phase will then be triangulated with the data collected from the quantitative phase and the review of the literature to answer the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018

Data Analysis

According to Boudah (2019), "data analysis begins as soon as data collection begins" (p. 199). Furthermore, Boudah (2019) stated, "The researcher constantly reviews data for patterns, concepts, and looks for ways that categories fit into themes that lead to a theory about a phenomenon that responds to the research question" (p. 199). The quantitative data of the Cultivation of Transformational Leadership Survey will be analyzed using basic descriptive statistics. Descriptive research methods rely on participants' responses to written survey statements or interview questions (Burkholder et al., 2020). The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages. Figures were designed to display the percentages for each Likert-type scale response. The integration of data from the survey and focus group informed the inferences drawn from the study (Burkholder et al., 2020). The survey response choices were; strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, and strongly agree.

The qualitative phase of the mixed-methods research design included data coding. Data coding is the procedure of fragmenting and classifying text to form explanations and comprehensive themes in the data (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). It is the process through

which the researcher gathers or tags content related to a specific theme or data for interpretation (Attride-Sterling, 2001; Blair, 2015). Furthermore, Akinyode and Khan (2018) stated:

> It aims at reducing the data by sorting out the information transcript into manageable and meaningful transcript segments with the aid of coding framework. Data coding in qualitative research means assigning labels or codes to different section of text that related with different problems. (p. 166)

A coding framework was devised based on the theoretical interests guiding the research questions and on prominent issues that arose through the qualitative research (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Open and axial coding was used to examine the distinct parts of the data for differences and similarities (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). Akinyode and Khan (2018) determined, "Open coding aims at identifying the discrete concepts while Axial coding is primarily to designate the manner in which links are made in new ways between the groups and subgroups" (pp. 166-167).

Ethical Considerations

Several safeguards were implemented to ensure study participants' protection, anonymity, and confidentiality (Burkholder et al., 2020; Gupta, 2017; Johnson & Christensen, 2020; Mertens, 2020). Approval from the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board was obtained before data collection began. All participants were emailed the Lindenwood approved survey consent form and the survey link. The survey link allowed participants to respond anonymously online. The final survey question allowed survey volunteers to submit their contact information if they were willing to participate in the

focus group discussion. The first eight survey participants signifying interest in participating in the focus group discussion were provided with an informed consent form that was read aloud before the start of the focus group. All electronic files, including email addresses, survey response data, and interview transcripts were secured within a password-protected personal computer and will be kept for three years (Fraenkel et al., 2019). The Lindenwood-approved consent form identified the purpose of the study, any risks to participants, and outlined procedures to opt out of the study at any point.

Summary

Chapter Three provided a brief review of the methodology of the research study. This included rationalizations of the problem, purpose, and research questions. An introduction to the mixed-methods research design was shared. The population and sample of the study were also reviewed. Analysis of the instrumentation tools for phases one and two of the mixed-methods design were presented. This included the triangulation of the qualitative phase results with the data collected from the quantitative phase and the review of the literature to answer the research questions. Specifics of data collection and analysis were reviewed. Lastly, ethical considerations were presented to offer verification of how participants were protected during research.

A presentation of the data is provided in Chapter Four. Quantitative data is presented using percentages and figures. Qualitative data is presented by including a synthesis of the findings from each focus group discussion question.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

When determining the development of a school, the principals' leadership style is one of the most critical factors (Wiyono, 2018). To improve the quality of the educational experience, the principals' leadership qualities and traits need refinement and improvement (Wiyono, 2018). By investigating how secondary school principals who identify as a transformational leader perceive cultivating transformational leadership qualities and characteristics through professional development, networking, and mentorships, this study may allow secondary school leaders to have specific data to utilize when developing other secondary school principals into transformational leaders. The data from this research may support secondary school principals who are transformational leaders by further strengthening and refining their leadership skills through professional development, networking, or mentorship opportunities.

The survey was created to elicit secondary school principals' perceptions of the impact professional development, networking, and mentorship opportunities have on cultivating transformational leadership in secondary school principals. Data collection instruments for this study included a researcher-created survey and focus group questions. The survey contained nine Likert-scale statements and one "yes" or "no" response statement. A total of 249 secondary school principals who were members of the Southwest Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (SWMoASSP) were sent the survey for completion.

Out of the 249 members of SWMoASSP who received the survey, 70 participants responded to the survey. Of the 70 respondents, 65 indicated they identified their leadership style as transformational. The total number of respondents varied throughout

the survey. Survey Statements 2 and 3 had 55 total respondents; Survey Statements 4 through 7 had 54 total respondents; Survey Statement 8 had 53 total respondents; Survey Statement 9 had 52 total respondents; and Survey Statement 10 had 54 total respondents. It is unclear why the number of total respondents varied throughout the survey.

Phase two of the study included interview questions created by the researcher to elicit qualitative responses. The structure of the interview questions allows the researcher to analyze the responses using the interpretive framework. The interview questions were structured around four themes. The first theme was understanding transformational leadership at its core. The second theme focused on the cultivation of transformational leadership through mentorship experiences. The third theme focused on the cultivation of transformational leadership through professional development opportunities. The fourth theme focused on determining the importance of cultivating transformational leadership through networking opportunities. The data consisted of a sample ($n = 4$) of secondary school principals' responses to questions asked during the qualitative phase of the study.

Upon collecting data from The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals Survey, results were evaluated using descriptive statistics, including histograms to display tendencies and frequencies from each question's responses. Focus group interview data were transcribed and analyzed to allow the researcher to determine themes and trends. Focus group interview data themes and trends were displayed through tables and discussions of the analysis.

Quantitative Survey Data Analysis

Survey Statement 1

Participants in the study were provided with the definition of transformational

leadership and instructed to indicate whether or not they identified their leadership style

as transformational. Survey response data revealed 92.86% of participants perceived

their leadership style as transformational (see Figure 1). In contrast, 7.14% of the

participants indicated their leadership style is not transformational. The participants who

indicated they were not transformational leaders did not continue with the rest of the

survey.

Figure 1

Secondary School Principals Identify as Transformational Leaders
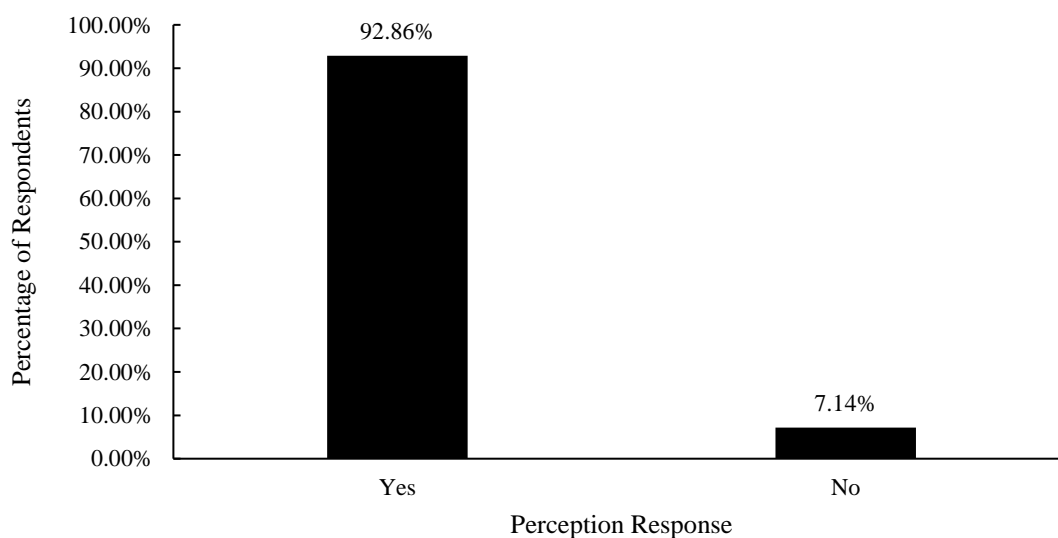
Survey Statement 2

Participants in the study were asked to rate if they perceived receiving feedback

and coaching is important to the cultivation process of transformational leadership.

Survey response data revealed 81.82% of participants strongly agreed receiving feedback

and coaching is important to the cultivation of transformational leadership (see Figure 2).

In contrast, 18.18% of participants agreed receiving feedback and coaching is important

to the cultivation of transformational leadership. No respondents disagreed, strongly

disagreed, or felt neutral that receiving feedback and coaching is important to the

cultivation process of transformational leadership.

Figure 2

Receiving Feedback and Coaching is Important to the Cultivation of Transformational
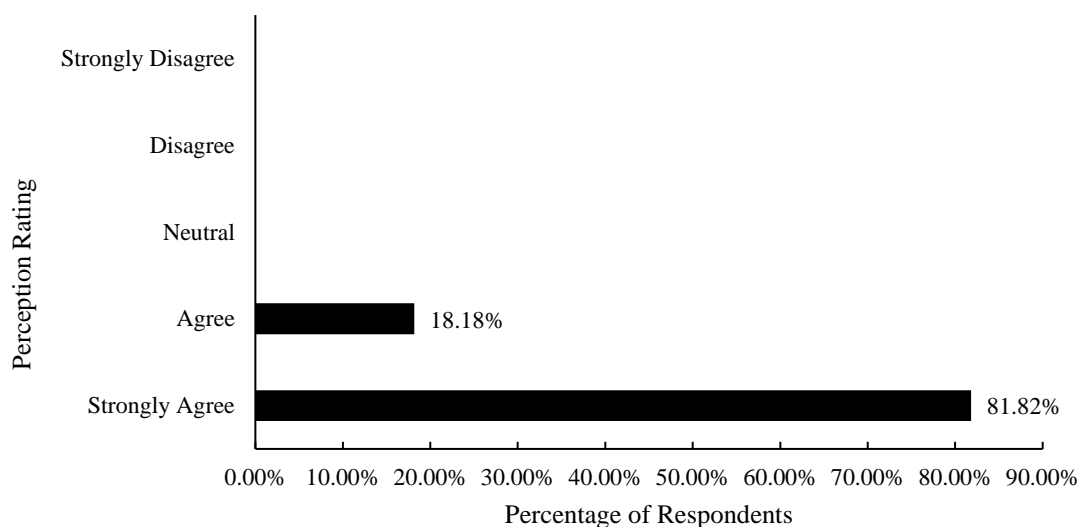
Leadership

Survey Statement 3

Participants in the study were asked to rate how developing a relationship with a

mentor who leads through transformational leadership will ultimately result in further

commitment to the organization from the follower. Survey response data revealed

98.19% of participants agreed or strongly agreed developing a relationship with a mentor

who leads through transformational leadership will ultimately result in further

commitment to the organization from the follower (see Figure 3). Of the 98.19% of

respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that developing a relationship with a mentor who leads through transformational leadership will further result in commitment to the organization from the follower, 67.27% strongly agreed developing a relationship with a mentor who leads through transformational leadership will result in further commitment to the organization from the follower. In contrast, 1.81% of participants were neutral in determining whether or not developing a relationship with a mentor who leads through transformational leadership will ultimately result in further commitment to the organization from the follower. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that developing a relationship with a mentor who leads through transformational leadership will ultimately result in further commitment to the organization from the follower.

Figure 3

Developing a Relationship with a Mentor Who Leads Through Transformational Leadership Will Ultimately Result in Further Commitment to the Organization from the Follower
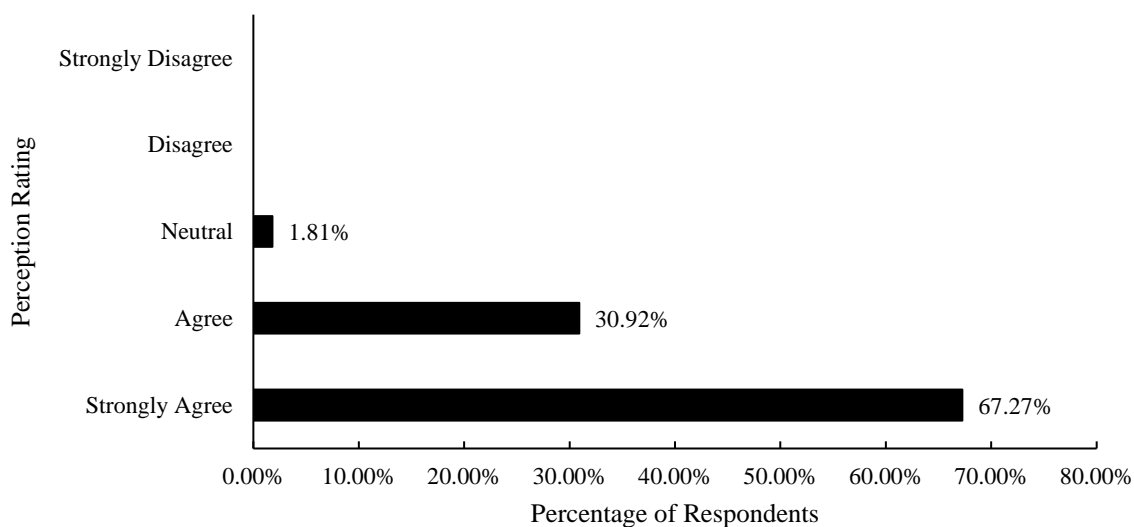
Survey Statement 4

Participants in the study were asked to rate if their specific needs were highlighted by their mentor in professional development through their experience of developing into a transformational leader. Survey response data revealed 69.17% of participants agreed or strongly agreed their specific needs were highlighted in professional development through their experience of developing into a transformational leader (see Figure 4). Of the 69.17% of respondents of agreed or strongly agreed, only 9.17% strongly agreed their specific needs were highlighted by their mentor in the area of professional development through their experience of developing into a transformational leader. In contrast, 27.27% of respondents were neutral or disagreed their specific needs were highlighted in professional development through their experience of developing into a transformational leader. Of the 27.27% of participants who disagreed or were neutral, only 7.27 % of respondents disagreed their needs were highlighted by their mentor in the area of professional development through their experience of developing into a transformational leader. No respondents strongly disagreed their needs were highlighted by their mentor in the area of professional development through their experience of developing into a transformational leader

Figure 4

Through My Experience in Developing into a Transformational Leader, My Specific

Needs Were Highlighted by My Mentor in the Area of Professional Development
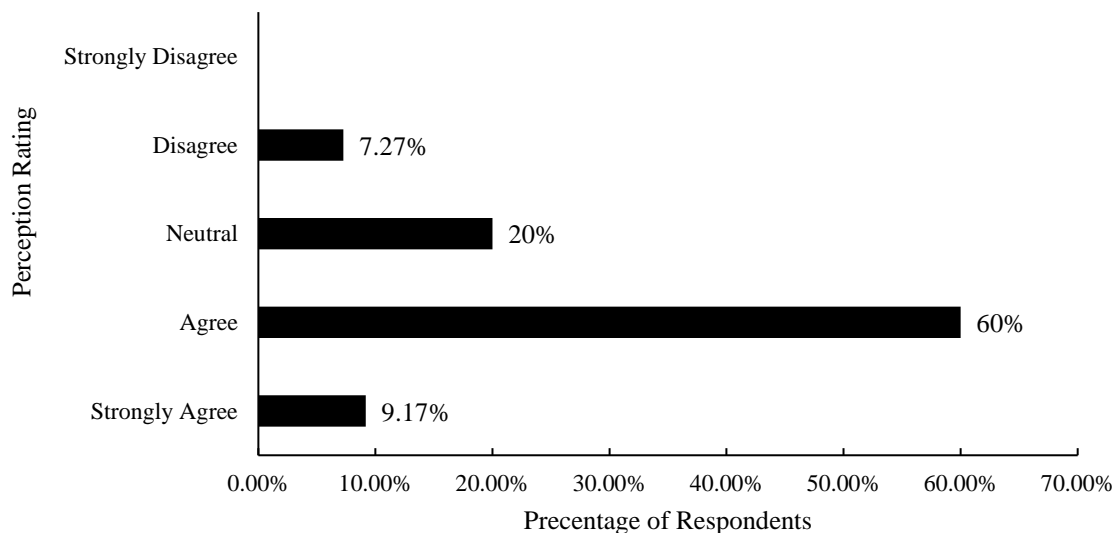
Survey Statement 5

Participants in the study were asked to rate their belief in a leader's ability to

influence individuals, teams, and groups by enhancing behaviors, cognitions, and

motivations to achieve common goals within the organization. Survey response data

revealed 98.18% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with their belief in a leader's

ability to influence individuals, teams, and groups by enhancing behaviors, cognitions,

and motivations to achieve common goals within the organization (see Figure 5). In

contrast, 1.90% of participants disagreed with their belief in a leader's ability to influence

individuals, teams, and groups by enhancing behaviors, cognitions, and motivations to

achieve common goals within the organization. No respondents felt neutral or strongly

disagreed with their belief in a leader's ability to influence individuals, teams, and groups

by enhancing behaviors, cognitions, and motivations to achieve common goals within the organization.

Figure 5

Belief in the Ability a Leader has to Influence Individuals, Teams, and Groups by Enhancing Behaviors, Cognitions, and Motivations to Achieve Common Goals Within the Organization
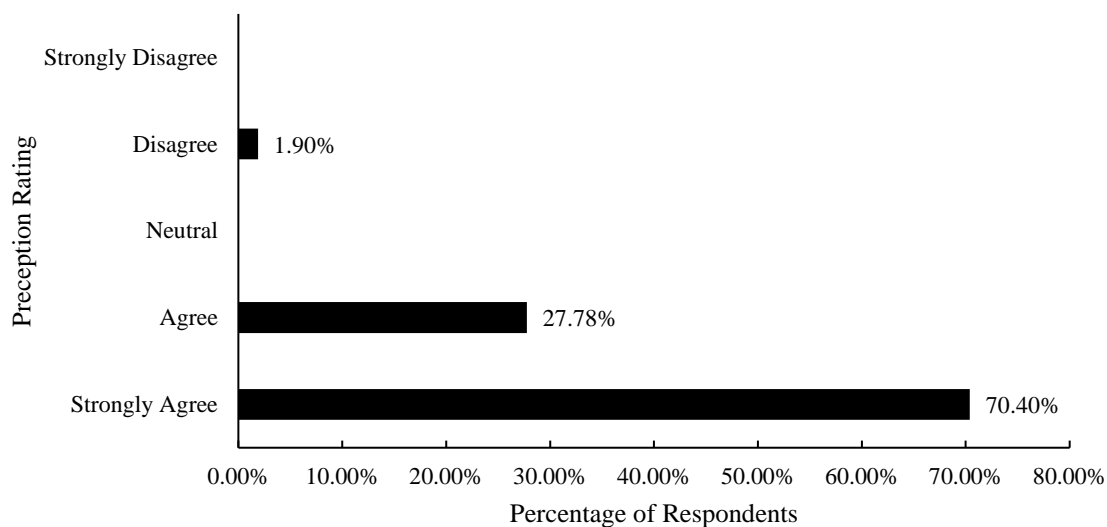
Survey Statement 6

Participants in the study were asked to rate if networking is an important determinant of individuals' current and future development. Survey response data revealed 98.18% of participants agreed or strongly agreed networking is an important determinant of the current and future development of individuals (see Figure 6). Of the 98.18% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed, 70.40% strongly agreed networking is an important determinant of individuals' current and future development. In contrast, 1.90% of participants disagreed that networking is an important determinant of individuals' current and future development. No respondents were neutral or strongly

disagreed that networking is an important determinant of individuals' current and future development.

Figure 6

Networking is an Important Determinant of the Current and Future Development of Individuals
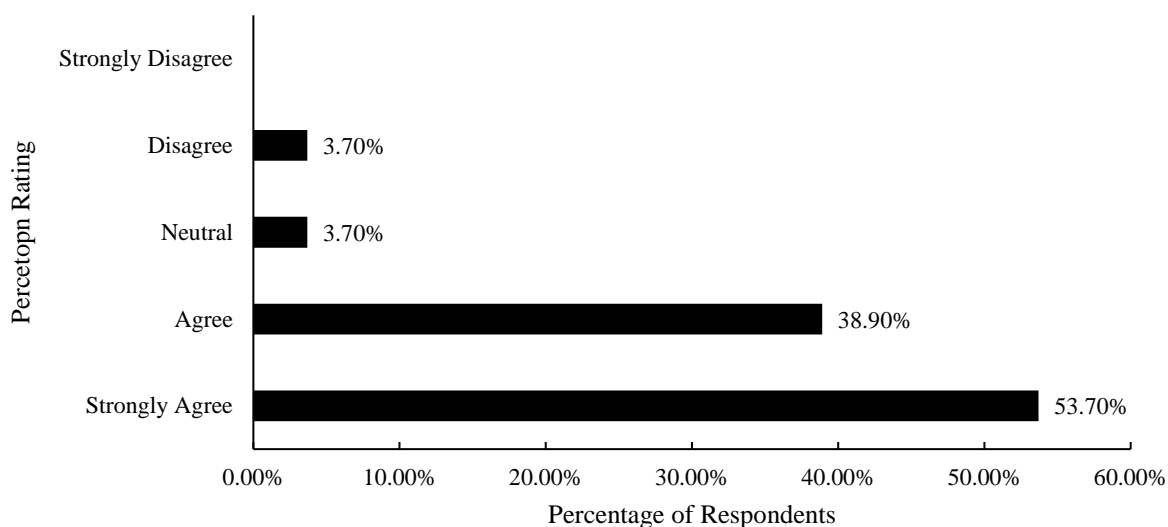
Survey Statement 7

Participants in the study were asked to rate if they felt networking opportunities provided by their principals were important to their development in becoming a transformational leader. Survey data revealed 59.30% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed networking opportunities provided by their principal were important to their development in becoming a transformational leader (see Figure 7). In contrast, 40.70% of respondents disagreed or were neutral about networking opportunities provided by their principal helping their development in becoming a transformational leader. Of the 40.70% of respondents who disagreed or felt neutral, 14.80% of participants were neutral about networking opportunities provided by their principal helping their development in

becoming a transformational leader. No respondents strongly disagreed networking

opportunities provided by their principal were important to their development in

becoming a transformational leader.

Figure 7

Networking Opportunities Were Provided to Me by My Principal Were Important to My

Development in Becoming a Transformational Leader
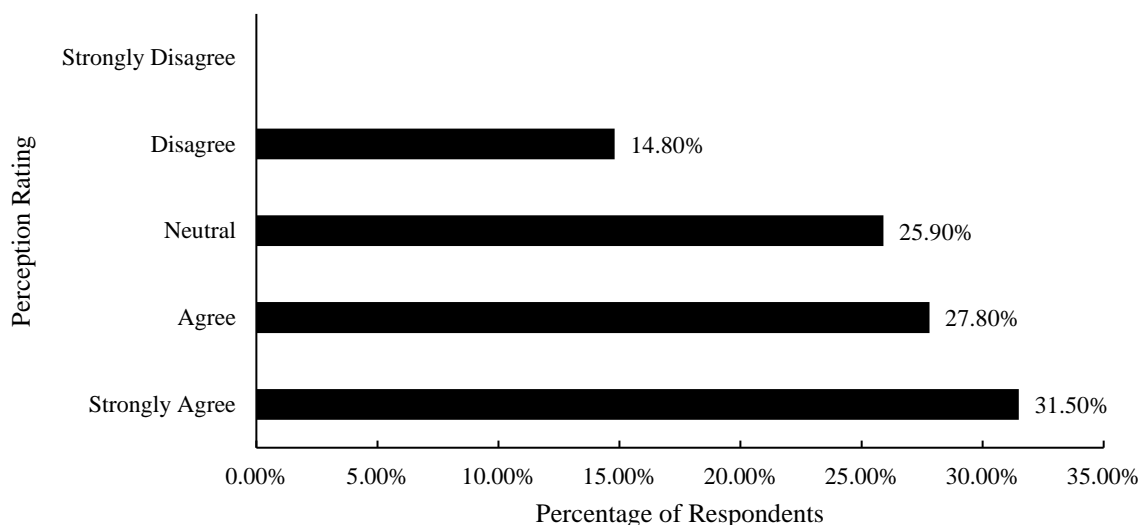
Survey Statement 8

Participants in the study were asked to rate transformational leaders improving

teachers' self-efficacy in the area of professional development. Survey response data

revealed 96.10% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that transformational leaders

improve teachers' self-efficacy in professional development (see Figure 8). Of the

96.10% of participants who agreed or strongly agreed, 52.80% agreed transformational

leaders improve teachers' self-efficacy in professional development. In contrast. 3.80% of

participants were neutral if transformational leaders improve teachers' self-efficacy in

professional development. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that

transformational leaders improve teachers' self-efficacy in professional development.

Figure 8

Transformational Leaders Improve Teacher's Self-Efficacy in the Area of Professional

Development
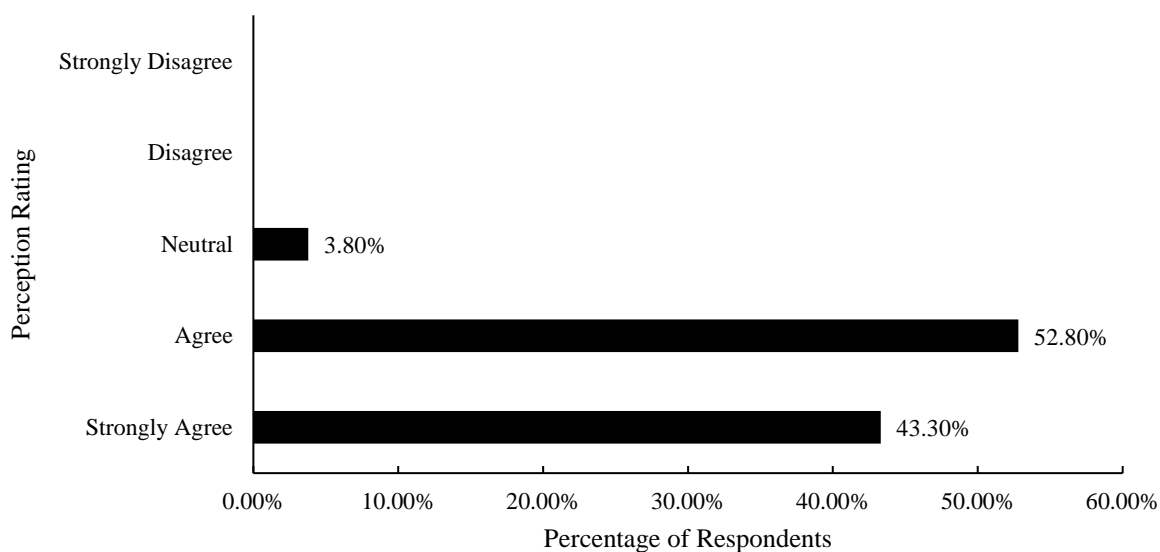
Survey Statement 9

Participants in the study were asked to rate their experience under the leadership

of a transformational leader, if they were encouraged to achieve beyond the minimum

standard of organizational requirements based on the set of attitudes and behaviors of the

leadership. Survey response data revealed 88.70% of participants agreed or strongly

agreed under the leadership of a transformational leader, they were encouraged to achieve

beyond the minimum standard of organizational requirements based on the set of

attitudes and behavior of the leadership (see Figure 9). Of the 88.70% of respondents who

agreed or strongly agreed, 49.10% strongly agreed under the leadership of a

transformational leader, they were encouraged to achieve beyond the minimum standard

of organizational requirements based on the set of attitudes and behaviors of the leadership. In contrast, 11.30% of participants disagreed or were neutral under the leadership of a transformational leader, they were encouraged to achieve beyond the minimum standard of organizational requirements based on the set of attitudes and behaviors of the leadership. No respondents strongly disagreed that under the leadership of a transformational leader, they were encouraged to achieve beyond the minimum standard of organizational requirements based on the leadership's set of attitudes and behaviors.

Figure 9

Under the Leadership of a Transformational Leader, I Was Encouraged to Achieve Beyond the Minimum Standard of Organizational Requirements Based on the Set of Attitudes and Behavior of the Leadership
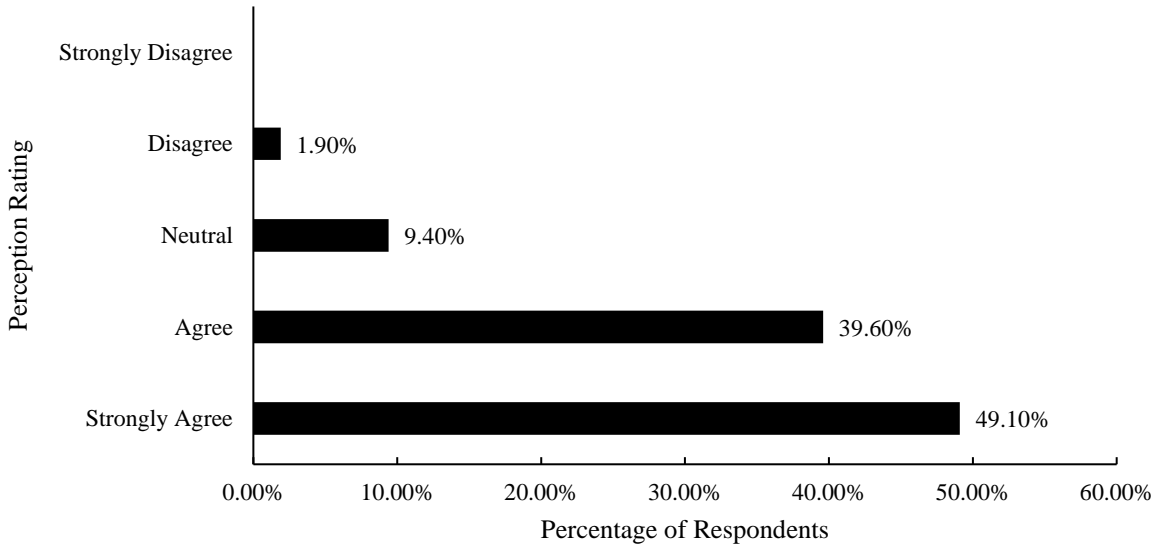
Survey Statement 10

Participants in the study were asked to rate if, as a transformational leader, they believe it is important that they mentor and provide support for an upcoming secondary school administrator. Survey response data revealed 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that as a transformational leader, they believe it is important to mentor and provide support for an upcoming secondary school administrator (see Figure 10). Of the 100% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed, 68.50% strongly agreed that as a transformational leader, they believe it is important to mentor and provide support for an upcoming secondary school administrator. In contrast, no participants strongly disagreed, disagreed, or were neutral that as a transformational leader, they believe it is important to mentor and provide support for an upcoming secondary school administrator.

Figure 10

As a Transformational Leader, I Believe it is Important That I Mentor and Provide Support for an Upcoming Secondary School Administrator
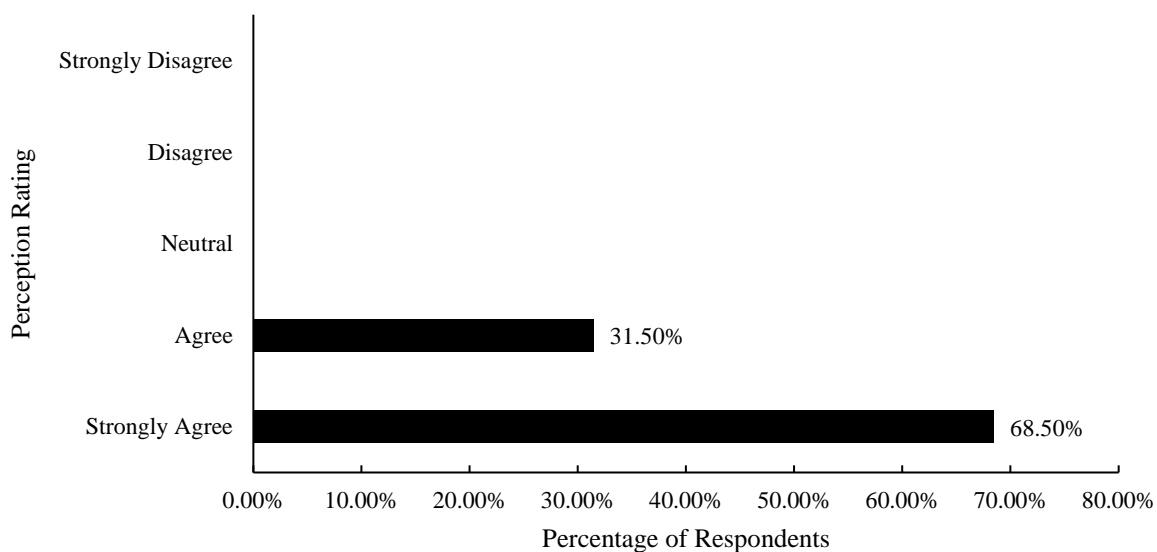
Qualitative Focus Group Analysis

Phase two of data collection included 19 interview questions developed to produce qualitative data. The open-ended focus group questions were structured to seek the understanding and perceptions of each participant. The participants (*n = 4*) were selected from volunteers identified during the phase one survey. The focus group was conducted using the discussion guide to ensure questions were asked concisely. Within the days leading up to the focus group discussion, four participants opted out due to unforeseen circumstances. After analysis and coding of the transcripts from the focus group, many participants' perceptions emerged as themes. There was some concern whether saturation would occur with only four focus group participants, however after analysis, data saturation occurred as participants' responses became redundant. Burkholder et al. (2020) suggested saturation is attained when analysis produces no new data and there are no phenomena that cannot be explained.

Interview Question 1

As a transformational leader, in what ways have you created an intentional relationship with your followers?

Secondary school principals' perceptions of ways they create intentional relationships with their followers were vital to the overall success of their school building. Participant 1 reflected on their experiences when they were a teacher and how relationships built with other teachers allowed them to gain trust with those individuals and other teachers in the district when they moved into their current role as head principal. Participant 1 also acknowledged the importance of building intentional relationships with teachers and staff who are highly thought of by their peers, "I would

say the intentional relationships were recognizing those who were well plugged into the junior high and had a good pulse [of the building]." Participant 2 agreed and noted the importance of building intentional relationships with teachers and substitute teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 2 stated, "You know, you have to make it intentional, you have to be a presence, and you have to be individualized." Participant 2 acknowledged the importance of individual conversations with their teachers and substitute teachers throughout the day that provided them with opportunities to be a good listener and provide actionable feedback.

Participant 4 acknowledged advice they received from a mentor principal to be a presence in the hallway during passing periods and to make an intentional effort to position himself in various parts of the building to create more opportunities to be seen and communicate with all of the teachers in the building. Participant 4 stated, "I'm intentional about where I'm going to be and try to cover every hallway in the building throughout the day, so I can be around all of the teachers and just have, you know, conversations with them."

Participant 3 agreed with the other participants about the importance of building intentional relationships. Participant 3 mentioned the impact of one-on-one meetings with their teachers at the beginning and end of the year as a positive way to build intentional relationships. Participant 3 suggested the meetings "…helps build that intentionality, you know, gets them in my office and kind of breaks the barrier of it, making it a safe place for them."

Interview Question 2

     As a transformational leader, in what ways have you increased the expectations of your followers?

     Participant 2 gave specific examples of models they had used to increase follower expectations through collective teacher efficacy. Specifically, Participant 2 identified Peter DeWitt as an individual who developed the *meet-model-motivate* theory. Participant 2 stated, "You kind of find out [through this model] where your teachers are and you meet them at that point and provide them with some information of whatever you're trying to get to. I've done this with collective advocacy with our proficiency scale model." Participant 2 also noted the importance of instilling confidence in their teachers and having high expectations for them, because they are the experts in the building. Furthermore, Participant 2 explained, "Everybody wants to live up to those expectations and especially when you're telling them, you know, they can do it."

     Participant 1 agreed with Participant 2 and identified the importance of having a solid vision and mission statement for their building to increase the expectations of their followers. Participant 1 explained before they moved into the principal position, the school building did not have a vision and mission statement: "So one thing we did is develop those, you know, why we exist, what our purpose is, and what we believe in." Participant 1 pointed out the benefit of involving department chairs in weekly meetings and doing book studies with those individuals "on different aspects of CFA's or curriculum development." Furthermore, Participant 2 agreed with Participant 1 that being an encourager will increase follower expectations. They all mentioned getting out of the

way of teachers, letting them do their job, and providing growth opportunities, positively

increase trust and expectations with followers.

Participant 3 agreed with the other participants and explained that the importance

of increasing their followers' expectations is to lead by example. Participant 3

acknowledged the significance of being present in the day-to-day operations in their

building and holding himself and others accountable for being their best every day.

Participant 3 agreed with Participant 1 about the importance of showing growth and

trying to grow with every experience and opportunity they are given as a building leader.

Furthermore, Participant 3 reflected on their philosophy as a coach they referred to as

"KYP," which stands for "know your personnel." Participant 3 stated, "You know, as a

coach, I used to say KYP a lot, but you know, just knowing your personnel and

understanding the buttons you can push to motivate and inspire others." Additionally,

Participant 3 explained the only way you can know your personnel the best is to build

positive relationships with them and form those bonds and trustworthiness with them.

Interview Question 3

In what ways did a transformational leader increase their expectations of

yourself?

Participant 4 reflected on their experiences working with a former building

principal who supported them through various situations during a school day. The

principal allowed them to come to their own conclusions before giving them advice on

how to handle a particular situation. Participant 4 explained that their building principal's

expectation was to determine a solution before coming to the office with the problem.

Participant 4 acknowledged the importance of the positive feedback they would receive

from their building principal. Participant 4 determined, "…then they gave me feedback and kind of guided me to the solution that might work best. These experiences were invaluable to me and my growth as a professional."

Participant 1 agreed with Participant 4 about the importance of positive or constructive feedback from a superior. Additionally, Participant 1 felt their experiences under two different superintendents allowed them to see two different but effective leadership styles. Participant 1 identified one superintendent's leadership style as very positive and encouraging. Participant 1 stated, "[He] was really good about just being positive and always just telling you, you know, you had a ton of potential and that you can live up to it and making you believe in yourself." On the other hand, Participant 1 described another superintendent as someone who challenges them to make tough decisions and get things accomplished.

Furthermore, Participant 1 described himself as someone who tends to be "a little slower with things." Participant 1 explained this type of leadership style got them out of their comfort zone and forced them to be more assertive as the building principal. There was a point in their tenure as principal when a tough decision needed to be made, and the superintendent, who was more challenging in their leadership style, gave them the confidence to "pull the trigger on something and do it." Participant 4 felt the confidence their superintendent gave them with this experience helped them to grow as a principal, and tough decisions in the future became easier for them to make.

Interview Question 4

In your experience, how have you empowered others through transformational leadership?

Two respondents identified providing positive feedback and opportunities for people to lead as two ways they have empowered others through transformational leadership. Participant 2 identified individuals in their building who "often do not get opportunities to lead." Participant 2 explained they used Professional Learning Community opportunities to get those individuals involved in minor leadership roles. Furthermore, Participant 2 explained the importance of getting individuals "out of their comfort zone, communicating your expectations, and expressing confidence in those individuals to lead." Participant 2 also determined the importance of providing individuals with feedback and opportunities to have follow-up conversations; these conversations help build positive relationships and increase trust with teachers.

Participant 3 agreed with Participant 2 and explained they thought providing feedback to others in leadership roles in their building was the most significant way they could empower them through their transformational leadership style. Participant 3 reflected on their experience as a first-year principal and how they thought their teachers were like them in taking the initiative and doing things without being told. However, Participant 3 quickly found out not all of their teachers were like them "you often find out they're not, you know, the same as you. Some people literally want to be told what to do, and others can do it on their own." Participant 3 determined they had to be creative to get teachers involved and tailor leadership opportunities for teachers to meet their needs. Furthermore, Participant 3 explained when teachers were provided with feedback and opportunities to have conversations, they felt empowered to use their voice. Participant 3 noted that their teachers' buy-in and morale increased significantly after providing feedback and being there for them when they wanted to have follow-up conversations.

Interview Question 5

    In what ways did a transformational leader empower you?

    Secondary school principals expressed feelings of gratitude to former transformational leaders they served under. Participant 1 felt empowered by their former superiors, because they allowed them to "take things and tweak them to make them better, and they both [former principals] were very supportive of that." Additionally, Participant 1 shared their experience of coming up with new ideas or initiatives for their building and having the support of their superiors to pursue a plan of action with their input and expertise. Participant 1 acknowledged the importance of professional development opportunities provided to them by their leaders that put them "in a position to understand and know the more significant needs of the district."

    Participant 2 and Participant 3 agreed with Participant 1 and valued the empowerment they received from their current and former leaders. Both participants felt their leaders were very intentional and helped them grow professionally. Participant 2 acknowledged the networking opportunities they were allowed to experience because they "ensured that I was around positive influences and that I was with people who would challenge me to grow." Participant 3 agreed and added being around leaders who "legitimately want to make things better" has helped them realize the people they work for and under are their greatest asset as a building principal. Furthermore, Participant 3 elaborated upon Participant 1's comment regarding the feeling of support for a new idea or initiative from the leaders they worked with and how they empowered them the same way. Participant 3 articulated the sense of empowerment they felt from their leaders and this has led them to treat others the same way.

Interview Question 6

What type of mentorship, if any, has cultivated your transformational leadership abilities?

Three respondents reflected on how their experiences of being employed in different school conferences have allowed them to build relationships with individuals they now consider mentors in their personal and professional lives. Participant 4 expressed, "I've been able to network with so many people at small schools, medium schools, and large schools. Having that mentor to pick up the phone and call them on a situation to gain their perspective and feedback has been valuable to me." Participant 2 agreed; however, they were employed in a district that often promotes from within and expressed their inability to meet new teachers and administrators. However, Participant 2 credited their Doctoral experience as one that provided them with opportunities to meet secondary school administrators outside of their district. These individuals have become mentors to them, and they "still feel comfortable picking up the phone and calling any of them for anything." Furthermore, Participant 2 acknowledged the relationships they had built through professional development and networking opportunities in their school conference and how those relationships have developed into people they refer to as a mentor.

Participant 3 specifically credited their brother, a district superintendent, as a person who has been a mentor to them and further cultivated their transformational leadership abilities. Participant 3 described the importance of conversations they and their brother have had that enlightened them on how things are run in another district, "…that mentorship has been big for me, just because they kind of let me in and [they] talk a lot

about their things with me, and then, in turn, I can talk about some of the things going on with me. So, I think it's been big for me." Participant 3 also acknowledged the benefits of monthly meetings with their conference administrators. Participant 3 felt the meetings helped them develop strong relationships with other administrators, and they feel comfortable calling them or emailing them any time to discuss a particular situation.

Interview Question 7

In what areas of your life have you had someone mentor you?

Responses to this question resulted in far-ranging perceptions regarding how mentors in participants' lives have helped them become the people they are today. Furthermore, the participant's mentors also push them to continue to find ways to improve their personal, professional, and spiritual lives. Participant 1 indicated the significance of having a mentor who knows their work aspirations: "[they] knew my aspirations work-wise so they would consistently feed into me and helped me to keep my mind in a work-life balance." Participant 1 also indicated the importance of having an available mentor 24/7 to "see how things were going and even be willing to pray for me or give me little bits of advice here and there."

Participant 2 shared their unique experience over the last 18 years of following the same individual, their mentor, as they replaced them as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, and building principal. Participant 2 indicated the importance of having a professional relationship with someone who they know well and someone who is "definitely a transformational leader." Furthermore, Participant 2 determined their mentor has helped them understand the importance of the work-life balance, which they consider one of the most important things to ensure a successful career in education. Additionally,

Participant 2 expressed the importance of having a strong mentor as they navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic while running their school building as safely and efficiently as possible over the last couple of years.

Participant 3 acknowledged Participant 1's response regarding the importance of having a positive mentor in all aspects of their life. Participant 3 reflected on their previous experience as head varsity basketball coach and their relationships with other basketball coaches that developed into strong mentorships. The relationships with former coaches provided opportunities for feedback and insight with "no strings attached." Participant 3 noted the importance of being vulnerable with people they trust and how "…just finding someone you're not afraid to be vulnerable with, I think, is important."

Participant 4 shared their personal experience of how the "school walls have filled the gaps in their life" left by their father and mother, who they portrayed as not having set a good example for them in their upbringing. Participant 4 reflected on their poor upbringing to point out the importance of having strong teachers and coaches throughout their time in school as positive mentors who made them into the person and educational leader they are today. Participant 4 indicated they naturally navigate toward strong leaders in their building and rely on them to be mentors and "replace the void in their life professionally." Additionally, Participant 4 expressed their goal to one day serve as a positive mentor to younger administrators.

Interview Question 8

Through mentorship, in what ways have you motivated someone to transcend their self-interests for the school district's best interest?

Participant 3 and Participant 2 shared similar experiences that dealt with teachers in their buildings struggling to adjust to change or a new initiative that was being implemented. Both participants identified the importance of communicating with their team members and having an organized and efficient plan to implement the new idea successfully. Participant 4 explained the steps they had to go through to get teachers to buy into a consistent and structured Response to Intervention program, "You know, we got others involved outside of [administration], and we asked the right questions to get the information we needed before bringing it to the teachers." Additionally, Participant 4 suggested asking their teachers, "How do we best address our students' needs?" Participant 4 believed this question was necessary to get their teachers' thinking about the same priorities.

Participant 2's experience came with implementing a standards-reference grading system. Specifically, Participant 2 identified the model of "meet-model-motivate" as a successful way to find out where their teacher's feelings are about the proposed initiative. Furthermore, Participant 2 explained, "showing the teachers how the plan will be successfully implemented and their roles in ensuring the plans are implemented successfully; motivating their teachers to believe in the plan and understand its positive benefits on students was important to consider." Lastly, Participant 2 acknowledged how important it was to recognize how difficult the previous two years have been due to COVID and how they needed to "turn down the heat when trying to make a transition like that the year after coming out of the worst COVID year we had."

Participant 1 suggested they did not feel like they have ever motivated someone to transcend their self-interests for the school's best interest. However, Participant 1

determined they have seen other leaders who "did a great job providing a vision and then clarity around the vision and just having a positive attitude." Furthermore, Participant 1 expressed when put together, a vision, a plan, and a positive attitude are three things "really made people think, 'hey, we can do this!'"

Interview Question 9

Transformational leaders show concern toward the needs of their followers to allow them to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization (Dappa et al., 2019, p. 825). As a mentor, in what ways have you addressed the needs of your followers that allows them to reach their personal and professional goals?

Secondary school principals' perceptions of addressing the needs of their followers to allow them to reach their personal and professional goals varied from participant to participant. Participant 2 shared their experience of mentoring a teacher in their building who is currently working towards their Master's degree in administration. Participant 2 explained they see a lot of potential in the person they are mentoring, and they feel the mentee has benefitted most from the time that has been set aside for the two of them to meet one on one. Participant 2 continued, "I see incredible potential in this young man. You know I'm giving him time to access other administrators and me in the building who provide him with tasks and experiences." Participant 2 expressed the professional development opportunities they have provided the aspiring administrator have been significant, as well.

Participant 3 agreed with Participant 2 and elaborated on a comment they made earlier in the focus group. Participant 2 suggested the importance of getting to know their followers by asking meaningful questions and allowing them to "identify the needs of the

followers." Additionally, Participant 2 shared their belief that education is a "service industry…so just having that, you know, service mindset to help other educators is very important." Furthermore, Participant 2 suggested having a service mindset allows a leader to identify the needs of a follower and then serve those needs to "help them grow individually and within the school building and district."

Participant 4 and Participant 1 both suggested providing followers with honest and open feedback to help them grow personally and professionally. Participant 1 indicated the importance of not being scared of trying to better people "for fear they will leave you." Participant 4 determined, "the most critical thing is genuine, honest feedback and just making sure that they know they get that honesty out of you to help them grow." Additionally, Participant 1 suggested the importance of determining appropriate professional development opportunities for their followers can "help them grow in specific areas of their professional lives."

Interview Question 10

What type of professional development, if any, has cultivated your transformational leadership abilities?

Participant 1 shared several professional development experiences they thought cultivated their transformational leadership abilities. Participant 1 gave credit to their Master's and Doctoral degree programs and Professional Learning Community workshops and webinars. Additionally, Participant 1 suggested personal reading as a professional development experience, "For me, just personal reading on leadership, you know, finding those good authors that you can follow, trust, and grow in."

Participant 3 agreed with Participant 1 and determined the significance of identifying themself as a transformational leader early in their administrative career. Participant 3 determined early leadership identification helped define who they are personally and professionally. Furthermore, Participant 3 acknowledged the importance of pursuing higher degrees as an essential piece of professional development that "pushed them to be the best administrator they can possibly be."

Interview Question 11

School leaders need to adopt certain behaviors and characteristics of transformational leadership to facilitate collaboration with their colleagues (Bunaiyan & McWilliams, 2018, p. 2). What specific behaviors modeled through transformational leadership have you adopted that have improved your collaboration with your colleagues and peers?

Participant 3 indicated the importance of seeking feedback and how it has improved collaboration with peers and colleagues. Participant 3 acknowledged seeking feedback from others "forces you to be vulnerable and showing your followers your own vulnerability can open the door to them being more vulnerable which creates more openness." Furthermore, Participant 3 determined they believe everyone "genuinely does the best they can, but getting feedback helps you see areas you can improve in."

Participant 1 agreed with Participant 3 regarding the importance of leaders being vulnerable and "stepping into a situation and asking for feedback and also not be scared to give it because you think you are going to upset someone." Participant 1 referenced a book by John Maxwell, 360 Degree Leader. Participant 1 explained how well this book articulated a leader's ability to lead others who are below them and those above them.

Additionally, Participant 1 pointed out how a person's influence on others can be impactful when they provide "a clear vision and a clear idea to their followers so they can see what you see and want to join it."

Interview Question 12

In what ways does being a transformational leader contribute positively to professional development opportunities you have created for teachers and other secondary school leaders in your district?

Participant 2 indicated the importance of supporting innovation and how doing this is out of their comfort zone, because they do not necessarily like to be the first one to do something. Participant 2 described themself as "evidence-based and wants to see how things work before jumping right in." However, Participant 2 suggested finding individuals who want to be innovative in their own way or through guided practice to "let them go for it and try it out."

Participant 3 agreed with Participant 2 and suggested giving individuals a voice for professional development. Participant 3 determined transformational leaders are the opposite of transactional leaders who "decide what is best for everyone else even though it may not be." Thus, a transformational leader should give individuals a voice to express how specific professional development opportunities can benefit them and the school. Participant 3 recalled the previous focus group question and brought up the significance of being vulnerable and "not being afraid to fail because we learn a lot through that, you know, not being afraid of trying new things and failing is okay." Furthermore, Participant 3 suggested that failing, specifically when trying something new through a professional development opportunity, is something that "makes your district better in the long term."

Interview Question 13

In what ways do your transformational leadership abilities improve teachers' self-efficacy and attitude towards professional development?

Two respondents indicated individualization of professional development and proving to teachers the worth of each professional development opportunity will increase teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards professional development in the future. Participant 2 explained the importance of having conversations with teachers to let them know they are supported and gather feedback. Participant 2 further determined their approach is to "listen, coach, and advise" when working with their teachers to determine successful outcomes from each professional development opportunity.

Participant 3 suggested each teacher should have a voice in selecting professional development opportunities and having them identify "how the PD opportunity will benefit [me] and the school." Participant 3 explained teachers who see a direct benefit from the professional development opportunity will "have an increase in the desire to be involved with it because they know it has worth to them."

Interview Question 14

Bass and Avolio (1994) concluded transformational leaders demonstrate behaviors in four categories. One of those categories is intellectual stimulation. This is when a leader encourages followers to challenge the status quo and promote and reformulate problems. As a transformational leader, in what ways have you encouraged the intellectual stimulation of your followers in your building or district's professional development?

Participant 1 indicated they have had a lot of success through a guiding coalition. Participant 1 explained they realized their potential as a leader and their ability to impact followers through this coalition. It led them to take more risks to try new things like "a book study on collaborative formative assessments and just leadership positivity in general." Participant 1 explained the guiding coalition allowed for positive feedback from their followers, and this experience also allowed them to encourage teachers' intellectual stimulation with questions, "What do you think? Do you feel satisfied with where we are at? Does 'all' mean 'all'? Do we really mean every child in our district?" Furthermore, Participant 1 suggested, "consistently putting a big target in front of them that says, 'are we there yet or are we still headed there?"

Participant 2 referenced "instructional rounds" as "something they put into place a few years ago that's been fantastic and encouraged teachers' innovation through professional development opportunities." Participant 2 determined this practice to be effective because it allows teachers to be in groups according to their subject area. Throughout the school year, they are given opportunities to observe other teachers teaching in their classrooms. After the observations, teachers are advised to meet after school to discuss what they saw from their colleagues. Participant 2 explained, "I think it's kind of pushed some people to be a little more creative and more vulnerable to build trust with their peers and let other teachers see what they are doing in their classroom."

Participant 4 reflected on their experience of taking teachers new to their building and having the administrative team record that person teaching a lesson and then breaking the lesson down with other teachers involved on a panel. Participant 4 determined this exercise is "a good way to increase teachers' intellectual stimulation and

help them grow professionally." Participant 4 noted the importance of feedback and how teachers who get observed are open and receptive to the feedback they receive. Participant 4 suggested the receptiveness of the teachers is "ultimately what makes them better teachers."

Interview Question 15

What type of networking opportunities, if any, have cultivated your transformational leadership abilities?

Secondary school principals' responses were very positive, and each response indicated the importance of networking and its positive effects on their personal and professional lives. Participant 4 shared their experience of becoming a first-year assistant principal and their building principal taking their administrative team on a tour of other school districts. Participant 4 expressed that this opportunity allowed them to see how other school districts worked and provided them with valuable networking opportunities to meet other administrators in the area. Additionally, Participant 4 indicated the relationships they built with other administrators on this tour are "still strong to this day and people I call on whenever I need help or feedback on something from someone outside of my district."

Participant 1 indicated the experience they had on their district's Continuous School Improvement Plan team provided them with opportunities to network with other administrators and central office personnel in their district. Participant 1 determined the relationships they built through this district networking opportunity gave them more insight into "why we do what we do as a district." Participant 1 reflected on their relationships earlier in their career with other teachers who are now district-level leaders

and how these individuals continue to be people that expand his network and "give valuable insight and feedback when one of us reaches out to the other." Furthermore, Participant 1 suggested the relationships they built early in their career "pay dividends later on in life."

Participant 3 suggested the key to networking is "being open to networking and not being afraid to step out of your comfort zone to meet other people in our profession." Participant 3 identified networking as the best form of professional development for a secondary school principal, because it is time to "bounce ideas off of other principals and see how they handle different situations." Participant 3 credited their experience as a former head basketball coach as an excellent opportunity to learn how to network and uses those relationships to help their career as a building principal. Participant 3 indicated several former basketball coaches he coached against are now in administrative roles.

Interview Question 16

In what ways is networking an essential part of the development process for secondary school leaders?

Participant 3 indicated networking has helped develop their ability to receive feedback from other secondary school principals. Participant 3 suggested receiving feedback from other administrators outside of their district is crucial because "they do not have any skin in the game, and their feedback is unbiased." Participant 3 indicated receiving feedback from individuals involved in the situation can "be skewed a bit" because those individuals could be directly affected by the outcome of a decision.

Participant 1 determined that networking played a vital role in their development as educators and secondary school principals, because it allows them to see different

viewpoints from those they interact with. Additionally, Participant 1 suggested the importance of networking with community members. Participant 1 shared their experience of networking with parents and other community members at sporting and academic events at their school. Participant 1 felt these interactions with community members built levels of trust and more positive relationships. Furthermore, Participant 1 stated they could "control the narrative more by being available and talking to people outside of a school-building setting."

Interview Question 17

How are transformational leadership qualities cultivated within a secondary school principal when networking?

Participant 4 felt their need to feel supported and heard by the individuals they networked with was important to their growth and gave them confidence in their job responsibilities. Participant 4 suggested their peers' affirmation also supports them because "with society the way it is right now and everybody bearing down on [educators], it can be overwhelming at times." Participant 4 also recognized the relationships they have built through personal and professional networking had paid dividends later on in their life.

Participant 2 determined networking opportunities have allowed them to meet people within the profession they now look up to and consider role models for them. Specifically, Participant 2 indicated they especially looked up to women who are secondary school principals and in other types of administrative roles in the area. Furthermore, Participant 2 expressed their appreciation for other females who do a great job as administrators, moms, and wives.

Participant 3 and Participant 1 agreed with Participant 4. Participant 3 shared their experience of networking being intellectually stimulating for them and further cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within themselves, because they "pick up so many positive things from other educators when networking." Participant 1 discussed their learning experience from administrators they hired who were formerly in other districts. Participant 1 indicated those hires opened up other networking communities. This allowed them to compare and contrast with other building principals and discuss what they were doing that was working well and what needed to be worked on to get better as a school. Additionally, Participant 1 indicated that the networking opportunities through the State Administration Association (MoASSP) helped them grow as an educator and further provided experiences working with other secondary school principals across Missouri.

Interview Question 18

Through networking, knowledge shared amongst organizations has contributed positively to transformational leaders (Sayyadi & Provitera, 2018, p. 10). What have you learned from other secondary school transformational leaders that have helped you in your own school district?

Participants responded to this question with many examples of how administrators in other school districts and even their districts have helped them in their school buildings. Participant 1 acknowledged COVID and social media issues with students as topics he has worked with other district administrators to try and combat in their building. Additionally, Participant 1 discussed the relationship they have with their high school principal, and even though that person is in another building, "knowing what he's doing

and seeing some things he's doing since we're in a very similar spot is crucial to bridging the gap with students in our district from one building to the next." Furthermore, Participant 1 shared their experience of applying knowledge from other districts in the area, such as curriculum, intervention processes, and collaboration exercises, to improve their school.

Participant 2 discussed their experience with conference-wide meetings that have allowed opportunities to have "strong conversations with other conference administrators." Participant 2 shared feelings on the importance of collaborating with other area administrators: "Just like we talked about in the last question, it is being intentional and reflective and not necessarily comparing yourself to somebody else, but taking what you can from every conversation." Participant 2 noted the significance of being in the focus group and "the intellectual stimulation they have received from the opportunity."

Participant 4 recognized social media as a resource to learn what other school districts and administrative leaders are doing. Participant 4 suggested their experience as a head coach taught them the importance of "seeing what other teams are doing that works well for them and trying to apply it to my own team." Furthermore, Participant 4 expressed the importance of working with area and regional administrators and building positive relationships, because it is essential to rely on those individuals and not be afraid to share ideas, successes, and failures.

Interview Question 19

Through idealized influence, in what ways have you modeled networking for other secondary school principals?

Two of the participants recognized the importance of setting a good example for their colleagues by attending high quality professional development opportunities for secondary school principals. Both participants referenced their experiences attending area and regional conferences such as the MoASSP regional and state conferences. Participant 2 discussed the difficulty of attending in-person networking opportunities for the last two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Participant 2 determined the appropriate way to show their colleagues the importance of networking is to "model those behaviors for [secondary school principals] and encourage them to participate in and attend networking opportunities."

Participant 3 agreed with Participant 2 and suggested modeling as appropriate behavior for their colleagues when attending networking opportunities. Participant 3 identified the importance of attending peer networking opportunities because "you get feedback from people in the same position as you. They understand the job responsibilities of being a building principal." Additionally, Participant 3 referenced how they learned to network and get out of their comfort zone, because the educators around them modeled appropriate networking behaviors and saw the benefits and positive impact on their professional careers.

Participant 1 reflected on their experience as a building principal and the time they took at the beginning of the year to take their assistant principals on a tour of other schools in Southwest Missouri. Participant 1 explained they took their assistant principals on this tour to allow them to meet other secondary school principals to "begin the relationship-building process." Participant 1 implied the more an educator is around other strong educators, and the more things are discussed around other educators, "you're

going to build that much clearer picture of what you are doing and the goals you want to accomplish."

Summary

Chapter Four provided an analysis of the data collected. Phase one included quantitative data and phase two included qualitative data to answer the research questions of the study. The perceptions of secondary school principals regarding cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within secondary school principals were collected with The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals survey. The results of the survey were analyzed, coded, and presented using descriptive statistics and histograms. The interview transcripts from the focus group were analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of educator perceptions of transformational leadership qualities and traits being cultivated within secondary school principals.

Chapter Five presents the findings and conclusions of the explanatory, sequential, mixed-methods study of the cultivation of transformational leadership within secondary school principals. Implications of this research on cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within secondary school principals follows. The final chapter concludes the recommendations for future research regarding the cultivation of

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

Hetland et al. (2018) suggested, "Transformational leaders are expected to challenge their followers to take greater ownership of their work, allowing the leader to align followers with tasks that enhance their performance" (p. 746). As transformational leaders' followers face changes, they inspire them through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Hetland et al., 2018). Secondary school leaders who identify as transformational leaders build and maintain a culture of learning in an environment by providing a positive influence that promotes a transformation in school culture and professional network practices (Waruwu et al., 2020).

The purpose of this study was to develop a greater understanding of the impact cultivating components of transformational leadership can have on secondary school principals. School principals who are transformational leaders motivate teachers and students by raising their awareness of the school's goals (Daniels et al., 2019). The focus of the study was to determine the perceptions of secondary school principals who identify as transformational leaders in the areas of professional development, mentoring, and networking.

The findings based upon this study's data analysis were introduced in Chapter Four and are further described in this chapter. Additionally, conclusions guided by the findings and enhanced by the reviewed literature in Chapter Two are provided. Implications for practice are offered with methods to improve the cultivation of transformational leadership within secondary school principals. Future research suggestions are also provided. The final summary of the study concludes Chapter Five.

Findings

Secondary school principals' perceptions of transformational leadership in the areas of professional development, mentoring, and networking were elicited and analyzed. Three research questions were used to guide this study and were answered with the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The study's first phase, The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals Survey, was utilized to collect quantitative data from secondary school principals who identify as transformational leaders. The quantitative data were then analyzed to create interview questions for the study's second phase. Data from the survey and the focus group discussion revealed secondary school principals' perceptions of the importance of the cultivation of transformational leadership within secondary school principals in the areas of professional development, mentorships, and networking.

Research Question One

In what ways is transformational leadership cultivated in secondary school principals through professional development?

Analysis of quantitative data revealed secondary school principals' perceptions of the cultivation of transformational leadership through professional development to be positive. Quantitative data from The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals Survey indicated secondary school principals' perceptions of the cultivation of transformational leadership through professional development. A total of 69.17% of surveyed secondary school principals indicated that through their experience of developing into a transformational leader, their specific needs were highlighted by their mentor in the area of professional development. Additionally, 96.1%

of participating secondary school principals perceived transformational leaders improve teacher's self-efficacy in the area of professional development.

Participant response analysis revealed secondary school principals who identify as transformational leaders found professional development to be an essential part of their development and growth as a school leader. Secondary school principals' perceptions fell into five separate clusters: (a) professional development provides secondary school principals with opportunities to be challenged and intellectually stimulated; (b) high-quality professional development opportunities cultivate a mindset of growth and innovation; (c) a mindset of continuous improvement is instilled in secondary school principals through goal setting and effectively communicating and articulating a vision and mission to students, teachers, faculty, and staff; (d) professional development provides secondary school principals with opportunities to be vulnerable and receive constructive and positive feedback from their peers; and, (e) high-quality professional development opportunities for secondary school principals allows them to remain current in their profession.

Through the focus group discussion, participant response analysis also revealed the importance of studying leadership through book reading, listening to podcasts, and watching online videos. Several respondents indicated the importance of giving teachers a voice in determining appropriate professional development experiences. Respondents determined educational leaders should listen to feedback from teachers to assess their needs for adequate professional development. Furthermore, respondents suggested listening to teachers' specific feedback for their professional development needs enhances their confidence in being innovative.

Research Question Two

In what ways is transformational leadership cultivated in secondary school principals through mentorship?

Quantitative data analysis revealed secondary school principals' perceptions of transformational leadership being cultivated within themselves through mentorships to be a practical and positive experience. A total of 98.19% of surveyed secondary school principals indicated developing a relationship with a mentor who identifies as a transformational leader will ultimately result in a further commitment to the organization from the follower. Being a mentor and providing support for an upcoming secondary school principal was perceived by 100% of survey respondents to be an effective practice. Furthermore, receiving feedback and coaching was perceived by 100% of survey respondents to be important to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within secondary school principals.

Analysis of responses to the focus group discussion revealed secondary school principals who identify as transformational leaders found mentorships crucial to their development and growth as transformational leaders and professionals. Secondary school principals' perceptions fell into four separate clusters: (a) mentorships provide secondary school principals with opportunities for feedback which gives individuals confidence in their decision-making and leadership abilities as a principal; (b) mentorship experiences were developed through relationships within principals' school conferences and Specialist and Doctoral degree cohorts; (c) secondary school principals' have been further exposed to more networking and professional development opportunities through their mentorship experiences; and (d) mentors provided secondary school principals with

a person they can confide in while trying to navigate their school building through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Question Three

In what ways are transformational leadership traits cultivated in secondary school principals through networking opportunities?

Three research questions were designed to make identifiable inferences or conclusions from quantitative and qualitative data related to the cultivation of transformational leadership within secondary school principals through professional development, networking, and mentorships (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). Quantitative analysis data revealed secondary school principals' perceptions of transformational leadership being cultivated within themselves through networking opportunities to be crucial to providing them with experiences to meet and build positive and professional relationships with other secondary school principals. A total of 92.6% of surveyed secondary school principals indicated networking to be an essential determinant of their current and future development. However, only 59.3% of surveyed secondary school principals indicated networking opportunities received from their building principal were significant in their development as a transformational leader.

Participant response analysis revealed secondary school principals who identify as transformational leaders found networking to be an essential part of their development and growth as a school leader. Secondary school principals' perceptions fell into four separate clusters: (a) professional networks began before current secondary school principals became a principal. Participants emphasized the importance of building their professional networks as coaches and teachers prior to their administrative careers; (b)

networking opportunities within a secondary school principals' district were achieved through Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) planning; (c) relationships established through networking have increased secondary school principals' opportunities to reach out to their colleagues to gain insight and perspective on particular issues; and (d) receiving feedback from individuals within a secondary school principals' network elicit neutral responses. because the individual providing the feedback is not directly impacted by an impending decision.

Conclusions

Kitur et al. (2020) proposed perspective principals should be trained as transformational leaders in college, and current principals should be supported and trained to be transformational leaders with in-service trainings. Additionally, Kitur et al. (2020) determined high-quality professional development opportunities, networking experiences, and mentorships can adequately train and develop secondary school principals to meet the growing demands of a 21st Century principal. Determining secondary school principals' perceptions of the cultivation of transformational leadership through professional development, networking, and mentorships provides a stronger understanding of how qualities and traits of transformational leadership abilities can be cultivated within secondary school principals through these professional experiences.

Additionally, Anderson (2017) suggested education leaders benefit from training and development in transformational leadership because it will enhance their performance in an educational setting. An investigation of secondary school principals' perceptions of the cultivation of transformational leadership through professional development, networking, and mentorships provides insight into the effectiveness of in-

service trainings designed to cultivate and enhance transformational leadership abilities through professional development, networking, and mentorships.

In March of 2020, the rapid spread of the respiratory disease, designated by medical experts as COVID-19, spread worldwide (McIntosh et al., 2020). During this time, every state within the United States enacted interventions to try and slow the spread of COVID-19 by implementing mandatory school closures, nonessential business closures, prohibiting large gatherings of people, and household lockdowns (Auger et al., 2020). Despite knowing the effectiveness of these precautions mandated by local, state, and federal agencies, all schools around the country were closed (Auger et al., 2020; Slavin & Storey, 2020).

The coronavirus pandemic redefined school leadership, placing new pressures on school leaders and educators to provide students with remote learning opportunities (Bagwell, 2020; Richmond et al., 2020; Stone-Johnson & Weiner, 2020). School principals were tasked with educating students based on ever-changing health and safety protocols mandated by health agencies. (Fotheringham et al., 2021). School principals' leadership styles became even more critical to ensure schools functioned optimally during the uncertain and demanding times brought on by the pandemic (Buric et al., 2021).

Data collected from surveys and interviews were triangulated with the review of literature, and coding was used to develop themes. The five themes that emerged included feedback, vulnerability, intentional relationships, professional growth, and COVID-19. These emergent themes are included as part of the conclusions of this study.

The Importance of Feedback for the Cultivation of Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits

Data collected and analyzed from the survey and focus group discussion identified the importance of feedback for the cultivation of transformational leadership qualities and traits. Participants shared examples of the importance of receiving and providing feedback for the cultivation process of transformational leadership, specifically through their experiences of professional development, networking, and mentorships. Additionally, data collection and analysis of the survey and discussion group data revealed receiving and providing productive and constructive feedback aligned with the transformational leadership component of individualized consideration.

Receiving and providing feedback were cited frequently as an enhancement to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within secondary school principals. Previous researchers indicated feedback positively contributes to professional development, specifically in collaborative teams, because people learn informally through discussions among colleagues or peer learning (Mizell, 2010). Specifically, through professional development, focus group participants provided comments regarding the importance of receiving and giving feedback to and from their colleagues when participating in experiences that involved collaboration.

Previous researchers acknowledged feedback is essential to professional networks, networking enhances school principals' learning experiences when they spend time with fellow principals and share their ideas and current practice (Daniels et al., 2019). Additionally, previous researchers determined principals should be able to speak openly to their colleagues and be provided feedback on issues and concerns (Tingle et al.,

2019). Focus group Participant 3 commented on the importance of receiving feedback from secondary school principals outside their district who are in their professional network because those individuals are not directly affected by a future decision.

Through mentorships, focus group participants commented on the importance of receiving and providing feedback from mentors who identify as transformational leaders. More specifically, Participant 4 expressed appreciation for their mentor and their willingness to provide guidance or feedback on issues. Focus group participants indicated their mentor provides valuable insight and perspective based on their professional experiences. Additionally, survey participants strongly agreed that developing a relationship with a mentor who leads through transformational leadership will ultimately result in further commitment to the organization from the follower. Previous researchers determined the daily demands on school principals require clear and consistent feedback from their mentors (Gimbel & Kefor, 2018).

In individualized consideration, a component of transformational leadership, a leader cares about their subordinate's abilities, personal needs, and aspirations; they conduct differentiated cultivation and guidance to help individuals develop and grow (Mi et al., 2019). Leaders motivate their followers through the transformational leadership component, individualized consideration, by being attentive to needs and listening to concerns in order to support development and growth (Yin et al., 2019). Focus group participants provided examples of transformational leaders in their professional lives who provided them with feedback and support through the transformational leadership component of individualized consideration. Additionally, participants provided examples

of how they gave feedback to their colleagues or teachers in their building through the individualized consideration component of transformational leadership.

The Importance of Secondary School Principals Being Vulnerable to the Cultivation of Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits

A second emergent theme determined the importance of secondary school principals being vulnerable to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits. Focus group participants shared examples of getting out of their comfort zones and how their ability to be vulnerable cultivated transformational leadership qualities and traits, specifically through professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences. Additionally, data collection and analysis of survey and focus group discussion data revealed secondary school principals' ability to be vulnerable aligned with the transformational leadership component of idealized influence. Through the idealized influence component, focus group Participant 3 explained how they conduct end-of-the-year exit meetings with teachers and the importance of themself and the teacher being vulnerable in this setting. Furthermore, focus group Participant 3 felt their willingness to be vulnerable in these meetings allowed the teachers to be vulnerable and open to new ideas and suggestions for the upcoming school year.

Secondary school principals' willingness to be vulnerable was cited frequently as essential to cultivating the qualities and traits of transformational leadership. Vulnerability is a trait of transformational leadership that allows leaders to humble themselves through open conversations and creates a sense of accountability with the individuals they work with (Beer, 2020). All focus group participants identified secondary school principals' ability to be vulnerable in professional development

opportunities as essential because this allows leaders to build trust with their followers and show them they are not afraid to fail.

A leader's vulnerability is essential to networking because leaders who share their experiences, ideas, and practices build positive social capital (Pino-Yancovic, 2019). Three focus group participants commented on the importance of being vulnerable through open conversations with members of their professional networks. Focus group Participant 2 suggested open discussions lead to increased innovation and more effective problem solving with issues they may be having in their school building. Furthermore, focus group participants acknowledged vulnerability within their professional networks built stronger relationships and trust with those individuals.

Through mentorships, focus group participants communicated the importance of having a positive and trusting relationship with their mentor; the only way to have this type of relationship with their mentor is to be vulnerable. Focus group Participant 3 shared experiences of getting out of their comfort zone with their mentor and having open and honest conversations. Additionally, focus group participants suggested being vulnerable provided their mentor with more information to give open and honest feedback and more insight into a situation. Mentors are essential for the success of their mentees (Sun, 2018) because school leadership is collaborative and social, leaders must trust each other (Tingle et al., 2019).

Idealized influence, a component of transformational leadership, is essential to principals fostering a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration (Munir & Abdullah, 2018). The leader does not use idealized influence to be idolized by their followers (Raman et al., 2020), instead, this particular component of transformational leadership

hones in on the leader's ability to model appropriate behaviors for their followers, motivating them to internalize the leader's vision, mission, and values (Koveshnikov &Ehrnrooth, 2018). Focus group participants provided examples of being vulnerable through open channels of communication with their followers. Focus group Participant 3 suggested open communication with their followers allows them to ask specific questions to determine their followers' needs. Additionally, focus group Participant 4 expressed their experience of being vulnerable and having open and honest conversations with followers and the importance of not sugar-coating any feedback provided. Through the participants' openness and vulnerability, they determined the idealized influence component of transformational leadership increased their followers' engagement in collaboration sessions and built stronger relationships and levels of trust.

Secondary School Principals Cultivate Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits Through Intentional Relationships

After analysis of survey and focus group data, the emergent theme of secondary school principals fostering transformational leadership qualities and traits through intentional relationships was determined. Focus group participants shared examples of how positive relationships with their colleagues and peers have cultivated qualities and traits of transformational leadership within themselves. More specifically, focus group participants determined the relationships they built with individuals through professional development experiences, networking opportunities, and mentorships provided them the opportunity to cultivate the qualities and traits of transformational leadership. Additionally, data collection and analysis of survey and focus group discussion data revealed secondary school principals' ability to build intentional relationships with their

colleagues and peers aligned with the transformational leadership component of individualized consideration. Focus group Participant 1 shared their experience as a new principal and understanding the importance of identifying stakeholders in their building who are well plugged-in and focusing on those individuals to start the foundation of building intentional relationships.

Secondary school principals frequently cited how intentional relationships with their peers and colleagues cultivated transformational leadership qualities and traits within themselves. Participant 4 suggested their transformational leadership style has naturally allowed them to build intentional relationships with other educators. Therefore, Participant 4 determined they would not have their current principal's job if it were not for the previous relationships they built with other educators.

Transformational leaders develop relationships with their followers and organization to promote continuous improvement through trust and a shared vision for school change (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019). Specifically, through professional development, focus group Participant 1 suggested the relationships built prior to becoming a principal have helped their progression through the principalship experience. Furthermore, Participant 1 indicated co-workers and people they coached against are now in leadership roles in their districts. Those prior relationships have helped to develop a mindset of continuous improvement.

Intentional relationships are vital to professional networking, networking experiences for principals alleviate feelings of loneliness or isolation, contributing to greater self-confidence (Daniels et al., 2019). Additionally, relationships secondary school principals build through networks allow them to meet personal and professional

needs to help develop ideas for practice (Dalgic & Bakioglu, 2014). Focus group

Participant 2 acknowledged respect for other school administrators who attend

networking opportunities. Participant 2 determined their experience meeting other school

administrators through networking experiences has allowed for building intentional

relationships, exposing them to greater insight and knowledge as a secondary school

principal.

Through mentorships, all focus group participants indicated intentional

relationships they have built with other secondary school principals who have cultivated

transformational leadership qualities and traits within themselves. Focus group

Participant 1 determined their mentor gave them an example of how to treat people

genuinely. Participant 4 suggested their ability to form intentional relationships with

people they are around has increased the overall morale and culture of their school

building. Additionally, Participant 3 shared their experience of being a new principal.

One of the things their mentor told them to do was create intentional relationships with

their teachers to build trust and buy-in.

In individualized consideration, one of the four components of transformational

leadership, a leader cares about their followers, attaches importance to their personal

needs, and conducts differentiated cultivation and guidance to their followers' situations

(Mi et al., 2019). Through the component of individualized consideration, leaders treat

each person in the organization as an individual (Balyer, 2012). The leader identifies each

individual's abilities and needs and then guides them to attain mutually beneficial goals

for the follower and the organization (Puni et al., 2018). Focus group Participant 3

emphasized the importance of the component of individualized consideration. Participant

3 explained how they identify the needs of their teachers and then serve them to meet those needs so they can improve individually, thus, improving the school district. Additionally, focus group Participant 2 shared their experience of working in a large school district and the importance of building intentional and individualized relationships with all of the teachers in their building

Secondary School Principals Experience Professional Growth Through the Cultivation of Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits

Survey and focus group discussion responses revealed professional growth is cultivated within secondary school principals through transformational leadership qualities and traits. The focus group participants shared examples of how working with other transformational leaders has inspired them to grow professionally, specifically through experiences in professional development, networking, and mentorships. Furthermore, analysis of survey and focus group discussion data revealed secondary school principals experience professional growth through the cultivation of transformational leadership aligned with the transformational leadership component of inspirational motivation.

Secondary school principals experiencing professional growth through the cultivation of transformational leadership were cited frequently. Secondary school principals experience professional growth from training and development in transformational leadership styles because they are proven to increase their performance in the educational setting (Anderson, 2017). Additionally, previous researchers suggested professional growth occurs through professional development experiences that are spread over time and promote continuous learning and support for school principals (Daniels et

al., 2019). Focus group Participant 1 suggested their experience reading on leadership and finding good authors who are transformational leaders has helped them grow professionally.

Professional growth occurs through professional networking experiences because they support principals' development as school leaders (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018). Additionally, networking is an experience and tool principals can use to grow professionally (Acton, 2021), thus, motivating principals to enhance their professional performance (Arhipova et al., 2018). Furthermore, survey respondents strongly indicated networking is an important determinant of secondary school principals' current and future development.

Through mentorship experiences, focus group participants commented on their experience of professional growth through the cultivation of transformational leadership qualities and traits. Mentors effectively communicate with their staff and help them grow personally and professionally (Gumus, 2019). Focus group Participant 4 suggested they experienced professional growth through positive and constructive feedback from their mentor. Additionally, focus group Participant 1 recognized their mentor as someone who helped them to identify areas in need of growth and suggested specific professional development opportunities for participation.

The inspirational motivation component of transformational leadership is exemplified by the leader developing strategies to keep employees' motivational levels high and transform their motivation to achieve the organization's future goals (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018). Focus group Participant 3 indicated their experience of professional growth through goal setting and motivating teachers in their building to set goals of their

own to start the school year. Additionally, Chan et al. (2019) determined leaders create a favorable view of the future within their followers by establishing goals and identifying new opportunities.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Secondary School Principals

All focus group participants mentioned COVID-19 and the impact the pandemic had on their role as a secondary school principal. This was consistent with previous research findings which indicated the pandemic placed new pressures on school leaders and educators (Richmond et al., 2020; Stone-Johnson & Weiner, 2020). Additionally, Dawson and Nosworthy (2021) indicated school principals were forced to navigate through unchartered territories and serve as frontline workers in their school community.

School principals were responsible for supporting teachers and community stakeholders as they navigated the pandemic's evolving circumstances (Richmond et al., 2020). Focus group Participant 2 shared their experience of how the COVID-19 pandemic forced them to become more intentional with individuals in the school, specifically, substitute teachers. Participant 2 expressed they had to make more of an effort to build relationships with substitute teachers due to the increased amount of absences of teachers brought on by the pandemic. Additionally, Participant 2 acknowledged the importance of having a mentor and supportive professional network as a sounding board for advice and feedback while trying to run a school building during the pandemic. Furthermore, focus group Participant 1 commented on their experience learning from a principal in another school district who is a transformational leader. Participant 1 said they could call this principal to review precautions they were putting into place for decreasing COVID exposure and how this principal's district was handling

the varying COVID guidelines mandated by the local, state, and federal health experts. The comments focus group participants provided were supported by previous researchers who argued school principals' experiences in the pandemic taught them the importance of enhancing relationships with stakeholders within their community (Hubbard, 2020).

Implications for Practice

The findings of this mixed-methods study have significant implications for cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits in secondary school principals. The first implication is secondary school principals cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits in their followers through one or more of the four components of transformational leadership. The second implication is transformational leadership qualities and traits can be cultivated within secondary school principals through professional development opportunities. The third implication is networking experiences cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits in secondary school principals. The fourth implication is secondary school principals should have transformational leadership qualities and traits cultivated within themselves through mentorships experiences. The final implication is school districts should provide professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences for secondary school principals that focus on transformational leadership qualities and traits.

Secondary School Principals Should Cultivate Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits in Their Followers Through the Four Components of Transformational Leadership

Secondary school principals who are transformational leaders have a mindset of continuous improvement and always look to move their schools forward (Balyer 2012).

To better understand the leadership factors of transformational leadership, it is essential to have insight into the four components of transformational leadership, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019). Based on focus group participants' positive responses to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within their followers through the four components of transformational leadership, more effort should be made by other transformational leaders to use the components of transformational leadership to cultivate those qualities and traits within their followers. More specifically, focus group Participant 1 explained they encouraged intellectual stimulus through book studies throughout the school year. Participant 1 indicated the book studies challenged the teachers' beliefs and instilled a mindset of continuous improvement and development.

Secondary school principals who lead through the components of transformational leadership have positive effects on satisfaction among teachers and improved performance at school (Balyer, 2012). Focus group participant 3 shared their experience of improving teacher performance by recoding their lessons and sitting down with them to provide feedback and input on ways they can improve. Additionally, Participant 3 determined the feedback they received from teachers was positive and indicated the feedback and input from their principal helped them develop, grow, and become more motivated to become better classroom teachers. Furthermore, in a school setting, the four components of transformational leadership directly affect teachers' commitment and inspire innovation, bringing out more changes in practice (Duraku & Hoxha, 2021; Hartinah et al., 2020; Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019). Because of the positive effects transformational leaders have on their followers, it is essential for

secondary school principals to make efforts to cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits within their followers through the four components of transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits Should be Cultivated in Secondary School Principals Through Professional Development

Participants in this study indicated the importance of high-quality professional development opportunities cultivating the qualities and traits of transformational leadership within themselves. Unsatisfactory results in schools are because principals are not adequately trained for school management and leadership; thus, developing school principals through high-quality professional development is necessary (Mathibe, 2007). Survey participants identified the significance of being a transformational leader and suggested their leadership style improved teachers' self-efficacy, specifically in the area of professional development.

Secondary school principals who are responsible for facilitating the learning of teachers and students need to be part of an ongoing learning and development process to ensure they are meeting the demands of modern education and better serve the various needs of teachers and students (Gumus & Bellibas, 2020). In the focus group discussion, participants emphasized the importance of high-quality professional development opportunities that allowed for collaboration with others and provided opportunities for professional growth. More specifically, Participant 2 and Participant 4 suggested professional development opportunities with other administrators from member conference schools were very effective in developing themselves and cultivating qualities and traits of transformational leadership. It is imperative secondary school principals

experience high levels of professional development to improve themselves and apply what they have learned through those experiences to strengthen their followers.

Networking Experiences Should Cultivate Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits in Secondary School Principals

Professional organizational and personal networks are tremendous sources of professional learning for principals because they aid in their development as a secondary school leader (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018). Survey participants strongly agreed that networking opportunities for secondary school principals are an important determinant of current and future development. Additionally, survey participants indicated the networking experiences provided by their school principal were essential to their development in becoming a transformational leader.

Principals need to experience networking opportunities in order to cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits, networks connect and help school leaders develop skills needed to solve the challenges faced in their schools (Pino-Yancovic et al., 2019). Specifically, through the COVID-19 pandemic, focus group Participant 1 acknowledged the importance of having a strong professional network to work closely with individuals within their network to make appropriate decisions for their school district. Focus group Participant 1 acknowledged how they felt supported by other professional network members during the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, Participant 1 explained the importance of working with other secondary school principals outside of their district to see how they were handling virtual learning for students and staying up to date on the policies and guidelines from their local health departments.

Additionally, focus group participants determined the significance of having a

professional network where they can have open and honest conversations with other principals and receive valuable insight and feedback. Focus group Participant 3 emphasized the importance of a strong network, especially during the first couple of years as a principal. Participant 3 suggested their professional network was vital to their development and growth as a new principal, they felt supported and built relationships with individuals they could call for feedback or input on situations. Participant 4 recognized the importance of networking opportunities for moral support because of the opportunity for positive conversations. Participant 4 determined that their networking experiences led to more opportunities for professional development.

Secondary School Principals Should Have Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits Cultivated in Themselves Through Mentorship Experiences

To ensure secondary school principals are supported and grow professionally, it is essential for them to have a person they can be vulnerable with, ask open and honest questions, and have a trusting relationship. Secondary school principals benefit from a mentor who asks thought-provoking questions, provides feedback, and is trustworthy (Tingle et al., 2019). Additionally, transformational leaders empower and develop their followers by intellectually stimulating them and serving as their coach or mentor (Kao et al., 2021). Participants in the focus group discussion expressed strong appreciation for the mentors they had as new secondary school principals and how those individuals continue to mentor them throughout their professional careers. Focus group Participant 1 and Participant 2 suggested the importance of a mentor to ensure the longevity of their principalship. More specifically, Participant 1 explained their mentor was a positive example for them and provided clarity around the school's vision and mission, giving

them a strong understanding of the district's goals. Participant 2 indicated their mentor gave them the confidence to make decisions and take risks. Furthermore, focus group Participant 2 highlighted the importance of a mentor, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 2 explained their mentor played a vital role in guiding and supporting them through the difficulties of ensuring the safety of students and teachers.

Donmez et al. (2021) suggested mentoring significantly impacts principals in the areas of personal and professional development, organizational commitment, and organizational adaptation. Based on survey responses, participants strongly agreed that developing a relationship with a mentor who leads through transformational leadership will ultimately result in further commitment to the organization from the follower. Additionally, survey participants strongly agreed that receiving feedback and coaching is vital to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits. To conclude, survey participants strongly indicated their belief in the importance of mentoring and providing support for a prospective secondary school administrator.

School Districts Should Provide Professional Development, Networking, and Mentorship Experiences for Secondary School Principals that Focus on Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits

Quin et al. (2015) suggested secondary school principals are not adequately trained and prepared to take on a principal's leadership role. Anderson (2017) determined education leaders benefit from training and development in transformational leadership styles proven to enhance performance in business organizations and educational settings. Additionally, prospective principals should be trained as transformational leaders while in college; however, current principals should be supported and trained to be

transformational leaders with in-service trainings (Kitur et al., 2020). Several focus group participants vocalized their support for prospective and current secondary school principals to have high-quality professional development opportunities, networking experiences, and mentorships that focus on cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits. Participants 3 and 4 shared their experiences and the difficulties they had as beginning principals to meet other administrators outside their district. Both participants felt they were not provided with information for professional development or networking opportunities from their district. In contrast, Participant 1 shared their experience working in a school district that supported its administrators' professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences. Participant 1 indicated these opportunities have helped them grow professionally, even as a veteran administrator.

School districts that want to instill a mindset of continuous improvement and development must ensure they provide their secondary school principals with valuable experiences that instill and cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits. A focus group participant expressed appreciation for the opportunities provided to them by their district to further their professional development and growth. Participant 1 was thankful for the experiences offered by their school district for administrators to be a part of professional development opportunities that challenged them to grow. Additionally, focus group participants shared personal stories of how a mentor supported them through a difficult decision and gave them the confidence to make ethical decisions even though it was not popular. Participants 2 and 3 determined the importance of having a strong mentor, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they navigated and adjusted to ever-changing policies and procedures.

Furthermore, Participant 4 gave examples of how networking opportunities allowed them to create intentional relationships with other secondary school principals outside of their district. More specifically, these relationships were developed with other school principals in the same conference. Participant 4 suggested these relationships gave them an insight into the inner workings of districts similar to theirs in student population and financial resources.

Recommendations for Future Research

This mixed-methods study focused on cultivating transformational leadership within secondary school principals through professional development opportunities, networking experiences, and mentorships. The results of this study add to the knowledge of cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within secondary school principals. However, further research is suggested to understand which of the four components of transformational leadership best cultivates transformational leadership within school leaders, the cultivation of transformational leadership within elementary principals, and cultivating transformational leadership in college education preparation programs. Additionally, further research is needed to understand school administrators' perceptions of cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits when a worldwide pandemic is not affecting professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences.

Cultivating Specific Components of Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits Within School Leaders

Analysis of data indicated the four components of transformational leadership were essential to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within

secondary school principals. Future research regarding cultivating specific components of transformational leadership qualities and traits within school leaders through professional development, networking, and mentorships is justified. However, more research is needed to determine which component is directly tied to professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences.

The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership Within Elementary School Principals

The findings of this study identified the importance of cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within secondary school principals. Data collected from the survey and focus group discussion focused exclusively on secondary school principals. Research participants strongly indicated the importance of transformational leadership qualities and traits cultivated within themselves through professional development, networking, and mentorships. Researchers further indicated how their experiences allowed for opportunities in growth and improvement as school leaders. Investigating how transformational leadership qualities and traits can be cultivated within elementary school principals can improve these principals' leadership abilities. Perhaps, elementary principals who do not identify as transformational leaders will become one if they are provided with professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences specifically designed to cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits.

Cultivating Transformational Leadership Qualities and Traits in College Education Preparation Classes

Data collected from the survey and focus group discussion indicated transformational leadership qualities and traits were cultivated within secondary school

principals during their principalship. Investigating how colleges prepare future administrators to develop as transformational leaders can give future principals an advantage on how to better lead as school principals. Future administrators in college classes can better understand the four components of transformational leadership and how the qualities and traits can be further cultivated through professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences. Additionally, future school leaders would be more apt to become involved in professional development, networking, and mentorship opportunities as a teacher, rather than waiting to become involved after becoming school administrators.

Comparing Transformational and Non-Transformational Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Analysis of data revealed the impact of COVID-19 on secondary school principals. As secondary school leaders were placed under more pressure to provide a safe and adequate learning environment for students and teachers because of the pandemic, they were unable to grow professionally or as a leader through normal professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences. A study could focus on comparing transformational and non-transformational leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary

Chapter Five presented the critical findings and conclusions of this research study. Secondary school principals' perceptions of the cultivation of transformational leadership qualities and traits through professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences were identified to answer the study's three research questions. The five

themes that emerged included feedback, vulnerability, intentional relationships, professional growth, and COVID-19.

Feedback emerged as a theme based on data collection and analysis from the focus group discussion and survey results. Receiving and providing feedback were cited frequently as an enhancement to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits within secondary school principals. Additionally, data revealed the individualized consideration component of transformational leadership aligned with receiving and providing constructive feedback.

After analysis of the focus group discussion data, vulnerability emerged as the second theme. Focus group participants determined the importance of being vulnerable and getting out of their comfort zones to maximize their opportunities to cultivate transformational leadership qualities and traits through professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences. Additionally, focus group participants indicated their willingness to be more vulnerable within their professional networks, which allowed them to build stronger relationships and trust with those individuals. Furthermore, focus group discussion data revealed vulnerability aligned most consistently with the transformational leadership component of idealized influence.

The intentional relationships theme emerged through survey and focus group discussion data analysis. Focus group participants determined intentional relationships built through professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences further cultivated the qualities and traits of transformational leadership within themselves. Additionally, focus group participants cited mentorships as experiences that enhanced their ability to build intentional relationships. Furthermore, focus group data determined

individualized consideration to be the component of transformational leadership that aligned with the theme of intentional relationships.

Survey and focus group responses determined the emergent theme of professional growth for secondary school principals through the cultivation of transformational leadership. Focus group participants indicated their experiences of working with other transformational leaders inspired them to grow professionally. Additionally, participants acknowledged professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences further enhanced their opportunities for professional growth. Furthermore, survey and focus group data indicated professional growth aligns with the transformational leadership component of inspirational motivation.

The impact of COVID-19 on secondary school principals emerged as the final theme of the study. All focus group participants mentioned COVID-19 and the impact the pandemic had on their role as a secondary school principal. Specifically, focus group participants determined supportive mentors and networking experiences helped them deal with the day-to-day changes faced during the pandemic.

Implications for practices were developed and presented based on this mixed-methods study's findings and theoretical framework. These implications included secondary school principals cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits in their followers through one or more of the four components of transformational leadership. Additionally, transformational leadership qualities and traits being cultivated within secondary school principals through professional development opportunities, networking experiences, and mentorships were suggested as implications for practice. Furthermore, implications for practice included secondary school principals cultivating

transformational leadership qualities and traits within themselves through mentorships experiences and school districts providing professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences for secondary school principals that focus on transformational leadership qualities and traits.

Chapter Five concluded with four recommendations for future research. The first recommendation suggests determining which of the four components of transformational leadership is directly tied to cultivating transformational leadership qualities and traits through professional development, networking, and mentorship experiences. The second recommendation for future research suggests the study be duplicated with elementary school principals rather than secondary school principals, who were the focus of this research study. The third recommendation suggests investigating college preparation classes and how or if they prepare future administrators to be transformational leaders. Perhaps, future school leaders would be more apt to become involved in professional development, networking, and mentorship opportunities as a teacher, rather than waiting to become involved after becoming school administrators. The final recommendation for future research suggests investigating the successes of transformational leaders compared to non-transformational leaders as they lead their respective schools through the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Appendix A

Survey

For this survey, please use the following definition for transformational leadership:

Transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

1. Based on the definition of transformational leadership, do you identify yourself as a transformational leader? If you respond "yes", please continue with the survey. If you respond "no", you do not need to proceed with this survey beyond this question.

Below are a number of statements regarding secondary school principal's perspectives of the cultivation of transformational leadership. Please read each one and indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with each statement.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. Receiving feedback and coaching is important to the cultivation process of transformational leadership (Pokharel, 2014, p. 63).

3. Developing a relationship with a mentor who leads through transformational leadership will ultimately result in a further commitment to the organization from the follower (Bodilenyane & Mooketsane, 2019, p. 689).

4. Through my experience in developing into a transformational leader, my specific needs were highlighted by my mentor in the area of professional development (Udin, 2020, p. 2625).

5. I believe in the ability a leader has to influence individuals, teams, and groups by enhancing behaviors, cognitions, and motivations to achieve common goals within the organization (Grunberg et al., 2021).

6. Networking is an important determinant of the current and future development of individuals (Palalic et al., 2019).

7. Networking opportunities were provided to me by my principal were important to my developing in becoming a transformational leader (Palalic et al., 2019).

8. Transformational leaders improve teacher's self-efficacy in the area of professional development (Francisco, 2019, p. 623).

9. Under the leadership of a transformational leader, I was encouraged to achieve beyond the minimum standard of organizational requirements based on the set of attitudes and behavior of the leadership (Udin, 2020, p. 2624).

10. As a transformational leader, I believe it is important that I mentor and provide support for an upcoming secondary school administrator (Suchter et al., 2017).

11. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group to further discuss the cultivation of transformational leadership in secondary school principals through networking, mentorships, and professional development? If so, please provide your name and email address below. The focus group is limited to eight participants.

Appendix B

Focus Group Discussion Questions

- Questions 1-5: Transformational Leadership Styles

  o 1. As a transformational leader, in what ways have you created an intentional relationship with your followers? (Bodilenyane & Mookesane 2019, p. 689)

  o 2. As a transformational leader, in what ways have you increased the expectations of your followers? (Bodilenyane & Mookesane, 2019, p. 689)

  o 3. In what ways did a transformational leader increase their expectations of yourself?

  o 4. In your experience, how have you empowered others through transformational leadership? (Bodilenyane & Mookesane, 2019, p. 690)

  o 5. In what ways did a transformational leader empower you?

- Questions 6-9: Mentorship

  o 6. What type of mentorship, if any, has cultivated your transformational leadership abilities?

  o 7. In what areas of your life have you had someone mentor you?

  o 8. Through mentorship, in what ways have you motivated someone to transcend their self-interests for the school district's best interest? (Buil et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2019)

  o 9. Transformational leaders show concern toward the needs of their followers to allow them to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization (Dappa et al., 2019, p. 825). As a mentor, in what ways have

you addressed the needs of your followers that allows them to reach their personal and professional goals?

- Questions 10-14: Professional Development
  - 10. What type of professional development, if any, has cultivated your transformational leadership abilities?
  - 11. School leaders need to adopt certain behaviors and characteristics of transformational leadership to facilitate collaboration with their colleagues (Bunaiyan & McWilliams, 2018, p. 2). What specific behaviors modeled through transformational leadership have you adopted that have improved your collaboration with your colleagues and peers?
  - 12. In what ways does being a transformational leader contribute positively to professional development opportunities you have created for teachers and other secondary school leaders in your district? (Kouni et al., 2018)
  - 13. In what ways do your transformational leadership abilities improve teachers' self-efficacy and attitude towards professional development? (Francisco, 2019, p. 623)
  - 14. Bass and Avolio (1994) concluded transformational leaders demonstrate behaviors in four categories. One of those categories is intellectual stimulation. This is when a leader encouraged followers to challenge the status quo and promote and reformulate problems. As a transformational leader, in what ways have you encouraged the intellectual

stimulation of your followers in your building or district's professional

development?

- Questions 15-19: Networking Opportunities

  - 15. What type of networking opportunities, if any, have cultivated your

    transformational leadership abilities?

  - 16. In what ways is networking an essential part of the development

    process for secondary school leaders? (Palalic, et al., 2019)

  - 17. How are transformational leadership qualities cultivated within a

    secondary school principal when networking?

  - 18. Through networking, knowledge shared amongst organizations has

    contributed positively to transformational leaders (Sayyadi & Provitera,

    2018, p. 10). What have you learned from other secondary school

    transformational leaders that have helped you in your own school district?

  - 19. Through idealized influence, in what ways have you modeled

    networking for other secondary school principals? (Sayyadi, 2019, p. 70).

Appendix C

Organization Permission Letter

Letter of Permission from Southwest Missouri Association of Secondary School

Principals Group

Date: October 12, 2021

To: Southwest Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals

RE: Permission to Conduct Research SWMoASSP Group

 To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to request permission to conduct research in the SWMoASSP group. I am currently pursuing my doctorate through Lindenwood University and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled, *The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals.*

I am asking permission to obtain a list of email addresses for secondary school principals in your organization to gather data.

If you agree, please sign below, scan this page, and email it back to me, Christian Overstreet, at cso431@lindenwood.edu.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Christian Overstreet, Doctoral Student at Lindenwood University

Approved by:

_____

Print name and title here

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Appendix D

Lindenwood Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Dec 10, 2021 5:40:21 PM CST

RE:
IRB-22-63: Initial - The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership In Secondary School Principals

Dear Christian Overstreet,

The study, The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership In Secondary School Principals, has been Approved as Exempt - Limited IRB.

Category: Category 2. (iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

The submission was approved on December 10, 2021.

Here are the findings:

Regulatory Determinations

- This study has been determined to be minimal risk because the research is not obtaining data considered sensitive information or performing interventions posing harm greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.
- The IRB has conducted a limited IRB review to ensure that the provisions of 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7) for the privacy and confidentiality of subjects is effective for the purposes of this Exempt study. The final dataset will include identifiable contact information for a follow-up focus group. Use of these identifiable data are specifically restricted to accommodating the follow-up research

design as described in this IRB application, with appropriate safeguards addressed for potential future publication or presentation. Any subsequent modeling of data will be performed in the aggregate, or in a manner adherent to strict provisions ensuring subjects may not be identified by third parties, incidentally or otherwise, for the duration of this research. These data will be retained for the period prescribed by LU research data retention policy in a secure space on LU servers only accessible by the PI. The nature of the data and these corresponding administrative and technical controls effectively minimize the risk of harm to subjects and potential for accidental or inappropriate disclosure of these data.

Sincerely,
Lindenwood University (Lindenwood) Institutional Review Board

Appendix E

Survey Letter of Participation

Survey Participation Letter

Date:

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is Christian Overstreet, and I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Educational Administration at Lindenwood University. The focus of my dissertation research is to determine the importance of cultivating transformational leadership qualities in secondary school principals.

I have received permission to conduct research on members of the SWMoASSP from the regional president of the SWMoASSP, Allison Dishman. To conduct my research, I would like to invite all members of the SWMoASSP to participate in the completion of an online Transformational Leadership Survey found at the following link: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Additionally, I would like to invite a maximum of 8 secondary school principals who identify as a transformational leader to participate in a focus group. The focus group discussion will be conducted via Google Meet. The purpose of the focus group discussion is to collect information on the cultivation process of secondary school principals, specifically, in the areas of professional development, networking, and mentorship. If you are interested in being considered, and possibly contacted to participate in the focus group phase of the study, please provide your name at the end of the survey.

All information obtained through this research will be presented anonymously and will be coded to maintain the privacy of all individual participants. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and subjects may withdraw at any time. Please see the Informed Consent notice attached for further information.

I wish to thank you and the SWMoASSP association for supporting this study. It is hoped that results of this investigation will enable school districts to better cultivate transformational leadership in secondary school principals. If you have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact me at (417) 830-6003 or via email at cso431@lindenwood.edu, or Dr. Shelly Fransen via email at sfransen@lindenwood.edu.

Sincerely,

Christian Overstreet

<center>Appendix F</center>

<center>Survey Research Information Sheet</center>

<center># LINDENWOOD</center>

<center>**Survey Research Information Sheet**</center>

You are asked to participate in a survey being conducted by Christian Overstreet under the guidance of Dr. Shelly Fransen at Lindenwood University. We are doing this study to determine secondary school principal's perspectives of transformational leadership and the importance of transformational leadership attributes being cultivated into other secondary school principals. You will be asked questions about perspective of transformational leadership and how important it is to cultivate the foundations of transformational leadership in other secondary school principals. It will take about 10 minutes to complete this survey. The last question of the survey will ask if you would like to participate in a focus group discussion.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or closing the browser window.

There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

<u>WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?</u>

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Christian Overstreet cso431@lindenwood.edu

Dr. Shelly Fransen sfransen@lindenwood.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be required to do, and the risks involved. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time by closing the survey browser. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age.

You can withdraw from this study at any time by simply closing the browser window. Please feel free to print a copy of this information sheet.

Appendix G

Email to Focus Group Participants

Letter of Participation for Focus Group

Date:

Dear (Participating Secondary School Principal),

My name is Christian Overstreet. I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University, and I am conducting a research study titled *The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals*. You indicated on the approved survey, your willingness to participate in a focus group discussion to share your perceptions on transformational leadership. I have attached the informed consent form and a copy of the focus group discussion questions. If you are still willing to participate, please respond affirmatively to this email message, and I will be in contact with you to provide the date and time for the focus group discussion. The focus group will take place via web conferencing.

Please contact me a cso431@lindenwood.edu with any questions you might have.

Thank you,

Christian Overstreet

Lindenwood University

Doctoral Student

Appendix H

Informed Consent Form for Focus Group

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals

Before reading this consent form, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

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Basic information about this study:

- We are interested in learning about secondary school principals' perspectives of transformational leadership.
- You will be asked to participate in an online survey and you will also be asked in you would be willing to participate in a focus group discussion.
- There are no risks in participating in this study. The online survey will not collect identifiable information and those willing to participate in the focus group will have their identities protected by the use of alphanumeric codes. Al data will be secured for three years and then destroyed.

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

The Cultivation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary School Principals

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Christian Overstreet under the guidance of Dr. Shelly Fransen at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Why is this research being conducted?

We are doing this study to determine secondary school principal's perspectives of transformational leadership and the importance of transformational leadership attributes being cultivated into other secondary school principals. You will be asked questions about perspective of transformational leadership and how important it is to cultivate the foundations of transformational leadership in other secondary school principals. We will be asking about six to ten other people to answer these questions.

What am I being asked to do?

First, you will be asked to participate in a survey. The last question of the survey will ask if you would like to participate in a focus group discussion with 6-8 other secondary school principals who identify themselves as transformational leaders. If you would like to participate in the focus group discussion you will be asked to include your email address on the last survey response. The focus group participants will be asked to join a virtual discussion that will last approximately 45 minutes. The session will be audio- and/or video- recorded and then transcribed. Transcriptions will be sent to each focus group discussion member for review prior to analysis.

How long will I be in this study?

The focus group discussion will take approximately 45 minutes. The study will conclude during the Spring Semester of 2023.

What are the risks of this study?

Privacy and Confidentiality

We are collecting data that could identify you, such as your email address. Every effort will be made to keep your information secure. Only members of the research team will be able to see any data that may identify you

What are the benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefits for participating in this focus group. We hope what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

Will I receive any compensation?

There will be no compensation to participate in this research.

What if I do not choose to participate in this research?

It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decide to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

What if new information becomes available about the study?

During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

How will you keep my information private?

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

How can I withdraw from this study?
Notify the research team immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or

mleary@lindenwood.edu. You can contact the researcher, Christian Overstreet directly at (417) 830-6003 or cso431@lindenwood.edu. You may also contact Dr. Shelly Fransen at sfransen@lindenwood.edu.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Vita

Christian S. Overstreet received his Bachelor of Science in Physical Education from Missouri State University in 2011. Christian began teaching RTI in the Fair Grove R-X School District in 2012. While teaching RTI, middle school health, and elementary physical education, Christian received his Masters of Arts in School Administration from Lindenwood University in 2015. In 2015, Christian began serving as the Fair Grove District Athletic Director and High School Assistant Principal. Since 2022, Christian has served as Fair Grove High School Principal.