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The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional Growth Through the Evaluation Protocol

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The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional

Growth Through the Evaluation Protocol

by

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to investigate the impact of the perception of principal efficacy
on instructional growth. The research questions examined what factors determine the
perception of principal efficacy, how those perceptions impact instructional feedback
during the evaluation process, and how they impact teacher growth. Data were collected
in two stages. First, a survey was distributed to all K-12 teachers from a rural Southwest
Missouri athletic conference. Participants completed the survey to provide qualitative
information on the impacts of the perception of principal efficacy. Stage two consisted of
follow-up interviews with the participants who indicated they were willing to participate.
The data were analyzed, sorted, and themed from both the survey and follow-up
interviews and presented in the findings. Implications that were revealed through this
study include the determination that perceived principal efficacy impacts instructional
feedback, perceived principal efficacy is malleable, and perceived principal efficacy
plays a role in the effectiveness of being a principal.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The rationale for this study was to determine what, if any, impact the perception of principal efficacy has on instructional growth. While there is research on evaluator feedback impacting instructional growth and research on teacher self-efficacy impacting instructional growth, the research lacked clarity on the perception of principal efficacy. This study seeks to discover teacher perspectives on perceived principal efficacy concerning the impact of instructional growth. Principals interact with teachers daily to provide the necessary support for student success. This study used specific research methods and data collection techniques to provide more context and clarity to gather teacher perspectives on perceived principal efficacy and its influence on instructional growth. By shedding light on this under-researched area, the study aims to inform policy and practice around principal leadership development and ultimately contribute to improving student outcomes.

The research-based practices of employing data-informed decision-making, defining evidence-based classroom practices with support, strengthening collaboration and growth with the district, and developing a system for feedback and evaluation all positively contribute to leadership development (Staumont, 2017). According to Winn et al. (2021), leadership is the second most crucial educational component, second only to teaching. As the building leader, the principal has many responsibilities within a school, and one of the most vital is as an instructional leader (Campbell et al., 2018). Instructional leadership includes time, content knowledge, and feedback skills from principals to improve instructional practices (Louis et al., 2010). Principals' self-efficacy for instructional leadership contributes to leading an effective school because principals

have a key role in leading a building. Their efficacy impacts many areas, such as teacher emotional exhaustion, teacher engagement, and the retention of teachers (Skaalvik, 2020). Principal efficacy is defined as the judgment of one's ability to produce desired results and has been linked to increased teacher and student performance (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Teachers' perceptions of principal efficacy are found to be statistically connected to the principals' self-efficacy assessment (Pannell et al., 2018). Self-efficacy as a teacher or a principal is the confidence in their capacity to achieve a given outcome (Bandura, 1997). This study seeks to apply the groundwork of Bandura's sociopsychological theory. The core of the sociopsychological theory emphasizes the idea that a significant portion of human learning and behavior occurs in social environments and is influenced by social contexts and interactions (Schunk & Usher, 2012). One of the main objectives of this study is to explore how perceptions of a supervisor's efficacy influence instructional growth, potentially leading to the enhancement of an individual's self-efficacy.

Background of the Study

The role of the principal has expanded over the past few decades as responsibilities have extended to all aspects of school management, including student learning, the development of goals and visions, establishing evaluation procedures, and cultivating a safe learning environment (Skaalvik, 2020). As the role of the principal has expanded, instructional feedback remains the foundation for improving teachers and the school system (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). Principals are tasked with the duty of leading instructional growth in their buildings and are responsible for the evaluation of teachers

to measure overall effectiveness and teacher development (Derrington & Campbell, 2018).

The process to measure teacher effectiveness and development is completed through the evaluation protocol, which is the process of promoting growth in effective instructional practice that ultimately increases student performance (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022). In order to evaluate a teacher, the administrator must complete observations of the teacher's performance in the classroom (Chandler, 2016). The system in which a school district adopts to evaluate teachers is flexible, but the components include identification of standards, scoring the performance of progress toward the standards through summative or formative assessments, and developing an educator growth plan (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022). The administrator providing feedback to the teacher is the foundation of effective evaluation (Carson, 2020).

Feedback is information provided to a learner to close the gap between how the learner is presently performing and the targeted objective (Sadler, 1989). Feedback is the primary element used to impact instruction and improve teachers; however, many factors contribute to the effectiveness of feedback (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). The timeliness of the feedback is imperative and directly related to the impact the feedback has upon the individual (Fuentes & Jimerson, 2020). Teachers want timely feedback to improve their instruction (Fuentes & Jimerson, 2020). Additionally, effective feedback focuses on the actions of the teacher and the response of the students to support learning (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). While the evolving role of the principal encompasses many

responsibilities, instructional leadership and providing feedback through the evaluation process is paramount.

Research has revealed that feedback can increase the amount of learning and the rate at which it is applied (Won et al., 2019). Studies have found that to make feedback effective, it should be frequent, specific, and timely (Fuentes & Jimerson, 2020). When feedback is specific it provides the learner with clear information about their successes and opportunities for improvement (Won et al., 2019). When principals provide teachers with feedback regularly, the instructional practices teachers employ will strengthen and improve. Additionally, feedback that is specific and targeted to an area in need of improvement can help teachers identify and address their weaknesses, leading to instructional growth (Wisniewski et al., 2020). When the feedback is specific and targeted, the learner understands the learning goal and their progress toward that goal (Won et al., 2019). It is also important that feedback is delivered in a timely manner, allowing teachers to make changes and adjust their practices promptly (Fuentes & Jimerson, 2020). Feedback is one of the tools at a principal's disposal that impacts instructional growth.

Another element that has the potential to impact the effectiveness of feedback is the relationship between the principal and the teacher. Research suggests that when principals establish a positive relationship with their teachers, they can provide more meaningful and effective feedback (Carson, 2020). Principals who show interest in their teachers' work and are supportive and approachable are more likely to build trust and foster open communication, leading to more effective feedback (Sleiman, 2018). How the administrator delivers the feedback to the teacher impacts the way in which the feedback

is received (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). A teacher's perception of the principal's experience

with instructional practices can also impact the effectiveness of feedback (Caingcoy,

2022). Feedback can mold the implementation of instructional strategies, influence

practices and develop teachers' skills which impact learning (Won et al., 2019). There are

many factors that contribute to feedback including, but not limited to, the relationship

between the principal and the teacher, the confidence of the principal, the culture of the

school, and the timeliness in which the feedback is given (Chandler, 2016). The principal

must be skilled at modeling, questioning, providing suggestions, highlighting positives,

and engaging the teacher in reflective conversations to provide effective feedback (Balyer

& Ozcan, 2020). The effectiveness of feedback is also influenced by the relationship

between the principal and the teacher, with research indicating that a positive and

supportive relationship can lead to more effective feedback.

In summary, as the role of the principal continues to expand, the importance of

instructional feedback remains crucial. Feedback that is frequent, specific, timely, and

delivered in a supportive relationship can lead to instructional growth for teachers and

improve the overall school system (Won et al., 2019). Additionally, the principal's

experience and knowledge of instructional practices can impact the effectiveness of

feedback through the cultivation of a positive principal-teacher relationship.

The results of this study may allow the examination of teacher perspectives of

principal efficacy on instructional growth through the evaluation process and contribute

to the practical applications of principalship. The goal is to examine whether the

perception of principal efficacy specifically impacts instructional growth. The results will

be analyzed to determine factors that influence teacher instructional growth. Principals

could use the results of this study to provide targeted professional learning opportunities that address factors identified as influencing instructional growth.

Theoretical Framework

Grant and Osanloo (2014) described a conceptual framework as the researcher's understanding of how the research topic will best be explored, the direction the research leads, and the connections between the variables within the research. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated specifically that the conceptual framework "lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them" (p. 440). Multiple theories state varying perspectives on the same topic; therefore, a researcher must keep the theoretical framework in the forefront to justify the research questions, the problem, and the significance of the study, and as a method to help choose the research design and analysis plan (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

The two theoretical frameworks used to support the implementation of this study are social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory. First, social cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of personal agency and self-efficacy in shaping behavior (Bandura, 2014). In education, social cognitive theory suggests that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, or their confidence in their ability to influence student learning, can significantly impact their instructional practices and student outcomes (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2020). Applying the theory to the role of a principal, the perception of principal efficacy may play a critical role in shaping teacher self-efficacy and instructional growth. Research has shown that principals who provide clear expectations, support, and feedback to teachers can improve their self-efficacy and instructional practices (Eldar & Shoshani, 2019). Additionally, principals who prioritize teacher

professional development and collaboration can foster a positive school culture that promotes continuous learning and improvement (Lillejord & Borte, 2020).

Social cognitive theory also highlights the importance of observational learning and modeling in shaping behavior (Bandura, 2014). In the context of instructional growth, principals who model effective instructional practices and provide opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from one another can enhance their instructional practices (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Principals can promote a growth mindset among teachers and encourage them to take risks and experiment with new instructional strategies by establishing a culture that promotes ongoing growth (Eldar & Shoshani, 2019). Overall, social cognitive theory provides a useful framework for understanding the role of the perception of principal efficacy in shaping teacher self-efficacy and instructional growth.

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to achieve their full potential and work toward a common goal (Francisco, 2019). Transformational leadership behaviors positively impact teacher perceptions, motivation, trust, collaboration, self-esteem, and performance (Munir & Khalil, 2016). The target of transformational leadership is to establish positive change and transformation within an organization while building self-efficacy (Francisco, 2019). In the context of education, transformational leadership is often used by principals to lead and inspire their teachers to improve their instructional practices and promote student learning (Baptiste, 2019). Transformational leadership is a motivational approach that strives for positive change and growth within an organization, which principals employ to inspire teachers to impact instructional practices and student learning.

The leader's ability to inspire and motivate their staff is an integral part of transformational leadership (Chua & Ayoko, 2021). This is accomplished using various techniques, including defining the mission and vision for the organization, building strong relationships with staff, and offering opportunities for personal growth and career development (Chua & Ayoko, 2021). When applied to principals leading teachers, transformational leadership can contribute to the establishment of a healthy school culture that is positive and promotes continuous learning and improvement (Baptiste, 2019). Transformational leadership can be motivating for staff improvement.

Teachers who perceive their principals as transformational leaders will likely have a more positive attitude toward their work and be more committed to achieving the school's goals (Baptiste, 2019). A study by Ndiritu et al. (2019) found that teachers who perceived their principal as a transformational leader reported higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This sense of career fulfillment could be a product of transformational leaders who are seen as caring and supportive and can inspire their followers to work toward a shared vision (Ndiritu et al., 2019).

In addition to inspiring and motivating followers, transformational leaders can empower their followers to take ownership of their work and become leaders themselves. This ownership in their work and a move toward leadership is accomplished by trusting staff with responsibilities and establishing opportunities for followers to take on leadership roles (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). When applied to principals leading teachers, this can involve delegating decision-making power to teachers and involving them in the school's leadership processes.

Teachers who feel empowered and have a sense of ownership over their work are likely to be more engaged and committed to their work and are more likely to take risks and try new approaches to teaching (Chua & Ayoko, 2021). Another key element of transformational leadership is the leader's ability to provide individualized support and feedback to their followers. This is achieved through regular communication and feedback, as well as coaching and mentoring (Fuentes & Jimerson, 2020). When applied to principals leading teachers, this can involve providing regular feedback and coaching to teachers, as well as supporting their professional development through training and other opportunities. Teachers who receive regular feedback and support from their principal are likely to feel valued and supported and are more likely to be motivated to improve their instructional practices (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020).

In conclusion, transformational leadership is an effective approach for principals to lead and inspire their teachers to improve their instructional practices and promote student learning. Teachers who perceive their principals as transformational leaders will likely have a more positive attitude toward their work and be more committed to achieving the school's goals (Francisco, 2019). By inspiring and motivating their followers, empowering them to take ownership of their work, and providing individualized support and feedback, transformational leaders can foster a constructive environment that encourages support and growth of ongoing learning and improvement.

Statement of the Problem

Principals are directly and indirectly responsible for student learning and achievement (Skaalvik, 2020). According to Ndiritu et al. (2019), "the school principal's work is a high-stress job especially because he or she has to do virtually everything

related to students, teachers, parents, subordinate staff and the community at large" (p. 44). The role of a principal is expanding and evolving; however, the principal plays an important role in developing the culture of learning among staff and students within the school (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Many well-documented factors can lead a principal to success but currently, there is a gap in the research around perceived principal efficacy and its impact on instructional growth. In a study by Goddard et al. (2021), principal efficacy for instructional improvement positively and significantly predicts teachers' collective efficacy beliefs, which in turn predicts student achievement. The authors of the study did not discuss the teacher's perception of the principal's efficacy (Goddard et al., 2021). However, Munir and Khalil (2016) posit that the academic performance of teachers is influenced by the teachers' view of the leadership actions of their principal. Principals whose behaviors are positively perceived are more likely to produce good results (Munir & Khalil, 2016). When high efficacy behaviors are modeled, the efficacy beliefs of the observers increase (Hoogsteen, 2020). In addition to the perceived behaviors of the principal, the structure of the system, aligned goals, and positive school culture impact the collective efficacy of the building (Skaalvik, 2020). While studies have linked the perceived behaviors of principals to the collective efficacy of teachers, a gap remains in the perception of principal efficacy in relation to instructional growth (Munir & Khalil, 2016).

Another important factor in the role of the principal is conducting teacher evaluations. The current research on the impact of instructional feedback on teacher self-efficacy and instructional growth links post-observational feedback that includes both strengths and weaknesses as factors that influence teachers' self-confidence (Mireles-

Rios & Becchio, 2018). According to Skaalvik (2020), teachers' self-efficacy positively correlates with job satisfaction, combats teacher exhaustion, and promotes retention within the profession. Additionally, the perception of support from a supervisor increases the self-efficacy of employees, which results in increased task performance and job satisfaction (Afzal et al., 2019). According to Winn et al. (2021), "Second only to teaching, leadership is the most crucial component of education. Effective leaders are the key to meaningful teacher support and development, which lead to high-quality teachers" (p. 18). Effective leadership relies on instructional feedback as the basic element to improve teachers and the school system (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). The research does not investigate perceived principal efficacy as a factor for impacting instructional feedback or influencing instructional growth.

This study seeks to investigate the research gap concerning the perception of principal efficacy and its impact on instructional feedback despite the abundance of research on various factors influencing instructional feedback and principal efficacy. Principals face a growing number of responsibilities in the role and should be equipped with as much knowledge as possible for impacting instructional growth and leadership. This study focuses on the teacher perspective and lived experiences of the evaluation process, to hone in on factors of efficacy perception and their impact on the educational experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore how teacher perception of principal efficacy affects instructional growth through the evaluation process and what factors determine this perception and its impact on instructional feedback. The topic was chosen

to equip instructional leaders with a better understanding of whether perceptions impact growth. To achieve this, a survey of K-12 educators in Southwest Missouri and a series of semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted. For the purposes of this study, the perception of teachers is defined as a judgment from experience, awareness, or understanding, and instructional growth is defined as teacher progression toward identified instructional goals and outcomes. The study's findings may help future administrators better comprehend the impact of their efficacy perception on teacher instructional growth.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors determine the perception of principal efficacy?

2. How does the perception of principal efficacy impact instructional feedback during the evaluation process?

3. How does the perception of principal efficacy, in conjunction with the evaluation process, impact teacher growth?

Significance of the Study

The potential benefits of this study to the professional field are identifying the impact of teacher perceptions of principal efficacy and what impact if any, teacher perceptions have on instructional growth. Principals have many responsibilities within a school, and one of the most vital is as an instructional leader (Campbell et al., 2018). Understanding how the perception of principal efficacy impacts teachers can have significant implications for school leadership and teacher development. If teachers perceive their principals to be ineffective, this may lead to a lack of trust and a decreased willingness to collaborate with or take feedback from the principal. Building trust is a key

factor in providing effective feedback (Carson, 2020). On the other hand, if teachers highly regard their principal as knowledgeable in the curricular content and instructional practices and can provide suggestions for improvement, they may be more likely to trust their feedback and collaborate with them on improving instruction (Mathers & Oliva, 2008). As trust grows between an administrator and a teacher, the view of having an evaluator present in the classroom for the purpose of providing feedback widens (Carson, 2020). Therefore, understanding how the perception of principal efficacy impacts teachers can help school leaders build stronger relationships with their teachers, leading to a more positive school culture and improved student outcomes.

The results of this study could impact the skills of principal evaluation through the insight gained from teachers. Principal leadership is constantly evolving and growing through further research and the publication of data, and this study will add to the library of strategies and knowledge in the field of leadership practices. In turn, effective instructional leadership influences and contributes to student learning and school improvement (Wieczorek & Lear, 2018). The goal of the study is to identify if perceptions of principal efficacy impact instructional growth so that principals can appropriately meet the needs of their teachers through the evaluation process. According to Grissom and Bartanen (2019), school leadership quality is an important factor for teachers when choosing to stay with a school.

Furthermore, understanding the impact of the perception of principal efficacy on instructional growth through the evaluation process can also inform the design and implementation of teacher evaluation systems. Systematic evaluation is the basis of improvement for teachers (Derrington & Campbell, 2018). If a teacher perceives their principal to lack competency, they may be less likely to engage with the evaluation process, leading to a missed opportunity for growth (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). Conversely, if a teacher perceives their principal to be competent, they may be more willing to engage with the evaluation process and receive feedback to improve their instruction (Balyer &

Ozcan, 2020). By understanding how perception impacts instructional growth through evaluation, school leaders can design evaluation systems that are more effective in supporting teacher growth and ultimately improving student outcomes.

In addition to the impact on instructional growth, the perception of principal efficacy may also affect teacher job satisfaction and retention rates (Skaalvik, 2020). When teachers perceive their principal as effective, they are more likely to feel supported and valued in their work, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and a greater likelihood of staying in their position. On the other hand, when teachers have a negative perception of their principals' efficacy, they may feel unsupported and undervalued, which can lead to dissatisfaction and even turnover (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). According to Skaalvik (2020), principals play an important role in teacher retention. This is particularly important in the current teacher shortage crisis in many parts of the United States, where retaining effective teachers is crucial to maintaining high-quality student learning (Nguyen et al., 2022). By understanding how their actions and behaviors impact teacher perceptions of efficacy, principals can work to improve job satisfaction and retention rates, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

Definition of Key Terms

Evaluation Protocol

Evaluation protocol is the process of promoting growth in effective instructional practice that ultimately increases student performance (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022).

Feedback

Feedback is information provided to a learner to close the gap between how the learner is presently performing and the targeted objective (Sadler, 1989).

Instructional leader

An instructional leader collaborates with teachers to help guide and develop optimal pedagogy, strategy, and methodologies within the teaching profession (Brolund, 2016).

Observation

An observation is characterized as the process of assessing a teacher's performance by closely watching their interactions as they teach and work with students and colleagues (Carson, 2020)

Principal efficacy

Principal efficacy is the judgment of one's own ability to produce desired results in the role as the leader of a school (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy as a teacher or a principal is the confidence in their capacity to achieve a given outcome (Bandura, 1997).

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

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

Time Frame

The collection of data occurred during the Spring Semester of 2023.

Location of the Study

The location of this study is Southwest Missouri.

Sample

A purposive sample size from a rural Southwest Missouri conference teacher population was selected for this study.

Criteria

The selection criteria required that the sampled K-12 teachers be certified with one or more years of experience and are employed by one of the nine school districts within the selected rural Southwest Missouri conference.

Sample Demographics

The sample selected for participation in this survey was limited to the teachers with one or more years of experience from a rural Southwest Missouri conference who responded to the request to fill out the survey.

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

The confidence to perform a specific task or accomplish a particular goal is defined as one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). In the context of being a principal, self-efficacy is highly important for a principal so they can perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Principals with high self-efficacy believe that they have the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to lead their school and make a positive impact on student outcomes (Skaalvik, 2020). On the other hand, a principal with low self-efficacy may struggle to lead effectively, particularly in challenging or high-pressure situations (Bandura, 1997).

Principals' self-efficacy have been linked to various outcomes in the school setting (Skaalvik, 2020). For instance, it has been found to be statistically connected to teacher emotional exhaustion, teacher engagement, and the retention of teachers (Skaalvik, 2020). Moreover, principals' self-efficacy for instructional leadership contributes to leading an effective school because principals have a crucial role in leading a building (Winn et al., 2021). The building leader's efficacy impacts many areas, such as teacher emotional exhaustion, teacher engagement, and the retention of teachers (Skaalvik, 2020). Thus, self-efficacy is a crucial aspect of being a successful principal.

Chapter One included the background of the study and the theoretical framework. The study focused on teachers' perceptions of principal efficacy on instructional growth, which has not been extensively researched. The principal's role as an instructional leader is vital in improving instructional practices, and their self-efficacy in this area is linked to increased teacher and student performance (Louis et al., 2010). The building principal is responsible for developing a vision for learning, providing continuous support and professional development for teachers, and guiding the instructional practices and culture in the school.

Chapter Two summarizes the theoretical frameworks of social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory, emphasizing their relevance in understanding how individuals learn, develop self-efficacy, and create positive learning environments. Efficacy, including self-efficacy and collective efficacy, is discussed as an important concept in education, impacting student achievement, teacher job satisfaction, and overall school performance. Teacher perceptions and their impact on job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover are also discussed. Additionally, instructional growth is

highlighted as essential for teachers to provide effective learning experiences. Building principals play a crucial role in supporting instructional growth through professional development, feedback, coaching, and fostering a positive school culture. Teacher evaluation, feedback, reflective questioning, and teacher perception are identified as crucial components of professional growth and development for teachers, enabling them to improve instructional practices and student learning outcomes.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The instructional leadership role of the school principal is a critical component of successful school leadership, and there is a growing body of research that emphasizes its importance (Ma & Marion, 2021). The principal assumes a pivotal role in providing guidance and support to teachers and helping improve their instructional practices and achieve improved student outcomes. Effective instructional leadership by principals was significantly associated with higher levels of student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020). The building principal's instructional leadership is a key component for successful school leadership, as research shows its importance in helping teachers improve practices that positively impact student learning.

A key duty of a school principal, in their role as an instructional leader, is to create and execute a vision aimed at achieving excellence in instruction within their school, ensuring its alignment with the district and state educational objectives, all while balancing the attributes and requirements of the school community. The principal's role in shaping the vision for the school should be collaborative and is critical because it sets the tone for the instructional practices and culture within the school (Day et al., 2020).

Another critical aspect of the building principal's role as the instructional leader is providing on-going support and professional development for teachers (Ma & Marion, 2021). The principal must work with teachers to identify areas for growth and improvement and provide them with the resources and support they need to achieve their goals (Wallin et al., 2019). This might involve providing coaching or mentoring, organizing professional development workshops or conferences, or ensuring teachers have the time to collaborate and plan together. Effective instructional leadership by

principals was positively associated with teachers' professional development, which in turn was significantly associated with higher levels of student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Chapter Two encompasses an exploratory overview of foundational theoretical frameworks, diving into social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory. Furthermore, within this chapter, an examination is carried out on several components, including the concepts of efficacy, teacher perceptions, instructional growth, and the building blocks of evaluation. In addition to these components, the chapter analyzes relevant literature on efficacy, the significance of feedback, the effectiveness of coaching cycles, and the role of reflective practices applied within the educational context.

Theoretical Framework

The social cognitive theory stems from psychologist Albert Bandura's (1997) social learning theory and explains how individuals acquire knowledge through processes like observation, modeling, attention, motivation, and memory, offering a framework for understanding the complex nature of learning (Bandura, 1997). According to Devi et al. (2017), social cognitive theory encompasses observational learning when students or teachers observe a well-trained model and experience increases in their knowledge and understanding. Social cognitive theory is relevant because it provides a framework for understanding how students learn, how they develop self-efficacy, and how teachers can use instructional strategies to enhance learning which can be applied to principals as instructional leaders, as well (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy is the confidence an individual has in their ability to accomplish a particular task or situation. Self-efficacy is a fundamental element within the framework

of social cognitive theory. In education, students' self-efficacy beliefs can impact their motivation to learn and their academic performance. Teachers can enhance students' self-efficacy by providing them with opportunities for success, modeling effective strategies, and providing constructive feedback. The same is true of principals to teachers (Zimmerman, 2000). Self-efficacy affects students' motivation and academic performance, which both teachers and principals can enhance.

Social cognitive theory also emphasizes the importance of observational learning (Devi et al., 2017). In education, students can learn from observing their teachers, peers, and other role models. Teachers and principals can use this principle to model effective learning strategies, provide opportunities for people to observe and imitate positive behaviors, and create a positive classroom culture emphasizing learning and growth (Bandura, 1997). In summary, social cognitive theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals learn and develop self-efficacy (Devi et al., 2017). By applying the principles of social cognitive theory in the school setting, principals and teachers can create a positive learning environment that promotes learning and instructional growth.

Transformational leadership theory emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to achieve their full potential and work toward a common goal. Transformational leadership aims to begin constructive change within an organization while strengthening the self-efficacy of its members by fostering a positive culture of collaboration and improvement (Francisco, 2019). Bass and Riggio (2006) stated:

> 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 group, and the

larger organization. More evidence has accumulated to demonstrate that

transformational leadership can move followers to exceed expected performance,

as well as lead to high levels of follower satisfaction and commitment to the

group and organization. (p. 5)

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), in relation to education, transformational

leaders encourage teachers to take risks, try new teaching strategies, and present

opportunities to develop skills and knowledge. Leaders who employ transformational

leadership characteristics excel in making interpersonal connections with others and excel

in collaborating which can help improve teacher morale, reduce turnover, and improve

student achievement (Shields & Leithwood, 2019). Transformational leaders can

positively impact teaching and learning.

Efficacy

Efficacy pertains to an individual's confidence in their capacity to execute a plan

or task to produce a desired outcome. It is an important concept in education as it can

impact the success of students, teachers, and school leaders (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis,

2004). Self-efficacy is about the individual and their conviction in their competence to

perform well, whereas collective efficacy is the principle that states the collective effort

of the group can produce more effective results than the individual (Bandura, 1997). Both

types of efficacies are important in education and can impact student achievement,

teacher job satisfaction, and overall school performance (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis,

2004).

A comprehensive investigation published in 2020 found that the critical role of teacher self-efficacy was positively associated with student academic achievement (Engin, 2020). According to Hoogsteen (2020), collective teacher efficacy had an even stronger positive impact on student achievement than the efficacy of the individual teacher. Goddard et al. (2021), "characterized collective teacher efficacy as the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (p.480). While the collective self-perception shared by teachers within a school can be a catalyst for transformative educational outcomes for their students and is noted as a predictor of differences in achievement between schools, it plays an important role in shaping the educational landscape (Tschannen-Maran & Gareis, 2004). This highlights the importance of individual teacher efficacy and the collective belief that teachers can work together effectively to support and increase student success, specifically occurring from productive patterns of teaching behaviors (Hoogsteen, 2020). Bandura (1997) stated that highly effective schools set themselves apart from less effective schools through the organization of their learning activities and that schools with high collective efficacy foster an atmosphere that believes all students have the capability to learn. Hattie and Timperley (2007) assert that the most influential factor impacting student achievement is collective teacher efficacy. Promoting collective efficacy within schools is strategic to foster encouragement with continuous growth and student achievement (Goddard et al., 2021).

In addition to teacher efficacy, principal efficacy is an important concept in education. Principal efficacy is the belief or judgment of a principal's ability to produce desired results in their leadership role (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Principal

efficacy in relation to instructional leadership contains five dimensions that contribute to positive student outcomes: developing educational goals and visions, creating a collective culture among staff, motivating teachers, classroom observation and guidance, and creating a positive learning environment (Anselmus Dami et al., 2022). According to Meyer-Looze et al. (2019), creating a sustainable vision must include learning systems for both staff and students. Furthermore, understanding what principals, students, teachers, and parents need to know is the key to developing educational goals and school vision (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). Instructional leadership is a key element when developing educational goals and visions. This along with setting high expectations, implementing effective professional development, and emphasizing instruction using data to evaluate students' progress will guide the instructional decision-making (Mendez-Morse, 1991). Developing a vision and goals is important to understand the direction of the school, but leaders must consider "initiative fatigue" when rolling out building plans for student achievement (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). To avoid this and cast an effective vision while defining educational goals, leaders must identify and define the gaps the school will address and clearly define the reasoning behind the projected direction (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019).

Secondly, principal efficacy includes creating a collective culture among staff. School leaders who continually work toward growth and instructional support of their teachers build collective efficacy beliefs within their schools (Hoogsteen, 2020). Principals who take time to build a sense of community, especially when including faculty members in the development of the shared vision and educational goals, will develop a collective culture within the school (Mendez-Morse, 1991). One effective

method of leadership to help create a collective culture is called distributive leadership.
Distributive leadership is defined as the principal understanding that it is not possible for
an individual to carry out all of the decision-making, the duties, and the responsibilities of
the school; thus, it is necessary to distribute responsibilities to ensure the organization
functions effectively (Engin, 2020). Other benefits of distributive leadership include an
increase in the commitment of teachers, the creation of positive perceptions of
administrators, and an increase in teacher efficacy (Engin, 2020). In an environment
where teachers feel safe in their level of trust, maintain positive working relationships
with colleagues, and are open to sharing teaching strategies, the collective culture thrives
(Akinyemi et al., 2020). Overall, the collective culture of a school is impacted by the
efficacy of the principal.

      The teacher's motivation and the establishment of a positive learning environment
is directly influenced by principal efficacy (Anselmus Dami et al., 2022). Studies support
that the leadership approach of the principal impacts the motivation of teachers (Engin,
2020). When teachers are motivated and empowered with high developmental leadership
the learning environment is positively strengthened, however, when there are
unmotivated teachers with low developmental leadership the learning environment is
negatively impacted (Engin, 2020). Principals who cultivate a collective culture and
empower teachers by communicating directly and frequently with teachers about student
needs develop a learning environment that is positive and conducive to high student
achievement (Mendez-Morse, 1991). Principal efficacy is important when executing a
leadership approach to positively impact teacher motivation and create a positive learning
environment.

The final dimension of principal efficacy that Anselmus Dami et al. (2022) discusses is classroom observation and guidance. Mendez-Morse (1991) stated that "principals participate in the instructional process through their discussions with teachers about instructional issues, their observations of classroom instruction, and their interactions with teachers when examining student data" (p. 2) as part of the on-going evaluative process. While there are similarities in these actions, they are each distinct in their own right. The instructional focus from a principal to a teacher helps support the teacher's methods in the classroom and ensures the teacher has the appropriate resources to impact student learning (Mendez-Morse, 1991). Observing teachers frequently by being in their classroom and providing feedback is an essential component of the principal's instructional leadership (Anselmus Dami et al., 2022). Additionally, principals must monitor student outcomes by guiding teachers in examining data, evaluating curriculum, and teaching strategies, and determining the appropriate professional development for the staff (Mendez-Morse, 1991). Classroom observations and feedback influence principal efficacy.

This belief in oneself is crucial in being an effective instructional leader and leading a school to success. Research has found that higher levels of principal efficacy are associated with improved student achievement, teacher job satisfaction, and overall school performance (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Pannell et al., 2018). Furthermore, principal efficacy is positively associated with teacher job satisfaction and retention which indirectly impacts student achievement (Baptiste, 2019). This suggests that a principal's belief in their ability to lead a school effectively can have a significant impact on the school's overall performance.

Efficacy is an important concept in education that can impact the success of students, teachers, and school leaders. Teacher self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy are positively associated with student achievement, while principal efficacy is positively associated with teacher job satisfaction, retention, and overall school performance (Baptiste, 2019; Pannell et al., 2018).

Teacher Perceptions

Teacher perceptions are subjective beliefs, attitudes, and understandings that teachers hold about the teaching profession and the educational environment in which they work. These perceptions are shaped by various factors, including their own experiences, training, and the organizational culture of their schools (Beijaard et al., 2000). The type of leadership the principal employs impacts teacher perception of leadership as distributive leadership and transformational leadership can positively impact this perception (Engin, 2020; Shields & Leithwood, 2019). On the other hand, if teachers have a negative perception of their principal because of their principal's lack of support or inaccessibility, they are more likely to resist the common vision and collaborative school improvement initiatives (Kirby & Blase, 1991). Ismail (2012) stated:

> Normally, principals' leadership styles are seen in their behaviors and how they interrelate with teachers, students, parents, and other school staff. If the principal has an effective leadership style, he or she can engender a positive climate in the school. Teachers, students, staff, and parents will come to feel more comfortable and satisfied with their children's educational experience. However, if the principal is ineffective, then the opposite may equally hold true. (p. 3)

Recent research has demonstrated the importance of teacher perceptions in impacting student outcomes and teacher motivation and engagement (Vanderbilt University, 2023). Teacher perceptions impact how they engage with their daily work.

Educators are essential factors who impact student achievement and performance because they are in the classroom each day with students. To ensure teachers can fulfill this role effectively, principals need to develop good relationships with them, so they feel supported and motivated to positively impact students (Ismail, 2012). Principals who present themselves as effective leaders can get the best out of their teachers and build their capacities for student success in academic performance (Munir & Khalil, 2016). Additionally, teachers' perceptions of their principals impact their performance at school (Munir & Khalil, 2016).

Research findings indicate that teachers who have a positive perception of their ability to teach and support their students demonstrate increased levels of job satisfaction and are more likely to remain in the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). On the other hand, teachers who have negative perceptions of their profession may experience burnout or leave the profession altogether. Therefore, understanding and improving teacher perceptions is important because it can lead to increased efficacy which will increase student academic performance (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Lastly, teachers' perceptions of their building principal are important because they can impact teacher job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover, which, in turn, can impact student outcomes. Positive principal-teacher relationships are associated with increased teacher job satisfaction, while negative relationships are associated with decreased job satisfaction and increased

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teacher turnover (Baptiste, 2019). The development of relationships between teachers and principals can impact overall teacher perception either positively or negatively.

Instructional Growth

Instructional growth is important for teachers to deliver impactful and high-quality learning opportunities for their students. Through instructional leadership, building principals are responsible for fostering instructional growth in their teachers (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Instructional leadership by building principals is associated with higher student achievement and teacher professional development. Building principals can provide the necessary support and resources to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge, positively impacting student outcomes (Day et al., 2020). A principal can impact student performance through positive leadership practices.

One way building principals can support teachers' instructional growth is by providing opportunities for professional development. Professional development can range from workshops, conferences, mentoring, and content-based collaborative inquiry, which can enhance teachers' skills and knowledge in their subject areas (Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). Instructional leaders who provide feedback on curriculum alignment, planning, instruction, and assessment, as well as promoting reflective practice are supporting continued professional learning for teachers (Fuentes & Jimerson, 2020). In this regard, when instructional feedback is given correctly, it produces positive influences on both the teachers' expertise and their professional development (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). When teachers see the value or the utility of the learning within the conversational feedback, it increases their interest; whereas, if they do not see the value, they will show little interest in gaining the new knowledge (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). Today's

leaders expect to be informed while maintaining a focus on instructional practices and possessing an understanding of the content areas they supervise to help teachers grow their professional practice (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). Teachers who experience extensive professional development are more likely to incorporate new teaching strategies into their instruction, sustain motivation and commitment, and raise standards to increase student achievement (Day et al., 2020).

Building principals can also support instructional growth by providing feedback and coaching to their teachers (Brown, 2019). Feedback can help teachers identify strength and areas for improvement, allowing them to focus on their professional growth and confidence (Bukko et al., 2021). Coaching can provide more targeted support to address specific weaknesses in instruction, allowing teachers to refine their teaching practices while receiving support (Brown, 2019). According to Fuentes and Jimerson (2020), practices such as observational walkthroughs only sometimes yield positive outcomes for teacher growth unless there is engagement with the teacher in dialogue surrounding the instructional practice(s) observed. Additionally, if the administrator does not have sufficient understanding of the content being taught or the quality of instruction, then feedback will not be effective (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). Instructional growth can take place through observational feedback when the principal engages with the teacher about pedagogy and instruction.

Another way building principals can support instructional growth is by creating a positive school culture that values continuous learning and growth. When teachers feel supported and encouraged to take risks in their instruction by the instructional leader, they are more likely to engage in professional growth to improve their teaching practices,

have a higher perception of motivation, and have a higher level of satisfaction (Ozdemir et al., 2020). According to Prothero (2020), brain development flourishes when there is a positive school culture and children feel emotionally and physically safe allowing them to improve their academic performance. To establish a positive school culture, teachers and administrators must ensure that positive relationships are being developed. Academic performance is positively impacted when students believe their teacher has built strong connections and genuinely cares about them (Osher & Fleischman, 2005). Another factor in fostering a positive school climate is ensuring consistency in expectations for behavior and discipline (Prothero, 2020). Teaching students skills, such as relationship building, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making can help prevent problematic behavior and promote academic success (Osher & Fleischman, 2005). Positive school culture has many contributing factors which can lead to increased student achievement.

Building principals are responsible for supporting teachers' instructional growth through various means, which can positively impact student outcomes. This complex leadership involves various strategies that collectively empower educators. Offering tailored professional development through workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning keeps teachers updated and equipped with innovative tools. Principals also provide valuable feedback, guiding teachers to refine their techniques, fostering an environment of experimentation. They are responsible for shaping a positive school culture, encouraging collaboration and developing a shared pursuit of the vision. Building principals must lead with vision to lay the groundwork for improved education and student achievements through empowered educators. Instructional leadership is an important part of the role of a principal.

Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation, feedback, reflective questioning, and teacher perception are crucial components of professional growth and development for teachers. Evaluating and providing feedback to teachers can help identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, improve instructional practices and student learning outcomes, and identify quality instruction (Brownfield, 2020). Reflective questioning is a strategy that entails the examination of questions to gain insight to one's thoughts, helping teachers to introspectively evaluate their teaching methods by identifying areas for improvement, and elevating sound instructional practices (Mathers & Oliva, 2008).

Teacher evaluation is a process that can provide teachers with valuable feedback on their instructional practices, and according to Mathers and Oliva (2008), when teacher evaluation is being used properly it should identify and measure instructional strategies, behaviors, and delivery of content that positively impact student learning. Mathers and Olivia (2008) go on to state:

> There are two types of evaluations—formative and summative. Formative evaluations are meant to provide teachers with feedback on how to improve performance and what types of professional development opportunities will enhance their practice. Summative evaluations are used to make a final decision on factors such as salary, tenure, personnel assignments, transfers, or dismissals. (p. 1)

Both formative and summative evaluations are designed to assess performance, with formative evaluations focusing on improvement strategies and summative evaluations determining the overall effectiveness of teacher performance (Mathers & Oliva, 2008).

Combined, these evaluation methods are crucial to getting a holistic view of how the teacher is performing while providing essential feedback to the teacher (Mathers & Oliva, 2008). Feedback from principals is desired from teachers in pursuit of reaching specific performance targets (Munir & Khalil, 2016). Furthermore, teachers who received feedback from their peers and supervisors were more likely to self-reflect and improve their instructional practices. Feedback is an essential component of teacher evaluation and can be a powerful tool for professional growth (Hodge, 2019).

Teacher perception also plays a significant role in their professional growth and development. According to a study by Hattie and Timperley (2007), teachers' perceptions of their instructional practices can impact their professional growth and development. According to Munir and Khalil (2016), teachers who have a positive perception of their principal are more likely to have a positive impact on their school and in their professional learning. The study found that teachers who have a positive perception of their instructional practices are more likely to engage in reflective practice and improve their teaching practices. Munir and Khalil (2016), stated that the existing research highlights the many contributing factors influencing teachers' academic performance; however, the academic research has yet to fully explore teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership behaviors. In addition, teachers who have a positive perception of their instructional practices are more likely to seek out feedback and engage in professional development (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Transformational leadership behaviors support teachers' perceptions of principals and are positively correlated with motivation, self-efficacy, and performance (Munir & Khalil, 2016). These combined leadership actions enhance the effectiveness of teachers.

Summary

   Chapter Two included a summary of the theoretical frameworks of social
cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory. These are the frameworks that
laid the foundation for understanding the dynamics of the content in the chapter. Chapter
Two also highlighted the concepts of efficacy, teacher perceptions, instructional growth,
and teacher evaluation. This chapter discussed the role of building principals as
instructional leaders and how they impact teachers' instructional growth. The literature
review included topics of efficacy, teacher perceptions, instructional growth, and
evaluation components. Chapter Two outlined the importance of the principal's role in
creating a shared vision aligned with educational goals, developing a positive school
culture, and providing continuous support for teachers' growth and development.

   Lastly, Chapter Two emphasized the importance of self-efficacy in teachers and
principals, exposing how perceptions impact their engagement. Furthermore, the value of
timely feedback integrated with reflective questioning that promotes professional and
instructional growth was discussed. Chapter Two encompassed the essential groundwork
for comprehending the exploration and potential impacts of the perception of principal
efficacy on instructional growth.

   In Chapter Three, the methodology is scrutinized to guide the research study. This
comprehensive analysis contained the overview of the research's problem and its
underlying purpose. In addition, the design of the research and the outline of the
population and sample are reviewed. The instrumentation, analysis of the data, and how
the data were collected is discussed at length. A discussion of the methods employed in
gathering the data is contained in the later portion of the chapter. Finally, ethical

considerations, which are foundational to research, are addressed before the conclusion of
Chapter Three.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The methods and procedures used to collect and examine the data are explained in this chapter. First, the problem and purpose section discuss the fundamental reasons that make this study significant and relevant. This section exposes the overarching questions central to the study while linking them to the potential impact on the field of education. Next, the chapter includes an in-depth explanation of the methodologies used to guide the study. The boundaries of the study and its target population are defined. Finally, the chapter addresses ethical considerations. The ethical framework is outlined and highlights the measures in place to protect the participants' privacy.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Current research examining the impact of instructional feedback on teacher self-efficacy and instructional growth suggests that post-observational feedback, which includes both strengths and weaknesses, plays a role in shaping teachers' self-confidence (Mireles-Rios & Becchio, 2018). Additionally, the perception of support from a supervisor increases the self-efficacy of employees, which results in increased task performance and job satisfaction (Afzal et al., 2019). According to Winn et al. (2021), "Second only to teaching, leadership is the most crucial component of education. Effective leaders are the key to meaningful teacher support and development, which lead to high-quality teachers" (p. 18). Effective leadership relies on instructional feedback as the primary element to improve teachers and the school system (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). The research does not investigate perceived principal efficacy as a factor for impacting instructional feedback or influencing instructional growth.

This study explores how teacher perception of principal efficacy affects instructional growth through the evaluation process and what factors determine this perception and its impact on instructional feedback. The topic was chosen to equip instructional leaders with a better understanding of whether or not perceptions impact growth.

Research Questions

1. What factors determine the perception of principal efficacy?

2. In what ways does the perception of principal efficacy impact instructional feedback during the evaluation process?

3. In what ways does the perception of principal efficacy, in conjunction with the evaluation process, impact teacher growth?

Research Design

This study centers on qualitative research. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4).

Specifically, a phenomenological research design will be used to conduct this study. Phenomenological research can be defined as an investigatory approach that stems from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher portrays the lived experiences of individuals regarding a particular phenomenon, as articulated by the participants themselves (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A phenomenological design was selected for this research because the researcher will be collecting the viewpoints of teachers about their perceptions of principal efficacy. The research will collect the teachers' perceptions through surveys and interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sample

Participation in the survey was voluntary. No pressure to complete the informed consent, and thus the survey was applied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey participants may volunteer to participate in the subsequent virtual interview. A purposive sample from the conference teacher population was selected for this study. The recruitment of participants was based on a shared experience that is relevant to the research (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). Participants of the study included K-12 teachers with at least one year of experience who were recruited from nine schools in the same rural athletic conference in Southwest Missouri, which represents approximately 3,150 teachers. The survey closed three weeks after the initial email; however, due to a lack of participation, the survey was extended six additional weeks. The six-week extension provided opportunity for more participants to respond to the survey. Through the survey the participants had the opportunity to voluntarily participate in a follow-up interview. The interview participants were originally going to be limited to the first volunteer per district for a maximum of nine, however, due to the extension of time and the lack of initial responses, anyone who volunteered was accepted to participate. All K-12 teachers with at least one year of experience were invited to participate in the survey. Each participant had the opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview by providing their contact information on the last question of the survey. There were 63 respondents from the survey, and in the first three weeks, 19 indicated a willingness to participate in a follow-up interview; however, 3 of the 19 responded to the interview. After the six-week extension, eight more were able to schedule time for the follow-up interview for a total of 11 participants who participated in the follow-up interview.

Instrumentation

Based on the theoretical framework and the literature review, a survey (see Appendix A) and semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) were used to collect qualitative data for this study.

Qualitative Online Teacher Survey

The survey was created to elicit K-12 teachers' perceptions of principal efficacy impacting their instructional growth through the evaluation protocol. The data collection instruments for this study were comprised of a researcher-created survey and a set of follow-up questions designed for participants who expressed their willingness to participate. The survey contained one question about the number of years of experience, one question identifying the tool used for evaluation, one open-ended question, five Likert-scale questions, and one "yes" or "no" question about participation in a follow-up interview.

Semi-Structured Interviews

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative interviews typically consist of a small number of open-ended questions that are vague so the chosen participants can provide their perspective and opinions on the subject. The interview questions, though limited in number, were carefully crafted to encourage participants to express their unique views and opinions. Participants who indicated they would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview scheduled a time with the researcher to conduct a Google Meet to answer seven additional questions. In the study, the interview questions were specifically designed to prompt participants to reflect upon their lived experiences within education, with a particular emphasis on their perceptions of

principal efficacy. The survey questions and interview questions were formed from the examination of the literature and linked to the research questions. The interview contained one question about the number of years of experience, one question about experience with teacher evaluation, one question about defining efficacy, and four questions about perceived principal efficacy impact. In total, the researcher asked the participants seven questions and recorded their responses.

Reliability. A high-quality qualitative study can help us understand complex phenomena and different viewpoints. In terms of reliability in qualitative research, the instrument's dependability, and the ability to collect data consistently are important (Golafshani, 2003). The researcher utilized the instrumentation of the survey and semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix A and Appendix B) to ensure the study met reliability standards. According to Clonts (1992), reliability increases with the use of field notes and recordings, which is how the researcher captured the data from the participants in the semi-structured interview. Each interview was recorded via Google Meet and transcribed through the Descript Transcription application.

Validity. As per Creswell and Creswell (2018), validity within the realm of qualitative research includes a process where the researcher analyzes the accuracy of the data gathered by adhering to specific procedures and methodologies. Trustworthiness is another term for validity, which should lead to credible and defensible results (Golafshani, 2003). The researcher provided consistent information by reading the same message at the beginning of every interview. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), researchers should incorporate one or more validity strategies within their study. In this study, the researcher recorded and transcribed each interview and then provided each

participant with transcriptions as a form of member checking to provide more validity
(Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Collection

The data collection process began after receiving permission to conduct research
from the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C). A list of
K-12 principals from a rural Southwest Missouri conference representing nine districts
were emailed a letter of participation (see Appendix D), a research information sheet (see
Appendix E), and a survey link. The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on
Instructional Growth Through the Evaluation Protocol Survey gathered K-12 public
school teachers' responses through the web-based survey tool *Qualtrics*. The survey also
included a question asking for follow-up interview participants.

Upholding the ethical standards of research, a comprehensive informed consent
process was implemented. Each participant received a detailed informed consent
document that provided assurances regarding the key principles of data security,
confidentiality, and anonymity (Burkholder et al., 2020; Mertens, 2020). This document
was thoughtfully created to be easy to understand while outlining the procedures to be
used and explaining the full involvement of each participant. It was made clear that
partaking in the study was voluntary and that participation in the survey signified the
participant's consent to be a part of the study (Burkholder et al., 2020). To streamline the
process, the initial survey page adopted the Lindenwood University consent form.
Participants affirmatively validated their consent to participate in the study by completing
the survey.

The survey was available initially for two weeks but was extended six more weeks to obtain an appropriate number of responses. Upon completing the data collection phase, the survey responses were collected and analyzed in a spreadsheet. The qualitative survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages and reflexive thematic analysis. Reflexivity involves the researcher making sense of the data by categorizing themes based on their subjective experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To effectively present and communicate the research findings, tables and figures were designed to display the data. Tables were created to display the years of experience, type of evaluation protocol used, and thematic analysis. Figures were generated to visually represent the percentages associated with the Likert scale responses provided by the participants. Both the tables and figures enhance the accessibility and the comprehension of the data, allowing readers to extract meaningful information from the results of the study.

The next phase of the research included the identification of which participants of the survey indicated they would be willing to participate in the follow-up interview. A total of 19 survey participants expressed their willingness to take part in a follow-up interview. The researcher corresponded with the participants who indicated they wanted to participate in the follow-up interview via email as outlined in Appendix F. The informed consent form (see Appendix G) was contained within this confirmation email. The consent form was thoroughly reviewed with each participant, and any questions or concerns were addressed. Following that, each participant verbally confirmed their consent to be a part of the research. The follow-up interview was conducted via Google Meet, allowing for remote engagement with the participants. The interview sessions were

audio recorded and later transcribed using the Descript Transcription application to ensure accurate conversation documentation for later analysis.

The recordings of the follow-up interviews were transcribed. The transcripts were shared with the participating individuals as part of the procedure of member checking (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Member checking is a practice where participants are given the opportunity to review and validate the accuracy of their statements, ensuring that their experiences and opinions have been captured and represented accurately. After all the follow-up interviews were conducted, the analysis of qualitative data was completed. Following the qualitative data analysis, the next step involved the interpretation of the dataset. The data were interpreted to provide context and meaning of the participants' responses to the reader. The researcher worked to uncover underlying themes and connections to draw substantial conclusions. By triangulating the data with the relevant literature, the researcher formulated responses to the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis

In this study, all teacher survey responses and interview questions were analyzed to determine what impact, if any, perceived principal efficacy had on instructional growth. The qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions and interview questions were coded and analyzed for themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics; specifically, percentages and reflexive thematic analysis using coding. The analysis is an active process of reflexivity that involves the researcher's subjective experience in making sense of the data by categorizing themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design of

figures served to visually represent the distribution of percentages corresponding to each response category on the Likert scale. The visual representation communicated a clear overview of the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, the study's inferences were enhanced through the combination of the information from the survey and the follow-up interview questions (Burkholder et al., 2020). The options for survey responses of the five Likert-scale questions were: Never, Sometimes, About half the time, Most of the time, and Always. There was one Likert-scale question in which the response choices were: High efficacy, Average efficacy, and Low efficacy.

The qualitative analysis of the follow-up interviews included data coding. Data coding is organizing the data by chunking into categories represented by words (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Open coding is the first level of coding in which the researcher identifies distinct concepts and themes for categorization (Williams & Moser, 2019). Williams and Moser (2019) determined that during open coding, researchers must carefully examine the information provided by the participants, identify recurring words and phrases, and categorize them into initial thematic categories. The second level of coding employed by the researcher was axial coding. According to Williams and Moser (2019), axial coding "further refines, aligns, and categorizes the themes."

Ethical Considerations

Measures were put into place to ensure the safety, anonymity, and confidentiality of all study participants as outlined by Burkholder et al. (2020) and Mertens (2020). Official approval was obtained from the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board. To start the data collection process, each participant received an email containing the Lindenwood-approved consent form, along with a secure link to the survey. The link

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was designed to allow each participant to respond without being identified to ensure their identities remained confidential. To provide the opportunity for further involvement in the study through a follow-up interview, the final question of the survey offered participants the option to submit their contact information voluntarily. The researcher provided an informed consent form to participants who responded with their contact information indicating they would participate in a follow-up interview.

To secure the integrity of the participant data, all the electronic files were carefully stored within a password-protected personal computer. These records will be securely retained for three years, as recommended by Fraenkel et al. (2019). This was implemented to ensure the confidentiality of the data and follow the guidelines and norms of ethical research practices. By providing the consent form and taking the outlined steps, the participants were fully informed throughout the study and protected within the participation of the research.

Summary

Chapter Three provided a detailed review of the methodology of the research for this study. Within this chapter, the research questions were presented, rationalizations of the problem were outlined, and the purpose was stated. Additionally, the selection of the population and sample of the study were presented, accompanied by a comprehensive rationale for adopting a qualitative study approach. Analysis of the instrumentation tools was reviewed while the techniques and tools utilized to draw meaningful insights from the information gathered. Finally, the chapter outlined the ethical considerations that were addressed to ensure the participants were protected throughout the process.

Looking forward, Chapter Four outlines the overview of the research data. Qualitative data are presented through the utilization of charts and figures to provide a visual representation. Additionally, the synthesis of themes through the analysis of the participants' responses is presented. This thematic synthesis aims to communicate the complexities of the data in a manner that provides readers with valuable insights to understand the research findings.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

By exploring how teacher perception of principal efficacy affects instructional growth through the evaluation process and what factors determine this perception and its impact on instructional feedback, instructional leaders will have a better understanding of whether or not perceptions impact growth. The role of a principal is expanding and evolving; however, the principal is a critical factor in improving the culture of teaching and learning in the school (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Many well-documented factors can lead a principal to success but currently, there is a gap in the research in the area of perceived principal efficacy and its impact on instructional growth. In a study by Goddard et al. (2021), principal efficacy for instructional improvement positively correlates and significantly predicts teachers' collective efficacy beliefs, predicting student achievement. The authors of the study did not investigate the teacher's perception of the principal's efficacy (Goddard et al., 2021). Another important factor in the role of the principal is conducting teacher evaluations, and the current research on the impact of instructional feedback on teacher self-efficacy and instructional growth links post-observational feedback that includes both strengths and weaknesses as factors that influence teachers' self-confidence (Mireles-Rios & Becchio, 2018). Additionally, the perception of support from a supervisor increases the self-efficacy of employees, which results in increased task performance and job satisfaction (Afzal et al., 2019).

The survey was created to elicit K-12 teachers' perceptions of principal efficacy impacting their instructional growth. The survey also asked participants about their experience with evaluations and their view of their principal's efficacy. The data collection instruments for this study comprised of a researcher-created survey and a set of

follow-up questions designed for participants who expressed their willingness to participate. The survey contained one question about the number of years of experience, one question identifying the tool used for evaluation, one open-ended question, five Likert-scale questions, and one "yes" or "no" question about participation in a follow-up interview. The survey was sent to all the K-12 principals in each of the nine districts from a rural Southwest Missouri conference. The survey was distributed to all the K-12 teachers in the district with one or more years of experience. Respondents completed the survey on a voluntary basis.

The participants who indicated they would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview provided their contact information. The researcher then scheduled a time with each participant to conduct a Google Meet to answer seven additional questions. The interview contained one question about the number of years of experience, one question about experience with teacher evaluation, one question about defining efficacy, and four questions about perceived principal efficacy impact.

Survey Analysis

The participants answered questions from the survey which were analyzed and separated by the question number.

Survey Question One

During this study, perceptual data were collected from teachers to identify common themes and summarize the insights of the educators about the impact of perceived principal efficacy. The study focused on the experience of teachers during evaluations and their perceptions of principal efficacy. Participants were required to have at least one year of experience to be eligible for the study to ensure they had completely

experienced their evaluation cycle. There were 63 total respondents who completed the survey. Table 1 shows K-12 teacher survey participants and their years of experience in that role. Of the 63 participants, 11 went on to participate in the follow-up interview.

Table 1

K-12 Teachers Response to Years of Experience - Survey Results

Teacher Years of Experience	Number of Respondents
1-3 years	4
4-6 years	7
7-10 years	6
11-15 years	9
16 years or more	37

Survey Question Two

Participants were asked what evaluation protocol was used to conduct their teacher evaluations. The responses varied from naming the specific system utilized to describing the process. Table 2 shows K-12 teacher responses categorized by the protocol used for evaluations.

Table 2

K-12 Teacher Response to Evaluation Protocol - Survey Results

Protocol	Number of Respondents
Artisan	1
Did Not Know The Name	7
District Developed	1
MMOAP	1
NEE	12
Observations	13
PBIS	1
PBTE	3
PGP	2
School Status	1
Talent ED	14
Teachboost	6

As noted in Table 2, of the 63 respondents, seven did not know the name of the evaluation protocol used in their building. The theme from each of the responses in this section is that no matter the protocol, the evaluation included one or more observations of teaching lessons.

Survey Question Three

Participants were asked to rank their perception of principal efficacy demonstrated by their evaluator as perceived high efficacy, perceived average efficacy, or perceived low efficacy, as shown in Figure 1. Of surveyed teachers, 60.32% said they perceived their evaluator as demonstrating high efficacy, 31.75% said they perceived

their evaluator as demonstrating average efficacy, and 7.94% said they perceived their

evaluator as demonstrating low efficacy.

Figure 1

Teacher Perception of Principal Efficacy of their Evaluator
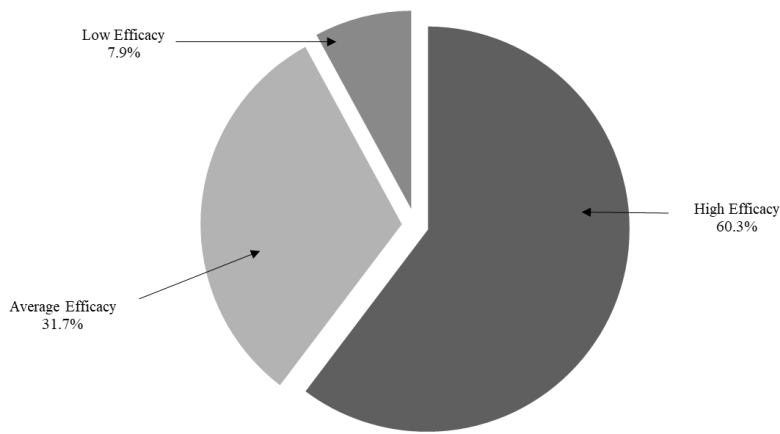
Survey Question Four

Participants were asked how often they feel their perception of their principal's

efficacy impacts the feedback they receive through the evaluation protocol, as shown in

Figure 2. Of surveyed teachers, 6.35% said never, 22.22% said sometimes, 6.35% said

about half the time, 47.62% said most of the time, and 17.46% said always.

Figure 2

Perceived Frequency of Principal Efficacy's Impact on Feedback Received through the

Evaluation Protocol
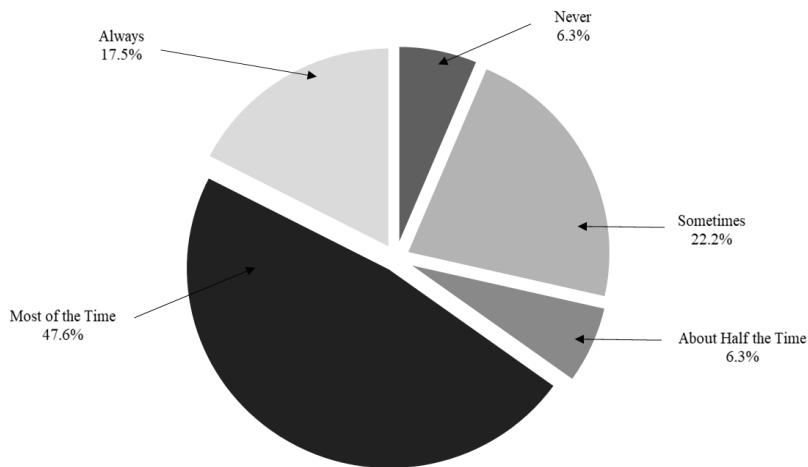
Survey Question Five

Participants were asked how often they feel their perception of their principal's

efficacy impacts their instructional growth, as shown in Figure 3. Of surveyed teachers,

11.11% said never, 34.92% said sometimes, 9.52% said about half the time, 30.16% said

most of the time, and 14.29% said always.

Figure 3

Perceived Frequency of Principal Efficacy's Impact on Instructional Growth
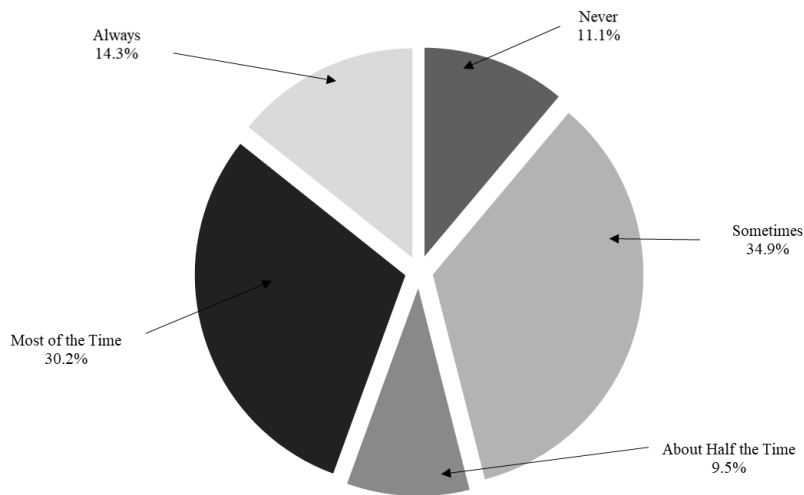
Survey Question Six

Participants were asked how often they feel their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts how they implement their curriculum, as shown in Figure 4. Of surveyed teachers, 20.63% said never, 26.98% said sometimes, 14.29% said about half the time, 25.40% said most of the time, and 12.70% said always.

Figure 4

Perceived Frequency of Principal Efficacy's Impact on Curriculum Implementation
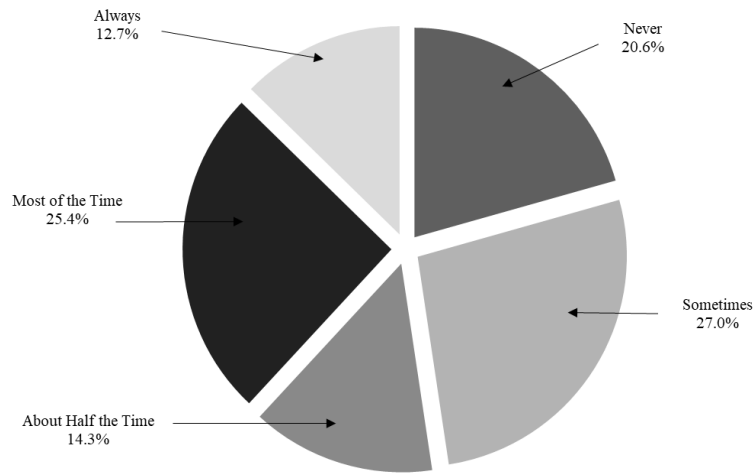
Survey Question Seven

      Participants were asked how often they feel their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their desire to continue working in the same building, as shown in Figure 5. Of surveyed teachers, 4.76% said never, 11.11% said sometimes, 11.11% said about half the time, 28.57% said most of the time, and 44.44% said always.

Figure 5

Perceived Frequency of Principal Efficacy's Impact on Desire to Continue Working in the Same Building
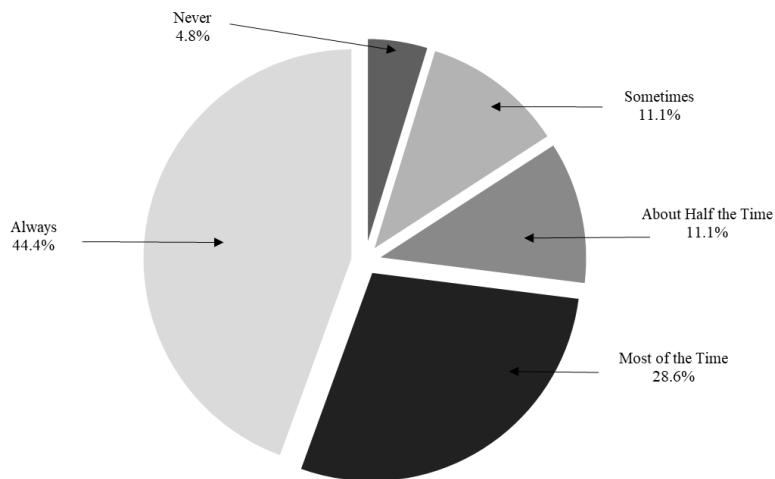
Survey Question Eight

Question 8 was open-ended and 54 of the 63 respondents answered. Participants were asked in what ways, if any, they feel their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts the way they teach. Table 3 shows K-12 teacher responses categorized by themes about how their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts the way they teach.

Table 3

Identified Themes from Question 8 - Survey Results

Theme	Number of Respondents
Accept Recommendations	5
Culture	9
Empowered	10
Meet Expectations	3
Motivates	11
No impact	16

The themes identified in Table 3 were categorized by the researcher based on the open-ended responses from the participants, noting that nine participants did not answer this question. The first theme indicated respondents' perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their teaching by accepting the principal's recommendations. One respondent stated, "I take their recommendations more seriously when I perceive them having a higher efficacy." The five responses within this theme each indicated that teachers' perceptions of principal efficacy impacted their willingness to accept recommendations from their principal.

The second theme identified indicates that the respondents' perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their teaching by contributing to the climate of the school. The nine responses to this theme indicated that their principal's efficacy either positively or negatively impacted the school culture. A respondent stated, "A leader's growth mindset and action demonstrates a culture of growth for the staff in the building" while another respondent stated, "I do not value [the principal's] opinion because I do not find [the principal] to be very effective." Furthermore, the impact on school culture directly

impacted the way they teach. Several respondents stated that the culture is reflective of the efficacy of the leader and that sets the tone for teaching and learning within the building. Specifically, one respondent stated, "My teaching is responsive to the general culture of the school which is directly related to my principal's efficacy." Conversely, another respondent stated that a principal with low efficacy "can have a negative impact on the culture of the building." School culture can be influenced by the efficacy of the leader as respondents indicated that an effective principal fosters a positive school culture that enhances teaching and learning, while a principal with low efficacy can have a detrimental effect on the school culture.

The third theme identified the respondents indicating that their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their teaching by making them feel empowered. This theme surfaced as an important factor of how teachers view the leadership of their principals, emphasizing the psychological impact on their professional identity and confidence. The 10 responses in this theme all related their perception of their principal's efficacy to increased confidence and the ability to have a positive impact while teaching. Teachers shared that they felt they were supported, trusted, and empowered to take risks within the classroom environment due to their perception of their principal's efficacy. This empowerment translated to action within the classroom as teachers reported a willingness to experiment with strategies and approaches.

The theme outlined the reciprocal relationship between a teacher's perception of principal efficacy and their professional efficacy. Teachers who perceived their principal as having high efficacy experienced a gain in confidence, creating a positive feedback loop. The gain in confidence, in turn, enhances the teacher's ability to positively impact

student learning. The theme brought to light the role of leadership perception in shaping the teacher's self-perception, emphasizing the need for principals to be mindful of the psychological impact their efficacy can have on the confidence and empowerment of their teachers.

The fourth theme identified the respondents indicating that their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their teaching by making them feel the need to meet expectations. Each of the three respondents talked about their perception of their principal's efficacy as impacting their teaching by clearly knowing the expectations. The connection between perceived efficacy and the expectation clarity created a spark for professional growth and motivation.

The clarity provided by the principal enabled the respondents to fulfill their roles and responsibilities with purpose and a good sense of direction. Teachers stated that when their perception of their principal's efficacy is high, they recognize and feel a responsibility to meet expectations. This sense of responsibility comes from the belief that their actions contribute to the entire school team and are driven, in part, by the effective leadership of the principal. Additionally, the sense of accountability to the expectations fosters the environment of continuous growth. This theme outlines the important link between the perception of principal efficacy with aligning individual goals to the overall goals of the school. Lastly, the theme suggests that by cultivating a positive perception of principal efficacy, principals can clearly communicate expectations and inspire teachers to strive for excellence in their instructional practices.

The fifth theme identified the respondents indicating that their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their teaching by motivating them to do well. One respondent

stated, "My principal is motivated and knowledgeable and it inspires me to be the same." Another stated that their perception of their principal's efficacy "inspires and motivates me to be my best so I can make him proud, rise to the standards set by the school, and grow as an educator." As a whole, the 11 respondents felt motivated to perform well, due to their perception of their principal's efficacy.

Lastly, the sixth theme recorded 16 responses of no impact. The participants indicated that their perception of their principal's efficacy had no impact on the way they teach. While the previous themes outlined the positive impacts of perceived principal efficacy, there is a group of respondents who perceived their principal's efficacy as having minimal impact.

For these participants, the disconnect between the perception of principal efficacy and instructional growth comes from a variety of factors. Some of the participants felt as though their drive and motivation was intrinsic, therefore not dependent on the perception of their principal's efficacy. Additionally, some participants may separate the role of the principal from the impact to their daily instruction. Some teachers view their instructional decisions as more closely related to their subject matter expertise, teaching philosophy, or instructional strategies rather than to the effectiveness of their principal.

Follow-Up Interview Question Analysis

The participants answered questions from the follow-up interviews which are analyzed and separated by the interview question number.

Interview Question One: How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?

There were 63 respondents from the survey and a total of 11 participants indicated they were willing and scheduled a time for the follow-up interview. Table 4 shows interviewed K-12 teachers and their years of experience in that role.

Table 4

Interviewed K-12 Teachers and Years of Experience - Follow-Up Interview Results

Teacher Year of Experience	Number of Respondents
6-10 years	1
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	2
21-25 years	3
26 years or more	1

Interview Question Two: Describe your experience with the process of teacher evaluation.

Each teacher reflected on how they have been evaluated in their years of teaching. All of the responses described the way in which they have been evaluated, with several also naming the evaluation system in their response. Participant 1 reflected on their experience of being observed four to six times per year. The evaluator came in unscheduled and looked for specific indicators as outlined in the evaluation system and then will have scheduled feedback time. Participant 2 described their experience as always receiving feedback from the principal or assistant principal. Participant 2 acknowledged feedback was a motivator by stating, "I've tried to make it where if they [the principal] tell me something I learn from it and if they say I am good at something I want to know how to be better at it."

Participant 3 had multiple experiences with evaluations over the course of their career, stating that "it used to be more of a dog and pony show" but now, in the current system, it is "more of a snapshot" of teaching each time the evaluator stops in for an observation. Participant 5 also reflected on multiple experiences with evaluations describing one style as the principal or assistant principal always being scheduled, and now, in their current district, the observations are unannounced. In each instance, feedback was given from the evaluator. Whereas Participant 4 discussed their evaluation experience as one that includes following a rubric. Participant 4 also indicated that feedback from the administrator was an integral piece of the evaluation.

Participants 6 and 11 had somewhat different experiences with evaluations. Participant 6 explained, "I only get evaluated one time a year and that's about it." Participant 11 noted that their experience was largely based on the administrator they had that year. Participant 11 explained, "Some of them [principals] have taken teacher evaluations very seriously and they do a lot of formatives, but the last few years I have pretty much been back to one end of the year summative".

Participants 7, 8, 9, and10 all had similar descriptions of their experiences with evaluations. They each described being observed for a period of time and then having time scheduled for feedback. Participant 7 went into more detail about the scoring in the evaluation process by describing the criteria in which they were scored and how feedback was much more impactful than just the score they received.

Interview Question Three: How would you define principal efficacy?

Principal efficacy, as defined for this study, is the judgment of one's ability to produce desired results (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Each participant was asked

what their definition of principal efficacy was, and they varied from person to person. Participant 1 described principal efficacy as the effectiveness of supporting teachers. Participant 2 described principal efficacy as the principal acts and speaks to teachers. Furthermore, Participant 2 stated that how the principal "interacts with you will affect how you teach." Participant 2 also described an element of efficacy as knowing that the principal values teachers.

Participant 3 wanted to verify their answer before verbalizing it, so turned to their phone, looked up the definition from Google, and summarized what they found as the ability to produce a desired or intended result. Participant 3 added to the description with their view in stating that principal efficacy "is the way they [principals] have to implement their duties with fidelity." Participant 4 stated they did not know so they Googled it, similarly to Participant 3. After Participant 4 Googled principal efficacy, they summarized it as basically the ability to get things done.

Participant 5 described principal efficacy as characteristics of the principal being knowledgeable on what is expected of teachers and what is expected from the curriculum. Participant 5 added that a portion of principal efficacy deals with the way the principal leads the building to achieve the mission and goals of the school. Participant 6 personalized their definition of principal efficacy and related it to how they felt about the principal. Participant 6 stated, "If I respect them [the principal] I will listen to their evaluations" or "If they have good intentions or I like them as a person, I will value their feedback." Participant 7 described principal efficacy as powerful and important before providing a definition. Participant 7 continued by relating principal efficacy to their

experience with how good of a job their principal does, which in turn created the desire to learn and grow from them.

Participant 8 responded by telling the researcher that this was a tough question. Participant 8 then Googled it and summarized principal efficacy as "how proficient they [principals] are at their job and if they're able to be effective when working with their teachers." Participant 8 later added that principal efficacy had a component of relationship building with students as well. Participant 9 responded that principal efficacy "is about the belief the principal can do their job and support teachers." Participant 9 continued by discussing efficacy is how principals help teachers grow and get better. Lastly, Participant 9 identified the belief of the staff in the expertise the principal has and at what they are good.

Participant 10 succinctly defined principal efficacy as, "The overall effectiveness of how they [the principal] run the building." Participant 11 had a similar view by stating that principal efficacy is "their [the principal's] ability to just be involved in the day-to-day operation of the school and benefit the school." Participant 11 added to their description by talking about the ability of the principal to make improvements based on the principal's expertise and the staff's ability.

Interview Question Four: How, if at all, do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts the feedback you receive through the evaluation protocol?

Participant 1 was not sure how much their perception of their principal's efficacy impacted the feedback they received but related the principal's ability to understand the lesson as impactful to receiving feedback. Participant 1 discussed the evaluation process as mostly getting feedback on how the lesson went and how the kids responded, therefore

stating that "I don't know that it [perception of principal efficacy] has much to do with [the impact]." However, Participant 1 further reflected that there is a positive impact when they feel the principal understands the grade level instruction (K-5) more. Moreover, if the principal is observing how the lesson went and how the students are responding, then their ability to portray they understand the teacher's instruction will lead to increased value of the feedback given. Participant 2 responded confidently that their perception of their principal's efficacy absolutely impacts the feedback they receive. Participant 2 said that "It does affect me because I always want to improve" and that "I am harder on myself than [the principal] would be, but they turn that around for me to help myself." Participant 2 verbalized that their perception of their principal's efficacy when it comes to feedback makes them want to work harder and improve.

Participant 3 discussed the scoring system with their answer. They related their feedback to receiving a score, and when they received a lower score (anything less than the best), they were demoralized. Participant 3 went on to describe that their teaching has not changed much through how the evaluation system has been implemented, but the feedback they received was impacted by their perception of how well the principal understood the rubrics for the scoring. Participant 4 viewed their perception of principal efficacy impacting feedback similarly to the view of Participant 3. Participant 4 described the principal's understanding of the scoring evaluation system by stating that when "I felt like they [the principal] had no idea what they were doing, it was very disturbing." This perception of lack of efficacy with how to score a teacher according to the scoring system had a negative impact on the feedback Participant 4 received through the evaluation protocol. Participant 5 talked about how their perception of principal efficacy might

impact the feedback they receive and related the feedback to the way the overall building was perceived. Participant 5 furthered their statement by adding that they feel like the feedback that is given, in terms of the score received through the observation, is more about the principal wanting "our building to look good." They felt as though the feedback was given more for the building to look high performing rather than to individually make them a better teacher.

Participant 6 responded to the question by focusing on the number of times they received feedback through the evaluation protocol. Participant 6 verbalized that "If I am only evaluated one time per year it affects how I view their [the principal's] feedback in general." Participant 6 expanded upon their answer by reiterating that an established positive relationship between the teacher and the principal makes a big difference on how they view feedback. Participant 7 discussed the impact of the administrator being further removed from the classroom as impacting feedback. Participant 7 said that their perception of principal efficacy impacts the feedback they receive because of the vast changes that have occurred through the past few years, including how COVID has changed education in general. Participant 7 expressed that it is "frustrating" for an experienced teacher because, "sometimes there is a disconnect" between a teacher's and an administrator's experience as the landscape of education has evolved. Participant 7 concluded that their perception of their principal's efficacy impacting feedback is "definitely out there for sure."

Participant 8 described their perception of their principal's efficacy as very high; therefore, "it plays a huge part into it." Participant 8 described their principal as very encouraging and having great relationships with teachers, which positively impacts the

feedback they receive. Participant 8 also agreed with Participant 6 about the establishment of a positive relationship between the teacher and the principal as impactful. Participant 9 described the perception of their principal's efficacy impacting the feedback they receive as critical. Participant 9 replied that "The belief that a person has in their evaluator's ability to help them get better" and "if they [the teachers] believe that the information is coming from somebody who knows what they are talking about and support them, it [the feedback] is maybe more likely to be received genuinely." Participant 9 continued by saying, "If I believe that the person telling me something knows what they're talking about then I am more likely to find it to be helpful."

Participant 10 directly responded that the principal's efficacy, along with "their classroom experience or lack thereof," directly impacts the feedback they receive through the evaluation protocol. Participant 10 stated that their perception of their principal's efficacy increases when the principal has the experience "to at least relate to what teachers are dealing with every day" and due to that perception, the feedback from the observation is more accurate and better overall. Participant 10 stated they felt this experience contributed to higher efficacy, which led to better-received feedback after observations. Participant 11 responded that their perception of their principal's efficacy is the number one thing that impacts the feedback they receive. Participant 11 said, "If they believe in the principal, they will value feedback which is based off of the principal's current competency." Participant 11 also acknowledged that the background of the principal may play an unfair role in the perception of their efficacy depending on what the principal taught while in the classroom. Participant 11 discussed that a math teacher may be less likely to value feedback from a principal who was a former PE teacher,

whether fair or unfair. Additionally, Participant 11 added this is why the perception of efficacy is so important, as if you "trust" and "know that the principal is really trying to help" because their feedback will be valued.

Interview Question Five: How, if at all, do you feel the perceived level of efficacy of your principal impacts your instructional growth?

Participant 1 responded that because they felt like the principal was "well-versed" in what we were teaching, they were on the same page. However, they did not feel "much of a difference between them and me needing to step up my game anymore." Participant 1 said, "I just wanted to do a good job because I wanted to do a good job," therefore they viewed their desire to grow instructionally as intrinsic. Participant 2 stated that they felt like receiving feedback from the principal "helps me become a better teacher." From the lens of Participant 2, the perception of their principal's efficacy is high and motivates them to do better for their principal. Additionally, Participant 2 said the more knowledgeable and helpful they view their principal, the more it helps them become a better person and a better teacher. Participant 3 agreed with Participant 1 about being motivated intrinsically to grow. Participant 3 added that even though they were personally motivated to get better as a teacher, the positive reinforcement they received from their principal impacted their want to get better.

Participant 4 bluntly stated, "I don't think it does at all." They went on to relate their personal experience with principals to impacting growth as negligible because they said, "I have had some really bad principals and some really good ones, but I am going to do what is best for kids no matter who is in charge." Participant 5 indicated they did not know how much their perception of their principal's efficacy impacted their instructional

growth because "I don't feel like they [the principals] are checking in to see what we are teaching." Participant 5 clarified by talking about how principals have a close knowledge of all the standards like the teachers do. Participant 6 explained that their perception of their principal's efficacy does not impact their growth in the classroom "as far as content goes."

Participant 7 stated they think that their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their instructional growth, stating, "If I feel like my principal is good at their job and is respected and they wanted me to make some changes, then I would definitely do that." Participant 8 stated that the impact on instructional growth depends on how far the teacher is into their career and how much support they might need. Participant 8 stated that their personal experience with instructional growth was more impacted by their instructional coach and their grade level team than by their principal. Participant 8 concluded that "it just depends on your relationship with your principal." Participant 9 agreed there are many factors impacting instructional growth. However, Participant 9 discussed the level of perceived knowledge of the principal, especially with instructional strategies, impacts the desire to implement the strategies. Participant 9 stated that the higher the principal's efficacy with pedagogy, the more the teacher will "want to try more things [instructional strategies]."

Participant 10 replied that instructional growth comes from "either the district level" through professional development or the teacher's "own personal continued learning." Participant 10 discussed that they do not feel like their perception of their principal's efficacy impacts their instructional growth "day to day or week to week" because principals "are not really in classrooms enough." Participant 11 echoed the

theme of intrinsic motivation. They related instructional growth to coaching athletes in that "until a kid wants to be helped, it is difficult for the coach to make much of an impact on that kid;" therefore, the "teacher has to want to be helped" to grow instructionally. Participant 11 clarified that if the teacher is open to that help, then "the principal's efficacy really, really matters" to help that teacher grow instructionally.

Interview Question Six: How, if at all, do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts your desire to continue working in the same building?

Participant 1 related their personal experience with five different principals over the course of their career to answering the question. They stated that their perception of their principal's efficacy had not impacted their desire to stay in the same building very often. Participant 1 provided more context by stating the only time they changed buildings was when there was a decrease in enrollment in the grade level they taught and had to move to another building within the same district. Participant 2 responded that their perception of their principal's efficacy "very much" impacts their desire to continue working in the same building. Participant 2 said, "I feel like having that bond and that connection is very important with a principal and a teacher." They went on to say that the impact was building-wide and not just with an individual teacher. Participant 2 commented that change is harder when you have a higher perception of your principal's efficacy.

Participant 3 discussed different factors contributing to the desire to stay in the same building. Participant 3 said that their personal experience was more dependent on their relationship with their colleagues and teammates. However, they acknowledged that they have not served in a building where they perceived their principal's efficacy to be

low. Participant 3 further stated that they would not want to work in other specific buildings due to the behaviors and efficacy of their principals; therefore, it does impact the desire to stay. Participant 4 described a specific experience where they had a really bad principal with low efficacy, and their whole goal was to "outlast" them. Whereas Participant 5 simply responded, "I don't know if it [perception of principal efficacy] really is a factor" to the desire to continue to work in the same building.

Participant 6 replied that their perception of principal efficacy is a factor in wanting to continue teaching in the same building. They said if they did not feel appreciated or valued that "could be enough" to get them to consider leaving. Moreover, Participant 6 stated that "good relationships with fellow teachers" greatly impacts the desire to continue working in the same building. Participant 7 associated their perception of their principal's efficacy with directly impacting the climate and culture of the building, which directly impacts their desire to stay in the same building. Participant 7 responded that when managing people, being approachable and listening to the teachers is a huge motivator for "teachers wanting to be in a building versus wanting to leave a building." Participant 8 responded that their perception of their principal's efficacy "one hundred percent" impacts their desire to continue working in the same building.

Participant 9 began by saying they were not sure how much the perception of principal efficacy impacts the desire to continue working in the same building. They described the desire to stay in a building as having many contributing factors. Participant 9 expanded by stating that having a principal with high perceived efficacy may contribute to growth, which is potentially a motivator to stay in the same building. Participant 9 continued to reflect by concluding that if the perception of the principal's efficacy is

"minimal or lacking then you might start looking elsewhere." Participant 10 responded that they think their perception of their principal's efficacy greatly impacts their desire to continue working in the same building. Participant 10 agreed with Participant 7 about principal efficacy directly impacting the climate and culture of a building which impacts the desire to continue working in the same building. Lastly, Participant 11 personally stated that "[principal efficacy] doesn't matter" when thinking about the desire to continue working in the same building.

Interview Question Seven: In what ways, if any, do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy is important?

Participant 1 discussed the importance of their principal's efficacy in terms of the curriculum, recognizing that teachers are working hard and have the ability to provide positive feedback. Participant 1 verbalized they appreciate when a principal lets them know they are doing a great job because it motivates them to do better. Perception of principal efficacy is important when it comes to challenging teachers. Participant 2 responded that perception of principal efficacy is very important as it directly affects the way the principal handles situations within the building. Participant 2 said that they feel like the perception of principal efficacy makes teachers want "to do better." Participant 3 stated that their perception of principal efficacy is important to "set the building tone." Participant 4 responded that the perception of principal efficacy is important because "I want to follow someone who knows what they are doing" and "I have a hard time following suggestions from someone who I don't think knows what they're doing." Participant 4 further explained that they want to "trust in them [the principal] to make good decisions."

Participant 5 responded that their perception of principal efficacy does matter as it impacts "how effective they're [the principal] being as our building leader." Participant 5 also broadened their perspective to include that the perception of principal efficacy is important for the school's effectiveness within the community because the principal is the first representative of the building. Participant 6 stated that the perception of principal efficacy is important, but more so to earlier career teachers because of their lack of experience with pedagogical practices. Participant 7 said that the perception of principal efficacy is important because it impacts the principal's "ability to be viewed as a leader." Participant 7 also talked about how principals with perceptions of high efficacy are more likely to be "good at the job."

Participant 8 responded that the perception of principal efficacy is "super important" because it is critically important in the development of a family feeling within the building. When a principal is perceived to have high efficacy, they are often involved, encouraging, and effective at their job. Participant 8 concluded that it is important to set the tone of the building. Participant 9 replied that the perception of principal efficacy is important because the principal is "showing and modeling the process of learning." Additionally, it is important to the model of growth and the support of teachers. Participant 10 related the importance of the perception of principal efficacy to the amount and type of experiences of that principal. Participant 10 stated that the more quality experiences the principal has had the higher the perception of their efficacy, which leads to them being more effective. Lastly, Participant 11 stated that the perception of principal efficacy is extremely important when it comes to trust. Participant 11 viewed the principal as one of the most important people in the building, "so them [the principal]

being good at their job impacts the entire building in a variety of ways." Some teachers need help with discipline, some need help with instruction while others do not, so "I think the efficacy of a building principal is extremely important."

Summary

Chapter Four provided an analysis of the data collected in two different stages. The first stage of data collection involved the administration of a qualitative survey centered on the research questions about the potential impacts of the perception of principal efficacy. The teacher's responses to the survey provided valuable insights into their perspectives. The answers to the survey questions were analyzed and presented with tables and figures in Chapter Four. The tables and figures visually represented the trends and patterns that emerged from the participants' responses.

The second stage of data collected included follow-up interviews of 11 teachers' perceptions of the impact of principal efficacy. These interviews provided a qualitative depth that served as complimentary data sets to the survey. The interview transcripts were analyzed from the individual responses to each of the seven questions to provide an in-depth understanding of how the perceptions of principal efficacy impacts teachers. This depth of knowledge, along with the qualitative insights from the survey, formed a comprehensive explanation that highlighted the complexities between the perception of principal efficacy and its impact on teachers' experiences. The results contributed meaningful insights with perceptions of principal efficacy and instructional growth.

Chapter Five presents the findings and conclusions of the study by synthesizing the data. The purpose of the study is clearly stated, and the research questions are reviewed to provide context to the objectives of the study. The bulk of the chapter is

dedicated to themes and implications for practice. These implications offer practical insights which are discussed along with the suggestions for future research. Embedded within the chapter is a comprehensive summary of findings outlined in themes. The themes shape the explanations to the qualitative data and shape the connections between perceived principal efficacy and instructional growth. The conclusion of findings from the research is presented in a summary based on the research.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential influence of teachers' perceptions of principal efficacy on instructional growth. While there is existing research on how feedback from evaluators and teachers' self-efficacy can impact instructional growth, there is a gap in our understanding when it comes to the role of perceived principal efficacy. The goal of this research was to gain insights into teachers' viewpoints about the perceived effectiveness of their principals and how that perception relates to instructional growth. Principals play an essential role in the educational process as they interact with teachers daily to provide the essential support needed for student success (Campbell et al., 2018). Additionally, the significance of the study is in the potential changes in practice for leader and teacher development. By understanding how the perception of principal efficacy influences teachers, principals will be able to build stronger relationships while positively impacting school culture.

To achieve the objectives, this study employed specific research methods and data collection techniques designed to provide a comprehensive context and clarity in gathering teachers' perspectives on their perception of principal efficacy and its potential impact on instructional growth. Through exploring this relatively uninvestigated topic, this study aspires to contribute valuable information to inform practices and procedures related to principal leadership growth and development. Specifically, this study could impact the skills of principal evaluation through the insight gained from teachers. The study contributes to the pool of leadership practice and strategy. By better understanding the impact of perceived principal efficacy, principals can better meet the needs of their teachers through the evaluation process. Systematic evaluation is the foundation for

continuous improvement (Derrington & Campbell, 2018). Ultimately, the goal is to make a positive impact in the educational world.

This study included K-12 teachers with at least one year of experience who were recruited from nine schools in the same rural athletic conference in Southwest Missouri which represents approximately 3,150 teachers. All K-12 teachers with at least one year of experience were invited to participate in the survey. Each participant had the opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview by stating "yes" to the last survey question and providing their contact information. There were 63 respondents from the survey, and in the first three weeks 19 indicated a willingness to participate in a follow-up interview; however, only three of the 19 responded for the interview. After a six-week extension to provide further opportunity for response, eight more were able to schedule time for the follow-up interview for a total of 11 participants in the follow-up interview. The following questions directed the research:

1. What factors determine the perception of principal efficacy?
2. In what ways does the perception of principal efficacy impact instructional feedback during the evaluation process?
3. In what ways does the perception of principal efficacy, in conjunction with the evaluation process, impact teacher growth?

Through the data collection and analysis portion of the study, themes were identified and presented by the researcher. Each of these themes are integral to determining what implications for practice and implementation the study uncovered. The findings from the study are based upon the data collected, disaggregated, and analyzed in Chapter Four.

Findings

  This study aimed to understand the impact of teacher perceptions of principal efficacy on instructional growth. The initial survey was returned by 63 respondents of which 59% had 16 or more years of teaching experience. The survey included eight questions, and of the 63 respondents, 11 chose to participate in a follow-up interview comprised of seven questions. Potential answers to the research questions of the study have been derived by synthesizing the responses of the participants from both the survey and the follow-up interviews.

Research Question One - What factors determine the perception of principal efficacy?

  Principal efficacy, as defined for the purposes of this study, is the judgment of one's own ability to produce desired results (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The respondents of the follow-up interview questions described their perceptions of principal efficacy. Based on the responses, several factors determined the perception of principal efficacy that are summarized into three categories.

  First, the observed actions of the principal determine the perception of principal efficacy. The participants identified actions, such as how the principal acts and speaks, how the principal completes tasks and supports teachers, and how the principal implements their job duties with fidelity as essential to determining perceived efficacy.

  The second category revealed through the participant responses was that of capacity. Many of the respondents highlighted the principal's level of knowledge as a key factor influencing perceived efficacy. Beyond the principal's knowledge, the study revealed that the staff's trust in the principal's expertise was also a significant determinant. It became clear that not only what the principal knows but also the trust the

teachers placed in their abilities shaped the overall perception of principal efficacy. This reinforces the complex balance of both knowledge and trust in the educational environment.

Relationships was the third category that arose from the participant responses. The aptitude of the principal to connect and cultivate relationships with others is a significant factor in determining the perception of principal efficacy. In addition to the principal's relationship-building skills, the study indicates that the specific way in which these relationships are leveraged in leadership practices significantly contributes to the perception of their efficacy. Combined, how well the principal establishes connections and effectively applies the established relationships in their leadership style forms the perception of their efficacy, which emphasizes the complex nature of educational leadership.

Research Question Two - In what ways does the perception of principal efficacy impact instructional feedback during the evaluation process?

The data from the survey revealed that 71% of respondents felt like their perception of principal efficacy impacted the feedback they received half of the time or more. The impact of the feedback could be positive or negative. Conversely, 29% of respondents felt like their perception of principal efficacy sometimes or never impacted the feedback they received through the evaluation process.

The follow-up interview questions allowed participants to expand on how their perception of their principal's efficacy impacted the feedback they received through the evaluation process. All 11 interview participants stated that their perception impacted the feedback they received. The common thread was with whether or not they had a high

perception of their principal's efficacy or a low perception of their principal's efficacy. For respondents who maintained a high perception of their principal's efficacy, the influence on the feedback they received was predominantly positive. Specifically, there were two themes that emerged from their responses.

The first theme was related to their confidence in the feedback from their principal. The higher the perception of their principal's efficacy, the more confident the teacher was in the feedback given. Seven of the 11 respondents identified confidence in the feedback as directly impacting their perception of their principal's efficacy. Secondly, the theme of validity emerged as impactful. Four of the 11 respondents stated that their view of their principal's efficacy played a vital role in determining whether the feedback they received through the evaluation process was considered valid. This connection between their perception of their principal's efficacy and the validity of the feedback highlighted the belief that an effective principal was more likely to provide influential feedback. This connection could influence teacher performance and instructional growth. In summary, the survey and follow-up interviews both revealed that the perception of principal efficacy influences the feedback teachers receive through the evaluation process. Specifically, in the areas of confidence and validity, the importance of fostering a positive perception of principal efficacy was brought to light. Ultimately, these aforementioned factors impact the feedback experience teachers have through the evaluation process.

Research Question Three - In what ways does the perception of principal efficacy, in conjunction with the evaluation process, impact teacher growth?

The survey findings revealed teachers' perceptions of their principals' efficacy influenced their instructional growth. Of the respondents, 54% felt that their perception of their principal's efficacy impacted their instructional growth more than half the time. Conversely, the remaining 46% of respondents stated that their perception of their principal's efficacy sometimes or never impacted their instructional growth. Since nearly half of the respondents stated there was significant impact and the other half was stating there was minimal impact, this highlights the complexities in the experiences of each teacher as they experience the evaluation process.

The findings from the follow-up interview questions mirrored the results from the survey respondents. Nearly half of the interview respondents felt that their perception of their principal's efficacy did not have any impact on their instructional growth. Conversely, four interview respondents felt that their perception of their principal's efficacy gave them positive reinforcement in discussing their performance in the classroom. This positive reinforcement was empowering and encouraging, which instilled confidence in their instructional growth because of the evaluation process. The remaining two respondents felt that their perceptions of their principal's efficacy led to increased implementation of instructional strategies, which, in turn, positively impacted their instructional growth. Their perception motivated them to try new strategies within the classroom.

In summary, both the interview and survey results support the idea that teachers' perceptions of their principals' efficacy can influence their instructional growth.

However, based on approximately half of the responses, many other factors can influence instructional growth. The vast experiences of teachers show that there are many factors that work interdependently with leadership perceptions and the evaluation process to impact instructional growth.

Conclusions

The role of the principal is ever-changing and challenging. As the role of the principal has expanded, instructional feedback remains the foundation for improving teachers and the school system so students reap the benefits (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020). Regular feedback from principals strengthens and grows the instructional practices teachers utilize in the classroom (Wisniewski et al., 2020). Caingcoy (2022) proposed that the teacher's perception of the principal's experience with instructional practices can impact the effectiveness of the feedback. In addition to experience with instructional strategies, establishing positive relationships with teachers builds a foundation upon which feedback is effectively received.

This study revealed some interesting connections surrounding the perceived perception of principal efficacy and its impact on instructional growth. However, the study did have some limitations. The most significant limitation was the sample size. The study was sent to a population of around 3,150 teachers in a rural athletic conference in Southwest Missouri. Of that population, only 63 respondents filled out the survey. Of the 63 respondents, only 11 volunteered for the follow-up interview questions. The sample gave a good cross-section representation of the rural athletic conference in Southwest Missouri but may not represent the views of educators throughout the state or nationally.

Despite the limited sample size, there were several themes that emerged from the study beyond the focus of the three research questions mentioned above. Each theme provided insight into the potential impact and importance of the perception of principal efficacy. Expanding upon the three main research questions, the data from both the survey and the follow-up interview questions revealed findings related to how the perception of principal efficacy impacts teaching, why it is important, and how it influences the desire to continue working in the same building.

Theme One: The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Teaching

From the survey data, 70% of respondents stated that their perception of principal efficacy impacted their teaching in some way or another. One impact identified was the relationship between culture and perception of principal efficacy. More specifically, respondents related a higher perceived efficacy to a better culture within the building. In essence, teachers who have a high perception of their principals' efficacy associate the environment of the building to be more conducive to teaching. It is evident there is a relationship between culture and the perception of principal efficacy, underscoring the importance of effective leadership developing the building atmosphere.

Furthermore, respondents identified there was impact in the form of motivation and empowerment. The data supported the notion that teachers feel more motivated and empowered to do their job when they have a positive view of their principal's efficacy. The connection between motivation and perception of principal efficacy is key to inspiring teachers to seek professional growth, ultimately influencing their overall craft and impacting students. Speaking to the empowerment theme, teachers find comfort in

contributing to the school community through innovative teaching practices when their perception of their principal's efficacy is high.

In summary, the connection between perceived principal efficacy and how it impacts teaching most is through culture, empowerment, and relationships. Each of those areas has a significant impact on instructional practices that shape the student experience. The conclusions from this section highlight the importance of the role school leadership plays in shaping the educational environment to impact teaching.

Theme Two: The Importance of the Perception of Principal Efficacy

The participants in this study spoke about how they felt the perception of principal efficacy was important. First, several discussed that their perception of principal efficacy gave them confidence that their principal was an effective leader who could make the right decisions for the building. Teachers with a high perception of their principals' efficacy had trust in their principals' ability to do their jobs. Participants indicated that principals with a good history of quality experiences tend to have a higher perception of efficacy, which allows them to be more effective.

Secondly, the importance of perceived efficacy comes to light as the principal models growth and learning. Teachers are more likely to learn from and emulate a leader with high perceived efficacy. Participants spoke to this aspect as important in the area of support as well. How supportive the principal is and how likely the teacher is to accept that support hinges on the perception of the principal's efficacy.

Lastly, several spoke to the importance of perceived principal efficacy as key to setting and maintaining a positive school environment. As previously stated, the perception of efficacy is a significant influence on the effectiveness of a principal in the

development of culture. More specifically, culture increases when teachers are motivated through positive feedback. When principals recognize and celebrate the hard work and success of their teachers, it serves as a source of motivation. The motivation and feedback are more readily accepted when the teacher has a high perception of principal efficacy. Perceived principal efficacy is important because it influences leader effectiveness, culture, and continued growth.

Theme Three: The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Teacher Retention

Another area of impact from the perception of principal efficacy is the desire to continue working in the same building. From the survey, 84% of respondents indicated that their perception of their principals' efficacy influenced their decision to continue teaching in the same building half the time or more. The follow-up interview questions also indicated that they supported this notion as 7 of the 11 respondents stated that it was very impactful. Though there were varying responses to the impact on the desire to stay, the connection and importance of the teacher-principal bond was highlighted. Additionally, some respondents identified that if their perceptions of their principal's efficacy were low, it would be a motivating factor to seek employment elsewhere. For some of the participants, their perception of principal efficacy plays an important role in their desire to stay, and in the midst of a thin educational candidate pool, every factor contributing to retention is significant.

In conclusion, the impact of perceived principal efficacy emerges in several different areas, including teacher instructional growth, feedback, retention, culture, motivation, empowerment, and relationships. Regardless of the area of impact, each of the respondents from the follow-up interview identified that their perception of their

principal's efficacy held importance. The perception of principal efficacy impacts leader effectiveness, relationship building, and the development of culture.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study indicate that the perceptions of principal efficacy have an impact on feedback through the evaluation process and teacher instructional growth. The implications for practice are applicable contributions to the field. The first implication is that the perception of principal efficacy is malleable. The second implication is that the perception of principal efficacy impacts instructional feedback through the evaluation process. The third implication is that perception of principal efficacy plays a role in the effectiveness of a principal.

Implication One: Perception of Principal Efficacy is Malleable

As defined by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), principal efficacy is the judgment of one's own ability to produce desired results. Efficacy, both individual and collective, is highly impactful in promoting continuous growth and student achievement (Goddard et al., 2021). While the combined self-perception held by teachers has the potential to drive improved outcomes, it has also been linked to predicting achievement. Self-efficacy is one's own belief, whereas a variety of actors determines the perception of someone else's efficacy and is therefore malleable. The actions of the principal determine the perception of principal efficacy. How a principal acts and speaks, how the principal completes tasks and supports teachers, and how the principal implements their job duties with fidelity are essential to determining perceived efficacy.

Along with actions, the capacity of the principal in their role impacts the perceived efficacy. Therefore, as the principal's capacity within the scope of the job

grows, the perception of principal efficacy has the opportunity to grow. Each of these factors are coupled with the ability to create and maintain positive relationships. The perception of principal efficacy can change depending on the relationships that are developed and cultivated. How the staff trusts the principal directly shapes the overall perception of principal efficacy. This reinforces the complex balance of knowledge and trust in the educational environment. Perception of principal efficacy can increase or decrease over time given the determining factors.

Implication Two: Perception of Principal Efficacy Impacts Instructional Feedback through the Evaluation Process

According to Sadler (1989), feedback is information provided to a learner to close the gap between how the learner is presently performing and the targeted objective. Feedback can help teachers identify areas of strength and improvement, allowing them to focus on their professional growth and confidence (Bukko et al., 2021). There are several documented impacts to providing effective feedback, such as conducting successful classroom observations, understanding the content, and being specific about the progress toward the target (Balyer & Ozcan, 2020; Fuentes & Jimerson, 2020). This study contributes to the knowledge base of feedback effectiveness. The results of this study show that teachers' perceptions of their principals' efficacy impact the feedback they receive through the evaluation process. This demonstrates the importance of fostering a positive perception of principal efficacy in practice, as it directly impacts the teachers' experiences with the feedback a principal gives. Fostering a positive perception of principal efficacy can result in increased confidence in the principal's feedback to a teacher. Teachers with a higher perception of their principals' efficacy reported feeling

more confident in the feedback received. Additionally, teachers reported that they felt the feedback they received from their principal through the evaluation process had a higher validity depending on their perception of principal efficacy. In practice, principals who are aware of their perception are better positioned to provide feedback that is considered credible and valuable. Principals should be aware of the teachers' perceptions of their efficacy in order to positively impact instructional feedback through the evaluation process.

Implication Three: Perception of Principal Efficacy Plays a Role in the Effectiveness of a Principal

One of the primary responsibilities of a principal is instructional leadership and fostering growth among teachers (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Instructional leadership must be accompanied by interacting with teachers and providing feedback, and coaching is common practice (Brown, 2019). In addition to providing feedback and coaching, principals can support instructional growth by creating a positive school culture (Ozdemir et al., 2020). This study revealed another component of being an effective instructional leader and steward of the principalship. By understanding the impacts surrounding the perceived perceptions of principal efficacy, one can leverage this factor to positively contribute to advancing the school's mission. First, the teacher experience contains many complexities, but school culture is all-encompassing. Teachers' perceptions of their principals' efficacy are impactful to shaping the environment. Secondly, a principal can positively impact the motivation of their teachers while encouraging each to be empowered to be successful in their role by understanding how their efficacy is perceived. When teachers have confidence in their principals' effectiveness, they are

more motivated and encouraged to grow and improve. Lastly, the perception of principal efficacy can impact teacher retention. When there is perceived high principal efficacy, relationships can be grown and strengthened, ultimately impacting the desire of a teacher to continue working in the same building. Overall, the perception of principal efficacy plays a critical role in the educational experience and understanding this can impact the practices of a principal.

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative study focused on the impact of perceived principal efficacy on instructional growth through the evaluation process. The literature review covered efficacy (collective and individual), effective feedback, instructional growth, and the process of evaluation. This study filled a gap in the research on the impact perceived principal efficacy has on feedback and instructional growth. Further research is needed to understand better how to measure perceived principal efficacy systematically, what leadership practices improve perceived principal efficacy, what leadership styles are associated with high perceived efficacy, and how perceived principal efficacy impacts teacher retention in a high demand hiring landscape.

Systematic Measures of Perceived Principal Efficacy

This study was able to describe perceptions of principal efficacy from the teacher viewpoint qualitatively. In future research, it would be beneficial to investigate aspects of implementing a system to quantify the collective perception of principal efficacy within a building. This data-driven quantitative approach could shed new light on the understanding of the depth of impact to perceived principal efficacy and its impacts on instructional growth. In practice, this knowledge would help a principal understand where

the staff stood with their perception, in turn providing data to better inform building decisions. This would serve as a tool for principals to diagnose the levels of perceived efficacy within the building.

The quantitative data would help principals make informed decisions on how to increase perceived efficacy through leadership strategies over time. Additionally, this information would be impactful in giving feedback to teachers through the evaluation system. A data-based system would foster a culture of continuous improvement in the school environment. The benefits of such a system could help school districts train leaders in best practices and strategies to maximize the effectiveness of a principal. In conclusion, future quantitative research would identify what leadership strategies are most impactful to perceived principal efficacy.

Leadership Practices that Improve Perceived Principal Efficacy

This study made strides in gathering information on descriptors of what influenced perceptions of principal efficacy but did not research the practices that could improve such perceptions. Future studies should look at specific strategies and their effectiveness for principals to adopt to positively shape their perceived efficacy.

The study outlined the importance of valued feedback, school culture, and relationship building but did not study the best practices for influencing the perception of principal efficacy. Practices such as communication styles, innovative initiatives, and collaboration centered around decision making could further the impact to principals. To bridge the gap, future research could focus on identifying and testing specific practices or strategies that a principal could utilize to improve the perception of their efficacy. This deeper level of analysis could provide a more comprehensive understanding of lasting

impacts of strategies over time. In summary, by zoning in on specific effective strategies, researchers can equip educational leaders with essential knowledge to positively impact perceptions of their efficacy.

Leadership Style and Perceived Principal Efficacy

This study utilized transformational leadership as the framework to grow and impact instruction. Future research concerning all leadership styles could investigate if there is a particular style of leadership that correlates with higher perceptions of principal efficacy among teachers. There are possibilities that different leadership approaches correlate more strongly with high perceptions of principal efficacy.

Researching different leadership styles such as transactional, situational, or servant would advance the understanding of how leadership behaviors and strategies influence the way a teacher perceives the effectiveness of their principal. Specifically, this could link a strategy that could impact the effectiveness of the feedback given during the evaluation process. Identifying some of these strategies could benefit the development of leadership training programs. Professional development for principals to effectively increase perceptions of their efficacy among teachers would be impacted by understanding which leadership styles most significantly influence these perceptions. Thus, this may change how principals are trained.

In summary, this study has set the foundation with transformational leadership applications to perceived principal efficacy, but there is potential for broadening the learning to include many other leadership styles. This would enhance leadership development and impact education positively.

Perceived Principal Efficacy and Teacher Retention

This study gathered surface-level information on how the perception of principal efficacy can impact the desire for a teacher to stay in the same building. Future research could focus on this topic and explore how the perception of principal efficacy could be used as a tool for teacher retention to offer a better understanding of the factors involved. Teacher retention is a critical concern in the current landscape as education is currently experiencing a supply and demand issue because there are not enough qualified teachers entering the workforce to fill the demand of the job openings. This shortage issue underscores the need for strategies and insights to contribute to teacher retention. Understanding the potential impact the perception of principal efficacy could have on influencing teachers to stay in their current positions would benefit the entire field of education.

Gaining a better understanding of the interactions between perceived principal efficacy and teacher retention would have a significant impact on the field of education. It addresses the immediate challenges associated with the teacher workforce and contributes valuable insights to shape leadership practices and professional development for principals. In conclusion, the potential knowledge gained from the expansion of this research would impact teacher retention.

Summary

The perception of principal efficacy and its impact on teaching was thoroughly discussed throughout this chapter. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the potential impact of teachers' perceptions of principal efficacy on instructional growth. The research closed the gap in the understanding of how the perception of principal

efficacy impact instructional feedback and growth. The data from this study were used to formulate conclusions and implications throughout this chapter. The study addressed a relatively unexplored area in principal development and aimed to contribute valuable information to the field of education. The results and conclusions that were discussed could inform future practices and strategies related to principal development, instructional feedback, and instructional growth.

Conclusions were drawn to answer the three main research questions of what factors determine the perception of principal efficacy, what ways instructional feedback is impacted by perceived principal efficacy, and what ways does perceived principal efficacy impact teacher instructional growth. The findings discussed in this chapter revealed insights into each of these questions. The perception of principal efficacy was determined by several factors, including the observed actions of the principal, the capacity of the principal, and the quality of relationships the principal developed. The impact to instructional feedback from perceived principal efficacy was characterized by teachers feeling more confident and viewing the feedback as more valid. Specifically, confidence and validity of instructional feedback received during the evaluation process were positively impacted when a teacher had a positive perception of their principal's efficacy. Lastly, the impact on instructional growth influenced motivation and relationship building.

Three implications for practice within the field of education were outlined. Beginning with the malleability of perceived principal efficacy, it was highlighted that perceived principal efficacy can change depending on the relationships that are developed and cultivated. The way the staff trusts the principal directly shapes the overall perception

of principal efficacy. Perception of principal efficacy can increase or decrease over time given the determining factors. Next, the importance of fostering a positive perception of principal efficacy was highlighted, as it directly impacts the teachers' experiences with the feedback a principal gives. Lastly, by understanding the impacts surrounding the perceived perceptions of principal efficacy, one can leverage this knowledge to positively impact the culture and environment of the entire school through the role of the principal.

The end of the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research in several areas. These areas include investigating systematic methods to measure perceived principal efficacy, exploring leadership practices that improve perceived principal efficacy, determining the correlation between the style of leadership and perceived principal efficacy, and researching how perceived principal efficacy can be implemented to increase teacher retention.

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Appendix A

Teacher Perception of Principal Efficacy Survey Questions

Question	Survey Item	Response Choices
1	How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?	1-3 years 4-6 years 7-10 years 11-15 years 16+ years
2	What evaluation protocol is used to complete your teacher evaluations?	Open-Ended
3	What is your perception of the principal efficacy your evaluator demonstrates?	High efficacy Average efficacy Low efficacy
4	How often do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts the feedback you receive through the evaluation protocol?	Never Sometimes About half the time Most of the time Always
5	How often do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts your instructional growth?	Never Sometimes About half the time Most of the time Always
6	How often do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts how you implement your curriculum?	Never Sometimes About half the time Most of the time Always
7	How often do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts your desire to continue working in the same building?	Never Sometimes About half the time Most of the time Always
8	In what ways, if any, do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts the way you teach?	Open-ended
9	Are you willing to participate in a 15-minute follow-up interview? If so, please provide your contact information.	Open-ended

Appendix B

Teacher Perception of Principal Efficacy Interview Questions

	Question
1	How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?
2	Describe your experience with the process of teacher evaluation.
3	How would you define principal efficacy?
4	How, if at all, do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts the feedback you receive through the evaluation protocol?
5	How, if at all, do you feel the perceived level of efficacy of your principal impacts your instructional growth?
6	How, if at all, do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy impacts your desire to continue working in the same building?
7	In what ways, if any, do you feel your perception of your principal's efficacy is important?

Appendix C

Lindenwood Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Nov 21, 2022, 4:20:41 PM CST
RE:
IRB-23-34: Initial - The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional Growth
Through the Evaluation Protocol

Dear John Thompson,

The study, The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional Growth Through
the Evaluation Protocol, has been Approved as Exempt.

Category: Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted
educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not
likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or
the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on
regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of
or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management
methods.

The submission was approved on November 21, 2022.

Here are the findings:

IRB Discussion

- The PI is reminded that compliance with the recruitment policies at an external
  site resides with the PI. Should the policies of an external site require
  authorization from that site's IRB or another office, the PI must obtain this
  authorization and upload it as a modification to their approved LU IRB
  application prior to recruiting subjects at that site.

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.

Sincerely,
Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

Appendix D

Survey Letter of Participation

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is John Thompson and I am requesting your participation in my doctoral dissertation research project at Lindenwood University. The study is entitled *The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional Growth Through the Evaluation Protocol.* For this study, *Efficacy* is defined as the judgment of one's own ability to produce desired results. Participants will be asked to complete an 8-minute online survey. I am conducting this study to identify what, if any, impact the perception of principal efficacy has on instructional growth.

In order to conduct my research, I would like to invite all teachers with at least one year of experience to participate in the completion of an online survey at the following link: https://lindenwood.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eM2dcEWV5n0fYoe.

The survey should take 8 minutes or less to complete. If you are willing to participate in an interview, you will have an opportunity at the end of the survey to indicate your willingness and share your contact information. The interview will last about 15 minutes and occur at an agreed-upon time via Google Meet.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. All information obtained through this research will be reported anonymously. I will only receive the anonymous data collected from the survey. Participants will indicate consent by completing the research instrument but may also review the informed consent form attached to this email.

Thank you in advance to those willing to participate and support this study. I hope the results of this study will identify how perceived principal efficacy impacts instructional growth. If you have questions, you can contact me at (jrt273@lindenwood.edu). Dr. Tanya Vest, the dissertation chair for this research project, may be contacted at tvest@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you for your time,

John Thompson
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Research Information Sheet

Appendix E

Survey Research Information Sheet

LINDENWOOD

Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We are doing this study to investigate the impact of teacher perception regarding principal efficacy on instructional growth through the evaluation protocol. During this study, you will fill out a survey that will take 8 minutes or less. After taking the survey, you may choose to be considered for an interview. One representative per district will be chosen to participate in a 15-minute interview. The representative will be chosen based on the first to respond.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time.

There are no risks from participating in this project. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. We are collecting data that could identify you, such as an email address or phone number to contact you to schedule your interview should you indicate a willingness to participate in an interview on the survey. Every effort will be made to keep your information secure and confidential. Only members of the research team will be able to see your data.

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, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

Who can I contact with questions?

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

John Thompson: jrt273@lindenwood.edu

or

Dr. Tanya Vest: tvest@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.

Appendix F

Email to Follow up Interview Participants

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is John Thompson and I want to thank you for participating in my doctoral dissertation research project at Lindenwood University by filling out the survey last month. The study is entitled *The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional Growth Through the Evaluation Protocol.* You indicated in the survey that you may be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. The interview will last about 15 minutes (7 total questions) and occur at an agreed-upon time via Google Meet. I can set up this interview at your convenience to be conducted when you are available. Please let me know if you are willing to help by responding to this email. When I hear from you, we can establish a convenient date and time.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. All information obtained through this research will be reported anonymously. I will only receive the anonymous data collected from the survey. Participants will indicate consent by completing the research instrument but may also review the informed consent form attached to this email.

Thank you in advance to those willing to participate and support this study. I hope the results of this study will identify how perceived principal efficacy impacts instructional growth. If you have questions, you can contact me at (jrt273@lindenwood.edu). Dr. Tanya Vest, the dissertation chair for this research project, may be contacted at tvest@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you for your time,

John Thompson
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Research Information Sheet

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form for Follow up Interview Participants

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional Growth Through the Evaluation Protocol

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 the impact of perceived principal efficacy on instructional growth through the evaluation protocol

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 follow up interview

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. All data will be secured for three years and then destroyed.

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

The Impact of Perceived Principal Efficacy on Instructional Growth Through the Evaluation Protocol

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by John Thompson under the guidance of Dr. Tanya Vest 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 what impacts perceived principal efficacy has on instructional growth. You will be asked questions about perceived principal efficacy and what impacts it has, if any. 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 follow up interview individually with the researcher. If you would like to participate in the follow up interview you will be asked to include your email address or contact information on the last survey response. The follow up interview participants will be asked to join a virtual discussion that will last approximately 30 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 follow up interview discussion will take approximately 30 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, John Thompson directly at (417) 343-6522 or jrt273@lindenwood.edu. You may also contact Dr. Tanya Vest at tvest@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

John R. Thompson III received his Bachelor of Science in Unified Science from Missouri State University in 2005. John began teaching Science in the Springfield Public School R-12 School District in 2005. While teaching high school physics, biology, and anatomy, John received his Master of Education in School Administration from William Woods University in 2010. In 2016, John began serving as the Parkview High School Assistant Principal and Athletic Director. He graduated with a Specialist in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University in 2021. Since 2020, John has served as Republic High School Principal.