TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL SUPPORT AND TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

Teacher perceptions of their principal are an important element in how teachers view themselves and the profession. The proposed study will be used to understand the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principal's support and teacher self-efficacy. Approximately 100 full-time educators across the United States will be surveyed. A mixed-methods, convergent parallel design will include a multiple linear regression analysis and responses to open-ended questions.

RATIONALE

- A building principal is a crucial component of an effective school (DiPaola, 2012).
- Existing literature indicates that teachers consistently report, "the level of support principals provide has a significant impact on their effectiveness and job satisfaction" (DiPaola, 2012, p. 115).
- The impact principals have on teacher self-efficacy is a concept within the field of leadership that has been important over time (Leithwood, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).
- A Teacher's perceptions of their principal's support are critical elements in understanding the impact self-efficacy has on the overall school environment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- The support of teachers by a principal is "an important school dimension, and additional research is needed to examine the nature of supportive behaviors" (DiPaola, 2015, p. 137).
- When teachers feel emotionally supported, they are motivated to be more productive and engaged (Amabile & Kramer, 2011).
- Leading in an emotionally supportive way is the most "powerful, 'natural' path through which principals contribute to student learning" (Leithwood, 2007, p. 237).
- Through social support, principals can impact teachers' internal motivations that can assist in supporting and maintaining the emotional labor of teaching or conversely, undermine it resulting in burnout (Lambersky, 2016).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study will contribute to **existing research** on the relationship between teacher perceptions of principal support (emotional, professional, instrumental and appraisal) and teacher self-efficacy (for instructional strategy, classroom management and student engagement).

KEY TERMS

Self-Efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to produce levels of performance that influence events affecting their lives (Bandura, 1994).

This study will be used to investigate the degree and manner teacher perceptions of their principal's support predict teachers sense of self-efficacy for:

Instructional Strategy	Classroom Management	Student Engagement

Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001.

KEY TERMS

- **Principal Support** is demonstrating appreciation; providing adequate resources and information; maintaining open communication; supporting a collegial climate; offering feedback; and offering professional development opportunities.
  - **Appraisal Support** is providing frequent and constructive feedback about teacher performance.
  - **Emotional Support** is showing appreciation, keeping open lines of communication, encouraging colleague support, and recognizing teachers' ideas.
  - **Instrumental Support** is the extent to which teachers perceive their principal as providing support in terms of time, resources, and constructive feedback.
  - **Professional Support** is the teacher's perception of how the principal supports them in their professional growth.
    (DiPaola, 2012; House, 1981; Littrell, 1994)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Bandura's findings indicated that **self-beliefs of efficacy** play a major role in **self-regulation** and **motivation.**
  - Personal accomplishments require "not only skills but self-beliefs of efficacy to use them well" (Bandura, 1993, p. 119).
  - Existing research emphasizes that a teacher's sense of self-efficacy impacts their performance.
  - **Positive attitudes toward teaching** a topic have been **better predicted by perceived self-efficacy** than by a teacher's ability level.
  - How a person interprets their abilities is an important aspect of their self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy

- J.S. House describes his **Theory of Social Support** as "an interpersonal transaction involving one or more of the following:
  (1) Emotional concern (liking, love, empathy)
  (2) Instrumental aid (goods or services)
  (3) Information (about the environment)
  (4) Appraisal (information relevant to self-evaluation)" (House, 1982, p. 39).

Social Support

LITERATURE REVIEW

Topic/Author	Participants	Self-Efficacy Findings
"Prospective Teachers' Professional Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Terms of Their Perceived Autonomy Support and Attitudes Towards the Teaching Profession" (Kanadli, 2017)	173 prospective teachers who graduated from a state university's faculty of education program in Turkey in 2015	Prospective teachers' professional self-efficacy beliefs had a mean of 161.60 (SD = 26.14), the mean for perceptions of autonomy support was 56.10 (SD = 20.10), and the mean for their attitudes towards the profession was 135.50 (SD = 23.57). Prospective teachers' professional self-efficacy beliefs are moderate.
"Novice Teachers' Perceptions of School Climate and Self-Efficacy" (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2013)	112 first year teachers from Estonia	A supportive school climate positively influences novice teachers' beliefs regarding self-efficacy.
"Are We Building Preservice Teacher Self-Efficacy? A Large-Scale Study Examining Teacher Education Experiences" (Clark & Newbury, 2019)	Primary education preservice teachers ages 18-50 (N = 783) completing their four-year bachelor's degree	There was a statistically significant correlation between the perceptions of the mastery experiences that took place during student teaching on the ST-MES and the TSES.

Topic/Author	Participants	Principal Support Findings
"Faculty Perceptions of Principal Support and Change Orientation in Virginia High Schools" (Cagle, 2012)	1,276 survey responses including licensed teachers from 34 urban, suburban, and rural public high schools throughout the state of Virginia	Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between expressive support and community pressure for change and a significant relationship between instrumental support and faculty openness to change at p < .05.
"Dimensions of Principal Support Behaviors and their Relationship to Organizational Citizenship Behaviors and Student Achievement in High Schools" (Tindle, 2012)	1281 teachers from 34 high schools in the commonwealth of Virginia	Teachers rated their level of principal support as moderate, with a mean score of 4.43, placing the average between "somewhat agree" and "agree" on the Likert-style scale used for the measure. Pearson correlations revealed a positive significant relationship between Expressive Support and Organizational Citizenship Behavior.
"Principal Support: Its Impact on Job Satisfaction and Early Career Teachers' Decisions to Remain in Teaching" (Diggs, 2020)	614 early career teachers (ECTs) with 2-5 years of experience from elementary, K-8, middle and senior high schools within a large urban school district in the southeast United States	Teachers perceived greatest levels of support in the instrumental support dimension (M = 4.74, SD = 1.70) and the least in the appraisal support dimension (M = 4.36, SD = 1.70).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what degree and in what manner do teachers' perceptions of their principal's support (emotional support, professional support, instrumental support, and appraisal support) predict **teachers' efficacy for instructional strategy**?
2. To what degree and in what manner do teachers' perceptions of their principal's support (emotional support, professional support, instrumental support, and appraisal support) predict **teachers' efficacy for classroom management**?
3. To what degree and in what manner do teachers' perceptions of their principal's support (emotional support, professional support, instrumental support, and appraisal support) **predict teachers' efficacy for student engagement**?
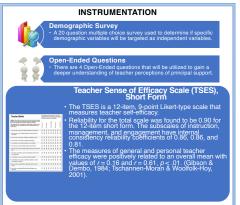4. What are teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and the role of principal support in teacher self-efficacy?
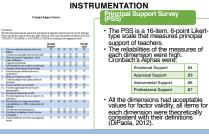
PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

- Approximately 100 educators across the United States will be targeted using the Qualtrics platform. Participants will be invited to answer the following pre-screening questions prior to beginning the survey:
  1. Are you currently employed as a certified teacher in the United States?
  2. Are you currently employed as a full-time teacher in the United States?
  3. Do you work in a Local Educational Agency(LEA) or similar public, private, or regional school district?
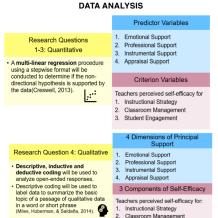
RESEARCH DESIGN

- In this survey research study, a convergent-parallel mixed methods design will be used to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principal's support and teacher self-efficacy, as well as their responses to four open-ended questions.
- Quantitative and qualitative data types and their results will be merged with a comparison matrix into one overall interpretation as depicted in the two ovals in the figure below, which indicate these points of interface between the strands (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).
- This design will allow the researcher to triangulate the themes across types of data regarding teacher perceptions of principal support and teacher self-efficacy.

Quantitative Data Collection → Quantitative Data Analysis
Qualitative Data Collection → Qualitative Data Analysis
→ Merge the results → Interpretation

Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011.

INSTRUMENTATION

Demographic Survey
- A 20 question multiple choice survey used to determine if specific demographic variables will be targeted as independent variables.

Open-Ended Questions
- There are 4 Open-Ended questions that will be utilized to gain a deeper understanding of teacher perceptions of principal support.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), Short Form
- The TSES is a 12-item, 9-point Likert-type scale that measures teacher self-efficacy.
- Reliability for the total scale was found to be 0.90 for the 12-item short form. The subscales of instruction, management, and engagement have internal consistency reliability coefficients of 0.86, 0.86, and 0.81.
- The measures of general and personal teacher efficacy were positively related to an overall mean with values of $r = 0.16$ and $r = 0.61$, $p < .01$. (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

INSTRUMENTATION

Principal Support Survey (PSS)
- The PSS is a 16-item, 6-point Likert-type scale that measures principal support of teachers.
- The reliabilities of the measures of each dimension were high. Cronbach's Alphas were:

Emotional Support	.94
Appraisal Support	.93
Instrumental Support	.88
Professional Support	.87

- All the dimensions had acceptable values for factor validity, all items for each dimension were theoretically consistent with their definitions (DiPaola, 2012).

DATA ANALYSIS

Predictor Variables
1. Emotional Support
2. Professional Support
3. Instrumental Support
4. Appraisal Support

Research Questions 1-3: Quantitative
- A **multi-linear regression** procedure using a stepwise format will be conducted to determine if the non-directional hypothesis is supported by the data(Creswell, 2013).

Criterion Variables
Teachers perceived self-efficacy for:
1. Instructional Strategy
2. Classroom Management
3. Student Engagement

4 Dimensions of Principal Support
1. Emotional Support
2. Professional Support
3. Instrumental Support
4. Appraisal Support

Research Question 4: Qualitative
- **Descriptive, inductive and deductive coding** will be used to analyze open-ended responses.
- Descriptive coding will be used to label data to summarize the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data in a word or short phrase (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

3 Components of Self-Efficacy
Teachers perceived self-efficacy for:
1. Instructional Strategy
2. Classroom Management
3. Student Engagement