Spring 4-5-2019

# A Mixed-Methods Study of How Elementary Principals Build Trust With Staff Using Weisman's Five Domains of Trust Model

Cynthia Smith-Ough
*Brandman University*, cynthiaough@yahoo.com

# A Mixed-Methods Study of How Elementary Principals Build Trust With Staff Using Weisman's Five Domains of Trust Model

A Dissertation by

Cynthia Smith-Ough

Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2019

Committee in charge:

Doug DeVore, Ed.D, Committee Chair

Len Hightower, Ph.D.

Lisbeth Johnson, Ed.D.

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY

Chapman University System

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Cynthia Smith-Ough is approved.

_____, Dissertation Chair

Douglas DeVore, Ed.D.

_____, Committee Member

Len Hightower, Ph.D.

_____, Committee Member

Lisbeth Johnson, Ed.D.

_____, Associate Dean

April 5, 2019

A Mixed-Methods Study of How Elementary Principals Build Trust With Staff Using Weisman's Five Domains of Trust Model

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my incredible family, friends, and colleagues who have believed in me every step of the way. This process has been a journey full of ups and downs with sharp twists and turns, but with the encouragement of those who love me, I have been able to trust in the process and accomplish what at times seemed impossible. I want to say thank you to my husband, Charles, for his dedication and love. Thank you for always being there for me and telling me I can do it. Thank you to my daughter, Nicole, for cheering me up and helping me relax when I felt stressed, and for being so patient with me. Thank you to my eldest daughter, Stephanie, for always being that shining light in my life and knowing when I needed a boost. Thank you to my son, Max, for his sense of humor and making me laugh when I needed it most. I'm also so incredibly thankful for my mom for always inspiring me throughout my life and for her unwavering belief in me. I love you, Mom. To my father who passed away last year, thank you for teaching me about perseverance and grit. I think of you often.

Thank you to my colleagues and wonderful Epsilon cohort. Your friendship means so much to me. I am a better person because of you. Thank you to Dr. DeVore for serving as my dissertation chair and to Dr. Johnson and Dr. Hightower for serving on my committee. I was blessed to have such a dream team. I couldn't have done this without you. I am forever changed as a result of this journey, and I can't wait to discover what new roads I will travel next.

ABSTRACT

A Mixed-Methods Study of How Elementary Principals Build Trust with Staff Using Weisman's Five Domains of Trust Model

by Cynthia Smith-Ough

**Purpose:** The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe how elementary principals establish trust with staff using the 5 domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Weisman, 2010). In addition, it was the purpose of this study to determine the elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of the 5 domains for building trust.

**Methodology:** This mixed-methods research design used quantitative and qualitative data to analyze the research questions related to trust between elementary principals and their staff. The study combined surveys and in-person interviews. The quantitative data were gathered via a 10-question online Likert Scale survey. The results of the quantitative survey guided qualitative data gathering. The population for this study included elementary principals in San Diego County.

**Findings:** Qualitative findings of this research suggest that elementary principals demonstrate trust building strategies from each of the 5 trust domains, with competence as most significant to building trust with staff. Additionally, quantitative findings concurred that the trust domain of competence was perceived as most important to creating trust.

**Conclusions:** The study's findings supported by literature conclude the need for elementary principals to integrate leadership strategies from each of the 5 trust domains in order to build trust with staff. Elementary principals can build a culture of trust by

demonstrating the following behaviors: (a) developing positive relationships with staff members through meaningful interactions, (b) demonstrating genuine care and concern for staff's personal needs and well-being, (c) setting clear expectations through open and honest communication, (d) building the capacity of teams through shared decision-making, and (e) leading by example demonstrating consistency and alignment between words and actions.

**Recommendations:** The researcher recommends state administrative credentialing programs implementing emotional intelligence coursework to build the emotional capacity of principals in developing trust. Additionally, school districts should provide principals ongoing coaching and professional development around the 5 domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency in order to support principals to acquire the leadership skills needed to build and sustain trust.

# PREFACE

Following collaborative discussions regarding the opportunity to study principal trust leadership with various populations, six doctoral students in collaboration with faculty researchers developed a common interest in investigating how principals establish trust with staff. This resulted in a thematic study conducted by a research team of six doctoral students. This mixed-methods study was designed with a focus on the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency using The Values Institute's trust framework in order to identify and describe the leadership practices principals use to establish trust with staff. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to determine principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains for trust. Principals were selected by the team from various public K-12 school districts in California to examine the trust leadership strategies these site leaders used.

Each researcher first administered a survey to 12 principals to determine the perceived degree of importance for building trust utilizing the five domains of consistency, competence, candor, concern, and connection; the researcher then interviewed the same school site principals who were surveyed to determine what leadership strategies helped them to establish trust with teachers. To ensure thematic consistency and reliability, the team co-created the purpose statement, research questions, definitions, interview questions, survey, and study procedures.

Throughout the study, the term *peer researchers* is used to refer to the other researchers who conducted this thematic study. My fellow doctoral students and peer researchers studied principal trust leadership with the following populations in California K-12 school districts: Amy Brower, elementary school principals in Apple

Valley area; Danielle Clark, high school principals in San Diego and Orange County; Diana Escalante, elementary school principals in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties; Iyuanna Pease, high school principals in Sacramento; and Wendy Ryerson, middle school principals in Orange County.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION ..... 1
Background ..... 3
Historical Perspective of Trust Leadership ..... 4
Theoretical Framework of Trust Leadership ..... 4
Competence ..... 5
Consistency ..... 6
Concern ..... 7
Candor ..... 7
Connection ..... 7
Defining Trust ..... 8
The Importance of Trust in Schools ..... 9
School Principals and Trust Leadership ..... 10
The Role of the Principal ..... 10
Statement of the Research Problem ..... 11
Purpose Statement ..... 12
Research Questions ..... 12
Significance of the Problem ..... 13
Definitions ..... 15
Theoretical Definitions ..... 15
Operational Definitions ..... 16
Delimitations ..... 16
Organization of the Study ..... 16

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ..... 18
Speed and Complexity of Change ..... 20
Impact of Change on Leadership and Organizations ..... 21
Impact of Change on Trust ..... 23
Barriers to Trust ..... 24
The Need for Trust in Leadership ..... 25
Leadership Theories ..... 26
Leadership Trait Theory ..... 27
Behavioral Leadership Theory ..... 28
Transactional Leadership Theory ..... 29
The Link Between Effective Leadership Styles and Trust in Organizations ..... 30
Authentic Leadership ..... 31
Servant Leadership ..... 32
Transformational Leadership ..... 33
The Importance of Leaders Exhibiting Trust in Organizational Settings ..... 35
Theoretical Foundations ..... 36
Integrative Model for Organizational Trust ..... 37
The Five Waves of Trust ..... 38
Self-trust ..... 38
Relationship trust ..... 39
Organizational trust ..... 40

Market trust ..... 41
Societal trust ..... 41
Eight Pillars of Trust ..... 41
Clarity ..... 42
Compassion ..... 42
Listen ..... 42
Appreciate ..... 43
Wake-up ..... 43
Serve others ..... 43
Character ..... 43
Competency ..... 44
Commitment ..... 44
Connection ..... 44
Contribution ..... 45
Consistency ..... 45
Trust Works! ABCD Trust Model ..... 45
Able ..... 45
Believable ..... 46
Connected ..... 46
Dependable ..... 46
Theoretical Framework ..... 47
Competence ..... 49
Consistency ..... 49
Concern ..... 50
Candor ..... 51
Connection ..... 52
K12 Leadership and Trust ..... 53
Role of a School Principal ..... 54
Principal's Role as Lead Learner ..... 55
Principal's Role as Change Leader ..... 56
Summary ..... 57
Synthesis Matrix ..... 58

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY ..... 59
Overview ..... 59
Purpose Statement ..... 59
Research Questions ..... 60
Research Design ..... 60
Qualitative Research Design ..... 62
Quantitative Research Design ..... 63
Method Rationale ..... 64
Population ..... 65
Target Population ..... 65
Sample ..... 66
Instrumentation ..... 68
Researcher as Instrument of Study ..... 69
Quantitative Instrumentation ..... 69

Qualitative Instrumentation ..... 70
Validity and Reliability ..... 71
Reliability ..... 71
Field Testing ..... 71
Content Validity ..... 72
Criterion Validity ..... 73
Data Collection ..... 73
Data Analysis ..... 74
Quantitative Analysis ..... 75
Qualitative Analysis ..... 76
Limitations ..... 77
Time ..... 77
Geography ..... 77
Sample Size ..... 78
Researcher as Instrument of the Study ..... 78
Summary ..... 79

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS ..... 80
Overview ..... 80
Purpose Statement ..... 80
Research Questions ..... 81
Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures ..... 81
Interrater Reliability ..... 83
Population ..... 84
Sample ..... 84
Demographic Data ..... 86
Presentation and Analysis of Data ..... 86
Data Analysis for Research Question 1 ..... 90
Establishing positive relationships ..... 91
Being vulnerable and authentic. ..... 93
Listening to staff members ..... 94
Making others feel valued ..... 95
Data Analysis for Research Question 2 ..... 96
Caring about the needs of staff ..... 98
Creating a positive culture ..... 100
Checking in with staff ..... 102
Getting to know staff ..... 102
Data Analysis for Research Question 3 ..... 103
Setting clear expectations ..... 105
Open, honest, and transparent communication ..... 106
Providing staff with specific feedback ..... 107
Data Analysis for Research Question 4 ..... 109
Providing opportunities for shared decision-making ..... 110
Reflection and seeking to improve ..... 112
Establishing clear vision and purpose ..... 113
Ability to model and coach staff ..... 114
Developing clear systems and structures ..... 116

Data Analysis for Research Question 5 ..... 118
Leading by example ..... 119
Alignment between words and actions ..... 120
Keeping students at the center of the work ..... 121
Following through on your word ..... 122
Being visible and accessible ..... 123
Data Analysis for Research Question 6 ..... 124
Major Findings for Consistency ..... 126
Major Findings for Competence ..... 129
Major Findings for Candor ..... 131
Major Findings for Concern ..... 134
Major Findings for Connection ..... 137
Summary ..... 139
Qualitative Summary ..... 140
Quantitative Summary ..... 141

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 143
Overview ..... 143
Review of Methodology ..... 143
Purpose Statement ..... 143
Research Questions ..... 144
Population ..... 144
Sample ..... 145
Major Findings ..... 145
Research Question 1: Connection ..... 146
Major Finding 1 ..... 146
Research Question 2: Concern ..... 147
Major Finding 2 ..... 147
Research Question 3: Candor ..... 147
Major Finding 3 ..... 147
Major Finding 4 ..... 148
Research Question 4: Competence ..... 148
Major Finding 5 ..... 148
Major Finding 6 ..... 149
Major Finding 7 ..... 149
Research Question 5: Consistency ..... 150
Major Finding 8 ..... 150
Major Finding 9 ..... 150
Research Question 6 ..... 151
Major Finding 10 ..... 151
Major Finding 11 ..... 151
Major Finding 12 ..... 152
Major Finding 13 ..... 152
Major Finding 14 ..... 152
Major Finding 15 ..... 153
Unexpected Findings ..... 153
Conclusions ..... 155

Conclusion 1. Interconnectedness of Domains ..... 155
Conclusion 2. Connection ..... 156
Conclusion 3. Concern ..... 157
Conclusion 4. Candor ..... 158
Conclusion 5. Competence ..... 160
Conclusion 6. Consistency ..... 161
Implications for Actions ..... 162
Implication 1. Developing Emotional Intelligence in School Leaders ..... 163
Implication 2. Leadership Coaching and Mentoring ..... 164
Implication 3. Professional Development on the Five Domains of Trust ..... 165
Recommendations for Future Research ..... 165
Concluding Remarks and Reflections ..... 166

REFERENCES ..... 169

APPENDICES ..... 185

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Studies of Leadership Traits ....28

Table 2. Demographics for Study Participants ....87

Table 3. Study Criteria ....87

Table 4. Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 1: Domain of Connection ....91

Table 5. Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 2: Domain of Concern ....98

Table 6. Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 3: Domain of Candor ....104

Table 7. Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 4: Domain of Competence ....110

Table 8. Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 5: Domain of Consistency ....119

Table 9. Summation of Number of Responses for Perceived Degree of Importance for the Five Domains for Building Trust ....125

Table 10. Summation of Number of Responses to "How Well is the Organization's Ability to Perform Consistently and Dependably Over the Long Term?" ....127

Table 11. Summation of Number of Responses to "How Effective Is the Organization in its Ability to Accomplish What it's Designed to Do?" ....130

Table 12. Summation of Number of Responses to "How Transparent is the Organization Communicating or Making Information Available to Employees?" ....133

Table 13. Summation of Number of Responses to "How Much Does the Organization Show Empathy or Care for its Employees?" ....136

Table 14. Summation of Number of Responses to "How do Your Values or Goals Align With the Organization, the People and Their Behavior Behind it?" ....138

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Edelman's trust index. ..... 21

Figure 2. Pyramid of trust. ..... 48

Figure 3. Graphical representation of mixed-methods study. ..... 62

Figure 4. Population, target population, and sample visual representation. ..... 68
..... 85

Figure 5. Number of themes in each variable ..... 88

Figure 6. Frequency count for coded themes in each domain of trust ..... 89

Figure 7. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 1. ..... 91

Figure 8. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 2. ..... 98

Figure 9. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 3. ..... 105

Figure 10. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 4. ..... 110

Figure 11. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 5. ..... 119

Figure 12. Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of consistency. ..... 129

Figure 13. Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of competence. ..... 132

Figure 14. Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of candor. ..... 135

Figure 15. Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of concern. ..... 137

Figure 16. Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of connection. ..... 140

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Trust is a complex and dynamic process (Covey, 2006; Tonissen, 2015; White, Harvey, & Fox, 2016). The concept of trust and leadership dates back to the era before Christ. Confucius, Chinese philosopher of 6th-century BCE, once remarked that trust is the most important resource for a ruler to protect and to hold onto at all costs, for without it, one cannot live (Hosking, 2002; Luhmann, 1979). According to Hosking (2002), trust is essential to take risks in the face of unknown challenges and to overcome the fear of living in an unpredictable future. Therefore, today's complex and ever-changing world requires leaders to establish trust as a key priority within their organizations in order to successfully take actions and survive in the face of an unknown and uncertain future (Hosking, 2002; Luhmann, 1979; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; White et al., 2016).

Consequently, trust is a critical competency of leadership that is needed (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Zak, 2017). However, because of the rapidly changing economy and complex global world we live in, trust in our culture at large and in our organizations is quickly eroding (Covey, 2009; Horsager, 2012; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; Ospina, Kersh, & Wart, 2012). The growing public perception that organizations are not acting in the best interest of the people they serve is becoming more prevalent in communities all over the world (Smith & Cruickshank, 2017). As a result, trust has become more and more complex for leaders to acquire and sustain with key stakeholders in their organizations (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016).

The lack of trust perpetuating in our society exists across a variety of organizations across the globe, from large independent organizations to small public

schools (Smith & Cruickshank, 2017). The perceived public image of organizations, both private and public, as self-serving institutions is corroding public confidence in businesses, governmental agencies, and schools (Smith & Cruickshank, 2017; Thomas, 2009). With public trust in leadership on the decline (Covey, 2006; Edelman, 2017; Hosking, 2002; Weisman, 2016), it is crucial to focus on the leadership practices that help establish trust, especially within schools.

Trust leadership practices are a critical component of effective schools. Societal demands and the changing global economic realities have led to the higher standards for schools and have increased measures of accountability on school principals (Farnsworth, 2015; Fullan, 2014; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). The leadership of the school principal is second only to teaching in the classroom among all school-related factors impacting student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). As a result, principals need to develop leadership strategies that foster trust within and among stakeholders in order to directly impact a positive-school culture that accelerates achievement.

The role of the school principal requires being a trustworthy leader (Fullan, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Principals need to earn the trust of their stakeholders if they are to be successful. Without trust, schools are more likely to fail in their efforts to achieve their goals or make significant improvements to achievement efforts (Bird, Wang, Watson, & Murray, 2012). Principals who have developed trusting relationships with their faculty are more apt to be successful in developing a positive school culture of learning and collaboration (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). According to Tschannen-Moran (2014), “These leaders create a bond that helps inspire teachers to move to higher levels

of effort and achievement" (p. 13). Amid the demands of accountability and ever-changing expectations placed on school leaders, "no leader can long survive the demise of trust" (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p. 251).

## Background

Trust is at the heart of transformational leadership (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; White et al., 2016; Zak, 2017). In a world assaulted by monumental changes across all industries and organizations in recent years, the demand for leaders to have the capacity to build and sustain relationships and influence positive outcomes is greater than ever (Hargreaves & Boyle, 2015; White et al., 2016). Trusting relationships are the foundation of business and the cornerstone of collaboration and change (Altman, 2010; Brewster & Railsback, 2003). However, because of the unpredictable and turbulent world we live in, trust in society and in institutions is rapidly deteriorating (Covey, 2009; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; White et al., 2016). Trust has become progressively demanding for leaders to earn and maintain with key stakeholders in their organizations because of existing and unforeseen problems related to the speed and complexity of change including the stresses of a volatile economy, competition for resources, the technological revolution, and increased diversity in the workplace (Covey, 2006; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016; White et al., 2016). Therefore, today's world requires leadership who can develop and sustain an organization's social capital as much as its' financial capital for both social and economic development (Heathfield, 2019; Horsager, 2012; Hosking, 2002; Luhmann, 1979; White et al., 2016).

## Historical Perspective of Trust Leadership

Seminal social psychologists have concluded that trust is psychologically essential to organizational prosperity (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Increases in workplace diversity and implementation of work teams in organizations throughout the United States have generated increased interest in the topic of trust for organizations in the 21st century. As globalization and technology continue to expand organizational scope and strategy, teams are quickly becoming an essential work unit of organizations in order to accomplish complex tasks (Boundless, 2016; Schwarz, 2002). When the world is connected so intimately, so many more people can collaborate in much deeper ways; therefore, an organization's prosperity will depend on how well teams work together to analyze and apply data to produce better results in innovative ways (Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). Trust is the fundamental ingredient of a functioning and cohesive team and requires team members to be comfortable in being vulnerable with each other (Lencioni, 2002). According to Rousseau et al. (1998), "New organizational forms built around the management of interdependence will provide a catalyst for innovative research on trust and its band-with into the next millennium" (p. 402).

## Theoretical Framework of Trust Leadership

Trust is anything but simple. Because of its complexity, The Values Institute (TVI) focuses on multiple factors of trust and identified five dimensions or variables of trust: competence, consistency, concern, candor, and connection. TVI framework has not been used in education; therefore, this study used TVI variables of trust in order to adequately measure its impact on productivity and performance within schools.

Similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Weisman (2016) explained that trust involves a hierarchy of values that begins with the functional base requirements of trust (competency and consistency) and builds up the pyramid through the emotional factors of trust (concern and candor) to establish the self-actualization factor of connections that ultimately develop trust in the organization. Weisman described that corporate cultures need to move beyond short-term gains and move toward embracing a values-based approach to leadership in order to develop an organizational culture where all employees succeed and thrive. These values are what all organizations and schools strive for. Building a values-based relationship and culture is a journey toward a single goal: trust (Tonissen, 2015; Weisman, 2016).

Organizations consist of interdependent individuals working together to achieve common goals and affect organizational outcomes (Farnsworth, 2015). Trust matters most in relationships of mutual dependence in which all parties depend on one another for success. According to Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), "Working together often involves interdependence, and people must therefore depend on others in various ways to accomplish their personal and organizational goals" (p. 710). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) further argued that trust is fundamental to functioning in a complex and interdependent society with the confidence that people's expectations of others will be fulfilled.

**Competence**

Competence is the ability to adequately perform and execute a task as expected (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Competence involves the extent to which a leader is seen as effective with both functional and interpersonal skills (Handford & Leithwood, 2013).

Handford and Leithwood (2013) further explained that competence is essential since people are cautious and hesitant to rely on someone whose abilities they believe are substandard. Tschannen-Moran (2014) defined functional competencies as "setting an example, working hard, pressing for results, setting standards, buffering teachers" (p. 34). Additionally, interpersonal competencies have been defined as "engaging in problem solving, fostering conflict resolution (rather than avoidance), handling difficult situations, and being flexible" (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p. 34).

Schools require competent leaders. In schools, the principal and faculty depend on each other to perform as expected and according to appropriate standards to accomplish teaching and learning goals. Employees need to believe in their leader and in their abilities to follow through on their word. According to Farnsworth (2015), "Faculty trust in the principal is more likely when principals are competent in their role and responsibilities (p. 10).

**Consistency**

Consistency refers to the leader's ability to perform dependably and reliably over the long term (Brown, 2017; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Weisman, 2016). Can faculty count on the principal to do what he or she says? Tschannen-Moran (2014) stated that "trust in someone's reliability implies a sense of confidence that we can rest assured that this person will do what is expected on a regular, consistent basis" (p. 33). Thornton and Cherrington (2014) further explained that to develop trust leaders need to maintain accurate alignment between their words and their actions. Principals who consistently follow through on their word earn the trust of their faculty, yielding better results within the school (Horsager, 2012).

## Concern

People put faith in those who care about them (Covey, 2009; Horsager, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). When employees feel cared about, it sets the foundation for a trust-based relationship. People who feel that their supervisor cares about them are more likely to stay with an organization, have higher levels of engagement, and be more productive (Altman, 2010). A 2015 study by Google found that supervisors who demonstrate a genuine interest in and concern for others' happiness, success, and well-being achieved higher levels of productivity and performance (Peck, 2015; Zak, 2017). In schools, the principal is the educational leader. Principals who show concern for their faculty will produce a happier and more productive faculty (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

## Candor

Candor refers to sincerity, authenticity, and honesty. This involves not only the accuracy of information delivered but also the manner in which it is communicated (Weisman, 2016). Tschannen-Moran (2014) stated that "when you trust someone, you believe that the statements he or she makes are truthful and conform to what really happened" (p. 25). School leaders who exercise candor confront crucial conversations with respect, tell the truth, avoid manipulation, and are true to themselves (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

## Connection

Trust is best built by establishing genuine connections with people (Brown, 2017; Horsager, 2012). Neuroscience experiments conducted by Zak (2017) on the science of trust showed "that when people intentionally build social ties at work, their performance

improves" (p. 89). Additionally, Zak found in a study of software engineers in Silicon Valley "that those who connected with others and helped them with their projects not only earned the respect and trust of their peers but were also more productive themselves" (p. 89).

In schools, the relationships between principals and teachers, in particular, are being highlighted as critical indicators of a school's preparedness for transformational change and the ability to sustain it (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). The greater the connection between principal and faculty, the more likely that authentic trusting collaboration will take place (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

## Defining Trust

Trust has been defined by many authors in multiple ways. Many descriptions of trust refer to it as the "glue" that binds people together and the "lubricant" that keeps an organization running smoothly (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Covey, 2006; Mineo, 2014; Tonissen, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). According to Tschannen-Moran (2014), "As 'glue', trust binds organizational participants to one another. Without it things fall apart" (p. 18). Trust is difficult to define because of its multifaceted construct; however, an examination of various definitions of trust across the literature uncovered common themes as related to the business model of TVI's science of trust framework. According to Weisman (2016), the science of trust framework consists of five dimensions or variables of trust: competence, consistency, concern, candor, and connection. The literature review therefore examines each of these variables of trust in the context of school leadership and positive school culture.

Trust is a challenge for schools across the nation as they face ongoing pressures to increase student assessment scores and demonstrate higher levels of proficiency for every student. A review of the literature suggests that school principals must recognize the leadership strategies that build and sustain trust within their schools to positively impact school culture.

## The Importance of Trust in Schools

Trust is an essential ingredient for school reform and prosperity. In the seminal study of school reform efforts of 12 Chicago public schools, Bryk and Schneider (2003) found that building trusting relationships between the adults in the school was at the heart of successful school improvement. Additionally, Brewster and Railsback (2003) contended that if school improvement efforts are to succeed and maintain momentum over time, school leaders must first cultivate a culture of trusting relationships with teachers and staff that is anchored on a shared vision for change.

Schools are comprised of daily social exchanges that rely on trust to take on the difficult work of teaching and learning that results in a positive school climate and culture (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). An important component of a positive school culture is trust. In schools, "neither organizational nor professional community can endure without trust" (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011, p. 53). Principals and faculty are interdependent in their shared commitment of professional learning and achievement for all. Therefore, identifying and describing trust leadership strategies utilizing Weisman's (2010) trust model is worthy of exploration because it will add to the pool of knowledge by exploring a theoretical framework of leadership trust-building strategies that has not been studied with elementary school principals.

## School Principals and Trust Leadership

Principals need to earn trust of their stakeholders if they are to be successful. Results from the majority of research on developing trust in schools lead to the strong conclusion that the principal's actions and behaviors are key to developing trust with faculty and fundamental to leading successful school improvement (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tonissen, 2015; Zakrzewski, 2015). According to Krasnoff (2015), effective principals focus on building a sense of community by creating a school atmosphere of caring and trust. Exemplary elementary school principals, like other business leaders, understand the complexity of the position but also know how to create a trusting, engaging, and collegial school culture that increases performance and productivity for all employees through trust leadership (Fullan, 2014).

## The Role of the Principal

The role of the school principal has grown increasingly complex over the past 2 decades with the expectation that principals have the capacity to be both manager and instructional leader to improve the quality of schools (Fullan, 2014). Kratzer (1997) concluded that school improvement is contingent upon developing relational trust within the school and in changing school culture rather than making only structural changes. Bryk and Schneider (2003) and Brewster and Railsback (2003) agreed with the work of Kratzer (1997) and also contended that relational trust among teachers and principals serves as a key factor in leading school reform. Tschannen-Moran (2014) stated, "Principals and teachers who trust each other can better work together in service of solving the challenging problems of schooling" (p. 13).

## Statement of the Research Problem

Leadership is complex. Leaders need both intellectual and emotional competencies in order to develop and sustain an organization's social capital as much as its financial capital for both social and economic development (Bass, 1990; Fullan, 2010, 2014; Heathfield, 2019; Horsager, 2012; Hosking, 2002; Luhmann, 1979; Ospina et al., 2012; White et al., 2016). Therefore, the demand for leaders to have the capacity to build and sustain trusting relationships and influence positive outcomes is greater than ever (Hargreaves & Boyle, 2015; White et al., 2016).

In the current culture of widespread uncertainty and distrust in leadership and institutions across the world (Friedman, 2017; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011), trust leadership practices are a critical component of organizational prosperity and the cornerstone of collaboration and change (Altman, 2010; Brewster & Railsback, 2003). However, because of existing and unforeseen problems related to the speed and complexity of change, trust has become progressively demanding for leaders to earn and maintain with key members in their organizations (Covey, 2006; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016; White et al., 2016). If organizations are to prosper given the unpredictable economic realities and the increasing societal demands for organizational transparency for the well-being of those they serve, leaders need to cultivate and strengthen trust as a first priority in order to create an environment in which all people can learn and work together for a common purpose (Ebersole, 2013; Glowacki-Dudka & Griswold, 2016).

Furthermore, an accumulation of research supports the proposition that building trust within an organization will fundamentally increase productivity and performance

(Covey, 2009; Farnsworth, 2015; Zak, 2017). According to Zak (2017), "By fostering organizational trust, you can increase employees' productivity and energy levels, improve collaboration, and cultivate a happier, more loyal workforce" (p. 86). As a result, additional research in identifying and understanding leadership strategies that principals use to build trust within the school and community is worthy of exploration.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe how elementary principals establish trust with staff using the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Weisman, 2010). In addition, the purpose of this study was to determine elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust.

## Research Questions

The purpose of the research questions is to form a link between the stated purpose of the study and the research problem and have an impact on the current state of knowledge of the study (Coughlan, Cronin, & Ryan, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The following research questions aligned to the purpose of this mixed-methods study:

1. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of connection?
2. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of concern?
3. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of candor?

4. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of competence?
5. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of consistency?
6. How do elementary principals perceive the degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust?

## Significance of the Problem

Trust is an essential asset needed of 21st-century leaders (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Zak, 2017). The challenges that organizations face in this rapidly changing world require leaders who can gain the trust of their people to influence transformational change (Dean Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Fullan, 2014; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; White et al., 2016). Trust studies have postulated that trust in this culture at large is in crisis and significantly lower than a generation ago (Covey, 2006, 2009; Thomas, 2009; Weisman, 2016). Furthermore, recent studies have acknowledged that the lack of trust in organizations is the root cause for poor employee performance, motivation, and retention (Heathfield, 2019; Paccagnella, 2017; Zak, 2017). Consequently, this downward trend of trust presents a unique challenge for principals because trust is so crucial for schools in fulfilling their mission of creating a positive school culture and preparing students to succeed in the 21st century (Tonissen, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Although the need for organizations to provide trust in the workplace has been noted in the research, little research has been done to guide school leaders, especially elementary principals, in their efforts to establish trust with teachers (Battle, 2007).

Therefore, this study will contribute to the existing literature by examining how elementary school principals can establish trust with staff within their school through the use of specific trust variables. Moreover, studies have examined effective school leadership practices for school reform (Blankstein, 2010; Fullan, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2012), yet few studies have examined how specific variables can support how elementary school principals establish trusting relationships with their staff. According to Weisman (2016), the science of trust framework consists of five dimensions or variables of trust: competence, consistency, concern, candor, and connection. This corporate model of trust leadership has not been applied with elementary school leadership and will therefore fill a gap in the current research.

Trust is a complex and dynamic process. The results of this study may assist school leaders with trust-building strategies that improve the overall culture of the school. Additionally, principals may gain valuable insight as to how to create trusting relationships that result in improved productivity, motivation, and performance. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) asserted that there is increasing evidence that organizations with positive cultures have superior employee job satisfaction rates and are more effective in achieving their goals.

In summary, it is imperative that school leaders establish trust with their stakeholders. Elementary school principals must be capable of leading innovation and change within their schools in a rapidly changing and competitive society. By examining how elementary school principals establish trust using Weisman's (2010) trust model, principals may be better equipped to establish a positive school culture that supports learning and achievement for all.

## Definitions

The following terms are theoretical and operational definitions that are relevant to the study. Theoretical definitions explain the abstract concept or idea of a term related to the academic discipline or area of study (Cline, 2017). Operational definitions define concepts by the way they are measured in order to provide concise and unambiguous information when applied to data collection (Creswell, 2005).

### Theoretical Definitions

**Competence.** Competence is the ability to perform a task or fulfill a role as expected (Covey, 2009; Farnsworth, 2015; Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

**Candor.** Candor involves communicating information in a precise manner and being truthful even if one does not want to provide such information (Gordon & Giley, 2012; O'Toole & Bennis, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016).

**Concern.** Concern is the value placed on the well-being of all members of an organization, promoting their welfare at work and empathizing with their needs. Concern entails fostering a collaborative and safe environment where leaders and members are able to show their vulnerability and support and motivate and care for each other (Dean Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Covey, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Livnat, 2004; Weisman, 2016).

**Connection.** Connection is a shared link or bond in which there is a sense of emotional engagement and interrelatedness (Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Stovall & Baker, 2010; White et al., 2016).

**Consistency.** Consistency is the confidence that a person's pattern of behavior is reliable, dependable, and steadfast (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016).

**Trust.** An individual's willingness, given his or her culture and communication behaviors in relationships and transactions, to be appropriately vulnerable based on the belief that another individual, group, or organization is competent, open and honest, concerned, reliable, and identified with the common values and goals (Weisman, 2016).

### Operational Definitions

**Principal.** The person in charge of managing and leading a school.

**Elementary school.** A school providing children with their primary education from kindergarten to fifth or sixth grade.

## Delimitations

Delimitations for this study restricted participation in this research by setting specific boundaries for the study. This study was delimited to the following:

1. Twelve elementary school principals in San Diego County who have 3 or more years of leadership experience and at least 15 staff members at their school site.
2. Convenience and purposeful sampling because of geographical proximity and availability.
3. Identification and description of how elementary principals establish trust was limited to the site staff including both certificated and classified staff.

## Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter I provided the foundation of the study by introducing the topic of trust, the five variables of trust, and the background of the problem. In addition, Chapter I consisted of the problem

statement, purpose statement, research questions, definitions, and delimitations of the study. Chapter II provides an extensive review of the literature discussed in Chapter I and includes seminal works of trust leadership noting major trends and yielding new insights. Chapter III describes the methodology and explains the appropriateness of utilizing a mixed-methods research design for the study. Chapter IV presents the data collected and summarizes all the key findings of what has been discovered from the study. Chapter V summarizes the major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, and implications for action based on the research. Additionally, Chapter V concludes the study by offering recommendations for future research based on the research findings.

# CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Effective leadership begins with a foundation of trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Covey, 2009; Mineo, 2014; Ospina et al., 2012). As leaders try to influence change and make a lasting impact on organizational achievement and prosperity, establishing trust with those they lead is a critical and essential competency needed of leadership (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Covey, 2006; Mineo, 2014). In a world saturated by distrust, paranoia, and the corrosion of public confidence of this country's institutions, the importance of developing trust leadership strategies and establishing a culture of trust has never been as urgent a need as it is now (Edelman, 2017; Friedman, 2017; Smith & Cruickshank, 2017). With school principals at the helm of leading transformational change and reform in schools amid political and cultural tensions, a need for school principals to recognize and implement leadership strategies that establish trust with staff is necessary to achieve breakthrough results. To meet the new challenges and demands as a result of the speed and complexity of change, a new set of leadership strategies is needed. This study explores trust leadership strategies and the domains of trust to establish trust with staff within schools.

Chapter II provides a comprehensive review of the literature and research conducted on trust leadership strategies using the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Wiseman, 2010) for building trust with staff. A synthesis matrix of pertinent research was created (see Appendix A) and used to guide the development of this review of literature. Several online databases (Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and PsycINFO) were searched through the Leatherby Library provided by Brandman University. This review is a synthesis of peer-reviewed journal articles,

books, reports, dissertations, and multimedia spanning the past 20 years and focusing on the five domains of trust with emphasis on elementary school principals. The review was organized into five parts using a funneling approach (Roberts, 2010). Each section develops from a general review of the literature to a specific focus of developing trust leadership. Part I includes the background on the speed and complexity of change in the world and the impact it has on leadership and organizations. Research on current issues with distrust and the need for trust in leadership is then reviewed. Part II provides an overview of organizational leadership theory models and the role of trust in organizations. Part III focuses on seminal studies of trust. This section presents a discussion of trust theories applied in leadership to develop trust within an organization and then leads to the key theoretical framework used in the study. Part IV introduces the trust theoretical framework and gives a succinct overview of each of the five domains of trust (connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency) used in the study. Part V describes the target population of elementary school principals and their role in establishing trust as a transformational leader. This chapter closes with a summary of major topics explored and further research needed.

The review of literature provides the conceptual framework for this mixed-methods study. The purpose of the study was to identify and describe how elementary principals establish trust with staff using the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Wiseman, 2010). In addition, the purpose of this study was to determine elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust.

## Speed and Complexity of Change

This world is changing at lightning speed, and organizations require leaders who can develop and nurture a culture of trust with the people they support and serve. According to Mandelbaum and Friedman (2011), the merger of globalization and the information technology revolution is changing every job and institution at record speed and raising the level of skill needed by the workforce to compete in the global market. Given the speed and complexity of change, trust in society and in organizations in general is in crisis (Covey, 2006; Horsager, 2009; Llopis, 2013). According to the *2017 Edelman Trust Barometer* global report, trust in institutions and in leadership across the globe continues to erode with over two thirds of the countries surveyed falling below 50% on trust (Edelman, 2017). Figure 1 depicts the average trust in institutions as declining across the world in 2017 with trust declining in 21 out of 28 countries and showing a 3-point decrease on the global trust index when compared to 2016.

Covey (2009) further contended that trust is significantly lower than a generation ago with only 49% of employees trusting senior management. This trust crisis demands a new way of leading in organizations that puts the needs of its people first in order to increase the rate of productivity within the organization for all stakeholders. Leaders need to move away from the old system of leading by exerting power over people with a focus solely on the bottom line to leading by connecting and collaborating by putting people over profit (Crowley, 2011; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; Weisman, 2016). In addition, White et al. (2016) asserted that the problems confronted in organizations today call for a new way of doing business that requires leaders who can develop trust from their employees in order to influence a shared vision, develop sustainable change, and

achieve desired outcomes. People of the 21st century, in particular the millennial generation, expect more of their leaders, especially in an era of deceit, corruption, and political turmoil (Blind, 2006). Employee needs have evolved over time and income is no longer the top priority for most people, but rather "people (in all jobs and roles) want to feel that they matter and that the work they do matters" (Crowley, 2011, p. 9). Therefore, trust leadership is a necessity with the newfound realization across organizations that people are seeking a sense of purpose, value, and fulfillment from their work and that "trust is a source of sustainable competitive advantage" (Weisman, 2016, p. 168). As a result, change has impacted the traditional way of doing business.


*Figure 1*. Edelman's trust index. From "2017 Edelman Trust Baromater" global report, by R. Edelman, 2017, p.3.

## Impact of Change on Leadership and Organizations

In the Global Age of increasing worldwide competitive demands, leapfrogging technological innovations, and constantly changing conditions as a result of the speed and

complexity of change, organizations and leadership must sacrifice traditional ways of doing business in order to remain sustainable in the future (Appelbaum et al., 2008; Markovic, 2008). According to McKinsey & Company (2016), if organizations fail to reinvent themselves and advance with the times, in 10 years they will fail to exist in any meaningful way. Consequently, the array of technological advances comprises the need for organizations to compete, connect, and collaborate to keep up with current trends in a predominate service industry and stay in business (Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). The traditional leadership model of the Industrial Age focused on a stable set of mechanical transactions centered on a physical product mindset of a predominate manufacturing industry (Crowley, 2011; Shwieters & Moritz, 2017). As the world changes and evolves, "new business imperatives call for new organizational behaviors" (Marković, 2008, p. 10). The desire people have for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment from their work requires leaders to think about how to retain their top talent and develop new ways to engage, motivate, and inspire their employees (Crowley, 2011; George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007; Seaver, 2017; Weisman, 2016). In 2006, "a *Gallup Management Journal* survey revealed that only 29% of employees considered themselves actively engaged in their jobs, working with passion and feeling a profound connection to their company" (Weisman, 2016, p. 22). Therefore, leaders who develop relationships with people built on a foundation of trust and respect will become the new and productive model that inspires and leads an organization toward success amid the trust crisis of the 21st century (Crowley, 2011; Edelman, 2017; Fullan, 2001; Horsager, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016).

## Impact of Change on Trust

The fast-paced economic and technological changes experienced throughout the world have created enormous stress and struggles within all types of organizations (Horsager, 2009; White et al., 2016). In this climate of high-stakes competition to stay afloat during tumultuous times, "trust has become the world's most precious resource" (Horsager, 2009, p. 13). The rise of digital technology has blurred traditional boundaries within industries, requiring a rise in the quality of services and relationships rendered and making trustworthiness more important to business (Shwieters & Moritz, 2017). The speed and complexity of change with advancements in technological infrastructure have created significant industry changes necessitating organizations to focus on developing trust to give them the edge over the competition (Ebersole, 2013; Horsager, 2009; Shwieters & Moritz, 2017). Ebersole (2013) asserted that leaders who develop trusting relationships gain the competitive advantage and are ultimately the most successful. On the other hand, leaders without trust have very little chance of influencing organizational change and are doomed for failure (Horsager, 2009; White et al., 2016). Furthermore, the chaotic conditions of change in the world require leaders to develop trusting relationships with staff in order to engage in purposeful and meaningful interactions that encourage risk taking and complex problem solving (Fullan, 2001). Horsager (2009) believed that "without trust, organizations lose productivity, relationships, reputation, talented people, customer loyalty, creativity, morale, revenue, and results" (pp. 7-8).

**Barriers to Trust**

With the statistics showing that trust has significantly decreased over the years, it is important to understand the barriers to trust in order to overcome them. According to Horsager (2009), there are 12 barriers to trust:

1. **"Conflict of interest."** Situations in which competing loyalties or interests are at stake can compromise trust (p. 34).
2. **"Rising litigation**." In this highly litigious society, people worry about whom they can trust and what can happen to them if they make a mistake (p.34).
3. **"Low customer loyalty**." People have easy access to information online and do not need to establish a relationship to get the best deal (p. 34).
4. **"Media coverage of scandals**." People are bombarded with negative news coverage causing distrust of others to spread (p.35).
5. **"Speedy social networks**." Opinions and critiques travel quickly across the world using social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and can either build or destroy trust in a flash (p. 35).
6. **"Technology**." Rapidly changing technology, although amazing, can be a barrier to trust because of the lack of consistency and longevity in devices (p. 35).
7. **"Fear**." With the world changing at such high speed, fear of the unknown is a barrier to trust (p. 36).
8. **"Negative experiences**." Negative experiences in business cause people to be skeptical and lose trust. Horsager (2009) stated that "recent studies show that 80 percent of Americans do not trust corporate leaders" (p. 36).
9. **"Individualism**." Believing one can do everything without the help of another is a

barrier to trust. Although being independent has value, it can hurt one's ability to trust others (p. 37).

10. **"Diverse thinking**." People prefer to be with others who share the same values and think like them; therefore, diverse thinking can be a barrier to trust (p. 38).
11. **"Instant gratification**." With the ability to get most things with a click of a button, people want everything fast. Since trust takes time to build and earn, the expectation of instant gratification can be a barrier to trust (p. 38).
12. **"Focus on the negative**." Most research on trust centers on how trust is destroyed rather than how it can be developed. Focusing on the negative factors of trust can therefore be an obstacle (p. 39).

With so many barriers to trust in the world, the need for trust in leadership is paramount to society's success and unity. Moreover, with the steady stream of scandalous news headlines revealing how business, political, religious, and educational leaders have damaged trust with the people they serve because of their self-serving and dishonest actions, trust has emerged as the key to overcoming the challenges with achieving success in modern society (Covey, 2006; Horsager, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Soloman and Flores (2001) stated that trust is "cultivated through speech, conversation, commitments, and action. Trust is never something 'already at hand', it is always a matter of human effort. It can and often must be conscientiously created, not simply taken for granted" (p. 87).

**The Need for Trust in Leadership**

Trust is essential to leadership (Covey & Link, 2012; Soloman & Flores, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; White et al., 2016; Zak, 2017). With the new demands and

expectations of the 21st-century leader, "trust has become the new currency of the global economy" and the critical competency needed of leaders today (Covey & Link, 2012, p. 13). Results from a 2014 research study from Towers Watson, a global professional services company, found that trust-building leadership skills are in dire need of improvement and are a top driver for employee engagement and retention. Covey and Link (2012) contributed to the body of literature stating that the two biggest drivers of employee engagement are "(1) the relationship of trust employees have with their supervisor, and (2) the trust they have for the organization at large" (p. 20). As a result, high-trust leadership produces a performance multiplier effect that generates greater prosperity, increased revenues, and greater overall achievement (Benko & Anderson, 2010; Covey & Link, 2012). In addition, research economists, Zak and Knack (2001), found that high-trust organizations and leaders produce more output and achieve at higher levels than low-trust organizations and leaders. Leaders who are able to develop trust within an organization and within teams increase the rate and effectiveness of employee performance (Fullan, 2001; Pfeffer & Veiga, 1999). Therefore, today's leadership needs trust. Leaders need to lead in a way that develops people toward higher levels of engagement by establishing trusting relationships that bring greater fulfillment, purpose, and value to all (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Covey et al., 2012; Crowley, 2011; Horsager, 2009; White et al., 2016).

## Leadership Theories

Leadership is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has developed and changed over time, yet the need for strong leaders has remained consistent (King, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Leadership theories evolved because of the conditions of a

changing world and the need to adapt management styles to meet the needs of followers (Bass, 1990). Over time, people are seeking and needing much more than just a paycheck; rather, many people are seeking a greater sense of satisfaction and fulfillment from their work (Pfeffer, 2005). Bennis (2013) and Latham (2014) agreed with Pfeffer (2005), explaining that traditional leadership styles are not keeping up with the demands and needs of contemporary organizational environments. Traditional leadership theories focus primarily on the supervisory control over employees while nontraditional leadership theories focus more on the development of people, ethics, values, credibility, and the ability to build relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Martin, 2018; McGregor, 1960). This section provides an overview of three traditional leadership theories (leadership trait theory, behavioral leadership theory, and transactional leadership theory), and the progression toward more contemporary leadership theories (authentic leadership, servant leadership, and transformational leadership) associated with building trust in organizations.

**Leadership Trait Theory**

Leadership trait theory, tied to the great man theory proposed by Thomas Carlyle in the mid-1800s, believed that people were born with innate characteristics and personality traits that distinguished them from others as effective leaders (Colbert, Judge, Choi, & Wang, 2012). Implications for the trait theory of leadership indicate that certain inheritable leadership traits produce certain patterns of behavior that are consistent across various situations (Cherry, 2018). In 1948, researcher Ralph Stodgill contributed to the body of literature stating that leadership is comprised of both traits and the interactions between the individual and social situation (Cherry, 2018; Northouse, 2019). According

to Stodgill's study, the following traits were identified as effective leadership traits: sociability, self-confidence, persistence, initiative, responsibility, insight, and alertness (Northouse, 2019). In 1974, Stodgill added cooperativeness, influence, tolerance, and achievement as additional traits associated with effective leadership. Kirkpatric and Locke (1991) extended Stodgill's research explaining that traits alone do not make a successful leader, but rather traits combined with actions contribute to successful leadership. The traits associated with research about leadership have evolved over time through various studies as represented in Table 1.

Table 1

Studies of Leadership Traits

| Stodgill (1948) | Mann (1959) | Stodgill (1974) | Lord, DeVader and Alliger (1986) | Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) | Zaccaro, Kemp and Badar (2017) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| intelligence<br>alertness<br>insight<br>responsibility<br>initiative<br>persistence<br>self-confidence<br>sociability | intelligence<br>masculinity<br>adjustment<br>dominance<br>extroversion<br>conservation | achievement<br>persistence<br>insight<br>initiative<br>self-confidence<br>responsibility<br>cooperativeness<br>tolerance<br>influence<br>sociability | intelligence<br>masculinity<br>dominance | drive<br>motivation<br>integrity<br>confidence<br>cognitive ability<br>task knowledge | cognitive ability<br>extraversion<br>conscientiousness<br>emotional stability<br>openness<br>agreeableness<br>motivation<br>social intelligence<br>self-monitoring<br>emotional intelligence<br>problem solving |

*Note.* From *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (8th ed.), by P. G. Northouse, 2019, p. 22. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## Behavioral Leadership Theory

Similar to trait leadership theory, behavioral leadership theory focuses on a set of traits. However, instead of focusing on certain innate personality traits as in trait theory, behavioral theory focuses on behavioral trait patterns of leadership and on what leaders do (Engard, 2017; King, 1990). According to behavioral leadership theory, people can

develop leadership traits and learn to be effective leaders through observation, teaching, experience, and training (King, 1990; Kirkpatric & Locke, 1991). Two key studies of the behavioral leadership theory include the University of Michigan study and the Ohio State University study both conducted in the 1940s. Both studies identified two key behavioral categories: production orientation and employee orientation (Northouse, 2019). Production orientation focuses on the behaviors producing technical outcomes while employee orientation focuses on the behaviors of human interaction and relationships (Northouse, 2019).

A strength of the behavioral leadership theory is that it provides a broad set of behaviors and actions that people can work toward applying in their repertoire of skill sets in order to improve as a leader. Northouse (2019) asserted that "leaders can learn a lot about themselves and how they come across to others by trying to see their behaviors in light of the task and relationship dimensions" (p. 80). A limitation of behavioral leadership theory is that research has failed to find particular behaviors or actions that would be best in all circumstances of effective leadership (King, 1990; Northouse, 2019). Although the behavioral leadership theory made a significant shift in the focus of leadership research from personal characteristics to what effective leaders do, researchers have not been able to establish a consistent link between the leader's task, relationship behaviors, and performance outcomes (Northouse, 2019).

**Transactional Leadership Theory**

Transactional leadership theory, introduced by Max Weber in 1947, is defined as an exchange of behaviors between leaders and followers for the purpose of attaining goals and personal interests through the use of a system of rewards to motivate followers

(Martin, 2018; McCleskey, 2014; Rowold, 2014). As a popular leadership method during the industrial era, transactional leaders maximized employee production of goods through pay increases, bonuses, and promotions (Bass, 1990; McCleskey, 2014). Conversely, transactional leaders used punitive measures toward employees for lack of performance (Bass, 1990). If an employee performed and produced as expected, the employee was rewarded. If the employee failed to perform as expected, the employee was reprimanded or punished. This form of leadership is least effective because it relies mostly on fear of failure and punishment to work and accomplish tasks. According to Lord, Day, Zaccaro, Avolio, and Eagly (2017), transactional leadership was centered on authority and power over people and focused on the completion of tasks and the day-to-day operations within the organization. Epitropaki and Martin (2013) conducted research on the influence of transactional leaders and found that in predictable organizational environments, transactional leaders and followers experienced more positive exchange interactions and outcomes. Reality, however, shows that because of globalization, technology, and digitization, organizational environments can be unpredictable; therefore, leadership needs to continually evolve and move past traditional approaches to leadership in order to fully engage, motivate, and establish trust with followers in a way that develops long-lasting transformational change (Bennis, 2013; Crowley, 2011; Horsager, 2009).

### The Link Between Effective Leadership Styles and Trust in Organizations

Organizations need leaders who can operate at the speed of change and lead from the future (Covey, 2006; Schwahn & Spady, 2002). With the end of the Industrial Age, "organizations recognized that the old rules of organizational management, structuring, and functioning no longer applied" (Schwahn & Spady, 2002, p. 1). Traditional

leadership theories were no longer a fit in the continuous process of change of today's Information Age; therefore, leaders must be willing to learn, improve, and change by applying new leadership strategies that build trust in order to compete successfully in the challenging conditions of our time (Schwahn & Spady, 2002; Thomas, 2009).

Trust strengthens relationships, increases productivity, and keeps people in business (Covey, 2009; Covey & Link, 2012; Mineo, 2014; Thomas, 2009). According to Blanchard (2010), "Studies show that productivity, income, and profits are positively or negatively impacted depending on the level of trust in the work environment" (p. 1). Therefore, leaders must adopt practices that inspire, motivate, and engage employees in a way that makes them feel cared for and valued. Crowley (2011) stated that "more often than not, it's non-monetary, non-perk gestures that impact people most" (p. 35). The leadership theories that follow describe their impact on organizations and how trust can enhance the performance outcomes for organizations in this era of change.

**Authentic Leadership**

The essence of what it means to be an effective leader revolves around authentic leadership (Schwahn & Spady, 2002). According to Cooper and Sawaf (1997), authentic leaders exhibit high levels of self-awareness, reflection, empathy, trustworthiness, integrity, and resilience in their leadership. Additionally, "Besides specifically employing the core organizational values of reflection and honesty, they [authentic leaders] place special emphasis on the inquiry and connection principles of professionalism" (Schwahn & Spady, 2002, p. 40). Reflection is the intrapersonal process of self-assessing past practice in order to develop self-awareness and be able to improve future actions and behaviors of oneself and of the organization (Northouse,

2019; Schwahn & Spady, 2002). Inquiry represents the authentic search of various viewpoints and perspectives to understand complex issues prior to making impulsive decisions. Honesty involves communication that is sincere and candid by leaders even when that kind of communication might put them at risk. Connection represents relationships and an understanding of the leader's role in creating those relationships with people. Honesty and connection are essential to building trust and genuine relationships with people (Schwahn & Spady, 2002; White et al., 2016). Without honesty and connection, organizational culture and prosperity are jeopardized (O'Toole & Bennis, 2009; Schwahn & Spady, 2002; Zak & Knack, 2001).

According to Schwahn and Spady (2002), authentic leaders possess three critical performance roles:

1. Creating and maintaining a clear and compelling purpose.
2. Being the lead learner and creating a culture of learning and innovation.
3. Modeling core values and the principles of professionalism. (p. 43)

In essence, authentic leaders have a strong sense of purpose, know their core values, walk their talk, and do not compromise their integrity (George, 2015; Northouse, 2019). George (2015) indicated that "authentic leaders are true to themselves and to what they believe in" (p. 8).

**Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership originated in 1970 with Robert K. Greenleaf whose seminal research significantly influenced how the servant leadership theory developed (Northouse, 2019). Northouse (2019) cited Greenleaf's original work from 1970, "The central goal of servant leadership is to create healthy organizations that nurture individual

growth, strengthen organizational performance, and in the end, produce a positive impact on society" (p. 236). Servant leaders are change agents in service of the organization's purpose and vision and lead in ways that put the needs of others above their own, creating the conditions for change to happen (Northouse, 2019; Schwahn & Spady, 2002). Servant leaders exhibit core values of risk taking and teamwork and are committed to the principles of professionalism: alignment and contribution (Schwahn & Spady, 2002). Risk taking involves moving out of one's comfort zone and trying something new without the assurance of success (Lencioni, 2002). Teamwork is about working collaboratively to achieve a common goal and putting the needs of the group above personal gain or interest (DuFour, 2004; Lencioni, 2002). Alignment represents the clear connection between the organization's actions and decisions with the organization's purpose and vision. The principle of contribution represents servant leaders' willingness to give their best at all times without expecting anything in return, which creates a professional and positive culture that puts the needs of the organization and its people at the core of the work. In summary, authentic leaders know who they are, where they are going, and why they are doing what they do as leaders (George, 2015; Northouse, 2019).

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leaders are visionaries who move organizations through cultural change while recognizing the skills and contributions of all employees (Manktelow et al., 2018; Northouse, 2019). Transformational leaders carry out significant change in an organization in a manner that instills motivation and inspires people to take action (Northouse, 2019). The ability to inspire and motivate others to take action for the betterment of the organization is a complex task. According to McCleskey (2014);

Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015); and Northouse (2019), when leaders are able to empower and motivate others to act on common core values and a collective purpose, the potential for breakthrough results is greatly enhanced. In addition, transformational leaders inspire, excite, and uplift the people in the organization to look beyond their own self-interests to be a part of something greater than themselves (Bass, 1990; Hargreaves & Boyle, 2015). Transformational leaders understand that they cannot accomplish their goals alone and therefore inspire and empower others to act with purpose and to act like leaders themselves (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Furthermore, transformational leaders constantly reflect on their practices and are always working within a cycle of improvement.

With the increased complexities and globalization of the 21st century, the expectations and demands placed on leaders require them to move beyond a system of rewards and punishment that creates compliant individuals to a new model of conscious change leadership that develops and inspires others for a common vision (Dean Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Nevins & Stumpf, 1999). Transformational leaders are best equipped to shift and adapt to an intensively integrated system of technology. They resist restrictive cultural norms, choosing instead to create a society that grows both businesses and individuals (Binney, 2015). Organizations today are looking for transformational leaders with the ability to develop an organizational culture of learning and collaboration that reflects the core values and purpose of the organization resulting in increased production or performance, improvement in quality, and overall job satisfaction (Crowley, 2011; Fullan, 2010). In summary, these are the leaders who will achieve the breakthrough results needed by organizations in the 21st century.

## The Importance of Leaders Exhibiting Trust in Organizational Settings

Trust is a critical element of strong, effective, and influential leadership (Dean Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Battle, 2007; Covey & Link, 2012; Mineo, 2014). Numerous leadership theories have called out trust as an important factor for effective leadership required of the 21st-century leader (Khan, Nawaz, & Khan, 2016; Manktelow et al., 2018; Northouse, 2019). A study by Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that trust strengthens moral commitment and shared purpose between the leader and followers. In addition, studies have found that trust plays a significant role in employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational relationships, and conflict management (Crowley, 2011; Hargreaves & Boyle, 2015; Seaver, 2017). According to Dean Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001), leaders of change must attend to relationships and to the people of the organization as much as to the day-to-day management of processes and procedures in order to make significant progress in transformational and sustainable change as a transformational leader. Fullan (2010) stated that "the role of the leader is to enable, facilitate, and cause peers to interact in a focused manner" (p. 36). Therefore, investing time and effort in building trust with employees enables leaders to "work through the natural mistrust that many people have with respect to leaders" (Fullan, 2010, p. 66). Covey (2006) asserted that a leader's investment in building trusting relationships with employees gives the organization a huge return on investment. The higher the level of trust in the leader, the higher the level of performance and the less resistance to change from followers (Dean Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Fullan, 2010). Furthermore, high-trust leaders accomplish breakthrough results and foster a culture of trust and teamwork by behaving in a way that models integrity and

competence, inspires a shared vision, challenges the status quo, enables others to act, and encourages the heart (Kaser, Stiles, Mundry, & Loucks-Horsley, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). According to George (2015), "Today's employees demand more personal relationships with their leaders before they will give themselves fully to their jobs" (p. 224). With the world demanding high levels of transparency and authenticity from its leaders, the importance of leaders exhibiting trust in organizational settings is paramount to success (Fullan, 2010).

## Theoretical Foundations

Over the last 5 decades, trust research studies began examining the role and meaning of trust across a variety of organizational settings (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Researchers have shown interest in the complexities involved with developing trust and the impact trust has on various forms and levels of professional relationships (Mayer et al., 1995). The importance of trust has been cited across various organizational studies in relation to leadership, teamwork, organizational culture, and transformational change (Bass, 1990; Mayer et al., 1995). Studies show that the level of trust in the organizational environment can positively or negatively impact the level of profit, productivity, and performance (Blanchard, 2010).

Trust is complex and has been defined by many authors in various ways. For some, trust is defined as a feeling or intuition (Battle, 2007). Although definitions for trust may vary depending on the individual's perspectives and experiences, a commonality among definitions is that "trust is a primary factor in how people work together, listen to one another, and build effective relationships" (Blanchard, 2010, p. 1).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the definition of trust developed by Weisman (2016):

> An individuals' willingness, given their culture and communication behaviors in relationships and transactions, to be appropriately vulnerable based on the belief that another individual, group or organization is competent, open and honest, concerned, reliable and identified with their common values and goals. (p. 1)

The following section describes some of the influential trust frameworks developed by trust researchers over time.

**Integrative Model for Organizational Trust**

The work of Mayer et al. (1995) described trust as a fundamental ingredient to social interaction and organizational relationships. With organizations shifting away from working in silos to working in self-directed collaborative teams, trust is not only necessary but also practical (Mayer et al., 1995). The integrative model for organizational trust developed by Mayer et al. suggested three key characteristics as the foundation of trust development between trustor and trustee: ability, benevolence, and integrity. Ability refers to a set of skills and competencies in a leader to handle tasks and situations in a competent manner and with good judgement in order to lead the organization effectively (Mayer et al., 1995). Benevolence refers to the leader's genuine interest and intent in wanting good for the employee (Mayer et al., 1995). Lastly, integrity refers to a set of principles that demonstrates alignment between one's beliefs, words, and actions (Mayer et al., 1995). These three characteristics, according to Mayer et al., contribute to the level of trustworthiness between the leader and followers. In addition, Mayer et al. noted that "to understand the extent to which a person is willing to

trust another person, both the trustor's propensity to trust and the trustor's perceptions of the trustee's ability, benevolence, and integrity must be discerned" (p. 724).

**The Five Waves of Trust**

Covey (2006), in *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*, explained the economics of trust in business in addition to how leaders can cultivate trust in themselves and in their relationships. According to Covey (2006), high levels of trust increase the speed of production and lower the cost of doing business. When trust is established, people have more confidence in the leader and in the organization to perform and produce as expected and are therefore more apt to take risks and invest in the organization. Higher levels of trust create less suspicion and fear, which yields faster results while lower levels of trust impede progress (Covey, 2009).

Trust affects every aspect of life in which we interact with another (Covey, 2006; Flores & Solomon, 1998; Thomas, 2009). The best leaders recognize that trust is the fundamental ingredient of every relationship (Covey, 2006; Covey & Link, 2012). Covey (2006) outlined five waves of trust to help leaders understand and establish trust with others.

**Self-trust**. The first wave of self-trust involves the belief in oneself to be credible. According to Covey (2006), trust is made up of two key characteristics: character and competence. Character is related to one's integrity, and competence is related to one's capabilities. Both of these characteristics contribute to one's credibility and trustworthiness. Credibility is based on four core areas: integrity, intent, capabilities, and results, all of which can be developed to help establish trust (Covey, 2006, 2009). The core area of integrity involves having strong core values, knowing who one is and what

he or she believes in, being open and honest, and keeping commitments (Covey, 2006; George, 2015). The core area of intent involves the alignment between one's motives, plans, and action steps. Trust is developed when one's motives are clear and transparent and when one's actions are representative of intended motives. The core area of capabilities refers to a person's strengths, proficiencies, attitude, and particular style in handling things (Covey, 2006). The core area of results represents the evidence of consistent performance that builds one's credibility and establishes trust. Understanding these four core areas of credibility (integrity, intent, capabilities, and results) enables leaders to focus on specific areas of need to help them establish credibility and trust.

**Relationship trust.** Relationship trust focuses on the behaviors that help establish trust with others. Covey (2006) outlined 13 common behaviors of high-trust leaders worldwide that exemplify the two key trust characteristics of character and competence. These 13 behaviors when balanced together help leaders establish and maintain trust in their organizations (Covey, 2006).

1. **"**Talk straight." Be clear, concise, and forthcoming in communication.
2. **"**Demonstrate respect." Behave in a way that shows genuine care, concern, and civility toward others.
3. "Create transparency." Tell the truth without any hidden agendas.
4. "Right wrongs." Apologize and take action to make restitution for one's mistake.
5. "Show loyalty." Give credit to others, keep confidentiality, and speak about others as if they were present.
6. "Deliver results." Define outcomes upfront and be accountable to achieving goals. Do not make excuses.

7. “Get better.” Learn from mistakes and model a growth mindset.
8. “Confront reality.” Address difficult issues and have the courage to lead in uncomfortable situations.
9. “Clarify expectations.” Create a shared vision and effectively communicate expected outcomes. Discuss and revisit expectations as necessary to ensure common understanding without making assumptions.
10. “Practice accountability.” High-trust leaders hold themselves accountable just as much as they hold others accountable.
11. “Listen first.” Focus on trying to understand the person’s feelings without rushing to judgement and trying to offer advice. An individual should not make assumptions that he or she understands others.
12. “Keep commitments.” Following through with promises is the quickest way to build trust in a relationship. A leader must do what he or she says he or she will do.
13. “Extend trust.” A leader must also trust others who have demonstrated trustworthy behaviors and have earned his or her trust. (pp. 239-240)

**Organizational trust**. The third wave of organizational trust focuses on how leaders can promote trust with the people in their organizations. Covey (2006) asserted that it is important for leaders to look at the systems, structures, and processes that affect behaviors and promote trust within the organizations. Leaders who simply focus on the operational processes and procedures without attending to the emotional needs of their people cultivate an environment of distrust, which jeopardizes organizational relationships, productivity, and performance (Covey, 2006; Horsager, 2009). In addition, Covey (2006) explained that building a culture of trust in the organization creates the

foundation for fast and sustainable innovation, which is necessary in the ever-fast-moving world. When people trust each other in an organization, they are able to leverage differences assuming positive intent, move beyond coordination to collaboration, enable risk taking without judgement, create a culture of learning, and increase the speed of innovation (Covey, 2006).

**Market trust.** Market trust involves the brand or reputation of the organization. With market trust, one can explicitly see the connections between trust, speed, and cost. If a customer trusts a brand or product, the customer will not hesitate to buy it over a nontrusted brand. Organizations that build a brand or reputation of being trustworthy positively impact the speed of trust and create a loyal following of stakeholders who are invested for the long haul (Covey, 2006; Horsager, 2012; Weisman, 2016).

**Societal trust.** The fifth wave of Covey's (2006) speed of trust framework is societal trust—the principle of giving back and contributing to society. Organizations that contribute to societal trust and global citizenship refer to it as their corporate social responsibility (CSR). The growing distrust in the world because of fraud, schemes, and lies requires leaders and organizations to build societal trust and to think beyond themselves and beyond the walls of their business (Bacon & Moller, 2016; Blanchard, 2010; Covey, 2006; Horsager, 2012). According to Covey (2006), "The ability to establish, grow, extend, and restore trust truly is the key leadership competency" (p. 258).

## Eight Pillars of Trust

Business strategist and trust researcher, David Horsager (2009), explained how to build the 8 Pillars of Trust in his book, *The Trust Edge: How Top Leaders Gain Faster Results, Deeper Relationships, and a Stronger Bottom Line,* for the purpose of supporting

leaders and businesses to ascertain better relationships and achieve better results. According to Horsager, trust is the most important factor to successful and influential organizational leaders. Horsager stated that "leaders who are trusted are effective" (p. 3). As a result of studying and researching the common characteristics of high-trust successful leaders, Horsager identified eight key areas or pillars to building trust and accelerating organizational success.

**Clarity.** Clarity begins with honest communication. Horsager (2012) stated, "People trust the clear and distrust the ambiguous" (p. 47). Clarity gives focus, reduces the potential for conflict, and inspires trust (Horsager, 2012). If leaders are to be genuinely successful in earning the trust of their followers, they need to be clear with their expectations and have the courage to give honest feedback and engage in hard honest conversations related to performance (Brown, 2018; Horsager, 2012; Patterson et al, 2012).

**Compassion.** Thinking beyond oneself and making people feel valued and cared for is a strong component of trust (Horsager, 2009). Horsager (2012) stated that "compassion gives birth to trust and adds richness to life, and—more important—it helps you become a conduit for making the world a better place" (p. 93). People believe and trust in those who put the needs of others before themselves. According to Horsager (2012), there are four elements or LAWS to compassion: listen, appreciate, wake-up, and serve others.

***Listen.*** Listening involves being fully present and listening with one's eyes and body, paying attention to what is being said without interruption, and empathizing by seeing things through others' point of view.

***Appreciate.*** Showing appreciation is a tangible way to demonstrate compassion, which helps to build trust. Leaders who want to create trusting relationships notice people doing good work and appreciate and thank them for it (Horsager, 2012).

***Wake-up.*** Wake-up refers to being fully present in the moment. Many times leaders are so consumed with thinking about the future that they miss opportunities to engage with what is happening in the present (Horsager, 2012). Dean Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001) referred to this as being on autopilot and explained that to be a conscious change leader, leaders need to be fully present and hold themselves accountable for their way of being, relating, and working in leadership and in life.

***Serve others.*** Putting the needs of other people first and having their best interest at heart is the first step to building connections with others and developing trust (Horsager, 2012). When leaders recognize that people are their most valuable resource, they develop deeper relationships in support of the organization (Horsager, 2012; Schwahn & Spady, 2002).

**Character.** According to Horsager (2009), "Without character there is no trust" (p. 98). Horsager defined character as being comprised of two core elements: integrity and high morals. A leader with integrity demonstrates consistency between words and actions. A leader with high morals has a personal code of ethics, values, and belief system that enables him or her to lead as an authentic human being (George, 2015; Horsager, 2012). Character involves doing the right thing even when things get hard. High-trust leaders show character by following through on their word and doing what is right over what is easy (Horsager, 2012).

**Competency.** People have confidence and trust in those they know can get the job done (Horsager, 2009). According to Horsager (2009), "Competency drives trust"; therefore, the ability to learn quickly and keep up with advancing information and technologies is crucial to gaining trust as a competent leader (p. 126). Leaders who are continuously striving to improve themselves by stretching their thinking and taking in new ideas and perspectives gain the trust of their followers to make sound and competent decisions (Fullan, 2010; Horsager, 2009).

**Commitment.** A leader's decisions and actions reveal his or her level of commitment. If a leader says he or she will do something, he or she must do it. Empty promises and weak follow-through on commitments are a sure way to lose trust (Horsager, 2009). In addition to keeping one's word and following through with commitments in a timely manner, a committed and trusted leader is a passionate leader who is willing to make sacrifices for the greater good of the organization (Horsager, 2009).

**Connection.** Connecting with people on a personal level through relationships is at the root of trust (Horsager, 2009; White et al., 2016). People want to do business with people they like and that begins by establishing a connection (Horsager, 2012). Providing people with opportunities to engage in conversation by encouraging input and soliciting feedback helps build connections that can lead to trust (Horsager, 2009). By engaging in conversation with people and asking questions, leaders can learn more about their employees and discover some commonalities that lead to stronger connections (Horsager, 2009).

**Contribution.** Contribution is linked to action and results and "people trust results" (Horsager, 2009, p. 187). Leaders who contribute to the organization prioritize their time and resources to accomplish goals that deliver real results (Horsager, 2012). According to Horsager (2009), "Doing, not saying, builds trust" (p. 186); therefore, taking time each day to review action plans and next steps to accomplish outcomes is essential to building trust with staff and colleagues.

**Consistency.** Horsager (2009) explained that trust either increases or decreases with every little action and interaction done over time; therefore, practicing all the pillars consistently is critical for success in gaining the trust edge as a leader. He stated that "trust is earned by consistent action, not just words" (Horsager, 2009, p. 231). Furthermore, practicing consistent behaviors demonstrates dependability and reliability that builds credibility with followers and makes one a trustworthy leader (Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; White et al., 2016).

## Trust Works! ABCD Trust Model

Trust experts Blanchard, Olmstead, and Lawrence (2013) suggested that trust is developed by leaders as a result of four elements (able, believable, connected, and dependable) known as the ABCD trust model. The ABCD trust model provides leaders with a framework to help them understand how to build trusting relationships with staff or repair trust that has been broken. The following four elements of the ABCD trust model enable leaders to build a foundation of trust to support staff with higher levels of collaboration, innovation, and performance for the success of the organization.

**Able.** Able is about demonstrating the skills and abilities required of a competent leader (Blanchard et al., 2013). People need to believe that their leader is capable of

getting the job done. According to The Ken Blanchard Companies (2010), "The fastest deterrent to trust is evidence of incompetence" (p. 14). Continuously learning and keeping up to date with new technologies and innovations is crucial for a leader to stay current and remain competent in his or her field.

**Believable.** To be believable, one must be truthful and act with integrity at all times (Blanchard et al., 2013). Leaders need to give honest and constructive feedback to build capacity in a supportive way that earns trust and respect (White et al., 2016). Being sincere and straightforward with messages, even the difficult messages, builds trust in leaders because people are made aware of expectations without having to wonder about where they stand (The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2010; White et al., 2016). Believable leaders practice their values not just preach about them (Brown, 2017). Believability is also enhanced by being consistent with one's words and actions.

**Connected.** Being a connected leader is about showing genuine care and concern for the needs of others (Blanchard et al., 2013). Leaders who connect with their followers are not afraid to be vulnerable and share about themselves. This allows others to see the leader as a real person and someone whom they can identify with and trust.

**Dependable.** Dependable or reliable leaders are people who can be counted on and trusted in their word (Blanchard et al., 2013). In order to be dependable, leaders must be aware of what is in and out of their control so that they do not overpromise and are able to follow through on commitments (Brown, 2017). As stated by The Ken Blanchard Companies (2010), "Keeping your word on small things demonstrates dependability that people can count on when it comes to the big things" (p. 3).

## Theoretical Framework

The Values Institute, a research and consulting practice founded in 2009, works to enable leaders to build trusting relationships while focusing on a values-based corporate culture (Weisman, 2016). To support leadership in building trust, The Values Institute developed a pyramid of trust that incorporates five specific dimensions of trust: competence, consistency, concern, candor, and connection (Weisman, 2016). These five dimensions of trust or five C's were a result of years of research in the study of personal and organizational trust (Weisman, 2016). According to Weisman (2016), the five C's "are individual stages of a single journey toward the ultimate goal: trust" (p. 139). Understanding the link between the five C's is just as important as understanding each individual element. The goal is to develop an awareness and understanding of how to use the pyramid of trust to move toward embracing a values-based approach to leadership in order to develop an organizational culture where all employees succeed and thrive (Weisman, 2016).

Similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Weisman (2016) explained that trust involves a hierarchy of values that begins with the base-level requirements of trust: competency and consistency, which serve as the foundation to trust relationships and are found at the base of the pyramid. The middle layer of the pyramid represents the emotional factors of trust: concern and candor, which add the *glue* to the relationship. The top of the pyramid represents the self-actualization factor of connections that ultimately develop trust in the organization. Reaching this pinnacle peak of trust rewards the organization not only with financial riches but also with loyalty, satisfaction, and

advocacy from its stakeholders, which go beyond any monetary value (Weisman, 2016). Figure 2 displays a visual representation of The Values Institute's pyramid of trust model.

As a result of extensive research, Weisman (2016) defined trust as "a belief in the reliability, ability, or strength of someone or something" (p. 33). Trust is the key element that differentiates a meaningful, long-term relationship from a superficial or shallow relationship (Weisman, 2016). The ability of an elementary school principal to demonstrate competence, consistency, concern, candor, and connection is essential to establishing meaningful relationships and trust with staff in order to create a positive school culture (Tonissen, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). This review examines the pyramid of trust and its implication for elementary school principals.

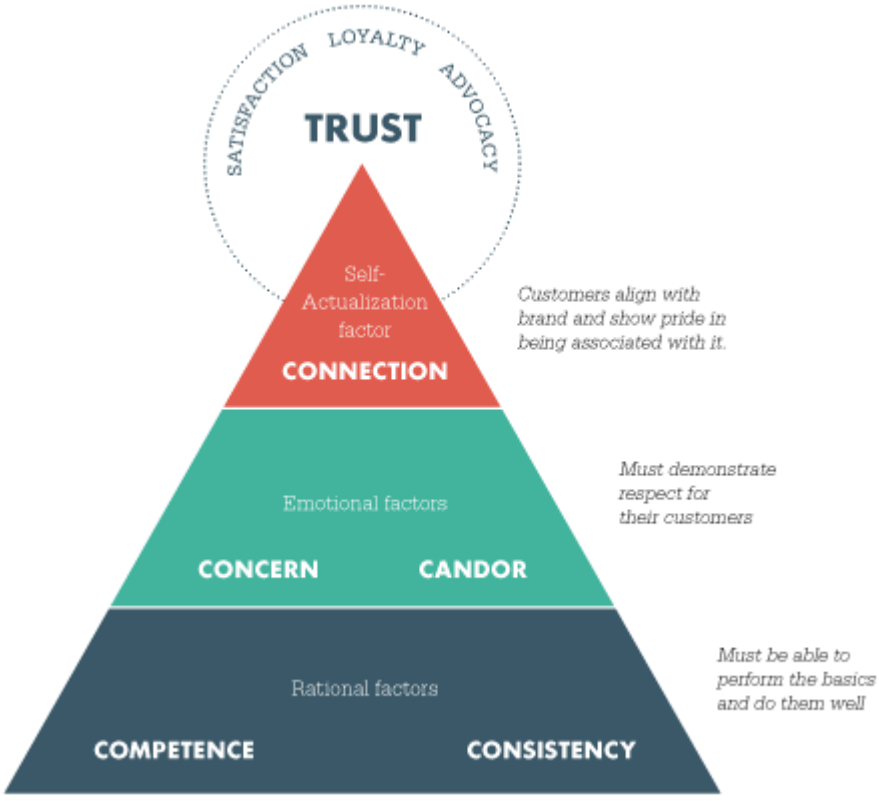



*Figure 2.* Pyramid of trust. From *Choosing Higher Ground: Working and Living in a Values Economy*, by M. Weisman, 2016, Santa Ana, CA: Nortia Press.

**Competence**

Competence is the capacity to execute a task as expected and deliver as promised (Covey, 2006; Farnsworth, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016). People tend to trust those they believe have the ability to follow through and perform in a proficient manner (Horsager, 2009; Mayer et al., 1995). The changing expectations of school principals to be more than an operational manager, but an instructional leader of the 21st century, require principals to be competent in building the capacity of teams, leading transformational change, and fostering equitable learning opportunities for all students (Fullan, 2010, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In schools, staff depend on the principal's competence to accomplish school goals, lead by example, and handle difficult problems productively (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). In a study of high- and low-trust schools by Handford and Leithwood (2013), results indicated that perceptions of competence were associated with a high-trust principal twice as often as any other characteristic of trustworthy principals. Skills related to a principal's competency include problem solving, conflict resolution, setting high standards, working hard, and setting an example. Furthermore, being a competent and trusted leader is about being adaptable to change and continuing to grow and learn as a leader. Horsager (2009) stated, "Trust is rooted in competency, and you can't achieve that without continuing to learn and grow" (p. 128).

**Consistency**

Consistency refers to the leader's predictability of being someone others can count on to perform dependably and reliably each and every time (Horsager, 2009; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Weisman, 2016). The confidence that one can routinely

rely on another is an important aspect of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). The consistent production of results builds one's credibility and reputation as a trustworthy leader (Covey, 2006; Weisman, 2016). Blanchard et al. (2013) stated, "The extent to which there's an inconsistency between our actions and our behaviors is the degree to which other people will or won't trust us" (p. 85). The more consistent the leader is in following through on commitments, the higher the level of trust earned. If the leader consistently breaks his or her word and fails to follow through on commitments, trust diminishes quickly. For principals to foster trust with staff, their actions need to consistently demonstrate alignment with stated beliefs. According to Bryk and Schneider (2003), "This consistency between words and actions affirms their personal integrity" (p. 43). In addition, principals' behaviors need to consistently inspire confidence that teachers can depend on them for support (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Teachers gain greater confidence and trust in their principal when they feel they can anticipate the actions and behaviors of the principal.

**Concern**

Showing empathy, compassion, and care for others is an important element of trust (Horsager, 2009; Weisman, 2016). With more than half of all employees feeling unhappy at work, they yearn to feel valued, cared for, and appreciated by their leaders (Covey, 2006; Crowley, 2011). Studies from Crowley (2011), Kouzes and Posner (2012), and Zak (2017) affirmed that showing heartfelt care and concern as a leader toward others in the organization cultivates a positive culture of trust that generates higher levels of employee engagement and productivity. School principals can establish a similar culture of trust by demonstrating concern and consideration for staff needs and

expressing appreciation for their efforts (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Tschannen-Moran (2014) stated that "principals who hope to earn the trust of their faculty need to demonstrate goodwill and genuine concern for teachers' well-being" (p. 25). When staff feel cared for and supported, they are more willing to accept corrective feedback in a positive light and therefore work harder to achieve the goals. Horsager (2009) explained that cultivating concern for others not only elevates employee performance, but it also creates a culture of loyalty that diminishes turnover rates and helps retain talented people. Furthermore, demonstrating concern creates a sense of connectedness that unites people toward a shared purpose and vision for the betterment of the organization (Horsager, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Weisman, 2016).

**Candor**

Candor is about being authentic, transparent, and honest, which is fundamental to establishing trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016). Donald L. Anderson (2015) explained that being an authentic and trusted leader means being forthright and honest about one's agenda, decisions, and motives. Furthermore, high-trust leaders are not afraid to be candid and to tell the truth in a clear straightforward manner even at risk of being unpopular (Blanchard et al., 2013; Covey, 2006; Horsager, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Weisman, 2016). Horsager (200) believed, "Secrets destroy trust. Being candid, whether it is during hard economic conditions or during a new project, puts your staff on the same page and builds trust" (p. 60). School leaders who exercise candor give honest feedback and address issues head on when necessary (Horsager, 2009). Failure to be honest and address challenging issues hinders school progress and damages trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). For school principals to build trust

with their staff, they need to talk straight and hold themselves and others accountable in a candid yet respectful way (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). According to Covey (2006), "While straight talk is vital to establishing trust, in most situations, it needs to be tempered by skill, tact, and good judgement" (p. 144).

**Connection**

Connection is found at the peak of Weisman's trust pyramid model, which is a result of having the basic rational factors of trust (competence and consistency) and the emotional factors of trust (concern and candor) consistently in place to support the actualization of connection (Weisman, 2016). Trust is built by establishing genuine connections with people over time leading to "a relationship of community, where each party provides a tool that the other needs in order to fulfill their shared goals" (Weisman, 2016, p. 142). People are wired for genuine connection (Brown, 2017). When leaders develop authentic connections with others, they develop the deepest level of trust (Blanchard et al., 2013; Brown, 2017; Weisman, 2016). Every interaction one has with another is an opportunity to strengthen connections and increase trust (Covey, 2006; Horsager, 2009). In schools, the greater the connection between principal and staff members, the greater the extent of authentic collaboration and trust (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Brewster and Railsback (2003) reported that the level of relational trust between principals and teachers plays a significant role in school reform efforts. If school principals are to lead successful transformational change efforts, they must build solid foundations of trusting relationships with staff members centered on shared values and vision for change (Brewster & Railsback, 2003;

Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Before principals can attack the challenges of change, they first must build relationships and trust (Fullan, 2010).

## K12 Leadership and Trust

The accelerated pace of the digital revolution requires school leaders to understand how to build trust within the school community in order to cultivate a culture of learning and collaboration that raises student achievement (Fullan, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). With trust on the decline in this society and negatively impacting work relationships (Covey, 2006; Edelman, 2017; Tschannen-Moran, 2014), there is an urgent need for school leaders to create the conditions that allow trust to flourish. Tschannen-Moran (2014), a leading scholar on the subject of trust in educational settings, believed that "without trust, schools are unlikely to be successful in their efforts to improve and to realize their core purpose" (p. x). She stated that school leaders must take an active role cultivating and sustaining trust if they are to provide their stakeholders with a productive learning environment that inspires higher levels of achievement for all (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). In addition, Fullan (2014) asserted that in order to maximize impact and raise school achievement, principals need to focus on facilitating teams and establishing a culture of collaborative work. If school leaders are to facilitate collaborative structures in schools, such as in shared decision-making and complex problem solving, trust is essential to making it successful (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

The following sections describe the role of elementary school principals and the importance of creating a positive school culture and trusting relationships to meet the demands of the 21st century.

## Role of a School Principal

The role of the school principal has grown increasingly complex through the years. Principals of the 21st century primarily focused on managerial tasks and the basic operations of the school and were not involved in the integral work of teaching and learning (Marshall, 2018). That singular role no longer applies to the work expected and needed of today's principal, which requires principals to have the capacity to be both manager and instructional leader in order to lead school reform efforts (Fullan, 2014). School reform efforts require relational trust among teachers and principals (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kratzer, 1997). Kratzer (1997) explained that school reform requires more than simply making structural changes in a school; moreover, school reform requires building a positive school culture from a foundation of trust. Therefore, in addition to managing systems and procedures of a school, the role of the principal requires developing an understanding of how to cultivate, nurture, and sustain trust within the school. Tschannen-Moran (2014) discussed the important role principals have in establishing trust for school success:

> Principals and other school leaders need to earn the trust of the stakeholders in their school community if they are to be successful. They need to understand how trust is built and how it is lost. Getting smarter about trust will help school leaders foster more successful schools. (p. 8)

New realities and demands of the 21st century require leaders who understand the complexities of leading and developing people to thrive in a global world. Mandelbaum and Friedman (2011) recognized the merging forces of globalization and technology in the world and the necessity to reform this country's educational system for economic

prosperity. Collaboration, creativity, innovation, and teamwork are essential skills needed to survive in this hyper-connected world, and it cannot happen without trust (Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). Lencioni (2002) added that collaborative teamwork cannot happen without trust. People need to feel safe to share ideas without fear of being discounted or criticized. As such, school leaders are tasked with creating the conditions that promote trust to improve the flow of innovation, problem solving, and creativity of teams to achieve breakthrough results (Fullan, 2014; Lencioni, 2002). Mandelbaum and Friedman (2011) further contended that a leader cannot command collaboration, creativity, and innovation, but rather leaders need to inspire it by creating a culture of trust that enables it to happen. Therefore, the most important role of a school principal or leader is to inspire others to innovate, create, and collaborate in a way that adds value to others, to the organization, and to the world (Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011).

**Principal's Role as Lead Learner**

To maximize the impact on teaching and learning in a school, principals need to focus on leading the learning of their staff as well as their own learning (Fullan, 2014). Research by Robinson (2011) explored the impact of school principals on student achievement and concluded that leading teacher learning and development was the most significant factor in raising achievement. Robinson (2007) indicated that "the more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes" (p. 15). The research of Timperley (2011) and Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) drew similar conclusions indicating that when school principals take on a lead learner role by working collaboratively and learning with teachers to improve instruction and the learning

experiences of students, they have the greatest impact on student achievement. Furthermore, building relational trust with staff was found as a key element for principals functioning as lead learner in order to promote honest and open dialogue, risk taking, and problem solving within an environment of engagement (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Fullan, 2014; Marshall, 2018; Robinson, 2011). Marshall (2018) explained that school principals can nurture their own learning and model learning for others by engaging in a professional book study with staff, teaching a lesson in a classroom and asking for feedback, and participating in learning networks with other principals. In summary, the principal as lead learner is one who models learning, participates in learning with his or her staff and peers, and cultivates a culture of learning for all that is built on relational trust (Fullan, 2014; Marshall, 2018).

**Principal's Role as Change Leader**

Being a change leader requires the capabilities to move people and organizations forward in order to be more effective, productive, and invested in continuous improvement within a culture that enables people to grow and develop (Donald L. Anderson, 2015; Fullan, 2014). Effective leaders of change, according to Fullan (2010), motivate and move people to take new action without imparting judgment so that people feel safe working through challenges. The pressures for change from outside forces require principals to establish trust with staff in order for change initiatives to take hold (Fullan, 2010; Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Therefore, with the increasing complexities and speed of change in the world (Donald L. Anderson, 2015; Covey, 2006), it is crucial for school leaders to be trustworthy agents of change so that their schools can prosper and produce creative and innovative individuals who can

compete in the job market and contribute to society (Fullan, 2010; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). Tschannen-Moran (2014) explained the importance of principals to be agents of change because of the changing expectations of schools "to provide a stronger workforce that will allow their nations to remain economically competitive in a global marketplace" (p. 9). Schools need to prepare students to thrive in an ever-changing world; therefore, school principals need to lead staff in a cycle of continuous improvement that requires the ability to adapt and apply new innovative practices in order to provide students with equitable opportunities of success (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

## Summary

In summary, the review of literature indicated that trust matters in leadership, and it plays a significant role in the success of an organization, especially in this fast-paced changing world. As such, school principals who establish trusting relationships and cultivate a culture of trust within schools increase the performance and productivity of staff, which translates into higher levels of student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). According to Tschannen-Moran (2014), "School leaders need to appreciate and cultivate the dynamics of trust to reap its benefits for greater student achievement as well as for improved organizational adaptability and productivity" (p. x). High-trust schools have been linked with higher levels of engagement, collaboration, productivity, and overall school performance (Bird et al., 2012; Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Additionally, the review of literature described barriers to trust and how the absence of trust negatively impacts growth and achievement.

School reform requires authentic and transformational leadership with trust at the core (Tschannen-Moran, 2014); therefore, the evolution of various leadership theories were examined within the context of trust. The theoretical foundations presented in this review served to lay the groundwork for the theoretical framework of this study: The Values Institute pyramid of trust framework including the five dimensions of trust: competence, consistency, candor, concern, and connection (Weisman, 2016). Each dimension of trust was examined in relation to elementary school principals and the implications for building trust with staff. In addition, the complex role of school principals was explored and provided insight into the importance of trust in school leadership in order achieve educational excellence.

## Synthesis Matrix

The synthesis matrix provides a conceptual framework that organizes study variables and summarizes the review of the literature for this study at a glance (see Appendix A). The matrix identifies the categories, variables, and/or themes and lists the references associated with them. The matrix also shows the relationships and connections between each of the sources.

# CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

## Overview

Chapter III describes the research methods and processes used in the study that identified and described how elementary school principals established trust with staff. The study also determined elementary school principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust. Describing the methodology used to conduct the study in detail is essential so that other researchers may conduct the same research to accurately replicate the study (Roberts, 2010). The chapter begins with the purpose of the study and the specific research questions to be addressed. Additionally, the rationale for the research design, research instruments, and methods of data analysis are discussed in detail. The chapter also describes the population, sample, validity and reliability as well as the ethical procedures used to protect participants in the study. The final section of the chapter describes the limitations of the study, and the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the information presented.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe how elementary principals establish trust with staff using the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Weisman, 2010). In addition, the purpose of this study was to determine elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust.

## Research Questions

The purpose of the research questions is to form a link between the stated purpose of the study and the research problem and have an impact on the current state of knowledge of the study (Coughlan et al., 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The following research questions aligned to the purpose of this mixed-methods study:

1. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of connection?
2. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of concern?
3. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of candor?
4. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of competence?
5. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of consistency?
6. How do elementary principals perceive the degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust?

## Research Design

In the world of research, there are two general approaches to gathering, analyzing, and reporting information to generate interpretations and conclusions: qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2005; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The qualitative approach to research is focused on exploring and understanding a social situation from participants' perspectives and experiences through the use of multiple data points, such as interviews, observations, and documents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010;

Patton, 2015). The quantitative approach focuses on establishing relationships between variables measured by an instrument that can provide numerical data to test a hypothesis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten, 2012).

Based on these two general approaches to research, this study utilized a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches that is referred to as a mixed-methods research design in an effort to provide more comprehensive data related to the research questions (Creswell, 2005; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), "The importance of the research problem and questions is a key principle of mixed methods research design" (p. 60). Mixed-methods research is appropriate for investigation of complex research questions in which the sole use of either quantitative or qualitative research would be insufficient to achieve the desired outcomes of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, based on the complexity and dynamic process related to the topic of trust (Covey, 2006; Tonissen, 2015; White et al., 2016), a mixed-methods research design focused on collecting and analyzing data using both qualitative and quantitative research methods was the most appropriate for the study. Moreover, research is conducted using a sequence of steps that begins with the researcher's formulation of concise research questions that guide the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). The research method then follows from the questions. According to McMillan and Shumacher (2010), "A good study is designed so that the methods used will give the most credible answer to the question" (p.10). Thus, using a mixed-methods approach to gather data on the research questions of how principals establish trust with staff using each of the five domains of trust—competence, consistency, candor, concern, and connection—

as well as how principals perceive the degree of importance of each of the five domains of trust, helped to answer the research questions to this study in the most comprehnsive and credible way. Figure 3 diplays a graphical represenation of a mixed-methods approach to research.

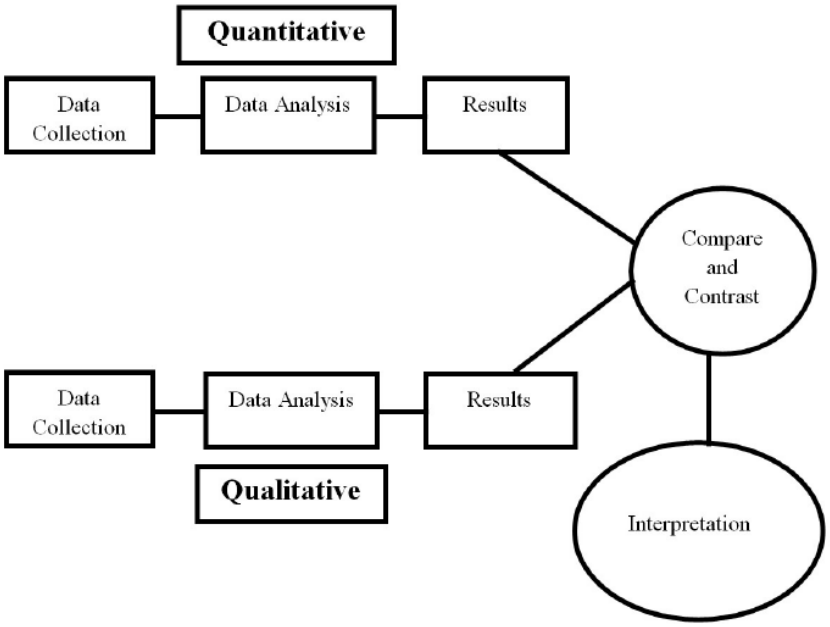



*Figure 3*. Graphical representation of mixed-methods study. Adapted from *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed.), by J. W. Creswell, 2012. Boston, MA: Pearson.

## Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative approach seeks to understand and illuminate meaning of the world by studying how people construct meaning of their experiences and interpreting the meaning-making process to find patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). Therefore, in an effort to understand principals' experiences of how they establish trust with teachers at greater depths using the five domains of competence, consistency, candor, concern, and connection, a qualitative approach was necessary.

Patton (2015) described three kinds of qualitative data that contribute to qualitative findings: interpersonal interviews, fieldwork observations, and documentation. Interpersonal interviews ask open-ended questions to discover and gain insight into participants' feelings, perceptions, experiences, and opinions. For this research, the qualitative portion of this mixed-methods study comprised face-to-face interviews with elementary school principals to gain insight into their experiences of how they establish trust with teachers using each of the five variables of trust outlined in Weisman's (2010) trust model.

**Quantitative Research Design**

In contrast to qualitative research, quantitative research examines the relationship between variables using a deductive approach to planning the research as opposed to the inductive approach in qualitative research (Patten, 2012). The quantitative portion of this study was used to gather data on how elementary principals perceived the degree of importance of the five domains of competence, consistency, candor, concern, and connection for building trust with staff. The survey instrument (see Appendix B) used was an electronic survey, SurveyMonkey (http://www.surveymonkey.com), with multiple closed-ended questions using a 6-point forced-response Likert scale to generate responses from the 12 principals selected in the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), scales are widely used in research to assess beliefs and opinions. They also stated that "a true Likert scale is one in which the stem includes a value or direction and the respondent indicates agreement or disagreement with the statement" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 198). Additionally, quantitative data from the survey were utilized

to form connections with the qualitative data gathered from the interviews, which provided greater validity to the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

**Method Rationale**

Selecting the appropriate mixed-methods research model that best fit the problem and research questions of the study was an essential step conducted by the Principal Trust Thematic Research team in order to "guide the methods decisions that researcher must make during their research studies and set the logic by which they make interpretations at the end of their studies" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 53). The mixed-methods study approach was collaboratively selected by six peer researchers in the field of K-12 education to study how principals established trust with staff using the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Wiseman, 2010). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), mixed-methods research design is a two-phase interactive process that begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data and is then followed by qualitative data collection to help explain and further investigate initial quantitative findings. The researchers used the mixed-methods research design to elicit greater in-depth information of leadership strategies that school principals used to establish trust with staff by analyzing the quantitative results of the survey and then using face-to-face interviews to gain more insight and to help explain what was learned in the survey. Using a mixed-methods research design allowed researchers to conduct a more complete investigation in the complex world of trust and to triangulate the information gathered from both qualitative and quantitative sources to provide a more comprehensive and valid study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Each researcher surveyed 12 school principals in his or her selected population consisiting of either elementary school,

middle school, or high school site principals. After analyzing the survey data, each researcher then interviewed the same 12 principals whom he or she surveyed to gather more in-depth information on the leadership strategies that principals used to establish trust with staff.

## Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a population is the total group of individuals, objects, or events to which results of research can be generalized. The larger population for this study was elementary school principals. Elementary school principals manage and lead schools composed of students in kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade. Elementary school principals are ultimately responsible for the culture, climate, safety, and overall academic performance of their schools. In addition, the school principal is an agent of change, systems player, and lead learner charged with moving people forward under difficult circumstances, contributing to the success of the system as a whole, and for modeling learning and shaping conditions for all to learn (Fullan, 2014).

## Target Population

The target population of a research study is a group of individuals selected with some specific criteria to which researchers want the research results to apply (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Creswell (2005), "The target population is the actual list of sampling units from which a sample is selected" (p. 393). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), there are over 67,000 elementary public schools in the United States and approximately 6,000 principals in California. It was not feasible to use such a large population for the study because of time, availability, financial, and geographical constraints; therefore, a target population was narrowed to

full-time public elementary school principals in San Diego County. According to the *San Diego County 2016-2017 Annual Report*, there are 42 school districts in San Diego County composed of 783 schools. Of that total, 499 schools in San Diego County are elementary schools.

## Sample

In scientific studies, researchers frequently collect data from a representative subset of the population referred to as a sample population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For this study, a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling was used to describe the experiences of the sample population. The researcher selected 12 full-time public elementary principals working in three districts in San Diego County. Purposive sampling is a method used by researchers who purposively select participants for their study whom they believe will be rich sources of information (Patten, 2012). Convenience sampling is selected based on participants' accessibility and willingness to participate in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Creswell (2005) stated, "In convenience sampling the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied" (p. 149). Because of the mixed-methods research design of this study, a combination of both convenience and purposive sampling offers the researcher convenient accessibility and proximity to the participants being studied as well as the opportunity to select information-rich participants. Patten (2012) stated that "the characteristics of the sample probably are the characteristics of the population . . . inferring from a sample to a more generalized population" (p. 45).

For this study, the sample population consisted of 12 public elementary school principals. The sample participants were selected from three school districts in San

Diego County. Patton (2015) asserted that there are "no rules to sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p, 311); the sample depends on what the researcher wants to investigate. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) agreed with Patton (2015) that "there are only guidelines for qualitative sample size . . . qualitative samples can range from 1 to 40 or more" depending on what the researcher wants to find out (p. 328). Furthermore, according to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), after 12 interviews, the topic of study will begin to repeat and data saturation is reached; therefore, utilizing a sample size of 12 was sufficient and appropriate for this mixed-methods study.

Study participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Participant had a minimum of 3 years experience as an elementary school principal.
2. Participant had a minimum of 15 staff members in his or her charge in order to sufficiently identify and describe how he or she established trust with staff.
3. Participant expressed a willingness to participate in the study.
4. Participant agreed to sign the informed consent form.

Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the population, target population, and sample for the research study.

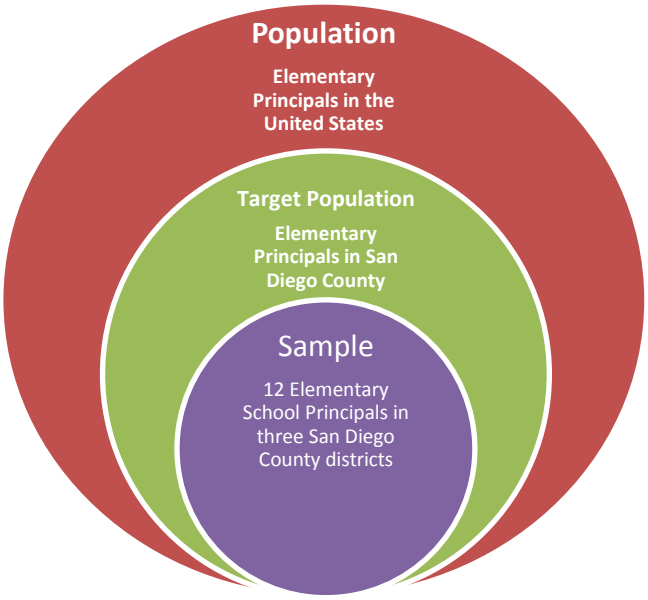



*Figure 4*. Population, target population, and sample visual representation.

## Instrumentation

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative instrumentation to collect data from research participants. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), using both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study is often the best approach to answering research questions, especially when using one sole approach would not provide complete answers because of the complexities of the study. By combining quantitative and qualitative philosophies and methods in meaningful ways, mixed-methods research "is able to provide insights that are not possible when either the quantitative or qualitative approach is used independently" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 396). Therefore, the researchers used the same methodology, a mixed-methods research design, to expand on the quantitative data gathered. Quantitative data were gathered first from a custom survey, and then qualitative interviews were conducted to help explain and inform what was learned in the survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

## Researcher as Instrument of Study

Researchers, as human beings, make mistakes and get things wrong; therefore, "a consideration of self as a researcher and self in the relation of the topic of research is a precondition to coping with bias" (Norris, 1997). In qualitative studies, the depth and complexity of the interpretations derived from interviews and observations are "determined by the effectiveness of the researcher as instrument" (Xu & Storr, 2012, p. 15). Therefore, the credibility of the researcher is of utmost importance. As an educator, staff developer, and an elementary school principal for almost a decade, it was important for the researcher to self-reflect and understand the personal experiences and biases she brought to the study because of being the instrument of study during the qualitative interviews sessions. The establishment of validity and reliability of all data collection instruments and the use of an observer when field-testing supports the researcher's efforts to eliminate bias.

## Quantitative Instrumentation

A custom survey was designed by the thematic team of researchers to collect quantitative data on principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. The Values Institute trust pulse survey was used as a model for creating a quality survey instrument that was aligned to the five domains of trust (Weisman, 2010). The survey included a three-step process: posing the same question to all participants, recording the answers, and analyzing the answers. The survey also included requests for one-on-one interviews with principals in participating districts. The use of electronic surveys provided the researcher with numerical data for statistical analysis. The statistical analysis of the survey helped

to determine descriptive statistics in the form of percentages of what principals perceive as most important to establishing trust with staff.

**Qualitative Instrumentation**

Qualitative data were then collected by each researcher through purposeful interviews with each principal who was surveyed. Semistructured and open-ended interview questions were developed by a trust thematic team of 15 peer researchers across an interdisciplinary set of organizations including K-12 schools, superintendents and board members, nonprofit organizations, and military organizations. Semistructured interviews enabled the researcher to engage in more of an authentic dialogue with the participants. In addition, semistructured interviews allowed the researcher to gain greater insight into the participant's thinking by utilizing probes and prompts as follow-up questions when needed to dig deeper (Patton, 2015). Collaborative discussions were held with faculty to revise and edit the interview questions to ensure alignment with the five domains of trust, purpose statement, and research questions of the study. Within the K-12 schools, a Principal Trust Thematic team of six peer researchers across each segment of education (elementary, middle, and high schools) reviewed all interview questions and participated in multiple collaborative discussions to choose the final questions to be used for the field-test interview to investigate how principals establish trust with staff.

Each of the six researchers utilized the same interview and survey questions in the study of principal trust leadership. The one-on-one semistructured interviews were recorded electronically and used to clarify and expand on the quantitative data of the survey. The interview protocol was finalized on July 20, 2018, utilizing field-test feedback to ensure validity and reliability (see Appendix C).

## Validity and Reliability

In research, obtaining data that are both accurate and consistent is paramount to the credibility of the study (Coughlan et al., 2007). Therefore, validity and reliability are key indicators of the quality of a measuring instrument in research studies. In order for research data to be considered valuable and useful, they must be both reliable and valid (Patten, 2012; Patton, 2015). According to Patten (2012), reliability refers to the consistency and repeatability of findings, and validity refers to the credibility of the research. The credibility of the research is achieved by having the research instrument measure the content of the study that it intended to measure in an absolute and consistent way to ensure accurate findings (Coughlan et al., 2007; Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008; Patten, 2012). A survey instrument is valid if what is needed to be measured is actually measured and accurately performs the function it is meant to perform (Patten, 2012).

### Reliability

The success of a study is dependent on reliable and consistent outcomes. Creswell (2005) asserted, "Reliability means that scores from an instrument are stable and consistent" (p. 162). Research instruments are valid if they produce consistent and reliable outcomes (Patten, 2012; Patton, 2015); therefore, administering the instrument in a standardized way was important to reduce potential errors. Field-testing was used by the team of peer researchers to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

### Field Testing

To minimize error in the use of instrumentation tools and obtain a higher rate of accurate and consistent data, field-testing is often used to determine validity and

reliability (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Field-testing allows researchers to discover potential errors in the measurement process and provides the researcher with the opportunity to refine the instrument to reduce measurement error (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). For this study, each researcher field-tested the interview questions with a principal participant similar to his or her population sample to determine any revisions needed prior to implementation of the study. Each peer researcher conducted the interview with an expert observer present to provide feedback on interviewing skills, body language, timing, and any other behaviors that may have indicated researcher bias. Additionally, at the conclusion of the field-test interview, principal participants were asked questions regarding their overall experience of the interview and whether there were any questions that were either confusing or difficult to understand. The Principal Trust Thematic team shared and discussed the field-test experience and feedback received from both the expert observer and the principal participant with peer researchers and faculty. Appropriate modifications and revisions were made based on the feedback to ensure validity and reliability of the interview instrument prior to data collection.

**Content Validity**

Content validity refers to the use of experts in the field of study to determine whether an instrument accurately covers the content area of research (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). The thematic team of peer researchers and core faculty reviewed the content and construction of the instruments to ensure all elements of the tool were effectively measuring the intent of the research questions (Patton, 2015). Content validity reduces potential errors when drawing conclusions from the data by ensuring that the measurement tools are clearly aligned to the purpose and research questions.

### Criterion Validity

Criterion-related validity "determines whether the scores from an instrument are a good predictor of some outcome they are expected to predict" (Creswell, 2005, p. 165). The Principal Trust Thematic team members worked to gain consensus in the field-test phase, and feedback was provided from the field-test for both the interview protocol and the survey questions. The Principal Trust Thematic team met with the faculty chair to clarify the field-test feedback and make adjustments to both instruments as needed. The adjustments made included simplifying language to ensure content was comprehensible to all participants and refining probing questions to support the researcher in collecting more in-depth data related to the five elements of trust.

## Data Collection

Data collection is a critical component of research that is essential to maintaining the integrity of the research study (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 2015). In this mixed-methods study, quantitative and qualitative data were systematically collected in two phases. The first phase consisted of collecting and analyzing quantitative data from an online survey given to the sample population. The second phase consisted of qualitative data collection and analysis from face-to-face interviews to clarify and further elaborate on the quantitative findings. All data, including survey results and interview transcripts, were kept secure in a locked file cabinet and password protected computer. Data collection was initiated only after approval the researcher received from Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) and after completion of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) web-based training course in protecting human research participants. An application for Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval of Research Protocol to the

BUIRB was submitted and approved (Appendix E: IRB Approval). IRB is responsible for determining whether a study meets the legal and ethical requirements prior to approving research with human subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The NIH web-based training course, Protecting Human Research Participants, was completed by this researcher in May 2017 (Appendix D: NIH Certification). Prior to the collection of data with human subjects, this researcher obtained active informed consent from each participant, which included "participant knowledge and acceptance of procedures, any risks or discomforts, benefits, voluntary participation, nature of confidentiality, and assurance that nonparticipation will not result in any harm or detriment" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 125).

## Data Analysis

Research is a systematic investigation that involves collecting and analyzing data that are aligned to a study's purpose in order to generate new knowledge and draw conclusions to answers generated from the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). According to Creswell (2005), data analysis consists of first examining the individual parts of data collected and then summarizing all the parts together as a whole. In this mixed-methods study, both quantitative and qualitative research data were collected and analyzed. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative research allowed the researcher to further analyze the findings from the quantitative survey and extrapolate additional data using qualitative research methods of face-to-face interviews. The interview transcription data were organized into categories and coded for themes to gain further insight into the statistical data of the survey. Upon

completion of both modes of research, the data were examined to investigate the findings of the study.

**Quantitative Analysis**

Qualitative data were gathered from a peer-reviewed survey disseminated to 12 school principals from each Principal Thematic Trust team's sample population using an online software survey tool called SurveyMonkey. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the outcomes of the survey. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained that "the use of descriptive statistics is the most fundamental way to summarize data, and it is indispensable in interpreting the results of quantitative research" (p. 149). Descriptive statistics allow the researcher with the ability to describe what the data show in a simplified way (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten, 2012). Using descriptive statistics allows the researcher the ability to present quantitative descriptions with simple summaries of the sample and the measures in the study used to answer the research question: How do elementary school principals perceive the degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust?

Prior to taking the online survey, all participants were informed of the purpose of the study in an e-mail attached to the SurveyMonkey link. Participants were also provided with the informed consent form prior to continuing with the survey. Participants were asked to acknowledge their reading of the consent form in order to have access to the survey questions. All survey questions were protected using a password protected SurveyMonkey account.

**Qualitative Analysis**

The qualitative approach to research is focused on exploring and understanding a social situation from the participants' perspectives and experiences through the use of multiple data points, such as interviews, observations, and documents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). For the qualitative analysis in this study, the researcher analyzed data gathered from face-to-face interviews and coded the data for themes. The researcher strengthened the reliability and validity of the study by using the process of inter-rater reliability (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). Inter-rater reliability measures the degree of estimated reliability between one or more researchers by each independently analyzing and assessing the same phenomenon in order to ensure consistent data sets (Patton, 2015; Trochim, 2007). The researcher utilized the assistance of a research expert with a doctorate degree and experience in qualitative research to double check the coding employed by the researcher and to ensure a clear link existed between the data, codes, and theory that emerged from the codes with an 80% agreement rate or higher (Patton, 2015). Codes provide meaningful names or categories to the significant themes that emerge from the data for the purpose of answering the research question of the study (Patton, 2015).

The data coding process for this study involved the following steps:

1. Interview transcriptions were coded for themes in support of the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency.
2. Upon completion of coding data for themes in response to the research question, data were sorted using NVivo, an online data coding system, to tabulate frequencies and sources used.

3. The codes were consolidated into meaningful themes aligned to the study's research questions.

## Limitations

Limitations of a study are those characteristics of design or methodology out of the researcher's control that can impact or influence the findings of a study (Patton, 2015; Roberts, 2010). This Principal Trust Thematic study was replicated by six different researchers who used the same methodology and instrumentation but with different principal populations (elementary, middle, and high schools); therefore, the validity of the findings was reinforced. This study had a variety of limitations that may have affected this mixed-methods study including time, geography, sample size, and researcher as the instrument.

### Time

Time was a limitation in this study because of the interview time constraints of the sample participants. Because of a school principal's busy schedule, interview appointments needed to be arranged well in advance and not exceed 60 minutes for the duration of the interview. In addition, there was no control over scheduling when the principals were available for the interview. School principals are extremely busy people with multiple priorities. Keeping the interviews less than 60 minutes minimized the amount of time that needed to be given to the study, which may limit the depth of the interview.

### Geography

There are over 67,000 elementary schools with school principals in the United States and nearly 500 elementary school principals in San Diego County alone. Because

of geographical constraints, the sample was limited to elementary school principals employed in San Diego County public school districts.

**Sample Size**

The sample size was limited to 12 participants for each peer researcher on the Principal Trust Thematic team. This limits how the results can be generalized to the overall population of principals across the United States.

**Researcher as Instrument of the Study**

The quality of qualitative research depends largely on the extent of the researcher's methodological training, skillful interviewing, and credible content analysis and integrity (Patton, 2015). Therefore, this researcher's role as the instrument of research in this study is a limitation. As the instrument of study, the researcher's presence during data gathering can affect the participant's responses as well as hinder the researcher's objectivity because of personal bias (Patton, 2015). Because the researcher is the instrument of data collection in qualitative research, serious thought must go into safeguarding personal biases in order to produce high-quality qualitative data that are credible and trustworthy (Patton, 2015). Recording personal reactions of what is seen and heard in a subjectivity journal is a way to help limit personal bias. By taking note of all personal reactions, the researcher becomes more aware of judgements, emotions, and hidden biases that may emerge when conducting research (Mehra, 2002). As a current elementary school principal for almost a decade, it was important for the researcher to be aware of personal biases she brought to the study.

## Summary

A mixed-methods research design was used for this study in order to identify and describe how elementary principals establish trust with staff using the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Wiseman Trust Model, 2010). Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze data to gain a greater understanding of the trust leadership strategies and practices that principals use and perceive to be most important in establishing trust with their staff. This study was conducted with elementary school principals while five other peer researchers conducted a similar study utilizing the same methodology and instrumentation. Through the collaborative effort of the Principal Trust Thematic research team, the outcomes and findings of this study may yield insights into how connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency are used by principals to establish trust with staff. The outcomes and findings are discussed in Chapter IV and are followed by a descriptive analysis of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research presented in Chapter V.

# CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

## Overview

This mixed-methods study identified and described how elementary school principals establish trust with their staff using Weisman's (2010) five domains of trust. In addition, this study also explored the degree of importance to which elementary principals perceive of the five domains for building trust. This chapter describes the qualitative results gathered through face-to-face interviews with elementary school principals and quantitative results collected through an electronic survey with the same elementary school principals who were interviewed. This chapter begins with a review of the purpose statement and research questions. The chapter also described the population and sample used for this mixed-methods study. A presentation and analysis of the data are presented in this chapter. The data collected from the qualitative interviews address Research Questions 1 through 5 and are presented in a narrative format, including direct quotes from elementary school principals. The data collected from the quantitative surveys address Research Question 6 and are presented in narrative form followed by a table format. Chapter IV concludes with a presentation of key findings from the study.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe how elementary principals establish trust with staff using the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Weisman, 2010). In addition, the purpose of this study was to determine elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust.

## Research Questions

The purpose of the research questions is to form a link between the stated purpose of the study and the research problem and have an impact on the current state of knowledge of the study (Coughlan et al., 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The following research questions aligned to the purpose of this mixed-methods study:

1. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of connection?
2. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of concern?
3. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of candor?
4. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of competence?
5. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of consistency?
6. How do elementary principals perceive the degree of importance for the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust?

## Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

The current study employed a mixed-methods research design to identify and describe how elementary school principals establish trust with their staff using Weisman's (2010) five domains of trust. A mixed-methods study was applied to this investigation to provide more comprehensive data through the use of both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) claimed that a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches contribute to a greater depth

of knowledge derived from the investigation. For the qualitative portion of this study, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 12 elementary school principals who have a reputation of trusting relationships with their staff. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio recorded with principals' consent. All participants responded to the same 10 semistructured, open-ended interview questions developed in collaboration with the trust thematic team under the guidance of four faculty members. The questions centered on Weisman's (2010) five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. Each variable was associated with two interview questions, with at least one probing question, to elicit further responses from the participant as needed. To ensure reliability, the researcher followed the interview protocol (Appendix C) throughout the interviews. For the quantitative portion of this study, the researcher used a survey developed by peer researchers titled, Survey of Principal Behaviors that Develop Trust with Staff (Appendix B). The Values Institute's (Weisman, 2010) Trust Pulse Survey was used as a model for creating a quality survey instrument that was aligned to the five domains of trust. The same 12 elementary principals were asked to complete an online survey via SurveyMonkey prior to their interview in order to gain a deeper understanding on how elementary principals perceive the degree of importance for Weisman's (2010) five domains of trust. All qualitative and quantitative data were stored in a secure place by the researcher. The researcher used the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain greater depth and insight of what was being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Upon completion of quantitative and qualitative measures, the data were analyzed and interpreted to ensure the strength and consistency of the data (Patton, 2015). The interview transcription data

were organized into categories and coded for themes to gain further insight into the statistical data of the survey.

The 15 researchers conducted this study across an interdisciplinary set of organizations including K-12 schools, superintendents and board members, nonprofit organizations, and military organizations. Ten of the researchers (six principals and four superintendents) used the same methodology, a mixed-methods research design, to expand on the quantitative data gathered through the use of qualitative interviews. Within K-12 education, a group of six peer researchers identified and described how principals across each segment of the school system (elementary, middle school, and high school) established trust with their staff. Each of the six researchers utilized the same interview protocol and survey questions to gather data from principals in order to ensure consistency "across different researchers and different projects" (Creswell, 2014, p. 201).

## Interrater Reliability

In order to reduce errors and produce reliable results, the researcher strengthened the reliability and validity of the study by using the process of interrater reliability (Lombard et al., 2002). Interrater reliability measures the degree of estimated reliability between one or more researchers by each independently analyzing and assessing the data to secure consistency (Patton, 2015; Trochim, 2007). The researcher utilized the assistance of a research expert with experience in qualitative studies to double check the coding employed by the researcher and to ensure that a clear link existed between the data, codes, and theory that emerged from the codes with an 80% agreement rate or higher (Patton, 2015). In this study, the peer researcher established the same conclusions and consistencies with the data as did the researcher.

## Population

Creswell (2003) defined the population of a study as "a group of individuals who comprise the same characteristics" (p. 644). The overall population for this study was elementary school principals. According to the California Department of Education (2018), there were approximately 6,000 elementary principals in California. It was not feasible to use such a large population for the study because of time, availability, financial, and geographical constraints; therefore, a target population was identified to assist the researcher in saving expenses and time. The target population was narrowed for this study to full-time public elementary school principals in San Diego County.

## Sample

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a study sample is defined as a "group of individuals from whom data are collected" (p. 129). For this study, a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling was used to describe the experiences of the sample population. Because of the mixed-methods research design of this study, a combination of both convenience and purposive sampling offered the researcher convenient accessibility and proximity to the participants being studied as well as the opportunity to select participants who are rich sources of information. From the target population, 12 elementary school principals in San Diego County were selected for the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher, "Select a sample that is representative of the population or that includes subjects with needed characteristics" (p. 138). The sample participants were selected from three school districts in San Diego County. All 12 elementary school principals in San Diego County met the following criteria:

1. Participant had a minimum of 3 years experience as an elementary school principal.
2. Participant had a minimum of 15 staff members in his or her charge in order to sufficiently identify and describe how he or she established trust with staff.
3. Participant expressed a willingness to participate in the study.
4. Participant agreed to sign the informed consent form.

Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the research study sample.

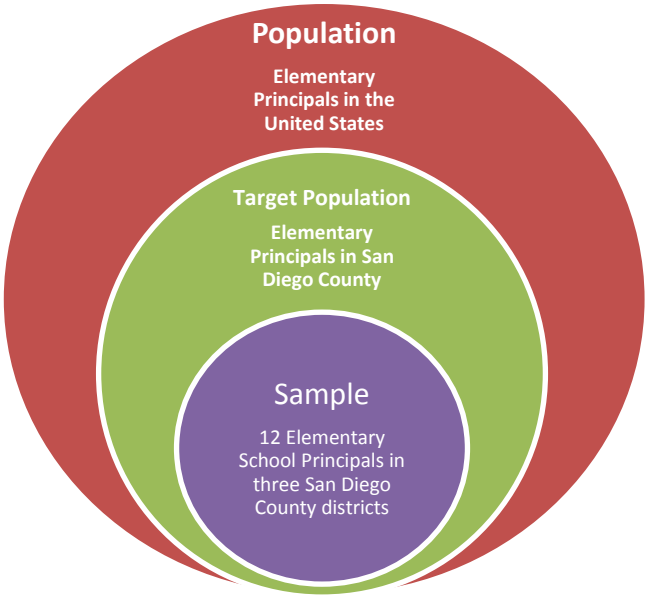



*Figure 4*. Population, target population, and sample visual representation.

To begin the sample selection process, the researcher accessed public information found on district websites to acquire elementary contact information, such as e-mails and phone numbers. First, the researcher contacted the potential participants via e-mail to provide a brief overview of the research and to request their participation in the study. Then, the researcher contacted the 12 elementary school principals via phone to discuss the online survey and criteria specified to complete the survey as well as to answer any questions. In addition, another e-mail was sent to all participants thanking them for being

willing to participate in the research study and providing them with the SurveyMonkey link to take the online survey. The survey results were kept confidential and saved using a password-protected software. Face-to-face interviews were scheduled with the same 12 participants based on their availability. Interviews were audio recorded and also kept confidential and stored using a password-protected software application. By interviewing the 12 participants, the intent was to identify and describe how elementary principals build trust with staff.

## Demographic Data

Twelve elementary school principals in San Diego County were selected to participate in this study. For confidentiality purposes, data were reported without reference to any individual or district. Therefore, the participants were each assigned a number and identifying demographic data, such as the participant's gender and the number of years as a principal. Six of the participants were female and six were male. All participants met eligibility requirements. Participants' demographic data are described in Table 2, and qualifying criteria for inclusion in the study are summarized in Table 3.

## Presentation and Analysis of Data

The presentation and analysis of data in this chapter were obtained using a mixed-methods research design. Qualitative data were gathered through face-to-face interviews with 12 elementary principals, and quantitative data were gathered through the use of an electronic survey taken by the same elementary principals interviewed. The findings from the interviews and surveys are reported as follows in relation to how they directly pertain to answering each of the research questions.

Table 2

*Demographics for Study Participants*

| Participant | Years as a principal | Gender |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 15 | M |
| 2 | 9 | F |
| 3 | 4 | F |
| 4 | 13 | M |
| 5 | 4 | F |
| 6 | 8 | M |
| 7 | 3 | F |
| 8 | 13 | F |
| 9 | 4 | M |
| 10 | 4 | F |
| 11 | 6 | M |
| 12 | 8 | M |

Table 3

*Study Criteria*

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A minimum of 3 years' experience as an elementary school principal | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| A minimum of 15 staff members in their charge in order to sufficiently identify and describe how they established trust with staff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| A willingness to participate in the study | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agree to informed consent form | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

The 12 recorded interviews were transcribed through a digital transcription service application and then uploaded into NVivo, a qualitative coding software. The use of NVivo provided the researcher with the ability to analyze a large amount of data in order to identify and code emergent themes and patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, the researcher coded for common themes based on Weisman's

(2010) five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. Upon completion of the coding process, the researcher then analyzed the strength of each code based on the frequency count of each code tallied in NVivo.

A comprehensive analysis of the data collected from the 12 interviews yielded a total of 21 themes and 407 frequencies. The themes and frequencies were unequally distributed among the five study variables of the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the themes among the five study variables, and Figure 6 illustrates the frequency count for each variable.

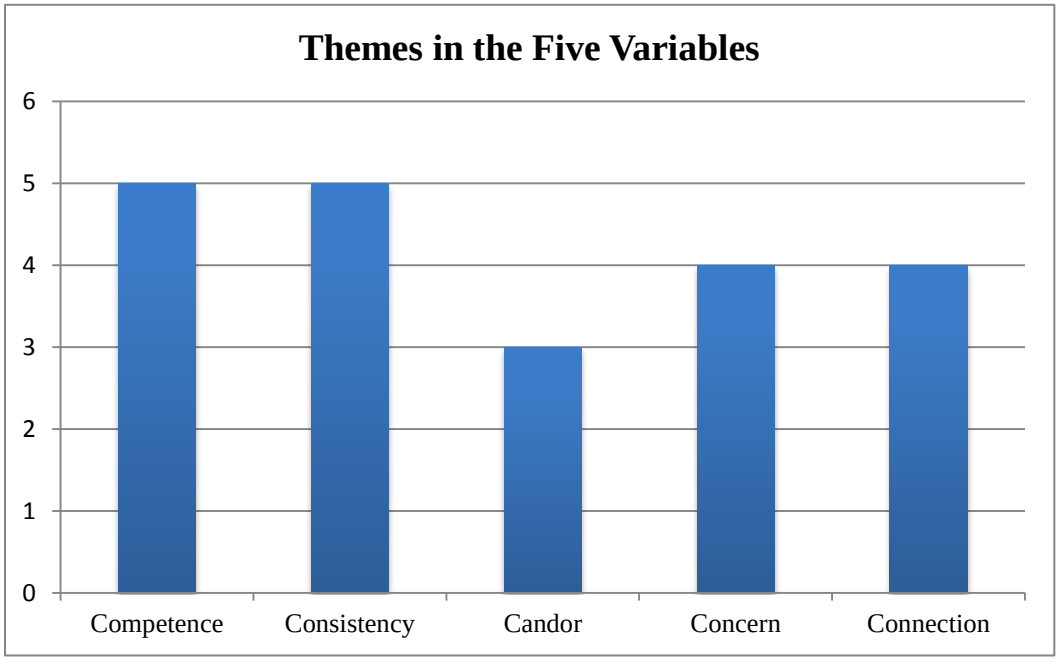



*Figure 5*. Number of themes in each variable.

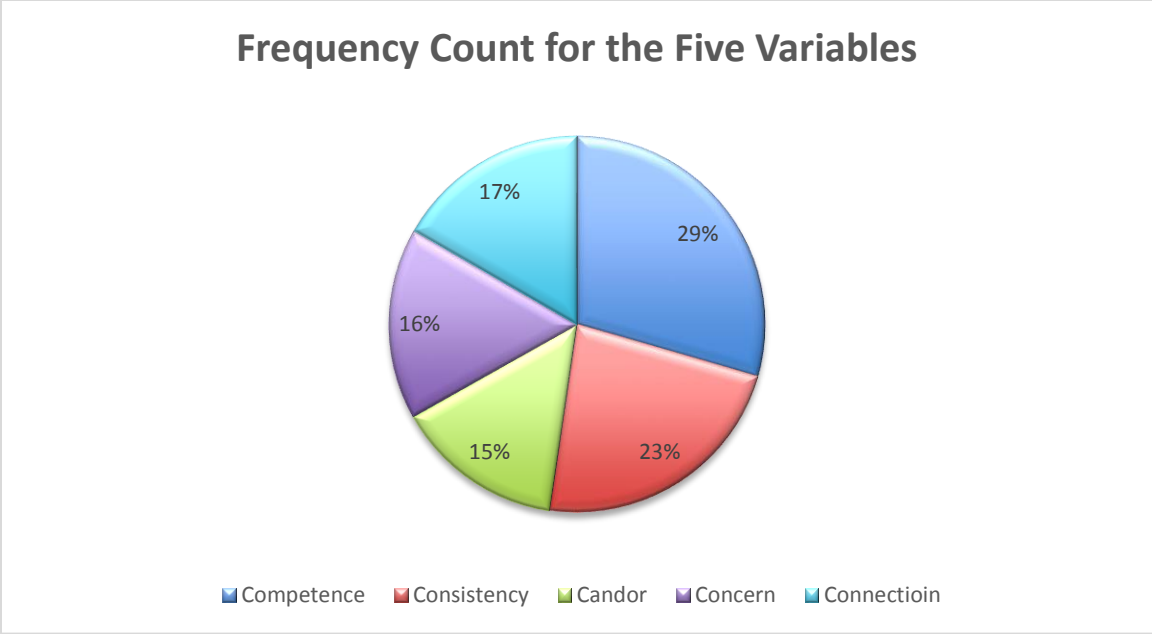



*Figure 6.* Frequency count for coded themes in each domain of trust.

While competence and consistency variables each had five themes, concern and connection each had four themes, and candor had a total of three themes. In order for a theme to be included in the study, a minimum frequency count of 10 for a theme needed to be coded. Therefore, themes with less than 10 frequency counts were excluded from the study.

Competence emerged with the highest number of frequencies with 120 counts (29%). Consistency followed with 93 frequency counts (23%), connection had 68 frequency counts (17%), concern had 67 frequency counts (16%), and candor had the lowest with 59 frequency counts (15%). As represented in the visual graph, competence and consistency emerged with more than half (52%) of the entire frequency counts of the coded themes. The next section provides a detailed analysis of the qualitative interview data arranged according to each research question, which focused on a specific domain of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency.

**Data Analysis for Research Question 1**

The first research question asked, "How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of connection?" The theoretical definition of connection, as defined by the team of peer researchers, is a shared link or bond where there is a sense of emotional engagement and interrelatedness (Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Stovall & Baker, 2010; White et al., 2016). According to Weisman (2016), trust is developed by establishing genuine connections with people over time. Findings from the principal interviews concluded that the individual domain of connection contributed to the leadership strategies that helped elementary school principals build trust with their staff. Four themes emerged from the data coding process for Research Question 1. These themes were referenced 68 times by the elementary principals and accounted for 17% of the coded data. All four of the themes had more than 50% of respondents with two of the themes having a frequency rate of over 80% based on the number of respondents. The main overarching findings concluded that the individual domain of connection had significant strengths that assisted elementary school principals in developing trust with their staff.

Table 4 and Figure 7 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged from an NVivo analysis of the interview transcripts. The common themes of how elementary principals establish trust through the domain of connection, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 4. This table assists in identifying emerging themes on how elementary school principals develop trust with their staff through the domain of connection.

Table 4

*Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 1: Domain of Connection*

| Theme/pattern | Number of respondents | % based on *N* | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Establishing positive relationships | 10 | 83 | 20 |
| Being vulnerable and authentic | 10 | 83 | 18 |
| Listening to staff members | 9 | 75 | 18 |
| Making others feel valued | 7 | 58 | 12 |

*Note.* The *N* for interview participants = 12.

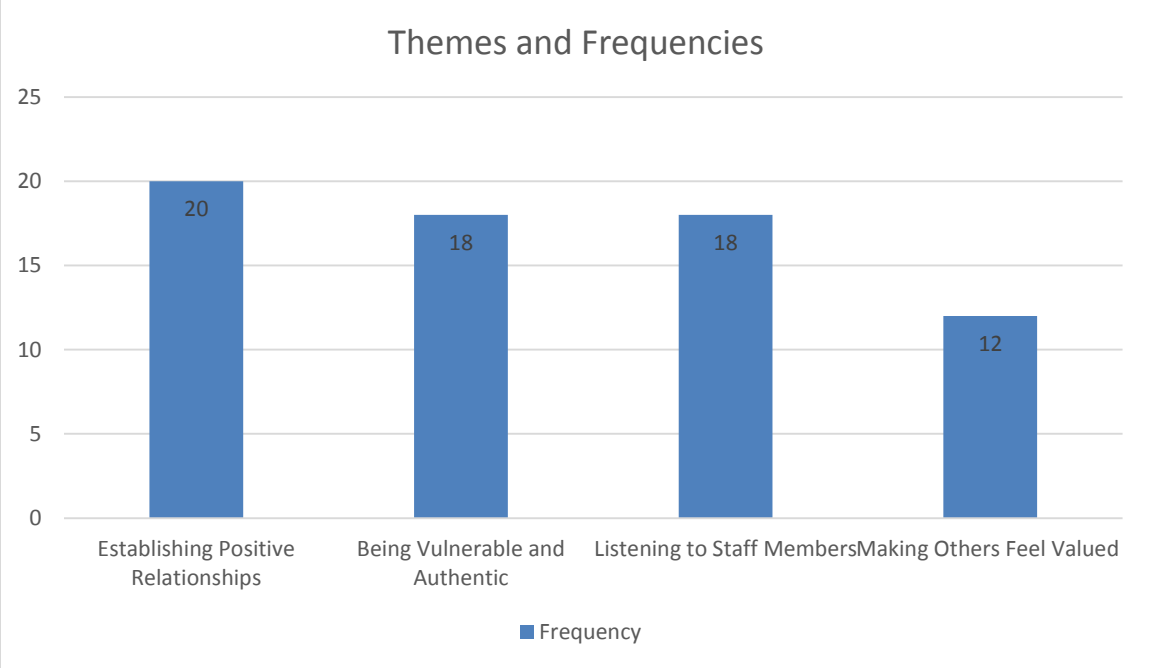



*Figure 7*. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 1.

**Establishing positive relationships.** One of the top themes that emerged as a key element to building trust with staff through the domain of connection was the principal's ability to establish positive relationships with staff. Ten of the 12 (83%) elementary school principal participants referenced this theme 20 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. Weisman (2016) referred to connection as being a genuine relationship existing between people that develops a deep level of trust.

Elementary school principals agreed that developing positive relationships with their staff contributed to establishing trust and required putting in the time necessary to accomplish this level of trust. For example, one participant stated,

> To develop positive rapport and connections, it goes to spending the time to build those relationships, to have more positive encounters than negative encounters, to spend the time to find similarities and things to talk about. I do it by getting into 55 classrooms a week and being able to have conversations about what teachers are doing in the class and getting to know the students. It's about spending the hard time to really get to know people. And then with those connections and the relationships, we're able to do more. We build equity in that, right? And where I don't have big deposits, it's hard to take out stuff. So I'm trying to just keep building those relationship deposit accounts so I can make withdrawals, for the kids.

Another participant recounted how he intentionally puts connection and building relationships as a priority in order to be able to focus on the work by sharing his mantra of "Community first, before work." He continued, "You're building that set of interpersonal skills with each other, and then developing that relationship and trust to do the work."

Furthermore, expressing the importance of knowing oneself as a leader and connecting to core values was highlighted in a variety of ways. One participant expressed, "I think it just comes back to knowing who you are and having relationships with people, but having relationships that are based on trust and really high expectations and connecting right back to those core values."

**Being vulnerable and authentic.** This theme was referenced by 10 of the 12 participants (83%) with the second highest frequency count (18) for the domain of connection. Leaders who connect with their followers are not afraid to be vulnerable and share about themselves. This allows others to see the leader as a real person and someone they can identify with and trust. One participant expressed, "I think any time that you communicate about your own personal vulnerabilities that you develop trust and it's much easier for people to then be reflective on themselves if you're modeling reflection for them." Another participant expressed the importance of being authentic and vulnerable in order to build trust with staff by allowing them to get to know her as person when she stated, "I think a big part, for me, is showing who I am and having them have an opportunity to get inside to who I am and being authentic as possible."

A predominant action shared by the participants for the theme of being vulnerable and authentic included being willing to take a risk in front of staff. For example, a participant noted,

> I take on the role of a teacher. I'm willing, and it's always because I want them to see that I'm vulnerable, that I'm not perfect, but I'm willing to try on a lesson or step in and do that for them and be a learner alongside of them.

Another participant reiterated the importance of showing vulnerability and authenticity with staff by being willing to do the work with them:

> And I think the best asset that I have to bring to the table is that vulnerability where if we gotta do this, here let me start first kind of thing. And I'll work with you guys. I'll roll up my sleeves and teach a couple lessons. I think that's been by far the most beneficial leadership skill to gain credibility where they trust you.

One participant revealed how he shared his true feelings with staff: "I think they appreciate what I can say, hey, I'm not happy with this either. They think, oh, you're happy with everything. I'm not happy with everything. This sucks for me."

From the coded responses, showing vulnerability comprised being real with people. One participant stated,

> Well, I think first and foremost, it's knowing yourself, knowing who you are, knowing your strengths and your tendencies, and then being real with people, being real, being upfront, being consistent, and just getting to know people's strengths and maintaining high expectations, and yeah, I think just being real. Sometimes I think there's the tendency that when you become an administrator that you're different than everyone else. They're just different roles, different responsibilities, so still a person.

Another participant shared that she "keeps it real by admitting to her mistakes" and further expressed, "Trust has just built over time because of the vulnerability and the transparency. Personally, I believe it starts with being vulnerable yourself, not just about the data or context."

**Listening to staff members.** The theme of listening to staff members was referenced 18 times by nine of the 12 participants. According to Horsager (2012), listening involves being fully present with your mind and body and paying attention to what is being said with the intent to understand and see things through others' point of view. The elementary principals frequently mentioned listening to staff needs and ideas. One participant expressed,

> Really gaining their trust by listening and not always agreeing, but just in general I think them feeling like they had a voice and that I would actually consider their thoughts, helped develop that trust and build relationships and then when they would go out and tell other people like, "She'll listen." It just allowed me to really build some relationships that way.

Another participant shared the importance of listening to staff ideas: "And actually listening and making changes when their ideas are good. They've got amazing ideas in knowledge and listening and taking those." One principal talked about her experience in leading her school through a restructuring process and shared the importance of listening to staff:

> I think, I honestly can say that one of the things that, when staff feels listened to, and if you honor the ideas by implementing, maybe not all, it could be a few. I think that that helps with trust. An example of that is once again, going back to [school name], I was getting to know the school. But restructuring, like I said, brought us together, but their voices were heard. And I think that developed trust. Because they saw me as a part of what we're going through. It's not because she's a principal and she's making us. I really wanted to know what they wanted to do.

**Making others feel valued.** This theme was referenced 12 times by seven of the 12 principals. Leaders who appreciate and value the contributions of their followers create connections that lead to trust, which inspires people to improve their performance (Covey, 2006; The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2010). For example, one participant shared how valuing staff provided motivation to their work:

> I think that if we're really seeing them as the professionals that they are, they have so much to offer us as the practitioners in the classroom every day and when they feel valued and they feel like they're a part of that process, then they have something to work for. They want to make sure that it's going to be the best that it's going to be.

Another participant shared the importance of valuing staff despite not agreeing with what they have to say:

> There's oftentimes too that as a leader you have to be receptive to feedback from staff members even if you might not necessarily agree with feedback, or you might not be on the same page with them. It's how they're feeling and you have to value that.

Another participant reiterated the importance of valuing others even in times of disagreement by stating, "We all bring different things to the table and all ideas are valued, and everyone has a right to be heard, even if you may not be in agreement with certain things."

In conclusion, the domain of connection for Research Question 1 yielded four themes with 68 total frequencies. All four of the themes had more than 50% of respondents with two of the themes receiving over 80% response rate of the number of respondents.

**Data Analysis for Research Question 2**

The second research question asked, "How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of concern?" Concern was defined in this study as the value placed on the well-being of all members of an organization, promoting their

welfare at work and empathizing with their needs. Concern entails fostering a collaborative and safe environment where leaders and members are able to show their vulnerability and to support, motivate, and care for each other (Dean Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Covey, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Livnat, 2004; Weisman, 2016). In addition, demonstrating concern creates a culture of trust in the organization that generates higher levels of employee engagement and satisfaction at work (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Weisman, 2016).

Four themes emerged from the data coding process for Research Question 2. These themes were referenced 67 times by the elementary principals and accounted for 16% of the coded data. All four of the themes had a minimum of 50% of respondents with one of the themes receiving a significant higher response frequency, doubling or close to doubling the other three themes. The main overarching findings concluded that the individual domain of concern had significant strengths that assisted elementary school principals in developing trust with their staff.

Table 5 and Figure 8 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged from an NVivo analysis of the interview transcripts. The common themes of how elementary principals establish trust through the domain of concern, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 5. This table assists in identifying emerging themes on how elementary school principals develop trust with their staff through the domain of concern.

Table 5

*Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 2: Domain of Concern*

| Theme/pattern | Number of respondents | % based on *N* | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Caring about the needs of staff | 11 | 92 | 27 |
| Checking-in with staff | 9 | 75 | 13 |
| Creating a positive culture | 8 | 67 | 13 |
| Getting to know staff | 6 | 50 | 14 |

*Note.* The *N* for interview participants = 12.

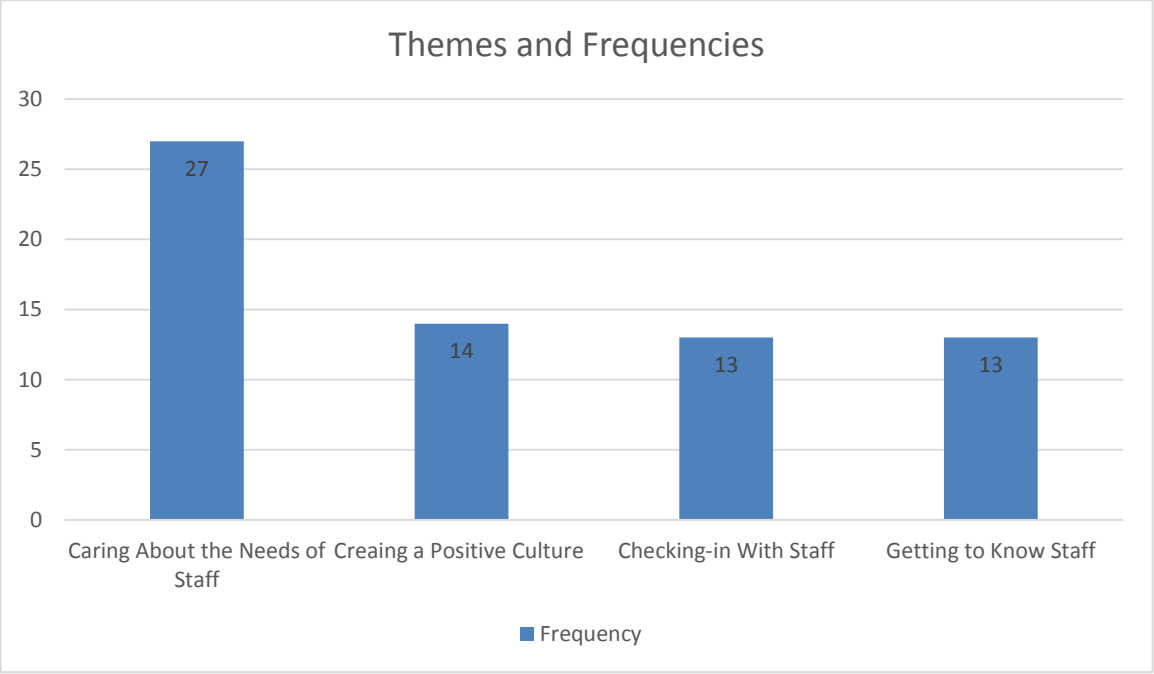



*Figure* 8. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 2.

**Caring about the needs of staff.** This theme was referenced by 11 of the 12 (92%) participants and had the highest number of frequency counts (27) within the domain of concern. According to Weisman (2016), caring about the needs of people by focusing on personal interactions brings social purpose and value to an organization. For the elementary principal participants, caring about the needs of staff was considered an important part of building trust as the leader of the school. Participants expressed that

caring about the needs of staff required allowing staff to attend to personal matters, such as family emergencies or personal health. For example, one participant described a situation in which a staff member received news that her dog got out of the house and was found walking down a major boulevard. The participant cared about the needs of his staff member and expressed,

> So we all know that teaching is not easy and just like my resource teacher that had to go with the dog, I understand. We love our pets just like our children, so go take care of that emergency. But showing understanding and caring, I just had to let her leave and not ask any questions. She came back super thankful.

Another participant concurred that caring about the personal needs of staff is important to building trust:

> I am very flexible in terms of making sure that you meet your appointments for personal necessities that you need to take care of. And, any time that has to do with family, if your spouse, if your significant other, or your kids need something, you have to go because they need your support.

Caring about the needs of staff is demonstrated through everyday interactions. One participant shared how she maximizes opportunities throughout the day to show staff that she cares about their needs by asking them how they are doing. She also believes in giving staff the time they need to care for their various needs:

> I think just asking how people are is huge. Taking a minute. I try always to make sure before I enter in, because it's really easy, like you're coming through the lounge in the morning and you see that teacher and you're like, "Oh, I need to tell you something," and really taking a second first thing in the morning with my

> office team. We always greet each other: "Good morning. How are you? Did you do anything last night?" A follow-up, "Hey, how did that go yesterday? I know you had an appointment with blah, blah." Just the following up that's really human, and I try to do that with my team as well, my staff team where it's, "Good morning. How are you?," "What's going on with you?" Just really asking them and being interested. I think that really helps establish that I truly care. I think also, making room for them to take the time off that they need when they need to, and then also having some accountability around that, like the conversation of, again, going to honesty of "I care about you and I also care about our kids. How can I get you to a place mentally where you can be ready for our kids? Is that a day off? Is it through your self-care? What does that look like for you?"

According to another participant, caring about the needs of staff is an important element to building trust, but it doesn't mean letting go of expectations. He explained,

> Caring about the needs of staff could be some subtle things, notes or if a teacher says they have a headache and bringing some aspirin over or something like that. So just being attentive to people's physical and emotional state. But I think the main thing is just being real, being a person and being caring, but at the same time holding really high expectations because lowering expectations because someone might have some personal matters going on is not necessarily the right thing to do either, but being empathetic and supportive with still the awareness and the mission of doing good work is critical.

**Creating a positive culture.** The theme of creating a positive school culture was referenced 14 times by six of the 12 (50%) participants. Creating a positive culture that

is inclusive and involves everyone at the school site, not just the leader, makes a difference when building trust. For example, one participant shared how she worked on transforming school culture by creating a sense of team:

> I'm thinking just in terms of the school culture transforming here and our focus, my focus more than anything on making it an "our," and not a "me," not an "I," and I think that is something that developed over time that people feel now when they come here, that shows in students' just excitement for school and in turn reflects in our data.

Establishing a growth mindset in which mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning was shared by all participants and contributed to the theme of creating a positive culture. One participant recounted,

> I can think of a couple of examples where teachers have tried things and come back like, "Oh my gosh, that bombed." "Okay, but what's one thing you learned from it?" I think if you always turn it around, it helps to create a positive culture and we've shifted a lot. We spend a lot of time talking about growth here and not about a deficit model, but about a growth model. I think that shifts the way you look at failure in the first place. And I hope that they feel like I embrace failure. I'm not afraid of failure.

Another participant shared the importance of creating a positive culture where it is safe to make mistakes in order to grow and learn: "If we didn't make mistakes, then we wouldn't grow as individuals, and it's important to really making it a safe place to make mistakes."

**Checking in with staff.** This theme was referenced 13 times by nine participants. Showing concern by checking-in with staff to see how they are doing was considered important to developing trust with staff by 75% of respondents. For example, one participant expressed, "I'm always in the classrooms, and I'm always checking in and asking them, "How is it going?" and "How can I help you?" Another participant shared that checking in with staff in person helps build trust: "If I even see an email from a teacher, I'll go and check in with them like, 'Hey, I saw your email, fill me in. Let's talk about it.'" This theme is further supported by another participant stating, "When I'm out in classrooms, I try and just check in with people, and I try and be out in classrooms a lot. I think it helps show people that you care." By checking in with people to engage in conversation and offer support, leaders show that they care about their employees well-being, which builds stronger connections that lead to trust (Horsager, 2009; Weisman, 2016).

**Getting to know staff.** Of the 12 respondents, eight responded to the importance of getting to know the staff of their site on a personal and professional level. In addition, this theme tallied a total of 13 references that substantiated the importance of getting to know people on a personal level, which demonstrates concern for others and helps build trust. To further support this claim of getting to know staff on a personal level, one participant explained,

> So for me, I think what's most important is getting staff to realize that we're all in this work together and that the reason why I'm here is to support them in the academic achievement of the students and their success as well. So some of the ways in which I do that are sitting with staff, just to get to know them first on a

personal level and really get to hear about not only their personal lives, but what they're striving for professionally as well, and then also sharing a bit about myself, my personal life so they see that I'm human too.

Another participant contributed to the theme of the importance of getting to know staff by stating, "It really is about knowing them as a person outside of the realm of school, and I think that builds that trust and that confidence."

When leaders put people first, they take the time to get to know people and want to learn more about them. This helps build trust because people feel cared about, valued, and appreciated. A participant shared that by getting to know staff, they tend to open up more. The participant stated, "By getting to know that person well, they begin to trust you. They share more when they know that you're listening, when they know that you know what they're passionate about."

In conclusion, the domain of concern for Research Question 2 yielded four themes with 67 total frequencies accounting for 16% of the coded data for how elementary school principals build trust with their staff.

**Data Analysis for Research Question 3**

The next section presents the themes identified by the study's participants from the compiled data of the 12 participants' interview responses for Research Question 3: "How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of candor?" Candor involves communicating information in a precise manner and being truthful even if an individual does not want to provide such information (Gordon & Giley, 2012; O'Toole & Bennis, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016). Candor involves

the leader's ability to be honest and straightforward with his or her followers. For school leaders to build trust with staff, they need to be able to tell it like it is in a respectful way.

Three themes emerged from the data coding process for Research Question 3. These themes were referenced 59 times by the elementary principals and accounted for 15% of the coded data. All three themes had 80% or more of the respondents contributing to the theme. The main overarching findings concluded that the individual domain of candor had significant strengths that assisted elementary school principals in developing trust with their staff.

Table 6 and Figure 9 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged from an NVivo analysis of the interview transcripts. The common themes of how elementary principals establish trust through the domain of candor, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 6. This table assists in identifying emerging themes on how elementary school principals develop trust with their staff through the domain of candor.

Table 6

*Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 3: Domain of Candor*

| Theme/pattern | Number of respondents | % based on *N* | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Setting clear expectations | 12 | 100 | 22 |
| Open, honest, and transparent communication | 11 | 92 | 26 |
| Providing staff with specific feedback | 10 | 83 | 11 |

*Note.* The *N* for interview participants = 12.

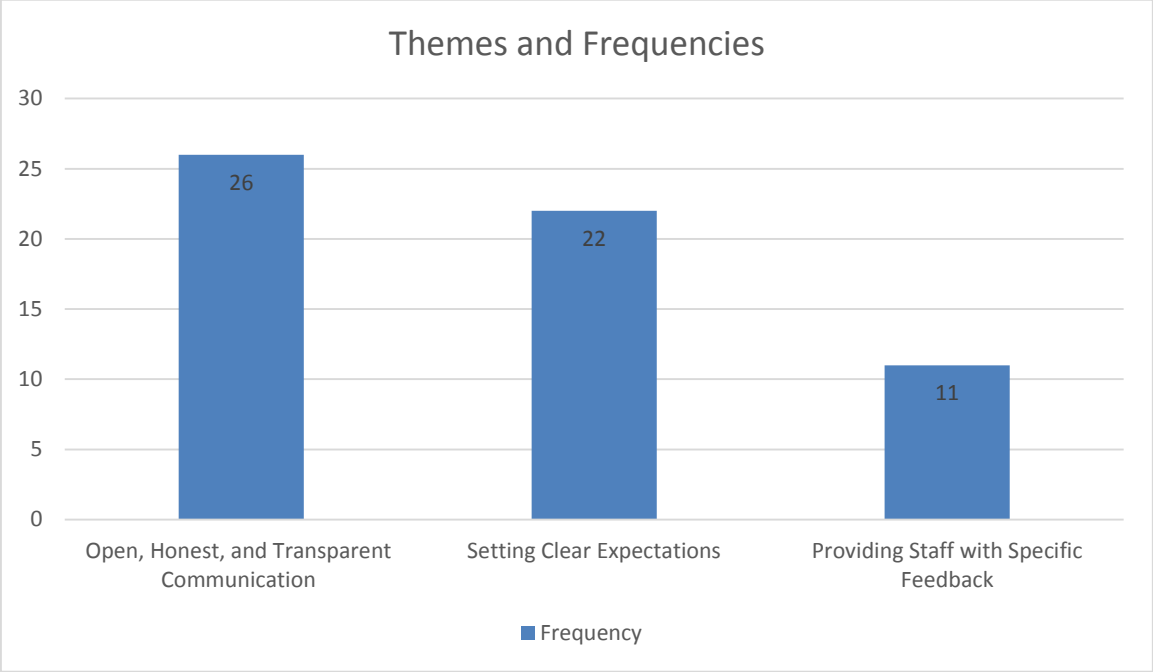



*Figure 9*. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 3.

**Setting clear expectations.** This top theme was referenced by all 12 participants (100%) with a frequency count of 22. High-trust leaders effectively communicate expected outcomes (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2009; Fullan, 2010). If principals are to be successful in earning the trust of their staff, they need to be clear with their expectations and engage in hard, honest conversations. For example, one participant stated, "It is vital to communicate explicitly what the expectations are, and then following through if expectations aren't met. I think all of that contributes to trust." Another participant disclosed,

> So one of the ways that I established expectations for staff is at the beginning of the year, really laying out what my expectations are, whether it be for specific content areas, frequency of when things are being done, and as far as really what my expectations for teaching and learning are, and then ensuring that I am monitoring those areas in which I value and feel the need to be occurring

throughout the site daily and that I'm staying true to reinforcing those throughout the year.

In addition to setting clear expectations, participants discussed the importance of reinforcing expectations and holding staff accountable to what is expected. For example, a participant firmly declared,

> And as far as establishing expectations with people, it's important to make sure that the expectations are backed up if they're not, so there has to be a form of accountability. Part of that is when you don't meet it, then you take action and then that's when they realize that, "Okay, these values do exist."

Another participant concurred and stated with a very clear and assertive tone:

> It's about being very transparent and clear with my expectations from the beginning and holding people accountable and following through with what I say. If this is what we're agreeing to as a school community, then this is what we are agreeing to as a school community. And if for some reason one of those things needed to change, communicating that back to staff as well.

**Open, honest, and transparent communication.** With a frequency rate of 27, the theme of having open, honest, and transparent communication with staff had 92% of all respondents reference this theme for the domain of candor. Being open, honest, and transparent with staff about what needs to change at the site is essential to establishing trust and in moving the school forward. For example, one participant expressed,

> So I think one of the things is really looking at some of the struggles that we may have as a site. When we're looking at how our students are performing and having those honest discussions about things that may need to change at our

> school site, instructional practices, and not because we are horrible educators, but it's because there's some tweaking that needs to be done. We need to have those honest conversations in looking at instructional practices to then really be able to move our students forward. So I think that's part of the work, as far as when we're having those honest conversations that staff has stated they appreciate.

In addition, another participant stressed the importance of communicating openly and honestly in relation to school data and the changes that need to be made in order to achieve better outcomes for students:

> Just having that candid conversation with staff and saying that this is the current reality, we are underperforming. And this is why we're doing what we're doing, and this is why we're making the changes, and that we're going to keep moving forward together. So that was just yesterday, which was pretty objective but yet supportive at the same time, but also honest and clear of changes that needed to happen.

An additional participant further stressed the point that communicating openly and honestly is critical to building trust and to making progress:

> We can't pretend that we're achieving gains in mathematics if we're not. We have to be able to have an environment in which we talk about that and problem solve together as a team because all of our team is what makes us strong.

**Providing staff with specific feedback.** The theme of providing staff with specific feedback yielded 11 occurrences from 10 of the 12 (83%) participants. All 10 participants agreed that providing staff with specific feedback on what they are doing well and what they need to improve upon gives clarity of purpose, which leads to trust.

For example, one participant shared his experience in giving specific feedback in comparison to a sports coach:

> I think it's like if you're coaching a football team, I want to tell you what you're doing well so that you can do more of that while you're running your route. And I try to take that play and go, "Well, you're not good at this and this, but you are good at this. Well, I'm going to have you do more of that."

Another participant described a situation in which a staff member was not performing up to standard and expressed the importance of being explicit and direct with the feedback to make expectations clear:

> And so, the clarity of feedback is important. Remember this is what we learned already, these are the expectations based on the research. And if I'm going to be giving you a remediation plan, those are the things I'm going to coach you and give you feedback on. I'm going to be direct in a respectful way about what I see and what I don't see.

To further support the theme of providing staff with specific feedback under the domain of candor, another participant described his experience:

> When I give feedback to staff, I think about the positive, the plus, like, what is it that they were doing that you would want them to continue to do. So it's a positive reinforcement. Then there's that delta which is giving feedback on specific area to change or improve. The delta isn't necessarily a negative thing, but it's like, what could they be thinking about? What would be the next step? What could possibly be different? And basically, is there something they could have done to make it better? But you approach it from that angle too. It isn't

anything that you did wrong, but it's like, how do we get better at this? So, that's the way I always approach things. I feel that leads to trust.

In conclusion, the domain of candor for Research Question 3 yielded three themes with 59 total frequencies accounting for 14% of the coded data for how elementary school principals build trust with their staff.

**Data Analysis for Research Question 4**

The fourth research question asked, "How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of competence?" Competence is the ability to perform a task or fulfill a role as expected (Covey, 2009; Farnsworth, 2015; Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Leaders who are equipped with the competency skills necessary to effectively move their organization forward gain the trust and confidence of their followers.

Five themes emerged from the data coding process for Research Question 4. These themes were referenced 120 times by the elementary principals and accounted for 29% of the coded data. All five themes had over 50% of respondents with three of the themes having a frequency rate of 25 or higher. The main overarching findings concluded that the individual domain of competence had significant strengths that assisted elementary school principals in developing trust with their staff.

Table 7 and Figure 10 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged from an NVivo analysis of the interview transcripts. The common themes of how elementary principals establish trust through the domain of competence, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 7. This table assists in identifying emerging themes on

how elementary school principals develop trust with their staff through the domain of competence.

Table 7

*Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 4: Domain of Competence*

| Theme/pattern | Number of respondents | % based on *N* | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Providing opportunities for shared decision-making | 12 | 100 | 34 |
| Reflection and seeking to improve | 11 | 92 | 30 |
| Establishing clear vision and purpose | 11 | 92 | 25 |
| Ability to model and coach staff | 9 | 75 | 19 |
| Developing clear systems and structures | 7 | 58 | 12 |

*Note.* The *N* for interview participants = 12.

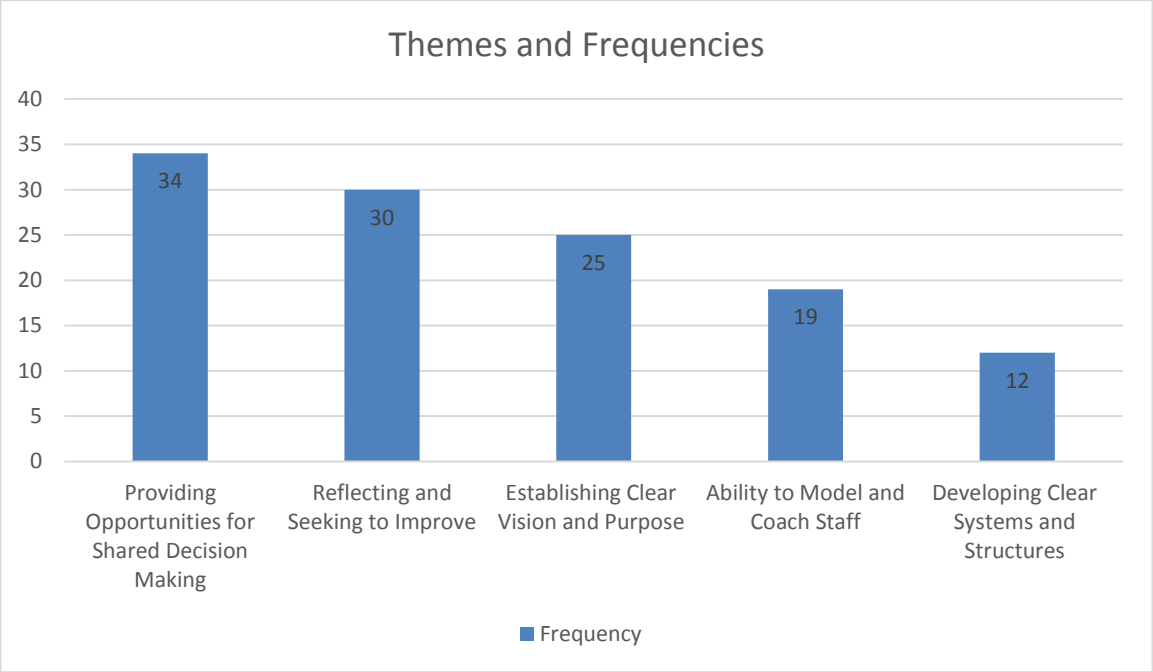



*Figure 10*. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 4.

**Providing opportunities for shared decision-making.** One of the top themes that emerged as a key element in building trust with staff through the domain of competence was providing staff with opportunities for shared decision-making. Twelve

of the 12 (100%) elementary principal participants referenced this theme 34 times as being important to establishing trust with staff members. Participants agreed that giving staff a voice and allowing them to give input on decisions and contribute to problem solving elicits buy-in and a culture of trust. One participant expressed, "As a leader, I'm always having to make sure what we do has buy-in throughout the staff. They have a lot of say in terms of what's implemented and how it's being done which helps to build trust." Additionally, another participant emphasized the importance of providing staff with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process concerning schoolwide initiatives or transformational change in order to gain trust and stated, "With every decision around what's best for kids, there's always a discussion. Whenever we have some type of initiative, or some type of change, it always goes through a staff meeting." To further corroborate the theme of providing staff with opportunities for decision-making as a way to build trust, an additional participant expressed the following:

> I'm very big on getting staff input on where we are and where we want to go, and based on their grade level team's input, we take ideas to the whole staff. We don't ever even really go and say, "This is what we're doing." We come with ideas and get their input as well. And I think that's been really critical in developing trust.

Another elementary principal participant explained that if shared decision-making practices are not implemented it could damage trust and further stated, "It's important to give staff a voice. If I don't give them voice, and they're always told what to do, then we're stuck in forced compliance. That hurts trust."

**Reflection and seeking to improve.** The second highest theme with a frequency count of 30 from 11 of the 12 (92%) participants is the leader's reflection and seeking to improve. According to Fullan (2010), leaders who are reflective and continuously striving to improve one's skill set gain the trust of their followers. The principal participants agreed that being reflective as a leader and working to improve upon one's weaknesses is a necessary attribute to build trust with staff. As an example, a participant explained, "Being responsible and taking responsibility for your actions as a leader, and then taking the next step to ask for help and support to get better. I think that helps to build trust." To further support this theme, another participant stated,

> We believe in a growth mindset at, and just like we ask our students to embrace mistakes, I embrace my mistakes. I'm very transparent about them and then it creates that environment of trust as well, I believe for staff.

In addition, another participant acknowledged, "We're going to do this together and that includes me. I have areas that I continue to reflect on to see if I can do better."

Another participant was very thoughtful and reflective during the interview as she shared some of her struggles in her role as the principal. She demonstrated reflection and seeking to improve by expressing the following:

> I do think this year more than last year, I've dropped the ball on some things, and I can see quickly how that diminishes that trust and that level of trust and competency. I'm thinking a lot in the last 6 weeks about how I attend to that with more precision because it's important for people to see you as a competent person.

Another example of reflecting as seeking to improve was shared by a participant describing her ritual as she drives home from work every day:

> I drive home every night thinking about and reflecting about the day. What could I have done better? What did I do? And when I feel like I could have done something better or maybe impacted someone else, I have absolutely no problem going to that person and apologizing and just owning it, if I could have done something differently, whether it be a student or an adult.

**Establishing clear vision and purpose.** This theme was referenced 25 times by 11 of the 12 (92%) participants. Competency in leadership requires the ability to articulate a clear vision that exemplifies the values and beliefs of the organization. Similarly, a leader's influence derives from the ability to motivate and inspire others about the collective purpose and vision for the betterment of the organization (McCleskey, 2014; Northouse, 2019). Participants agreed that creating a shared understanding with staff as to the school's purpose and vision is critical to developing trust. One participant commented, "I think always being able to address the why we are doing something and being clear about our purpose develops trust." Similarly, another participant expressed,

> But ultimately it comes back to me making sure that my why is always clear to everybody. Whether it's on written paper, a meeting with anybody, staff, parents, even kids. If I give a good why, that's aligned with those shared values that you're talking about, then it would make sense logically to move forward with that and you get more buy in from staff and parents and kids too.

Along the same line of thinking, another participant shared the importance of establishing and communicating a clear vision and purpose with staff right from the start:

> I think of talking about clarity, but more deeply in clarity, we have this vision of where we're going and sometimes I'm a broken record, but remember this is what we're doing, this is why we're doing it, from the beginning I start that.

Establishing a shared vision and purpose with staff requires collaboration. One participant shared the process that she facilitated with staff:

> We wrote down our own personal vision and values as educators and what was important to us. Then we ended up coming together through a process to create our larger school vision where we all adapted what we had written into less and less words and working in larger and larger groups until we had one altogether that really was a shared vision in value and message.

Another participant shared his process for establishing a shared vision and purpose:

> I've always focused first on what are the shared values, and actually that was one of the first things that we did at this school site on the first day where we identified what impacts our learners and then what are the things that we value, and then that becomes the school's mission and the school's vision. But you got to know what you value and what you collectively value first.

**Ability to model and coach staff.** A principal's ability to model and coach staff was a theme that emerged by nine of the 12 (75%) participants. The theme was referenced by the participants a total of 19 times. High-trust leaders are competent in their field and have the ability to build the capacity of their followers. One participant

recalled her experience in building trust with a staff member through her ability to model and coach:

> So what I was able to do is sit with that teacher and talk through some of the supports I could provide and looking through the various supports, such as getting into other classrooms, collaboration with colleagues, as well as me being a support and planning through lessons with the teacher and actually going in and coteaching and actually modeling lessons for that teacher. So, I think that's one of the ways in which I was able to develop trust with that individual.

Similarly, another participant shared the following:

> The trust that I was able to immediately build with the staff was around instructional coaching. I think coming in as someone who has a strong background in coaching and observation, I was able to instructionally support people immediately with some of those really quick feedback coaching conversations, and it provided me with some credibility as a leader.

Another participant spoke confidently about how he builds trust with staff through his ability to model and coach staff:

> I will tell any teacher on campus I can come in and teach what you want me to teach, and I will do it. I think I do it fairly well and they can watch and they can give me feedback at the same time. So it goes both ways. But I'm very confident in being able to still teach and model for them and that establishes a great deal of trust.

Another participant described her experience in developing trust as a competent leader by modeling and coaching staff in the area of special education and supporting staff with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). She expressed the following:

> I think my leadership, for example, when we're talking about IEPs, we're talking about implementation with fidelity. We're talking about data collection and going in with general education teachers, alongside my support staff, and really showing them how to do that, even if it is me working alongside with you on a data sheet and collecting behavioral data. Modeling that and coaching them, and staff seeing you do the work that's really, really hard, I do think buys you a lot of trust in the long run.

Having the skill set and competence to model and coach staff contributes to building trust with staff according to another elementary principal participant:

> Staff really trust me, having that background, being able to coach and support them with the work that we're leading and being able to trust that when we're talking about the work, when we're planning the work and executing the work that they can trust that my experience is going to support the work that we're doing.

**Developing clear systems and structures.** This theme was referenced 12 times by seven of the 12 (58%) participants and deemed important to developing trust under the domain of competence. One participant shared the systems and structures for collaboration meetings at her site and how it helps build trust:

> We have norms which we do go over every meeting. We have roles. While ILT members a facilitator, we always have a process observer and we pick one of our

> norms that we're focusing on and that's just a procedure that we have in those collaboration meetings. I think having systems in place helps develop trust because everyone understands the expectation. I think too that because we've spent so much time developing trust, the collaboration does happen a lot more naturally. There's an agenda before every grade level collaboration and there are expected outcomes they're walking away and with what they've talked about.

Another principal participant reiterated the importance of having systems and structures to support trust building and productivity of professional collaboration meetings:

> I think every team, every grade level team or every school leadership team or every type of team is different, they are so diverse. And I think it goes back to having the structures that are in place that kind of facilitate that it's got to be purposeful and people can share openly which helps to build trust. And I'm just thinking of like our PLCs and that there's an agenda and there's opportunities for everyone to contribute and to share their thoughts around it.

To further support the theme of developing clear systems and structures for developing trust with staff as a competent leader, a participant declared, "You have to have many, many structures in place or systems in place for people to feel safe to come to the table to be part of the collaboration or shared decision-making."

In conclusion, the domain of competence for Research Question 4 yielded five themes with 120 total frequencies accounting for 29% of the coded data for how elementary school principals build trust with their staff.

**Data Analysis for Research Question 5**

The fifth research question asked, "How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of consistency?" Consistency is the confidence that a person's pattern of behavior is reliable, dependable, and steadfast (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Weisman, 2016). Leaders must ensure that they are following through on their commitments and practicing consistent behaviors that demonstrate dependability and reliability in order to build trust with followers (Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Five themes emerged from the data coding process for Research Question 5. These themes were referenced 93 times by the elementary principals and accounted for 23% of the coded data. All five themes had a minimum of 50% of respondents. The main overarching findings concluded that the individual domain of consistency had significant strengths that assisted elementary school principals in developing trust with their staff. Table 8 and Figure 11 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged from an NVivo analysis of the interview transcripts.

The common themes of how elementary principals establish trust through the domain of consistency, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 8. This table assists in identifying emerging themes on how elementary school principals develop trust with their staff through the domain of consistency.

Table 8

*Themes and Patterns Resulting From an Analysis of the Interviews Related to Research Question 5: Domain of Consistency*

| Theme/pattern | Number of respondents | % based on *N* | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leading by example | 11 | 92 | 22 |
| Alignment between words and actions | 10 | 83 | 21 |
| Keeping students at the center of the work | 9 | 75 | 19 |
| Following through on your word | 9 | 75 | 18 |
| Being visible and accessible | 6 | 50 | 13 |

*Note.* The *N* for interview participants = 12.

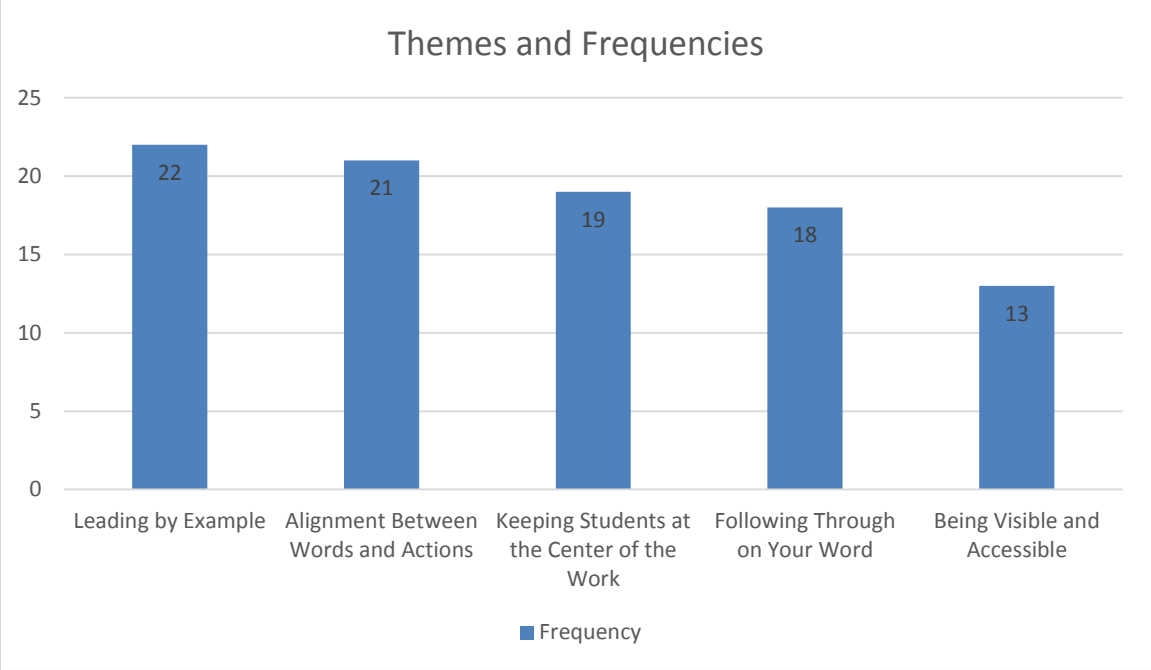



*Figure 11*. Themes and frequencies for Research Question 5.

**Leading by example.** The top theme that emerged for the domain of consistency is the ability for a principal to lead by example. Eleven of the 12 (92%) elementary school principal participants referenced this theme 22 times as an important component to developing trust. Participants believed that it is crucial for principals to lead by example and model the expected behaviors required by all staff. When staff members witness

principals who lead in such manner, it establishes the principal's credibility and develops trust with staff. One participant stated,

> I truly believe if I'm going to ask anybody else to do anything that I'm going to be doing it too. I'm not going to ask anybody to do anything that I'm not willing to do. I think with that comes trust. If I'm going to be asking my teachers to really focus on their relationships with their students, then I'm going to really focus on my relationships with my teachers and my relationships with my parents.

Additionally, another participant expressed the value of leading by example and building credibility and trust over time:

> I think I establish credibility and trust every day by being present and being willing to do the hard work. I think that if your staff, if they see you working just as hard as they are and trying to solve the problem alongside them and not just telling them how to solve the problem, I do think that builds credibility and trust over time.

Furthermore, another participant stated, "I just need to ensure that I'm modeling the expectations that I have for staff, and that in a time of crisis, that I'm being a positive model for staff and my messaging is remaining positive and consistent."

**Alignment between words and actions.** The theme of alignment between the principal's words and actions for the domain of consistency was referenced 21 times by 10 of the 12 (83%) participants. Principals believe that it is important to have alignment between their words and actions if they are to build trust. For example, a participant expressed, "Trust always comes with making sure the words that I'm speaking and my actions are meaning the same thing."

In addition, another participant shared,

> You have to stay consistent with what you believe in and not make a change just because it's not the popular decision. I think it's just being consistent with what you say and do. You say what you mean and you do what you say.

To further support the theme of alignment between words and actions as a way to build trust through the domain of consistency, a participant declared in a very matter of fact way, "This is who I am, this is my core values and I'm going to make every decision in alignment with that." To emphasize this same point in other words, another participant shared how he demonstrates consistency and builds trust with staff, "Kind of the mean what I say, say what I mean kind of walk the walk, talk the talk kind of principal. I try to do that all the time."

**Keeping students at the center of the work.** Keeping students at the center of the work came in as the third emerging theme with nine respondents and a total of 19 references associated with this theme. Principals who were interviewed believed that students must always come first and be the driving force on every decision. By consistently acting on what is best for kids, principals believe that it helps them to build trust with staff. For example, one participant stated, "We're all about growing incredible children, and that's kids who are safe are the playground. That's kids who like themselves. That's kids who can read, write, and are wanted."

Another participant expressed,

> I think as long as I've been in this role, I have not deviated from my belief about how we should treat students and what we should be offering students and how we should behave as role models for the students. I would hope that, we talk

about legacy and, I would hope that 20 years from now that's how I would be remembered is that students were always first. That is something that I feel is consistent with my leadership.

Participants agreed that their belief in kids and in having their actions consistently reflect their values of serving students by putting students at the center of the work in their school sites was evident throughout the interviews. One participant expressed the theme of keeping students at the center of the work in these words:

> Students are the most important clientele that we have. And my actions, I consistently back that up with actions. It is about being student-centered.

**Following through on your word.** Of the 12 respondents, nine responded to the importance of a principal following through on his or her word in order to build trust with staff at a frequency of 18 references. For example, one participant shared how she built trust with staff by following through on her word regarding her school's focus despite various other initiatives sent by the district office:

> I think that really built up a lot of trust for them for me as an instructional leader that I was going to stand by what we had agreed upon and keep my word as to what our school focus would be. I know that, that meant a lot to them that I was going to be that filter and take what those initiatives were from the district and make sure that they fit where we were as a site and not just doing them to do them.

Consistency also entails following through on your word even if one may not agree with you. Another participant commented,

> I think another way to build trust is to be consistent and to have that follow through even if that person doesn't like your response. Because sometimes *yes* is the right answer, sometimes *no* is. I think the follow through and just building those day-to-day relationships, I think that's really important in building that trust.

Furthermore, another principal stated, "If I say I'm gonna do something then we do it, or if I say we're not gonna do something and I communicate the why not now, I think people appreciate that."

**Being visible and accessible.** Lastly, for Research Question 5, principals being visible and accessible resulted as the last emerging theme with the lowest frequencies. Six of the 12 (50%) elementary school participants referenced this them 13 times as being important to creating trust. Participants believed that it is key for a principal to show consistency in being visible and accessible with staff members to develop trust. One participant, for example, expressed the value of being visible and accessible to staff and how that helps develop trust:

> So accessibility, that door is always open and being present as much as possible out where students or the teachers are and inviting people to come in and express any questions or concerns or thoughts. I believe that helps to build trust.

Another participant stated, "So availability is super important to me, accessibility, being willing to talk."

In addition, another principal shared,

> I'm very visible. I average 10,000 steps a day on campus, and so I'm everywhere. So at any time staff can talk to me, and people do approach me, and I think that they know that they can. I could probably name three times today at least where

people approached me in the hallway about stuff that was going on. So, there's the accessibility is just always like that.

In conclusion, the domain of consistency for Research Question 5 yielded five themes with 93 total frequencies accounting for 23% of the coded data for how elementary school principals build trust with their staff.

**Data Analysis for Research Question 6**

The sixth research question asked, "How do elementary principals perceive the degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust?" Data for Research Question 6 were collected using SurveyMonkey, an electronic survey software, from 12 elementary school principals within San Diego County in Southern California. The electronic survey was delivered via e-mail to all 12 participants. The e-mail reiterated the purpose of the study and included a SurveyMonkey link to the Principal Behaviors That Develop Trust With Staff survey. Included within the survey was the informed consent protocol and the Participant's Bill of Rights. Once the participants read and agreed to both forms, they were able to proceed as a participant and complete the survey.

The survey results for Research Question 6 were categorized into the five domains of trust: consistency, competence, candor, concern, and connection. A total of 12 surveys were e-mailed to elementary school principals within San Diego County. Eleven of the 12 principals who selected to participate in the study completed the survey. The results were compiled and analyzed. The summary chart in Table 9 provides a summation of the overall data results by variable. Each variable of trust (consistency,

competence, candor, concern, and connection) consisted of six behavioral questions asked of the respondents resulting in 66 answers.

Table 9

*Summation of Number of Responses for Perceived Degree of Importance for the Five Domains for Building Trust*

| Variable of trust | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Disagree somewhat | | Agree somewhat | | Agree | | Strongly agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *M* |
| Consistency | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.5 | 1 | 1.5 | 9 | 14 | 31 | 47 | 24 | 36 | 5.15 |
| Competence | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 11 | 17 | 26 | 39 | 29 | 44 | 5.27 |
| Candor | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 9 | 42 | 64 | 15 | 23 | 5.18 |
| Concern | 1 | 1.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.6 | 11 | 17 | 33 | 50 | 20 | 30 | 5.05 |
| Connection | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 9 | 14 | 36 | 55 | 20 | 30 | 5.12 |

*Note*: $N = 66$.

The results from Table 9 show competence as the most important domain for building trust with a mean of 5.27 and 44% of respondents indicating *strongly agree* and 39% of respondents indicating *agree*. The second most important domain was candor with a mean of 5.18 and a combined total of 87% of respondents indicating *agree* or *strongly agree*. The third most important domain was consistency with a mean of 5.15 and 83% of respondents indicating *agree* or *strongly agree*. Connection came in fourth with a mean of 5.12, and concern came in fifth place with a mean of 5.05. These results aligned with the qualitative findings, which also had the largest number of codes supporting competence (29%) as the leading domain for elementary school principals in developing trust with their staff.

When analyzing the results of the quantitative survey in more detail, competence ranked higher than the other domains in the category of *strongly agree* with 29 total responses and a mean of 5.27. The mean is defined as the average of all numbers in a

data set (Patten, 2012). Although candor came in below competence with a mean of 5.18, it had the most responses (42, 64%) in the *agree* category making candor the second most critical element to developing trust among the principal participants. Both competence and candor had zero respondents in the *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, and *somewhat disagree* categories. Although consistency came in third after candor with a mean of 5.15, it should be noted that consistency had the second highest number of responses (24, 36%) in the category of *strongly agree*. It should further be noted that consistency had one response in *disagree* and one response in *disagree somewhat.* In fourth place, connection came in slightly below consistency with a mean of 5.12 and 20 responses (30%) indicating *strongly agree* with one response notated in *disagree*. Although concern had the lowest mean of 5.05, it should be noted that 20 (30%) responses were indicated for *strongly agree* and 36 (55%) responses were indicated for *agree*. It should also be noted that one response was documented in *strongly disagree* and one response was documented in *disagree somewhat* for the domain of concern.

**Major Findings for Consistency**

Table 10 shows the variables for the domain of consistency and the survey results of the elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to rank each question from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The researcher used the mean to discuss the degree of perceived importance for each of the six consistency domain behaviors.

Table 10

*Summation of Number of Responses to "How Well is the Organization's Ability to Perform Consistently and Dependably Over the Long Term?"*

| Consistency domain behaviors | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Disagree somewhat | | Agree somewhat | | Agree | | Strongly agree | | *M* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | |
| I behave in manner consistent with my role and responsibilities. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 3 | 27 | 6 | 55 | 5.4 |
| Overall, the school operates efficiently. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 27 | 6 | 55 | 1 | 9 | 4.6 |
| I create an environment where staff have the opportunity to accomplish their goals and responsibilities every day. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 55 | 3 | 27 | 5.0 |
| I let staff know what is expected from them. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 64 | 3 | 27 | 5.2 |
| I make commitments to staff I can keep. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 36 | 6 | 55 | 5.5 |
| I hold myself and staff accountable for action. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 46 | 5 | 46 | 5.4 |

The participants rated six behaviors in the domain of consistency according to their perceived degree of importance for developing trust with staff. The behavior rated as most important for relating to an organization's ability to perform consistently and dependably over long term with a mean of 5.5 was, "I make commitments to staff I can keep." Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents selected *strongly agree* and 36% selected *agree*, indicating that keeping commitments to staff was important to building trust. Two of the behaviors, "I behave in a manner consistent with my roles and responsibilities" and "I hold myself and staff accountable for action," were ranked as second most important with a mean of 5.4. For the behavior, "I behave in a manner consistent with my roles and responsibilities," six (55%) respondents indicated *strongly agree*, three (27%) respondents indicated *agree*, and two (18%) respondents indicated *agree somewhat*. Additionally, the behavior, "I hold myself and staff accountable for action," had five (46%) respondents indicate *strongly agree*, five (46%) respondents indicate *agree*, and one (9%) respondent indicate *agree somewhat*. With a mean of 5.2, the behavior, "I let staff know what is expected of them," came in third place. Of all respondents, three (27%) indicated *strongly agree*, seven (64%) indicated *agree*, and one (9%) indicated *agree somewhat* that letting staff know what is expected of them is important to building trust with staff. In fourth place and with a mean of 5.0 was the behavior, "I create an environment where the staff have the opportunity to accomplish their goals and responsibilities every day." This behavior had slightly more diverse responses with respondents indicating that three (27%) *strongly agree*, six (55%) *agree*, one (9%) *agree somewhat*, and one (9%) *disagree somewhat*. The behavior ranking in last place was "Overall the school operates efficiently" with a mean of 4.6. This was the only behavior

in the domain of consistency to have one response indicated in the *disagree* category and only one response indicated for *strongly agree*. Of the remaining respondents, six (55%) indicated *agree* and three (27%) selected *agree somewhat* for their perception of the school operating efficiently. It is important to note that all six behaviors were rated either *agree* or *strongly agree* by 60% or more of respondents. Figure 12 details the behaviors related to the domain of consistency and the mean for each behavior.

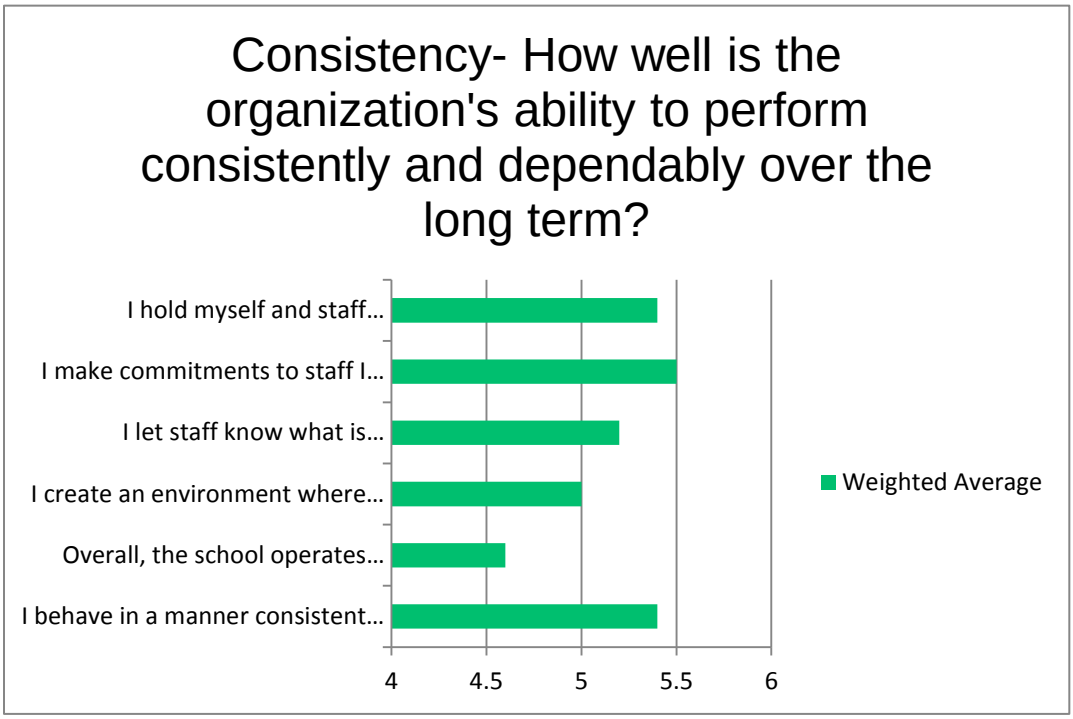



*Figure 12.* Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of consistency.

**Major Findings for Competence**

Table 11 shows the variables for the domain of competence and the survey results of the elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of each related behavior.

Table 11

*Summation of Number of Responses to "How Effective Is the Organization in its Ability to Accomplish What it's Designed to Do?"*

| Competence domain behaviors | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Disagree somewhat | | Agree somewhat | | Agree | | Strongly agree | | *M* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | |
| I focus the work of staff on the quality of services the district provides to students, other staff, families, and community. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 36 | 6 | 55 | 1 | 9 | 4.7 |
| I work with the staff to achieve the school's vision. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 36 | 6 | 55 | 5.4 |
| I promote the capability of my staff members. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 73 | 5.6 |
| I create opportunities for staff to learn and grow. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 55 | 4 | 36 | 5.3 |
| I promote collaborative decision-making with staff. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 45 | 5 | 45 | 5.4 |
| I oversee the strategic actions for staff at my site. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 4 | 36 | 5 | 45 | 5.3 |

The respondents were asked to rank each question from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The researcher used the mean to discuss the degree of perceived importance for each of the six domain behaviors as related to competence.

According to the participants surveyed, the most important behavior with a mean of 5.6 and relating to an organization's ability to effectively accomplish what it is designed to do was, "I promote the capability of my staff members." Eight respondents (73%) indicated *strongly agree*, one respondent (9%) indicated *agree*, and two respondents indicated *agree somewhat*. The behaviors, "I work with staff to achieve the school's vision" and "I promote collaborative decision-making with staff," were ranked as second most important with each receiving a mean of 5.4. In a very close third place, with each receiving a mean of 5.3, were the behaviors, "I create opportunities for staff to learn and grow" and "I oversee the strategic actions for staff at my site." The behavior with the lowest mean of 4.7 was, "I focus the work of staff on the quality of services the district provides to students, other staff, families, and community." One (9%) respondent indicated *strongly agree*, six (54%) respondents indicated *agree*, and for (36%) respondents indicated *agree somewhat* for this behavior. It is of importance to note that 100% of respondents ranked all six behaviors as either *agree somewhat, agree,* or *strongly agree*. Figure 13 details the behaviors related to the domain of competence and the mean for each behavior.

**Major Findings for Candor**

Table 12 shows the variables for the domain of candor and the survey results of the elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to rank each question from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree.*

The researcher used the mean to discuss the degree of perceived importance for each of the six domain behaviors as related to candor.

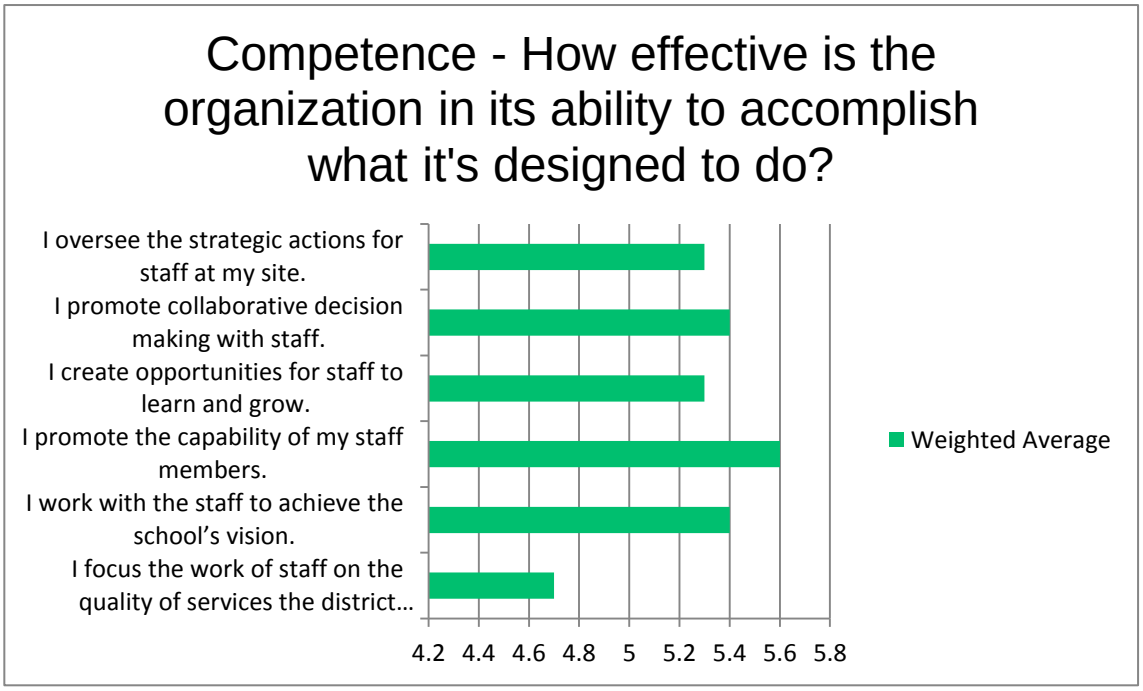



*Figure 13.* Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of competence.

The participants rated six behaviors in the domain of candor according to their perceived degree of importance for developing trust with staff. The behavior rated as most important for relating to an organization's ability to be transparent and make information available to employees with a mean of 5.5 was, "I engage in open communication with all staff." Of the 11 respondents, five (45%) *strongly agreed*, and six (55%) *agreed* with the importance of open communication with staff to build trust. The second most important behavior relating to an organization's ability to be transparent and make information available to employees with a mean of 5.4 was, "I engage staff in (36%) *strongly agreed*, and seven (64%) *agreed* with the importance of engaging staff in

Table 12

*Summation of Number of Responses to "How Transparent is the Organization Communicating or Making Information Available to Employees?"*

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Disagree somewhat | | Agree somewhat | | Agree | | Strongly agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Candor domain behaviors | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *M* |
| I engage in open communication with all staff. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 55 | 5 | 45 | 5.5 |
| I share openly with staff when things are going wrong. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 64 | 3 | 27 | 5.2 |
| I engage staff in discussions about the direction and vision for our school. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 64 | 4 | 36 | 5.4 |
| I create a safe environment where staff feel free to voice differences of opinion. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 82 | 1 | 9 | 5.0 |
| I am open, authentic and straightforward with all staff. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 55 | 4 | 36 | 5.3 |
| I take issues head on, even the "undiscussables." | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 27 | 7 | 64 | 1 | 9 | 4.8 |

discussions about the vision and direction of our school." Of the 11 respondents, four discussions about the vision and direction of the school as a way to build trust. The third highest ranked behavior stated, "I am open and authentic and straightforward with all staff," with a mean of 5.3. This behavior had four (36%) respondents *strongly agree*, six respondents (55%) *agree*, and one (9%) respondent *agree somewhat*. With a mean of 5.2, the behavior, "I share openly with staff when things are going wrong," was rated the fourth most important behavior in the domain of candor. Of the 11 respondents, three (27%) *strongly agreed*, seven (64%) *agreed*, and one (9%) *somewhat agreed* on the importance of sharing openly with staff when things are going wrong. Creating a safe environment where staff feel free to voice differences of opinion was derived a mean of 5.0 and, therefore, coming in as the fifth most important behavior related to candor. One of 11 (9%) respondents indicated *strongly agree*, nine (82%) *agree*, and one (9%) *agree somewhat* to the importance of creating a safe environment for staff to voice differences of opinion. The behavior ranked in last place with a mean of 4.8 was, "I take issues head on, even the 'undiscussable'." This behavior had one (9%) respondent *strongly agree*, seven respondents (64%) *agree*, and three (27%) respondents *agree somewhat*. Figure 14 details the behaviors related to the domain of candor and the mean for each behavior.

**Major Findings for Concern**

Table 13 shows the variables for the domain of concern and the survey results of the elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to rank each question from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree.* The researcher used the mean to discuss the degree of perceived importance for each of the six domain behaviors as related to concern.

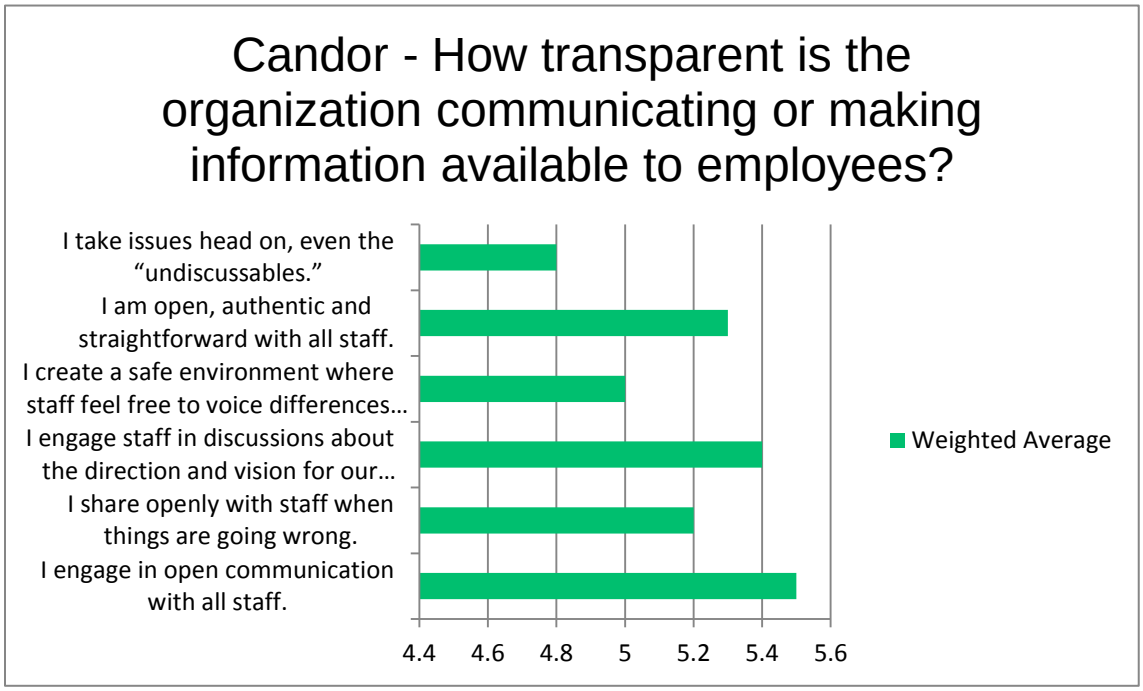



*Figure 14.* Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of candor.

The most important behavior acquiring a mean of 5.5 in relation to an organization's ability to show empathy or care for its employees was, "I always treat staff positively and with respect." Seven respondents (64%) *strongly agreed* as to this behavior being the most important. In addition, three respondents (27%) *agreed*, and one respondent (9%) *agreed somewhat* to the importance of treating staff positively and with respect. The behavior ranked as second most important with a mean of 5.4 was, "I demonstrate respect and concern for each staff member." Of the 11 respondents, two (18%) *strongly agreed*, five (45%) *agreed*, and one (9%) *somewhat agreed* on the importance of demonstrating respect and concern for each staff member to build trust. Ranking third place, with each receiving a mean of 5.1, were the behaviors, "I am a good listener" and "I am patient with the questions and issues of interest to the staff." With a mean of 5.0, the behavior, "I take time to meet personally with each staff member to understand their concerns" was ranked as fifth most important. Lastly, the overwhelming lowest ranking

Table 13

*Summation of Number of Responses to "How Much Does the Organization Show Empathy or Care for its Employees?"*

| Concern domain behaviors | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Disagree somewhat | | Agree somewhat | | Agree | | Strongly agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *M* |
| I take time to meet personally with each staff member to understand their concerns. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 7 | 64 | 2 | 18 | 5.0 |
| I demonstrate appropriate work and life balance. | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 36 | 4 | 36 | 1 | 9 | 4.2 |
| I am a good listener. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 73 | 2 | 18 | 5.1 |
| I always treat staff positively and with respect. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 27 | 7 | 64 | 5.5 |
| I am patient with the questions and issues of interest to staff. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 6 | 55 | 3 | 27 | 5.1 |
| I demonstrate respect and concern for each staff member. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 45 | 2 | 18 | 5.4 |

behavior with a mean of 4.2 was, "I demonstrate appropriate work and life balance." This behavior had the lowest *strongly agree* responses with only one respondent (9%). Four respondents (36%) *agreed*, four respondents (26%) *agreed somewhat*, one respondent (9%) *disagreed somewhat*, and one respondent (9%) *strongly disagreed*. Figure 15 details the behaviors related to the domain of concern and the overall mean for each behavior.

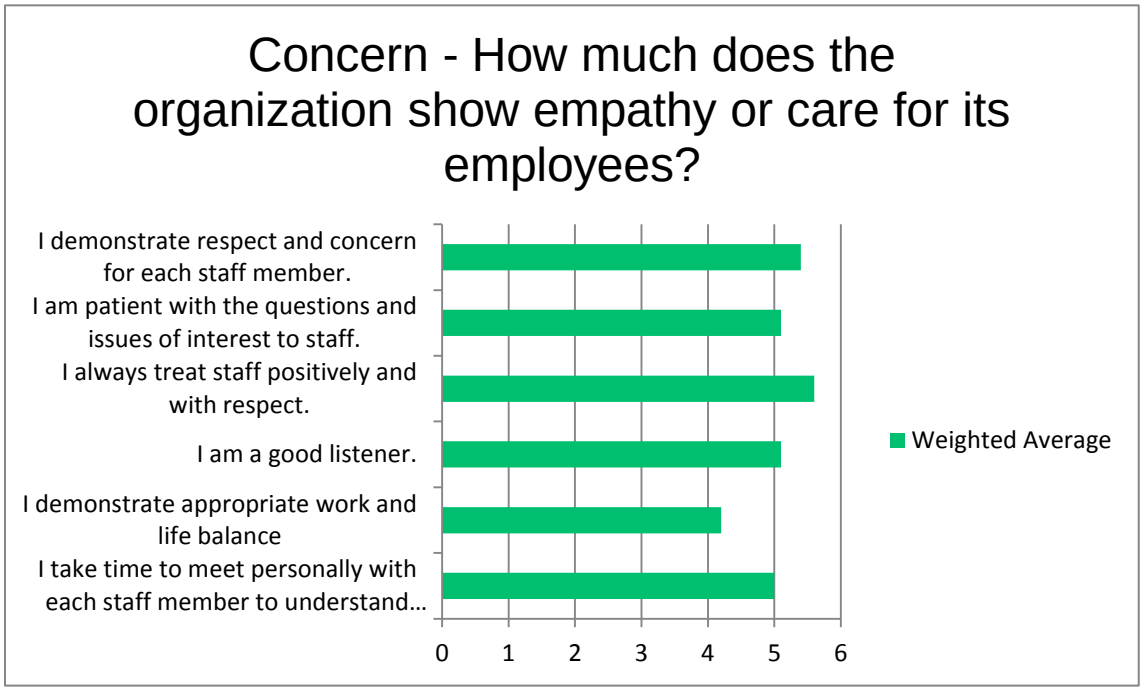



*Figure 15.* Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of concern.

**Major Findings for Connection**

Table 14 shows the variables for the domain of connection and the survey results of the elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to rank each question from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The researcher used the mean to discuss the degree of perceived importance for each of the six domain behaviors as related to connection.

Table 14

*Summation of Number of Responses to "How do Your Values or Goals Align With the Organization, the People and Their Behavior Behind it?"*

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Disagree somewhat | | Agree somewhat | | Agree | | Strongly agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Connection domain behaviors | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *M* |
| I am accepting and receptive to the ideas and opinions of all staff. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 7 | 64 | 2 | 18 | 5.0 |
| I am truthful, and frank in all interpersonal communications with staff. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 6 | 55 | 3 | 27 | 5.1 |
| I display behavior that is aligned with the values and beliefs of our school site vision. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 36 | 6 | 64 | 5.5 |
| I give voice to the site vision and shared values. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 7 | 64 | 2 | 18 | 5.0 |
| I actively engage staff in recognition and celebrations of site successes. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 5 | 45 | 3 | 27 | 4.8 |
| I listen carefully to understand and clarify issues. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 64 | 4 | 36 | 5.4 |

The participants rated six behaviors in the domain of connection according to their perceived degree of importance for developing trust with staff. The behavior rated as most important, with a mean of 5.5, for relating to a leader's ability to have his or her values or goals align with the organization, the people, and their behavior behind them was, "I display behavior that is aligned with the values and beliefs of our school site vision." Ten of 11 (91%) respondents indicated *agree* or *strongly agree*, with one (9%) respondent indicting *agree somewhat*. The next behavior, "I listen carefully to understand and clarify issues," was ranked as the second most important with a mean of 5.4. The last four behaviors, "I am truthful, and frank in all interpersonal communications with staff," "I give voice to the site vision and shared values," "I am accepting and receptive to the idea and opinions of all staff," and "I actively engage staff in recognition and staff celebrations of site success" had a mean of 5.1, 5.0, 5.0, and 4.8 respectively. It is important to note that the lowest ranking of these four behaviors previously discussed with a mean of 4.8, the behavior "I actively engage staff in recognition and staff celebrations of site success" was the only behavior in the domain of connection to have one (9%) respondent *disagree*. Figure 16 details the behaviors related to the domain of connection and the overall mean for each behavior.

## Summary

This chapter reported the findings and analyses of the research aimed at identifying and describing how elementary school principals establish trust with their staff using Weisman's (2010) five domains of trust. The qualitative and quantitative data results supported the development of trust through each of the five domains: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. This mixed-methods research study used

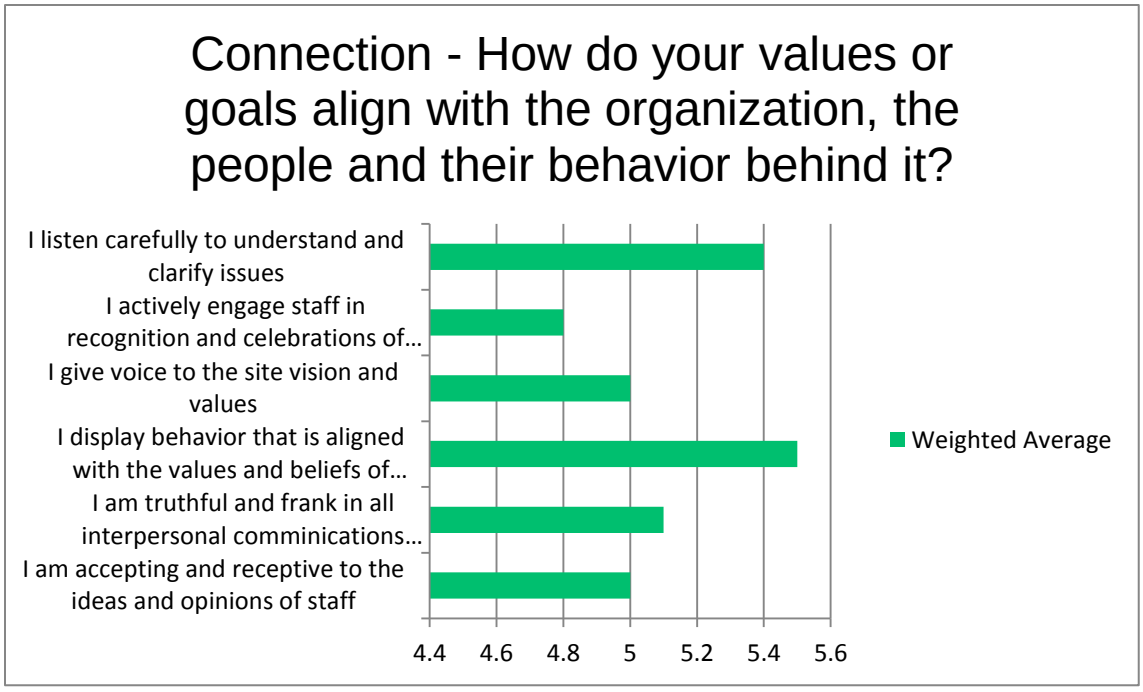



*Figure 16.* Summation of weighted average for Research Question 6 for the domain of connection.

two data collection methods, face-to-face interviews and an electronic survey, to gather information on how elementary school principals establish trust with their staff using the five domains of trust. Further, the research supported how elementary principals' perceived degree of importance of the five domains helped to develop trust with staff.

A comprehensive analysis of the quantitative survey data and of the qualitative interview data supported the significance of elementary principals using the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency to establish trust with staff.

**Qualitative Summary**

Twelve elementary principals were interviewed with an interview protocol consisting of 10 questions, two questions per trust domain. Of the 12 interviews, a total of 21 themes were coded with 407 frequencies. The domain of connection for Research Question 1 yielded four themes. The top theme that emerged as a key element to

building trust with staff through the domain of connection was the principal's ability to establish positive relationships with staff. Ten of the 12 (83%) elementary school principal participants referenced this theme 20 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. The domain of concern for Research Question 2 yielded four themes. The top theme that emerged as a vital component to creating trust through the domain of concern was a principal's ability to care about the needs of the staff. Eleven of the 12 (92%) elementary school principals referenced this theme 27 times as an important factor in developing trust. The domain of candor for Research Question 3 yielded three themes. The top theme that emerged as a key component to creating trust through the domain of candor was a principal's ability to set clear expectations. Twelve of the 12 (100%) elementary principal participants referenced this theme 22 times as a key component to establishing trust. The domain of competence for Research Question 4 yielded five themes. The lead theme that emerged as a key element in building trust with staff through the domain of competence was providing staff with opportunities for shared decision-making. Twelve of the 12 (100%) elementary principal participants referenced this theme 34 times as being important to establishing trust with staff members. Lastly, the domain of consistency for Research Question 5 yielded five major themes. The top theme that emerged for the domain of consistency was the ability for a principal to lead by example. Eleven of the 12 (92%) elementary school principal participants referenced this theme 22 times as an important component to developing trust.

**Quantitative Summary**

The sixth research question asked, "How do elementary principals perceive the degree of importance for the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence,

and consistency for building trust?" Data for Research Question 6 were received through an electronic survey software, SurveyMonkey, from 12 elementary school principals. The survey results for Research Question 6 were broken down into the five domains of trust: consistency, competence, candor, concern, and connection. The results from the survey indicated competence as the most important domain for building trust with a mean of 5.27. Overall, the results show that the greatest number of respondents *strongly agreed* with competence as the most important domain for building trust with 29 respondents (44%). Each domain was then broken down into particular behaviors in which respondents were asked to rank each question from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

Following are the five domains with the top-ranked behavior for each domain: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency.

- Connection: "I display behavior that is aligned with the values and beliefs of our school site vision."
- Concern: "I always treat staff positively and with respect."
- Candor: "I engage in open communication with all staff."
- Competence: "I promote the capability of my staff members."
- Consistency: "I make commitments to staff I can keep."

Chapter IV reported the comprehensive findings using both qualitative and quantitative data results. Chapter V presents a summary of findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research.

# CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Chapter V of this dissertation reviews the research study design, including the purpose, research questions, population, and sample. In addition, Chapter V discusses the major findings and the unexpected findings of this study. It also includes the conclusions reached, implications for action, and recommendations for future research. Chapter V closes with reflections and concluding remarks from the researcher.

## Review of Methodology

The methodology used for this study was a mixed-methods research design. The researcher used qualitative research methods by conducting in-depth semistructured interviews of 12 elementary school principals who were considered exemplary in creating trust with their staff. All interviews were conducted face to face and audio-recorded with principals' consent in order to capture the interview in its entirety. In addition, the researcher used quantitative research methods by asking the same 12 elementary principals to complete an online survey, via SurveyMonkey, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how elementary principals perceive the degree of importance for Weisman's (2010) five domains of trust.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe how elementary principals establish trust with staff using the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency (Weisman, 2010). In addition, the purpose of this study was to determine elementary principals' perceived degree of

importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust.

**Research Questions**

1. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of connection?
2. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of concern?
3. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of candor?
4. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of competence?
5. How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of consistency?
6. How do elementary principals perceive the degree of importance of the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust?

**Population**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a population is the total group of individuals, objects, or events to which results of research can be generalized. The larger population for this study was elementary school principals in the United States. The target population for this study was defined as a group of individuals selected with some specific criteria to which researchers want the research results to apply (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A manageable target population was identified to assist the researcher in saving expenses and time. The target population for this study included elementary principals in San Diego County in Southern California.

## Sample

For this study, a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling was used to describe the experiences of the sample population. The researcher selected 12 full-time public elementary principals working in three districts in San Diego County. Purposive sampling is a method used by researchers who purposively select participants for their study whom they believe will be rich sources of information (Patten, 2012). Convenience sampling is selected based on participants' accessibility and willingness to participate in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Study participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Participant had a minimum 3 years of experience as an elementary school principal.
2. Participant had a minimum of 15 staff members in his or her charge in order to sufficiently identify and describe how he or she established trust with staff.
3. Participant expressed a willingness to participate in the study.
4. Participant agreed to sign the informed consent form.

## Major Findings

This study revealed 15 major findings after a comprehensive analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings are outlined according to each of the six research questions. The first five research questions were designed to gather qualitative data on each of the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. This study revealed nine major findings after a comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 12 elementary school principals to answer each research question. The researcher asked participants in the study open-ended, semistructured interview questions about the

behaviors they use to establish trust with staff through each domain of trust. Interview responses were coded and analyzed for major themes and patterns.

The criteria for inclusion as a major finding were as follows:

- Theme must be referenced by a minimum of 10 participants.
- Theme had a frequency count of 20 and above.

Based on the criteria, Research Questions 1 and 2 pertaining to the domains of connection and concern respectively each had one major finding. Research Questions 3 and 5 regarding the domains of candor and consistency respectively each had two major findings. Research Question 4 for the domain of competence had three major findings.

Lastly, Research Question 6 was designed to gather quantitative data on the principal's perceived degree of importance of each of the five domains for building trust. This study revealed six major findings after a comprehensive analysis of the quantitative results from the survey. The following are the major findings by research question:

**Research Question 1: Connection**

*How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of connection?*

**Major Finding 1**. A major finding to building trust with staff through the domain of connection was the principal's ability to establish positive relationships with staff. Ten of the 12 (83%) elementary school principal participants referenced this theme 20 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. This aligns with the review of literature that relationships between principals and staff are critical indicators of a school's readiness for sustainable transformational change (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). The greater the connection between principal and staff, the higher the likelihood for

authentic trusting collaboration (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Elementary school principals agreed that putting in the time necessary to accumulate positive interactions and develop positive relationships with their staff contributed to establishing trust.

**Research Question 2: Concern**

*How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of concern?*

**Major Finding 2**. A major finding to building trust with staff through the domain of concern was the principal's ability to care about the needs of staff. Eleven of the 12 (92%) participants referenced this theme 27 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. Elementary principals agreed that caring about the needs of staff was considered an important part of building trust as the leader of the school. This supports the review of the literature regarding principals who show care and concern for their staff create a more positive school culture and happier and more productive staff (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Participants expressed that caring about the needs of staff required allowing staff to attend to personal matters, such as family emergencies or personal health, without any hesitation.

**Research Question 3: Candor**

*How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of candor?*

**Major Finding 3**. A major finding in establishing trust with staff through the domain of candor was setting clear expectations. Twelve of the 12 (100%) participants referenced this theme 22 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. All

participants believed that if principals are to be successful in earning the trust of their staff, they need to be clear with their expectations and engage in hard honest conversations. This finding is supported by the literature in that leaders who communicate with clarity and establish a shared understanding of expectations gain the trust of their followers (Covey, 2006; Fullan, 2014). Participants expressed that principals need to communicate effectively about their expected outcomes if they are to gain the staff's trust.

**Major Finding 4**. Another major finding in the domain of candor was a principal's ability to practice open, honest, and transparent communication. Eleven of the 12 (92%) participants referenced this theme 26 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. Leaders who communicate openly and honestly, even when the information may not be desirable, build trust with followers' performance (Brown, 2018; Horsager, 2012; Patterson et al., 2012). Participants strongly believe that being open, honest, and transparent with staff about what needs to change at the site is essential to establishing trust and moving the school forward. They believed strongly in communicating openly and honestly about the current reality of school data and the changes that need to be made in order to achieve better outcomes for students.

**Research Question 4: Competence**

*How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of competence?*

**Major Finding 5**. A major finding for the domain of competence was the ability of principals to provide opportunities for shared decision-making. Twelve of the 12 (100%) participants referencing this theme 34 times as being critical in the work of

establishing trust. When leaders value the input of their followers and listen to their thoughts and ideas, they develop deeper relationships in support of the organization (Horsager, 2012; Schwahn & Spady, 2002). Participants agreed that giving staff a voice and allowing them to give input on decisions and contribute to problem-solving elicits buy-in and a culture of trust. When principals provide opportunities for staff to contribute their ideas and to be involved with important school decisions, principals show that they believe in their staff's abilities and value their input. This creates a culture of mutual respect and trust.

**Major Finding 6**. Reflection and seeking to improve was another finding for the domain of competence with 11 of the 12 (92%) participants referencing this theme 30 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. High trust leaders routinely participate in self-reflection in order to improve their future actions for the benefit of the organization (Northouse, 2019; Schwahn & Spady, 2002). Participants strongly agreed that leaders who are reflective and continuously striving to improve their leadership skills gain the trust of their staff. They also believed that being reflective as a leader means being aware of their struggles and what they need to work on and what is considered necessary to building trust with staff.

**Major Finding 7**. Establishing a clear vision and purpose was an additional major finding for the domain of competence with 11 of the 12 (92%) participants referencing this theme 25 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. When people have a clear understanding of what their organization stands for, why it exists, and what they hope to accomplish, a culture of trust begins to form (George, 2015; Schwahn & Spady, 2002). Participants agreed that creating a shared understanding with staff as to

the school's purpose and vision is critical to developing trust. They believed that competency in leadership requires the ability to articulate a clear vision that represents the values and beliefs of the organization. In this way, principals feel they are able to motivate and inspire others around a collective purpose and vision, which allows staff to trust in their principal.

**Research Question 5: Consistency**

*How do elementary principals establish trust with staff through the domain of consistency?*

**Major Finding 8**. A major finding of the study for the domain of consistency was the principal's ability to lead by example with 11 of the 12 (92%) participants referencing this theme 22 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. Leaders must consistently model the standards expected of all staff in order to gain credibility and trust (Thornton & Cherrington, 2014). Participants believe that it is crucial for principals to lead by example and model the expected behaviors required by all staff. When staff members witness principals leading in such manner, it establishes the principal's credibility and develops trust with staff.

**Major Finding 9**. Alignment between words and actions was another major finding for the domain of consistency with 10 of the 12 (83%) participants referencing this theme 21 times as being critical in the work of establishing trust. A leader's consistency between words and actions establishes him or her as a trustworthy leader (Blanchard et al., 2013; Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Principals interviewed believe that it is important to have alignment between their words and actions if they are to build trust.

Another way principals referred to this was "walk the talk" so that their actions consistently match their words.

**Research Question 6**

*How do elementary principals perceive the degree of importance for the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for building trust?*

The survey results for Research Question 6 were categorized into the five domains of trust: connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. A total of 12 surveys were e-mailed to elementary school principals within San Diego County. Eleven of the 12 principals selected to participate in the study and completed the survey. Participants were asked to measure and rate each domain behavior from 1 to 6, with 6 being *strongly agree*, to 1 being *strongly disagree.* The number of participants, percentages of responses, and the mean were calculated to establish the overall results of the survey by each of the five domains of trust and related behaviors. The results were compiled and analyzed.

**Major Finding 10.** The results of the survey indicate competence as the most important domain for building trust with a mean of 5.27 and 44% of respondents indicating *strongly agree* and 39% of respondents indicating *agree.* A leader's capability to perform as expected and deliver results is a key driver in building trust (Blanchard et al., 2013; Covey, 2006; The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2010).

**Major Finding 11.** The behavior rated as most important for relating to an organization's ability to perform consistently and dependably over the long term with a mean of 5.5 was, "I make commitments to staff I can keep." Fifty-five percent of the respondents selected *strongly agree* and 36% selected *agree* indicating that keeping

commitments to staff was important to building trust. According to Brown (2013), leaders who follow through on their promises and commitments build a reputation of being dependable and trustworthy.

**Major Finding 12.** The most important behavior relating to an organization's ability to effectively accomplish what it is designed to do with a mean of 5.6 was, "I promote the capability of my staff members." Eight respondents (73%) indicated *strongly agree*, one respondent (9%) indicated *agree*, and two respondents indicated *agree somewhat*. Leaders who build the capacity of their teams create higher levels of engagement and productivity within the organization, which creates an environment of trust in which all members can thrive (Fullan, 2010).

**Major Finding 13.** The behavior rated as most important for relating to an organization's ability to be transparent and make information available to employees, with a mean of 5.5, was "I engage in open communication with all staff." Out of the 11 respondents, five (45%) *strongly agreed* and six (55%) *agreed* with the importance of open communication with staff to build trust. This is congruent with the literature of trust in that honest and transparent communication is fundamental to being seen as a credible and trustworthy leader that others can believe in (Donald Anderson, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Weisman, 2016).

**Major Finding 14.** The most important behavior in relation to an organization's ability to show empathy or care for its employees with a mean of 5.5 was, "I always treat staff positively and with respect." Seven respondents (64%) *strongly agreed* to this behavior as being the most important. In addition, three respondents (27%) *agreed* and one respondent (9%) *agreed somewhat* to the importance of treating staff positively and

with respect. The review of the literature supports that when leaders exhibit empathy, compassion, and care for their employees and treat them with respect, they build trust (Horsager, 2009; Weisman, 2016).

**Major Finding 15.** The behavior rated as most important for relating to a leader's ability to have his or her values or goals align with those of the organization, the people, and his or her behavior behind it with a mean of 5.5 was, "I display behavior that is aligned with the values and beliefs of our school site vision." Ten of the 11 (91%) respondents indicated *agree* or *strongly agree* with one (9%) respondent *agreeing somewhat*. Trustworthy leaders behave in ways that reflect the core values and purpose of the organization, creating a climate and culture of trust that inspires others to act and behave for the common good of the organization (McCleskey, 2014; Northouse, 2019).

## Unexpected Findings

This study revealed two unexpected findings. The first unexpected finding was that the trust domain of candor ranked last for establishing trust with staff in the qualitative interview data results, receiving 15% of all coded responses and a total frequency count of 59. Although the domain of candor accumulated three main themes from the qualitative interviews, the theme of providing staff with specific feedback had a surprisingly low frequency with 11 responses, which was half the response rate of the other two themes represented for candor. This was an unexpected finding because the ability of a school principal to give staff specific feedback in order to grow, learn, and improve is crucial to shaping a positive school culture of learning and collaboration grounded in trust (Fullan, 2014). Furthermore, providing staff with specific feedback is critical to improving performance and achieving school goals.

In contrast, candor ranked as the second most important domain for building trust with staff according to the quantitative survey data results with an overall mean of 5.18. Candor may have ranked higher on the survey data because of the participants' ability to read and rate specific behaviors associated with candid and transparent communication as opposed to sharing about their experiences on the topic of building trust through candor in a face-to-face interview.

The second unexpected finding was that the domain of concern ranked low on both the qualitative interview data and the quantitative survey data. On the qualitative interview data, concern ranked second to last, contributing to 16% of the total coded data and having a frequency count of 67. Out of all five domains, concern ranked last in the quantitative survey with a mean of 5.05. Although the domain of concern generated four major themes as a result of the qualitative data analysis and coding, concern was not represented across all participant responses. Similarly, concern was the only domain in the survey to have a response in the *strongly disagree* category for the behavior of "I demonstrate appropriate work and life balance." In addition, this behavior only had one respondent indicate *strongly agree* and four respondents indicate *agree,* which was the fewest respondents for both categories among all the domains. This was an unexpected finding because principals tend to spend much of their time and energy caring for the needs of their school, yet concern was not expressed with as much frequency as the domains of competence and consistency. Furthermore, caring about the needs of staff resulted in a major finding for the domain of concern, yet showing concern for oneself as a principal by maintaining a healthy balance in work and life was a major shortcoming with the lowest mean of 4.2 among all behaviors across the domains.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study helped to form the six conclusions on how elementary principals use the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency for establishing trust with staff. This section explores all six of the study's conclusions with supporting evidence for each listed.

### Conclusion 1. Interconnectedness of Domains

It was concluded that the interconnectedness of the five domains of connection, concern, competence, candor, and consistency work together in providing significant purpose in establishing trust between a principal and his or her staff. Specifically, the variables of concern and connection shared many similar responses. For example, principal responses highlighted the importance of showing care and concern in order to build connections with staff; likewise, taking time to build connections consistently over time shows care and concern. Findings also showed that the variable of consistency was highlighted most often when referencing the other domains of trust.

This interlink between the domains weaves together a tapestry of trust that creates a positive school culture that elevates learning, collaboration, and relationships to higher levels. As relationships continue to grow and develop within a school, mutual trust is created between both the principal and the staff member, which benefits the overall culture, climate, and performance of the school. Principals who have developed trusting relationships with their staff tend to be more successful in developing a positive school culture of learning and collaboration that inspires staff to put forth more effort to achieve school goals of achievement (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

The following evidence supports this first conclusion:

1. All five domains of connection, concern, competence, candor, and consistency emerged with three to five themes as a result of coding data from the transcribed interviews for how principals build trust with staff.
2. All five domains received a mean ranging from 5.05 to 5.27 for the perceived importance of building trust with staff.
3. All principals were able to produce responses demonstrating behaviors from each of the five domains of trust.
4. Principals made mention of a combination or relationship of the domains they utilized at one time, for example, demonstrating competence by being consistent and creating caring connections.

**Conclusion 2. Connection**

It was concluded that concentrating on relationship building was an important leadership strategy principals used to develop positive connections that established trust with staff. Therefore, devising strategies to cultivate connections with staff in a variety of ways is worthy of a principal's focus and time. Connecting with people on a personal level through relationships is at the root of trust (Horsager, 2009; White et al., 2016). Furthermore, connection represents relationships and an understanding of the leader's role in creating those relationships with people. When a leader shows that he or she is connected to staff professionally and emotionally in authentic ways, the relationship between the principal and staff member grows in meaningful and productive ways to ultimately support the school's vision, goals, and outcomes. Elementary school principals interviewed indicated that taking time to build positive relationships by being vulnerable and authentic, listening to understand, and making others feel valued develops

and maintains trust with staff members. Principals who connect with their staff are not afraid to be vulnerable and share about themselves. This allows others to see the principal as a real person and someone they can identify with and trust.

When principals create a sense of connectedness through positive relationships, staff members will produce higher levels of creativity and innovation, resulting in a greater positive culture and higher levels of student achievement. Therefore, a principal's ability to establish positive relationships will deepen the levels of connection, leading to trust. The following evidence supports this conclusion:

1. The domain of connection emerged with four themes and was referenced 68 times by participants.
2. The theme of building connection through establishing and maintaining positive relationships was referenced 20 times by 10 of the 12 (83%) participants.
3. Connection received a mean of 5.12 out of 6.00 on the survey for the perceived importance of establishing trust with staff.
4. Principals indicated that displaying behavior that was aligned with the values and vision of the school was a top behavior in the domain of connection, receiving a mean of 5.5 of 6.0 on the survey. This behavior was expressed in the interview in the form of building positive relationships with staff as a means to promote a positive school culture that sets a foundation for learning and collaboration.

**Conclusion 3. Concern**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that demonstrating concern for staff members by showing care and respect for their personal needs and well-being was a critical component for building trust with staff. Therefore, investing quality time to

routinely check in with staff on their well-being and demonstrating empathy toward staff needs should be an area of focus in principals' pursuit for creating trust. When staff feel genuinely cared about, it sets the foundation for a trust-based relationship between the principal and staff member. In addition, staff who feel that their principal cares about them, their happiness, and their well-being are more likely to have higher levels of engagement and be more productive (Altman, 2010; Peck, 2015; Zak, 2017). Principals who show concern for their staff will ultimately create a culture of trust that brings about more fulfilled and productive staff (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). By taking the time to identify and support the various needs of staff members, principals gain the trust of their staff. As such, effective principals must be intentional and strategic with their time management so that caring about the needs of staff does not get overlooked as a priority. The following evidence supports this conclusion:

1. High-trust principals gave responses consistent with showing concern for the personal lives of staff members specifically by checking-in with staff, getting to know staff, and understanding family and/or personal needs.
2. Caring about the needs of staff received the highest frequency count of 27 of all themes in the domain of concern.

**Conclusion 4. Candor**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that elementary school principals must set clear expectations and communicate openly and honestly with staff in order to foster an environment of trust. The elementary principals in this study were intentional about communicating expectations clearly with staff members of their schools through sharing information honestly and openly, and providing staff with specific

feedback in a straightforward yet respectful way. Although providing staff with specific feedback emerged as a major theme for the domain of candor, it was ranked far lower than expected; therefore, it was also concluded that principals may lack training in providing individual staff members with feedback that elicits professional growth or changes in practices. If principals are to lead transformational change in their schools, providing staff with specific feedback in a candid yet respectful way is essential to achieve expected outcomes and produce higher levels of achievement.

Candor refers to sincerity, authenticity, and honesty. This involves not only the accuracy of the information shared but also the tone and appropriateness in which it is communicated (Weisman, 2016). According to Covey (2006), being clear and concise about expected outcomes and forthcoming with communication without any hidden agendas helps leaders establish trust. When staff members witness and experience their principal being truthful and forthcoming with information, credibility is established with the leader creating greater levels of trust (White et al., 2016). The following evidence supports this conclusion:

1. All 12 principals interviewed expressed the importance of communicating expected outcomes to staff in a clear and straightforward manner in order to establish credibility and build trust.
2. The behavior of engaging in open communication with all staff was ranked with the highest mean of 5.5 out of 6.0 for the domain of candor on the quantitative survey.
3. The theme of providing staff with specific feedback yielded the lowest frequency response rate of 11 compared to the other two themes generated for candor with response rates of 22 and 26.

**Conclusion 5. Competence**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that in order to build trust, principals must be models of continuous learning and demonstrate competence by building the capacity of teams through shared decision-making experiences. By providing staff with a voice and choice, principals help staff feel connected to the school's vision, gain a sense of purpose toward the work, and feel empowered, which helps to build a collaborative culture of trust. In addition, principals who are continuously seeking to improve themselves by reflecting on their leadership practices gain the trust of their followers to lead in a competent manner. In schools, staff depend on the principal's competence to accomplish school goals, lead by example, and facilitate problem-solving productively (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). According to Fullan (2014), principals need to focus on leading the learning of their staff as well as their own learning in order to build a culture of trust that maximizes the impact on teaching and learning in a school. The following evidence supports this conclusion:

1. All 12 principals gave responses consistent with promoting the capability of staff members and providing staff with opportunities for shared decision-making in order to develop trust. Principals shared that they did this by giving staff a voice and allowing them to give input into decisions and contribute to problem solving.
2. The theme of providing staff with opportunities for shared decision-making received the highest frequency count (34) from 100% of the participants among all themes within all five domains.

3. The theme of reflection and seeking to improve on behalf of the school principal received the second highest frequency count (30) from 92% of the participants among all themes within all five domains.
4. The behavior of promoting the capability of staff members was ranked with the highest mean of 5.56 out of 6.0 for the domain of competence on the quantitative survey.

**Conclusion 6. Consistency**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that it is crucial for principals to consistently lead by example through their actions and words. The elementary principals in this study were consistent in maintaining alignment between their words and actions. In particular, they demonstrated reliability and dependability by following through on commitments and showing integrity. Consistently keeping commitments and keeping one's word is the quickest way to build trust in a relationship (Horsager, 2009). In addition, principals stood by their values and beliefs, matched words with actions, and consistently put students first.

According to Bryk and Schneider (2003), the consistent alignment between words and actions inspires confidence and trust with staff and reveals the principal's personal integrity. When a principal does what he or she says he or she will do, staff members know that they can rely on their principal on a consistent basis. This creates a sense of security that staff members can trust. The following evidence supports this conclusion:

1. The behavior of "I make commitments to staff I can keep" received the highest mean of 5.5 out of 6.0 for the domain of consistency on the quantitative survey.

2. High-trust principals provided examples of how they modeled consistent leadership by consistently demonstrating their beliefs and values through their words and actions.
3. The theme of leading by example received the highest frequency count of 22 within the domain of consistency.

## Implications for Actions

The topic of trust leadership, especially within public schools, is both critical and timely. With public trust in leadership on the decline (Covey, 2006; Edelman, 2017; Hosking, 2002; Weisman, 2016), it is of utmost importance to focus on the leadership practices that help establish trust, especially within schools. Developing and maintaining trust within a school environment is key to impacting student learning and to the overall success of the school. As a result, principals need to develop leadership strategies that foster trust within and among stakeholders in order to directly impact a positive school culture that accelerates achievement.

In general, this research offered substantial insight into how leaders build and maintain trust with people in their organizations. The major findings of the study, along with the literature on trust, provide a clearer understanding of the strategies principals use to build trust with staff. Specifically, the findings in this study show that leaders build trust through engaging in the behaviors and leadership strategies that demonstrate connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. Hence, the practical implications resulting from the findings of the study challenge elementary principals to become a high-trust leader who develops and sustains trust with his or her staff and embraces the following trust-building tools in his or her leadership practices:

**Implication 1. Developing Emotional Intelligence in School Leaders**

School leadership requires much more than attaining technical skills. It requires attaining self-awareness of one's emotions and values and aligning those emotions and values with behaviors and actions shown to others in order to build relationships grounded in trust (Braden, 2013). When principals are more aware of their own emotions and feelings, they are more apt to show empathy and concern for others, which strengthens connections and relationships that lead to trust (Espy, 2019). New research is demonstrating that emotional intelligence, the awareness of emotions in self and others, is just as important or even more important for authentic transformational leaders (George, 2015); therefore, school leaders need to build their emotional intelligence to support trust building through the trust domains of concern, candor, and connection. If schools are about developing a positive school culture of learning and collaboration in support of student achievement, then school principals should learn the skills to developing a culture of trust in which all persons can learn and thrive, including staff. This requires having both the intellectual and emotional capacities to lead change. Therefore, all administrative credentialing programs should institute coursework on emotional intelligence (EI) practices in order to develop the emotional and social capacity and leadership skills of principals in the areas of concern, candor, and connection, which help create trusting relationships for meaningful change. All four areas of EI should be incorporated in trainings and coursework including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management to support the manifestation of Weisman's (2016) domains of trust. The use of self-assessments and 360-degree surveys

may serve as useful tools in order to provide leaders with meaningful and purposeful feedback to areas of strength and areas of need.

**Implication 2. Leadership Coaching and Mentoring**

Cultivating a culture of trust is a complex and dynamic process that requires a considerable amount of attention to the relationships, connection, and interactions between principal and staff. To support the principal in this very important endeavor, all school districts should provide principals with personalized leadership coaching and mentoring on the areas of trust building and cultivating positive school culture on a consistent basis. Principals often receive feedback in the technical facets of the role; however, the factors related to building trust are often taken for granted or overlooked. By having a leadership coach and mentor, principals can learn to develop their trust-building skills by receiving honest, objective feedback, thought-provoking questions that inspire new perspectives, and creating a plan of action to develop leadership practices that promote trust. Moreover, leadership coaching and mentoring can support principals in the development of their emotional intelligence skills required to build relationships grounded in trust in order to give feedback to staff in an authentic and honest ways for the purpose of elevating performance and achievement. According to Fullan (2014), "Most teachers want constructive feedback to get better, amd most find it lacking in the culture of their profession" (p. 75). For this reason, leadership coaching and mentoring should be implemented in all school districts as a way to develop the social-emotional capacities of required of high trust leaders.

### Implication 3. Professional Development on the Five Domains of Trust

Elementary principals should participate in regular professional development cycles related to trust-building strategies and the five domains of trust. With trust at the heart of transformational leadership and the essence of organizational change and prosperity (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; White et al., 2016; Zak, 2017), principals must be equipped with the skills to cultivate a culture and mindset that can withstand the speed and complexities of a changing world. Therefore, principals should receive ongoing professional development on the five domains of trust to continuously enhance and develop their trust leadership skills.

## Recommendations for Future Research

The current study discovered major findings in the trust-building leadership behaviors of the elementary school principals in San Diego County. Based on these findings and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made for further research:

1. A comparative study that focuses on the perceptions of trust from both elementary school principals and their staff members would be a recommendation for future research. The current study focused solely on the elementary principals and the strategies they use to build trust with staff in addition to the principal's perception of the degree of importance of the five domains. Another study incorporating the perceptions of staff members about how principals develop trust with staff would provide greater insight into the various perspectives between principals and staff and how that may support creating higher levels of trust in schools.

2. This study focused on elementary public school principals and how they build trust with their staff. Further research could replicate this study but with a different population, such as superintendents or other district leadership and how they build trust with their principals. This investigation would be worthy to explore whether the trust relationship between principals and district leadership affects the school's culture.
3. A comparative study with elementary principals from various cultural backgrounds would be an area of recommended future research. Although trust appears to be a part of all cultures, future studies should explore whether there are differences in trust leadership practices of school principals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
4. Further research could replicate this study with elementary teachers and how they build trust with their students using the five domains of trust.

## Concluding Remarks and Reflections

This chapter closes with my concluding remarks and reflections on the research process. My research of *A Mixed-Methods Study of How Elementary Principals Build Trust With Staff Using Weisman's Five Domains of Trust Model* changed my life in very many ways. As a school principal, I reflected more on my own practices and became more aware of the quality of relationships in which I was engaged. I began to reflect on how I, as the leader, was cultivating a positive culture of trust with the lens of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. I asked myself how I, as a leader, build trust using each of the five domains. I became much more aware of my thoughts, actions, and words. As a result of this process, I feel I have become a better leader and colleague. I am much more intentional about building and sustaining trust with people and all that I

value in life. Horsager (2009) stated, "Everything of value is built on trust, from financial systems to relationships" (p. 6). I value family, work, community, independence, equity, friendship, and education. I've learned throughout this research about the profound effects trust has on the performance and productivity of people in all areas of their lives, and I want to be someone who adds value to others. This process has helped me think in new and different ways and has helped me not only to gain trust but also to extend trust to others and lift my current relationships to new levels. I feel that I am better equipped to nurture my relationships with trust and care as I continuously grow and learn as a leader. Additionally, I have learned as a result of this process that I need to extend trust to gain trust. For example, by sharing my vulnerabilities in a sincere and honest way, I have gained the respect and trust of my peers and staff in more profound ways. Not only have I made trusting connections stronger in my life, but I have also gained more trust in myself and in my abilities to influence change through this process. With self-trust, I find myself taking more risks and also supporting risk taking in others, which models and cultivates a culture of trust.

A key component of becoming a transformational change leader is having a growth mindset. Knowing that one is continuously growing and learning over time is essential to leading in today's complex and ever-changing world. My journey over the past 3 years in Brandman's doctoral program has taught me a lot about grit and perseverance, but mostly, it has taught me about myself as a leader. Who am I and what do I want to continuously strive to be: A trusted leader who influences positive change in the world. This experience from start to finish has transformed the way I lead, think, and behave in more ways that I could have ever imagined.

To conclude, working with such an incredible team of peer researchers to identify and describe how principals build trust with staff was an honor and privilege. I believe that the six thematic studies on principal trust leadership designed to explore Weisman's (2016) five trust domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency will help principals and other school leaders create an environment of trust where productivity and performance are raised to new levels that achieve breakthrough results for all children. Trust is the key to success and the key to great influence and change in our world.

# REFERENCES


Altman, L. (2010, June 17). Working relationships–you have to care. *The Intentional Workplace:*. Retrieved from https://intentionalworkplace.com/2010/06/17 /workplace-relationships-do-you-care/

Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles, and styles and their relevance to educational management. *Management, 5*(1), 6-14.

Anderson, D. [Donald] L. (2015). *Organization development: The process of leading organizational change* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Anderson, D. [Dean], & Ackerman Anderson, L. S. (2001). *Beyond change management: Advanced strategies for today's transformational leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Appelbaum, S. H., Mitraud, A., Gailleur, J.-F., Iacovella, M., Gerbasi, R., & Ivanova, V. (2008). The impact of organizational change, structure and leadership on employee turnover: A case study. *Journal of Business Case Studies, 4*(1), 21-38. https://doi.org/10.19030/jbcs.v4i1.4742

Bacon, B., & Moller, K. (2016). Redefining leadership for the fourth industrial revolution. *Oxford Leadership*. Retrieved from https://www.oxfordleadership.com /wp-content/uploads/2016/08/3living-research-fourth-industrial-revolution.pdf

Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics, 18*(3), 19-31.

Battle, A. (2007). *Trust and leadership* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3258051)

Benko, C., & Anderson, M. (2010). *The corporate lattice: Achieving high performance in the changing world of work*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Bennis, W. (2013). Leadership in a digital world: Embracing transparency and adaptive capacity. *MIS Quarterly, 37*(2), 635-636.

Binney, E. (2015). Transformational leaders will rule the 21st century. *Society for Human Resource Management*. Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org /resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/leadership-and-navigation/pages/transformational-leaders.aspx

Bird, J. J., Wang, C., Watson, J., & Murray, L. (2012). Teacher and principal perceptions of authentic leadership: Implications for trust, engagement, and intention to return. *Journal of School Leadership, 22*(3), 425-461.

Blanchard, K., Olmstead, C., & Lawrence, M. (2013). *Trust works!: Four keys to building lasting relationships.* New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Blankstein, A. M. (2010). *Failure is not an option: 6 principles for making student success the only option* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Blind, P. K. (2006). *Building trust in government in the twenty-first century: Review of literature and emergiing issues*. Retrieved from http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc /groups/public/documents/un/unpan025062.pdf

Boundless. (2016). *The role of teams in organizations*. Retrieved from https://www.boundless.com/management/textbooks/boundless-management-textbook/groups-teams-and-teamwork-6/defining-teams-and-teamwork-51/the-role-of-teams-in-organizations-257-6411/

Braden, M. (2013). 3 keys for building trust in your leadership. *MSB Coach*. Retrieved from https://msbcoach.com/images/whitepapers/Building-Trust-in-Your-Leadership-103113.pdf

Brewster, C., & Railsback, J. (2003). *Building trusting relationships for school improvement: Implications for principals and teachers*. Retrieved from http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/trust.pdf

Brown, B. (2017). *Braving the wilderness: The quest for true belonging and the courage to stand alone*. New York, NY: Random House.

Brown, B. (2018). Clear is kind: Unclear is unkind. Retrieved from https://brenebrown.com/blog/2018/10/15/clear-is-kind-unclear-is-unkind/

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. New York, NY: Sage.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40-45. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org /publications/educational-leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Trust-in-Schools@-A-Core-Resource-for-School-Reform.aspx

California Department of Education. (2018). Fingertips facts on edcuation in California. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ceffingertipfacts.asp

Cartwright, S., & Holmes, N. (2006). The meaning of work: The challenge of regaining employee engagement and reducing cynicism. *Human Resource Management Review, 16*(2), 199-208. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2006.03.012

Cherry, K. (2018). *Understanding the trait theory of leadership: Can certain traits predict your leadership success?* Retrieved from https://www.verywellmind.com /what-is-the-trait-theory-of-leadership-2795322

Cline, A. (2017). *What are theoretical definitions? Constructing a "theory" about the nature of a concept.* Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/theoretical-definitions-250311

Colbert, A. E., Judge, T. A., Choi, D., & Wang, G. (2012). Assessing the trait theory of leadership using self and observer ratings of personality: The mediating role of contributions to group success. *The Leadership Quaterly, 23*(4), 670-685. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.03.004

Cooper, R. K., & Sawaf, A. (1997). *Executive EQ: Emotional intelligence in leadership and organizations*. New York, NY: Grosset/Putnam.

Coughlan, M., Cronin, P., & Ryan, F. (2007). Step-by-step guide to critiquing research. Part1: Quantitative research. *British Journal of Nursing, 16*(11), 658-663.

Covey, S. M. R. (2009). How the best leaders build trust. *Leadership Now*. Retrieved from https://www.leadershipnow.com/CoveyOnTrust.html

Covey, S. M. R. (with Merrill, R. R.). (2006). *The speed of trust: The one thing that changes everything*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Covey, S. M. R., & Link, G. (with Merrill, R. R.). (2012). *Smart trust: Creating prosperity, energy and joy in a low trust world*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitiative research.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed method research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crowley, M. C. (2011). *Lead from the heart: Transformational leadership for the 21st century*. Bloomington, IN: Balboa Press.

DuFour, R. (2004). What is "professional learning community"? *Educational Leadership, 61*(8), 6-11.

Ebersole, G. (2013). *The strategic importance of trust in business*. Retrieved from http://www.lvb.com/article/20130415/lvb01/304119983/the-strategic-importance-of-trust-in-business

Edelman. (2017, January 21). *2017 Edelman trust barometer*. Retrieved from https://www.edelman.com/trust2017/

Engard, B. (2017). *6 prominant theories of leadership.* Retrieved from https://online.rivier.edu/6-theories-of-leadership/

Epitropaki, O., & Martin, R. (2013). Transformational-transactional leadership and upward influence: The role of relative leader-member exchange (RLMX) and

percieved organizational support (POS). *Leadership Quaterly*, *24*(2), 299-315. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.11.007

Espy, L. (2019). 5 ways emotional intelligence builds trust through communication [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.pmworld360.com/blog/2018/04/20/5-ways-emotional-intelligence-builds-trust-through-communication/

Farnsworth, S. J. (2015). *Principal learning-centered leadership and faculty trust in the principal* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3732791)

Flores, F., & Solomon, R. C. (1998). Creating trust. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 8*(2), 205-232. https://doi.org/10.2307/3857326

Friedman, U. (2017). *Why Trump is thriving in an age of distrust*. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/01/trump-edelman-trust-crisis/513350/

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M. (2010). *Motion leadership: The skinny on becoming change savvy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Fullan, M. (2014). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

George, B. (2015). *Discover your true north: Becoming an authentic leader*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

George, B., Sims, P., McLean, A. N., & Mayer, D. (2007). *Discovering your authentic leadership.* Retrieved from https://www.simplylifeindia.com/uploads /8/1/1/5/8115412/discovering_your_authentic_leadership.pdf

Glowacki-Dudka, M., & Griswold, W. (2016). Embodying authentic leadership through popular education at Highlander Research and Education Center: A qualitative case study. *Adult Learning, 27*(3), 105-112.

Gordon, G., & Giley, J. (2012). A trust-leadership model. *Performance Improvement, 51*(7), 28-35.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59-82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903

Handford, V., & Leithwood, K. (2013). Why teachers trust school leaders. *Journal of Educational Administration, 51*(2), 194-212.

Hargreaves, A., & Boyle, A. (2015). Uplifting leadership. *Educational Leadership, 72*(5), 42-47.

Harvey, T. R., & Drolet, B. (2006). *Building teams, building people: Expanding the fifth resource* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Heathfield, S. M. (2019). *The secrets to developing trusting relationships in the workplace.* Retrieved from https://www.thebalance.com/trust-rules-the-most-important-secret-about-trust-1919393

Horsager, D. (2009). *The trust edge: How top leaders gain faster results, deeper relationships, and a stronger bottom line*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Horsager, D. (2012). You can't be a great leader without trust: Here's how you build it. *Forbes Leadership Forum*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesleadershipforum/2012/10/24/you-cant-be-a-great-leader-without-trust-heres-how-you-build-it/#5fee97284ef7

Hosking, G. (2002, July). Review of *Why we need a history of trust* (Review No. 287a). Retrieved from http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/287a

Kaser, J., Stiles, K., Mundry, S., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (2006). *Leading every day* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The Ken Blanchard Companies. (2010). *Building trust.* Retrieved from https://vtshrm.shrm.org/sites/vtshrm.shrm.org/files/Blanchard-Building-Trus.pdf

Khan, Z., A., Nawaz, A., & Khan, I. (2016). Leadership theories and styles: A literature review. *Journal of Resources Development and Management, 16*, 1-7. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Allah_Nawaz/publication /293885908_Leadership_Theories_and_Styles_A_Literature_Review/links/56bcd 3ad08ae9ca20a4cdea2.pdf

Kimberlin, C. L., & Winterstein, A. G. (2008). Validity and reliability of measurement instruments used in research. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy, 65*(23), 2276-2284. https://doi.org/10.2146/ajhp070364

King, A. S. (1990). Evolution of leadership theory. *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers, 15*(2), 43-51.

Kirkpatric, S. A., & Locke, E. A. (1991). Leadership: Do traits matter? *The Executive, 5*(2), 48-60.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2012). *The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Krasnoff, B. (2015). *Leadership qualities of effective principals*. Retrieved from http://nwcc.educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/research-brief-leadership-qualities-effective-principals.pdf

Kratzer, C. C. (1997). *A community of respect, caring, and trust: One school's story*. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED409654

Latham, J. R. (2014). Leadership for quality and innovation: Challenges, theories, and a framework for future research. *Quality Management Journal, 21*(1), 11-15. Retrieved from https://drjohnlatham.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2014_QMJ_Leadership.pdf

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *Review of research: How leadership influences student learning*. Retrieved from https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/how-leadership-influences-student-learning.aspx

Leithwood, K., & Seashore-Louis, K. (2012). *Linking leadership to student learning.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Livnat, Y. (2004). On the nature of benevolence. *Journal of Social Philosophy, 35*(2), 304-317. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9833.2006.00234.x

Llopis, G. (2013). *7 reasons employees don't trust their leaders*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/glennllopis/2013/12/09/7-reasons-employees-dont-trust-their-leaders/#67ef86862a22

Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J., & Bracken, C. C. (2002). Content analysis in mass communication: Assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability. *Human Communication Reseach, 28*(4), 587-604. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2002.tb00826.x

Lord, R. G., Day, D. V., Zaccaro, S. J., Avolio, B. J., & Eagly, A. H. (2017). Leadership in applied psychology: Three waves of theory and research. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102*(3), 434-451. Retrieved from https://psycnet.apa.org /doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fapl0000089

Louis, K. S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2011). Principals as cultural leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(5), 52-56. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171109200512

Luhmann, N. (1979). *Trust and power*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.

Mandelbaum, M., & Friedman, T. L. (2011). *That used to be us: How America fell behind in the world it invented and how we can come back.* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Manktelow, J., Jackson, K., Swift, C., Edwards, S., Bishop, L., Mugridge, T., . . . Robinson, R. (2018). *Core leadership theories: Learning the foundations of leadership.* Retrieved from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/leadership-theories.htm

Marković, M. R. (2008). Managing the organizational change and culture in the age of globalization. *Journal of Business Economics and Management, 9*(1), 3-11. https://doi.org/10.3846/1611-1699.2008.9.3-11

Marshall, T. (2018). *Reclaiming the principalship*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Martin, W. (2018). *Leadership: Outdated theories and emerging non-traditional leadership* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 10688717)

Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *The Academy of Management Review, 20*(3), 709-734.

McCleskey, J. (2014). Situational, transformational, and transactional leadership and leadership development. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly, 5*(4), 117-130.

McGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

McKinsey & Company. (2016). Cisco's John Chambers on the digital era. *McKinsey & Company*. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/high-tech/our-insights/ciscos-john-chambers-on-the-digital-era

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Mehra, B. (2002). Bias in qualitative research: Voices from an online classroom. *The Qualitative Report, 7*(1), 1-19. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu /tqr/vol7/iss1/2/

Mineo, D. L. (2014). The importance of trust in leadership. *Research Management Review, 20*(1), 1-6. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1038828.pdf

National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of education statistics: 2017*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/

Nevins, M. D., & Stumpf, S. A. (1999, July 1). 21st century leadership: Redefining management education: Educating managers in the modern era. *Strategy +Business,* 16. Retrieved from https://www.strategy-business.com/article /19405?gko=3b347

Norris, N. (1997). Error, bias and validity in qualitative research. *Educational Action Research, 5*(1), 172-176. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf /10.1080/09650799700200020

Northouse, P. G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ospina, S. M., Kersh, R., & Wart, M. V. (2012). The role of trust in leadership. *Public Administration Review, 72*(3), 454.

O'Toole, J., & Bennis, W. (2009). *A culture of candor.* Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2009/06/a-culture-of-candor

Paccagnella, B. (2017). Employee engagement starts with trust. *Livewire*. Retrieved from http://www.livewireinc.com/employee-engagement-starts-with-trust/

Patten, M. (2012). *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. (2012). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Peck, E. (2015). *Google has discoverd the 5 key traits employees need to succeed.* Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/google-employee-success-traits_us_564cd621e4b031745cef50fe

Pfeffer, J. (2005). Producing sustainable competitive advantage through the effective management of people. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 19*(4). Retrieved from https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/AME.2005.19417910

Pfeffer, J., & Veiga, J. F. (1999). Putting people first for organizational success. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 13*(2). https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.1999.1899547

Roberts, C. M. (2010). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Robinson, V. (2007). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence. Retrieved from https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi /research_conference_2007/5

Robinson, V. (2011). *Student-centered leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rousseau, D., Sitkin, S., Burt, R., & Camerer, C. (1998). Not so different after all: A cross-discipline view of trust. *Academy of Management Review, 23*(3), 393-404.

Rowold, J. (2014). Instrumental leadership: Extending the transformational-transactional leadership paradigm. *German Journal of Human Resource Management, 28*(3), 367-390.

Schwahn, C. J., & Spady, W. G. (2002). *Total leaders: Applying the best future-focused change strategies to education*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Education.

Schwarz, R. M. (2002). *The skilled facilitator: A comprehensive resource for consultants, facilitators, managers, trainers, and coaches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Seaver, M. S. (2017). *Building and recognizing best companies: 5 ways to develop a high trust workplace culture.* Retrieved from https://bestcompaniesusa.com/trust/

Shwieters, N., & Moritz, B. (2017). 10 principles for leading the next industrial revolution. *Strategy + Business*, 88. Retrieved from https://www.strategy-business.com/article/10-Principles-for-Leading-the-Next-Industrial-Revolution?gko=f73d3

Sloan, P., & Oliver, D. (2013). Building trust in multi-stakeholder partnerships: Critical emotional incidents and practices of engagement. *Organizational Studies, 34*(12), 1835-1868. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613495018

Smith, J., & Cruickshank, D. (2017). Corruption and the erosion of trust. *World Economic Forum*. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/corruption-and-the-erosion-of-trust/

Soloman, R. C., & Flores, F. (2001). *Building trust in business, politics, relationships, and life*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stovall, S., & Baker, J. D. (2010). A concept analysis of connection relative to aging adults. *Journal of Theory Construction & Testing, 14*(2), 52-56.

Tashakkori, A., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). Editorial: Exploring the nature of research questions in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(3), 207-211. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689807302814

Thomas, M. (2009). Is trust important in business? *Words of Motivation for Entrepreneurs*. Retrieved from Entre-Propel.com website: http://www.entre-propel.com/2009/03/11/is-trust-important-in-business/

Thornton, K., & Cherrington, S. (2014). Leadership in professional learning communities. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 39*(3), 94-102.

Timperley, H. (2011). *Realizing the power of professional learning.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Tonissen, J. D. (2015, August 13). The importance of trust: Why school culture matters. *The Intersection*. Retrieved from http://www.hunt-institute.org/resources/2015/08/the-importance-of-trust-why-school-culture-matters/

Trochim, W. M. (2007). *The research methods knowledge base*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/243783609_The_Research_Methods_Knowledge_Base

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). A multidisciplinary analysis of the nature, meaning, and measurement of trust. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(4), 547-593. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543070004547

The Values Institute. (2010). The science of trust. Retrieved from http://www.thevaluesinstitute.org/values-2#science-of-trust

Weisman, M. (2010). *The process of measuring trust*. Santa Ana, CA: The Values Institute.

Weisman, M. (with Jusino, B.). (2016). *Choosing higher ground: Working and living in the values economy.* Santa Ana, CA: Nortia Press.

White, P. C., Harvey, T. R., & Fox, S. L. (2016). *The politically intelligent leader: Dealing with the dilemmas of a high-stakes educational environment* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Xu, M. A., & Storr, G. B. (2012). Learning the concept of researcher as instrument in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 17*(21), 1-18.

Zak, P. J. (2017). The neuroscience of trust. *Harvard Business Review*, *95*(1), 84-90.

Zak, P. J., & Knack, S. (2001). Trust and growth. *The Economic Journal, 111*(470), 295-321. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0297.00609

Zakrzewski, V. (2015). How to build trust in schools. *Greater Good Magazine*. Retrieved from https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_build_trust_in_schools

# APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

# Synthesis Matrix

**Synthesis Matrix for Key Variables**

| Researchers | 21st Century Leadership | Trust leadership | Competence | Consistency | Concern | Candor and honesty | Connection | Principal as leader | Effective teams | Culture | Relationships | Leadership strategies | School reform | Trust | Transformational Leadership |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Altman (2010) | X | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Anderson (2015) | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | X | |
| Anderson & Ackerman (2001) | | | | X | | X | | | | X | X | X | | | X |
| Bass (1990) | | X | X | | | | | X | | | X | | | X | X |
| Battle (2007) | X | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Bennis (2013) | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| Bird, Wang, Watson, & Murray (2012) | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | | | X | |
| Blanchard, Olmstead, & Lawrence (2013) | | | | | | | | | | | X | | X | X | |
| Brewster & Railsback (2003) | | | | | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | X | |
| Brown, Brene (2017) | | X | | | | | X | | | | X | | X | X | |
| Bryk & Schnieder (2002) | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Covey (2006) | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | X | X |
| Crowley (2011) | X | X | X | | X | | | | | | X | X | | X | X |
| Farnsworth (2015) | | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | X | |
| Flores & Soloman (1998) | X | | X | X | | | | X | X | | | X | | X | X |
| Fullan (2010) | X | | X | | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | | X |
| Fullan (2014) | | X | X | X | X | | X | | | | | | | X | |
| George (2015) | | X | | | | | X | | X | X | X | | | X | |
| Gruenert & Whitaker (2015) | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Handford & Leithwood (2013) | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Horsager (2012) | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
| Kouzes & Posner (2010) | | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | X |
| Krasnoff (2015) | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Kratzer (1997) | X | X | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | X |
| Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, &Wahlsrtom (2004) | | X | | | | X | | | X | | | | | | |
| Lencioni (2002) | | | | | | | | X | | X | | X | | | |
| Louis & Wahlstrom (2011) | X | | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | |
| Mandelbaum & Friedman (2011) | X | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | | X |
| Marshall (2018) | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | |
| Mayer, Davis, Schoorman (1995) | | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | X | |
| Mino (2014) | | X | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Ospina, Kersh, & Wart (2012) | | X | | | | X | | | | | | | | X | |
| Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler (2012) | | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Peck (2015) | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, Camerer (1998) | X | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | X |
| Schwahn & Spady (2002) | X | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Schwartz (2002) | | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Thornton & Cherrington (2014) | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | X | |
| Tonissen (2015) | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | |
| Tschannen-Moran (2014) | | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | | X | | X | X | X |
| Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000) | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | X | | | X | |
| Weisman & Jusino (2016) | X | X | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | |
| White, Harvey, Fox (2016) | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | | X | |
| Zak (2017) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX B

## Informed Consent, Survey Prompts, and Survey Instrument

Survey of Principal Behaviors that Develop Trust with Staff

**Introduction: The success of any organization may depend on the trust that is developed between leadership, employees, and other organizational stakeholders. The purpose of this inquiry is to seek your perceptions of the importance of developing trust with staff in five specific domains: competency, consistency, candor, concern, and connection.**

**Completing this survey will take approximately 10 minutes. Please choose to become a part of this important undertaking.**

**It is important to read the following consent information carefully and click the agree box to continue. The survey will not open until you agree.**

* 1. INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMATION ABOUT: Developing Principal Trust with Staff

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Cynthia Smith-Ough

THE FOLLOWING WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE ELECTRONIC SURVEY:
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Cynthia Smith-Ough, a doctoral student from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of this explanatory mixed method case study is to identify and describe how principals across several education levels and geographic areas establish trust with staff using the five domains of connection, concern, candor, competence, and consistency. In addition, it is the purpose of this research to determine principals' perceived degree of importance for the five domains of consistency, competence, candor, concern, and connection for building trust.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this electronic survey, you can withdraw at any time.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. The survey questions will pertain to your perceptions regarding the impact of the specific domains on developing trust with your staff.

Each participant will use a three digit code for identification purposes. The researcher will keep the identifying codes safe-guarded in a locked file drawer to which the researcher will have sole access. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be

changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher. I understand that I may refuse to participate in or I may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact Cynthia Ought-Smith at csmithou@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at (619) 495-8510; or Dr. Doug DeVore, Advisor, at ddevore@brandman.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button indicates that you have read the informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate.

If you do not wish to participate in this electronic survey, you may decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

The survey will not open for responses unless you agree to participate.

- ○ AGREE: I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and "Bill of Rights." I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in the study.
- ○ DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey

Trust Survey

**Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research on developing trust with your school site staff. This study is focused on the following five domains for establishing trust:**

**Competence - how effective is the organization in its ability to accomplish what it's designed to do**

**Concern - how much does the organization show empathy or care for its employees**

**Connection - how do your values or goals align with the organization, the people and their behavior behind it**

**Consistency - how well is the organization's ability to perform consistently and dependability over the long term**

**Candor - how transparent is the organization communicating or making information available to employees**

**It is best to not 'overthink' the statements and respond with your first perceptual thought. It is anticipated you can complete this survey in approximately 10 minutes. After you complete and submit the survey the researcher will contact you to schedule an interview to explore your thoughts on how to establish trust with staff.**

**Directions: Using the 6 point scale below please rate your perceived importance for each of the following statements statements for you to build and maintain trust with your school site staff.**

**1 = Strongly Disagree**

**2 = Disagree**

**3 = Disagree Somewhat**

**4 = Agree Somewhat**

**5 = Agree**

**6 = Strongly Agree**

* 2. **Consistency-** How well is the organization's ability to perform consistently and dependably over the long term.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I behave in a manner consistent with my role and responsibilities. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Overall, the school operates efficiently. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I create an environment where staff have the opportunity to accomplish their goals and responsibilities every day. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I let staff know what is expected from them. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I make commitments to staff I can keep. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I hold myself and staff accountable for actions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

* 3. **Competence -** How effective is the organization in its ability to accomplish what it's designed to do.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I focus the work of staff on the quality of services the district provides to students, other staff, families, and community. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I work with the staff to achieve the school's vision. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I promote the capability of my staff members. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I create opportunities for staff to learn and grow. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I promote collaborative decision making with staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I oversee the strategic actions for staff at my site. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

* 4. **Candor -** How transparent is the organization communicating or making information available to employees.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I engage in open communication with all staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I share openly with staff when things are going wrong. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I engage staff in discussions about the direction and vision for our school. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I create a safe environment where staff feel free to voice differences of opinion. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am open, authentic and straightforward with all staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I take issues head on, even the "undiscussables." | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

* 5. **Concern -** How much does the organization show empathy or care for its employees.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I take time to meet personally with each staff member to understand their concerns. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I demonstrate appropriate work and life balance | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am a good listener. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I always treat staff positively and with respect. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am patient with the questions and issues of interest to staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I demonstrate respect and concern for each staff member. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

* 6. **Connection -** How do your values or goals align with the organization, the people and their behavior behind it.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am accepting and receptive to the ideas and opinions of all staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am truthful, and frank in all interpersonal communications with staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I display behavior that is aligned with the values and beliefs of our school site vision. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I give voice to the site vision and shared values. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I actively engage staff in recognition and celebrations of site successes. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I listen carefully to understand and clarify issues. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

APPENDIX C

## Interview Protocol

"My name is Cynthia Smith-Ough, and I am an elementary school principal in San Diego County. I'm a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I'm a part of a team conducting research to determine what strategies principals use to build trust with their site staff. We are seeking to better understand what is it that you do to build trust with your school staff.

I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview on trust and agreeing to our follow up electronic survey. The information you give, along with the others, hopefully will provide a clear picture of the thoughts and strategies that principals use to build trust with their site staff.

The questions I will be asking are the same for everyone participating in the study. The reason for this is try to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating principals will be conducted pretty much in the same manner.

**Informed Consent**

I would like to remind you any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). For ease of our discussion and accuracy I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent sent to you via email. I will have the recording transcribed to a Word document and will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas. The digital recording will be erased.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document? If so, would you be so kind as to sign the hard copy of the IRB requirements for me to collect.

We have scheduled an hour for the interview. At any point during the interview you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started, and thanks so much for your time.

1. Connection is about creating positive relationships & rapport with others. How have you developed positive relationships and rapport with staff?

2. In what ways have you developed shared values with staff?

**Prompt**: How do you see the establishment of shared values as contributing to trust with staff?

3. Research shows that leaders develop trust when they care for their employees' well-being. Tell me about some of the ways that you show you care for your staff and their wellbeing.

4. What are some of the ways you create a collaborative work environment for your staff?

**Prompt:** Can you provide some examples of how you make teams feel safe to dialogue in a collaborative environment?
**Prompt:** How do you manage failures among staff in the school?

5. Can you provide an example of a challenging situation when your leadership was dependable and steadfast and developed trust with and between staff ?

**Prompt:** How do you ensure that your message to staff is consistent and true during a time of crisis?

6. The leaders who communicate openly and honestly tend to build trust with their employees. Please share with me some ways that have worked for you as the leader of your site to communicate openly and honestly with the staff.

**Probe**: Can you describe a time when you perceive your communication with staff may have contributed to developing trust?

7. Two characteristics for a transparent leader are accessibility and being open to feedback. Please share some examples of how you demonstrate accessibility and openness to feedback.

**Probe:** How would you describe your feedback strategies for staff? Can you give me some examples?

8. The leaders who demonstrate competence by fulfilling their role as expected establish credibility and develop trust with their staff. Can you describe a time in which you feel your competence as a leader may have contributed to developing trust?

**Probe:** Please share with me some examples in which you feel you established your credibility within your role as the principal.

9. Competent leaders value the expertise of others and invite participation of team members to solve problems through shared decision-making. Please share with me

some ways that have worked for you as the leader of your site to invite participation in decision-making with your staff ?

**Probe:** Can you describe a time when you perceive your staff's participation in decision-making may have contributed to developing trust?

10. What are some of the ways that you model leadership that is consistent?

**Prompt:** How do you establish expectations that help you to lead the staff in a way that is dependable?

**"Thank you very much for your time. If you like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings."**

**Possible Probes for any of the items:**

1. "Would you expand upon that a bit?"
2. "Do you have more to add?"
3. "What did you mean by ……."
4. "Why do think that was the case?"
5. "Could you please tell me more about…. "
6. "Can you give me an example of ….."
7. "How did you feel about that?"

APPENDIX D

**NIH Certification**

**Certificate of Completion**

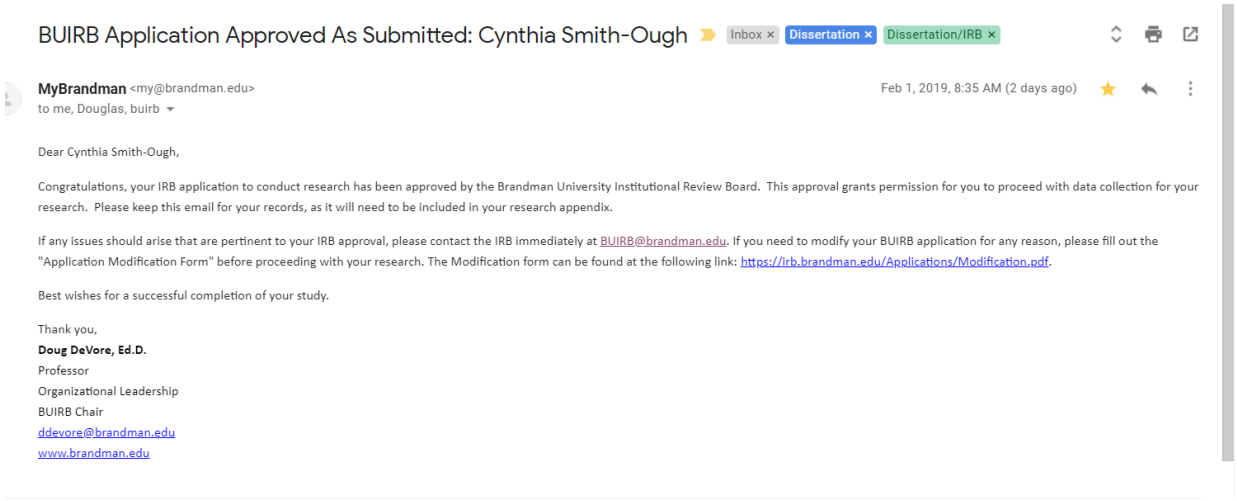
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Cynthia Smith-Ough** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 05/21/2017.

Certification Number: 2399611.

APPENDIX E

# BUIRB Approval



BUIRB Application Approved As Submitted: Cynthia Smith-Ough

Inbox × Dissertation × Dissertation/IRB ×

**MyBrandman** <my@brandman.edu>
to me, Douglas, buirb

Feb 1, 2019, 8:35 AM (2 days ago)

Dear Cynthia Smith-Ough,

Congratulations, your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. This approval grants permission for you to proceed with data collection for your research. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If any issues should arise that are pertinent to your IRB approval, please contact the IRB immediately at BUIRB@brandman.edu. If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at the following link: https://irb.brandman.edu/Applications/Modification.pdf.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank you,
**Doug DeVore, Ed.D.**
Professor
Organizational Leadership
BUIRB Chair
ddevore@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu