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Teacher Perceptions of Leadership and Student Growth in Reading and Mathematics in Northeast Tennessee

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Teacher Perceptions of Leadership and Student Growth in Reading and Mathematics in Northeast Tennessee

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading and mathematics for elementary and middle schools in nine school systems located in northeast Tennessee during the 2012-2013 academic year. Specifically, this study was an analysis of the leadership focuses of trust and respect, collaboration, shared leadership, data use and analysis. All data were collected through public online databases. Teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus were gathered from the Tennessee Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey and data on student growth in reading and mathematics was collected from Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). The analysis of data was constructed from 75 schools in nine school districts located in northeast Tennessee that educate students in any grade spans ranging from fourth to eighth grades.

The research revealed that the relationship between teacher perception of administrator leadership focus in the areas of trust and respect, shared leadership, and data use and analysis and

student growth in both reading and mathematics were not statically significant. Additionally, The results of the correlations for teacher perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading and mathematics yielded different results. There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading. However, there was a significant relationship between teacher's perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, who has been supportive of me throughout my numerous educational journeys. Even though grit and determination were essential characteristics needed in order to complete this degree, a supportive and loving family made the entire process manageable and instilled within me a passion that fueled my desire for completion. The encouragement and support of my family has truly made it possible for me to live out the phrase coined by Steve Gilliland, "Enjoy the ride."

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Secondly, I would like to thank my two wonderful daughters Jenna and Natalie. I am grateful that I was able to start and finish this doctoral journey before you reached an age where you will be able to remember the nights and weekends that I spent working on my dissertation and away from you. You have been blessed with a mother that spent many nights and weekends being a single parent as she insured that I had ample time to complete my doctoral program. As you get older, I hope that you discover the value of education and live a life that seeks to constantly learn new things.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCITON

School administrators are a vitally important component of the field of education. Spring (2011) asserts that administrators report that their greatest struggles are the lack of funding for schools and the poverty and welfare problems that students deal with daily. "School administrators emphasize the welfare function of government over other panaceas for improving American schools, particularly for reducing the achievement gap between high-income and low-income students" (p. 36). Even with the noted struggles, building level administrators have a tremendous impact on student learning. In fact, "School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006, p. 3). However, Schoho and Barnett (2010) report new principals do not foresee themselves staying in their role as a school administrator past 10 years.

Kersten and Israel (2005) surveyed 63 school administrators in Illinois concerning their current teacher evaluation methods. Their findings support the research that principals have an influence on student achievement (Wallace Perspective, 2006). "While noting the impediments, especially time, school administrators believe that, through increased communication opportunities, data-driven targeted staff development, peer coaching and mentoring, as well as principal demonstration of teaching, they can improve instruction in the classroom" (Kersten & Israel, 2005, p. 62). Influencing student achievement can require administrators to lead the dissemination of best teaching practices to teachers throughout the building. Administrators investing in coaching and modeling teaching practices can impact teacher instruction. For

example, principal leadership has been associated with change in teacher instruction in mathematics and literacy (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010).

The Tennessee Department of Education introduced a new evaluation system for teachers and administrators in during the 2011 – 2012 school year. The implementation of the new evaluation system was part of Tennessee's Race to the Top (RTTT) federal grant application process. Tennessee's evaluation model is designed to help build educator capacity and improve teaching and leadership skills (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010). Fullan (2014) emphasizes the importance of building capacity on the front end, rather than simply demanding accountability on the back end. Tennessee's evaluation system epitomizes Fullan's recommendations by striving to increase capacity of educators and administrators with the end goal of reaching the state's accountability targets of increased student achievement.

Reeves (2011) stresses that effective school leadership encompasses a variety of leadership skills and behaviors. Reeves elaborates on the need for school administrators to capitalize on the leadership factors that have the greatest influence an impact on student a achievement. Tennessee's Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey provides school leaders feedback from licensed educators within their school (Haslam & Huffman, 2013). Past research using the TELL Survey found no significant difference between school culture and the effectiveness of the school (Irvin, 2013). However, research supports that increasing school administrator's knowledge and understanding of effective leadership practices can lead to increased student performance. Marzano, Walters, and MucNulty (2005) share that school leaders impact teaching which in turns impacts student learning. Therefore, increasing school administrator effectiveness can result in increased student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Educational leadership programs have been portrayed in mostly negative terms in their ability to prepare administrators for the demands of being an educational leader (Greenlee, Bruner, & Hill, 2009). Shifting the focus from negative terms to positive expressions will require evidence of the impact educators have on student academic growth. McCollum and Kajs (2009) declare that the key attributes that principals possess and develop have an impact on their work. Identifying the attributes that principals of effective schools exhibit will assist acting administrators and school leadership prep programs ensure that schools have quality leaders. As the demands of educational leaders change, leaders must adapt and school leadership programs need to modify their courses to prepare future administrators. School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2006). Evaluating administrators of schools with high student academic growth will help bring positive attention to education and provide a springboard for others' success.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading and mathematics for elementary and middle schools in nine school systems located in northeast Tennessee during the 2012-2013 academic year. For the purpose of this study, teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus will generally be defined by the indicators on the Tennessee Teacher, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey. Student reading and mathematics growth will generally be defined as the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) mean gain for fourth through eighth grades.

Research Questions

The focus of this quantitative study was to determine if significant correlations exist between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading arts and mathematics. The research questions listed below guided this research study.

1. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading?
2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading?
4. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics?
5. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading?
6. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and student growth in mathematics?
7. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading?

8. Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics?

Significance of the Study

School administrators are charged with being educational leaders and leading school toward an increase in student achievement and academic gains. This study examined schools in northeast Tennessee and the relationships between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus from the TELL Survey and student TVAAS academic gains in mathematics and reading. The results from this study can potentially be beneficial to administrators as they seek to find which leadership characteristics have the most impact on student achievement. Additionally, district leaders might use this data in providing professional learning opportunities for their school administrators in researched based leadership practices. Finally, this study could provide higher education institutions with useful information of leadership strategies that are positively impacting student performance. Colleges and universities can potentially use this information while creating, planning, and facilitating graduate level coursework for aspiring school administrators.

Definition of Terms

The following terms appear throughout this study and have been defined in order to establish a common and consistent understanding of the frequently used terms.

1. Academic growth: Academic growth is measured by value-added analysis that measures the impact that teacher, schools', and districts' have on student academic achievement overtime (Kennedy, Peters, & Thomas, 2010).
2. Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS): TVAAS is an extensive database of longitudinal student data that is linked to teachers, schools, and districts that impacted the education of individual students. TVAAS is used to determine the effectiveness of teachers, schools, and districts in regards to student annual academic growth (Sanders & Horn, 1998).
3. Collaboration: "A systematic process in which teachers work together interdependently in order to impact their classroom practice in ways that will lead to better results for their students, for their team, and for their school" (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, p. 12).
4. Shared leadership: Shared leadership is a result of an officially selected leader sharing the leadership roles and responsibilities with members of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).
5. Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey: The TELL Survey is a teacher perception survey generated by the New Teacher Center (Validity and Reliability Report, 2013).

Limitations and Delimitations

The population for this study was delimited to 75 schools in nine school districts located in northeast Tennessee that educate students in any grade spans ranging from fourth to eighth

grades. Given the population of this study, the results should not be used to make generalizations of teachers or administrators in other school districts. The TELL Survey was offered to all licensed educators and administrators in Tennessee. Teacher and administrator total years of experience and length of tenure within the current school setting were not factors in the eligibility requirements for completing the survey. In order to generate TELL Survey results for each school, at least a 50% survey completion rate must have been reached along with a minimum of five teachers successfully completing the survey. Also, school size was not a factor in the analysis of the data. TVAAS data is calculated based on student completion of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) standardized tests. Student performance on standardized tests can be impacted by factors outside the school setting and can potentially negatively affect TVAAS gains.

Overview of the Study

This study is segmented into five chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction, purpose statement, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations and delimitations, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature that relates to this study including the following topics: background, Tennessee's Instructional Leadership Standards, school leadership, teacher perception of administrators, vision for continuous improvement, shared leadership, trust and respect, environment, collaboration, data use and analysis, and the conclusion. Chapter 3 provides an outline of the research methodology with specific details around the research questions and null hypothesis, instrumentation, population, data collection, data analysis, and a summary of the methodology. Chapter 4 will present the analysis of data for each research question. Chapter 5 provides the summary of

findings for each research question, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

The Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation in January 2010 that required student achievement data and measures to be factored into teacher and administrator evaluations (Piro, Wiemers, & Shutt, 2011). As written in Tennessee's Race to the Top application, 50% of teacher and principal evaluations would be based on student achievement. Additionally, Tennessee's Race to the Top application requires that the annual evaluation of administrators and teachers to be used to make personnel decisions such as: promotions, retentions, tenure, and compensation (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010). In opposition, critics claim that the value-added model for assigning teacher and administrator effectiveness is flawed and uncertain (Baker, Oluwole, & Green, 2013). Rewarding educators for student performance and growth, as defined by Tennessee's Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), is a fiercely debated topic (Alicias, 2005; Bracey, 2004; Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

With 50 percent of the administrator's evaluation being comprised of student achievement data – qualitative data, the remaining 50 percent of the evaluation is based on the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) Administrator Evaluation Rubric – qualitative data. Tennessee's Administrator Evaluation Rubric was implemented in the 2011-2012 school year (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). During the 2013-2014 school year the new Administrator Evaluation Rubric pilot was conducted with six school districts participating. According to Tennessee Educator Accelerator Model (2013b), the purpose of the Administrator Evaluation is, "to provide high quality feedback that deepens skills and improves leader

performance, leading to increased teacher effectiveness and student learning." Tennessee's new Administrator Evaluation Rubric was implemented statewide during the 2014-2015 school year.

Realizing that school administrators are a vital component of success in schools, it is important to understand how principals can best support improvement. "Educational leadership influences instructional practices, which changes student performance" (Supovitz et al., 2010, p. 45). Tennessee's Administrator Rubric incorporates the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards that are in place to guide principals as effective educational leaders.

Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS)

"The Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards establish the structural framework of the Administrator Evaluation Rubric by defining a set of indicators and detailed descriptors that provide a clear set of expectations to schools and districts" (Tennessee Educator Accelerator Model, 2013, p. 2). Tennessee's Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) were modified in 2013 and thus the new Administrator Evaluation Rubric has been updated to reflect changes that were made with in the TILS. The TILS is comprised of four standards that identify fundamental performance indicators of ethical and effective instructional leaders. The four newly modified TILS standards are:

- Standard A: Instructional Leadership for Continuous Improvement,
- Standard B: Culture for Teaching and Learning,
- Standard C: Professional Learning and Growth, and
- Standard D: Resource Management (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2013).

Additionally, the TILS are grounded in the belief that instructional leaders need to be both ethical and effective. "Attributes such as honesty, respect, sound judgment, commitment,

fairness, compassion, work ethic, and a genuine belief that all children can learn and grow, contribute to the foundation of ethical behavior connected to leadership" (p. 1).

Teacher Perception of Administrators

Numerous individuals have researched teacher perceptions of administrators (Ozel et al., 2007; Southworth, 2004; Williams, 2010). Specifically, researchers have examined teacher perception of administrators from specific groups of teachers such as, male and female teachers, special education teachers, and even lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) teachers (Nogay & Beebe, 2008; Otto & Arnold, 2005; Wright, 2010). Additionally, Oyinlade and Gellhaus (2005) studied teacher perception of administrators and schools for students with visual impairments. Understanding past research on teacher perceptions of administrators establishes a foundation for the importance of continued research in increasing the effectiveness of school leaders.

Teachers and administrators in Portugal shared similar responses in a survey around the effectiveness of school administration (Pashiardis, Costa, Antonio, & Ventura, 2005). However, teachers and administers do no always agree on the attributes of school leaders. Bird, Wang, Watson, and Murray's 2012 research of teacher and principals' perception of authentic leadership revealed that teacher responses to questions around authentic leadership proved more stable than the principal self-reported responses to questions around authentic leadership. Furthermore, a strong relationship existed between the teacher rating of their pprincipal authentic leadership and the trust they had in their principal and their engagement in school events.

Secondary teachers in Botswana responded that school administrators are not adequately fulfilling their responsibilities as instructional leaders (Isaiah & Isaiah 2014). The presences of

school leader in classrooms and other areas of the school building can affect teacher perception of administrators. Administrators who are seen on consistent bases throughout the school and actively join classrooms are perceived by teachers to exhibit qualities of transformational leadership (Hauserman, Ivankova, & Stick, 2013). The role of the school administrator has evolved from a building manager to an instructional leader. Ozel et al. (2007) surveyed 121 teachers, from Kutahya Province, Turkey, in regards to their perception of the school leader as a manger and school leader. The survey revealed that over 70% of teachers surveyed believe that their school leaders are managers but not educational leaders.

Williams (2010) compared teacher perception of administrators in high schools across Tennessee that were nominees of the National Secondary School Recognition Program and high schools in Tennessee that were not recognized as potential nominees for this prestigious program. A total of 824 teachers completed the Audit of Principal Effectiveness Survey that allowed teachers to rate their administrators on 80 different questions. Williams determined that principals of schools nominated for the National Secondary School Recognition Program focused more on encouraging and stimulating relationships between school and stakeholders in the community and surrounding areas.

Shared leadership has been attributed to assisting organizations in reaching better results (Dennis & Meola, 2009). According to Southworth (2004), shared leadership can help create an atmosphere of teamwork in elementary schools – regardless of the number of faculty and students. Yet, Leech and Fullen (2008) conducted research in a large urban school district to determine the perception of secondary school teachers of their administrators. Through a response of 646 teachers, Leech and Fullen reported, “There was very little relationship between

the leadership behaviors of the principal and the level of shared decision making in schools" (p. 638).

Williams (2009) conducted a Pearson correlation to determine if a significant relationship existed between student scores and teacher perception of administrators. Williams used Georgia's Criterion-Referenced Competency (CRCT) student scores and a large urban school district's internally created teacher perception instrument that measured pprincipal leadership competency. Williams determined, "Leadership behaviors of the principals as perceived by teachers are not aligned with student achievement" (p. 27). However, school leaders that focus on inspiring educators through the school's vision can help transform struggling schools (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009).

Traditional Roles of Administrators

The job responsibilities of school administrators have evolved over the past two decades (Ediger, 2014). The past objectives of the school principal were maintaining order and discipline and managing school personnel. Lynch (2012) states, "Historically, principals served as disciplinarians and the teacher boss" (p. 40). The passage and implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) required greater emphasis of the administrator responsibility as an instructional leader focused on increasing student achievement. This section of the literature review examines the traditional roles of administrators in the context of over arching responsibilities of school leadership, creating a vision for continuous improvement, and establishing a positive school culture.

School Leadership

Defining leadership within the field of education is often a fiercely debated topic. Hoy and Miskel (2008) examined research on educational leadership from numerous angles including the trait approach of leadership or the belief that leadership skills are inherited. Specifically, Hoy and Miskel categorize leadership traits and skills into three categories: personality traits, motivation traits, and skills. Leadership can also be viewed as a trait or skill possessed by an individual or a group of individuals. Northouse (2013) defines leadership for one single individual who "influences a group of others to accomplish common goals" (p. 6). The reoccurring conversation in education is between administrators serving in managerial roles or leadership roles. Blakesley's (2011) ethnographic research found that the administrators interviewed felt they were restricted to serving as managers even though stakeholders referred to them as educational leaders.

The characteristics of educational leaders have been viewed from multiple perspectives and research supports that certain characteristics are essential for effective school leaders. Personal qualities of school leaders in high achieving schools included positive attitudes that were contagious, motivating others through leading by example, and an emphasis on relationships (Dinham, 2007). Similarly, Russell's (2008) interviews of administrators in K-12 and higher education found that a relationship existed between enthusiasm and engagement and collaborative leadership style and strong work ethic. After the importance of leadership characteristics have been established, the wisdom of the leader cannot not be diminished.

A total of 417 Senior Assistants were randomly selected from principals of excellent secondary schools in Malaysia. Their survey results showed that principals of excellent schools in Malaysia exhibit leadership wisdom that is "very highly and effectively" (Ahmad, Salleh,

Awang, & Mohamad, 2013). Another key lever of leadership is building and maintaining relationships with both faculty and students. Relationships are the foundation on which all other characteristics and traits are received and respected. Maxwell (2010) challenges, "You've go to love your people more than your position" (p. 288). Improving the relationship between administrators and teachers can yield positive returns. Teachers who felt their principals engaged them in emotional connections reported that they were inspired to improve their teaching skills (Cherkowski, 2012).

Multiple authors have written about the need for positive student-teacher relationships (Goodwin 2011; Stronge, 2002). "The relationships that teachers build with students form the single strongest access to students goals, socialization, motivation, and academic performance" (Jensen, 2009, p. 20). However, relationships with students should not stop with teachers but should be extended to the administrators as well. Damiani's (2014) research emphasizes that principals who were better at establishing student experiences were effective communicators and had meaningful relationships with students. Administrators must strive to ensure that relationships between administration and faculty and also between administration and students are in good standing each and every day.

With the dynamics of educational leadership continually changing, colleges and universities are trying to adapt their student selection process and course offerings to match the requirements for today's leaders. McCollum and Kajs (2009) confirmed that the 2 x 2 goal orientation adapted instrument is a viable tool to use with administrator candidates to determine their disposition toward meeting the expectations of school leaders. After colleges and universities accept future administrator candidates, program offerings are vitally important. The research completed by Greenlee et al. (2009) stresses the importance of field experience and

allowing aspiring administrators the opportunity to make connections between theory and practice.

Improving educational leadership is not a task for higher education to address alone. School level administrators need to strive toward a mindset of continuous self-improvement. Administrators in Turkey who ensured their school's vision was shared with the community were found to demonstrate improvements in other areas of their instructional leadership competencies as well (Gulcan, 2012). The demands of educational leaders can be extremely tiring and taxing. Simply trying to implement every initiative and help every teacher improve is a daunting task – especially for a new administrator. Fortunately, the demands of the job seem to ease as experience is gained. A statistically significant correlation was found between demand rating and years of experience, more experience correlated with lower demand ratings (Drummond & Halsey, 2013).

Educational leadership consists of numerous features and is in constant state of evolution. Higher education continues adjusting to the demands and needs of educational leaders, while at the same time school leaders are trying to keep abreast of changes in initiatives and leadership responsibilities. The skills and characteristics of educational leaders can impact the performance of individual students and the school as a whole. Educational leaders must remain focused on improving their leadership competencies and ensure that relationships with all stakeholders are in good rapport. After all, school leadership falls second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2006).

Vision for Continuous Improvement

Dinham (2007) examined 50 high achieving schools and found that clear communication of shared expectations were evident in creating a culture of success. Gulcan (2012) emphasizes administrators who ensured the school vision is shared with the school community help make their instructional leadership competencies stronger for the administrator. Finnigan and Stewart (2009) focused on 10 schools in Chicago for two years that were identified as schools on probation because of the regression of student achievement results. Through in-depth interviews with teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders, Finnigan and Stewart found that the 2 schools that quickly lost probationary status had administrators who clearly communicated the schools vision, targets, and expectations. The researches further stress the need for district level administrators sharing the success with the remaining schools that are at risk.

Administrators who are leading high-performing schools provide an environment that is grounded in the continuous improvement of programs, processes, and performances (Ash, Hodge, & Connell, 2013). The 2013 TEAM Administrator Evaluation Rubric describes the administrator with a vision as one that, "Collaborates with stakeholders to establish and communicate a clear, compelling vision for continuous improvement" (p. 4). Multiple researchers have studied the importance of effectively communicating an organization's vision with employees and stakeholders (Kohles, 2001; Lahti, 2003; Wiedower, 2002). However, the design of the compelling vision and mission does not need to be exclusively controlled by the leader (Reeves, 2011). School administrators should establish a leadership team that is dedicated to creating a school vision that guides the school toward improvement (Lange, Range, & Welsh, 2012). Sagna (2010) found a significant positive relationship between providing a vision or inspiration and holding high performance expectations.

Continuous improvement with high expectations is a difficult concept to achieve and can be aided by utilizing shared or distributed leadership. Baloglu (2012) determined that there was a positive correlation between Value Based Leadership and Distributed Leadership. He further claims,

> Value-oriented leaders try to ensure the entirety of members with as values same as friendship, cooperation, solidarity, love, respect and tolerance. As to distributed leadership, it complements each other in the knowledge, skills, or is created by bringing together the expertise focuses on multiple leadership structures. In this sense, both types of leadership is sharing a common point (p. 1377).

Saban and Wolfe (2009) collected data from principals who had been mentored and those who had not been mentored. Their findings revealed that principals who had been mentored showed greater frequency in the practice of inspiring a shared vision. Furthermore, Saban and Wofle determined that a key component of establishing an inspiring shared vision is relationships. However, Foster (2006), reports that the first step of principals is to provide organizational vision, which then changes personal and professional relationships that had previously been formed.

The formation of relationships plays an important role in establishing a vision and the benefits and rewards of an inspiring vision can have a positive impact on the overall organization. In research conducted by Korkmaz (2006), teachers identified a connection between the health of an organization and a strong school vision. With the health of an organization associated to a robust vision, an increased focus on spreading and promoting the vision is essential. The vision of continuous improvement must be communicated so that all stakeholders can receive the message and understand. If the message is lacking content or

consistency, the message will not be deemed sufficient (Ärlestig, 2007). Additionally, Lane-Schmitz (2012) discovered that, "Leaders who learn how to create and communicate an effective vision have the potential to increase employee efficiency and therefore increase the productivity of the organization" (p. 71).

Professional learning communities provide an avenue for learning and collaboration (Stoll & Louis, 2007). Professional learning communities can be organized in many different configurations, with each structure having its own strengths and weaknesses (Caine & Caine, 2010). In 2011, Sanzo, Sherman, and Clayton's qualitative research found that administrators reported professional learning communities as a conduit for promoting the shared vision of their schools. However, recognizing and preparing for turnover in school administration is imperative. In Texas, the average tenure of newly hired school administrators from 1996 – 2008 was only 4.51 years (Fuller & Young, 2009). Garchinsky (2009) examined the succession of leadership and the continuity of a school's vision and culture. As a new principal begins to develop the school's vision, involving the entire faculty is an important step in the process. "The vision should not exhaustively be outlined and planned by the principal, lest there be no buy-in from the stakeholders" (p. 220).

Environment

The school administrator is the "chief executive in charge of culture building" (McEwan, 2003, p. 88). The attitude, behavior, and characteristics of the school principal establish the standard for others to follow. Hoy and Miskel (2008) contend that in order for leaders to be effective, they must be able to balance a variety of leadership behaviors that meet the needs of the current environment.

> The principal is a central, though not solitary, agent in establishing a culture in which a learning community might grow and flourish, ensuring conditions in which trust and respect are high, teachers are empowered to share in leadership, media are established for the flow of feedback, incentive and reward initiatives are in place, and a supportive and caring environment is established for all individuals within the community (Cherkowski, 2012, p 60).

Similarly, Fullan (2014) discusses the belief that principals cannot single handedly change school culture. Fullan states, "A wrong culture will absorb well-meaning individuals faster than we can produce them" (p. 33). In order for school administrators to effectively change culture, they will have to create a team of individuals focused on improving the school's environment that has been shaped by the staff, students, parents, and community.

In his research on how schools get moving and keep moving, Dinham (2007) noticed successful leaders evidenced responsiveness by discovering ways for all faculty members to experience success and recognition. Rewarding employees provides encouragement against burnout and fatigue while motivating them to continue persevering (Payne, 2005). Nonetheless, Cadwell (2004) warns that the value of rewards can be significantly diminished if rewards are given to employees that do not have merit worthy of receiving honors. The use of extrinsic rewards can have a negative impact on performance. Pink (2009) thoroughly examines Sawyer Effect and the adverse effects that contingent rewards can have on long term performance. Building level administrators must ensure that recognitions and celebrations do not turn into a system or rewards. Celebration and recognition of school faculty needs to protect the benefits on intrinsic motivation – the simple act of performing the task because the task is interesting and motivating to the person (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

Burns and Martin (2010) used a survey to examine respect within both effective and non-effective schools. Faculty from effective schools responded with higher scores regarding the characteristic of respect than faculty from less effective schools. Furthermore, their research showed that leadership's respect was beneficial for creating successful organizations and gender of the leader was not a major factor. Thus, respect as a leadership characteristic is not a gender specific effective characteristic. In 2003 Cotton released her list of 25 behaviors that principals display that directly affect student achievement. Cotton's research, based on a meta-analysis, determined that a positive and supportive climate is essential for an administrator to establish and maintain.

Woods (2007) conducted a qualitative research of student perceptions of a supportive learning environment. Students interviewed were part of an alternative high school and were deemed to be at-risk high school students. He found that at-risk students need to know that their adult educators care and support them in a safe learning environment.

> As such, with sense of belonging or community being such an important element of a supportive caring learning environment, the principal has a primary responsibility to lead the entire school in the engagement of activities that harbor and promote fairness, respect, support, and other caring attributes that develop and sustain an environment that is congruent with behavior that promote positive student learning experiences (p. 106).

Schools that maintain safe and respectful school environments had principals who became advocates of respect for all students (Wessler, 2003). Cooperative learning, cohesion, respect, and mutual trust promote a positive school climate for faculty and students (Thapa, Cohen, Higgins-D'Alessandro, & Guffey, 2012).

Building leadership capacity requires focused learning in a community type atmosphere (Lamber 2006). DuFour (2004) stresses the need for schools to create a culture of collaboration that focuses on specific results of student learning. Hughes and Kritsonis (2006) affirm, "Students learn when teachers learn together and share with one another" (p. 8). However, before teachers can work and grow together, everyone must exhibit an attitude of respect (Hoeer, 2005). The pprincipal first task in creating a collaborative environment is ensuring that mutual respect is present between faculty members involved in the sharing of best practices. Stated another way, an important responsibility of an effective leader is to establish a positive atmosphere (Whitaker, 2012).

Key Practices of Effective School Leaders

Increasing leaderships' impact on an organization's success has been studied and examined by numerous authors (Covey, 2008; Northouse, 2012; Reeves, 2011). Furthermore, Maxwell (2007) established his "21 irrefutable laws of leadership" which he claims help leaders be more effective in leading followers, if the leader respects the defined leadership laws. Narrowing the literature down to leadership within the context of education, a plethora of authors have published works on traits of effective principals (Fullan, 2014; McEwan, 2003; Robinson, 2011). Similar to Maxwell's (2007) "21 irrefutable laws of leadership," Marzano et al. (2005) established "The 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader:"

1. Affirmation
2. Change Agent
3. Contingent Rewards
4. Communication
5. Culture
6. Discipline
7. Flexibility
8. Focus

9. Ideas/Beliefs
10. Input
11. Intellectual Stimulation
12. Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
13. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
14. Monitoring/Evaluating
15. Optimizer
16. Order
17. Outreach
18. Relationships
19. Resources
20. Situational Awareness
21. Visibility (p. 42-43)

The following section of the literature review centers on the four areas of leadership focus that this study examines: trust and respect, collaboration, shared leadership, and data use and analysis. Figure 1 below outlines the proposed key practices of effective school leadership.

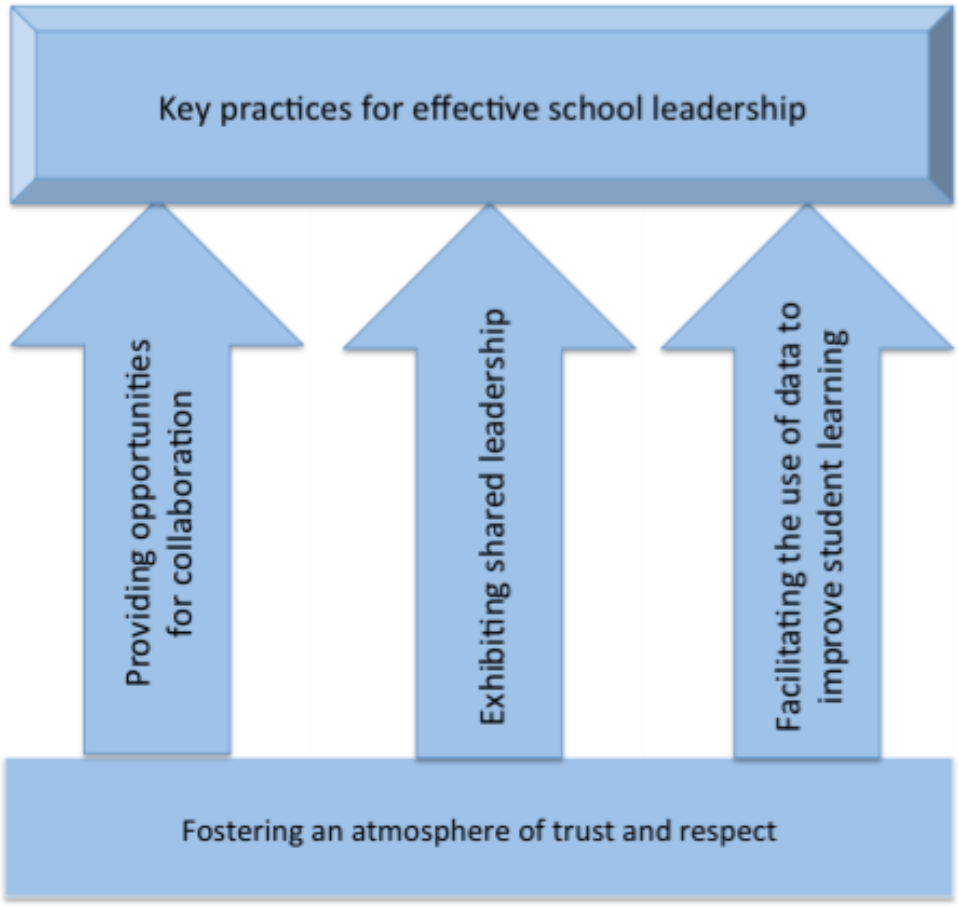

Figure 1. Proposed Key Practices of Effective School Leadership

Trust and Respect

Environment on the TEAM Administrator Evaluation Rubric (2013b) characterizes an administrator as one who, "Fosters a safe, respectful, and orderly learning environment for all" (p. 9). Northouse (2012) states that leaders who demonstrate respect are those who listen empathically to subordinates and allow opposing viewpoints to be shared. "Leaders who genuinely win the respect of their staff are those who never miss an opportunity to demonstrate their respect for others" (Knight, 2011, p. 51). Additionally, Clemens, Milsom, and Cashwell, (2009) report that mutual respect is fundamental in order for faculty to engage in leadership roles.

Creating an environment of trust and respect is essential for effective leadership. Orozco and Allison (2008) assert that establishing shared governance in an organization leads to an environment of respect and trust. In a survey of 2,355 teachers in 80 middle school, Tschannen-Morgan (2009) determined that trust had a significant positive influence on teacher professionalism. "Teachers demonstrate greater professionalism where leaders demonstrate a professional orientation and where greater trust is evident throughout the organization" (p. 239). Tschannen-Morgan concluded that faculty trust in the principal equated to better relationships among other adults within the building. While relationships are vital under any leadership, female principals have consistently reported placing a greater importance on building and preserving relationships (Price, 2012). Research conducted by Leithwood, Patten, and Jantizi (2010) also found that leadership is significantly related to teacher trust in other individuals within a school building.

While trust may be an important factor in any school setting, schools identified as needing improvement can actually benefit from an intense focus on increasing the level of trust

within the building. In a comparison of schools labeled for "program improvement" and schools labeled "non-program improvement," Daly (2009) found that trust is a critical element in the modern educational venue. "It appears that schools labeled *program improvement* can be considered potential turbulent environments that may benefit from drawing on the resources that trust provides" (p. 205).

Cosner (2009) interviewed 11 school administrators in Wisconsin that were deemed to be experts in the development of organizational capacity. Through his interviews with each principal, Cosner reported that administrators frequently mentioned trust as an important element of their efforts to improve schools. Likewise, 10 out of the 11 principals interviewed by Cosner described their emphasis on trust-building among faculty members in order to address building level transformation efforts. An emphasis on norms that had been established and enforcement of the norms helped foster a culture that embraced collegial trust in the school. In a survey of 156 teachers and 22 administrators, Bird, Wang, Watson, and Murray (2009) found that teachers reporting of trust and engagement are significantly related to their ratings of principals' authentic leadership.

Van Maele and Van Houtte (2009) anonymously surveyed 2,104 teachers in 84 secondary schools in Belgium. Teacher trust was measured based on the work previously completed by Hoy and Tschannen-Morgan. Several key factors around trust emerged from their research. Van Maele and Van Houtte uncovered that trust is higher in private schools than compared to public schools. Additionally, a higher percentage of female teachers in the school building was found to increase the overall trust in the school administration. Finally, the research showed that teacher trust was low for parents and students in schools with high socioeconomic status. However, teacher trust in the schools administration was not significantly

impacted by the socioeconomic status of the school. As trust between administration and faculty increases, the pprincipal job satisfactions also increases (Price, 2012). Building and maintaining trust within the school building is an important task for any school administrator. "School administrators can use technology to develop a culture of transparency that will help build trust and ensure the success of their programs" (Johnson, 2014, p. 80).

Hoerr (2014) emphasized that listening in an attempt to comprehend and contemplate an individual's perspective is one of the most important leadership skills. Subordinates know they are respected when leaders take time to listen to their concerns and suggestions. "Authority doesn't come from a tile, degree, or position. It comes because others believe in us and trust us. They know we care, and they know we listen" (p. 87). In order for school administrators to garner the trust of their teachers and colleagues, authentic listening must be utilized by school principals. Subsequently, trust between faculty and administration must be in place before professional learning communities can be truly effective (Hord & Hirish, 2009).

Establishing trust in an organization that has been engrossed with distrust and uncertainty is a daunting task that leaders must address. Covey (2008) conveys the importance of extending trust to others in the organization as an excellent way for leaders to create an environment of trust. Additionally, trust is reciprocal in that as leaders begin to trust others, people have a tendency to trust the leader in return. A priority for leaders is capitalizing on every opportunity available to show respect to others (Knight, 2011).

Collaboration

Collaboration has become a popular buzzword among educators. Nevertheless, Fullan (2014) considers collaboration to be one of the four qualities that administrators should look for

when interviewing candidates for open positions. Additionally, collaboration is vitally important between all stakeholders that are directly involved with the school's performance. Collaboration between school administrators and teachers, students, and parents is important for creating and monitoring school goals (Gulcan 2012). Caine and Caine (2010) assert that collaboration can occur in a variety of approaches. Furthermore, Caine and Caine emphasize that collaborative learning occurs in five major contexts: study groups, action research teams, communities of practice, conversation circles, and online communications. Each of these collaborative platforms has their own strengths and weaknesses in building and maintains a collaborative atmosphere. "Without trust, collaboration is merely cooperation, which fails to achieve the benefits and possibilities available to true collaborators in the knowledge worker age" (Covey, 2008, p. 256)

Chappuis, Chappius, and Stiggins (2009) stated that principals should be active participants in the professional learning that occurs within their schools. Professional learning communities offer teachers the opportunity to take part in the same learning cycle that educators desire for their students – the opportunity for constant improvement through self-reflection. Collaboration is paramount to the effectiveness of a team. It is imperative that team members stay focused on being solution oriented, while taking risks and respecting each other (Northouse, 2013).

DuFour and Marzano (2009) emphasize the need for school administrators to encourage teacher participation in professional learning communities, which has a greater impact on student achievement compared to focused attention of the strict evaluation process of teachers. Additionally, principals need to ensure that each member of the professional learning community shares evidence of progress toward the groups' predetermined goals. When a large number of teachers in a school building have the same focus and implement the same strategy, they create a

collaborating result (Fullan, 2009). DuFour and Marzano (2009) further stressed that principals need to spend more time involved in professional learning communities that are focused on increasing student learning and achievement.

Collaboration among educators often occurs within grade levels or content specific fields. However, vertical collaboration can positively impact the success of a school. Tiernety (2006) contend, "The 20th century, for example, was a time when a firewall was built between K-12 education and postsecondary education" (p. 3). Vertical collaboration is exemplified in the relationship between Rice Creek Elementary School in Columbia, South Carolina, and the University of South Carolina. The vertical collaboration strengthened the connection between K-12 and higher education (Evans et al., 2012). Research projects and sizable, innovative initiatives can be financially burdensome to school districts. Collaboration between school districts, businesses, colleges, and governmental agencies can assist in the implementation of new initiatives (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Lambert (2006) determined that individuals that participated in networking opportunities were more empowered in their work.

The America Samoa Department of Education has embraced the collaborative culture with their new organizational structure. Teachers, principals, and other educational leaders are now directly involved in decision-making. Collaboration between teachers and department of education executives is helping build knowledge and support for system wide initiatives (Gurr, 2006). However, collaboration is not an exclusive strategy for educational settings alone. Collaboration can occur in a variety of contexts and settings. Owen and Davis (2010) reported that of the surveyed participants that attended regional law academic meetings, 84 percent agreed that collaboration was meaningful for their overall growth.

Principals need to prioritize professional learning and provide teachers with ample time during the work day for professional collaboration (Hord & Hirsh, 2009). However, it is important for educators to have the intrinsic desire and motivation to be involved in professional learning communities. "Incentives, such as a stipend, release time, credit applied toward advancement on the local salary schedule, or college credit, then fall in place as a secondary, rather than a primary, motivator or support" (Chapppuis et al., 2009, p. 57). DuFour et al. (2010) assert that school leaders that emphasize the need for collaboration must provide teachers with adequate time for collaboration during their normal work hours. The school leader is responsible for providing the appropriate resources so that educators can be successful in accomplishing mandates and initiatives. In the area of collaboration, time is the resource that administrators must provide to educators in order for the collaboration to be productive and meaningful. Kennedy et al. (2013) similarly declare that one of the principals' responsibilities is to provide teachers with time to review data and form action steps in a collaborative environment.

Shared Leadership

Korkmaz (2006) contends that teachers play an important role in creating and maintaining the school vision. Practicing shared leadership enables school administrators to build capacity among teachers to form and implement the school's vision. The use of shared leadership by a school administrators helps with building capacity within the building. "As leadership capacity grew, teachers experienced a personal and collective journey from dependency to high levels of self-organization, and demonstrated a readiness to lead a school without a principal" (Lambert, 2006, p. 251). Lambert further emphasizes that the principals' goals should be to build leadership capacity. Before leadership capacity can be built, positive

relationships must be established, as they are the foundation to effective leadership (Orozco & Allison, 2008). Moreover, Fullan (2009) emphasized the need for capacity building as one of the six fundamentals of whole-system reform. Likewise, DuFour and Marzano (2009) state, "Time spent devoted to building the capacity of teachers to work in teams is far better than time devoted to observing individual teachers" (p. 67).

Shared leadership requires leaders to view all employees as valuable assets and equal contributors to the success of the organization. Leaders can be unsuccessful if they begin to view their role as more superior and important than others in the organization (Kinight, 2011). Hoy and Miskel (2008) emphasize that shared leadership responsibilities within a school is a common practice and does not negate any authority or responsibility that has been given to the school administrator. Principals that share power and responsibility have a tremendous impact on their school community. This impact will continue as long as school administrators continue to practice shared leadership (McEwan, 2003).

The United States military is structured in a linear model with a strict adherence to a specific predetermined organizational hierarchy that is not conducive to shared leadership. However, institutions of education offer greater flexibility with leadership and in turn are able to use shared leadership (Tierney, 2006). Organizations that have embraced shared leadership have reported reaching better result (Dennis & Meola, 2009). Regardless of the school's size, shared leadership can help create an atmosphere that encourages teamwork among staff (Southworth, 2004). Shared leadership can be beneficial to all educational leaders. However, Price (2012) determined that power sharing is slightly higher among female principals.

Highly effective teachers that receive recognition and praise from their administrators are more willing to take on additional leadership roles within the school (Kennedy et al., 2013).

School administrators can establish a culture of shared leadership through the implementation of leadership teams (Lange et al., 2012). McEwan (2003) examines the practice of school administrators building a community of leaders. A community of leaders helps the entire school reach new heights as everyone's skills and abilities are maximized to meet the needs of the school. "When teachers experience the empowerment and sense of efficacy that result from assuming leadership roles, they pass them along in their interactions with students and parents" (p. 59). Northouse (2013) stresses that team members utilizing shared leadership responsibilities need to be able to know when to serve in the leader role and when to allow others to take the lead. Shared leadership requires fluidity among individuals providing the leadership as each situation dictates which team member can best lead the group.

The American Samoa Department of Education has restructured its agency from a top-down organization and now embrace a shared decision making model. Shared leadership in American Samoa Department of Education involves teachers, principals, and senior leaders working together to solve problems and implement appropriate changes (Gurr, 2006). In the information age, Reeves and Burt (2006) contend that principals need to be dedicated to shared leadership in their pursuit of school improvement. Additionally, Waite (2011) discusses the manner in which servant leadership incorporates elements of leaders who strive to build capacity and increase shared responsibility in the decision making process. As trust within the school increases between administration and faculty, power sharing and delegation also increases (Price, 2012).

Data Analysis and Use

Principals, as leaders of an organization, need to be able to confidently use data as instrument in decision-making (Portin et al., 2009). The 2013 TEAM Administrator Evaluation Rubric defines data analysis and use as an administrator who, "Collaborates with educators to analyze and use multiple forms of data throughout the year to establish specific goals and strategies targeting student growth and achievement" (p. 5). Studies indicate that administrator use of data-driven decision making is not a new concept (Ceja, 2012; Luo, 2005; Teigen 2009). "Principals identified the importance of a data-driven culture in their schools reflecting a belief that data-driven decision making must be an integral part of the school culture in order for it to be effective" (White, 2008, p. 96). However, school principals should not be the only individuals examining data. School administrators can serve as data coaches and help guide their teachers with collecting, analyzing, and tracking student learning on specific skills (Knight, 2011). Lange et al. (2012) highlight the importance of creating school leadership teams that use data to drive school improvement decision.

Dr. William Sanders has extensive work with implementing value-added analysis to Tennessee's educational accountability model (Sanders & Horn, 1998). School administrators must diligently work to help teachers understand and use the data to improve student learning. "Ultimately, until principals and other building-level leaders buy in to the idea of value-added information, it has little value for school improvement" (Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 28). In addition to understanding data, the authors contend that administrators need to use data to identify the highly effective teacher in their schools and leverage their strengths to help impact all students in the building.

Wayman, Cho, Jimerson, and Spikes (2012) examined three school districts and found that teacher use of data was connected to strategies the principal applied to using data. If the principal supported data use, then teachers were more apt to have better attitudes toward data and used data more effectively. Conversely, if the principal had a negative view of data, teacher attitudes were negative and the data were not used as effectively. Principals' understanding and use of data is only part of the solution to helping teachers use data efficiently and effectively to drive instruction. "Principals reported that training is critical to enhancing teacher understanding data" (Reeves & Burt, 2006, p. 67).

Simply reviewing end-of-the-year, high stake testing data is not enough. Knoeppel and Reinhart (2010) argue that principals and teachers analyzing data from end-of-the-year assessments is too late to make the necessary changes to instruction that will help struggling students. Using multiple data sources throughout the year to drive instruction and guide remediation requires a systematic way to organize data. Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, and Thomas (2007). stress the importance of data acquisition,

> Data acquisition describes how leaders create practices to collect, acquire, and store data; data reflection and program alignment describe how leaders create practices to reflect on data and set goals; program design describes the interventions that leaders develop to guide instruction; and formative feed back describes the systems that leaders establish to learn from program design (p. 166).

Principals who promote and participate directly with teachers in the use of data to guide instructional activities have twice the effect size than any other leadership aspect (Fullan, 2008).

Administrators can also use student level data to drive the design of professional development. In 2007 Hayes and Robnolt report how an elementary school used kindergarten

and first grade student achievement data to identify that word knowledge was an area in need of instructional improvement. Likewise, student level data were used the following year to determine the effectiveness of the professional development that had been offered and attended by teachers in the specific instructional area of word knowledge. While administrator use of data is important, Hord and Hirish (2009) emphasize the need for school administrators to make certain that professional learning communities are using data to guide discussions centered around improving instruction.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 contained a review of literature using peer reviewed empirical sources. Numerous authors have expounded upon several topics that were addressed within the review of literature. Tennessee's Educator Acceleration Model was aligned to specific topics that were reviewed in Chapter 2. Reeves (2011) claims, "But if we have learned anything in our research, it is that practices endure while programs fade" (p. 8). Therefore, increasing administrator effectiveness holds the potential to directly affect the overall success of the school and individual students (Leithwood et al., 2006; Marzano, et al., 2005). Chapter 3 describes the methodology used for this research study. An analysis of data will be found in chapter 4, and chapter 5 will provide an overview of research findings, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 3

REASEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading and mathematics for elementary and middle schools in nine school systems located in northeast Tennessee during the 2012-2013 academic year. Teacher perception of administrator leadership focus was determined by educator responses to the TELL Survey and student academic growth was measured using the TVAAS mean gains in mathematics and reading. Both the TELL Survey and TVAAS mean gains are public data that are available through online sources. Microsoft Excel was used to compute the Pearson correlations between TELL Survey and TVAAS data.

A quantitative framework was selected for this study. According to Creswell (2009), "Quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables" (p. 4). This expo facto (after the fact) study uses data sets – TELL Survey and TVAASS – from the 2012-2013 academic school year (Salkind, 2010). The Pearson correlation was used to determine if a linear relationship exists between teacher perception of administrator leadership focus and student academic growth (Witte & Witte, 2009). This chapter provides an overview the research design by detailing the research questions and null hypotheses, population, data collection, data analysis, and summary of the research methodology.

Research Questions and Corresponding Null Hypotheses

Research Question 1

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading?

H_o1: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading.

Research Question 2

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics?

H_o2: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading?

H_o3: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading.

Research Question 4

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics?

H_o4: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics.

Research Question 5

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading?

H_o5: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading.

Research Question 6

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and student growth in mathematics?

H_o6: There is not a relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and student growth in mathematics.

Research Question 7

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading?

H_o7: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading.

Research Question 8

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics?

H_o8: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics.

Population

The population for this study consisted of 75 schools in nine school districts in northeast Tennessee. With an *n* of 75 schools, this correlational study's sample size is well above the minimum of 30 needed for a sufficient quantitative study (McMillian & Schumacker, 2010). The population was comprised of 44 elementary schools, 18 middle schools, and 17 K-8 schools in the northeast region of Tennessee. The 75 schools were examined to determine the relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student academic growth. Each of the 75 schools represented met both the 50% completion threshold and had a minimum of five teachers respond to the TELL Survey. Additionally, each of the 75 schools have value-added data for students in fourth through eighth grades.

Instrumentation

This research study used public data from two instruments to determine if there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading and mathematics. The Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey results provided data on teacher perception of administrator leadership focus. Data for student growth in reading and mathematics was determined by the use of data from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). The TELL Survey and TVAAS instruments are discussed individually in greater detail in the following sections.

TELL Survey

The TELL Survey was developed by the nationally recognized New Teacher Center in partnership with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission. The TELL Survey utilizes a four point Likert-scale with an additional option of 'Don't Know' ("Validity and Reliability Report," 2013). According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), intentionally leaving out a neutral choice aids in participants being unable to cluster their responses around the middle category. Nonetheless, a selection choice of 'not applicable' should be given. Questions on the TELL Survey are reported with the percentage of teaches that strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strong agree.

A total of 56 questions are examined with the TELL Survey, but this correlational study used only 15 of the questions to evaluate if a significant relationships exists between teacher perception of administrator leadership focus and student academic growth. The TELL Survey was available to all licensed educators that work in public schools in Tennessee. The survey was administered online from February 18, 2013 through March 15, 2013 and participation was

completely voluntary, confidential, and anonymous (Haslam & Huffman, 2013). School administrators randomly distributed access codes to teachers in order to maintain anonymity of individual teacher responses. TELL Survey results were provided to school s and published online for schools that met the 50% completion requirement and had a minimum of 5 teachers complete the survey (New Teacher Center, 2013). The 2013 Tennessee TELL Validity and Reliability Report provides an in depth review the survey's reliability and validity measures that have been verified through the New Teacher Center's internal measures and also through external reliability and validity evaluations.

TVAAS

TVAAS data have been used in educational research for numerous years and continues to be an evaluative tool in Tennessee (Sanders & Horn, 1998). The methodology behind TVAAS was developed at the University of Tennessee, published in 1997, and has been reviewed by educational testing experts from around the nation (TVAAS, 2014). Additionally, value-added analysis provides school leaders with a measure of the impact that districts, schools, and teachers have on the academic growth of students over the course of a year. Value-added mean scores that are reported by the Tennessee Department of Education compare average student growth compared to the 2008 – 2009 base year. Growth that exceeds expected growth is represented by a positive value, while growth that does not meet expected growth is represented by a negative value (Tennessee Report Card, 2013). TVAAS data are provided to the public on the Tennessee Department of Education's 2013 State Report Card.

Data Collection

Before data were collected, an approval request was presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at East Tennessee State University (ETSU). Because this study utilizes existing data and does not involve human subjects, the study was exempt from IRB approval. For this study, data was collected using results from the 2013 Tennessee TELL Survey and student academic growth as measured by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). TELL Survey results are public data and were retrieved from telltennessee.org. The value-added mathematics and reading mean gains scores are reported on the Tennessee Department of Educations State Report Card for each school independently (http://tn.gov/education/data/report_card/index.shtml). Value-added scores that are publically reported by the Tennessee Department Education were accurately recorded in preparation for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a series of Pearson correlations to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student academic growth. "The strength of the relationship becomes higher as the correlation approaches either +1 or -1 from zero" (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010, p.168). The population for this study consists 75 schools in nine school districts in northeast Tennessee that successfully completed the TELL Survey. Teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus was determined by TELL Survey results and student academic growth was determined by TVAAS mean gains in mathematics and reading. Each Pearson correlation was evaluated with the alpha of .05 to determine the level of significance.

The questions from the TELL Survey that align with each research questions were averaged to determine the overall rating of teachers that agree or strongly agree that their administrators exhibit shared leadership, foster an atmosphere of trust and respect, facilitate the use of data to improve student learning, and provide opportunities for collaboration. TVAAS data is calculated annually and reported on by the Tennessee Department of Education. The tables in chapter 4 outline the crosswalk between questions from the 2013 TELL Survey that were used and how the overall score for each category was be calculated.

Chapter Summary

This study examined teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in mathematics and reading. The population for this study is comprised of 75 schools from nine school districts in northeast Tennessee that teach students in fourth through eighth grades. Teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus was measured using the public data from the TELL Survey that was administered in the spring of 2013. Student growth in mathematics and reading was determined based on 2013 TVAAS mean gains scores that are provided to the public on the Tennessee Department of Education's Report Card website. All eight-research questions were analyzed using a Pearson correlation test to determine if a linear relationship exists between teacher perception of administrator leadership focus and student growth in mathematics and reading. Chapter 4 contains the results of the Pearson correlation tests.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading and mathematics for elementary and middle schools in nine school districts located in northeast Tennessee during the 2012-2013 academic year. Specifically, this study was an analysis of the leadership focuses of trust and respect, collaboration, shared leadership, and data use and analysis. The population was comprised of 44 elementary schools, 18 middle schools, and 17 K-8 schools in the northeast region of Tennessee.

This chapter includes the presentation and analysis of data that were used to answer the eight research questions and corresponding null hypothesis. Data were analyzed using figures from teacher perceptions of administrators from the TELL Survey and student growth measures in reading and mathematics from TVAAS reported on Tennessee's state report card.
Table 1 provides the TELL Survey questions that have been averaged together to calculate the overall rate of agreement (agree and strongly agree) for teacher perception of administrator leadership focus of fostering an atmosphere of trust and respect. The example teacher rate of improvement data provides an example how the overall rating has been calculated.

Model of Rate of Agreement

The tables below provide a model of the how the rate of agreement was calculated for each of the 75 schools in this study. The data in the tables represent one school from this study and provide actual data that was collected through the TELL Survey and TVAAS data that was

amassed from the Tennessee State Report Card for each school. Compiled rate of agreement scores for each of the 75 schools in this study are reported in appendix A.

Table 1

TELL Survey Questions Used to Determine Overall Teacher Rate of Agreement of School Leaders Fostering an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect

Statements from the 2013 TELL Survey	Teacher rate of agreement
"Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.	0.880
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.	0.640
Teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (i.e. pacing, materials and pedagogy) (TELL Survey, 2013)".	1.000
Overall Rating	0.840

Table 2 outlines the TELL Survey questions that have been averaged together to generate the overall rate of agreement (agree and strongly agree) for teacher perception of administrator leadership focus of providing opportunities for collaboration. The example teacher rate of improvement data provides an example how the overall rating has been calculated.

Table 2

TELL Survey Questions Used to Determine Overall Teacher Rate of Agreement of School Leaders Providing Opportunities for Collaboration

Statements from the 2013 TELL Survey	Teacher rate of agreement
"Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.	0.840
Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues to refine teaching practices.	0.760
Teachers work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices (TELL Survey, 2013)".	1.000
Overall Rating	0.867

Table 3 shows the TELL Survey questions that have been averaged together to generate the overall rate of agreement (agree and strongly agree) for teacher perception of administrator leadership focus of exhibiting shared leadership. The example teacher rate of improvement data provides an example how the overall rating has been calculated.

Table 3

TELL Survey Questions Used to Determine Overall Teacher Rate of Agreement of School Leaders Exhibiting Shared Leadership

Statements from the 2013 TELL Survey	Teacher rate of agreement
"Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.	0.880
Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.	0.920
Teachers are effective leaders in this school.	0.792
The faculty and leadership have a shared vision.	0.640
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school (TELL Survey, 2013)".	0.600
Overall Rating	0.766

Table 4 outlines the TELL Survey questions that have been averaged together to generate the overall rate of agreement (agree and strongly agree) for teacher perception of administrator leadership focus of facilitating the use of data to improve student learning. The example teacher rate of improvement data provides an example how the overall rating has been calculated.

Table 4

TELL Survey Questions Used to Determine Overall Teacher Rate of Agreement of School Leaders Facilitating the Use of Data to Improve Student Learning

Statements from the 2013 TELL Survey	Teacher rate of agreement
"The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.	0.960
Professional development offerings are data driven.	0.960
Teachers in this school use assessment data to inform their instruction (TELL Survey, 2013)".	1.000
Overall Rating	0.973

The same process was followed for determining the overall rating in each of the four categories for the remaining 75 schools. Pearson correlations were calculated using each school's overall rating in the corresponding categories and each school's TVAAS mean gains in reading and mathematics. A total of 8 Pearson correlations was computed and analyzed based on the relationship between the four areas of leadership focus and the reading and mathematics TVAAS mean gains.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading?

H_o1: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading. The results of the analysis, as shown Figure 2 below, revealed a weak negative relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust ($M = 0.86$, $SD = 0.09$) and student growth in reading ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 2.16$) and a correlation that was not statistically significant [$r(73) = -.144$, $p = .218$]. As a result of the analysis H_o1 was not rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is not a significant correlation between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading.

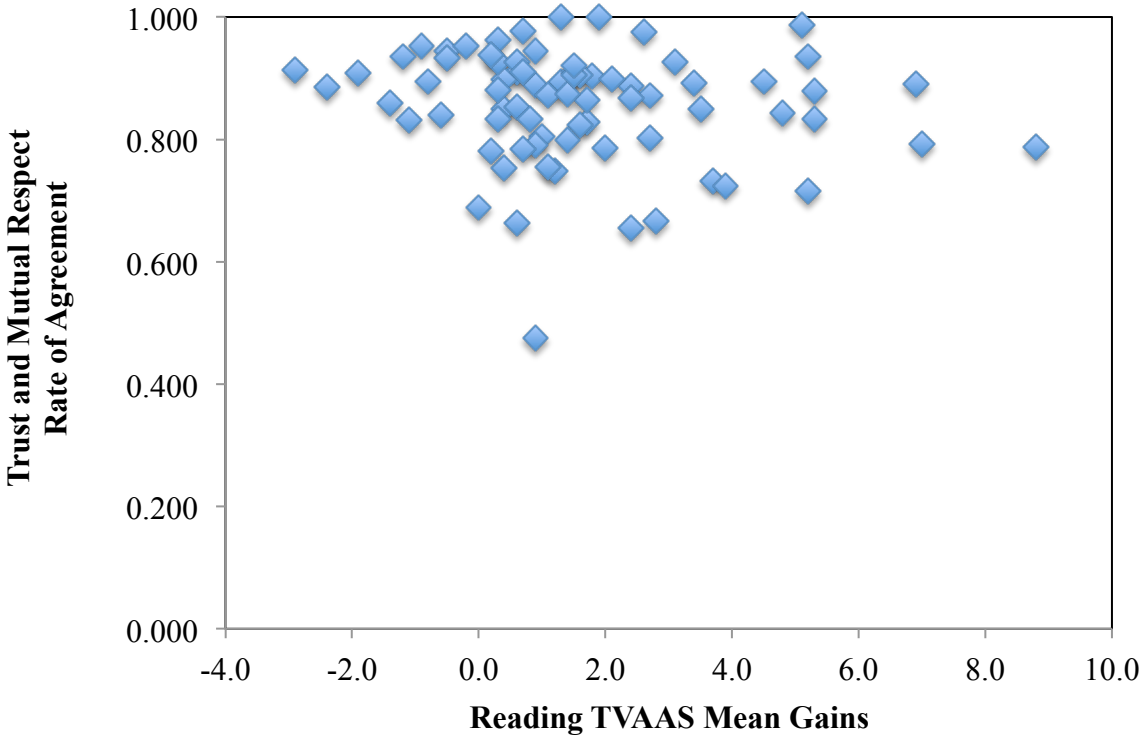

Figure 2. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Fostering an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect as Related to Student Growth in Reading

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics?

H_o2: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics. The results of the analysis, represented in Figure 3, revealed a weak positive relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust ($M = 0.86$, $SD = 0.09$) and student growth in mathematics ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 3.09$) and a correlation that was not statistically significant [$r(73) = .061$, $p = .602$]. As a result of the analysis H_o2 was not rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is not a significant correlation between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics.

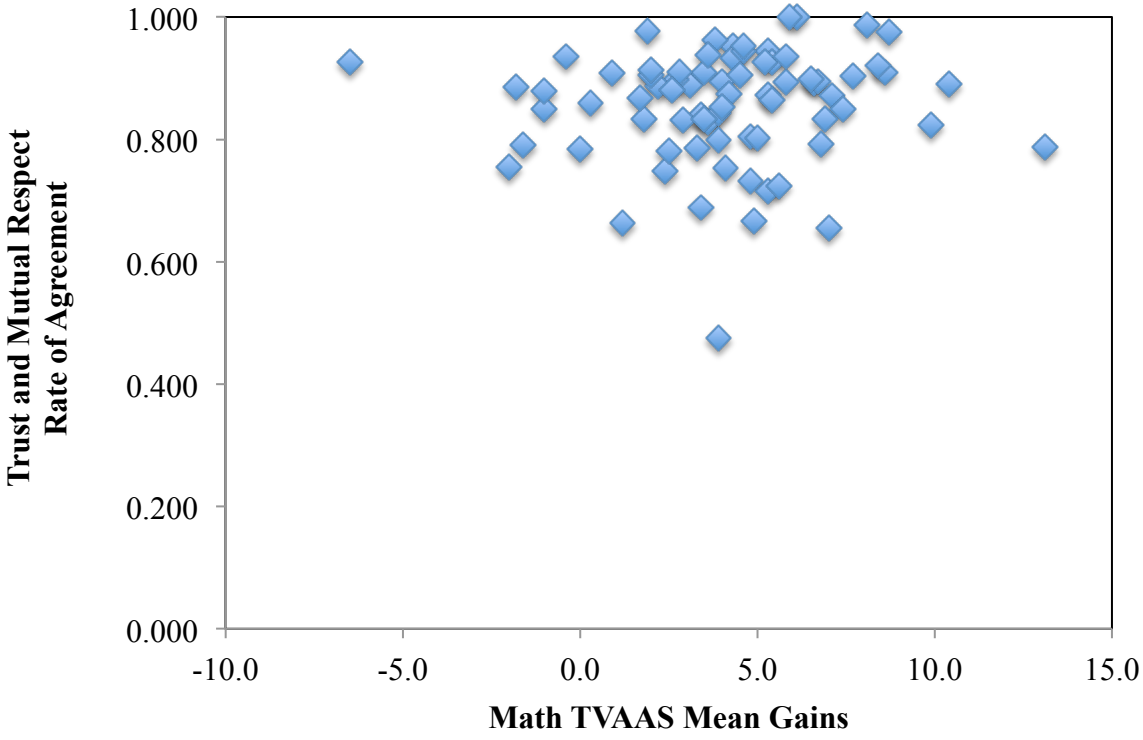

Figure 3. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Fostering an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect as Related to Student Growth in Mathematics

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading?

H_o3: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading. The results of the analysis, displayed in Figure 4, revealed a weak positive relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration ($M = 0.80$, $SD = 0.10$) and student growth in reading ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 2.16$) and a correlation that was not statistically significant [$r(73) = .036$, $p = .756$]. As a result of the analysis H_o3 was not rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is not a significant correlation between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading.

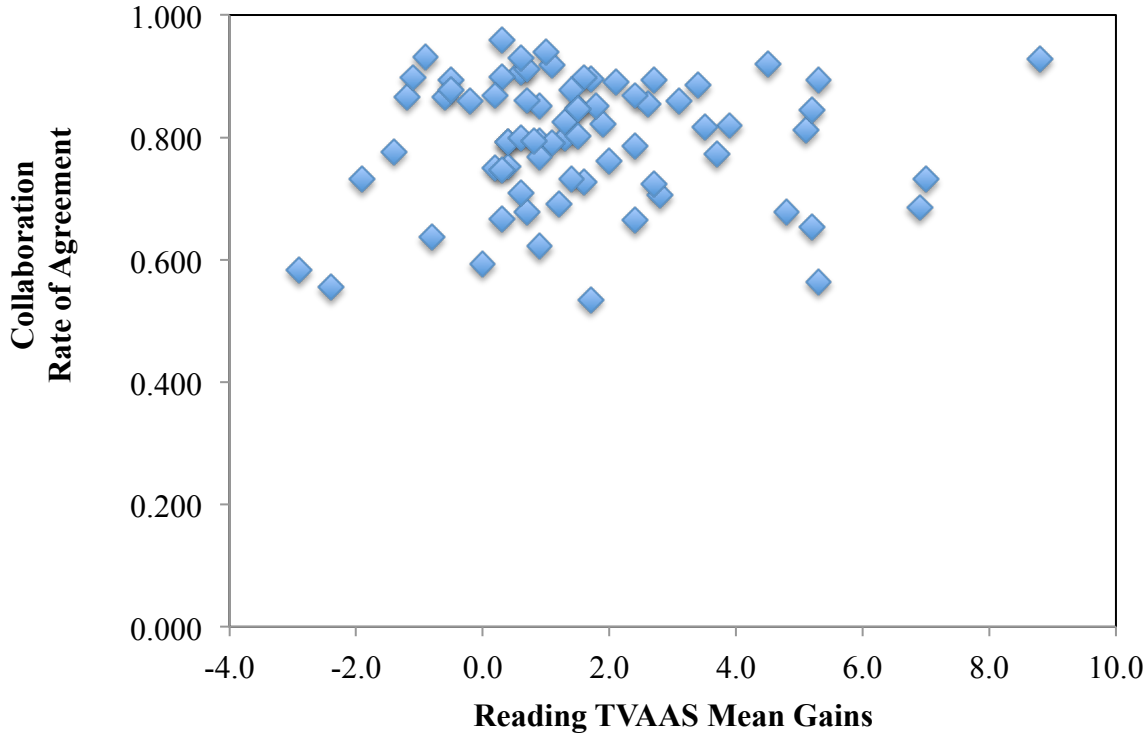

Figure 4. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Providing Opportunities for Collaboration as Related to Student Growth in Reading

Research Question 4

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics?

H_o4: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics. The results of the analysis, shown in Figure 5 below, revealed a weak positive relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration ($M = 0.80$, $SD = 0.10$) and student growth in mathematics ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 3.09$) and a correlation that was statistically significant [$r(73) = .281$, $p = .014$]. As a result of the analysis H_o4 was rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is a significant correlation between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics. High teacher perceptions of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration tend to be associated with high student growth in mathematics.

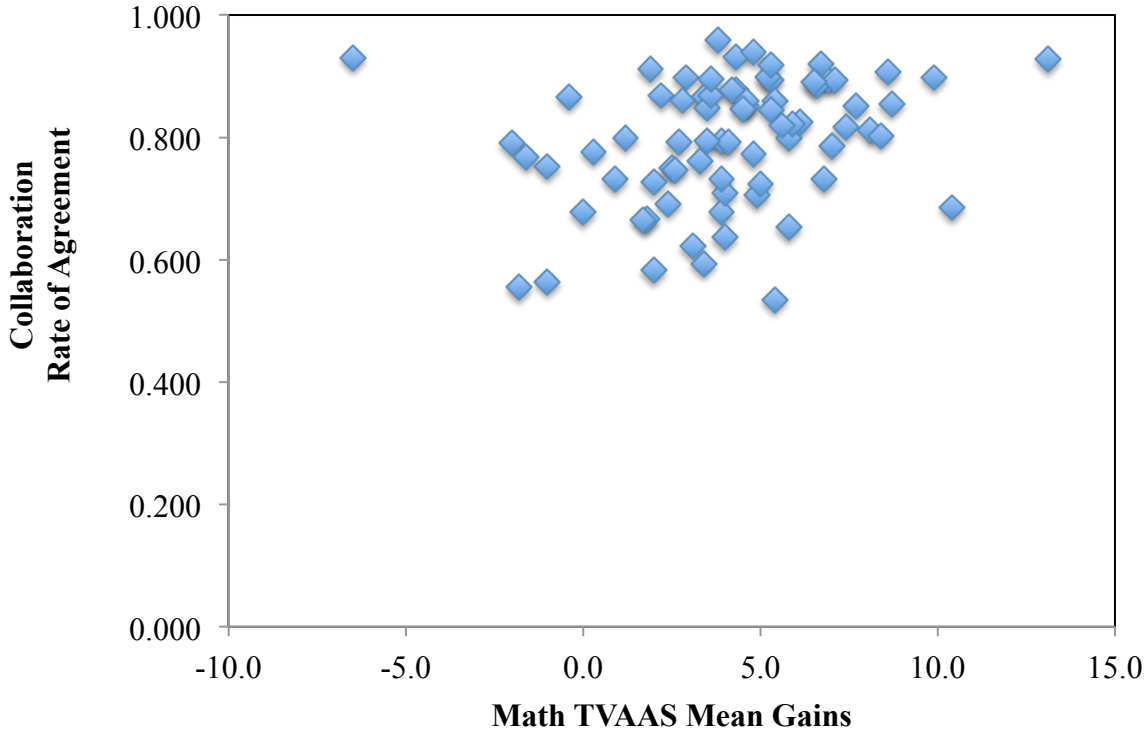

Figure 5. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Providing Opportunities for Collaboration as Related to Student Growth in Mathematics

Research Question 5

Research Question 5: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading?

H_o5: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading. The results of the analysis, displayed in Figure 6, revealed a weak positive relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership ($M = 0.87$, $SD = 0.08$) and student growth in reading ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 2.16$) and a correlation that was not statistically significant [$r(73) = .147$, $p = .208$]. As a result of the analysis H_o5 was not rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is not a significant correlation between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading.

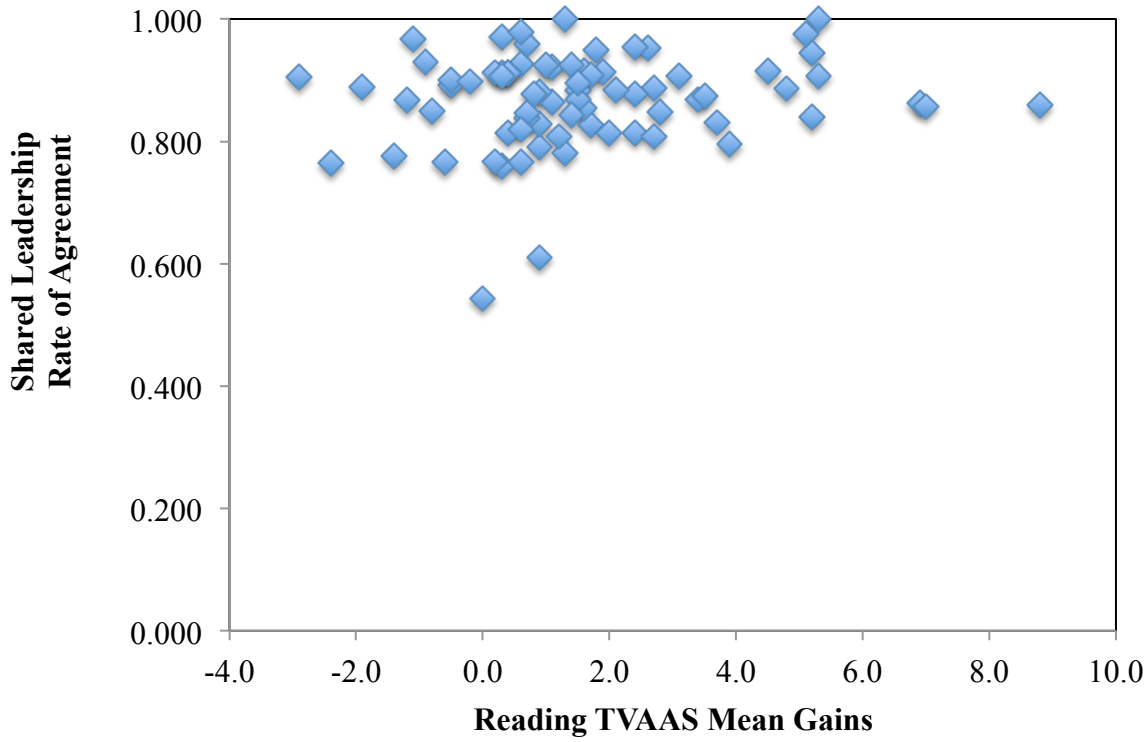

Figure 6. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Exhibiting Shared Leadership as Related to Student Growth in Reading

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and student growth in mathematics?

H_o6: There is not a relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and student growth in mathematics.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in mathematics. The results of the analysis, displayed in Figure 7, revealed a weak positive relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership ($M = 0.87$, $SD = 0.08$) and student growth in mathematics ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 3.09$) and a correlation that was not statistically significant [$r(73) = .096$, $p = .414$]. As a result of the analysis H_o6 was not rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is not a significant correlation between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in mathematics.

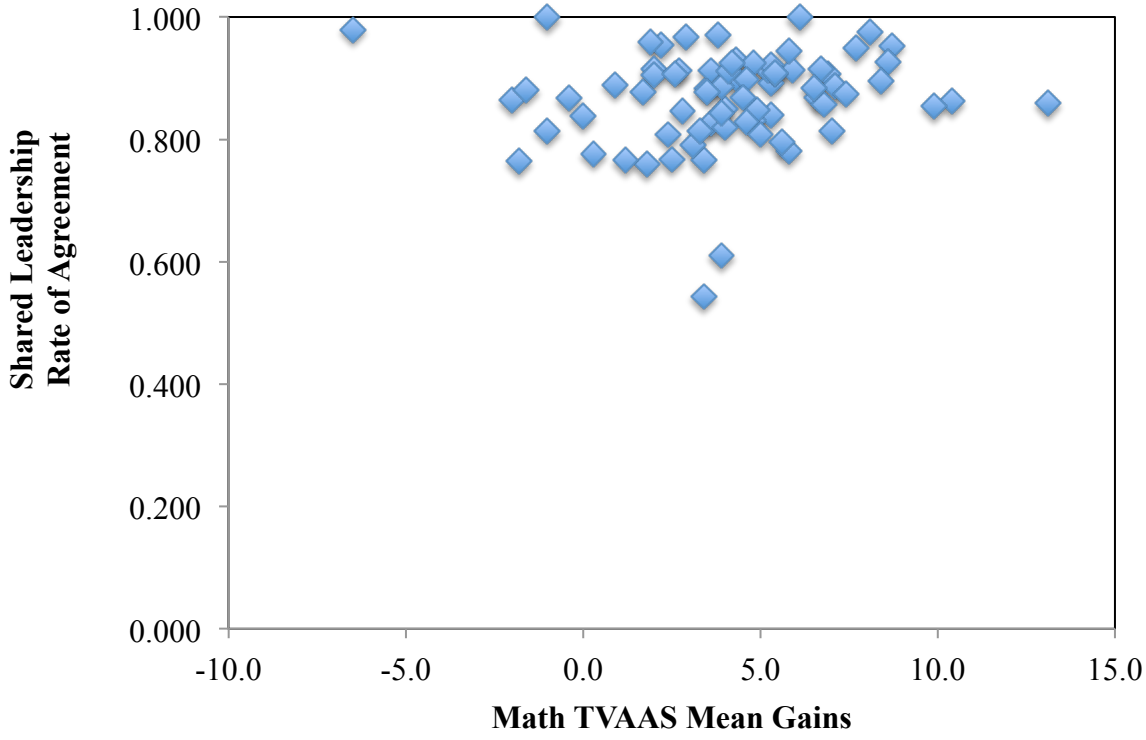

Figure 7. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Exhibiting Shared Leadership as Related to Student Growth in Mathematics

Research Question 7

Research Question 7: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading?

H_o7: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading. The results of the analysis, shown in Figure 8, revealed a weak positive relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning ($M = 0.95$, $SD = 0.03$) and student growth in reading ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 2.16$) and a correlation that was not statistically significant [$r(73) = .036$, $p = .756$]. As a result of the analysis H_o7 was not rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is not a significant correlation between t teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading.

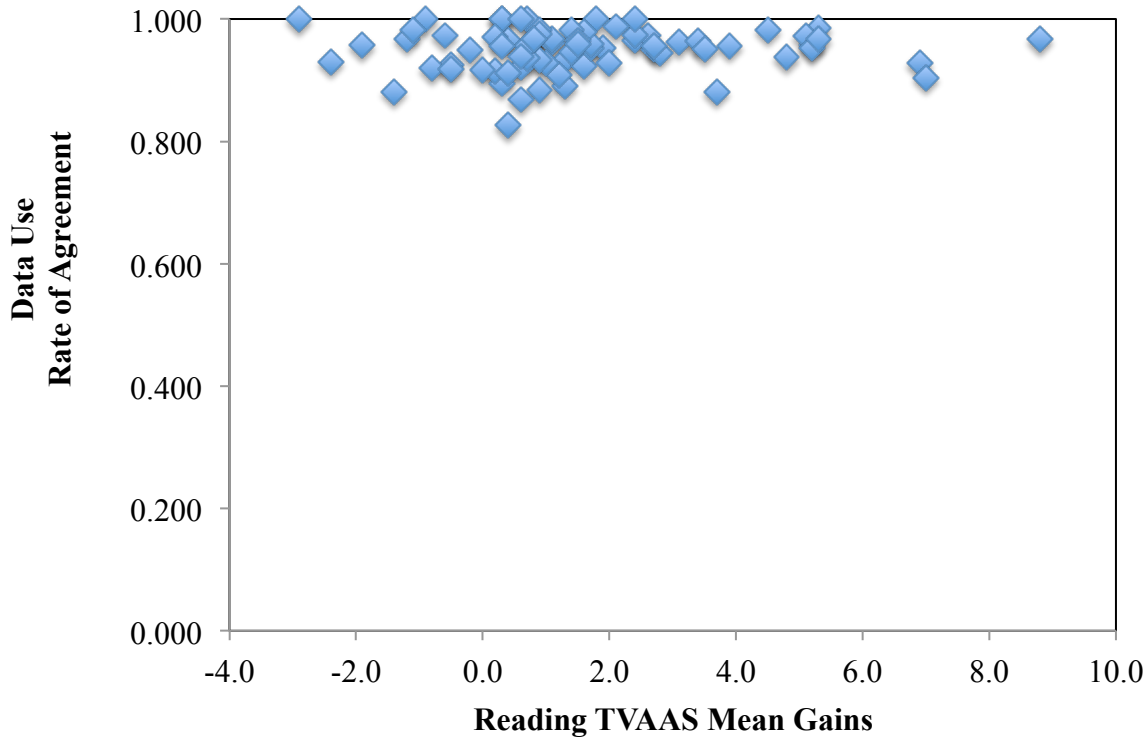

Figure 8. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Facilitating the Use of Data to Improve Student Learning as Related to Student Growth in Reading

Research Question 8

Research Question 8: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics?

H_o8: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics. The results of the analysis, displayed in Figure 9 below, revealed a weak positive relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning ($M = 0.95$, $SD = 0.03$) and student growth in mathematics ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 3.09$) and a correlation that was not statistically significant [$r(73) = .038$, $p = .743$]. As a result of the analysis H_o8 was not rejected. In general, the results suggest that there is not a significant correlation between t teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics.

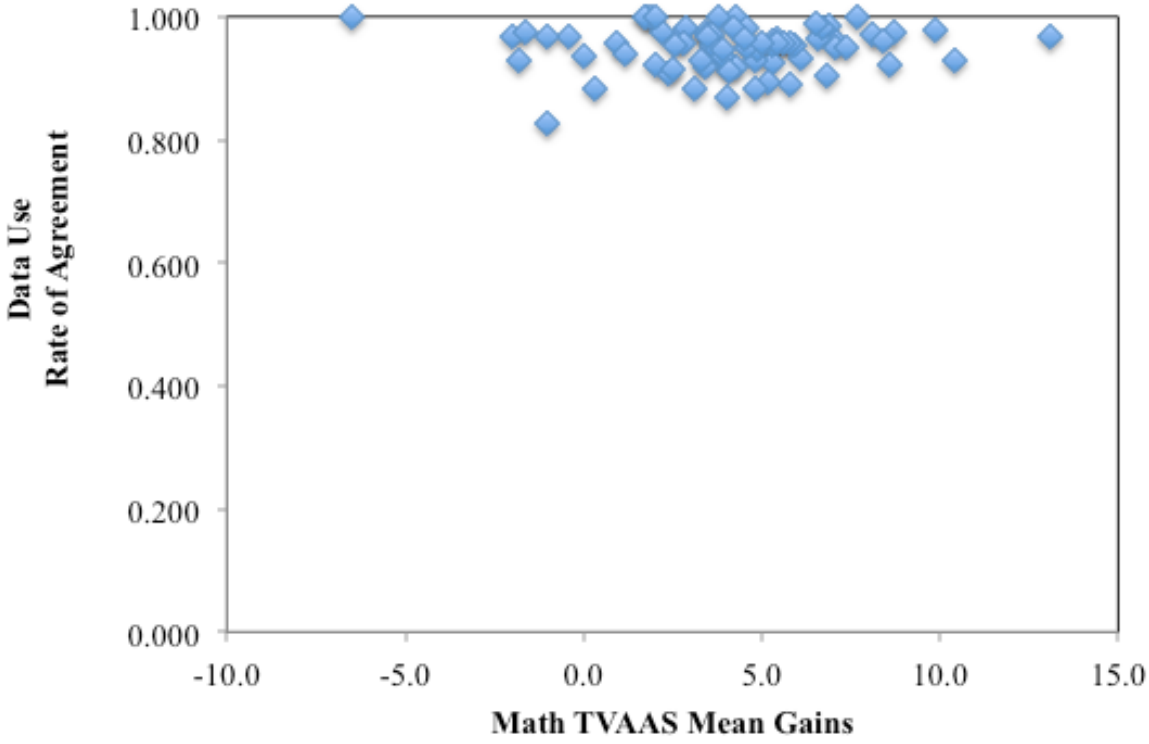

Figure 9. Teacher Agreement of School Leaders Facilitating the Use of Data to Improve Student Learning as Related to Student Growth in Mathematics

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of findings, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth, defined by Kennedy et al. (2010) in reading and mathematics. Explicitly, this study analyzed the leadership focuses, from the TELL Survey, of fostering an atmosphere of trust and respect, providing opportunities for collaboration, exhibiting shared leadership, and facilitating the use of data to improve student learning with TVAAS mean gain scores in reading and mathematics. The results from this study can potentially be beneficial to administrators as they seek to find which leadership characteristics have a statistically significant relationship with student gains in reading and mathematics. Additionally, district leaders might use this data in providing professional learning opportunities for their school administrators in researched based leadership practices. Finally, this study could provide higher education institutions with useful information of leadership strategies that are positively correlated with student performance. Colleges and universities can potentially use this information while creating, planning, and facilitating graduate level coursework for aspiring school administrators. This study was completed using data from the Tennessee TELL Survey and TVAAS data from the Tennessee's state report card for nine school districts in northeast Tennessee.

Summary of Findings

The statistical analysis for this study focused on eight research questions that were presented in Chapters 1 and 3. The corresponding null hypotheses that were centered on areas of leadership focus were outlined in Chapter 3. Data were analyzed using a series of Pearson correlations to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student academic growth. Each Pearson correlation was evaluated with the alpha of .05 to determine the level of significance.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The results showed that there is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading.

Research Question 2

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual

respect and student growth in mathematics. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The results showed that there is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The results showed that there is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in reading.

Research Question 4

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading. The null hypothesis was rejected. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and student growth in mathematics.

Research Question 5

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The results showed that there is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in reading.

Research Question 6

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and student growth in mathematics?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in mathematics. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The results showed that there is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership fostering shared leadership and student growth in mathematics.

Research Question 7

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student

learning and student growth in reading. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The results showed that there is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in reading.

Research Question 8

Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The results showed that there is not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and student growth in mathematics.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading and mathematics. Specifically, this study was an analysis of the leadership focuses of trust and respect, collaboration, shared leadership, data use and analysis. The TELL (2013) survey provided teacher perception scores. Student reading and mathematics growth was determined by the TVAAS mean gain for fourth through eighth grades as defined by Sanders and Horne (1998).

The following conclusions were made based on the findings from the data and literature review in this study.

Trust and Respect

There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of administrators maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and both student growth in reading and mathematics. According to Cosner (2009) administrators frequently mentioned trust as an important element of their efforts to improve schools. Numerous researchers (Covey, 2008; Hord & Hirish, 2009; Knight, 2011) stress the importance of school leaders building trust within their building as an effective leadership practice. However, the data analyzed in this study did not find the leadership element of maintaining trust and respect significantly correlated to student growth. Even though trust and respect was not significantly related to student growth in reading and mathematics, Daly (2009) noted that schools could be a turbulent environment when trust is not present. Trust and respect are vital elements of building a positive school culture and should not be forgotten (Hoerr, 2014).

Collaboration

The results of the correlations for teacher perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading and mathematics yielded different results. There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading. This result contradicts DuFour and Marzano (2009) that reported that collaboration has an impact on student achievement. However, there was a significant relationship between teacher's perception of

leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics. This finding supports Fullan's (2009) recommendation that administrators should look for candidates' willingness to collaborate as one of four essential qualities during the interview process. Additionally, collaboration can occur in a variety of contexts (Caine & Caine, 2010) and principals should be actively engaged in the collaboration process (Chappius, Chappius, & Stiggins, 2009).

Shared Leadership

There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and both student growth in reading and mathematics. The data from this study challenges DuFour and Marzano's (2009) assertion that administrators should devote time to building capacity of teachers in leadership roles. Additionally, this study refutes the findings of Reeves and Burt (2006) that content that principals need to be dedicated to shared leadership in their pursuit of school improvement. Conversely, shared leadership and decision making has been proven to be a successful model in education for helping all stakeholders work together to solve problems facing the institution (Gurr, 2006).

Data Use and Analysis

There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and both student growth in reading and mathematics. The data from this study contests White's (2008) finding that principals' use of data-driven decision making is essential for effective schools. The level and intensity that data is reviewed and used is important to the overall impact that data use will have

on impacting struggling students (Knoeppel & Reinhart, 2010). Finally, Fullan's (2008) findings that principals promoting and participating directly with teachers in the use of data to guide instructional activities had twice the effect size than any other leadership aspect is not supported by the findings from this study.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings and conclusions from this research have provided me insight on identifying the following recommendations for practice for areas of leadership focus for school leaders:

1. Administrators should work toward enhancing their leadership skills that will support teacher growth and in turn help maximize student achievement. According to Leithwood et al. (2006) and Marzano, et al. (2005), increasing administrator effectiveness holds the potential to directly affect the overall success of the school and individual students. As administrators enhance their leadership skills, they will sequentially have to balance a variety of leadership behaviors in order to be an effective and successful leader in a variety of complex environments (Hoy & Minskel, 2008).
2. School administrators must ensure that trust and respect are solid within their organization. Cherkowski (2012) emphasizes the role that administrators have in creating environmental conditions where trust and respect are prevalent. Trust and respect are key indicators in schools with positive climates that support both staff and students (Thapa et al., 2012). Furthermore, trust has a positive impact on increasing teacher professionalism (Tschannen-Morgan, 2009) supporting trust among colleagues (Leithwood et al., 2010) and

successfully implementing effective professional learning communities (Hord & Hirish, 2009). Administrators need to work on establishing respectful relationships among staff with their schools. Burns and Martin (2010) found that teachers in effective schools had higher scores regarding the characteristic of respect than faculty from less effective schools.

3. School administrators need to create and maintain a collaborative environment with in their schools. The principal should work collaboratively with stakeholders in establishing the school's annual targets. Collaboration between school administrators and teachers, students, and parents is important for creating and monitoring school goals (Gulcan 2012). Establishing a collaborative environment will assist the school administrator in creating a successful school. Northouse (2013) asserts that collaboration is paramount to the effectiveness of a team. As administrators work on increasing collaboration among staff members, school administrators must be mindful of teacher time and contractual agreements. DuFour et al. (2010) assert that school leaders that emphasize the need for collaboration must provide teachers with adequate time for collaboration during their normal work hours.
4. School administrators need to embrace shared leadership with an emphasis on building the leadership capacity of teachers. Dennis and Meola (2009) found that shared leadership was credited with assisting organizations reach better results. As school work toward continuously improving – increasing student achievement and reducing gaps among demographics – shared leadership can be an effective strategy in achieving enhanced targets. School administrators

should recognize that shared leadership does not repudiate any authority that has been bestowed upon them as a leader (Hoy & Minskel, 2008). Finally, McEwen (2003) asserts that the positive impact of shared leadership will endure as long as school administrators continue to practice shared leadership.

5. School administrators need to be able to lead teachers in the analysis and use of data to improve student learning. Principals are responsible for effectively using data in the decision-making process (Portin et al., 2009). While creating leadership teams that use data for school improvement is important (Lange et al., 2012), school administrators need to be willing and able to assist teachers in using data in procedures that lead to increased student learning. School administrators should serve as data coaches and help guide their teachers with collecting, analyzing, and tracking student learning on specific skills (Knight, 2011).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on four areas of leadership focus of school administrators in nine school districts in northeast Tennessee. The following are recommendations for future study:

1. A comparable study can be completed to compare leadership qualities of Tennessee's Reward Schools (top 10% performing schools) and Focus Schools (bottom 10% performing schools).
2. Similarly, a qualitative study could be performed to further investigate teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus.

3. This study examined student growth only in reading and mathematics TVAAS data. A similar study can be conducted to determine the relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in science and social studies.
4. A similar study can be conducted that studies the relationships of between student growth and the perceptions of administrator leadership focus from parents, students, and other community stakeholders.
5. An additional study can be completed that utilizes longitudinal data and compares administrator growth and student academic growth.
6. An identical study can be simulated using data from additional schools throughout Tennessee.

Overall Summary

This study was organized and presented over five chapters and used a quantitative design to investigate the relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership focus and student growth in reading and mathematics for elementary and middle schools in nine school systems located in northeast Tennessee during the 2012-2013 academic year. Chapter 1 consisted of the introduction, purpose statement, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations and delimitations, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 contained a review of literature that relates to this study including the following topics: background, Tennessee's Instructional Leadership Standards, teacher perception of administrators, traditional roles of administrators, school leadership, vision for continuous improvement, environment, key practices of effective school leaders, trust and respect,

collaboration, shared leadership, data use and analysis, and the conclusion. Chapter 3 provided an outline of the research methodology with specific details around the research questions and null hypothesis, instrumentation, population, data collection, data analysis, and a summary of the methodology. Chapter 4 presented the analysis of data for each research question. Chapter 5 provided the summary of findings for each research question, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

The results indicated there was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of administrators maintaining an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and both student growth in reading and mathematics. The results of the correlations for teacher perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading and mathematics yielded different results. There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in reading. However, there was a significant relationship between teacher's perception of leadership providing opportunities for collaboration and student growth in mathematics.

There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of shared leadership and both student growth in reading and mathematics. There was not a significant relationship between teacher perception of the value of school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning and both student growth in reading and mathematics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SCHOOLS' TVAAS AND TELL DATA

School Coded #	Student Enrollment	Teachers Completed the TELL Survey	Math TVAAS Mean Gain	RLA TVAAS Mean Gain	Shared Leadership Rate of Agreement	Collaboration Rate of Agreement	Trust and Respect Rate of Agreement	Data Use and Analysis Rate of Agreement
1	268	26	2.5	0.2	0.767	0.750	0.781	0.915
2	429	25	3.4	-0.6	0.766	0.867	0.840	0.973
3	313	31	3.9	0.9	0.610	0.794	0.475	0.932
4	517	33	4.8	1	0.925	0.939	0.805	0.928
5	462	24	5.6	3.9	0.795	0.819	0.724	0.957
6	478	31	4.8	3.7	0.830	0.773	0.733	0.881
7	314	14	2	1.6	0.914	0.727	0.905	0.923
8	465	20	4.9	2.8	0.848	0.705	0.667	0.945
9	111	11	3.5	1.5	0.884	0.848	0.909	0.970
10	193	17	9.9	1.6	0.854	0.898	0.824	0.979
11	379	29	-6.5	0.6	0.979	0.930	0.926	1.000
12	74	6	1.8	0.3	0.760	0.667	0.833	1.000
13	401	26	1.2	0.6	0.766	0.799	0.663	0.938
14	49	9	3.8	0.3	0.971	0.958	0.963	1.000
15	394	32	2.4	1.2	0.808	0.692	0.748	0.908
16	254	21	3.1	0.9	0.791	0.622	0.889	0.884
17	407	29	5.4	3.1	0.907	0.860	0.927	0.963
18	285	29	4.3	-0.9	0.930	0.931	0.953	1.000
19	802	49	3.6	0.2	0.913	0.869	0.938	0.971
20	273	17	8.4	1.5	0.896	0.803	0.920	0.960
21	247	15	1.9	0.7	0.959	0.911	0.978	1.000
22	544	29	1.7	2.4	0.877	0.664	0.868	1.000
23	390	22	8.6	0.6	0.927	0.906	0.909	0.921
24	306	17	4.1	0.4	0.911	0.792	0.753	0.912
25	490	33	13.1	8.8	0.859	0.928	0.787	0.967
26	337	28	2.2	2.4	0.954	0.869	0.887	0.974
27	539	35	7.1	2.7	0.887	0.894	0.871	0.950
28	329	24	3.6	1.7	0.827	0.895	0.827	0.952
29	455	30	-1.6	0.9	0.881	0.768	0.791	0.976
30	510	25	5.3	-0.5	0.892	0.893	0.945	0.925
31	364	20	3.4	0	0.544	0.594	0.689	0.917
32	363	20	2	-2.9	0.905	0.583	0.913	1.000
33	443	30	5.3	5.2	0.839	0.844	0.716	0.952

School Coded #	Student Enrollment	Teachers Completed the TELL Survey	Math TVAAS Mean Gain	RLA TVAAS Mean Gain	Shared Leadership Rate of Agreement	Collaboration Rate of Agreement	Trust and Respect Rate of Agreement	Data Use and Analysis Rate of Agreement
34	312	20	2.9	-1.1	0.968	0.898	0.831	0.982
35	585	45	3.3	2	0.813	0.761	0.786	0.928
36	324	23	5.9	1.9	0.913	0.822	1.000	0.952
37	144	10	6.1	1.3	1.000	0.825	1.000	0.933
38	493	33	0.9	-1.9	0.889	0.731	0.908	0.957
39	561	34	-1	0.4	0.814	0.753	0.850	0.827
40	851	51	4.3	-0.5	0.900	0.878	0.932	0.919
41	479	28	7	2.4	0.814	0.786	0.655	0.964
42	351	15	-1.8	-2.4	0.765	0.556	0.886	0.930
43	697	40	4	-0.8	0.849	0.638	0.894	0.920
44	574	32	10.4	6.9	0.863	0.686	0.891	0.929
45	623	39	2.8	0.7	0.847	0.860	0.910	0.956
46	381	18	5.4	1.7	0.908	0.535	0.864	0.958
47	554	40	0	0.7	0.839	0.678	0.783	0.936
48	386	30	2.7	0.4	0.912	0.792	0.897	0.966
49	443	31	-2	1.1	0.864	0.791	0.755	0.967
50	480	28	6.5	2.1	0.884	0.890	0.899	0.988
51	657	42	4	0.6	0.820	0.709	0.852	0.868
52	470	27	5	2.7	0.807	0.725	0.802	0.957
53	410	18	4.6	0.9	0.828	0.852	0.944	0.981
54	465	34	3.5	0.8	0.878	0.794	0.833	0.968
55	531	30	7.4	3.5	0.875	0.817	0.849	0.951
56	413	29	4.5	1.5	0.869	0.846	0.906	0.964
57	629	33	-0.4	-1.2	0.868	0.866	0.936	0.968
58	324	25	8.1	5.1	0.975	0.812	0.987	0.972
59	427	16	3.9	4.8	0.887	0.678	0.844	0.938
60	535	42	6.7	4.5	0.914	0.920	0.894	0.982
61	1159	72	5.3	1.1	0.921	0.919	0.873	0.961
62	395	22	6.9	5.3	0.907	0.893	0.833	0.985
63	188	11	-1	5.3	1.000	0.564	0.879	0.967
64	503	29	4.6	-0.2	0.897	0.859	0.953	0.949
65	537	50	5.2	0.3	0.912	0.899	0.926	0.895
66	684	39	3.9	1.4	0.843	0.733	0.799	0.946
67	376	27	6.8	7	0.857	0.731	0.793	0.904
68	448	28	8.7	2.6	0.953	0.855	0.976	0.973
69	326	19	4.2	1.4	0.925	0.877	0.874	0.982
70	446	23	0.3	-1.4	0.776	0.777	0.859	0.881
71	476	38	6.6	3.4	0.869	0.885	0.893	0.964
72	478	26	5.8	5.2	0.945	0.653	0.936	0.957
73	336	25	7.7	1.8	0.949	0.852	0.904	1.000
74	680	40	2.6	0.3	0.907	0.747	0.881	0.955
75	325	32	5.8	1.3	0.781	0.798	0.893	0.890

APPENDIX B: IRB EXEMPTION LETTER

East Tennessee State University
Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

November 14, 2014

Kyle Loudermilk
Zkal19@goldmail.etsu.edu

Dear Kyle,

Thank you for recently submitting information regarding your proposed project "Teacher perceptions and the impact on student growth in reading-language arts and math."

I have reviewed the information, which includes a completed Form 129.

The determination is that this proposed activity as described meets neither the FDA nor the DHHS definition of research involving human subjects. Therefore, it does not fall under the purview of the ETSU IRB.

IRB review and approval by East Tennessee State University is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are human subject research in which the organization is engaged, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,
Stacey Williams, Ph.D.
Chair, ETSU IRB

Accredited Since December 2005

VITA

KYLE A. LOUDERMILK

Personal Data:	Date of Birth: February 3, 1987
	Place of Birth: Bristol, Virginia
	Marital Status: Married
Education:	Ed.D. Educational Leadership East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2015
	Ed.S. Curriculum and Instruction Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee, 2012
	M.A. Educational Leadership Union College, Barbourville, Kentucky, 2010
	B.S. Elementary Education K-6 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2009
Professional Experience:	Associate Principal, Lincoln Elementary 2014 – Present Kingsport City Schools, Tennessee
	Data Analyst, Battelle for Kids – TDOE, 2013 -2014 First CORE Region, Johnson City, Tennessee
	Teacher, Blountville Elementary, 2011 – 2013 Sullivan County Schools, Tennessee
	Teacher, Akard Elementary, 2009 – 2011 Sullivan County Schools, Tennessee