EDUCATION LEADERSHIP REVIEW

Volume 18
Fall 2017

A nationally referred journal sponsored
and published by the International Council
of Professors of Educational Leadership

ICPEL
Education Leadership Review

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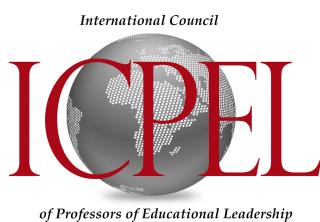
Out Over Their Skis: A Study of Principal Preparation Program Policy in Florida

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Perceived shortage of principals, increased accountability demands, the changing role of principals, and the growing influence of the state over school administration have created a set of challenges for principal certification and licensure that have propelled a renewed need for analysis of certification and licensure processes. Recent calls to hold preparation programs accountable for outcomes have prompted states to develop and adopt preparation program accountability systems. One primary feature of these systems is the success of program graduates on a state test leading to principal certification. Yet, little research has examined the validity and reliability of such state tests in assessing even the likely effectiveness of aspiring principals, let alone predicting their actual effectiveness once employed as a principal. This conceptual study utilizes theoretical analysis of extant literature and empirical analysis of extant data from one state (Florida) to reach conclusions about the appropriateness of using a state test to (1) credential aspiring educational leaders; and (2) evaluate principal-preparation programs.

Current literature on educational leadership preparation programs contributes to an understanding of what should be included in preparation curriculum–pedagogies that have the potential for developing strong leaders, inclusion of a rigorous internships, and effective partnership between universities and districts (Crow & Whiteman, 2016). However, little is known about the appropriateness of using a state examination to (1) credential aspiring educational leaders and (2) evaluate principal preparation programs. This paper utilizes critical policy analysis (Taylor, 1997) to address the research problem that policymakers, researchers, and practitioners lack a clear understanding of the appropriateness of the state examination (the Florida Educational Leadership Examination, or FELE) that educational leadership candidates in state-approved university-based[1] preparation programs in Florida are required to pass in order to graduate and obtain credentials to serve as a school administrator in ensuring quality leaders for the state's public schools.

Methods, Research Questions, and Conceptual Frame

As deployed here, critical policy analysis represents an approach in which policy is viewed as situated in (and thus the outcome of) specific contexts and the power dynamics that characterize those contexts (Ball, 1994; Edmonson, 2004; Prunty, 1985; Taylor, 1997). Operating from the position that policy is an outward manifestation of the values of its authors (Ball, 1994), such analyses are explicitly attentive to the historical, social, political, and economic forces that shape and are shaped by the values of the dominant groups in a particular context.

To provide an overall structure for the investigation, an analytical model developed by Fallon and Paquette (2009) based on earlier work by Blaikie and Soussan (2000) and Levin (2001) was adapted and modified. The model is grounded in a *stage theory* approach to understanding and describing public policy cycles (Fallon & Paquette, 2009). The one substantial modification to the Fallon and Paquette model here involved collapsing *policy adoption* and *policy implementation* into a single stage of the policy cycle. The rationale for that modification is that the contemporary FELE process has come about through an iterative process in which policy adoption and implementation (as operationalized in the model) are intertwined; thus, examining the two stages jointly should allow for a clearer understanding of the policy trajectory represented by the various iterations of FELE since its initial development.

The research questions driving the inquiry are aligned with the three stages of the policy cycle as described above. The first question asks *what are the historical, social, and political origins of the state examination used to certify school administrators in Florida?* The second question asks *what processes of policy development and implementation led to the current iteration of the Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE)?* The third question asks *what impact has the FELE had on the state's school leaders and the schools in which they serve*? In the case of all three questions, the inquiry adopts a decidedly critical approach. Data sources include archived primary documents (e.g., we examined state laws and administrative codes, state department of education materials) and publicly available extant data (e.g., we conducted original analyses of FELE results provided by the state department of education).

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[1] Of note, some non-university entities are involved in the development and implementation of educational leadership preparation, but the large majority of Florida educational leaders are trained in state accredited university programs.

The conceptual frame for this analysis integrates stage theory (Fallon & Paquette, 2009) and salient work from the extant literature describing current reforms and best practices in leadership preparation. Specifically, we utilize stage theory as a structural frame and the extant literature as the framework of critique (i.e., investigating the development and implementation of the FELE across stages through the lens of current thinking about what leadership certification programs should be and do).

Review of Relevant Literature

In the last few decades of the twentieth century, several reports have called for reforms in the preparation of school leaders (McCarthy, 2002). The most influential of these reports was *Leaders for America's Schools* (National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, 1987), which recommended eliminating at least two thirds of existing educational leadership programs nationwide and modeling the remaining third after law or medical schools (Cohen-Vogel & Herrington, 2005). In 1996 (revisions occurred in 2008 and 2015), the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association developed national policy standards for school leaders with funding from the Wallace Foundation. The six Inter-state School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) policy standards were intended to upgrade the quality of the profession (Cohen-Vogel & Herrington, 2005). Eight states adopted the ISLLC standards outright, 23 others added to or modified the standards for leadership frameworks, and 10 states separately developed leadership standards found to align with the ISLLC standards (Canole & Young, 2013). Within a decade, the ISLLC standards had become almost universally accepted across the United States, and by 2005, 46 states had adopted, slightly adapted, or relied upon the standards to develop their own state standards (Murphy, 2005; Murphy, Moorman, & McCarthy, 2008). Of note, in 2015 the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) was released by the Council of Chief State School Officers, ostensibly replacing both the ISLLC and ELCC (Educational Leadership Constituent Council) standards.

Half of all US states have mandated that aspiring administrators take and pass a standardized examination as a condition of attaining their administrative license (Canole & Young, 2013). Of these states, 18 require the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which is aligned with the ISLLC standards (Grissom, Mitani, & Blissett, 2017; McCarthy & Forsyth, 2009). States have also used the standards to implement significant changes in their program accreditation policies and processes and to mandate reviews of their approved leadership preparation programs (Murphy, 2003). At the national level, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) educational leadership specialty area, conducted by the Educational Leadership Licensure Consortium (ELLC), has used a modified version of these standards to guide their leadership preparation program reviews since 2001 (Canole & Young, 2013).

Currently, 18 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and two territories rely on the SLLA when licensing principals. Grissom et al. (2017) investigated 10 years of SLLA data on Tennessee test takers and found substantial differences in passage rates by test-taker characteristics. In particular, non-Whites are 12 percentage points less likely than otherwise similar White test takers to attain the required licensure score. Although candidates with higher scores are more likely to be hired as principals, they found little evidence that SLLA scores predict measures of principal job performance, including supervisors' evaluation ratings or

teachers' assessments of school leadership from a statewide survey. Grissom and colleagues (2017) question whether conditioning administrative licensure on SLLA passage is consistent with principal workforce diversity goals.

Policy Contexts

The literature on leadership preparation program elements does not exist in a vacuum, but rather in a context that has both internal and external forces. An increasingly influential external force is the regulatory role of the state (Cibulka, 2009; Louis, Thomas, Gordon, & Febey, 2008; Roach, Smith, & Boutin, 2011). The state's influence on program approval and improvement has intensified in the last several years, and in many instances has emphasized outcome measures (Cheney & Davis, 2011; Phillips, 2013a, 2013b). In addition to states' emphasis on program evaluation, other units have contributed to the increasingly high stakes for program evaluation. These include districts developing their own leadership preparation programs (Mitgang, 2012), foundations focusing attention and resources in the areas of leadership standards and leader preparation (especially Wahlstrom, Seashore Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010), and the private sector pursuing a role and an opportunity to monetize that role. In Florida, the Duval County School District (the state's 6th largest and the nation's 22nd largest district serving the Jacksonville metropolitan area) operates its own leadership preparation program (the Assistant Principal Preparation Program or APPP).

Program Assessment Instruments and Program Evaluation

The development of assessment instruments is a recent trend in the evaluation of academic programs. Consequently, researchers are increasingly focusing on program evaluation instruments and practices due to the high stakes nature of their outcomes and use (Gates & Kruse, 2016). The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) /Teaching in Educational Administration Special Interest Group (SIG) taskforce has been instrumental in designing assessment frameworks and in encouraging the development of appropriate instruments (Orr & Pounder, 2006; Pounder, 2012). Other researchers have also taken on this important initiative (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2010; Melton, Tysinger, Mallory, & Green, 2011; Ross, 2010).

 The majority of program evaluation efforts are conducted at the state, rather than national level. Crow and Whiteman (2016) focused on program outcomes, and candidate performance, while recent trends among researchers compare programs within the same state, Indiana (Black, 2011), across several states (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Murphy et al., 2008), schools with similar characteristics (Doolittle & Brown, 2011), different state political climates (Louis et al., 2008), and different foci, including social (Rodríguez, Chambers, González, & Scheurich, 2010) and turnaround principals (Schmidt-Davis, 2012).

Leadership Certification and Preparation in Florida

Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS)

Florida was a leader among states in recognizing the need for explicit principal leadership standards (Santostefano, 2013). The Florida Management Training Act (Florida Department of

Education, 1979) required a state system identifying competencies that support the effective management of schools; a performance-based management training program; a program of competency-based certification for school managers to become effective July 1, 1986; and a performance-based evaluation and compensation program for educational managers (FLDOE 2009, 2012).

In April 2005, the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) replaced the Florida Competencies (State Board of Education 6B-5.0012) and were adopted into rule (6A-5.080) by the State Board in 2006-07 (FLDOE, 2005). State Board of Education Rule 6A-4.00821 also states that the Commissioner of Education shall develop the Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE), and comply with Florida Statute 1012.56 (9)(b):

> The State Board of Education shall, by rule, specify the examination scores that are required for the issuance of a professional certificate and temporary certificate. Such rules must define generic subject area competencies and must establish uniform evaluation guidelines.

In 2011, Florida received federal Race to the Top (RTT) funding to review credentialing grounded by the rationale that as more is being expected from Florida students so more should be expected from Florida teachers and administrators (White, 2017). The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) formulated a RTT Teacher and Leader Preparation Implementation Committee (TLPIC) comprising teachers; school leaders; postsecondary institutions; school districts; district administrators; superintendents; and school board members. This committee was tasked with revising the FPLS to align with contemporary research on effective school leadership as presented to them by Drs. Douglas Reeves and Raymond Smith from The Leadership and Learning Center, a division of Houghton Mifflin (Santostefano, 2013). The committee's FPLS draft was presented to a subcommittee of William Cecil Golden Program partners; postsecondary and school leadership preparation representatives; and other interested stakeholders in order to receive feedback. Based on that feedback, the FLDOE and the TLPIC revised the FPLS draft. Following review and revision by the Commissioner of Education, the proposed draft standards were presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) for adoption into State Board Rule (FLDOE, 2012). The revised standards, organized under three domains: students' achievement, instructional leadership, and organizational leadership (Florida Principal Leadership Standards, 2011) were adopted by SBE Rule 6A-5.080.

Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE)

As previously mentioned, the Florida Management Training Act (Florida Department of Education, 1979) stipulated that all prospective school administrators needed to pass a competency examination in order to achieve Educational Leadership certification in the state of Florida. The FLDOE developed the Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE) in partnership with its contractor, Pearson. Beginning in October 2007, passing results in three skill areas were required to achieve educational leadership certification: (a) school communications, (b) school management, and (c) school operations. The three areas were changed, effective January 1, 2009, to (a) instructional leadership, (b) operational leadership, and (c) school leadership.

The current FELE, known, as FELE 3.0 was developed to align with State Board of Education-approved FPLS, adopted into rule (6A-5.080) by the State Board in 2011 (FLDOE, 2014). In addition to updating examination content to reflect the updated FPLS, FELE 3.0 also

focuses more explicitly on strategies that positively impact student achievement, incorporates the new *Beginning School Effective Administrator Candidate* (BESAC) profile, and increases rigor and cognitive complexity of the examination as a whole (Canto, 2013). When redesigning the FELE, the state conceptualized the test's target candidate as being a BESAC. A concept developed and defined by a representative sample of Florida educators:

> A beginning school effective administrator candidate (BESAC) understands a core of research on instructional strategies, and behaviors, leadership, decision-making models, and state approved academic and accountability standards so that the administrator will have a high probability of positively impacting student achievement, faculty development, school management, and the development of professional and ethical behavior. (FLDOE, 2014)

The explicit focus on strategies to positively impacting student achievement represents attentiveness to the ongoing evolution of the role of a school leader from manager to chief instructional officer (see, e.g., Alvoid & Black, 2014). The BESAC profile represents an attempt to capture the breadth and depth of leadership knowledge and skill that can be expected at the point of entry to the field (i.e., the FPLS articulates the desired expectations for a practicing school leader; the BESAC profile is intended to help gauge how those same expectations can be applied to the school leader just entering the field). The increased rigor and cognitive complexity was the direct result of longstanding criticism that the examination was not challenging enough, with first-attempt pass rates typically between 85% and 90% state-wide.

In terms of test structure/format, FELE 3.0 is organized as three separate subtests: leadership for student learning (with approximately 70 multiple-choice questions), organizational development (with approximately 70 multiple-choice questions), and systems leadership (with approximately 55 multiple-choice questions and one written performance assessment) (FLDOE, 2013). In total then, the examination includes approximately 195 multiple-choice questions and one written performance assessment (see Table 1).

Table 1
FELE 3.0: FPLS Content Alignment and Test Specifications

Subtest #1 Leadership for Student Learning	Subtest #2 Organizational Development	Subtest #3 Systems Leadership	
Standard 1 – *Student Learning Results* Standard 2 – *Student Learning as a Priority* Standard 3 – *Instructional Plan Implementation* Standard 5 – *Learning Environment*	Standard 4 – *Faculty Development* Standard 7 – *Leadership Development* Standard 10 – *Professional and Ethical Behavior*	Standard 6 – *Decision Making* Standard 8 – *School Management* Standard 9 – *Communication*	
70 Multiple Choice (MC) test items	70 MC test items	55 MC test items	Written Performance Assessment (WPA)
2 hours	2 hours	2.5 hours	

Source: FLDOE (n. d.)

All Florida state accredited, institutional, educational leadership programs require candidates to successfully pass the FELE (at a cost of $215.00 for the full test and $225.00 for a battery retake or a subtest) in order to complete their academic program. Successful completion of the academic program (including passing the FELE) leads to initial certification in Educational Leadership (Level 1 Certification) and eligibility for administrative positions in school districts. The processes followed in the development of FELE 3.0 is described in the following sections in terms of several key design components: stakeholder involvement, validation process, raters for the subtest 3 written performance assessment, standard-setting, and data monitoring and reporting.

Stakeholder involvement. According to Pearson Education (2017), stakeholder involvement in the test development process involved "highly qualified classroom teachers, district coordinators, college and university faculty" (para. 2), all of whom were "instrumental in gathering validity evidence and creating assessment materials that are job-related, accurate, measurable, bias-free, and aligned with relevant educational standards for the subject area" (para. 2). In comparison to the earlier version of the FELE, the redesigned FELE differs in the following ways: (1) higher cognitive complexity levels for items, (2) higher difficulty levels for items, (3) stronger emphasis on content knowledge needed by the BESAC, (4) minimum scoring for written performance assessment (WPA) determined at standard setting, and (5) no program/initiative names (Verges & Canto, 2014).

Validation process. Various stakeholder committees including educators from public schools and colleges across the state and generally reflected the diversity of the state of Florida (FLDOE, 2014) were engaged to complete the following activities: (1) develop, validate, and finalize competencies and test blueprints; (2) develop and finalize item specifications; (3) develop, field/pilot test, and validate items; (4) assemble and validate test forms; and (5) conduct key validation

Raters for Subtest 3 Written Performance Assessment. In order to be approved to score by the Florida Department of Education, FELE raters can be either an active school- or a district-level administrator with at least three years of experience; a school or district-level administrator with at least three (3) years of experience who has retired within the past two years; or a retired faculty member who has had three (3) years of experience as a school administrator or district-level administrator within the last ten years (Pearson Evaluation Systems Group, 2015, 2017).

Standard setting. The modified Angoff method (Angoff, 1971) was used to set passing scores for the examinations. Using this method, subject matter experts reviewed each item and marked the proportion of the BESAC population that would provide a correct response (FLDOE, 2015). Panel members represented districts and colleges across the state and generally reflected the diversity of the state of Florida were tasked with determining a test score that reflects the boundary line between candidates who satisfy the testing requirements for educational leadership licensure and those who do not. The passing scores are required to be set high enough to distinguish adequate from inadequate performance, but not too high to be unreasonably limiting (Pearson Evaluation Systems Group, 2017. The standard setting process included the following steps: (1) standard setting panel identified and trained; (2) performance-level descriptors developed; (3) item ratings identified and discussed; (4) discussion and feedback from FLDOE; and (5) ratings compiled to establish passing scores. During the first three months of FELE 3.0 implementation (i.e., January to March 2014), a *hold harmless* provision was implemented by setting the passing score at the point value that would maintain the same passing rate as the

FELE 2.0 that was administered through December 2013. Comparing the actual passing rates (using "linked" results, or results based upon maintaining the previous passing rates) with the results that would have been derived from immediate implementation of the new passing scores ("projected" results) demonstrates the increased expectations and the expected impact on test-takers (see Table 2).

Table 2
Impact Data and Passing Scores by FELE Subtest (Jan to March 2014)

FELE Subtest	N tested	Linked (Current) Passing Score	Linked (Current) Passing Rate	Recommended Passing Score	Projected Passing Rates
FELE Subtest 1	237	42 of 70 (60%)	84%	48 of 70 (69%)	58%
FELE Subtest 2	232	40 of 69 (58%)	89%	48 of 69 (70%)	55%
FELE Subtest 3	235	Weighted Composite Score (MC 70% & Writing 30%)	72%	MC 36 of 55 (66%) Writing 7 of 12 (58%)	34%

Source: FLDOE, 2014

As depicted in Table 2, the implementation of new passing scores was predicted to result in a pass rate decrease ranging from 26 percentage points (for subtest 1) to 38 percentage points (for subtest 3).

      Data monitoring and reporting. Data are collected on each item, allowing for the empirical consideration of item difficulty, item discrimination, content accuracy, and the plausibility of distractors. These item statistics are calculated and evaluated for the current administration and cumulatively (i.e., combined statistics for previous operational test administrations). In addition to simple descriptive data (e.g., *N* tested, *N* items used and omitted, raw score statistics), the analyses for the total test include the following: (1) *N* in 27% group (see item discrimination index), (2) average p-value, (3) average point biserial, (4) KR20 test reliability, (5) standard error of measurement, and (6) Brennan-Kane index. The analyses for each item include (1) item response distribution by response alternative (number and proportion); (2) p-value; (3) item-to-test point biserial correlations; and (4) item discrimination index (the difference in proportion correct between the upper and lower 27% of examinees). Item bias statistics (which measure the extent to which item performance may reflect group membership rather than the knowledge or skill that the item is designed to measure) are reported on a monthly basis for forms that meet the specified criteria for focal groups (focal group: Sample size=30 or more examinees) (Pearson Evaluation Systems Group, 2015).

    After operational data have been reviewed by the FLDOE, it is shared with state approved program on a bi-weekly basis. The pass rate is monitored by the FLDOE and any underperforming items are removed (White, 2017).

FELE 3.0 Results
      As noted, prior to FELE 3.0 statewide pass rates were generally at or near 90%. With the

implementation of FELE 3.0 came a marked decrease in pass rates (see Table 3).

Table 3
First-Time Examinees' Longitudinal Passing Rates by Subtest (2012-2015)

	2012 Pass Rate (*N* tested)	2013 Pass Rate (*N* tested)	2014 Pass Rate (*N* tested)	2015 Pass Rate (*N* tested)
FELE Subtest 1	88% (*N*=1,543)	89% (*N*=2,615)	84% (*N*=1,495)	65% (*N*=1,526)
FELE Subtest 2	94% (N=1,538)	93% (N=2,611)	90% (N=1,485)	60% (N=1,523)
FELE Subtest 3 – MC	88% (N=1,538)	86% (N=2,618)	82% (N=1,485)	52% (N=1,520)
FELE Subtest 3 - WPA	NA	NA	NA	55% (N=1,518)
FELE total – all subtests	90% (n=4,619)	90% (N=7,844)	85% (N=4,465)	58% (N=6,087)

Source: Canto & Olgar, 2017

In 2015-16, the two-year period since implementation of FELE 3.0 with the new cut scores, pass rates across the four examination areas ranged from 52% to 63% for first-attempt and from 71% to 75% for best attempt (Canto & Olgar, 2017) (see Table 4).

Table 4
Statewide Pass Rates for FELE 3.0 (January 2, 2015 – December 31, 2016)

Test Name	*N*	First-Attempt Pass Rate	*N*	Best-Attempt Pass Rate
FELE Subtest 1: Leadership for Student Learning	3,215	63%	3,199	75%
FELE Subtest 2: Organizational Development	3,158	60%	3,149	75%
FELE Subtest 3: Systems Leadership - Multiple Choice	3,205	53%	3,186	71%
FELE Subtest 3: Systems Leadership – Written Performance	3,200	52%	3,200	73%

Source: Canto & Olgar, 2017

It is not unreasonable to expect an initial dip in scores with the implementation of a new examination. When the results from Table 1 are divided into 2015 results (i.e., examinations completed January 2, 2015 to December 31, 2015) and 2016 results (i.e., examinations completed January 2, 2016 to December 31, 2016) and compared, however, the observed changes are minimal (indeed, in the case of the written performance section of subtest 3, the pass rate actually declined from 2015 to 2016. In other words, this was not an initial dip in scores but a sustained lower level of performance (and, in one case, continued decline) (see Table 5).

Table 5
Statewide Pass Rates for FELE 3.0 (2015/2016 First-Attempt Pass Rates Comparison)

Test Name	2015			2016		
	N	Pass Rate	Mean Score	*N*	Pass Rate	Mean Score
FELE Subtest 1: Leadership for Student Learning	1,617	63%	202	1,598	63%	203
FELE Subtest 2: Organizational Development	1,568	58%	200	1,590	63%	203
FELE Subtest 3: Systems Leadership - Multiple Choice	1,620	50%	197	1,585	55%	199
FELE Subtest 3: Systems Leadership – Written Performance	1,618	54%	7	1,582	50%	7

Source: Canto & Olgar, 2017

The impact of the new passing scores for FELE 3.0, effective since April 2015, quickly became evident:

> "It is embarrassing," said one middle school teacher. "It's ridiculous. I want to cry. I now feel like this is the stupidest thing I've ever done." He left a professional career in writing to get his master's in teaching but hasn't been able to pass the FELE's essay portion. Over the last two years, he said he's taken the essay, which focuses largely on data analysis, six times, spending over $1,000 on the test alone. Graded on a number scale, an examinee must earn a score of seven to pass, and the highest score possible is a 12. The last time he took the test, he said he "felt the best he'd ever felt" and was sure he'd passed. "I scored a four," he said. "I don't even know what to think." (Dion, 2017, paras. 12-14)

The pass rate for the Written Performance Assessment (WPA) referenced by the above teacher is 50% among first-time examinees (Dion, 2017). The sentiment expressed is reflective of many test takers due to the failure to receive any feedback on their test performance. Unofficial scores are released at the test site immediately after the test and official score reports are issued electronically within 4 weeks after testing or 6 weeks for tests with performance items (FLDOE, 2015). Test scores can be challenged ($75) by going to a Pearson Vue, the test's administrators, center and, in one hour, writing a letter to the FLDOE "defending the essay without knowing what exactly is wrong with it—on a computer without spelling or grammar checking software" (Dion, 2017, para. 18). Changes to passing scores impact student matriculation (e.g., program enrollment, academic progress), certification, employment within Florida public school districts, and ethnic and racial diversity among the ranks of certified assistant principals and principals (Canto, 2013).

Program Approval

The impacts of the implementation of FELE 3.0 are not limited to aspiring leaders who take the examination. With the passage of Florida HB 719, Level 1 certification programs in the state are required to report the following as part of the program approval process (FLDOE, 2016):

1. Rate of program completers placed in school leadership positions in public schools;
2. Results from personnel evaluations of program completers;
3. Passage rate on the Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE 3.0);
4. Impact that program completers have on student learning;
5. Strategies for continuous improvement and involving program completers, other school personnel, community agencies and business representatives in the program evaluation process; and
6. Other data provided by the institution or school district.

The first requirement is problematic for reasons beyond the immediate scope of this paper and are best addressed elsewhere. Requirements five and six are innocuous. Here, and related to the role of the state test in leadership preparation certification and approval of preparation programs, our focus is on requirements three, two, and four.

The third requirement stipulates that preparation programs be evaluated based on the success of their students on the FELE. There are logistical challenges resulted from the way this requirement was operationalized in the statutory language (e.g., all programs require a passing FELE result for program completion, so the rate would be 100% for all), but these challenges can likely be addressed. A more pressing issue is that the FELE itself has no established criterion-related validity; thus, preparation programs are to be evaluated based upon their success in preparing students to pass an examination for which there is no external marker of utility with regard to effective leadership or desirable schooling outcomes.

Theoretically (and subject to some notable methodological limitations), the second and fourth requirements have merit as outcome measures for leadership preparation programs. The results of administrator evaluations and student assessments would be useful indicators for understanding the effectiveness of completers who are practicing leaders, assuming a valid, reliable evaluation system for administrators and a valid, reliable system for assessing student learning. The irony is that these two measures offer potential (but not used) variables for enhancing the validity of FELE 3.0 (i.e., for promoting predictive validity).

Analysis

Within the context of changes in leadership preparation in recent decades, the state of Florida has essentially placed most of its eggs in a single basket—the FELE. At considerable time and expense, the state has developed its own standards and its own examination for assessing knowledge and application of those standards. It is important to note here that the state took great pains during the development process to promote (1) *face validity*: ensuring that the examination is an effective *translation* of the construct—in other words, ensuring that the FELE measures the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS); (2) *content validity*: ensuring that the examination reflects relevant content for the discipline—in other words, ensuring that the examination structure and individual items are attentive to the relevant extant literature; and (3) *reliability*: ensuring that examinees experience essentially the same examination regardless of where or when they take it.

As noted earlier, this work substantively involved academic and practitioner stakeholders.

While important, such efforts are insufficient to establish confidence in a high stakes examination that will be used to certify leaders, confer degrees, and evaluate university-based academic programs. Criterion-based validity measures like predictive validity, concurrent validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity (Johnson & Christenson, 2008) would help to increase confidence in the examination (and, through that process, likely disclose issues and yield recommendations that could improve the examination and its implementation). Of these measures, the two most salient here are *predictive validity* and *concurrent validity*. Measuring the correlation between FELE results and desirable outcomes (administrator evaluations and/or school-wide assessment results) would enhance confidence that what the FELE measures is aligned to what practicing administrators are expected to do (*predictive validity*). Measuring the correlation between FELE results and some external measure of leadership quality (e.g., SLLA results) would enhance confidence that what the FELE measures is what the larger community of scholars, policymakers, and practitioners has deemed relevant and important for school leadership (*concurrent validity*).

There are other issues as well. M.Ed. Educational Leadership programs have a moral imperative to ensure that content delivery reflects and addresses current federal, state, and district school issues. Ultimately this leads to dissonance between program content and FELE content due to the FELE constantly lagging behind the curve. On a more pragmatic level, taking the FELE imposes a substantial personal financial cost for the aspiring school leader. The first attempt of any combination of subtests is $215; retakes (any combination of subtests) is $225; and a single section of Subtest 3 (either the multiple-choice or the Written Performance Assessment) is $150. Inability to personally fund the taking/retaking of the FELE can seriously impact career progression of aspiring school leaders. Students from university-based programs also incur additional tuition costs in order to maintain enrollment in their educational leadership academic program until they have completed the remaining graduation criteria of passing the FELE (FLDOE, 2013).

Timing as to when to take the FELE can be contentious. For the test to be valid, it can be assumed that all program content is of equal value but it can take up to 6 weeks to receive a full test score. As M.Ed. Educational Leadership candidates are required to pass the FELE in order to graduate and most candidates seek a May graduation date in order to move forward in their career, candidates are taking the FELE earlier in the program (when they may be less prepared) to ensure that they are able to have a second chance at taking the test bearing in mind the need for a 30-day gap between attempts. Moreover, most FELE test takers are full-time teachers with substantial professional commitments. Consequently the FELE tends to be taken on a Saturday and it is a long day. Subtest 1 and 2 are allocated two hours each and Subtest 3 is subdivided into 90 minutes for the multiple-choice section and one hour for Written Performance Section. If two or all three subtests are taken in a single session, there is a 15-minute break between each subtest.

Assessment feedback is minimal, leading to candidate frustration and irritation. Unofficial pass/non-pass status for the multiple-choice-only subtests/sections are provided immediately after testing; official score reports are released within four weeks of testing; and official score reports for subtests/sections with performance assessments are released within six weeks of testing (Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE) (081)). Specifically, the lack of feedback on the Written Performance Assessment (WPA) has given cause for concern amongst both students and faculty. The WPA is intended to measure prospective educational leaders' and administrators' ability to analyze and interpret educational data, as well as the

efficacy of their written communication. Examinees are asked to respond to a prompt related to student achievement data as it applies to a given school type. Scoring rubrics are provided by the FLDOE in the free FELE test information guide. Faculty and examinees are well acquainted with the rubrics and ensure that all required aspects are addressed in WPA responses. Yet, excellent writers and data analysts are failing to achieve a passing grade in this section and often are unaware of the issue they need to address to experience success.

Conclusion

In this study, critical policy analysis was utilized to address research questions investigating (1) the historical, social, and political origins of the state examination used to certify school administrators in Florida; (2) the processes of policy development and implementation that led to the current iteration of the Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE); and (3) the impact has the FELE had on the state's school leaders and the schools in which they serve. Results suggest that the reforms in leadership preparation policy that resulted in various iterations of the FELE was grounded in sound intentions but evolved over time into a problematic process with empirical limitations and practical issues that demand attention.

The correlation between successfully passing a multiple-choice licensure examination and principal performance has yet to be adequately researched, let alone proven. Nevertheless the state of Florida has made success on such an examination *the* central element of determining the suitability of aspiring school leaders. Moreover, there is increasing movement toward evaluating leadership preparation programs based on outcomes that largely reflect the results of the same examination. In contrast, educational leadership professors who work with aspiring administrators and the school and school district where they serve possess substantive knowledge of their students from classroom interactions and rigorous internships in the field where both scholarship and practitioner excellence are examined. Attentive to the limitations evident in the current operational model, we would recommend that attention be paid to nurturing demonstrable competencies rather than completion of multiple-choice questions and to utilizing modern technology to assess aspiring administrators. Whether this requires an electronic portfolio, clinical simulation with interactors' role-playing student/teacher/parent is perhaps the topic of another paper. What is clear from the results presented here is that such possibilities need to be explored.

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Creating a Succession-Planning Instrument for Educational Leadership

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Businesses, non-profit entities, medical units, governmental departments, and other organizations have utilized succession planning for over 30 years, yet the field of education has been slow to adopt models used in other disciplines. Upon review of the literature from various disciplines, themes for developing and assessing quality succession plans were synthesized. The major themes included identification of talent, development and mentoring, and retention of the highest performing employees, with consideration of the unique organizational culture as an overarching theme. Based on the review of the literature, a survey instrument was established. The survey was validated through an expert panel using Lawshe's (1975) content validity ratio before being administered to a pilot group of 12 school administrators and aspiring administrators. The purpose of the instrument is to examine how school administrators and leadership candidates perceived the employment of succession planning in educational organizations. The survey can be administered to aspiring administrators, school-level leaders, and district senior administrators to identify perceptions of succession planning. The results can be used to develop, modify, and strengthen existing succession plans through revitalized professional development and mentoring.

Keywords: succession planning, educational leadership preparation, leadership development, pipeline, survey validation.

People interpret the term succession planning differently; implementation of a succession plan is also widely varied. For the purpose of this article, succession planning is defined as a systematic and purposeful effort to fill vacancies for key positions with qualified individuals in an organization (Chavez, 2011). To most business leaders, a succession plan is necessary; issues resulting from lost productivity and lack of direction can quickly lead to failure (Lewis, 2013). The roots of modern succession planning can be traced to a study commissioned through the National Security Act of 1947, in which the plans for executive administration from 53 national corporations were reviewed (Zaich, 1986). Neefe (2009) stated that formal succession plans have been utilized by businesses for more than 30 years. Yet, in the field of education, succession planning has been nonexistent. However, the field of education has slowly begun to adopt models and practices long employed by other disciplines (Riddick, 2009). Without using the term succession planning, Fullan (2005) discussed the need for sustainability in school leadership. He asserted advanced planning was necessary to ensure continuity of leadership, and the plan had to account for the organizational culture, particularly the vision of the organization.

Need for Further Research

Several authors reviewed succession planning in education from a qualitative perspective to understand why geographically isolated districts had difficulty in recruiting candidates to become administrators (Hengel, 2007; Thomas, 2011). Other analysts reviewed how officials in specific school districts treated succession planning. One of the findings was that senior school administrators believed their school districts were successfully utilizing succession planning because vacancies were filled by candidates from within the organization, or because professional development opportunities were available (Riddick, 2009; Steele, 2015). Simply filling a vacancy with an internal candidate was not enough. Fullan (2005) asserted that a principal had to plan for his or her departure on the very first day in the position.

Chavez (2011) provided a framework for quality succession planning. Potential candidates were identified, targeted development and mentoring were provided, and the highest performing employees were retained as the result of having a quality succession plan. Beeson (1998) contended the succession plan had to account for all levels of the organization. He also warned against presenting generic management training instead of specific and targeted opportunities. Conger and Fulmer (2003) agreed that replacement planning was no longer an effective strategy. Conger and Fulmer (2003) also focused on a systems-oriented approach for the succession-planning process. Beglinger (2013) postulated that potential candidates had to be prepared for positions of greater responsibility knowing that some will leave to accept promotions with other organizations.

Knowing individuals will leave the organization to pursue other options, only heightens the importance for succession planning. According to Fullan (2005), the need for sustainability in leadership is vital for the continued success of schools. Therefore, educational organizations need to analyze current succession-planning activities, refine existing plans, or develop a succession-planning process.

Statement of the Problem

Although overlapping themes are distinct in the academic literature, a clear definition of succession planning is not evident. Furthermore, in-depth studies into succession planning in educational organizations were limited. Four examples were found in which succession planning

was examined from a qualitative perspective (Hengel, 2007; Riddick, 2009; Steele, 2015; Thomas, 2011). In addition, a few journal articles addressed specific aspects germane to succession planning in schools, such as mentoring and professional development (Brittingham, 2009; Drago-Severson & Aravena, 2011); however, I could not locate any quantitative or mixed-method studies which have been conducted related to succession planning in schools. Based on the need for a system-oriented and comprehensive approach to succession planning (Conger & Fulmer, 2003), creating a survey to examine the perceptions of various employees in a school system regarding succession planning would provide beneficial insight.

Responses from a survey could provide significant and detailed information for senior school district administrators to identify current success-planning practices, analyze current processes for quality, align with best practices, or create new processes to identify, train, and retain promising leadership candidates.

Significance for Educational Leadership

In an era of high-stakes testing and accountability measures, school systems cannot afford to have the wrong person lead a school. The importance of the principal is evident from Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) who ascribed a .25 effect size on student achievement to the principal. Using Chavez's (2011) three points for succession planning, in conjunction with Fullan's (2005) focus on organizational sustainability, and Rothwell's (2005) process for creating a succession plan, an instrument was developed to assess an educational organization's succession plan. Results can be used to modify and strengthen succession planning for various administrative positions in the educational organization.

Review of the Literature

Chavez (2011) addressed the importance of succession planning for future growth through three components. The first step was the identification of the organization's emerging leaders. Leaders should be open-minded, visionaries, who took risks while being respected because of core values. The second step was the engagement and development of employees at each organizational level through a combination of traditional and non-traditional methods, including opportunities within and external to the organization. The third step was to retain the top performers in the organization, as the return on investment was much greater for retention of proven talent, rather than attempting to recruit top talent.

The modern concept of succession planning was derived as a function of human resources development theory in the mid-1950s. From inception, the focus changed into technology-based employment planning in the mid-1960s, to a focus on *manpower* in the early 1970s, and eventually toward more comprehensive human resources planning in the 1980s (Zaich, 1986). Although the focus on succession planning had changed, the core components as identified by Chavez (2011) were evident through the various iterations.

Succession Planning in Businesses

Although Neefe (2009) stated that succession planning had been employed in the business discipline for over 30 years; however, the implementation was inconsistent. McDonald (2015) described the fallout from a lack of planning, as "the pain felt watching a star employee walk out the door with no backup in place is immediate and costly" (para. 2). Therefore, Beeson (1998)

contended a quality succession plan had to address each level of the organization; not just focus on executive succession.

Beeson (2000) further opined that succession planning had undergone a change at the turn of the 21st century. Fast-paced and unpredictable change had rendered the models used over the previous quarter-century obsolete. Retention of top talent became a focal point, and organizations took greater risks in promoting people before they were deemed fully ready. Providing employees with a clear sense of direction was a paramount factor in retention, and the involvement of senior executives in the succession-planning process was a key to success.

Mehribani and Mohammed (2011) concurred with the historical focus of succession planning as simply replacing people, not in developing a potential successor's skillset. Enabling flexibility, establishing competency, and developing leadership at each level of the organization became the new foci, rather than simply identifying a candidate to assume a position next. However, Chavez (2011) warned that many processes to identify talent were based on charisma, or only analyzed performance for an employee's current job function. Therefore, Beeson (2000) believed the focus on developing skills was important, as the rapidly changing business climate meant that executive positions of the day might not exist in the near future. In addition to development of skills, retaining the top-performing individuals was vital. Cappelli and Hamori (2004) noted that failure to deliver on promises of upward mobility was the prime reason executives left a previous organization. Therefore, McDonald (2015) stressed the importance of having several qualified people ready to assume senior executive positions. However, challenges faced in succession planning were not unique to the corporate sector.

Succession Planning in Non-profit Entities

Non-profit entities have also adopted principles of succession planning, as the executive and board of an organization were jointly responsible for preparing for the planned and unexpected exit of a top executive. Because of the nature of a non-profit organization, executives had to discuss succession strategies with the board early; otherwise, challenges from the lack of a succession plan magnified issues for the organization upon the departure of the executive. Creating the environment for leadership development was especially important, as boards were often uncomfortable with the fact that turnover increased due to employee marketability (Gothard & Austin, 2013). Smeltzer (2002) believed that employees had to be prepared for higher positions, knowing some of the employees would leave to pursue positions with different organizations. Having a pool of trained employees, of which some will leave, was better than having no potential successor after the unexpected loss of an executive.

Succession Planning in the Nursing Field

With a focus on the patient, there was a need for stability in health care organizations. Griffith (2012) attributed the rise of succession planning in health-care organizations to a shortage of qualified nurses and nursing managers. Therefore, succession had to be planned for all management levels through identification, development, and retention of promising leaders. Furthermore, a successful succession plan ensured preservation of the organizational culture, and continuity of vision. Unfortunately, most succession plans did not include all of the requisite components to be successful.

In addition to the early identification of leaders, Griffith (2012) advocated for recruiting promising candidates for entry-level positions, and developing those individuals to assume

positions of greater responsibility. The recruitment process needed to be robust and include a component for encouraging candidates with the proper dispositions and potential to enroll in academic preparation programs in nursing.

One of the misconceptions with the concept of succession planning arose from supervisors believing they were simply training one replacement. Succession planning needed to be viewed through a broader lens, as supervisors had an obligation to prepare subordinates for positions of greater authority, knowing some will leave the organization to accept promotions with other institutions. Supervisors had to be held accountable for ensuring subordinates met goals (Smeltzer, 2002).

Succession Planning in Education

As Riddick (2009) posited, the field of education had been slower to embrace succession planning. Widespread efforts of succession planning in education were not found in the literature. However, succession planning was needed, as Zepeda, Bengtson, and Parylo (2012) contended that rapid turnover of principals—which they defined as four years or less—resulted in adverse negative effect on student achievement and school culture.

As an example of Riddick's (2009) contention that education has been slow to adopt principles of succession planning, Zepeda et al. (2012) focused significantly on replacement planning. Beeson (2000) asserted that business models for succession planning had moved away from replacement planning before the turn of the last century. However, Zepeda et al. (2012) also included a need for development of candidates.

Qualitative studies of succession planning. From three large school districts, Riddick (2009) interviewed two senior-level administrators from each district, and conducted follow-up interviews with other personnel to triangulate the data. She found that administrators from all three school districts believed succession-planning strategies were employed and effective, yet none of the districts could produce any formal documentation. None of the school districts used a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the implied succession plan. One of the school district officials stated that succession planning was evident because opportunities for teachers to earn a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards licensure. The administrators interviewed also cited turnover data for principals as evidence of succession planning; however, no data were available for other positions (Riddick, 2009).

Steele (2015) also conducted a multiple case study analysis, and interviewed 10 principals, and none indicated a formal succession plan had been utilized; though, all 10 principals had served as assistant principals. Mentoring and networking were cited as major themes, as all respondents indicated a reliance on mentors. Mentors included colleague principals, former supervisors, and current principal supervisors. Respondents also indicated an obligation to train the next generation of principals. Despite the small sample size, Steele (2015) generalized that serving as an assistant principal was useful in training future principals, because most of the respondents were promoted within the same building. Transparency with the succession-planning process was not evident in any case; however, all stakeholders would have benefitted from transparency in the process (Riddick, 2009; Steele, 2015).

Hengel (2007) studied a Canadian school system to understand why teachers were not pursuing administrative opportunities. He cited several factors that yielded a positive influence on potential candidates to pursue administrative positions, these included support from colleagues, professional development opportunities, and leadership opportunities—formal and informal. Furthermore, current principals needed to recognize the accomplishments, and

leadership activities of current staff members, assist in identifying potential leadership candidates, as well as encourage potential candidates to pursue leadership opportunities. Once identified, leadership candidates needed specific and targeted professional development opportunities. The organization's top leadership had to support development by providing growth opportunities, release from certain duties, and financial support.

In a similar case study, Thomas (2011) analyzed efficacy of succession planning in school systems located in Alberta, Canada. He interviewed several superintendents who indicated their district-based leadership training programs were successful; however, the evidence was not empirically based, and relied on assumptions of quality because internal candidates who attended the district-based programs filled all vacancies. One important finding was the need for quality training programs at the university level coupled with mentoring by successful administrators.

Importance of organizational vision. Sustainability efforts had to consider the organizational culture and climate. Owens and Valesky (2015) defined culture as the beliefs, norms, and values of the organization. They defined climate as a combination of the culture, ecology, milieu, and organizational structure of the school. Maintaining a positive culture was vital, as the impact of a principal was greatly influenced by his or her predecessor, and the foundation previously established. Although continuity between the visions of the incoming and outgoing principals was important, limiting the frequency of transfers provided for a more effective strategy, as cultures that fostered strong leadership there were easier transitions between leaders (Hargreaves, 2005).

Benefits of succession planning. Ease of transition was not the only benefit of a quality succession plan. Lee (2015) contended that succession planning was critical for maintaining momentum for a school. Innovative schools needed a quality succession plan to continue the innovations, and low-performing schools needed a quality succession plan to begin the transformation process. Although some transitions occurred unplanned, the negative effects were mitigated through a more structured support, an effort to build relationships immediately, and continued mentoring and development.

Challenges to Succession Planning in Education

Ambiguity in subordinate administrative positions. Part of the instability within the organization resulted from the ambiguity in subordinate administrative positions. Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, and Donaldson (2001) cited that professional development and formal training focused on the role of the principal. Specific professional development focused on the assistant principal role was extremely rare, and in most cases non-existent. Because of the lack of specific training and development to become an assistant principal, there was a lack of understanding and clarity of the role.

Rintoul and Goulais (2010) examined moral decision making by vice principals in Canadian schools. The respondents all conveyed a sense of ambiguity in the role, and specified their roles were dependent upon the leadership style of the principal. Oleszewsku, Shoho, and Barnett (2012) also asserted the role of the assistant principal varied from school to school. As a recommendation, the role of the assistant principal needed to be clarified with specific boundaries, and a clearly defined role. Any restructuring had to be consistent with the culture of the school; however, a focus on shared or distributed leadership was beneficial for student learning.

Prior leadership experiences influenced the confidence of assistant principals to perform successfully in the role. Mentoring and support were also needed to help novice assistant principals build confidence and competence, and overcome feelings of isolation and anxiety. An increased sense of self-efficacy was developed by novice assistant principals through support from principals, fellow assistant principals, leadership team members, and assigned mentors (Santacrose, 2016). Building self-efficacy was important, and the behaviors were influenced by personal attributes, as well as environmental factors (Bandura, 2012). A long-term strategy was needed to help develop knowledge and skills, as well foster a continuous vision.

Lack of a consistent vision. Lack of stability and administrative support was a leading reason for faculty departure, as Steele (2015) asserted that teachers were more likely to seek employment elsewhere when a change in principal is made in three years or less. Meyer, Macmillan, and Northfield (2009) found that younger teachers were affected more by the uncertainty of poorly planned succession of principals. Hargreaves (2005) stated that moving a successful principal from one school to address problems with another had contributed to discontinuity, and prevented lasting improvement. He contended a principal should remain in a position for five years or more. When the transition occurred, a key strategy for an organization to deal with the loss of a dynamic leader was to utilize more distributed leadership opportunities (Hargreaves, 2005).

While analyzing challenges for incoming principals, Lee (2015) described three scenarios for incoming principals: (a) planned continuity, (b) planned discontinuity, and (c) unplanned succession. Planned continuity ensured succession of principals, while keeping the same direction and overall goals. Planned discontinuity allowed for a smooth transition to a new principal, yet allowed him or her to make changes in the organization; often times to turn around a declining school, or push a good school toward status as high achieving. Both methods provided for support from various stakeholders and time to prepare for the transition. Those appointed to positions without any preplanning were often consumed by day-to-day tasks, which prohibited enactment of meaningful change initiatives. Even though planned discontinuity involved appointing a new principal to bring change to the organization, the individual had support, and was better prepared for the task. Planned continuity provided the least resistance to an incoming principal, as the vision was compatible with the vision and goals of the outgoing principal (Lee, 2015).

Developing a Succession Plan

According to Rothwell (2005), effective succession plans frequently exhibited all or most of 15 characteristics: (a) participation of senior management, (b) benchmarks and needs assessments, (c) a developmental focus, (d) dedicated responsibility, (e) emphasis at all organizational levels, (f) a systemic approach, (g) analysis of future potential, (h) a timeframe for high-level replacement, (i) accountability to prepare successors, (j) specific training and development, (k) continual performance of current employees, (l) an understanding of the specific culture, (m) critical review of procedures, (n) focus beyond the next promotion, and (o) formal mentoring.

Job rotation, special assignments, classroom-based training, and real-life exposure were effective strategies in providing specific, targeted development for promising individuals (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). Rothwell (2005) cautioned that training should not be exclusively outside of the organization or classroom-based. The employees needed to continue to succeed in current roles. The senior executives had to be intimately involved in the process for a succession plan to yield quality results. Beeson (2000) also specified the importance of including a great

number of the senior executives in the succession-planning process, and in providing development opportunities for subordinates. Ultimately, the discipline displayed by the members of the organization, and their supporting actions determined the success of a defined plan (Lewis, 2013). While providing targeted professional development opportunities was important, the process had to start with mechanisms to identify top-tier talent (Chavez, 2011).

Identification of talent. Relying solely on manager evaluations was found to be a poor source of talent identification. Some manager ranked employees highly because of a sense of loyalty, or a high degree of personal trust. Conversely, emotional factors led to highly-skilled employees receiving lower ratings than deserved (Beeson, 1998). Griffith (2012) contended the process for talent identification should begin with entry-level employees. Top-tier candidates with the proper dispositions needed to be recruited for entry-level positions, and trained for positions with greater responsibility. Rothwell (2005) asserted that an effective succession plan trained employees for future positions beyond the next promotion.

Conger and Fulmer (2003) focused on the development aspect for top-tier candidates, as early exposure to their own limitations allowed for development of needed skills. Development of skills should coincide with assessment of future needs of the organization (Rothwell, 2005). Identification of the proper candidates was imperative, yet difficult, as supervisors often hindered prime candidates from advancing, because of a desire to keep an employee in a current position for the perceived value of the current job performance (Beeson, 1998).

Chavez (2011) provided characteristics that should be possessed by suitable candidates, including: (a) vision with passion, courage, and integrity; (b) open-mindedness and ability to listen to others; (c) risk-taking and a willingness to admit failure; (d) acumen; and (e) respect through being trustworthy, value-driven, and authentic. Beeson (1998) believed that feedback had to be solicited from supervisors, subordinates, peers, and those external to the organization. Beeson (2000) also noted that the most successful organizations had active, cross-functional assessments of talent on a frequent basis. Rothwell (2005) agreed, and specified for organizations to identify key competencies for the present and future. Multiple raters had to consider those competencies in the framework of the organizational culture.

Development and mentoring. Specific leadership training and development is needed for identified candidates (Beeson, 1998; Chavez, 2011; Rothwell, 2005). Chavez (2011) recommended a combination of traditional and non-traditional approaches. Traditional approaches included executive coaching, mentoring, and rotation of job functions. Non-traditional approaches included projects meant to stretch the candidate's experiences, community service, experience on a non-profit board, and reverse mentoring in which the candidate was tasked with a leading team composed of superiors. Beeson (1998) specified to avoid the pitfall of providing generic managerial training, rather than intensive individualized professional development opportunities. Rothwell (2005) recommended the use of individual development plans to help employees develop the needed competencies to be successful in the future.

Some educational organizations recognized the importance of targeted development. Durden, Izquierdo, and Williams (2008) reviewed a program to train new administrators for New York City schools. Applicants underwent a multi-prong assessment, and those selected were provided with specific individualized development plans. No two leadership candidates had the same plan, as each plan was designed to help the candidate development specific knowledge and skills, and gain targeted experiences.

To gain knowledge and skills, Hopkins-Thompson (2000) contended mentoring and coaching served to model collaboration and collegiality. Mentors served to impart wisdom about

the culture, and provided feedback beyond the scope of the formal employee and supervisor relationship. To be successful, mentoring had to be supported from the superintendent, have clearly defined outcomes for the protégé, and most importantly, the pairing had to be a good match for both. One key distinction is the mentor should not be a direct supervisor, or have an evaluative position over the protégé.

Retention. The third component to a successful succession plan was retention of top-tier candidates. Chavez (2011) contended that retaining top performers was equally as important as preparing new talent; both were needed for organizational success, as retaining top-tier candidates provided a higher return on investment, because internal employees had demonstrated experience, along with an understanding of the organizational culture. Beeson (2000) asserted a link had to be clear between performance, and the reward and recognition systems. Ina previous article, Beeson (1998) had linked open communication and employee growth opportunities, as there had to be transparency in the entire process.

Beyond retention, internal movement of principals was another factor to be considered. Farley, Solano, and McDuffie (2012) divided retention and turnover into static and dynamic categories. Furthermore, they contended retention and turnover were defined differently in the literature. Therefore, analyzing the retention and turnover for principals was complex, especially as there were instances in which principals were transferred to new schools without participation in the decision-making process. Administrative retention and turnover had to be analyzed through static and dynamic approaches to yield valid data for policy considerations.

Organizational culture. Understanding the climate and culture of a school is an important facet for an administrator (Owens & Valesky, 2015). Poor planning is the enemy of sustainability. Succession plans should consider the organizational culture. Attempts to change the organization through a forceful, top-down strategy do not inspire teachers to improve teachers, the strategy only entrenches resistance among the faculty. Instead, distributed leadership was the only method to ensure important aspects of sustainability were perpetuated in the organization (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Combined with an assessment of organizational culture, a quality succession plan includes measures for organizational leaders to identify candidates, provide targeted training and development, and retain the most promising employees (Chavez, 2011). Only when organizational culture is considered in conjunction with each component, can a succession plan yield effective results (Griffith, 2012).

Research Design

The purpose of this article was to create and validate a survey instrument to reflect how school administrators and leadership candidates perceived the employment of succession planning in an educational organization. An analysis of perceptions could lead to revitalized mentoring and professional development opportunities better suited to create quality succession plans in primary and secondary schools.

Creating an Instrument

Based on the review of the literature, a survey instrument was developed. The survey questions are divided into five categories: (a) demographic information, (b) identification of talent, (c) development and mentoring opportunities, (d) retention of top talent, and (e) organizational culture based on the components identified by Chavez (2011). The framework for the survey is shown in Figure 1.

Organizational Culture ⇄
• Norms
• Values
• Beliefs

Identification of Talent	Development of Talent	Retention of Talent
• Multiple measure • Internal and external • Open-minded and willing to take risks • Passion, courage, and integrity	• Specific and targeted • Knowledge, skills, and dispositions • Coordinated • Formal and informal mentoring	• Valuable employees are rewarded • Evidence of high-quality employees staying

Figure 1. Succession-Planning Framework

The first section of the survey contains items inquiring about demographic information. The second through fifth sections contain items to identify perceptions of how the characteristics of effective succession plans are utilized in the educational organization. The survey items were developed using a five-point Likert-type scale (i.e., never, rarely, sometimes, frequently, & always).

Identification of talent. A total of 12 questions comprise the section for identification of talent. Examples of talent identification questions appear in Table 1.

Table 1
Sample Identification of Talent Questions

Number	Item
I-3	Assessment of candidates is based on multiple sources, not just a recommendation from the direct supervisor.
I-5	Future career aspirations are sought from all faculty and staff members on a routine basis.

Development of talent. The largest category is development of talent with 14 questions. Table 3 contains examples of the development of talent questions. Sample items from the development section are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Sample Development of Talent Questions

Number	Item
D-9	Specific skills and competencies are identified for administrative positions.
D-12	Informal mentoring opportunities are available.

Retention of highest performing employees. The smallest category, with four questions, is the retention of highest performing employees. Sample questions are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Sample Retention of Talent Questions

Number	Item
R-3	There is evidence of high performing employees staying in the organization.
R-4	Administrative vacancies are filled by qualified, internal candidates.

Organizational culture. The overarching category of organizational culture contains seven questions. Table 4 contains sample questions pertaining to organizational culture.

Table 4

Sample Organizational Culture Questions

Number	Item
C-4	Succession plans are made with the input of all stakeholders.
C-5	Succession plans consider the unique organizational culture.

Establishing Validity

An expert panel reviewed the contents of the instrument. Several retired administrators, current administrators, and leadership candidates comprised the expert review panel. Each item was reviewed for job-essential content validity using Lawshe's (1975) content validity ratio (CVR). The CVR value ranges from -1.0 to +1.0, with a positive number indicating content validity. For ease of computation, 1.0 is reduced to .99 (Lawshe, 1975). With 11 panelists using the Lawshe statistic (1975), the results were statistically significant at 5% with a CVR of .59. The CVR results are displayed in Figure 2, and the demographic information of the expert panel is listed in Table 5.

Content Validity Results					
I-1	.99	D-1	.99	D-13	.82
I-2	.99	D-2	.99	R-1	.82
I-3	.64	D-3	.99	R-2	.99
I-4	.82	D-4	.99	R-3	.99
I-5	.99	D-5	.99	R-4	.45
I-6	.99	D-6	.82	C-1	.99
I-7	.99	D-7	.64	C-2	.99
I-8	.99	D-8	.99	C-3	.99
I-9	.82	D-9	.99	C-4	.82
I-10	.82	D-10	.82	C-5	.99
I-11	.82	D-11	.82	C-6	.99
I-12	.99	D-12	.99	C-7	.99

Figure 2. Content Validity Ratio Results

Table 5
Demographic Information for Expert Panel Reviewers

Reviewer	Gender	Age Range	Level	Administrative Experience
1	Male	65+	Former Supervisor	20+ Years
2	Female	65+	Former Principal	20+ Years
3	Female	65+	Former Principal	11 to 20 Years
4	Female	35 – 44	Assistant Principal	3 to 5 Years
5	Female	35 – 44	Former Assistant Principal	3 to 5 Years
6	Female	35 – 44	Leadership Candidate	0 to 2 Years
7	Female	35 – 44	Leadership Candidate	0 to 2 Years
8	Female	25 – 34	Assistant Principal	3 to 5 Years
9	Female	45 – 54	Curriculum Coordinator	3 to 5 Years
10	Male	45 – 54	Leadership Candidate	0 to 2 Years
11	Female	55 – 64	Former Principal	20+ Years

All of the survey items were found to have content validity, and all were statistically significant at 5%, except for Question R-4 (CVR = .45). Question D-14 is omitted from the expert panel review, because the item was not content based. The content validity index (CVI) is computed as the mean of the CVRs for all questions in the final survey (Lawshe, 1975). The CVI for the survey is .91. To demonstrate validity and reliability for the survey instrument, Gilbert and Prion (2016) recommended a CVI of .80 or higher. After validation, the survey was administered to a small pilot group of 12 current and aspiring administrators to detect any ambiguous items. No changes were made based on the pilot survey administration.

Discussion

Implications for Practice

Respondents for the pilot survey administration indicated the entire survey took between 10 and 15 minutes to complete. The CVI of .91 indicated very strong content validity. Wilson, Pan, and Schumsky (2012) asserted an instrument validated using the CVR process inherently has been shown to have high interrater reliability, as a majority of subject matter experts indicated an item as job-related essential. Therefore, the survey has been shown to be valid and reliable. Because the survey can be administered within a reasonable time frame, senior administrators can use the results to analyze the perceptions of stakeholders pertaining to identification, development, retention, and culture within the organization.

Further Research

Results from survey administration can be used to determine generalizable perceptions of stakeholders pertaining to succession planning. Comparing results between large and small school districts, urban and rural settings, and geographical differences could yield beneficial information for educational organizations to consider in preparing for leadership succession. The results may also provide a basis for follow-up qualitative studies for specific locations.

Conclusion

Succession planning is vital for ensuring high-quality candidates are prepared to assume positions of greater responsibility at every level of an organization. A quality succession plan contains measures to identify potential candidates early. Feedback is provided from an individual's peers, subordinates, supervisor, and knowledgeable individuals outside of the organization. Individualized professional development is targeted for specific skill development to meet future needs of the organization, formal and informal mentoring opportunities are available, and the process is continually refined based on the organizational needs. High-performing employees are fairly rewarded, and their contributions are recognized, and both are directly connected to performance. Across all three components, the specific organizational culture must be honored. The survey can be used to assess an educational organization's strengths and weaknesses, and the results used to foster, modify, and expand succession-planning opportunities. Because student learning is directly influenced by the quality of the principal, a school setting cannot afford to place the wrong individual in a leadership position. Using an instrument to analyze current succession-planning processes will greatly aid in ensuring the proper individuals are selected for key leadership positions at all levels of the organization.

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Teaching Educational Leaders to Move from Moral Reasoning to Moral Action

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Ethical leadership is critical to effective schools. However, earlier research showed that ethics and moral reasoning were often not formally taught nor assessed in pre-service leadership programs. In this study I examined graduate programs' approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment of learning in ethics and moral reasoning. Rest's four component model of moral decision making provided the theoretical base for structuring the inquiry into how colleges define, teach and assess moral leadership (Bebeau, 2002).
Results of interviews with 43 graduate schools of educational leadership in the United States showed 91% of graduate schools of educational leadership report teaching moral leadership in some fashion but vary greatly in curriculum, method, and assessment.
Professional standards appear to influence the kinds of assignments and assessments most commonly reported in this study. In several cases, school leadership programs have engaged their faculty in a thoughtful planning process to integrate the teaching of moral leadership into their curriculum and develop meaningful assessment strategies. Highlighting these exemplary programs will be a critical next step in sharing information among faculty about how to teach moral leadership and evaluate student work in this area. However, before this can be effectively done the field must begin to reach a shared understanding of how moral leadership is defined within programs and in the literature. It is on this point that the work already done in moral psychology as applied to other pre-professional training programs can be most helpful.

Moral leadership has become an increasingly popular concept in the field of educational administration. It has been the focus of policy initiatives, accreditation standards and a body of research has emerged over the past two decades identifying moral leadership as a characteristic of high performing schools, particularly among high poverty schools (Fullan, 2003; Hodgkinson, 1991; Liou, 2017; Nucci, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1992; Sizer & Sizer, 1999; Starratt, 1991). However, the increased attention to moral leadership in schools has not shed much light on how to best teach moral leadership in the preparation of school administrators. The burst of interest since the early 1990s in developing moral leadership in schools largely has taken the form of identifying moral leadership as an important, in some cases critical, element of a strong school.

A resurgence of interest in moral leadership has been spurred on by anecdotal evidence that increasing pressures to meet student accountability measures brought on by state and federal reforms have resulted in an increase of both fraud and unethical allocation of school resources (Oplatka, 2016; Pardini, 2004). A general concern with thin applicant pools for school leadership positions has also raised concerns over the last 15 years that many ascending to top school positions may not be ready to make strong moral decisions in the face of increasing pressures (Pardini, 2004; Stover, 2002). In a survey of chief state education officers, executive directors of American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) state affiliates, and executive directors of the National School Boards Association's (NSBA) state affiliates, approximately 60% felt they were facing a leadership applicant pool crisis, over 84% felt the quality of the applicant pool was decreasing, and 75% of the respondents cited a need to improve pre-service graduate programs (Glass, 2001; Stover, 2002). Rural schools are particularly disadvantaged in developing deep principal candidate pools (Pijanowski et al., 2009).

Long before NCLB the ethical behavior of school administrators was under fire as the 1990s brought a seemingly endless string of high profile stories detailing ethical charges against top school officials (Pardini, 2004). Stories of nepotism, embezzlement, and sex scandals led to an increased critique of the role of moral leadership in schools. The result was not only more attention from scholars in the field but also increased activity among policymakers and professional organizations to establish ethics standards, and state or district wide ethics commissions. For example, in 1992 the state of New Jersey passed the School Ethics Act, which established the School Ethics Commission with the power to investigate ethical violations among school board members and school administrators, and to recommend disciplinary actions to the commissioner which range from formal sanctions to removal. The commission is responsible for oversight of a wide range of potential ethics violations but at the time was established to curb what was seen as rampant nepotism during the 80s and early 90s (Holster, 2004). Over the past two decades, state educational ethics commissions have become the norm nationwide.

Defining Moral Leadership

Despite a spike in scholarly activity advocating for moral leadership and increased attention to ethics regulation, the body of research exploring the nature of moral leadership remains thin. In earlier studies, researchers have found that for school district leaders size of district and salary are positively correlated, and years of service negatively correlated, with more ethical responses to moral dilemmas. These same researchers have shown that, in general terms, the ethical capacity of school leaders was not sufficient for the demands of the job (Fenstermaker, 1996; Pardini, 2004). Fenstermaker (1996) found that less than half (48.1%) of 2790 responses to *borderline ethical dilemmas* by 270 randomly selected superintendents that responded to the

survey were scored as ethical. The growing evidence of ethical shortfalls within the profession in the mid-90s led to a broad call from within and outside the field to address the moral decision making of school leaders. Both pre-service and in-service ethics education programs were prescribed to teach ethics to aspiring and sitting administrators (Pardini, 2004; Fenstermaker, 1996).

As those shaping policy and developing responses to the moral crisis in schools began their work, it became clear that talking about morals in schools was still a controversial topic and there was not a clear definition of what moral leadership was, despite the charge to hire more of it and help those already hired to have it (Starratt, 1994). Researchers have claimed that moral leadership as a key indicator of student success often fails to define what moral leadership looks like, and when definitions are provided they vary greatly across schools and studies. In a review of moral leadership studies from 1979 to 2003, William Greenfield concluded that "one of the limitations of the studies of moral leadership that have been conducted during the past 20 years is that few scholars define very clearly what they mean when they refer to moral leadership" (Greenfield, 2004, p. 178).

For example, in a review of twelve high performing, high-poverty schools, moral leadership was identified as instrumental to student and school success. The definition of moral leadership, however, was described in very different ways including "vision that what adults do in schools plays a major role in shaping children's lives and preparing them for lifelong success," "respect, high expectations, support, hard work," "empowerment," and "moral leadership also meant staff and students visualized themselves as part of the system as a whole. They understood that schooling was more than preparation for academic attainment. Education laid the foundation for success in life" (Bell, 2001, p. 10). The different definitions of moral leadership are largely a result of the diverse context and needs of schools that successful leaders must address. However, this creates a difficult challenge for teachers of educational leadership attempting to develop curriculum and teaching methods that will serve new principals and superintendents best as they graduate and enter an unfamiliar context with needs and ethical pitfalls that may not be immediately known to them.

The Influence of Accreditation Standards

The call to invest in moral leadership training has come from scholars, policymakers, and professional organizations in the field of educational administration. Graduate programs must prepare future leaders to be more aware of their ethical and moral responsibilities as well as being better equipped to execute them if they are to effectively steward the increasingly complex and high pressure school of the 21st century. School leaders are best able to positively influence school culture and success when well-established and significant community values that support equity and social justice are connected with "ethically and morally uplifting leadership" (Grogan & Andrews, 2002, p. 243). Graduate programs in educational leadership have been shown to significantly affect leadership capacity "when programs had a strong theory and research base, provided authentic experiences, simulated the development of situated cognition, and fostered real-life problem-solving skills" (Grogan & Andrews, 2002, p. 250).

National professional organizations and accreditation standards have played a major role in shaping the curriculum of school administration graduate programs. The first among major professional organizations to place an emphasis on moral school leadership was the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), which in 1994 created the Interstate

School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) with the goal of establishing universal professional standards that would guide the practice and preparation of school leaders (Murphy, 2005). Although consortium leaders recognized that infusing new standards with values and ethical guidelines would be controversial, they also acknowledged that behavior, policy, and practice were influenced by values and it was impossible to disentangle moral leadership and how schools functioned. This value-centered approach was reinforced by a belief among ISLLC founders that "the fight to create a scientifically anchored, value-free profession had brought forth an ethically truncated if not morally bankrupt profession" (Murphy, 2005, p. 33).

Six years after the initial formation of ISLLC, a working group was formed by the NPBEA to establish performance-based standards that would serve as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE) review standards for educational leadership programs (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002). This working group included representatives from the major professional organizations in the field including the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the
American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, the National Association of School Boards, and the (UCEA) University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002). The result of this broad based and powerful coalition was a set of standards officially adopted by NCATE in 2002 that is the foundation of NCATE's accreditation review process for educational leadership graduate programs. The NCATE standards were closely aligned with the ISLLC standards providing a single, unified set of national standards guiding administrative practice for the preparation of principals, superintendents, curriculum directors, and supervisors (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002). These standards are now known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards.

The NCATE/ELCC review process, that since 2002 has been the prevailing accreditation standard throughout the profession, has seven components. Standard number five refers specifically to ethics and reads, "Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner" (p. 13). The NCATE narrative continues (p. 13) to describe the purpose and function of the ethics in the profession:

This standard addresses the educational leader's role as the "first citizen" of the school/district community. Educational leaders should set the tone for how employees and students interact with one another and with members of the school, district, and larger community. The leader's contacts with students, parents, and employees must reflect concern for others as well as for the organization and the position. Educational leaders must develop the ability to examine personal and professional values that reflect a code of ethics. They must be able to serve as role models, accepting responsibility for using their position ethically and constructively on behalf of the school/district community. Educational leaders must act as advocates for all children, including those with special needs who may be underserved. (p. 13)

The NCATE standards (p. 13) also provide guidance for graduate programs assessment criteria. The three elements of the ethic standard are described as being met for school building and district leadership when a potential school leader:

- **5.1 Acts with Integrity**
  Candidates demonstrate a respect for the rights of others with regard to confidentiality and dignity and engage in honest interactions.
- **5.2 Acts Fairly**
  Candidates demonstrate the ability to combine impartiality, sensitivity to student diversity, and ethical considerations in their interactions with others.
- **5.3 Acts Ethically**
  Candidates make and explain decisions based upon ethical and legal principles.

The standards go on to provide specific guidance to faculty regarding the activities and practices that would serve as good measures of candidate performance.

- Candidates are required to develop a code of ethics using personal platforms, professional leadership association examples, and a variety of additional source documents focusing on ethics.
- Candidates are required to conduct a self-analysis of a transcript of a speech delivered to a community organization and look for examples of integrity, fairness, and ethical behavior.
- Candidates are required to lead a discussion around compliance issues for district, school, or professional association codes of ethics.
- Candidates are required to make a speech to a local service organization and articulate and demonstrate the importance of education in a democratic society.
- Candidates are required to survey constituents regarding their perceptions of his/her modeling the highest standards of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision-making and behaviors.
- Candidates are required to present an analysis of how he/she promotes teaching and learning that recognizes learning differences, multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and appreciation of ethnic diversity. (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002a, p. 13)

As expected, the prominence of ethics in the ELCC standards coupled with the NCATE accreditation process played a role in prompting leadership faculty towards the design and assessment of moral leadership curriculum. It is, however, important to note that as the ELCC standards became more prescriptive, there was a clear focus on producing documents that stemmed from reflection, but it was unclear how the practice of reflection, for example, would be taught and reinforced as a fundamental practice for school leaders. The ELCC ethics standard was an important vehicle for promoting teaching ethics in graduate programs but fell short of promoting the process of moral reasoning, and it is there where the field is still searching for an understanding of what effective moral leadership training encompasses and how to best deliver a comprehensive moral reasoning curriculum.

As the field of educational leadership transitions to a new set of standards we find there is an even greater emphasis on moving leadership candidates from moral reasoning to moral action. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) approved by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration in 2015 serves as the guiding principles for the new leadership preparation standards. The PSEL ethics standards read (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015):

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:
A. Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership.
B. Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.
C. Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being.
D. Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity.
E. Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.
F. Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.

Previous Studies

The emergence of moral leadership as a topic of policy and a component of the accreditation standard has not been lost on graduate schools. Many graduate programs identified as exemplary place moral leadership at the core of their curriculum. In a 2002 study of exceptional programs in educational leadership most of the exemplary programs were closely aligned with the ISLLC standards and almost all placed a particular emphasis on the ethics standard (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). For example, the Miami University (Ohio) program emphasis was summarized as, "Accepting school leadership as an intellectual and moral practice requires educators to understand their role in shaping the purposes of schooling for a new era, and to understand how this cannot be detached from the broader social and political context" (Jackson & Kelley, 2002, p. 206).

Historically, however, examples like Miami University have been the exception not the rule when it comes to program emphasis on moral development. Attempts to study teaching ethics and moral decision making in pre-service school leadership programs have focused largely on moral leadership as an emerging field with an emphasis on explaining the growth of ethics as an interest in school leadership, curriculum, and instructional strategies. Two studies have attempted to measure the approach to ethics in educational leadership preparation programs (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Farquhar, 1981). In the first study of its kind Robin Farquhar (1981) surveyed 48 colleges and found that only four schools reported, "distinct program components designed deliberately to focus on ethics," and additionally found only two schools that "endeavor consciously to integrate ethics into much of what they teach" (p. 196). Beck and Murphy (1994) revisited the study of ethics in educational leadership programs by surveying department chairs about their practice and perceptions of teaching leadership ethics. While only 4 out of 42 respondents reported that their department offered learning opportunities concerned with ethics "a great deal," 21 schools responded "somewhat" and only 7 schools reported little or no ethics

based curriculum of any kind. Beck and Murphy (1997) found that those schools that were actively engaged in an ethics curriculum did so because of the practical necessity for administrators to wrestle effectively with moral dilemmas and an evolving literature base supporting the need to provide more ethics instruction for leaders. Just over 1/3 of the responding schools offered courses in ethics showing a dramatic increase in attention to teaching moral leadership from the early 80s to the early 90s with an emphasis on the early 90s as a burst of activity because many chairs reported these courses as new or under development at the time of the study.

In a review of curriculum at leadership programs teaching leadership ethics, 17 schools surveyed sent course syllabi and materials for Beck and Murphy to analyze (1994). The approaches to teaching ethics was varied but tended to draw from philosophy as the theoretical base and focused on problems in practice. Teaching strategies ranged dramatically and included deductive, inductive and reflective approaches. Four trends emerged in the course content:
1. Written cases and dilemmas
2. Readings from outside education
3. Readings focusing on professional ethics
4. Readings discussing specific ethical principles or issues

Beck and Murphy (1997) pointed out that a contributing factor to the diversity of course content and pedagogy is the myriad definitions of ethics not only in the field of educational leadership, but in the literature as ethics is discussed cross-contextually. The lack of a unified definition of moral leadership and the wide range of thought about what moral leadership looks like and what it means for school success makes it difficult for research in the field to build on itself.

In other professional development fields (i.e., dentistry) the introduction of more strongly established operational definitions from moral psychology has provided a common language and facilitated growth in understanding profession-specific moral development by building on an existing body of research in professional ethics training in fields that have already adopted or applied moral psychology research (Bebeau, 2002; King & Mayhew, 2002). The lack of connection in the literature between the field of developmental moral psychology and educational leadership preparation is striking. For example, neither Kohlberg nor Rest are commonly cited in research that examines how prospective school leaders are taught and there have been few attempts to explore how moral psychology currently informs and may better inform the development of school administrators.

Moral Psychology in Professional Ethics Education

This study included an examination of the approach of graduate programs in educational leadership to create curriculum, teach, and assess moral reasoning. I chose Rest's Four Component Model as the foundation for our inquiry to apply what has already been shown to be successful in professional education other than educational administration. Particularly compelling reasons to use the Four Component Model as a guide include assessment of ethics education showing the ability of pre-service and in-service education to improve moral sensitivity, reasoning, and motivation; the ability of a person to continue growth along these components in adulthood; and the independence of the four components (Bebeau, 2002; Bebeau

& Thoma, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 2002; Erwin, 2000; Grogan & Andrews, Gross, 2001; 2002; Jaeger, 2001; Kidder & Born, 2002; Latif, 2000).

Methods

I reviewed the courses of study for 75 educational leadership programs and interviewed faculty at 43 major research universities, which offered doctoral programs in educational leadership and maintained a critical mass of at least five full-time faculty dedicated to teaching educational leadership. These criteria were chosen to focus on programs that were most likely to have consistency over time and across their curriculum as a result of courses being taught primarily by full-time faculty. For each university, I selected the department chair that was most directly responsible for the graduate program that prepares students as certified public school administrators. Initially each chair was contacted by phone to describe the project and either engaged the chair in a phone interview or was directed to the faculty member best able to address our questions about the teaching of moral decision making and ethics in their program.

Where previous studies sought to measure the teaching of ethics more generally defined, I structured the inquiry to differentiate between different elements of moral leadership education. I specifically was interested in how four components of moral decision-making are taught and how learning is assessed in graduate programs of educational leadership. The following operational definitions of the four components were discussed with each subject during the interview and were adapted from Bebeau (2002). Moral sensitivity is defined as interpreting the situation as moral. It involves being aware of the different possible lines of action and how each line of action could affect the parties concerned (including oneself). Moral sensitivity involves imaginatively constructing possible scenarios (often from limited cues and partial information), knowing cause-consequence chains of events in the real world, and having empathy and role-taking skills.The second, moral judgment, is defined as the ability, once a person is aware that various lines of action are possible, to effectively consider which line of action is more justified morally. The third is moral motivation and commitment, which is defined as prioritization of moral values over other personal values. The fourth and final component is moral character and competence, which is defined as having the strength of your convictions, having courage, persisting, overcoming distractions and obstacles, having implementing skills, and having ego strength.

During the semi-structured interview, subjects were read the operational definition for each component and asked if the program addressed that specific component of moral decision making, what courses or experiences in which it was taught, what methods were used to teach it, and how learning of the moral component was assessed. Subjects were then asked to send us copies of relevant syllabi, lesson plans, case studies, reading lists or other teaching tools that are used by faculty at their university to teach moral leadership.

Results

The results of our interviews showed a dramatic increase in activity from the previous studies by Farquhar (1981) and Beck and Murphy (1994). As illustrated in Table 1, 91% of the schools in our study reported that moral sensitivity was either explicitly covered in a course or integrated into their curriculum and 86% taught moral judgment. The component least likely to be taught,

motivation at 58%, still represents a sharp rise over the attention that ethics and moral leadership were receiving in the early 1990s.

Table 1
Teaching the Four Components for Moral Decision Making

Component	Taught	Not Taught	Integrated	Indirectly Taught
Sensitivity	37 (86%)	4 (9%)	2 (5%)	0
Judgment	37 (86%)	6 (14%)	0	0
Motivation	25 (58%)	16 (37%)	0	2 (5%)
Implementation	33 (77%)	6 (14%)	0	4 (9%)

Seventeen different courses were reported to teach moral leadership but four clearly dominated: Educational Leadership/Administration, Education Law, Ethics, and School Culture (see Table 2). Interestingly, for the motivation component 30% stated that it was integrated throughout their curriculum and not a specific course. As one respondent stated, "That content is covered in our overall conceptual framework–the whole premise of our conceptual framework is grounded there." For some schools there was a clear intent to weave moral leadership into the curriculum and in others it was driven by the interest of individual professors. In either case, the data indicated that schools are more likely to integrate ethics into staple courses such as Introduction to Leadership or School Law and yet as the presence of ethics in these courses appears to be on the rise so is the existence of ethics dedicated courses within the school leadership curriculum.

Table 2
Most Reported Courses in Which the Four Components Are Covered

Component	Leadership	Law	Ethics	School Culture
Sensitivity	21 (57%)	14 (38%)	9 (24%)	6 (16%)
Judgment	21 (57%)	10 (27%)	11 (30%)	4 (11%)
Motivation	4 (16%)	4 (16%)	7 (28%)	2 (8%)
Implementation	24 (73%)	24 (73%)	11 (33%)	6 (18%)

Note. Percentages are of those schools that reported teaching the component.

Eight different methods of delivering moral leadership instruction were reported with the five most popular presented in Table 3. Case studies are clearly the most used method of instruction for three of the four components followed by class discussion a trend reversed only

for the third component, motivation. The third most popular response, written work, tended to be reflective exercises that drew from field experience or case study analysis. In teaching the moral judgment component, six schools also reported capping the case study, discussion, and reflection activities with role playing or simulation exercises. One subject summarized this approach, saying, "role playing is viewed as the hallmark of the engagement in ethical issues since it puts people in uncomfortable situations and dilemmas and asks them to make decisions."

Table 3
Methods of Instruction for Teaching the Four Components

Component	Case Studies	Discussion in Class	Written Work	Lecture	Field Experience
Sensitivity	25 (68%)	17 (46%)	4 (11%)	6 (16%)	4 (11%)
Judgment	27 (73%)	21 (57%)	10 (27%)	10 (27%)	0
Motivation	16 (64%)	23 (92%)	8 (32%)	6 (24%)	2 (8%)
Implementation	17 (52%)	14 (42%)	8 (24%)	6 (18%)	9 (27%)

Note. Percentages are of those schools that reported teaching the component.

In many examples case studies and readings in ethics were part of adopted texts and when readings were brought in that were dedicated to the discussion of ethics or moral leadership, they tended to be philosophy or practitioner based. Interestingly, only three subjects indicated the use of readings from the field of moral development in the classroom. Two faculty members did point to the works of moral theorists James Rest and William Perry as heavily used in their curriculum.

Written assignments and observations were the two assessment methods most preferred by the schools in our study, but a close third is that they are not assessed (see Table 4). Many who were interviewed expressed that they felt that even when attempts were made to evaluate student work along one of the moral components they felt it was "hard to assess." As one professor put it, "We wing it a lot…rather than empirical evidence professors rely more on behavioral attributes. Students are assessed on their 'doing' in the field and related experiences."

Table 4
Methods of Assessing Learning of the Four Components

Component	Written Assignment	Observation	Presented Work	Exams	Not Assessed
Sensitivity	20 (54%)	10 (27%)	2 (5%)	6 (16%)	13 (35%)
Judgment	22 (59%)	12 (32%)	6 (16%)	6 (16%)	5 (14%)

Motivation	16 (64%)	14 (60%)	8 (32%)	6 (24%)	3 (25%)
Implementation	14 (42%)	8 (24%)	8 (24%)	6 (18%)	17 (52%)

Note. Percentages are of those schools that reported teaching the component.

Table 5
Programs Offering Ethics as a Course

Total Schools Sampled	Required	Elective	None	Stand Alone (% of ethics courses)	Combined (% of ethics courses)
75	10 (13%)	18 (24%)	47 (63%)	21 (75%)	7 (25%)

Written work included reflective pieces, writing a code of ethics, and responses to case study dilemmas. Observations of students in class and out of class included a mix of both formal and informal evaluations of students' reasoning, knowledge, and feedback from field supervisors. In a follow-up to how one college uses scenarios, a member of the faculty reported, "It's harder to do it that way because it is easier to say how you would act but not really know what to do in an actual situation . . .we want to be making the students walk the talk."

Conclusion and Implications

It is not clear whether the increased attention given to moral leadership education is more a result of accreditation standards; the public calls for better moral leadership, or the presence of more scholarly articles on the subject. What is evident is that the overarching theme found in the literature has translated to practice in the majority of school leadership graduate programs. Moreover, the prescriptive elements of the ELCC standards appear to influence the kinds of assignments and assessments most commonly reported in this study. In several cases school leadership programs have engaged their faculty in a thoughtful planning process to integrate the teaching of moral leadership into their curriculum and develop meaningful assessment strategies. Highlighting these exemplary programs will be a critical next step in sharing information among faculty about how to teach moral leadership and evaluate student work in this area. However, before this can be effectively done, the field must begin to reach a shared understanding of how moral leadership is defined within programs and in the literature. It is on this point that the work already done in moral psychology as applied to other pre-professional training programs can be most helpful.

The Neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral development that gave birth to Rest's four-component model has shown great promise in identifying independent and measurable skills that make up the process of effective moral decision making. The field of moral psychology has shown us how these components can be effectively taught and students can become better at identifying a moral problem, sifting through the myriad lines of action, making morally justified decisions about which line of action to choose, placing that choice in the context of often competing personal and professional values, and having the strength of conviction to persist and

follow through with the moral choice. However, the field of moral psychology is increasingly influenced by advances in our understanding of how the mind is influenced by emotional and physical stressors that can dramatically affect one's ability to follow through with moral decisions (Noval & Stahl. 2017; Regan & Sachs, 2016). There is a rising tide of research that points to self care as a foundational piece of supporting consistent moral action (Barnes et al., 2015; Jazaieri et al., 2016). Adapting these efforts to the context of school leadership would help faculty develop stronger assessments as well as address the teaching gap that exists in the third component of moral motivation and commitment.

The faculty who participated in this study had little trouble connecting the four-component model to the work they were, or were not, doing in their own programs. Although several offered that they were not familiar with the model, and only a few seemed to use it in their curriculum, the translation from Rest's model to the practice of delivering pre-service school leadership instruction was easily made. Over the last 25 years the field of educational administration has moved from formally introducing ethics into the education leadership curriculum to a widespread effort to emphasize moral leadership through myriad methods and theoretical frameworks. The next steps in this evolution are to examine critically how colleges of education teach moral decision making, ask the question "what works," and build a knowledge base that informs and improves pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment in the field of moral school leadership.

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Job Satisfaction: A Study of the Relationship between Right-To-Work Policy and Public School Teachers' Perceptions

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between state unionization policy and teacher job satisfaction in the K-12 public school environment in the states of Florida and New York (i.e., a right-to-work state and a non-right-to-work state). Data were collected via electronic survey to analyze personal demographics, human capital, workload, state union policy and job satisfaction information. A mixed effects multiple regression analysis found right-to-Work laws were statistically significant for overall job satisfaction and the job satisfaction facets of work and pay. Via study it was concluded that right-to-work laws had a negative impact on teacher job satisfaction.

Unionization in America

Right-to-work (RTW) Laws were put into effect in 1947 with the passing of the Taft Hartley Act which granted states the power to enact regulations outlawing contractual provisions requiring new employees join unions (i.e., union shop) (Ellwood & Fine, 1987). In addition, the Taft Harley Act outlawed *closed shop* requirements, demanding that workers be union members before they were hired. In sum, states who operated under RTW legislation believed that "no person [should] be required to become a union member or, conversely, be required to abstain from union membership as a condition of obtaining or retaining employment" (Lumsden & Petersen, 1975, p. 1237).

Moore (1998) provided two explanations for the passage of the RTW laws. The first hypothesis indicated these laws were created as an effort to enhance the attractiveness of the state's labor force to new businesses and to promote a faster economic growth rate (Palomba & Palomba, 1971). Moore's second hypothesis was that states with low economic development were subjected to pressure by employers to adopt RTW laws unless unions were able to counter the political pressure. Ultimately, Moore (1998) deduced that employers advocate for RTW legislation in order to slow the growth rate and labor union control over the workforce.

From historical maps pertaining to RTW states, high populations of states that have adopted RTW laws were located in the Southeastern Region of the United States; however, the political trend is shifting to the Northern and Midwestern Regions with the additions of Michigan (2012), Indiana (2012), Wisconsin (2015), West Virginia (2016), Missouri (2017), and Kentucky (2017) (Right-To-Work Resources, 2017). Moore (1998) also indicated that poorer states—as defined by economic development, wages, or income—were more likely to adopt RTW laws. The researcher eluded that these particular states were ideally in need of further industrialization.

The most abundant growth in RTW legislation approvals took place during the 1940s and early 1950s shortly after the passing of the aforementioned 1947 Taft-Harley Act. The Taft-Hartley Act was as a necessary amendment to the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (i.e., Wagner Act), which allowed unions to require universal membership or closed shop. In addition, it is important to note that this period of heavy RTW legislation approval also took place shortly after the end of the Great Depression. Using past economic trends and Moore's suggestion concerning the potency of RTW legislation after a period of economic decline, it may be reasonable to infer that the increase in RTW laws in northern and Midwestern states were influenced by economic resurgence in a post-Great Recession economy.

Vedder (2010), in support of RTW laws, asserted that in some situations labor unions use their influential power to extract agreements where the current marginal labor costs to employers exceed the marginal revenue associated with labor and ultimately, cost employers money. For this reason, one may justify employers' advocacy for RTW legislation. Nonetheless, from an employee perspective, average pay levels in non-RTW states are over 20% higher than RTW states and is corroborated by Mishel's (2001) study specifying the mean effect of working in RTW states result in a 4% deduction after controlling for regional cost of living.

At the expense of higher salaries and generous benefits, capital formation and entrepreneurial initiatives in non-RTW states are suppressed by union laws that affect employer output growth (Vedder, 2010). The researcher also explains how past negotiations concerning wages and benefits not only affected small businesses, but also how collective bargaining contributed to the bankruptcy of iconic industrial companies in the motor industry. Although, on the surface RTW laws do not have substantive positive impact on the individual employee as

compared to non-RTW states, researchers have heavily addressed the impact of RTW laws on the economy at large (Hicks, 2012; Newman, 1983; Vedder, 2010)

When studied more closely, Hicks and LaFaive (2013) found that RTW legislation had a minimal effect on population, income, and employment prior to 1970. However, from 1971 through 1990, the researchers reported RTW laws boosted average employment and real personal income annual growth by 0.9 percentage points and population growth by 1.3 percentage points. Similarly, from 1991 through 2011 the areas of annual growth rates, personal income, and population growth all rendered significant findings. Results indicated the average annual growth rates for employment increased by 0.4 percentage points, personal income increased by 0.7 percentage points, and population increased by 0.6 percentage points (Hicks & LaFaive, 2013).

When controlling for state real economic growth, region, year, and exogenous regressors (i.e., factors influencing a state's economic conditions and attitudes towards business), Stevans's (2009) findings provided further insight into the issue of RTW laws and their impact on the economy on both macro and micro levels. The results to this study concluded that RTW laws: 1) had no influence on employment, 2) is associated with a decrease in per-capita personal income and wages, 3) is associated with an increase in proprietors' income, and 4) had no effect on economic growth. When removing the endogeneity control, the researcher's findings differed indicating the importance of including this component. Without the endogeneity factor, employment rates were higher in RTW states than non-RTW, per capita income was lower in RTW states as compared to non-RTW states, no statistical difference was found in average wages, average proprietors' income was higher in RTW states relative to non-RTW states, and no statistical difference was found in average real state GDP growth rates.

Right-to-Work Laws and Job Satisfaction

The economic components associated with RTW states and non-RTW states are far from conclusive; however, the findings do support the theme that states operating under RTW laws are more *business friendly*, while states not operating under RTW law are more *employee friendly* (Stevans, 2009). Although the economic outcomes of these legislatures are vital to industry and the sustainability of a productive workforce, industrial-organizational psychology components-- in this case employee job satisfaction—can impact the economy as well through employee industrial productivity and organizational outcomes. Job satisfaction alone has been linked to absenteeism, turnover, and job performance (Lambert & Hogan, 2009; Schleicher, Watt, & Greguras, 2004; Wegge, Schmidt, Parkes, & Dick, 2007), each potentially having adverse effects on company sustainability.

Labor unions essentially seek to improve workers' wages, increase job security, enhance working conditions, and provide employee grievance procedures through collective bargaining agreements (Hipp & Givan, 2015). The aforementioned efforts suggest labor unions are advocates for employers, yet, research recognizes that labor unions have a negative impact on the job satisfaction of union members (Freeman & Medoff, 1984; Garcia-Serrano, 2009; Hammer & Avgar, 2005; Schwochau, 1987). Hipp and Givan (2015) explained the counter intuitiveness of the labor union/job satisfaction paradox by alluding that labor union members are not necessarily more dissatisfied with their jobs than nonunion members, instead, their ability to complain without fear of potential discrimination enables their dissatisfaction with their job to appear more potent. These findings are important not only because non-RTW states are expected to have

significantly more union members than RTW states (Gius, 2013), but the negative job satisfaction findings of union members may provide further indications of a need for universal RTW legislation.

In addition to the explanation provided by Hipp and Givan (2015), other hypotheses have been developed to explain the inverse relationship of the labor union/job satisfaction paradox. Freeman and Medoff (1984) purported the relationship to be the result of union members' tendencies to work in unpleasant, unsafe, and low paying jobs, while Hammer and Avgar (2005) expressed in their review of literature that labor unions increase its members' employment expectations to unrealistic levels. Ultimately, in their pursuit to find work related problems to collectively bargain, labor unions bring focus to negative aspects of the work environment, which inadvertently triggers its members to be dissatisfied with their jobs.

Research from Eaton, Gordon, and Keefe (1992) as well as Gordon, Beauvais, and Ladd (1984) found a relationship between union satisfaction and job satisfaction of workers. Their respective studies indicated that those who were satisfied with their jobs were more inclined to be satisfied with their union. This relationship suggests it may not be in the best interest of labor unions to heighten the awareness of the dissatisfying elements of the work environment because workers may hold the union liable for the corresponding issues (Gordon & Denisi, 1995).

Another explanation of the unionization-job satisfaction paradox is found in the work of Bryson, Cappellari, and Lucifora (2004), positing that workers who are dissatisfied with their job are more likely to join a union and engage in union activities. This example removes labor unions as the cause of the of employer's dissatisfaction and instead, labor unions create a haven for dissatisfied employers to express their grievances. As such, work communities with high levels of employee dissatisfaction become ideal locations for formal organization and the benefits of unionization are greater (Bryson et al., 2004).

The unionization and job satisfaction paradox has been studied throughout numerous occupational settings; however, few have researched these variables in the education field. Gius (2013) is the only researcher at this time to have studied the impact of labor unions on job satisfaction in education. The researcher found no significant relationship between teacher union status and job satisfaction when using 2007 national data. The findings are analogous to the findings of his 2012 study that utilized the same data source (Gius, 2012). This study is similar to the work of Guis (2013), however differs by using a 72-item instrument that assesses all facets of job satisfaction (i.e., work itself, pay, promotion, supervision, and coworkers) and is validated through psychometric testing. In addition, this study differs by controlling for school level unit-specific heterogeneity as a random effect, as opposed to district level. Considering this topic, in this particular occupational setting, is extremely limited, further research using a variety of instruments, populations, and analyses is warranted.

School Characteristics Effecting Teacher Job Satisfaction

When reviewing the effects of RTW laws on teacher job satisfaction, it is necessary to understand the pre-existing environmental constructs influencing teacher satisfaction in the absence of labor unions. Prior knowledge of these constructs in conjunction with the job satisfaction trends of teachers can better identify potential influences of teacher dissatisfaction. Understanding of these components may also provide context to how labor unions can categorically influence the job satisfaction of teachers positively or negatively.

Ma and MacMillan (1999) identified three specific areas that affect job satisfaction in the teaching profession: (a) teachers' feeling of competence or ability to do the work, (b) administrative control, and (c) organizational culture. Teachers display competence by having knowledge of their subject areas, having access to effective and current instructional strategies, and having the ability to use their content knowledge conjointly with instructional strategies to assist students in meeting the standards associated with their course (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). This supports the similar finding of work stress (a common cause of dissatisfaction) due to cognitive demand, deficiencies in ability, and inadequate resources (Ganzach, 1998; Schaubroeck & Ganster, 1993; Xie & Johns, 1995).

Although teachers spend countless hours within their classrooms with students, school leadership and administrative practices are just as impactful on teacher job satisfaction (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). School administrators are also crucial to the school's learning environment and can be viewed as essential components of school culture. As such, their behaviors and practices can foster either a positive or a negative environment (Davis & Wilson, 2000). By having the ability to assign teacher responsibilities outside of their teaching duties (i.e., extracurricular activities, excessive paperwork, student monitoring) job dissatisfaction may occur because of feelings that the required work responsibilities are non-significant contributors to student achievement and/or outside of the realm of their job description (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). To avoid administrative related teacher job dissatisfaction and the associated effects of job dissatisfaction (i.e., turnover, departure from the profession) (Albert & Levine, 1988), it is suggested that teachers must perceive that the tasks enforced by administrators are both meaningful and apply to the technical core of the school (i.e., teaching and learning) (Ma & MacMillan, 1999).

Finally, organizational culture or teachers' ability to view themselves as an active contributor to the school is a salient feature in determining one's level of satisfaction (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Organizational culture can be defined as the level of collegiality displayed within an organization in which teachers share positive attitudes and collaborate to enhance students learning (Ma & MacMillan, 1999; Stearns, Banerjee, Mickelson, & Moller, 2014). By its very nature, a collective pedagogical culture should remedy issues of isolation and assist teachers in resolving issues pertaining to teaching practices and professional competence that could lead to job dissatisfaction (Stearns et al., 2014). The components addressed by Ma and Macmillan (i.e., teachers feeling of self, administrative views, and feelings toward organizational) are all captured within the instrument utilized in this study.

Theoretical Framework

For theoretical framing, this study employs the *Bargaining Power Hypothesis* of Moore and Newman (1985). This theory hypothesizes that RTW laws directly weaken the bargaining power of labor unions by limiting the union's ability to require universal membership under the "union shop" clause. In doing so, the union's ability to collectively bargain is diminished because of the combination of: 1) reduced worker attraction to the union, and 2) loss of position because of the reduction in member support. Due to the weakened bargaining power, the expected benefits attributed to union membership are lower than one would find in a non-RTW state. Moore and Newman eluded that the elimination of RTW laws would increase the bargaining power of the union and increase the expected benefits to union workers.

Considering the measureable determinants of job satisfaction (e.g., work environment, pay, promotion, supervision) and their close alignment with areas unions collectively bargain, labor unions in principle serve as champions for employee satisfaction. The *Bargaining Power Hypothesis* indicated that RTW laws prevent labor unions from adequately bargaining for its members and, as a result, members do not receive the expected benefits. In an educational setting, this theory suggests that due to RTW laws restrictions on labor unions, teachers represented by a labor union in a RTW state are less likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction than teachers represented by a union in a non-RTW state.

Purpose and Significance

The broad purpose of this study is to increase the body of literature concerning labor union policies and its impact on employees. Specifically, this study addresses the relationship between right-to-work laws and teacher job satisfaction in addition to the relationship between right-to-work laws and teacher perceptions of work as it relates to each job satisfaction facets. This study is significant because within recent years, state politicians have enacted policies enabling their respective states to adopt RTW laws, yet the effects of RTW policy is lacking contemporary empirical research. Although there is dated research addressing the effects of RTW policy, few evaluate the job satisfaction of labor union policy (i.e., right-to-work vs. non- right-to-work). This study differs from past studies in similar settings by utilizing teacher survey data and analyzing their job satisfaction with a robust instrument deemed reliable and sufficient in measuring job satisfaction from past research. Ultimately, educational leaders, labor unions, and policymakers are provided empirical evidence concerning the impact of RTW legislation and teacher job satisfaction when isolating the K-12 public school teaching workforce within multiple school districts across two distinct, comparable states. The following research questions guide this study:
1. Does state labor union policy influence the overall job satisfaction of public, K-12 teachers?
2. Does state labor union policy influence public, K-12 teachers' perceptions of the job satisfaction facets (i.e., pay, work, supervision, coworkers, supervision, and promotion)?

Methodology

The population is drawn from all public education teachers employed in the RTW state of Florida and the non-RTW state of New York during the 2016-2017 academic year. In addition, data from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and the New York State Department of Education (NYSDOE) was obtained to identify schools to be randomly sampled. To retrieve the participants' contact information, the FLDOE, NYSDOE, and school websites were utilized.

The states of Florida and New York were chosen to isolate the different labor policies (i.e., non-RTW and RTW legislation) for the purpose of comparison. Florida was selected because it operates as a RTW state where collective bargaining is allowed but not mandatory, and employees are not required to join a labor union or receive the associated representation provided by the union. In comparison, New York was chosen because it operates as a unionized state with no RTW laws; therefore, all teachers are provided collective bargaining benefits including, but not limited to, salary negotiations, fringe benefit negotiations, working conditions,

and employee grievance procedures (Hipp & Givan, 2015). For this particular study, Florida and New York, respectively, serve as proxies for RTW and non-RTW work environments.

Procedures

Each participant was provided an electronic survey to identify personnel characteristics and job satisfaction information. Each teacher was emailed the survey through Qualtrics surveying software. In an effort to increase response rates, the sample was emailed with a request to complete the survey on three separate occasions over the duration of two weeks. To ensure adequate power, Cohen's (1988) power analysis was utilized to ascertain the needed sample size and detect the potential effects of unionization policy on the sample. From the results of the power analysis, which included five covariates, one independent variable, one dependent variable, as well as the recommended parameters of a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), an alpha level of .05, and a power of .80, an adequate sample size was determined to be 97 participants. By applying an oversampling technique, a random sample of 50 Florida public schools and 50 New York public schools were selected, of which, 200 K-12 public school teachers were randomly chosen and provided electronic surveys to achieve the needed sample size. Of the individuals who received a survey, 95 responded which equates to a reasonable response rate of 47.5% and statistical power of .78.

Variables

Independent variable. The presence of RTW policy is the independent variable manipulated in this study. Dummy codes were created to capture the participant's involvement in the aforementioned unionization policy. As such, participants from the state of New York were coded as "0" representing a non-RTW state while participants from Florida were coded as "1" representing a RTW state. As can be seen in Table 1, within our sample, 46.3% of the participants were from a non-RTW state and 53.7% were from a RTW state.

      Covariates. Statistical controls included in this study fall into three categories: 1) personal demographics, 2) human capital, and 3) workload characteristics. Within these categories, covariates utilized (i.e., gender, ethnicity, education level, years of experience, and workload) were chosen because of their impact on job satisfaction as suggested by empirical literature (Bolin, 2007; Donohue & Heywood, 2004; Fabra & Camisón, 2009; Sharma & Jyoti, 2009).

      Personal demographics are represented by gender and ethnicity. Gender is a characteristic historically studied in job satisfaction research, therefore, making it a necessary factor to be included in the analysis. Lead by Crosby's (1982) *paradoxical female hypothesis*, literature has continued to find females to be more satisfied with their jobs than males. In support of gender differences in job satisfaction, Clark (1997) found when using a large British database, females had significantly higher levels of job satisfaction than males. The researcher also suggests the cause of gender differences is due to lower job expectations of females because of a history of inequality. In concordance with the findings of Clark (1997), researchers Bender, Donohue, and Heywood (2005) identified gender difference in job satisfaction; however, their study found females to report higher level of job satisfaction only in woman dominated occupations and when the characteristics of male and female dominated jobs were accounted for, there were no statistical differences. The sample consisted of 77.9% females and 22.1% males. This finding is

not abnormal considering the heavy population of females in the teaching profession.

Ethnicity is another salient demographic factor included in the analysis based on previous research findings, as such the ethnicity proportions of the studies participants are as follows: 80% White, 9.5% Hispanic, 4.2% Black, 3.2% Asian, and 2.1% Multiracial. Within the hiring practices of a human resources department of schools, particularly in education, protected classes (e.g., race, age, and gender) are not discriminated against and all applicants are provided an equal opportunity for employment, as reported by school districts. Although, protected classes are taken into account when hiring, research has shown differences in the job satisfaction of these individuals; for example, Bender and Heywood (2006) found that Asians, African Americans, and those classified as 'other race' reported lower job satisfactions than Caucasians. Interestingly, these findings support the negative correlation found within Bashaw's (1998) research, yet contradict the results of Bartel (1981), who found blacks to be more satisfied with their jobs than whites. Although, these findings lack consistency, significant findings warrant the inclusion of this variable.

The ethnicity variable was dummy coded as White (0) and non-White (1) which equates to an 80/20 distribution as noted in Table 1. Considering the U.S. teaching population is over 80% Caucasian and 76% female (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013), the data are characteristic of the teaching population and the potential of response bias in the area of teacher demographics for this sample is less likely.

From existing research involving pay in the teaching profession, human capital endowment factors, as defined by education level and years of experience, are included in the analysis because of their influence on job satisfaction. To demonstrate the relationship between education level and job satisfaction, Fabra and Camisón (2009) found that individuals with higher levels of formal education are likely to be more satisfied with their jobs as compared to those with lower levels of formal education. They allude that individuals with higher levels of formal education can access jobs with characteristics that produce higher levels of job satisfaction. As noted in Table 1, education level ranged from bachelor's degrees (24.2%), master's degrees (51.6%), master's +30/Ed.S. (20%), and doctoral degrees (4.2%).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Teacher Characteristics	*Count and Percentages*
Union	*44 (46.3%)*
Right-To-Work	*51 (53.7%)*
Males	*23 (24.2%)*
Females	*49 (51.6%)*
White	*76 (80%)*
Non-White	*19 (20%)*
Bachelor's Degree	*19 (20.0%)*
Master's Degree	*4 (4.20%)*
Master's+30/Ed.S. Degree	*30 (21.6%)*
Doctorate Degree	*5 (3.60%)*

In addition to the human capital findings of Fabra and Camisón (2009) pertaining to education level, Van Maele and Van Houtte (2012) found a strong negative correlation between

years of teaching experience and job satisfaction. This indicates, the more years a teacher has acquired working in the same capacity, the more likely they will report lower levels of job satisfaction. The researchers allude that this finding may be due to career exhaustion of the more experienced teachers. The average years of teaching experience in this study is 16.03 years. To further address the sample's high mean for teacher years of experience, the sample is disaggregated and percentages of participant counts at 10-year intervals are provided. The percentage of the number of participants at each interval is as follows: 1-10 years (25%), 11-20 years (45%), 21-30 years (25%), and 31-40 years (5%).

Workload characteristics are defined by the number of contractual workdays for each teacher. Each state and/or school have varying contractual workday requirements. As such, increased numbers of contractual workdays may influence teacher jobs satisfaction differently. In a cross-sectional design, Cole, Panchanadeswaren, and Daining (2004) found that workload was negatively associated to job satisfaction when studying social workers. The average number of contractual workdays for participants in this study was 192 days, see Table 2.

Dependent variables. The dependent variable for this study was provided by the 2009 revised Job Descriptive Index (JDI) which can offer perceptions of overall job satisfaction as a cumulative score composed of each of the job satisfaction facets (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). In addition to overall job satisfaction, each facet of job satisfaction can be analyzed independently as dependent variables to provide further depth in the factors impacting teacher job satisfaction. JDI scales measure job satisfaction by identifying one's appraisal of the five facets of job satisfaction (i.e., work itself, pay, promotion, supervision, and coworkers). Each facet is then expressed as a question and accompanied with 9 or 18 itemized responses totaling to 72 items. To measure one's overall job satisfaction, the instrument utilizes a total scoring of each job satisfaction facet for each participant. As can be seen in Table 2, job satisfaction total scores ranged from 48-248 with an average score of 177.6.

This study used the JDI for the following reasons: (1) its popularity as one of the leading instruments for measuring job satisfaction (Buckley, Carraher, & Cote, 1992; Smith & Stanton, 1998), (2) its alignment with the school characteristic constructs affecting teacher job satisfaction mentioned in the literature review, and (3) its consistent reliability and validity when measured across different populations (Gillet & Schwab, 1975; Johnson, Smith, & Tucker, 1982).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Teacher Characteristics	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Teaching Experience[a]	16.03	8.35	1	40
Workload[b]	192.0	76.89	84	200
Overall Job Satisfaction[c]	177.67	44.42	48	248

Note. [a]Years. [b]days. [c]JDI Scale

Results

To address the aforementioned research questions, this study analyzed six Restricted Maximum Likelihood (REML) mixed effects multiple regression models that accounted for teacher nesting at the school level. This statistic was utilized for eliminating unobserved unit-specific

heterogeneity and reducing type-1 error. The respondents from both Florida and New York accounted for 61 different groups (i.e., schools) within the models, which exceeded the 20-25 group threshold necessary to provide accurate estimates of regression coefficients, standard errors, and associated variance components, thereby, justified the use of this model instead of an OLS fixed effects multiple regression model. In addition to the random effect (i.e., schools), the fixed effect component was also justified because of the fact all predictor variables were level-one teacher variables (i.e., job satisfaction, union association, education level, years as a teacher, gender, ethnicity, and workload).

  Shown in Table 3, the presence of RTW laws were significantly related to overall teacher job satisfaction (b= -23.56, $p \le 0.05$). Considering the direction of the coefficient, the data support that right-to-work legislation has a negative association with overall teacher job satisfaction. When analyzing the influence of RTW laws on the facets of teacher job satisfaction, the teachers' satisfaction with work (b= -4.79, $p \le 0.01$) and pay (b= -10.88, $p \le 0.001$) were both found to be statistically significant. The direction of the coefficients for both work and pay were negative, indicating negative relationships between RTW laws and teacher work satisfaction and pay satisfaction. Other results found to be statistically significant were the relationships between teachers' satisfaction with pay and years as a teacher (b= 0.20, $p \le 0.05$) and teachers' satisfaction with promotion and non-white ethnicity (b= 4.70, $p \le 0.01$). Although not statistically significant at the $p \le 0.05$ level, teachers' satisfaction with supervision and years as a teacher (b= -0.344, $p \le 0.10$) was found to be on the verge of significance and worthy of noting.

Table 3
Mixed Effects Regression Models of Teacher Job Satisfaction

	Overall Job Satisfaction (1)	Work (2)	Pay (3)	Supervision (4)	Coworkers (5)	Promotion (6)
Fixed Effects Variables						
Right-To-Work	-23.56**	-4.79***	-10.88****	-2.50	0.42	0.08
	(11.79)	(1.87)	(1.98)	(3.82)	(2.68)	(1.55)
Education Level	1.74	-0.50	-1.04	2.96	0.12	0.93
	(6.59)	(1.00)	(1.12)	(2.09)	(1.66)	(0.96)
Years as Teacher	-0.31	-0.007	0.20**	-0.344*	-0.11	-0.13
	(.59)	(0.09)	(.101)	(.189)	(0.14)	(0.08)
Gender	-13.62	-1.71	0.33	-4.27	-3.76	-1.43
	(10.91)	(1.65)	(1.86)	(3.45)	(2.75)	(1.60)
Ethnicity	2.44	0.15	2.15	-1.08	-2.76	4.70***
	(12.66	(1.94)	(2.16)	(4.03)	(3.15)	(1.83)
Workload	-0.11	0.000	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.006
	(.119)	(0.009)	0.01	(0.01	(0.01)	(0.008)
Constant	207.81****	37.51****	6.57****	49.63****	51.46****	7.94***
	(20.41	(3.11)	(3.48)	(6.49)	(5.08)	(2.95

Random Effects Variables						
School	406.52	14.71	9.53	1.26	0.180	0.000
	(414.73)	(8.78)	(11.94)	(36.74)	(16.93)	(0.000)
N	95	95	95	95	95	95

Note. Standard of errors appear in parentheses
Dependent Variables: Overall Job Satisfaction, Work, Pay, Supervision, Coworkers, and Promotion
* p ≤ 0.10, **p ≤ 0.05, ***p ≤ 0.01, **** p ≤ 0.001

Conclusion

Findings from this study do not align with the results of past research that suggests that labor unions fail to be related to higher job satisfaction (Freeman & Medoff, 1984; Garcia-Serrano, 2009; Hammer & Avgar, 2005; Schwochau, 1987), nor do they align with the research purporting there is no relationship between RTW laws and teacher job satisfaction (Gius, 2012, 2013). Unlike previous research, this study found a significant negative relationship between RTW laws and overall teacher job satisfaction indicating that teachers in non-RTW states reported higher levels of job satisfaction.

Considering this study accounted for unit specific heterogeneity at the school level, factors related to school culture or school dynamic did not impact the outcome in cases where multiple teachers from the same school were surveyed. Therefore, the finding that indicated employees reported more positive perceptions of job satisfaction in non-RTW states is beyond the influence of school specific variables and can be assumed it is associated with the particular unionization legislature.

The finding indicating there is negative association between RTW laws and teacher job satisfaction and a positive association between the absence of RTW laws and teacher job satisfaction is aligned with Moore and Newman's (1985) *Bargaining Power Hypothesis*. Their theory suggests that RTW laws directly weaken the bargaining power of labor unions by prohibiting certain union security agreements. Enforcing these regulations may cause a reduction in worker attraction to the union resulting in the union losing bargaining position because of the decrease in member support. As a consequence of the union's loss in bargaining power, the effects of collective bargaining and predictors of job satisfaction are lessened.

Other findings from this study support past research in the area of teacher pay satisfaction indicating RTW legislation has a negative relationship with teacher pay satisfaction. Buckman, Tran, and Young (2016) found that teachers in non-RTW states had higher levels of pay satisfaction than teachers in RTW states which is also aligned with the research of Currall, Towler, Judge, and Kohn (2005). The cause of teachers' dissatisfaction with pay in RTW states may be due to the difference in teacher salaries and wages, considering, teachers in non-RTW states—on average—have higher salaries, wages, and benefits than teachers of RTW states (Mishel, 2001).

In addition to the significant negative association between RTW laws and teacher pay satisfaction, teachers' years of experience was found to be significant and positively associated with satisfaction with pay. This finding is not uncommon considering teacher are typically

provided pay increases for years of experience in traditional salary schedules. Also, veteran teachers are more likely to hold advanced degrees which are compensated in traditional salary schedules.

A unique finding in this study is that the population of non-white teachers had a significant positive relationship with satisfaction with promotion as compared to white teachers. This finding may indicate that school districts are taking strides to increase equity and diversity in leadership. Although, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed in this study, this finding should be further researched to determine additional relationships associated with the satisfaction of promotion practices based on teacher ethnicity.

Advocates in support of RTW laws who seek to remove or limit the power of labor unions must take into account the impact these laws have on employees. Although there is some evidence indicating RTW laws have a positive impact on the economy, the employee satisfaction components found in this study should be addressed. When comparing the education setting and the business setting, the product schools produce is students' success and unlike business companies that fail due to poor product quality, the outcome of failing schools has a greater impact on society. Signs of unsatisfied workers such as low teacher attendance, poor work quality, and teacher turnover influence the overall quality of a school and impacts student learning; therefore, if RTW laws negatively impact teacher job satisfaction, legislators and school leaders need to address how to effectively bargain for teachers to increase teacher job satisfaction in RTW states.

Just as all studies, the findings of this study should be interpreted though its limitations. The present study addresses the impact of RTW laws on teacher job satisfaction by analyzing the data of two largely populated, comparable states. Thus, the study's findings are only generalizable to this population; however, by only using one setting, the endogeneity based on state bargaining culture is controlled. It is suggested that future researchers examine this topic by surveying a national sample with a reliable job satisfaction instrument such as the JDI and control for state level endogeneity (i.e., bargaining culture of each state) as defined by Stevans (2009), in addition to school-level heterogeneity. Furthermore, it may be of interest for future researchers to isolate states with RTW laws and determine if union and non-union members report significantly different job satisfaction levels.

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Influence of Mentorship Experiences in the Development of Women Superintendents in Texas as Transformational Leaders

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Ten women superintendents in Texas were interviewed for this phenomenological narrative study to understand their mentoring experiences framed within transformational leadership theory. The research used a guided protocol to conduct face-to-face interviews. In this study, authors sought to answer questions about the influence of mentorship experiences on the development of women superintendents through intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. These experiences were then interpreted through a phenomenological approach and retold through narrative. We found that mentorship experiences contribute to the development of women superintendents as transformational leaders and also expose the need to align mentorship experiences of aspiring superintendents to established leadership theory.

Keywords*: Mentoring, women superintendents, transformational leadership*

Women represent approximately 75% of all classroom educators and 52% of public school principals (Bitterman, Goldring, & Gray, 2013; Snyder & Dillow, 2012). Yet, among school superintendents across the nation, women only represent 24% of these educational leadership positions (Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young, & Ellerson, 2011). The contrast between the representation of women in the classroom and women as school district leaders suggests the need to continue to explore how women access and flourish in positions of leadership, especially the superintendency (Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Morrison, 2012).

There is no journey to leadership that is not without its difficulties (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013). The literature reflects the many obstacles unique to women seeking the superintendency (Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Katz, 2006; Muñoz, Pankake, Ramalho, Mills, & Simonsson, 2014). Academic leadership programs do not tailor development opportunities to address the specific needs of aspiring women leaders (Petersen, Fusarelli, & Kowalski, 2008). In the absence of textbook models for the superintendency or programs designed to prepare women as educational leaders, mentorship becomes a critical component to the development and preparation of women superintendents (Muir, 2014).

Though researchers of women in educational leadership would indicate that women are underrepresented in roles of educational leadership, they also would tell us women are more prepared than ever to assume a superintendency (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Snyder & Dillow, 2012). Without defined standards by which mentorship experiences operate between mentors and aspiring superintendents, much is left to chance as to what topics of leadership are addressed (Bynum, 2015; Muir, 2014). In addition to the lack of formalized or standards based mentorship experiences, women often find they are forced to enter into a mentorship experience with a male mentor as there is a shortage of women mentors or role models in the field of educational leadership (Katz, 2005; Sealy & Singh, 2010).

Theoretical Framework: Transformational Leadership

Bernard Bass expounded on the research of James Burns, which defined the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership (Leong & Fischer, 2011). Transactional leadership is based on the contingency of three factors, contingent reward and both passive and active management by exception (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Contingent rewards reinforce role and task requirements of the leader and followers. Passive and active management by exception involves the direct and indirect of monitoring by the leader for errors within the transaction (Bass, 1998; Zhu, Sosik, Riggio, & Yang, 2012). Key to the effectiveness of the transaction between the leader and follower is the economy of positive reward (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

The transformational leader is aware of the potential and needs of those who follow them (Northouse, 2015). There are four factors which impact transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Northouse (2015) elaborated on the four factors of transformational leadership. Idealized influence or charisma is when the followers strive to be like the leader. Inspirational motivation, involves inspiring followers to take ownership in a common vision. Intellectual stimulation empowers follower to take risks and explore problems and their solutions. Northouse added that individualized consideration allows leaders to become intimate with the needs of individual followers.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the mentor experiences of female superintendents in Texas, framed within transformational leadership. For the purpose of this study, success was defined as a female superintendent who has served a minimum of one year in the position and who is recognized as outstanding by her own district, Educational Service Center (ESC), or by another professional organization. These women identified themselves as transformational leaders framed within the four components of Bass's theory of transformational leadership (1998). The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How was intellectual stimulation influenced through mentoring experiences?
2. How was individualized consideration influenced through mentoring experiences?
3. How was inspirational motivation influenced through mentoring experiences?
4. How was idealized influence influenced through mentoring experiences?

Literature Review

At least 75% of the nation's public school teachers are female (Snyder & Dillow, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2011). Bitterman et al. (2013) reported that 52% of all public school principals were female, of which 64% were elementary, 42% were middle school, and 30% were high school principals. Data collected as part of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) decennial study of American School Superintendents showed that of the 1,867 school superintendents surveyed, women represented approximately only 24% regardless of size of the school district (Kowalski et al., 2011). With 75% of women in teaching positions one would expect there to be more women superintendents (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014).

The career pathway of women to the superintendency tends to follow a traditional path of being a teacher, principal, district office administrator and then a superintendent of schools (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Sampson & Davenport, 2010). However traditional, for a woman, the journey toward leadership is not necessarily linear (Hertneky, 2012; Katz, 2006). Brunner and Kim (2010) argued that women who aspire to become superintendents often hold degrees in education, curriculum and instruction or educational leadership. Consequently, women develop in their expertise as instructional leaders but often stagnate in the development of other leadership skills needed to access career opportunities. In fact, more men are appointed to the role of superintendent, even though the academic preparation of women for the position is more current (Glass, 2017). Over 12 years ago, Grogan and Brunner (2005) argued that women often plateau professionally as a mid-level administrator or as an assistant superintendent, often in curriculum and instruction. In addition, because they progress into leadership more slowly than men, women are older when they apply for and become superintendents. Women are often more likely to become superintendents in rural or small town districts (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006).

The Texas Education Code, Section 11.201 (a) (2015), outlines the duties of the superintendent. According to the Texas Education Agency, the superintendent certificate candidate must hold a master's degree, a principal certificate, complete a superintendent certification program, and pass the state superintendent exam. In Texas, school superintendents should possess competency in the following domains; Domain I: Leadership of the educational community, Domain II: Instructional leadership, and Domain III: Administrative leadership (Texas Education Code Sec. 21.046, 2015). The role of superintendent far reaches beyond the scope of professional competency it also encompasses, acting as a business manager or CEO,

instructional leader, communicator, political leader, and social activist (Björk, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2014).

Though prevalent in teacher preparation programs, mentoring programs are also being developed for school administrators and superintendents (Alsbury & Hackman, 2006). However, there are voids in the literature defining mentoring (Dawson, 2014). Ragins and Kram (2007) suggested that mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced mentor and a lesser experience apprentice with the focus of the relationship centered on professional growth and development. The growth and development aspect within the context of work is what makes mentorship different from other types of relationships.

Mentoring may be structured in different ways. Mentoring relationships may be formal when facilitated through an organization or leader preparation program (Muir, 2014). Bynum (2015) suggested they may also be informal as the result of a relationship among peers who aid one another through the collaboration of a project with supervisors or peers. Informal mentoring may better suit women who struggle with the traditional roles within formal mentorship, however, researchers have suggested informal mentoring can be just as valuable as formal mentoring for personal and professional growth (Gorman, Durmowicz, Roskes, & Slattery, 2010).

Copeland and Calhoun (2014) listed the attributes of a mentor as someone who is available to advise, direct or guide, protect, help one network, and connect their protégé with job opportunities. The greatest support the mentor often gives the protégé is time (Bynum, 2015; Grossman & Davis, 2012). Highly successful leaders do not always have the time required to give to mentoring relationships (Tolar, 2012). For today's new leaders, interaction with the mentor is often maximized through use of technology and social media (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Willingness to meet the unique needs of the protégé to further the mentorship experience emphasizes the intentionality of the mentor to support and in the selectivity of whom they mentor (Johnson & Ridley, 2015).

In educator development there are two facets of mentoring: career preparation and emotional support (Grossman & Davis, 2012). Mentoring that facilitates career development includes the introduction of the apprentice to networking opportunities they may not otherwise be afforded without the mentor, professional and political guidance, coaching in decision making, and the provision of safety from risky actions or decisions (Alsbury & Hackman, 2006). Many outcomes of mentoring for the protégé are evident in higher salaries, a strong sense of professional identity, career advancement, job satisfaction, and community (Johnson & Ridley, 2015).

Mentorship offers emotional support to the protégé by building a relationship of acceptance and trust, offering counseling and even friendship (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Sethna, 2014). Thus, new school district administrators need to be nurtured as they encounter the nuances of the role (Boerema, 2011). A successful mentorship should include building a relationship with someone of like values, who possesses experiences and knowledge, and who is willing to give in time and effort to support the protégé (Gilmour & Kinsella, 2009). The benefits of a mentor relationship are the same for both men and women, whether the arrangement is male to female, or female to female (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). Over 20 years ago, Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) found that men and women both prefer to have mentors from their own gender. Researchers still identify differences in outcomes of mentoring between males and females and those that only involve females; yet females continue to perceive having a female mentor as a means to have a role model who identifies with their experiences (Dunbar &

Kinnersley, 2011). However, one of the most impactful outcomes of women who are mentored is their decision to mentor other women in the career path (Morrison, 2012).

Methodology

The qualitative approach of phenomenological narrative approach was used to conduct this study. Phenomenology is the process of interpreting experiences through the first-person narrative (Moustakas, 1994). The approach of phenomenology magnifies the evolution of the research through developing phenomena (Simon, 2011). Complementing a phenomenological interpretation of experiences is the utilization of the narrative. The narrative approach draws out common themes embedded in the individual stories of the participants (Creswell, 2013)

The participants of this study consisted of 10 successful Texas women superintendents who were purposefully recruited to participate once the researcher identified that they met the criteria for the study. The women superintendents identified themselves as transformational leaders or aspiring transformational leaders framed within the four components of Bass's theory of transformational leadership. Specific criteria to participate in the study included the following:
1. Participants are current or past female superintendents in the state of Texas.
2. Participants have completed at least one year as a superintendent of a school system.
3. Participants self-identify as a transformational leader or aspire to being one.
4. Participants were recognized as outstanding for their positive contributions to education by an education-related entity.

The researcher conducted personal interviews with the participants. Interviews were audio recorded and scripted as suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Nine of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and one was conducted in writing via email. A transcriptionist transcribed each of the interviews. Each participant was given a pseudonym.

From the transcribed transcripts, multiple authors reviewed, described, classified, and interpreted the data. Multiple authors analyzed the transcripts of the interviews as recommended by Creswell (2013). First, the authors familiarized themselves with the data by listening to recordings of the interviews and reading the transcripts. The authors identified significant statements made by the participants to gain an understanding the experience of the participant. Significant statements were grouped, giving rise to themes from the responses of the participants. Both textural and structural descriptions were used to write about the experiences and the context of influence of the phenomena on the participant (Creswell, 2013).

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the mentor experiences of female superintendents in Texas, framed within transformational leadership. The major findings of this study are discussed and summarized by research question.

Research Question 1

The first research question was used to investigate how intellectual stimulation was influenced through mentoring experiences. A primary theme emerged: mentorship experiences give aspiring women leaders opportunity for professional exposure.

The theme of providing women leaders opportunities for professional exposure was

expressed by all of the participants. For example, Ms. Padilla shared how her mentor would have her come alongside him in the day-to-day operations of the school district. He would show her how to work through budget issues, have her attend regional superintendent meetings with him, helping her to "get a feel of who was who and what was what." She spoke of the invaluable lessons she learned in just being allowed to be present in the professional circle of her mentor. She commented:

> I almost feel like it found me instead of me finding it. He encouraged me to go to trainings and kind of getting a little bit of the bigger picture. I think about what it is like to be in a classroom, you know you have the blinder on and it's just about your little corner of the building. Then you become a campus administrator and your view expands to that campus. You come to central office it gets bigger and when you sit in the superintendent's chair you better have your head on a swivel. You need the full picture. He really just gave me the opportunity to see the big picture.

Professional exposure such as the opportunity to attend meetings, participate on committees and interacting with the school board provided participants with the hands-on experiences female superintendents need to prepare them for like experiences in the superintendency.

Dr. Condry shared how a superintendent she worked for as an assistant principal encouraged her to join a superintendent preparation program, he would be the one who would ultimately recommend her for the program setting her career path in a direction she would not have chosen for herself. She said:

> I learned everything about [being] a servant leader from him. I was always a teacher leader but I was never a [transformational] leader until I met him. He was the one who nominated me for the cooperative superintendency program without my knowledge. I had been an assistant principal for half a year and I [didn't feel that I belonged] in a Superintendent training program and he said, "You don't have to be one but if you can get into this program, you are going to learn more than you ever would" and I am so glad he pushed me into it or I wouldn't have done it.

This finding is consistent with the literature that these invaluable experiences provide an environment where the developing female superintendent can utilize leadership skills not necessarily taught in superintendent preparation programs (Brunner & Kim, 2010).

Research Question 2

The second research question was used to investigate how individualized consideration was influenced through mentoring experiences. We found that female superintendents were able to gain in their capacity for individualized consideration by learning how to recognize the needs of their employees, how to make connections with people and show compassion as leaders, and how to encourage those they lead to grow professionally and personally.

Recognize the needs of their employees. Being able to recognize the needs of the employees assists the transformational leader in maximizing the talents of their staff while creating opportunities for them to engage in professional development that not only propels the employee but undergirds the overall vision of the school or district (Dawson, 2014). Building capacity through professional interactions and relationships can be the platform by which the transformational leader drives change. Dr. Macias used the valuable lesson of making connections in order to move the team forward. In her first year as a superintendent, she was

approached by a teacher in the district and the connection with the staff that unfolded set the tone of her superintendency. She said:

> I'll never forget a teacher my very first month here that told me, "I can't believe you said hi to me" and I said, "Goodness what do you mean?" She said, "Our other superintendents would walk right by us and never say hi." I said I'm so sorry you were treated that way. There were some horror stories. There was another teacher that asked me if we were going to have the air conditioner turned on because you know some elementary teachers, they're starting to come already and they said, "Are you going to allow us to turn on the air conditioner?" I thought she was joking and I said, "What do you mean"? The teacher said, "Well, we either have to work really late at night and really early in the morning because we are not allowed to have the air conditioner on during the summer." I said, Oh, my gosh, that's crazy, you turn it on and crank it up."

Make connections with people and show compassion as a leader. Dr. Macias shared a poignant story of how she learned the importance of interpersonal relationships from one of the very first leaders she looked up to as a teacher, her campus principal. She shared:

> Picture me like a little puppy dog following around my principal at that time wanting to be on every committee I wanted to do everything she could possibly throw my way. I did it for her and she was a different type of person. I never really knew if she liked me or not or if I just annoyed her and that's why she allowed me to do things. Later on, I found out she did like me. She was a very, I don't want to say tough, but just very serious, never showed emotion. I am touchy feely; I like to hug everyone on the first day; that was not her. She rarely cracked a smile but that was not going to cause me to give up. It was like two years before she wrote me a handwritten note that said "thank you." I think I still have it.

How to encourage those they lead to grow professionally and personally. Participants noted how they were encouraged to grow professionally and personally. However, in some instances, even the absence of this had a strong influence on the participant. For example, Ms. Sheppard explained that the absence of a leader who took interest in her professional growth has resulted in a very intentional approach in the recognition and development of her own staff. She shared:

> I appoint people to leadership roles, sharing the wealth, and then get out of the way. Trusting people when they try new ideas and letting them "fly or fly in to the wall" is an important thing. And guess what? They usually fly and I learn my old ideas may have been outdated anyway.

Research Question 3

The third research question was used to investigate how inspirational motivation was influenced through mentoring experiences. The following themes emerged from the participants in this study: (a) mentoring experiences helped them to gain an understanding of the need to lead through inspirational motivation, (b) fostering a sense of purpose in others, and (c) being a resource helping others excel. Findings for this research question were in agreement with Weatherly (2011) who noted the up and coming transformational leader may aspire to be like their mentor hoping to exhibit similar inspirational attributes like being a strong instructional leader, demonstrating fiscal maturity, or political savvy when interacting with board members.

Mentoring experiences helped them gain understanding of the need to lead through inspirational motivation. One of the most compelling stories of inspiring others was revealed by Dr. Wang. Dr. Wang was a retiree who had volunteered to come out of retirement to lead a small 1A school district, with an approximate enrollment of 300 students PK-12. Dr. Wang recalled being told early on in her career when she attempted to enroll in an administrator preparation program, that perhaps she would be better suited as a school counselor as the likelihood that a school district would hire a female administrator was very slim. Dr. Wang explained what disheartened her most when thinking about that time in her career was that she did not even attempt to question the forced redirection of her career path. She said that she accepted that women were not meant to be educational leaders.

Eventually Dr. Wang would come to lead as a school principal, in what turned out to be a convenient happenstance. In her words, "I happened to be in the building, I happened to have my mid-management certificate, and the principal of the school happened to be dismissed that day." She had no experience leading a school, and her only hope was that the school board president believed she could do the job. She said that she now understands the value of inspiring future leaders by encouraging them that they can indeed become principals and superintendents.

Fostering a sense of purpose in others. Fostering a sense of purpose in others was mentioned by several of the participants. For example, faced with the decision of her next career step, Mrs. Millies stood at a crossroads that many leaders face not knowing which direction to go. She called upon a colleague for help. She was connected with a professional life coach. For Mrs. Millies, the concept of life coaching was foreign to her yet she knew this decision would impact her career for the long term, she took the leap and reached out for help. She said:

> I had a friend who was a superintendent who worked with me in [another district]. We talked and I'd call her about stuff so she told me to call this coach. She's a coach who coaches principals in turn around environments. She had done some work with [our district] on coaching, what coaching means, so I'd known her a little bit. I just sat down with her and she did something with me that I hadn't done before which was super important. One of the things she started with was, pick your top five values, go on the web look at list of 500 values and pick, not one, pick five! She said, when you have values and the environment you're in is not matching those values then you feel unbalanced.

Mrs. Millies had been talking to her about the superintendency. She was curious what her options were as an assistant superintendent and general counsel for the district. She wondered if she should select general counsel because there were three positions at the time. She shared:

> They were very different types of positions. One was a superintendency, one was a general counsel position, one was a deputy superintendent position and so she was helping me identify what was it that I really wanted. What about the situation I was in was incongruent with my five values? That was a really great exercise. I had never done that before. That has been super valuable to me.

Being a resource helping others excel. The women superintendents in this study gave many examples of helping others find purpose by helping them to excel at where they are now. Dr. Macias stated she hoped those she leads see her as a servant leader as part of being a transformational leader. She expounded on her desire to lead through service when she said:

> I would hope that people would describe it as a servant leadership type. My philosophy has always been that I will not be successful if my principals aren't successful. I try to walk a fine line of support but not micromanaging. That is certainly something I have

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worked on for years because I just like to get in there and do it and there's times when I've had to really reflect on my thinking that getting in there is helping them, when the staff is thinking, Wow! She must not trust me or why doesn't she just let me do this. So now I really work at backing myself up but still letting them know that I'm here to support, to help, but trusting them to do their job.

Dr. Macias emphasized that she shares with the staff in an effort to help them meet their goals. She tells them, "I'll only be successful if you get your goal, so I'm here to help you get your goal. So my goal is to really help people achieve in life."

Research Question 4

The fourth research question was used to investigate how idealized influence was influenced through mentoring experiences. Participants emphasized that mentorship experiences influence the capacity of being a part of a community. Emergent themes included: (a) the practice of sharing and promoting a vision with others, (b) leading by example, and (c) building a culture of trust and confidence. Findings for this question supported Bass (1985), who argued the successful mentorship experience promotes a leader to reach beyond their own strengths . Bynum (2015) further emphasized that they invite others into their circle of leadership allowing the talents of others to contribute to the direction of the school district.

Sharing and promoting a vision. Sharing and promoting a vision was emphasized by several of the participants. For example, Dr. Bays demonstrated a unique strength in her ability to allow others to be a part of casting the vision for the district. Where some school leaders might feel insecure, she found confidence in knowing she leads with a talented team of educators and business people. She did not just play the role of being a superintendent, but learned from her peers as much as they learned from her. The difference is that she shared the spotlight with others as they shared and promoted the vision.

For Ms. Sheppard, sharing and promoting a vision has proven to be successful. She said it well, "I learned to delegate. There is no way one person can do all of it and those around us appreciate the recognition of being given a leadership role. So in the words of Disney's Elsa character, I learned to "let it go." Her humorous take on sharing a vision undergirded this "must have" attribute of leadership in order to share anything you have to be willing to "let it go," not by the wayside or out of control, but instead into the hands of those around you to carry forward who share the vision.

Leading by example. Most of the participants mentioned the influence superintendents have by leading by example. Ms. Padilla gave some insight as to why she leads by example. She noted:

I think that my staff would say that I lead by example and that is one of my strengths. You know, last year was my first full year as a superintendent so I just spent a lot of time during in-service just talking to them. You know I went through the process of explaining to them I came here out of necessity but I am here because I want to be here. It was kind of a full circle thing. One of the things I shared with them is, I am never going to ask you to do something that I wouldn't do. I am going to work harder than I will ask you to work. I think they see that, I'm always around. I mean I go over and help with the car line at the primary school.

Building a culture of trust and confidence. Dr. Condrey recalled what her mentor taught her about the need for transparency to build trust. She responded that her superintendent

always was honest and acknowledged how important it is for the faculty to "own" what happened in the district. She said that his advice was "you just can't criticize people who own things." For example, to encourage them not to be complacent, he had built such a strong culture of trust and confidence that he could talk with faculty regarding district scores that other districts wish they had but it was not perceived as criticism. The district was 90% White and 100% economic advantaged. She recalled that he would say that 90% was just not "good enough. . . in other words, we suck." Her mentor superintendent would tell faculty not to be proud of themselves, after all, their students should be going to Ivy League schools. Because of that culture of trust, he was able to "push, push, and push."

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the findings from this study, there are several suggested conclusions. Overall, the study findings support other researchers who have found that mentorship experiences do indeed influence the development of female superintendents as transformational leaders (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Young & McLeod, 2001). Mentoring experiences provide opportunities for the aspiring transformational leader to work cooperatively with others learning to lead teams, analyzing fiscal data, and garnering the political relationships they will have with board members and the professional community of educators and district leaders (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014).

Mentorship experiences enhance the intellectual stimulation of the aspiring leader by providing a professional model the leader can reflect upon when influencing the intellectual stimulation of others in their leadership (Bynum, 2015). In addition, the success of the mentorship experience is closely tied to the relationship between the mentor and mentee and consequently, the relationships a school district leader builds with the stakeholders in their learning community strengthen their effectiveness in the role (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). For some leaders, the mentorship experience is a source of inspirational motivation. The up and coming transformational leader may aspire to be like their mentor hoping to exhibit similar inspirational attributes like being a strong instructional leader, demonstrating fiscal maturity, or political savvy when interacting with board members (Weatherly, 2011).

Another suggested conclusion is that as important as it is for the transformational leader to learn what to do, it is equally important to learn what not to do. Fostering a sense of purpose for the female superintendent requires overt acts of demonstrating leadership from behind the desk of the superintendent. Others are inspired to see their leader roll up their sleeves and work shoulder to shoulder with them, rather than issue mandates and edicts. Highly visible becomes more than being the superintendent seen in formal meetings; instead highly visible may mean the superintendent is seen picking up trash in and around the football field helping staff prepare for a football game. Thus, the transformational leader and mentor advocates and makes available the tools and resources for his or her staff to be successful and makes himself or herself accessible to the masses (Bass, 1998; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Lastly, a suggested conclusion based on the findings of this study is that the successful mentorship experience promotes a leader to reach beyond his or her own strengths suggesting that both the mentor and the mentee gain from the mentor experience. Mentors invite others into their circle of leadership allowing the talents of others to contribute to the direction of the school district (Bass, 1985; Bynum, 2015). Thus, mentors and mentees are able to identify with those they lead opening the relationship to trust and confidence and ultimately positive progress (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006).

We make the following suggestions for implications for practice to provide ways that mentorship experiences could be tailored to more positively impact the professional development of female superintendents as transformational leaders. There should be an intentional alignment of mentorship activities within the four components of Bass's theory of transformational leadership (Bass, 1998). Superintendent preparation programs should also require formal mentoring experiences aligned to the four components of Bass's theory of transformational leadership. These mentorship experiences should be mandated as part of the first year superintendent contract and should require evidence of the development and growth opportunities beyond that of a checklist signed by the mentor and mentee. We further suggest that job descriptions for the position of superintendent should reflect roles and responsibilities demonstrating utilization of transformational leadership strategies. In addition, administrator resources could be made available that provide scenario examples of administrative strategies incorporating the four components of transformation leadership.

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The Impact of Spirituality on School Leadership

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This qualitative study examined the practices and perceptions of six school leaders through the lens of exemplary leadership and spiritual leadership practices. Literature abounds in the field of exemplary leadership practices but spiritual leadership is traditionally overlooked as a credible topic of scholarly research because of its assumed nexus with religion. The irony is that great leaders in history are not remembered for what they accomplished, but rather for the spiritual core of values they imparted to their followers: fairness, kindness, trust, respect, honesty and integrity. The findings of the study revealed clear consistency between this spiritual core of values and the practice of exemplary leadership. The study contends that by viewing spiritual leadership as a holistic practice that transcends denominational doctrine, the achievement of results is solidly built upon the universally accepted spiritual values of hope, faith, altruistic love and caring for the well-being of the human spirit. By 2025, millennials will represent two-thirds of the global work force (Pew Research Center, 2016). Further implications point to the importance of acknowledging the millennial generation's need to have greater work/life balance, meaning and purpose to their work if school districts hope to retain and attract a talented pool of school leaders.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and understanding of school leaders as they related to exemplary leadership and spiritual leadership practices to inform a more holistic, model of educational leadership. The intent of this study is to provide insight into a more holistic approach to leadership that recognizes the need for balance between the tensions inherent in the pursuit of desired school goals with the need to prioritize the well-being and care of the human spirit (Allison, 2011; Beisser, Peters, & Thacker, 2014; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Fry, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Reave, 2005).

The study focused primarily on school leaders' perceptions and practices that aligned with the dimensions of spiritual leadership and exemplary leadership practices. These four research questions were considered:

1. What are the perceptions and practices of school leaders that align with the dimensions of school leadership?
2. What are the perceptions and practices of school leaders that align with the dimensions of exemplary practices of leaders?
3. How do the spiritual leadership and exemplary practices and perceptions of school leaders relate to each other?
4. How might the convergence or divergence of spiritual leadership and exemplary practices as shown by the participants of this study inform a more holistic model of educational leadership?

Review of Literature

Study of Spirituality

Many social scientists, psychologists, and organizational researchers have undertaken the study of spirituality due to a substantial increase of interest over the past 20 years (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005; Fry, 2003; Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010). Although some may consider the topic of spirituality unworthy of scientific study, the power it contains to transform traditional thinking about leadership is well worth the academic risk. Due to its nexus with religion, the working definition of spirituality for the purpose of this study was described as one that transcends denominational doctrine and practice and was understood as the kind of leadership that leads from deeper levels through purposeful actions and behaviors (Fry, 2003). When regarded within this context, spirituality is viewed as an individual phenomenon that is identified within the broader focus of finding a higher calling, meaning and purpose for one's life work (Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999; Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

Spiritual Intelligence

The research of social and behavioral scientists has suggested that alternate forms of intelligence exist. Gardner (1999) expressed the existence of many forms of intelligence as outlined in his theory of multiple intelligences. Goleman (1990) proposed that along with intellectual ability, humans have the capacity for emotional intelligence to guide their thinking and behaviors. Zohar (2000) explored yet another form of intelligence called spiritual intelligence (SQ). This was described as the capacity for humans to develop self-awareness, holism, compassion, humility,

and a sense of vocation that celebrates diversity. Covey (2004) suggested, "spiritual intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all intelligences because it becomes the source of guidance" (p. 53). Other researchers have suggested that SQ is expressed through wisdom and compassion and the willingness to attend to the overall well-being of self and others (Wigglesworth, 2012). Other studies contend that SQ is the ability to ask ultimate questions about the meaning of life and to simultaneously experience a seamless connection between each of us and the world in which we live. (Amram, 2009; Helminiak, 2008; King, 2008; Vaughn, 2002; Wolman, 2001).

Spiritual Leadership and Exemplary Leadership Practices

In this study, the review of the literature revealed two theories that were foundational to the determination of any interconnection that might exist between the practices of exemplary leaders and the dimension of spiritual leadership.

The first theory explored suggested that spiritual leadership involves "intrinsically motivating and inspiring workers through hope/faith in a vision of service to key stakeholders and a corporate culture based on altruistic love" (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013, p. 4). Spiritual leadership transcends denominational doctrine and practice and is understood as the kind of leadership that leads from deeper levels through purposeful actions and behaviors (Houston, Blankstein, & Cole, 2008; Thompson, 2005; Wax, 2008; Wheatley, 2002). It embodies qualities and habits of mind traditionally overlooked in leadership literature: faith, patience, intuition, humility, inspiration and spirituality (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Day & Antonakis, 2012; Dweck, 2016; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; Riggio, 2008; Thompson, 2005).

The second theory, Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, emerged from extensive research conducted by Kouzes and Posner (2007). Through the analysis of data collected from in-depth interviews, a theoretical framework of five leadership practices emerged. According to their study, exemplary leaders were at their best when they exhibited the practices of modeling the way through an inspired and shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart to motivate and inspire. The compelling research suggested that extraordinary things happened when leaders set the example of striving for excellence, thereby inspiring a shared vision that recognized and encouraged others to do the like. People follow the person first, then the plan.

Other researchers suggested that leaders will need to engage in transformative thinking about leadership if their intent is to improve the effectiveness of their organizations and address present multigenerational needs for greater work/life balance, well-being and work that has purpose and meaning (Beisser et al., 2014; French, Bell, & Zawacki, 2004). Further research may enhance understanding of the synergy needed to calm the sea of diversity represented in these multiple generational perspectives of those currently in the workforce (Lovely, 2005; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Nicholson, 2008).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

To better inform the research for this study, two theories were examined. Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggested that exemplary leaders are at their personal best and exhibit certain discernible practices that include modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart. The Five Practices of Exemplary leadership emerged from extensive

research conducted by Kouzes and Posner who wanted to know what exemplary leaders were doing when they were at their personal best. To find out, they collected and analyzed the results obtained from thousands of managers who answered questions on the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) that was supported by the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Through the analysis of the data, a theoretical framework of five leadership practices emerged. According to Kouzes and Posner when at their best, exemplary leaders consistently exhibited practices in the following five categories: (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage the Heart.

Fry and Nisiewicz (2013) suggested that spiritual leadership attends to the fundamental needs of people by facilitating the intrinsic motivation needed to increase commitment and levels of productivity. Spiritual leadership transcends the practice of denominational religion and emphasizes well-being and the interconnectedness of relationships that help people derive meaning and make sense of the ultimate significance and quality of their life work (Houston et al., 2008; Thompson, 2005; Wax, 2008; Wheatley, 2002). The purpose of spiritual leadership is to meet the fundamental need of well-being for both leader and follower through calling and membership, a well-articulated vision, and to provide an environment conducive to value congruence across all levels. Skillful spiritual leaders know how to balance the needs of the organization and the worker to adapt for a kind of change that mobilizes others to engage in a struggle with shared aspirations (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013; Fullan, 2016; Heifitz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The main components of spiritual leadership theory are the consistent practice of an inner life, the ability to inspire a shared vision through hope, faith, altruistic love, and a sense of calling to the profession.

Methodology

A qualitative research paradigm was designed to explore the perceptions and practices of school leaders regarding exemplary leadership practices and the dimension of spiritual leadership (Creswell, 2012; Merriam 2009; Patton, 1999). Inductive analysis was used to examine the data collected to answer the research questions in this study. The data were comprised of semi-structured interviews, observations of the school leader in three different settings and the examination of artifacts from the participant's school (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Notes were taken by the researcher at the semi-structured interviews that were also tape-recorded, transcribed and shared with each participant to check for accuracy. Field notes were taken for observations of each participant as was a thorough examination of artifacts that included the school's website, handbooks, policies, school vision and mission, and general physical plant of the school. During the data collection phase of the study, the following strategies were implemented to increase quality and credibility: member checks, adequate engagement, researcher's journal, and maximum variation (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Corbin & Straus, 2008).

Sample

Six participants were chosen from a pool of 80 doctoral students enrolled at a religiously affiliated university in a large, Midwestern city. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was administered electronically to the entire pool of participants to determine which of the leaders exhibited a high number of self-reported above-average exemplary behaviors as identified by one

of two theories underpinning this study (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The pool of participants was eventually refined to include six school leaders who were then studied in-depth. Through the purposeful selection of the participants, it was more likely that the data would yield high quality, detailed descriptions and highlight important shared patterns that allowed common themes to emerge (Patton, 1999). A summary of the criteria used for selection of the sample population and the demographics of the participants may be viewed in Tables 1 and Table 2.

Table 1
School Leaders Sampling Conceptual Definition Criterion

Criteria	Rationale
Doctoral students at a religiously-affiliated university in the suburbs of a Midwestern state in the United States	Knowledge and practices that align with dimension of spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003)
Currently practicing Type 75 school leader certification with at least a master's degree	Knowledge of current practice and expectations regarding school leadership
School leaders who score above average in the six rankings of the Leadership Practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2007)	Knowledge and practice aligned with exemplary leadership practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2007)
Six school leaders with at least one practicing at each level: elementary, middle, and high school	Maximum variation of setting and type of school

Table 2
Demographics of Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Degree	Certification	School Setting	Position Held
1	32	F	BS/MA	TYPE 75	9-12/Public	Assistant Principal
2	30	F	BS/MA	TYPE 75	9-12/Public	Assistant Principal
3	56	F	BS/MA	TYPE 75	K-8/Private	Principal
4	43	M	BS/MA	TYPE 75	K-8/Public	Principal
5	34	M	BS/MA	TYPE 75	6-8/Public	Principal
6	37	M	BS/MA	TYPE 75	9-12/Public	Assistant Principal

The results derived from the thematic analysis of the data provided insight into each research question.

Dimensions of Spiritual Leadership

Using the components of Fry's Theory of Spiritual Leadership (2003), all units of data were coded and analyzed through the process of thematic analysis leadership (Creswell, 2012; Merriam 2009; Patton, 1999). Several common threads emerged. The data collected clearly aligned with seven of the nine main categories of spiritual leadership: vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, meaning/calling, membership, organizational commitment, and productivity. The two areas indicated as areas of lesser alignment where related to consistent inner life practices and satisfaction with life. Four of the six leaders noted that they were "pretty happy" with their lives and indicated the lack of balance between personal and professional demands as being a stressful aspect of their life. This was further supported in the observational phase of the study where it was noted that all six leaders kept long hours, were time-starved and harried as they ran from one meeting to the next, and stopped only to answer emails or texts and to handle student discipline problems. The summary of the evidence collected for perceptions and practices that aligned to the dimension of spiritual leadership can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 3.
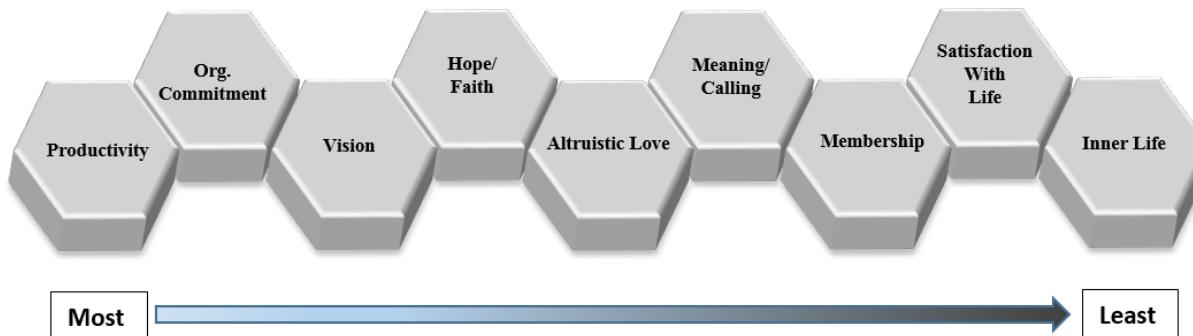

Figure 1. Most to least observed spiritual leadership practices (Adapted from Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013)

Table 3

Research Question 1: Perceptions and Practices Aligned to Spiritual Leadership

RQ1: What are the perceptions and practices of school leaders that align with the dimensions of spiritual leadership?	
Participant	Evidence
1	"Your vision drives everything you do"; "All I do is for the future of our school"; I always try to put myself in their shoes"; "My work is meaningful"; "I am committed"; "I feel responsible for the school's progress"; "I feel pretty happy"; "I am planning my wedding around school responsibilities"; Memory Garden for veterans; website "Expect Excellence" historical murals observed throughout school.
2	"We are an exemplary learning community"; "We believe in our at-risk students"; "I use a great deal of ethics when disciplining"; "I am a spiritual person"; "We are like family here"; "I knew there was something bigger to do in leadership; "I'm newly married and wish I had more time to spend with my husband"; Deferred Dreams Program for at-risk students.
3	"We educate the mind and nurture the soul"; "I hope that what I do matters each day to every student"; "God has given each student special gifts"; "I greet every child each day"; "I feel appreciated for my work"; "Sometimes I come in on the weekends to catch up"; "I have high expectations of myself and my staff."
4	"I am future oriented'"; "I have a passion for what I do"; "We like to laugh to help each other get through tough times"; "My faith is tied closely to the way I conduct myself professionally"; "I have a wonderful home life"; "Frequent interruptions are tough to deal with"; inspirational messages in student handbook.
5	"All of my decisions focus on children"; "Leadership goes back to service, you have to walk the walk"; "Each day is fueled by my passion to do my best for everyone"; "I don't mind living and working in the same community"; "I am a committed, faith-abiding man"; cabinet members repeated vision and mission at all staff meetings.
6	"Our district's vision guides us"; "Share in places that are dangerous, lean on each other, take risks"; "When you treat people with respect, they respect you"; "It's nice to know you are part of something bigger than yourself"; "There's never enough time to finish my list of to do's"; success-focused messages in student handbook and on website "Every day is a new beginning."

Dimensions of Exemplary Practices of Leaders

The Leadership Practices Inventory–Self-Report by Kouzes and Posner (2007) was used as criteria selection for the participants of this study. Evidence for all five of the exemplary

practices were noted on the self-report, the semi-structured interviews, observations and artifacts. On the self-report, it was noted that the leaders viewed themselves as most capable of having the ability to encourage others to act by modeling the way. They also saw themselves as capable of challenging the process and inspiring a shared vision in their school. They generally indicated less confidence in their ability to encourage the heart of others. The thematic analysis of the data demonstrated a similar pattern. Leaders clearly had the ability to set a clear, direct path related to the school vision and to challenge teachers to take academic risks. The leaders exhibited humble, selfless dispositions, had excellent listening skills and offered patient guidance that enabled the teachers and students to perform to their fullest potential. Leaders had little time to think about celebrating accomplishments on a regular basis indicating a lesser ability to encouraging the heart. A summary of evidence for perceptions and practices aligned to exemplary leadership is shown in Table 4 and Figure 2.

Table 4
Research Question 2: Perceptions and Practices Aligned to Exemplary Leadership

RQ2: What are the perceptions and practices of school leaders that align with the five exemplary practices of school leaders?	
Participant	Evidence
1	"I work with new teachers to help them balance their lives"; "Vision should be recognized by everyone"; "I challenge teachers to incorporate more descriptive data"; "Girls are encouraged to pursue math and engineering"; "I bring donuts if I can from time to time"; school was chosen as "America's Best High School-U.S. News."
2	"I make an extra effort and take extra steps with teachers"; "Our vision is to make the community feel like this is their home"; "You have to see all sides of the student's problems, they need someone to back them up"; "You have to hope every student will learn from a situation"; "When we can get together, sometimes we do celebrations during lunch"; website stated, "We seek excellence for all"; student awards posted in atrium.
3	"I start each day new and don't hold on to things"; "You have to be committed to what you do and why you do it"; "I try to understand and don't expect others to do what I don't; "I'm proud of my teachers"; Christian principles on website "Educating the Mind, Nurturing the Soul."
4	"I have the ability to touch all stakeholders in my position"; "I am a school leader because I impact students in a larger way"; "I support the well-being of my staff"; "I try to recognize individuals when they do well with my positive energy."
5	"We teach today for a successful tomorrow"; "It's o.k. to be vulnerable to failure – we don't take enough risks"; "When two sides disagree, we balance each other's perspectives; "We celebrate success"; "I write notes to thank people"; stated on website "Helping Children Achieve Dreams."
6	"Professional harmony is realized when everyone knows what is expected"; "The vision defines what we do each day"; "We need to lean into some uncomfortable times together"; "We are colleagues first and

| | foremost"; "It is seldom that anyone calls you up to tell you that you've done a good job"; "Believe you can and you're half-way there" in student handbook. |
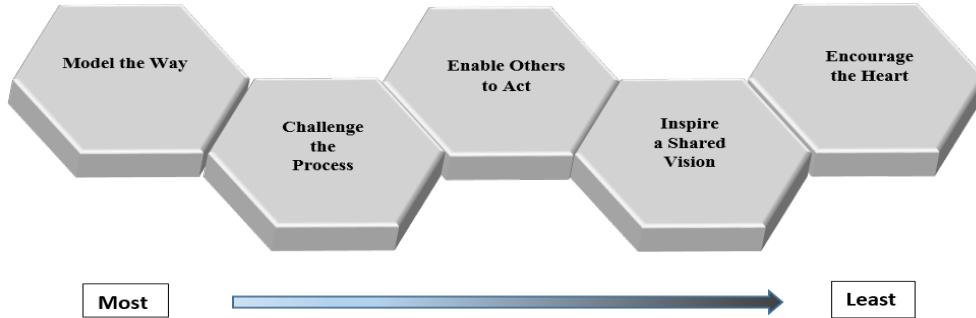
Figure 2. Most to least exemplary leadership practices (Adapted from Kouzes & Posner, 2007)

Spiritual Leadership and Exemplary Practices and Perceptions of School Leaders

The thematic analysis of the data suggested that all nine dimensions of spiritual leadership could be related to one or more of the five practices of exemplary leadership (Fry, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Spiritual leadership and exemplary practices were intertwined and although they could be coded separately during the analysis, the data most often demonstrated strength of evidence in both dimensions. Common themes that emerged indicated that exemplary leadership practice emanated from a solid base of spiritual values that included humility, altruistic love, integrity, and high standards for excellence. The data analysis further revealed common themes indicating that the high-achieving leaders in this study were passionate about their work and regarded caring for the well-being of their teachers as important. The selfless efforts of the leaders inspired relationships that were founded on hope, faith and mutual respect as demonstrated through their collegial interactions. The analysis suggested that each leader felt great purpose and meaning for their work, but also revealed that they frequently felt stressed and yearned for more time to devote to family. The continual pressure to provide better results for their schools contributed significantly to their stress levels. Despite this, the participants reported that they remained hopeful and believed that their efforts contributed to the accomplishment of something bigger than themselves. Each of the leaders expressed a belief in the existence of a "higher, guiding power."

Convergence or Divergence of Spiritual Leadership and Exemplary Practices

In the thematic analysis of the data, each of the leaders consistently demonstrated all five of the exemplary leadership practices and seven of the nine dimensions of spiritual leadership. Convergence was indicated through common themes that emerged to suggest that the exemplary leadership practices of modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart of others were greatly complimented and supported through the embodiment of spiritual values such as humility, altruistic love, integrity and high levels of productivity and excellence. This spiritual core of values facilitated the interconnectedness needed to sustain the level of effort required in the achievement of a shared vision. Triangulation

of the data collected from various sources was compelling and indicated convergence of the two dimensions through the words, actions and artifacts of the school leaders. Care for the well-being of others was fully extended by the leaders, but it was noted in all cases that this came at the expense of their own ability to achieve work/life balance. This suggested that meeting the demands of their job forced their own personal lives and well-being to be placed on the "back burner" which resulted in a lower than expected level of satisfaction with life.

Conclusions

Leading today's complex school environments calls for a different kind of leadership. DuFour and Marzano (2011) suggested that the changing role of contemporary school leaders presents the most daunting challenges in the history of public education. To meet the requirements now inherent in the role, school leaders are asked to navigate environments where more than a compendium of administrative skills are need to effectively lead a school (Beisser et al., 2014; Sparks, 2016). Through the study of exemplary school leadership practices as they related to spiritual leadership, this study boldly attempted to address the intangible, but discernable spiritual aspect of exemplary school leadership.

It was the aim of this study to examine the potential that the convergence of these two dimensions of leadership may have in providing a more holistic way of practicing school leadership that takes both the need for exemplary leadership and the well-being of both leader and follower into account. The research from this study suggests that setting high expectations and providing direction alone is not sufficient for the kind of leadership needed in today's schools. Upon closer examination, spiritual leadership may be the catalyst that empowers exemplary school leaders to perform in meaningful, productive ways that link the caring aspect of leadership with the need to increase student achievement.

The main finding of this study suggested that spiritually connected leaders are exemplary and exemplary leaders are spiritually-connected. Exemplary leadership that flows from the spiritual elements of mutual respect and care for one another inspires the intrinsic motivation required of self and others to achieve extraordinary results that produce a compelling and different future in the organization (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Analysis of the data revealed compelling evidence that the practice of exemplary leadership emanated from a solid core of spiritual values that was foundational to the effective practice of school leadership. Research outcomes clearly suggested that exemplary leaders who were at their best (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) practiced leadership that was integrated with a strong, spiritual core that balanced the need for achieving results by first prioritizing the need to have care and concern for the well-being of self and others (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013). It was discovered that the perspectives of exemplary leadership and spiritual leadership are complimentary practices that focus on the importance of achieving organizational goals by also highlighting the need for attention to the heart, soul and well-being of those in pursuit of those results.

The second conclusion suggested that the "art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 30) was found at the intersection of exemplary leadership and the dimension of spiritually connected practices. The participants in the study consistently exhibited deeply embedded spiritual values that resided at the core of effective leadership practices to form holistic leadership that flowed from a sense of inner peace and clarity. This holistic practice of school leadership was equally focused on the integration of the need for high levels of productivity and achievement with the ultimate concern of caring about

people and their well-being foremost. At this crossroads, the exemplary leaders emanated from a core of spirituality that was strongly supported by their ability to steward a clear and compelling vision for their school, a genuine conviction to the higher meaning and purpose of their work, and possessed the ability to challenge the process by striving to "do whatever it took" to solve issues with innovative thinking that supported and encouraged others to do the like.

The third conclusion of the study revealed a somewhat unanticipated finding that greater emphasis on the congruence between well-being (inner life) and the pressure to achieve results (outer life) is needed to positively impact the leader's ability to effectively create balance between their work and personal life. The school leaders in this study worked no less than 60 hours each week making it difficult to manage the demands place upon them by their professional lives with the need to have personal time for family. This finding suggests the urgent need to address the dissonance that leaders may be experiencing between their "inner and outer" worlds. This dissonance may be at the foundation of job-imposed stress experienced and perhaps one of the reasons many principals leave the profession within the first three years of their tenure. (Allison, 2011; Strickland-Cohen, McIntosh, & Homer, 2014; Superville, 2014).

The fourth conclusion puts forth the idea that both achievement and well-being are equally as critical to the school improvement process. Further support for this conclusion can be found in the recently released 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). The new standards which were researched and developed in response to the changing characteristics and demographics of children and their family structures amidst incessant funding cuts and higher levels of accountability, are a step in the right direction toward achieving this goal. For the first time, each of the ten PSEL (2015) standards now embodies research-based best practices that guide improving student achievement through a holistic view of leadership that includes the aspect of well-being. Without question, such changes are creating a myriad of challenges for school leaders and will require a different way of looking at leadership (NPBEA, 2015).

Implications of the Research

This study was initiated to explore the perceptions and understanding of school leaders as they related to exemplary leadership and spiritual leadership practices. Findings suggest that greater care for the human spirit as demonstrated through better work/life balance is needed by both school leaders and those who work in schools. The relentless pressure and pursuit of results has taken a toll on school leaders that may be at the expense of their well-being and the nurturing of their human spirit. Several implications from this study provide insight into a more holistic form of leadership that reprioritizes the importance of equilibrium between well-being of the individuals in the organization and the pursuit of organizational goals.

The first implication of this study is the need to refocus current thinking about school improvement to avoid a one-dimensional direction that focuses on achieving results. The difficult work that is dictated by the challenging and diverse needs of students in today's schools is best supported through a more holistic, view of leadership. When the core spiritual values of fairness, kindness, trust, respect, honesty and integrity are embedded in the practice of exemplary leadership, care of the human spirit and well-being is ensured and becomes the inspiration needed to continue the struggle for shared aspirations.

The second implication is that because the school leaders in this study were clearly observed to be overextended, time-starved and unable to maintain maximum work/life balance. They may benefit from further mentoring and coaching to create meaningful, spiritual

connections that may help them maintain the resilience needed to overcome these obstacles. Learning how to create intentional time and space throughout the day to recollect thought processes through quiet, spiritual and mindful reflection may help school leaders refresh and refocus on the tangible impact that their levels of stress have upon the well-being of themselves and others.

The final implication of this study is that as suggested in the six dimensions of wellness, most diseases can be traced back to chronic, sustained levels of stress (Hettler, 2017). The high levels of stress, as experienced by school leaders, may suggest reasons for early burnout resulting in talented leaders leaving or never considering the profession. It is recommended that districts and policymakers take a "salutogenic" approach in the care of school leaders by proactively seeking to develop wellness programs aimed specifically at creating healthy lifestyles for school leaders (Allison, 2011; Becker, Glascoff, & Felts, 2010; Strickland-Cohen et al., 2014; Superville, 2014).

As accountability measures, high stakes testing and the standards movement becomes more ingrained in the culture of schools, there is little hope that the workload and pressure placed upon school leaders will be lessened. Spiritual leadership may be the catalyst that empowers exemplary school leaders to be resilient and perform in meaningful, productive ways that encourage themselves and others to join in the struggle toward better achievement for all students. By considering spirituality and wellness in the equation of school improvement the important work done in schools may have a ripple effect that radiates goodness outward from the epicenter of what really matters in schools, to care and nurture the human spirit.

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